

THE GAE

SPRING 2022 • VOLUME 34

Saint Mary's Academy Opens at KCPS

*A school where Christ is taught,
His Blessed Mother is revered,
and the young who enter through
its doors are inspired.*

Also Inside:

Celebrating the Class of 2022

*Bethany Mahoney:
The Student Becomes
the Teacher*

Alumni News and Reunions

*Fitness Goals: The New Student
Fitness Center Needs You*

*Chris Berardis (8th grade) and Madison Cullen
(7th grade) are excited to start in the new Saint
Mary's Academy at KCPS.*

President's Message



Dear Friends of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School,

To the families and friends of Kennedy Catholic Prep, I send you my best wishes and God's speed as a country we move out of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Your recognition of the hard work and dedication to excellence by our Kennedy team during those very trying times is greatly appreciated. And that positive educational effect which the dedication of our staff showed during those most trying times speaks for itself – just look at the Kennedy Catholic classes of 2021 and 2022! Resilience in the face of adversity by our students has won them the high accolade of national recognition in the colleges and universities that they now attend – just visit our website and learn more!

But now let's move from the adversity of the past and turn towards the brilliant hope of our school's future. As you are well aware, Kennedy Catholic has launched an all-new middle school named St. Mary's Academy. We are excited about this new venture in Catholic education and are already well on our way to a path of excellence with strong enrollment and skilled staffing. We will work hard to close the "pandemic educational gap" that has left many of our young



people educationally behind, while at the same time preparing them to take on the academic rigors of a Kennedy Catholic college preparatory education.

Of course, we continue to excel in sports, with our boys and girls LAX teams winning city championships and our baseball team winning the very coveted Archdiocesan Championship. And how about that KC robotics team? Their appearance at the VEX World Championship has again won them international renown. Our Business School continues to grow as well with the addition of an all-new business lab with its state-of-the-art *Koyfin Macro Dashboards* to educate our young investors on how to analyze the market. The Sr. Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center will also be a welcome addition to our already expansive athletic complex. Filled with state-of-the-art exercise equipment, the student fitness center will be a very welcome sight flanking our already excellent track and field athletic facility.

So as you turn the pages of this edition of *The Gael*: if you are a parent - be excited for your child; if an alum - be proud of your alma mater; and if you are a prospective student – be enthusiastic about becoming a Gael!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark G. Vaillancourt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rev. Mark G. Vaillancourt, Ph.D.
President and Principal

Events at Kennedy Catholic

Golf Classic - Thursday, October 6, 2022
Open House - Sunday, October 16 and
Wednesday, October 26, 2022
Auction - TBD, 2022

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UPDATE YOUR ALUMNI RECORDS

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Saint Mary's Academy at KCPS Opens Fall 2022

"Let the children come to me." Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School has always championed the Catholic education model of accepting all children and putting them first in any consideration. To maintain the strength of the chain and avoid any broken links, KCPS now offers a middle school education to area students that will tie seamlessly into their high school experience when they attend KCPS.

The first class of the new Saint Mary's Academy will start in September 2022. According to its Mission Statement, "St. Mary's Academy is a school where Christ is taught, His Blessed Mother is revered, and the young who enter through its doors are inspired. It is the determined effort of our school's faculty and staff to form our young people into future leaders of tomorrow by actively living our faith, teaching the truth and loving one another in the way of the Lord Jesus. This is the call of the Gospel and the sacred mission of our school."

At St. Mary's Academy, students will explore "all that is true, good and beautiful within the mysteries of the Catholic faith, the Sacraments, church history and Revelation expressed in both the New and Old Testaments." Students will also

receive a full academic curriculum in mathematics, the sciences, humanities, robotics and a second language, all taught by teachers devoted to their growth and development. The program of studies will fulfill middle school educational standards of the state Board of Regents. SMA students will also have extracurricular

activities designed for them, such as STEM projects, the performing arts and athletics including cross country, soccer, basketball, volleyball and track & field.

The Academy will reside on the KCPS campus in Somers and will serve 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. Opening in September 2022, the Academy will be housed in a dedicated wing of the school building to allow for a safe and welcoming environment.

The Dean of Saint Mary's Academy is Ms. Emily Machado. Ms. Machado earned a B.S. from the University of Scranton, as well as an M.S. in Education from Boston College in the Lynch School of Education. Additionally, Father

Mark Vaillancourt, President/Principal of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School, leads the academy; Kyle MacDonald, KCPS Director of College Placement and senior guidance counselor, serves as Director of Curriculum; and Courtney Meyerer





serves as Chief Coordinator. Meyerer, currently the freshman and sophomore Guidance Counselor and a track & field coach at KCPS, has experience in both elementary education and curriculum development, and in partnership with Kyle MacDonald, the two have undertaken the necessary research, asset acquisition and design of the SMA curriculum.

"By transforming Kennedy Catholic into a 6-12 school, we are continuing to pave the way for a greater depth of learning for more age groups, which allows students to not only focus and grow in their academic studies, but also grow in extracurriculars with the empowerment of Christ motivating them," said Meyerer. She noted that there will also be two vice principals



and dedicated SMA faculty, and tuition will be \$7,500 per year.

MacDonald noted that families can schedule a visit and entrance exam with Meyerer at courtney.meyerer@kennedy-catholic.org. "We are creating an advanced course of studies that will dovetail with our current high school offerings. Math will lead to Algebra I in 8th grade, and science will lead to Living Environment in 8th grade, which will prepare students to take AP Biology in their freshman year. We've also leveraged our partnerships with four existing K-8 schools who currently use our one-to-one iPad program to develop a set of e-textbooks and curriculum maps for our teachers. Currently, we are planning on having several of our high school faculty also teach at the 7th or 8th grade level," he explained about the curriculum.

"St. Mary's Academy will give families another choice for a superior Catholic education, and experience our commitment to academic excellence within a faith-based environment," said Father Vaillancourt. He is also pastor of St. Mary's parish in nearby Katonah, and noted that the new middle school was named St. Mary's Academy as an acknowledgement of the parish's involvement in establishing Kennedy Catholic, originally known as St. Mary's School in Katonah, NY, in 1928 by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion. "St. Mary's Academy offers

the same time-tested Catholic school curriculum and values-centered education as Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School. Students will also be eligible to take high school level courses in the 8th grade," said Father Vaillancourt. "With challenging academics, state-of-the-art facilities and a beautiful campus, St. Mary's Academy offers a great opportunity for grade 6-8 students to be part of the KCPS educational experience," he noted.

John F. Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School and the St. Mary's Academy share one common mission: preparing students for a successful future by working to develop mind, body and spirit. There is so much faith in its mission that Ted McCourtney has generously established the St. Mary's Scholarship Fund with a donation of \$25,000. Mr. McCourtney serves as the Finance Committee Chairman for St. Mary's of

Assumption in Katonah.

For more information and to apply, go to www.kennedy-catholic.org/st-marys-academy/

Prospective SMA students spent the day at Kennedy Catholic for a STEM Day. Organized by Mr. Bruder, Ms. Meyerer, Ms. Jenkins and the entire Science Department, the day kicked off with a robotics demonstration and rotation of fun science experiments and concluded with fishing, kick ball and a bar-beque on the Kennedy lawn. A great group of Kennedy Catholic volunteers led the SMA students through their activities and showed them what it means to be a Gael.

The Student Becomes the Teacher

Bethany Mahoney

'12, KCPS English Teacher

It was because of impactful teachers, inspiring nuns and a safe environment with a beautiful campus that Bethany Mahoney decided to both attend Kennedy Catholic as a student and return to teach.

"I chose to attend Kennedy for high school so I could continue to learn in a small, Catholic environment in which I felt safe. After visiting other schools, I felt instantly at home at Kennedy the minute I walked through the door for Open House. The views were also an added bonus!" she said.

After graduating KCPS a decade ago, Bethany returned to teach English after graduating magna cum laude from Mount Saint Mary College in 2016 where she majored in English with Adolescence Education with a minor in Psychology. She was also a Ralph and Aquinas scholar and a member of the education international honor society Kappa Delta Pi and English international honor society Sigma Tau Delta. Bethany earned her Master of Arts degree in English from SUNY New Paltz in 2019 while working at Kennedy teaching Theology.

Another significant reason Bethany attended Kennedy Catholic and works here today is because of the love she has for her faith. "Being able to go on retreats, attend daily theology classes and participate in monthly Masses as a student was beneficial to me," she said. Bethany also liked having many sisters present at the school.

"I still remember Sr. Mary's theology class – I always loved her anecdotes and humor. To



this day, Sr. Mary tells the story of how she asked me to become a nun on the steps of the altar at St. Patrick's Cathedral after our senior Mass. I also remember my English classes with great fondness as well as our retreats and how proud I was when I got my class ring," Bethany recalls fondly.

Her teachers at Kennedy Catholic also influenced this faith-filled English teacher. "Many of the wonderful colleagues I work with today are the same teachers who inspired me to become an educator. While many teachers impacted me, the English department (especially Sue Willis, Moira Normile and Carol Morris) left the biggest impression on me. It was through my English classes, especially sophomore year, that I began to realize that I can learn about history through literature," Bethany said. "The inspiration that I received from my teachers, as well as the family-like atmosphere here, were leading factors in my decision to return as a teacher," she added.

Bethany loves teaching and working with her Kennedy family. Being able to incorporate history, theology and faith in her English classes is important to her, and she appreciates being able to do so, and it is why she teaches here. "I always feel supported by Father Vaillancourt in my faith, and I feel supported here in my pro-life views," Bethany said. This year, she took students to the March of Life in Washington, D.C.

Bethany intends to start a pro-life club at Kennedy Catholic, and to have guest speakers on Theology of the Body as well as organize other Respect Life events in the future. Bethany believes that Kennedy Catholic strengthened her Catholic foundation and, because of that, she continues to be involved in faith-related groups in the community and tries to inspire young people to follow and be active in their faith. "My goal is to show students that all stages of life are important (including their own). I have always been a fairly strong Catholic, but working

at Kennedy, and teaching theology, really increased my faith even more," she said.

Additionally, Bethany runs the Caritas (charity) club in which students participate in various service projects like making Christmas cards for the VA hospital, sponsoring a clothing drive, making bookmarks for the local library and conducting baby clothing/diaper and Baby Bottle Coin drives.

"My students are important in my decision to be a teacher here. They love to share their accomplishments with me. I tell them that they are soldiers of Christ. Honestly, it is such a joy to see them grow. Some even told me that I really inspired them and made an impact on their high school experience," Bethany said.

Bethany hopes to continue to inspire the students to be active in their faith, and instill in them a love of

learning and a love/respect for themselves. "All students are supposed to be tabernacles of/for Christ and so I hope that they do feel loved and appreciated, because they are here at Kennedy Catholic," she said. "I also want them to be ready for college. Although many seniors may not always be jumping for joy about writing a research paper in my class and using EBSCO, these are skills that they will benefit from in college. In fact,



of the Kennedy community," she said happily. That includes receiving the Stephen Murphy Memorial Teacher Award at graduation this year. Kennedy Catholic is always happy, and blessed, to have students return. Other teachers and staff here that are former students include Moira Tolan '12, Physical Education; Elizabeth Vlattas '14, Biology; and Noelle Torre '14, Administration.

compared to many students from other high schools that I went to college with, I felt more prepared academically. Kennedy truly prepared me to be successful in college and beyond."

To remind them about how important reading is, Bethany gives this quote to her students: "You can learn about history and other ways of life through literature." "I really want my students to leave my class having an appreciation for literature and realize that English is not just about grammar. I want them to be able to recognize the 'big' names in literature and be exposed to famous works. I also want them to see the connection

between literature and their own lives," Bethany said.

Her students are also learning a little about wedding planning, as Bethany is getting married in August 2022, and will return in the Fall as Mrs. Cerino. "Over the past several years, I have achieved so many milestones while being a part

of the Kennedy community," she said happily. That includes receiving the Stephen Murphy Memorial Teacher Award at graduation this year.

Kennedy Catholic is always happy, and blessed, to have students return. Other teachers and staff here that are former students include Moira Tolan '12, Physical Education; Elizabeth Vlattas '14, Biology; and Noelle Torre '14, Administration.

Class of 1974 Planning 50th Reunion

It's hard for them to believe, but nearly fifty years have passed since the Kennedy Catholic Class of 1974 graduated. "Thank goodness for social media," explained Donna Herrle '74. "I've always kept in touch with a few of my closest high school friends, but through Facebook I tracked down a couple of other classmates and it just snowballed" into renewing old friendships and hosting two mini-reunions at her Cape Cod vacation home.

It was at those mini-reunions the classmates started talking about making a real special occasion for their graduation's 50th anniversary. So they formed a committee and began meeting. To date, they've been able to track down over 80 of their classmates, and plan to continue the search for more. In addition to sending out surveys to get feedback on the type of event favored by their fellow alumni, they'll be inviting fellow classmates to mini "Zoom Reunions" in the weeks and months leading up to the actual reunion. If you're a member of the class of 1974, or are friends with or a sibling of one, please spread the word and be on the lookout for more news to follow! For now, you can follow the plans on the class Facebook page, or reach out directly to Donna Herrle at herrledonna@gmail.com.

Class of 1973 Gather at the Beach

Claude Wallace '73 and Mary (Hand) Lee pulled a group of Kennedy alumni together for a week in Long Beach Island, NJ, to celebrate their 60th birthdays, and everyone had such a great time they did a repeat for their 65th birthdays (delayed 1 year due to COVID). Pictured here are Rich Koke! '73, Diana Fallon, Ron Fallon '73, Sy Lynch, Mike Lynch '73, Mary (Hand) Lee, Claude Wallace '73, Michelle (LePere) Sterling '77, Ed Sterling '73, Mike Collins '73, Mary Collins, Kathy Komar, John Komar '73, Debbie (Buckley) LaPerch '75, (in front) Dan Prunty '73 and Bill LaPerch '73. Kathy and John Komar supplied the class alumni shirts with the Kennedy logo from '73.



KENNEDY ALUMNI

Captain Jason Davin '11 was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his hard work on the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.



Two former Kennedy Catholic lacrosse players from the Class of 2021 faced off this season in a match: PJ Wu (Northeastern) and Jack McInerney (UConn). Despite the competition, they're still great friends!



Michael Oddo '21 finished his freshman year in the rigorous Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service with a 4.0 GPA. He reports that he has also taken on many gratifying leadership endeavors, including being selected to serve on the Editorial board of *The Hoya*, Georgetown's oldest and largest school newspaper, and was chosen for a position in the Georgetown University Student Investment Fund (GUSIF). GUSIF is Georgetown's largest undergraduate student-run investment fund, managing more than \$1M on behalf of the Georgetown Endowment (and has only a four percent acceptance rate). Additionally, Michael serves on the board of a financial organization, is a member of two club sports teams, and has interned at a private equity fund in Washington, D.C. He notes that he still attends Mass regularly, as his Catholic faith is still important to him. Michael was the Invocation Speaker at the Kennedy Catholic graduation ceremony last year. "Throughout this busy year, I have had the opportunity to reflect on my experiences at Kennedy Catholic, as well as your support and encouragement for which I am extremely grateful," he said in a message to KC staff.

Omolara Akinfemiwa '17 will attend the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. She was accepted into eight dental schools before deciding to attend Ivy League UPENN, and said that it was God who guided her decision. "I want to pursue dentistry to diminish the healthcare inequalities amongst underrepresented groups in this country. Proper dental healthcare is linked to socioeconomic status, and I want to do my best to provide care for all, no matter their socioeconomic background," said Omolara. After attending Kennedy Catholic, Omolara graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University, where she double-majored in neuroscience and psychology and was a scholar in the Renee Crown Honors Program. "I want to challenge the 'one size fits all' model that a majority of healthcare providers prescribe; I will be a dentist who customizes the care of each and every patient. And I want to inspire future generations of children of color through dentistry, and help them overcome the constant doubt they face," said Omolara.

"My plan is to learn from all of the disciplines while in dental school, and see which specialty God calls me to. I eventually want to end up with multiple practices and use the income from these practices to start educational programs for youth from underrepresented communities." She noted that she does not believe that she would be where she is today without the education she received at KCPS, and that would not have been possible without the sacrifice of her parents. "Without Christ, nothing would be possible. My faith is extremely



important to me and it gets stronger with age. The faculty and staff at KCPS always set high standards for success, and that was the environment I was able to best thrive in. The teachers I had at Kennedy Catholic upheld a standard of excellence and it made me want to work ten times harder to do well, not only in my academics but in all of my extracurriculars, inside and out of school."



Anna Pawlowski '15 has opened her own business! The specialty at Phat Pastries is larger-than-life, extravagant and delicious custom-made cookies. Pawlowski helped send off the Class of 2022 with custom cookies at their Senior Breakfast. Follow her on Instagram @phatpastries.

Fitness Goals Almost Met: Student Fitness Center Update

Almost everyone has fitness goals, but in recent years Kennedy Catholic has had a big one: to build a state-of-the-art, competitive-quality student fitness center.

Last Fall, KCPS announced that such a new facility was in the works, thanks in part to a generous donation challenge from Mark Girolamo '71. Mark offered to match any donation up to \$300,000 dollar-for-dollar to build the facility, christened the Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center. Sister Meehan taught and coached track at KCPS for nearly 50 years, and everyone involved thought it was an appropriate way to honor her service and dedication to Kennedy Catholic students.

Now, only a few short months later, the Kennedy Catholic family has stepped up to see the student fitness center go from an inspired vision to an energized reality. Thanks to donors like Bill '73 and Debbie '75 LaPerch and many others, we have reached nearly 60% of our financial goal. In addition to his gift, Bill arranged to have a corporate match made. Perhaps you and your employer can do the same to help us reach 100% of our goal!

The brand new, 2,300 square foot building (situated in front of the convent, on the hill overlooking the turf field and track) will house new gym equipment for students and student-athletes to work out with to achieve a healthy lifestyle. In addition, "athletic teams will be able to conduct the weight training necessary to successfully compete in today's world of high school sports," as Mark Girolamo said in his appeal. This new

student fitness center will replace the small room currently in use. Due to the commitment of Kennedy Catholic, Mark and other dedicated volunteers, the center is beginning to take shape.

In early May, the planning committee chose an architect with the experience, credentials and creativity to bring the vision for the student fitness center to life. Next steps include finalizing the architectural drawings, selecting a contractor and working through various zoning approvals with the town. The plan is to break ground this summer, with the center on track to open its doors to students in Spring 2023.

Committee members working to make this happen include KCPS alumni Mark Girolamo '71, Debbie LaPerch '75, Terrence Yanni '80, John Arminio '83, Thomas McCabe '95, Luciana Shortal '96 and Devin Brown '06. Father Mark Vaillancourt, President/Principal, and staff members Fred Compton, Director of Advancement, and Noelle Torre '14, Director of Communications, are also instrumental, as is

Richard Davin, KCPS Parent and Board of Trustees member.

Luciana, along with the rest of the committee and school staff,



believes that the student fitness center is an important addition to the campus as KCPS continues strengthening its position as a premier, independent Catholic preparatory high school. "The site is physically well-positioned overlooking the track and football field and promises to stand out when KCPS is hosting other teams. Additionally, we think the clear dedication to athletics, which complements the curriculum, will impress prospective students and parents evaluating the school," she noted.

The committee would love to have more Class Captains involved in the project, particularly representing classes from the '90s through 2000s. If any alumni are interested, please contact Fred Compton at fred.compton@kennedycatholic.org.

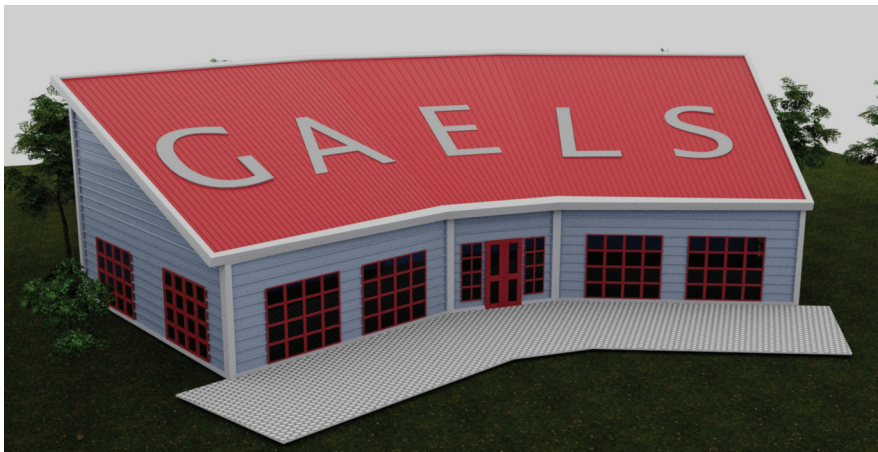
Luciana was excited about the project after reading Mark's appeal letter and contacted the school about getting involved. "As a student, I was a year-round member of the track team and a fine arts student. Sister Janet taught me everything from summer training (two-a-days!) for cross

country to charcoal drawing and oil painting. Reflecting on Sister Janet's dedication to the Catholic faith, the track program she built and the arts, I admire her success in leading a life that truly centered on her values and inspiring generations of young people in these areas," Luciana explained about why she got involved.

"The student fit-

ness center meets a key dimension of shaping well-rounded students in Kennedy Catholic's mission to lay the foundation for life-long learning and a healthy lifestyle," she said. "We envision it becoming a hub of activity and excitement for student-athletes as they train with their teammates. They will gain physical conditioning, motivation and friendships that they will carry onto the field and beyond," she added.

But KCPS is only about 60% of the way to reaching the fundraising goal. There have been hundreds of donations from alumni, parents and friends of KCPS, but a little more is needed. "We would love for every alumnus to have a hand in making this possible for KCPS students. The student fitness center is just one aspect of the future vision of the school with much more to come! No gift is too small in supporting KCPS on this journey," Luciana said. If you would like to help, please contact advancement@kennedycatholic.org.



Why I Support KCPS: The Morris Family

Carol and Bill Morris are big supporters of Catholic education and of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School in particular. Long after their three children graduated from KCPS and Carol retired from teaching English at the school after 12 years, the Morris family is still a pillar in the Kennedy Catholic community.

"When my youngest daughter was a junior at KCPS, I started teaching at Kennedy. I was able to see the school from a new and fresh perspective — that of an educator. I saw how dedicated the administration, faculty and staff were, and that they really enjoyed their jobs and their interactions with each other and with the students. I saw how hard administration worked to stay current and on the cutting edge with technology and new methods of teaching. Most of all, I saw how blessed I was to be a part of it," Carol said.

As parents, the Morris' saw how the faith-filled education their children received prepared them for college and beyond. All three have gone on to receive postgraduate degrees and are successful in their chosen careers. William '01 graduated from Boston University with a B.A. in History and Political Science and from Hofstra University with a Juris Doctor degree; Shannon '02 graduated from Mount Saint Mary College with a B.S. in Human Services and from California Coast University with an M.S. in Psychology; and Megan '08 graduated from Mount Saint Mary College with a B.S. in Nursing and from Mercy College with an M.S. in Nursing Administration.

Today, the couple continues to support KCPS by attending fundraising events, donating items to auctions and bidding on items.

"We all know that parochial schools rely on fundraising and Kennedy Catholic is no different. My husband and I consider it our duty to help support the school that did so much for our family," she said. "One of the ways we do this is by donating items for the annual auction and attending and bidding on items. Over the years, we have donated various electronics and other products. We have also had the winning bids on many items; this year's winnings included four premium Yankee tickets and a week at a beautiful cottage in Limerick, Ireland. We are looking forward

to both, most especially our first trip to Ireland, where we will celebrate our 42nd wedding anniversary in October," Carol added.

"Even though I have retired from teaching, and our children are grown with families of their own, Kennedy Catholic will always hold a special place in our hearts and we will continue to support it however we can," Carol said. If you would like to support KCPS, either through monetary donations, donating items for events, attending special events or in other ways, please reach out to advancement@kennedycatholic.org

Ways You Can Help Kennedy Catholic



Brian and Shannon Morris Zawiski, Megan Morris, Carol and Bill Morris

Founded by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion in 1928, with the current high school campus built in 1966, Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School continues to provide students with a high-quality, modern college-prep education complemented by four years of theology to learn about God and His church. Students are well prepared not only for college, but for a suc-

cessful life. There are several ways that you can help guarantee that all students who desire an excellent, value-centered education and daily life with God and Jesus can receive these gifts from Kennedy Catholic:

The **Kennedy Catholic Annual Fund** is an easy and effective way to help us provide for whatever the school may need to operate and grow its facilities

and programs.

The **Kennedy Catholic Scholarship Fund** allows students in need to attend our school and reap all the benefits of a Catholic high school education. All donations to this fund go directly to scholarships for students.

To donate to either fund, go to www.kennedycatholic.org/giving/. Attend, donate to and/or sponsor our special events, such as the **Golf Tournament** and **Annual Auction**. Contact advancement@kennedycatholic.org for more information on how to help.

Shop AmazonSmile and name Kennedy Catholic as your charity of choice. AmazonSmile donates .05% of your purchases to Kennedy Catholic.



Irish Vacation Cottage Prize

You Make Our Events Special – *and We Thank You*



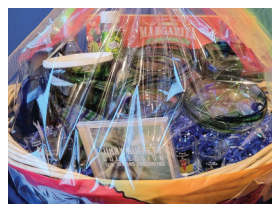
The faculty, staff and students of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's special events that raised funds to help KCPS provide scholarships, programming and upgraded facilities and support Catholic education at our school. Every dollar helps current and future Gaels.

The Golf Classic on September 30 at the Mahopac Golf Club raised \$30,000. On a beautiful day, 120 participants enjoyed a game of golf, breakfast, dinner, auctions and raffles.

The 40th Annual Auction on December 4 raised \$57,000. The event, themed "A Night in Casablanca," featured live music, tapas, drinks, raffles and of course the famous live auction.

Without our gracious donors, sponsors, volunteers and event participants, none of this would have been possible. Everyone at KCPS sends a heart-felt thank you to all those that support Kennedy Catholic's mission and students.

If you would like to help in any way, including volunteering, donating items or funds, become a sponsor, attend the events, or just learn more, please contact the Advancement Office at advancement@kennedycatholic.org or go to www.kennedycatholic.org/giving.





Congratulations to the *CLASS OF* *2022!*



On June 4, 140 seniors graduated from Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School. Megan Flaherty was named the Valedictorian, Peter Desimini earned the title of Salutatorian and Lauren Campise gave the Invocation Prayer. Everyone at Kennedy Catholic wishes each and every graduate a successful, healthy and happy college experience and a long, blessed life rooted in faith. Please remember to keep in touch at ADVANCEMENT@KENNEDY CATHOLIC.ORG, follow us on social media, come to alumni events and visit often!









Once again, the graduates of KCPS have made everyone proud! They contributed a combined 24,000 hours of service to their communities. The average SAT for the Class of 2022 was 1186, and 100% are going on to college. The seniors earned \$30.4 million in merit-aid from colleges, an average \$216,000 per student. Our students were accepted to top tier colleges, including:

- American University
- Barnard College
- Binghamton University
- Boston College
- Boston University
- Bucknell University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Colgate University
- College of the Holy Cross
- CUNY Macaulay Honors College
- Emerson College
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lafayette College
- New York University
- Northeastern University
- Northwestern University
- Stanford University
- Swarthmore College
- Tulane University
- University of Michigan
- University of Richmond
- University of Rochester
- University of Virginia
- Villanova University



Did you know that Westchester Magazine ranked KCPS in the top ten, or #8 out of 21, private high schools in Westchester County for 2022? And that Private School Review also rated Kennedy Catholic high in the Top Ranked Westchester County Private Schools list for 2022 (#10 out of 40)? See why at www.kennedycatholic.org.

The Sound of (Beautiful) Music and The Show (Always) Goes On at KCPS

It is essential for well-rounded students to have ways to express themselves and discover and develop their talents. At Kennedy Catholic, the Fine Arts program gives them multiple opportunities to do so.

The Kennedy Catholic band holds live Christmas and Spring concerts. Pre-pandemic, the band also performed for Open Houses and expects to continue that again. Concerts are unique. "For each concert program I select music that is varied in style. With each style comes different technical musical challenges for my students," said Mr. Chris Melito, band leader and music faculty. "For example, for the Christmas concert we performed a medley of Christmas pieces along with one based on 'The Little Drummer Boy.' We also performed a work that uses themes from three Spanish composers entitled 'Images of Spain' as well as a traditional concert band composition called 'Encanto' (different from the movie)," he noted.

For the Spring concert, the band performed the "El Capitan" march composed by John Philip Sousa, the Irish Folk Melody "Down By The Sally Gardens," an arrangement of the "Finale from the FireBird Suite" by Igor Stravinsky, as well as a Latin-style jazz number called "Spain" by late famous jazz pianist Chick Corea. Several solo passages featured Cara Curtain '22 playing French horn, Charles Straub '23 playing tenor saxophone and Andrew Bentivenga '24 playing the drum set.

"The programs always intend to offer a variety of styles for the

entertainment value of the audience while giving students technical challenges to further their musical expertise," explained Melito.

Something Great Happens With "Something Rotten"

The 2022 Kennedy Catholic Spring Musical was "Something Rotten," which gave students the opportunity to show off their acting, comedic and singing talents as well as stage management, costume design and marketing skills.

Director and choreographer Barbara Rue said that there are several considerations taken into account when choosing the right show. "We consider the number of roles in the production so that

many students can participate," she said, adding that one of the most important things to consider is "What will the students learn?"

When producing a musical, for students it's not just about auditioning for and learning their roles; it's also about planning and preparing for costumes, set designs, rehearsals and marketing the show. Encouraging students to try out and get involved is paramount. "During

rehearsals, we are friendly, encouraging and ready to see what a student can bring to the character. This is a non-judgmental environment that is a safe haven for the actors to take a chance," Rue said. As for casting, she said that "Much consideration is focused on how well characters fit with each other, whether it be a couple or group. We do not cast according to seniority. Whether you are a freshman or a senior has no bearing on how you will be cast; who is best for each role is always the primary consideration."





Lead roles were played by Michael Di Graci '22 (*Nick Bottom*), Joseph Beisswenger '24 (*Nigel Bottom*), Joanna Marie Ciron '22 (*Portia*), Maysea McShane '22 (*Brother Jeremiah*), Carolyn Visconti '23 (*Shylock*), Cynthia Piazza '23 (*Lord Clapham/Judge*), James Horan '23 (*Nostradamus*), Joseph DiFalco '22 (*William Shakespeare*), Sarah Coughlan '25 (*Bea*) and Connor Torrey '23 (*Minstrel*).

In total, the cast of "Something Rotten" consisted of 21 "awesome, versatile, hard working student thespians," as well as the stage crew of ten led by Lauren Campise '22 and Elizabeth Harnett '22. The costume crew of ten led by Mrs. Anette Di Grandi and Mrs. Sally Cartaya was invaluable in executing the many quick costume changes that were vital to the show's success. Student and classically trained violinist Peggy Johnson '22 played alongside the professional musicians.

"The wonderful musical theater production team is truly a team and I am deeply grateful for the incredible work they all do. We strive to put on a good solid production but our main focus is always what is in the

best interests of the students," said Rue. "They call it the magic of theater; it's not magic at all. It's the hard work of many, culminating in a production where everyone did their job day in and day out to the best of their ability. The real value in a musical theater program is the myriad of benefits gained by the students who participate, as well as the student body that goes to see the show. Accountability, collaboration, teamwork, cooperation, improved communication skills, memorization, concentration and self-esteem are a few of the positive benefits the students receive," she added.

Rue expressed gratitude for everyone involved in making the production a success, including the custodial staff, her assistant Joanna Ciron '22, "cheerleaders" Sister Mary McCaffrey, Mrs. Moira Normile and Mr. Chico Generoso; Musical Director/Conductor Ms. Chloe Bodt, production team members Mrs. Ines Wilhelm-Boston, Mrs. Maria Abbamont and Ms. Noelle Torre; technical and set designer Mr. Matt Tieber; and supporters Mr. Fred Compton, Mr. Steve Schmidt and Father Mark Vaillancourt.

The KCPS Bell Choir Club (pictured below) meets weekly starting in October to learn Christmas Carols. Any student interested can participate, as note reading is not required. Performances at Somers Paramount Nursing Home are a favorite tradition.



President's Dinner Honors KCPS Christian Service Leaders

The 2022 President's Dinner celebrated those individuals, faculty and students who are true examples of Christian service and testaments to the values of Catholic education.

On May 26, these Christian leaders were honored at the annual President's Dinner at Villa Barone Hilltop Manor in Mahopac in front of their peers and admirers. Father Mark Vaillancourt, President and

Teacher of the Year was Mrs. Ines Wilhelm-Boston, Fine Arts teacher and Fine Arts Department Chair, chosen by her fellow faculty for providing exemplary education and service to her students this past year.

Last but not least, the Students of Excellence awards were given to the Kennedy Catholic seniors who are considered to be "strong and committed Christian leaders who are determined to make a difference for Christ in our world and in the lives of others" and best represent the



Principal of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School, noted that "our honorees tonight are tried and true champions of Catholic education. Their dedication to molding the future leaders of our country is a blessing worth celebrating."

The Lux Christi Award was presented to Mr. Michael J. Deegan, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, for his dedication to Catholic education and continuing contributions to Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School.

The Divine Compassion Award was presented to Sister Mary McCaffrey for her strong and constant dedication to Christian service and Kennedy Catholic students.

The Sr. Christopher Principal's Award was presented to Dr. Rober Maher P'98, '05 for his leadership in developing the Saint Mary's Academy plan to join Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School in September 2022.



qualities of courage, compassion, service and academic accomplishment. The students honored were: Valeria Acierno, Brianna Bourke, Lauren Campise, Abigail Caridi, Jared Crane, Peter Desimini, Joseph DiFalco, Megan Flaherty, Edward Galvao, Luke Gerstner, Ethan

Harianto, Elizabeth Hartnett, Oriana Makar, Charlotte Martabano, Philip Mascia, Owen McInerney, Frank Muscarella, Veronica Platt, Melissa Rial, Andrew Savino, Dylan Sy, Clare Traynor, Kevin Uriarte and Ella Walko.

The entire Kennedy Catholic community recognizes and thanks all the awardees for their selfless dedication to past, current and future KCPS and Saint Mary's Academy students in their journey to receive an outstanding academic and faith-based Catholic education.

Special thanks to Mr. Rick and Mrs. Rosemary Davin P '05, '07, '11, '13 for their hard work and help in making the President's Dinner a success.



Robotics Team Sweeps the Season's Awards on the Way to Nationals



Once again the amazing KCPS Robotics Team, the reigning 2021 Southern New York State Champions, won multiple awards in various tournaments this year. The three teams of 14 students, coached by parents Andrei and Jennifer Achim, won eight awards in six regional tournaments combined during the 2021-22 season that recognized their robots' design excellence as well as sportsmanship, programming and driving. The Gaels even made it to the prestigious VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas in May, where Teams

teams during the season. Starting from scratch with just parts and their imagination, they built three well-engineered, innovative robots that allowed the three teams to compete in the various tournaments.

Along the way to the World Championship, the budding engineers won Tournament Champions and Tournament Finalists honors, a Design Award for an exemplary robot design, strategy and team professionalism; a Sportsmanship Award for earning the respect and admiration of the volunteers and other teams at the event; an Amaze Award for building an amazing, high-scoring robot that demonstrates overall quality; a Build Award for building a well-crafted and constructed robot; a Skills Champion award for the best driving and pro-



A and B won their first two matches, and Team B won the Energy Award for their extraordinary enthusiasm and Team A was ranked 6 out of 82 teams in their division.

Overall the students competed against 800 of the best robotics teams from around the world at the World Championship, and against 10,000 high school robotics



gramming; and, at the Southern New York State Championship, Team A won the Create Award for demonstrating a highly creative design process and engineering solution. This award qualified them to go to the World Championship.

For these competitions, the students design, operate and drive robots that, in part, launch discs into goals on a 12' by 12' specially configured field. To learn more and see a YouTube video that explains everything, go to www.vexrobotics.com/v5.

Kennedy Catholic has a strong commitment to STEAM education, and is proud of the students' hard work and commitment.

Congratulations to the Robotics Team members:

Team A - Captain Matthew Achim '24, Lazaro Hidalgo '25, John Pollack '24, Corbin Rosario '23 and Deonna Shapley '24
Team B - Captain Bart Casabona '23, Lucas Hung '24, Patrick O'Connor '25 and Christina Philips '24

Team C - Captain Gabriel Hidalgo '23, Lyla McKee '25, Bea Muraca '25, Edoh Ogbue '24 and Brenna Rosario '25

Spiritual Life at KCPS

Learning and Living the Teachings of Christ

Kennedy Catholic students' spiritual life and theology instruction are as important as their academic learning. An essential part of being a KC Gael is giving back to the community and living Christ's message of love.

Once again students organized several drives to provide food, clothing, toys, baby items and more to local organizations that support children and families facing hard times. Through the generosity of Kennedy Catholic classmates and their families, items were collected and donated to the Putnam Valley Community Food Pantry, Community Cares of Katonah, Toys for Tots, Maria Fareri Children's Hospital and Birthright. They also gave of themselves very personally, as students, parents and faculty donated blood for the New York Blood Center at KC's Annual Blood Drive.

During Pro-Life Month, English teacher Ms. Bethany Mahoney organized the Baby Bottle Coin drive for Birthright. She also chaperoned five students, along with Mr. Kyle MacDonald, Director of College Placement, and Father Matt Breslin on a trip to Washington, D.C., for the March of Life on January 21. The KCPS group went with parishioners from St. Patrick's Church in Yorktown and met up with a few alumni and people representing the Archdiocese of NY and participated together in the March. Afterwards, the group took part in a private Mass at the Basilica in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel. "We hope to have more students attend in the future when pandemic concerns are less severe, but even just one student can make a difference in the fight for life," said Mahoney. Students who marched this year were Charles Kalbfus '22, Ryan Hanrahan '23, Kieran Sullivan '23, Mary Gilmore '24 and Tucker Romagnoli '25.

Mahoney is also working with the Center for Life of

Putnam/Westchester to bring the Respect Life message (for all stages of life) into the school and the community as a whole. She hopes to have guest speakers on Theology of the Body as well as organize other Respect Life events in the future at Kennedy Catholic.

All four classes attended religious retreats this year. For over a dozen years seniors have visited the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center in Garrison, NY, in the Fall. At the retreat Father Matthew Breslin and Sister Mary McCaffrey shared with the students how God called them to serve Him. Seniors made confession, visited the tomb of Father Paul (the society's founder), attended a Mass in the Chapel of Saint Francis and enjoyed a taco lunch.

Father Vaillancourt then gifted the seniors beautiful rosary beads, made by Ms. Wanda Perugini, each adorned with the school colors of red, white and blue. According to a Gael Winds article detailing the day by Keira Ferretti '22 and Charley Martabano '22, "All together, the seniors and teachers prayed the rosary in moving unison." They also quoted Sister Mary as saying to them, "What a tremendous opportunity we have at Kennedy! Every year each one of us 'goes apart and rests awhile' with our Lord. The seniors go to Graymoor for the day to strengthen our faith in our gracious God and look into ourselves to be the best person we can be. Knowledge is wisdom, wisdom is holiness, holiness is happiness and grace. How good God is to us."

The underclassmen also attended retreats that inspired them and rekindled interest in aspects of their faith. The junior retreat was held at nearby St. Joseph's Church. Since a large focus of that year is shifting towards the future with college, Father Breslin spoke with the junior class about vocations. "Each of us is given a vocation from God and we will only achieve true meaning, joy and peace in our lives if we live the



life God has planned for us; to run from this plan of His is to run from true joy. The Church says that there are four different types of vocations: married life, priesthood, religious life and consecrated single life. Each of us has been called by God to live one of these lives." Father Breslin shared his own story of how he recognized that God was calling him to be a priest.

The sophomore class retreat was held at St. Mary's Church in Katonah. The retreat emphasized how to love and honor God during our daily lives, and that God will always love you. Students were taught how to recognize and combat the challenges and temptations



Sacrament of Reconciliation, and were given time to reflect and to ask questions about their faith that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to ask.

in their spiritual lives so that they can live an authentic Catholic faith.

Freshmen also attended their retreat at St. Mary's. They discussed what it means to live as a Christian in today's world, and how God has a plan for them to not just be successful, but to be significant. Success is not all that there is to aspire to in life. Father Breslin shared stories about saints who, at young ages, also lived incredibly significant lives.

At all the retreats students attended Mass together and made the

Student-Athletes Excel on the Fields and Courts



Kennedy Catholic student-athletes excel in the classroom while beating personal goals, and opponents, on the fields and courts. The Gaels had an exciting year of successes while showing good sportsmanship and gratitude to the Lord, as well as to their parents and KCPS coaches and staff that saw to it that they could safely play live-action sports while the pandemic winds down.

Congratulations to the Gaels for these remarkable achievements:

Varsity Girls Volleyball won the League Championship title.

Varsity Girls Lacrosse won the City Championship and were undefeated in the league.

Varsity Boys Lacrosse won the State Championship title, winning eight games to become the undefeated League Champions as they went on to also win their 7th consecutive CHSAA Class A Championship with a season record of 14-4.

Varsity Softball won the CHSAA Tier 1 Division title.

Varsity Baseball, after being ranked Number 1 in the preseason, secured the Archdiocesan and 2022 CHSAA AA championships and finished their season with a 16-2 league record. Junior Adam Agresti and seniors Gary Gill-Hill, Louis Marinaro, Nick Mazzotta and Russell Hunter were

named to Lohud's "Nine Who Shine" watch list for boys baseball. Look out for full coverage of the 2022 Spring Baseball season in the next edition of the Gael, Fall 2022!

Girls Track won ten medals at the 16th Annual Westchester Catholic Girls Championship Meet. Freshmen Eleanor Brown and Caroline Arrigael took first place in 400m hurdles and in the 1500m event respectively.



Signing for the Next Season/Chapter

Several KCPS student-athletes signed to play the sports they love and excel at in the colleges and universities they will attend. Kennedy Catholic is proud and thrilled that they can bring their talents and hard-work ethic to enhance the teams they will be joining. Congratulations to:

Ryan Boyd will play NCAA Division III baseball at Utica College.

Anna Cascapera will play NCAA Division I volleyball at the University of Connecticut.

Eddie Galvao will play NCAA Division III baseball at Skidmore College.

Gary Gill-Hill will play NCAA Division I baseball at Wake Forest University.

Russell Hunter will play NCAA Division I baseball at Hofstra University.

Brendan Kenneally will play NCAA Division II baseball at Adelphi University.

Michael Kocovic will play NCAA Division III baseball at Utica College.

Louis Marinaro will play NCAA Division I baseball at St. John's College.

Nick Mazzotta will play NCAA Division I baseball at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

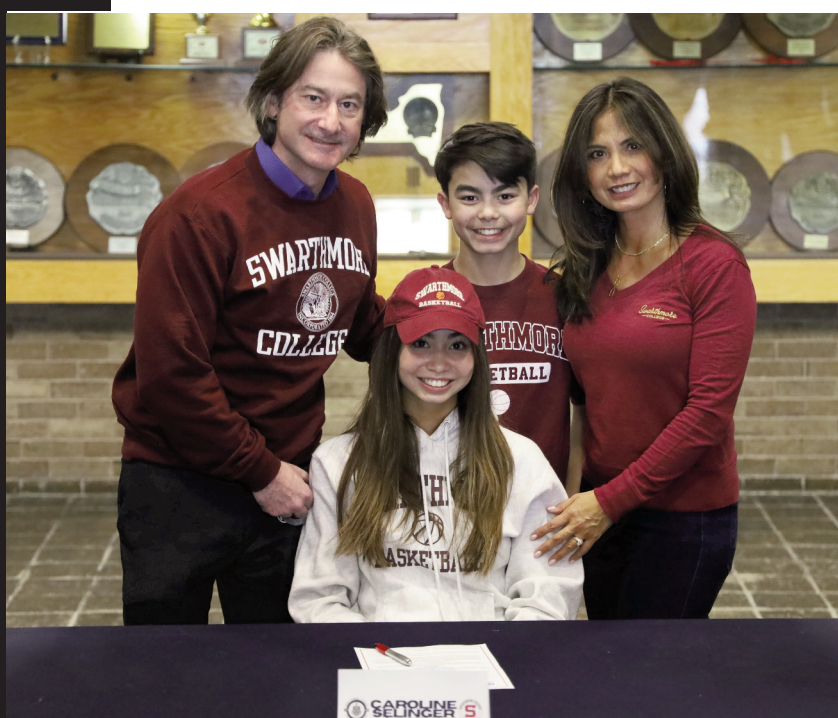
Pierson McGinnis will play NCAA Division III baseball at Bard College.

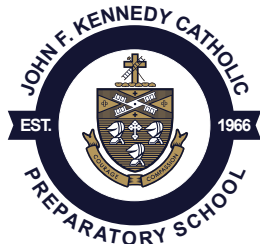
Nick Mittag will play NCAA Division III lacrosse at Springfield College.

Kayla Raucci will play NCAA Division III field hockey at Hartwick College.

Carolin Selinger will play NCAA Division III basketball at Swarthmore College.

Denis Ward will play baseball at Ave Maria University, part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division II.





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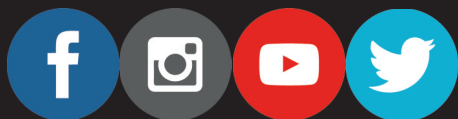
**SAVE & SHARE
THESE DATES FOR
IMPORTANT
UPCOMING
KENNEDY CATHOLIC
EVENTS!**

**Golf Outing: Thursday,
October 6, 2022**

**Open House: Sunday,
October 16 from 1-4
p.m. & Wednesday,
October 26 from
7-9 p.m.**

Auction: TBD

To learn about these events
and more, visit our website:
KennedyCatholic.org/calendar



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