

KENNEDY CATHOLIC PREPARATORY SCHOOL ♦ SAINT MARY'S ACADEMY

THE GAE

WINTER 2023 VOLUME 35

Sister Mary Celebrates 75 Years In Service To The Lord

*KCPS Rejoices In
All That
She Does For
The Students*

Also Inside:

Ayden Sanchez '20
Climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro

Alumni & Reunion News

Baseball Steals a Title

**Thank You To Our Donors
and Supporters**

*Chris Berardo (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 prayers for God's blessings as we have begun another year of grace. Time and again our faculty, staff and student body have shown resilience in the face of adversity, and creativity when encountering opportunity. Just look at the success of the Class of 2022 and their college acceptances, and 2023 is poised to do even greater things!

As you are well aware, Kennedy Catholic is in its inaugural year of our all new St. Mary's Academy. We are excited about this new venture in Catholic education and are very happy to have this new Academy as part of our student body. Together with our Prep staff, our Academy team will work hard to close the "pandemic educational gap" that has left many of our young people educationally behind as the Academy prepares them to take on the academic rigors of a Kennedy Catholic college preparatory education.



Of course, we also continue to excel in sports, with our boys varsity baseball team winning the very coveted Archdiocesan Championship. We are proud too of Coach Bob Fletcher and his induction into the New York State Baseball Hall of Fame, sharing the podium with such baseball greats as Yankee '78 MVP Bucky Dent! The Sister 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. And yes, we are well on our way to construction and have already cleared the ground for phase 1 of the project.

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, reading "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

Annual Auction "Mardi Gras" – February 11, 2023
"The SpongeBob Musical" – March 3-5
President's Dinner – May 11
Graduation 2023 – June 3

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Ayden Sanchez '20

Reaches New Heights and Climbs Mount Kilimanjaro

Kennedy Catholic alumni are expected to enjoy success and reach new heights after graduation, but few are expected to go where few have gone before, let alone so soon after graduation. Take Ayden Sanchez '20, who only two years after graduating from Kennedy Catholic, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro as a sophomore at the University of Southern California.

Ayden chose to try to "win" the mountain because "it was there" and he was challenged. "I had an incredible opportunity offered to me and it seemed like the adventure of a lifetime. I was finishing my sophomore year of college, studying for finals, preparing for my internship, etc. and all of a sudden I got an email from my Uncle Jon titled 'WELCOME CLIMBERS!! WHO'S READY TO COME WITH ME FOR THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME?'"

Ayden reveals.

Prior to this email, his uncle had successfully summited Mounts Rainier and Kilimanjaro once before and had told Ayden how beautiful, rewarding and challenging the climb was. "He also talked about how the natural beauty of the glaciers on its peak along with the 'most beautiful sunrise in the world' were sadly disappearing due to the effects of climate change. Therefore, when presented with the opportunity to challenge myself both mentally and physically, and be able to see a disappearing national wonder, I couldn't help but accept," Ayden said.

As hard as summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro (a dormant volcano in Tanzania) is known to be, Ayden had an even bigger challenge due to being diagnosed



with epilepsy during his freshman year of high school. Though medication prevents the disease from impacting his everyday life, being diagnosed at 14 changed the way he saw the world. "Ever since my original diagnosis I have strived to not let this define me, and if anything, it has been my personal call to not take any moment or opportunity for granted. What should have been a setback had the opposite effect and instilled in me the desire to take on any challenge as an opportunity to prove to myself that I am capable of anything that I put my mind to," he stated. "Therefore, what propelled me to climb Kilimanjaro was my continual desire to push my own limits, overcome fears and never turn away true opportunities of a lifetime because of circumstances life has given us," Ayden explained.

Ayden spent months training his mind and body to be ready to face the challenges of cold, fatigue and acute mountain sickness brought about by

the extreme altitude. While he realized he had never done anything like this before, Ayden said, "If I've learned anything over these past couple of years, it's that keeping perspective, not being afraid to fail and simply staying true to who you are,

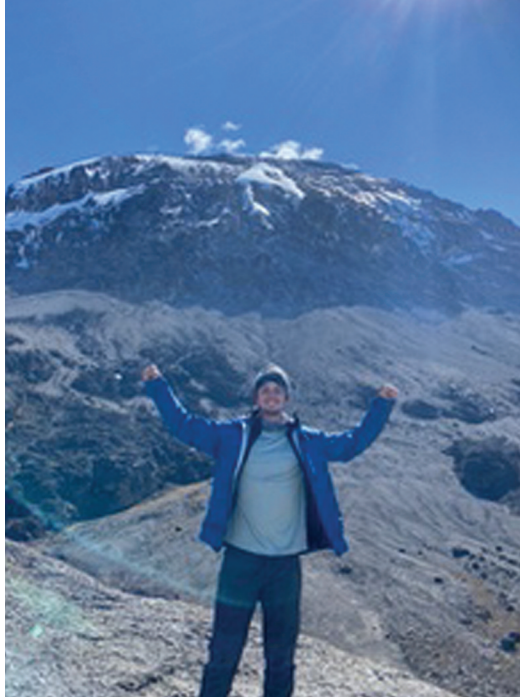


are key qualities that will help you grow universally later down the road. Also, what is important are the lessons we learn about ourselves and the world in embracing the unknown and taking any challenge head on."

Reaching the top was probably one of the most surreal yet rewarding experiences of his life. But on the way up there were reminders that success wasn't promised. "On the last day, we passed many people going in the opposite direction that had succumbed to altitude sickness and were being carried down, so it was a constant reminder that reaching the top was never guaranteed. By reaching the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, I not only saw the fruit of my efforts and the hard work it took to make it there, but I also showed myself how powerful the strength of will and positivity can be. My faith also helped me reach the top on that last day as all of the fear, nervousness and worry about going into the unknown and not being able to make it to the top flew away in an instant and were replaced with an overwhelming feeling of pure emotion, pride and relief," Ayden said.

Reaching the top took them seven hours to only go the distance of about 5 km. "Every trekker is slowed down immensely by the sheer effects of the altitude and cold. This made reaching Uhuru Peak extremely tiring and difficult. We were allowed to enjoy the time at the peak for only 20 minutes before we were required to begin the ascent, again due to the physical effects of the extreme altitude," Ayden explained.

The successful mountain climber has had other adventures, maybe less intense but no less important and challenging. Ayden moved from the East Coast to Los Angeles for his freshman year of college during the height of COVID 19, has been on safari to explore the Serengeti Desert and the Ngorongoro Crater, both in Tanzania (he also danced with true Maasai Warriors); hiked the Red Rocks of Sedona; and traveled to Rome to St. Peter's Square and the Sistine Chapel, as well as to Florence, San Gimignano and Venice, among other adventures.



Despite these incredible adventures, Ayden believes his greatest achievements include being inducted into the St. Mary's Chapter of the National Honor Society, winning the 2019 - 2020 CHSFL Championship Football Game on Kennedy's turf, making lifelong friends, getting accepted to USC and making Dean's List, and being elected into multiple leadership positions in his fraternity.

But there is more. Since graduating KCPS in 2020, Ayden played lead roles in two music videos ("Now or Never" by Jessica Lynn and "Red Cup" by Ingrid Griffin), was elected to two leadership positions (Athletics and Philanthropy Chairman) at USC's Omega Deuteron chapter of the Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity, had his first summer internship doing data analytics for a leading

luxury retailer, was accepted into USC's Impact Investing Group's Consulting Division, and learned to skateboard.

While at KCPS, Ayden was an NHS Peer Tutor, senior captain of the Football and Track teams, member of the Junior Varsity and Varsity Basketball teams, co-head of the Ultimate Frisbee Club, and one of the founders of the Suit Up Drive. "What inspired and helped shape me into the person I am today was the entire KCPS community, from my friends and fellow classmates who pushed me to be a better student, to my teammates whose faith in me and my abilities pushed me to be a better athlete, and to my coaches, teachers and administrators at KCPS who all served as mentors in guiding me to be the best version of myself," Ayden said. "I feel as though my time at KCPS helped prepare me spiritually, academically and physically to take on all of life's challenges, rigor, adventures and discipline needed to be a strong contributing member of society. Getting involved in many

aspects of what KCPS has to offer and building relationships helped provide me with a much broader perspective about myself, my faith and my community which will serve me really well in the future."

Currently, Ayden is an International Relations and Global Business major and Applied Analytics minor at the University of Southern California. His life philosophy is "Keep looking ahead towards the future, I'll see you there!"

KCPS **CELEBRATES**

SISTER MARY

*Celebrates
75 Years
in Service
to the
Lord*



Next to serving God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for 75 years, the longest stretch of commitment Sister Mary McCaffrey has achieved is educating young minds about the Catholic Faith (and English).

Devoted to the young minds she teaches and nurtures as much as she is to her Faith, Sister Mary has been a teacher for 47 years, and has taught at KCPS since 1998. She follows in the footsteps of many family members who graduated from Kennedy Catholic before she began serving at the school.

Although she applied to be an English teacher here, there was an opening in Theology and the Principal at the time, Monsignor Anthony Marchitelli, asked her to accept that position. She taught Theology 1 and 2 her first year, and from her second year on at KCPS she has taught Theology 4 and serves as head of the Theology Department. Sister Mary was the English Department Chair for five years and taught Creative Writing. She spearheads KCPS' Christian Service program by investigating opportunities for students to volunteer with local organizations and shares that information with them, and is always a prominent spiritual leader on student religious retreats.

Father Mark Vaillancourt, KCPS President and Principal, praised her devotion to growing students' faith. "For more than two decades, Sr. Mary McCaffrey has been the mainstay of our Kennedy Catholic spiritual life program. From teaching theology in the classroom, running retreats for the students, lecturing at Mass and helping our students meet their community service commitments, Sr. Mary has been the guardian angel of the program. As Sr. Mary celebrates over 75 years of religious life, we give thanks to Almighty God for sending her to us, and ask Him to bless her with many joyous years to come -- Ad multos annos Sr. Mary!"

"The most rewarding and wonderful experience I have had at Kennedy is the happy, family atmosphere, not only among the teachers, but also among our students," Sister Mary said. "There has never been a day in 24 years that I dreaded coming to work. In addition, there are many extracurricular activities here where we are fortunate to get to know our students even better," she added.

Sister Mary believes that the courses and curriculum at Kennedy are "heavy and interesting," but what she appreciates the most is the faculty with whom she works, calling them a wonderful and great group of competent and caring individuals. And why should students choose to enroll at Kennedy Catholic? "You get what you pay for. Enroll here if you want to be happy and be the best of whatever you are. We know here at Kennedy that the Catholic Faith is the one true Faith.

Therefore, grab on to it; never let it go. Our Lord and Our Lady are the ONLY ONES who will never let you down," she said.

As for why she became a nun, Sister Mary said that "I think that I was 'born' in the convent. Truly, I never wanted to do anything else." Sister Mary's faith comes from her upbringing in a "very" Catholic Irish family on both sides. She fondly remembers that in her youth all after school activities and play were in her school yard. "St. Catharine's in Pelham, NY, was our 'hub,' our 'playpen,' ball field, sports arena -- our everything every afternoon and on any Saturday when there wasn't an A-rated movie in the local theater," she said.

The beloved teacher knew from childhood what her first true calling was. "I made my decision as early as I can remember in grade school to become a Sister and I never deviated from it in 75 years of religious life. I had been going to daily Mass since the seventh grade in grammar school. I guess that helped me make a life-long decision, which I never regretted," Sister Mary explained.

Sister Mary notes that her other option in 1947 was marriage. "I did get along greatly with the boys, but none of them seemed to be in the running with GOD. I was always a decision-maker, even as a little kid. I thought out everything, decided my reasons in bed at night, and then fell into a peaceful eight-hour sleep," she recalls. If one can sleep peacefully and soundly each and every night, then they are content with their life choices and decisions.

While she says that it's hard to pick favorite memories after 75 years in religious life, Sister Mary thinks about the times she didn't want to do something she was told to do -- "but of course I did it and it turned out to be the best and even very happy time." She thinks one of the top five favorite memories is the day she stopped

working as a hospital administrator and returned to teaching high school.

Sister Mary knows how important a quality Catholic education is for personal growth and happiness. Growing up in Pelham, NY, she attended grade school in St. Catharine's, Pelham, and her high school freshman year at Ursuline School and then continued on and graduated from St. Gabriel's, both in New Rochelle. In 1947 she entered the convent Sisters of St. Francis in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, and went on to earn a BS degree in Education and an MA degree in English from Fordham University, and then received an MAHA from Columbia University in Hospital Administration. All together working in education, a hospital and in the religious community, she has worked in administration for 25 years.

"I have had a blissfully happy life...and the best is yet to come -- for all eternity!" Sister Mary rejoices.

*"The most
rewarding and
wonderful experience
I have had at
Kennedy is the happy,
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not only among
the teachers,
but also among
our students."*

Kennedy Catholic loves to hear from our alumni and share their updates and good news with the KCPS Family. Visit kennedycatholic.org/alumni to create a submission or contact the Alumni Office at alumni@kennedycatholic.org with your information and photos so we can share, and so we can stay in touch with you too! Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn! Reach us also at (914) 232-5061 ext. 110.

John Delfino '08 and his team at Available Light, Inc. received the Illuminating Engineering Society Award of Excellence for their work for the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. The award recognizes the exceptional contributions to the art and science of light. John, a Senior Associate Lighting Designer, designs lighting for architecture, museum exhibits, themed entertainment, theater and movement. He received his MFA from CalArts in Lighting Design, and did his undergraduate education at Boston College, earning a BA in English (Creative Writing) and Theatre Studies.



Former faculty member Marty Glembotzky received a prestigious news Emmy along with his production team for their commemorative 2021 film "Eyewitness to 9/11: Behind the Lens." Marty, while serving as an ABC-7 news photographer with news reporter N.J. Burkett, barely survived the collapse of the Twin Towers while covering the tragic event. While at Kennedy from 2014-2018, Marty taught the Media Lab class, worked on Kennedy Live, and helped students create work submitted to the Greenwich Youth Film Festival. A renowned photojournalist and the recipient of a Peabody and an Edward R. Murrow Award, Marty is currently Video Production Project Manager for the New York Power Authority. He is the husband of Katie Glembotzky, Visual Art instructor and Theology teacher at Kennedy Catholic, and they are parents to Genny Glembotzky KCPS Class of 2016.



Marty and his daughter Genny '16 at her graduation from American University, where she earned a master's degree in Political Science.



Gary Gill-Hill '22 was drafted in the sixth round by the MLB's Tampa Bay Rays. Gary earned the reputation as a top pitcher in the Hudson Valley, and was named to the Journal News/lohud.com Westchester/Putnam First-Team All-Stars in each of the last two seasons while playing for Kennedy Catholic. While a senior here, he posted a 6-2 record with a 1.28 ERA, 66 strikeouts and 11 walks in 49 innings and his fastball now reaches the mid-90s. Gary also pitched three no-hitters and was named First-Team All-League by the NYCHSAA.

Shannon (Morris) Zawiski '02 is doing important and wonderful work for the Newburgh, NY, community as the Chief Operating Officer for ILI and Independent Home Care. Both are community-based organizations that provide support and services to individuals with disabilities and their families. She earned a bachelor's degree in Human Services and Psychology from Mount Saint Mary College and a master's degree in Psychology from California Coast University.



Tim Farina '14 has begun graduate school at Yale University pursuing a degree in Architecture. He earned a BS in Architecture from The Catholic University of America. Tim most recently served as an Architectural Designer for David M. Schwarz Architects in Washington, DC.

Love Begins at KCPS, and Grows Beyond the Grounds

It is always wonderful when you make a lifelong friend, especially in high school where they grow with you, encourage you and know all of your "secrets." It is especially beautiful if that friend becomes your life-long partner through marriage! These Kennedy Catholic couples met at KCPS, fell in love and later joined together in holy matrimony. Marriage is one of the four vocations of the Catholic Church, so to have these foundations begin at KCPS is very special indeed!



Amanda Fraioli '14 and Justin Fitzpatrick '11

met at Kennedy Catholic when she was a freshman and he was a senior during the 2010-11 school year. After a platonic friendship that lasted beyond KCPS and college, the couple finally realized their connection was something deeper.

"Throughout my four years at Kennedy, I was a member of the Varsity Cheerleading Team, and this allowed me to develop friendships with many members of the senior class, ultimately leading Justin and I to meet and become friends ourselves," said Amanda. "Our interactions were strictly platonic due to the obvious age gap, but frequent. We kept in

touch every now and then through social media, but for the most part, after he graduated, we lost touch," she explained.

Then, when Justin graduated from the University of Tampa and she was a sophomore at James Madison University, they reconnected on social media texting. As fate would have it, Amanda decided to get a summer job at a restaurant where Justin worked weekend shifts. One week later, they went on their first date and the rest was history. The couple got engaged in September 2020 and were married on July 3, 2022 at St. Edward the Confessor Church in Syosset, NY, followed by a reception at Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, NY. Amanda and Justin now live in Yorktown Heights with their three dogs.

Many Kennedy Catholic classmates were part of their wedding, including maid of honor Cassandra Fraioli '17 and bridesmaids Lindsay Walsh '13 and Francesca Fraioli '17. One of Justin's best men was Jared Fitzpatrick '12 and groomsmen were Dan Healy '11, Eric Madonna '11, Mike Maguire '11 and Walter Morris '11. Other graduates in attendance spanned from the class of 2011 to 2017; over 35 Kennedy graduates were in attendance.

Amanda majored in Health Sciences Pre-Occupational Therapy at James Madison University, and earned her Master's of Science in Education from Hunter College. She is an Adolescent Special Education Teacher/Learning Specialist and Varsity Cheerleading Coach in the Chappaqua Central School District. Justin majored in Business at the University of Tampa and works as a Sales Team Lead and Account Manager for Randstad Technologies. *Photos courtesy of Fine Art Photography*

Amber Castellanos '14 and Tommy Girolamo '14 met at the end of eighth grade, and although she spotted Tommy at the Kennedy Catholic Meet & Greet for accepted students in February 2010, she didn't speak to him until he messaged her on Facebook several months later.

"I was scared to talk to her but I was lucky enough to find her on Facebook. We talked every single day until I had the courage to ask her to be my girlfriend," said Tommy. The couple dated all through high school and most of college. "We dated long distance during college and visited each other frequently," said Tommy. During their junior year, they studied abroad together in Florence, Italy.

On October 23, 2021 Tommy asked Amber to marry him at Wilkin's

Farm in Yorktown, one of their first date spots. They got married in Tommy's family's backyard and will renew their vows at St. Patrick's Stone Church in Yorktown. They both feel lucky to have some of their best Kennedy friends share their special day, and cannot wait to celebrate with them again! They live in Yorktown now.

The couple has warm feelings for Kennedy Catholic as well. "I had some of the best times of my life at Kennedy. I met incredible people who I am still friends with today and speak to on a daily basis. I always felt a sense of community and family every morning walking into school," Amber said. And Tommy noted that "During my years at Kennedy, I was thankful to play multiple sports, gain a vast education, and meet some of my friends that I still hang out with and talk to till this day. Kennedy has been a large part of my own family with my mother and father attending as well as all of my five siblings."

After graduating KCPS, Amber graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology as a Fashion Business Management major and now is a Strategic Account Manager overseeing Jewelry & Accessories at Walmart Marketplace. Tommy graduated from Springfield College with a dual major in Physical Education and Health Education, and earned a master's degree at SUNY Cortland in Sports Management. He is a Physical Education Teacher at Concourse Village Elementary School.



Keriann Eliseo '12 and Kevin Delfino '12 were introduced in homeroom in the beginning of their freshman year by classmate Mackenzie Feehan, and it took off from there. However, it was a classic story of secretly being in love with your best friend and neither being willing to admit it to each other. They finally started dating their sophomore year and remained a couple all through high school.

While they did go separate ways for a while during college, they ended up back together and moved to Chicago while Kevin completed medical school. Today, the couple reflects on how they have grown together. "Even though we've both changed over the years, we've changed and grown together and have a deep understanding of one another," they said.

The couple were married at St. Joseph's Church, her home parish. According to them, Sister Mary predicted in their senior year that they would be married someday. Classmates who attended their wedding were Kim Bruenn, Chris D'Angelo and Tannen Grgecic. Lauren Kennedy and Sarah DiNome Aliotta were bridesmaids and Pat Sheridan was a groomsman. Siblings and KCPS fellow grads Mary and Thomas were maid of honor and best man. Kevin's older brother John married his KCPS sweetheart Christina Ruperto a few years ago.

Right now the couple is focusing on Kevin's physician residency at Brown University in Rhode Island, where Keri works as a nurse. Kevin was a Biochemistry double major at the University of Loyola, Maryland, and Keri studied Biology and Health Sciences at Gettysburg College. Kevin went on to perform oncology research for Cornell and eventually to medical school at Rosalind Franklin University in Chicago. Keri did a post-bachelor degree in Nursing at Drexel University and worked in the pediatric ICU at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for several years.



Once a Gael, Always a Gael!

A Very Special Reunion for the Class of 1957!!!



The class of 1957 had a very special 65th reunion on June 18, 2022 at the home of Susan and Michael Giangrande in Somers, NY. A delicious dinner was served with a blessing from President/Principal Father Mark Vaillancourt.

His Eminence Edwin Cardinal O'Brien announced he would donate \$100 to Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School/Saint Mary's Academy for every year since their graduation - 65 years - \$6,500.

Alumni brought materials from their high school days, including a 1957 Yearbook and photographs to aid in the joyous reminiscing. John Hewes and Bob Kurutz are still wearing their class rings from 1957!

Thank you to the event organizers Susan and Mike Giangrande and to everyone who made this day so wonderful!

Calling All Members of the Class of 1974!!!

It's hard for them to believe it, but nearly 50 years have passed since the graduation of the Kennedy Catholic class of 1974.

"Thank goodness for social media!" explained '74 alum Donna Herrle of St. John, Michigan. "I had 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!" Inspired by the ease with which Facebook helped renew old friendships, Herrle hosted two mini-reunions at her Cape Cod, MA, vacation home, where nearly twenty of her classmates gathered and picked up the conversation it seemed right where they left off so many years before.

It was at those mini-reunions the classmates started talking about making a real special occasion of the 50th anniversary of their graduation. They formed a committee, and have already met several times. 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.

So, 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! Meantime, you can follow the plans on the class Facebook page, or reach out directly to any of the committee members, who are:



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Class of 1981 recently held a reunion at Molly Darcy's in Danbury – all reports indicate it was a great night for all who attended!

Class of 2002 held their 20 year reunion on November 5, 2022 at KCPS' Lakeview Room. Organized by class member Matt Grasso, the reunion was complete with dinner and a tour of the school. We thank all of those who attended and enjoyed reminiscing through the halls.



Saint Mary's Academy

Off To A Great Start

In September 2022, KCPS officially opened Saint Mary's Academy, a middle school for grades 6-8, on its campus. SMA is in a space within Kennedy Catholic's walls, and while "joined yet separated" physically, the new school's students benefit from what KCPS offers while preparing for a seamless transition to the high school.

"The students participated in their first retreat day in November with our chaplain, Father Breslin, to continue their faith formation as a community," Dean Machado indicated. She said the team is looking to establish more extracurricular opportunities for academy students and are working on creating sports clinics and clubs for the middle schoolers. A primary goal, Dean Machado noted, is to "also grow our



Currently, there are 43 middle schoolers from many different towns, from Ridgefield, CT, to Poughkeepsie, NY. "We are truly blessed with our current students here at Saint Mary's Academy. They have adjusted well to the routines and culture which are respecting others, our environment and ourselves," said Ms. Emily Machado, Dean of SMA and teacher of Social Studies and English. "Our students and teachers alike are very enthusiastic about being a part of a new school community. We have truly worked together to help create a 6-12 school culture here at Saint Mary's Academy and Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School," she added.

The middle school students are taught by teachers from Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School who teach middle school-specific courses, such as STEM, Art Appreciation, Physical Education, Latin and

student body and continue growing the intellect of all incoming students who walk through our doors to ensure mind, body and spirit are not only encouraged but embraced."

Everyone who works at Saint Mary's Academy believes that the biggest benefits for students attending SMA include being involved in a community where there is a strong focus on academics and the opportunity to create relationships in an environment where Catholic values are instilled in everyday practices. "Middle school years are a formative experience for students - it is a time for identity development, both emotionally and physically. By incorporating Catholic values into our everyday student life we strive to create young men and women for others, values that will carry over into Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School," said Dean Machado.



History. This has helped to bridge the gap between the middle school and high school, making it into one complete community, according to Dean Machado.

SMA students also have had many opportunities for social growth inside and outside of school. Students bonded through a field day experience in school and also have attended KCPS events such as the homecoming game. They also went to a Yankees game to cheer on Aaron Judge with Father Matt Breslin, JV Baseball Coach Will Jackson and Athletic Director Dominick Tassone, and the Kennedy Decorating and Art Clubs helped SMA students decorate pumpkins, while, on their first day of school, the newest students were guided by the KCPS National Honor Society for the day.

"Saint Mary's Academy provides a unique opportunity to start the Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School experience during an important developmental time in a student's life. Students at the academy are already incorporated into KCPS school life, and truly look up to our upperclassmen. They take pride in knowing that one day they too will be high school leaders inspiring SMA students," Dean Machado wanted everyone to know.

Saint 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. If you are interested in enrolling your child or relative in Saint Mary's Academy, go to kennedycatholic.org/st-marys-academy/ to apply or learn more.

Commendable and Exceptional Student Achievements

Seven Exceptional Seniors Named Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program



Seven exceptional KCPS seniors were named Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program for their PSAT scores earned in their junior year. Maia Forssman, Jess McGovern, Valeria Velez, Hunter Castro, Corbin Rosario, Jeffrey Torrieri and Gianni Bove were among the public and private high school juniors last year to achieve high scores in the annual academic competition for recognition and college undergraduate scholarships conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. In late September, two-thirds of the high scorers on the 2021 PSAT/NMSQT received Letters of Commendation in recognition of their "outstanding academic promise." This is a prestigious distinction, as over 1.5 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2021 Preliminary PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) their junior years, and only about 34,000 students are named Commended Students for their high PSAT scores. It is a great accomplishment for KCPS to consistently have six or seven students earn this status each year in the past several years, since in New York State out of more than 192,000 high school juniors, only 2,817 students from 404 high schools received this Commended Student status overall in September 2022.

Thirteen KCPS Students Are College Board Awardees



Thirteen Kennedy Catholic students were named College Board awardees in the organization's National Recognition Program. The students were chosen for this honor because of their strong academic performance and their high scores on their PSAT/NMSQT exams, and also identify as African American, Hispanic American, Indigenous and/or live in a rural area or small town. The upperclassmen are: Nicole Banka (NRSTA), Caitlin Ortiz-Luis (NRSTA), Jessica McGovern (NRSTA), Riley Evers (NRSTA), Justin John (NRSTA), Nancy Farias (NHRA), Ryan McInerney (NRSTA), Ashley Browne (NAARA), Neil Thumma (NRSTA), Julianna Perucci (NIA), Ragan Thompson (NAARA), Hunter Castro (NHRA), and Christopher Abbamont (NRSTA).

The College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success - including the SAT, the Advanced Placement Program and BigFuture. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

National Honor Society



Fifty-three exceptional KCPS juniors and seniors were inducted into the St. Mary's Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS). At their Induction Ceremony, 57 current members joined them for the reading of the four honor society pillars along with comments from President/Principal Rev. Mark Vaillancourt and Chapter Advisor Ms. Noelle Torre. All members witnessed their candle lighting ritual and the recital of the honor society pledge. Students whose cumulative GPA are or exceeds 93 by the start of their junior year are invited to apply; applicants are granted membership based on the merits of their character, service and leadership by a faculty committee. NHS students provide academic and mentorship support to their peers throughout the year.

SpongeBob Comes Ashore, Music Galore and More

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School and Saint Mary's Academy believe that all students should have a well-rounded, spiritual college prep education grounded in the Catholic faith. So besides theology, reading, writing, arithmetic and other STEM classes and a strong, diverse athletic program, all students are given plenty of opportunities in the Fine Arts, including music, art and performance.

More often than not, our students excel in the Fine Arts Program. Music has seen many honors so far this academic year, including:

Kennedy Catholic sophomores were selected to the Northern Westchester Honors Band: flutists Natalia Fiallos and Stevie Nadig, clarinetist Joel Lopez and mallet percussionist Erin Lavelle. The Northern Westchester Honors Band is an ensemble of high school band students from the Westchester area nominated by their band directors. "Each student is selected by a recommendation from their school Band Director for their outstanding musicianship and instrumental capabilities. This honors band is composed of some of the best band students from Westchester and Putnam counties and we are pleased to have these students represent our school," said Mr. Christopher Melito, Music History & Theory Teacher and Concert Band Director.

This ensemble rehearsed once a week from September 10 through their October 8 performance at North Salem High School. Students enjoyed the experience of performing with an ensemble of over 100 students performing some challenging music. This year's program included "Of Dark Lords and Ancient Kings" by Roland Barrett, "Arabian Dances" by Brian Balmages and "Mambo Perro Loco" by Julie Giroux. The directors for this festival were Dr. Bradley Ethington, Director of Bands at Syracuse University, and Mr. Steve Austin, Band Director at North Salem High School.



Joel Lopez, Erin Lavelle and Stevie Nadig

Christopher Abbamont '24 is participating in the Westchester Youth Symphony playing percussion. This highly selective ensemble meets once a week throughout the year at Westchester Community College and students must audition to be selected to participate. Under the direction of Kathleen Coletta Feldman the orchestra presents winter and spring concerts featuring a wide range of music from standard orchestral literature to pop music. "Christopher is an accomplished percussionist and pianist/composer, with an interest in serious classical music. He is a real asset to the Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School Band and has peer tutored students in music theory," said Mr. Melito.

SPONGEBOB LEAVES BIKINI BOTTOM FOR KCPS!

Who lives in a pineapple under the sea and is coming soon to Kennedy? SpongeBob SquarePants of course! In case you haven't guessed, the Spring Musical 2023 is "The SpongeBob Musical!"

"The SpongeBob Musical is a fun family show, filled with characters that we have all grown to know and love. Beneath the songs and hilarity, there are also many life lessons learned and self-discoveries made by the citizens and community in the undersea world of Bikini Bottom," said Ms. Barbara Rue, Director and Choreographer.

Performances will be on Friday, March 3, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 4, at 2 and 7 p.m.; and on Sunday, March 5, at 2

p.m. Tickets (\$15 general admission) will

go on sale in the new year on the Kennedy Catholic website. Please join us for this hilarious and entertaining musical, and support the Kennedy Catholic students as they grow in their appreciation for the arts! Harold and Margaret SquarePants would like to see many other parents there as well!





Mrs. Glembotzky's Studio Art pupils have completed a number of projects including oil on canvas, oil on panel, pencil on paper, and oil pastel on paper as pictured here. The artists of these works include senior Maia Forssman, juniors Nicole Banka and Gabriela Byrer, sophomores Grace Chae and Ashley Sense, and freshman Lesly Mora.





The KCPS Baseball Team

A True Gael Force

Spring 2022 was one for the record books for KCPS Baseball, literally. The Gaels stormed the diamond, making it to the semi-finals in the NYCHSAA, the furthest any KCPS baseball team has gone since joining the league. They also earned the honor of being named the 2022 Archdiocesan Champions. The team outhit, outran, outpitched and outcaught many of their rivals, coming in at an impressive 25-9-1 overall record and 16-2 in the NYCHSAA regular season.

"Last year's team was an excellent team that won the Archdiocesan Championship and played an extremely difficult schedule against teams like Don Bosco, Bergan Catholic, Iona Prep and Chaminade. This year's team will be playing the same schedule in hopes of continuing last year's success," said Head Coach Bob Fletcher, who has led the team for 18 seasons. "With the addition of a Freshman team for the first time in 20 years, the KCPS baseball program is in a very good position to compete for a CHSAA championship for a number of years," he noted.

Having a legendary coach also helps. Coach Fletcher was recently inducted into the New York State Baseball Hall of Fame, joining the likes of Bucky Dent and Luis Tiant.

Another reason they are so good? Preparation. The third secret ingredient? The players. "Our coaching philosophy is preparation; if the players are prepared for almost every conceivable obstacle and situation they'll be more likely to rise to the challenge that obstacle or situation presents. Our preparation is built through

repetitions in practice and competition in our non-league and pre-season games," said Assistant Coach Greg Delmonico.

The team was and is blessed with amazing players, many shouted out frequently as best players in the Hudson Valley by *Journal News/lohud.com*. Top standout Gary Gill-Hill '22 was the ace of the pitching staff and was drafted in the sixth round of the 2022 MLB Draft by the Tampa Bay Rays. Other standouts included 2022 graduates Ryan Boyd, who was 8-0 on the mound and led the team with a



0.28 ERA, and Nick Mazzotta, team captain and starting shortstop who led the team in homeruns (4) and RBIs (26). Ryan currently attends the University of Scranton and Nick is at Fairleigh Dickinson University, both playing baseball.

Juniors also propelled the team as very big contributors, including starting catcher Adam Agresti '23, starting center fielder Harry Leipold '23 and starting second baseman Nicky Duryea '23.

With these students playing as seniors, and other talented senior and underclassmen players, the team has high hopes, and good chances, for a great 2023 season. The team will head to Florida in March for "Spring Training" where they will play a week's worth of games to prepare for the season. And according to Assistant Coach Delmonico, when the team returns, they will play stiff competition both locally and regionally against



baseball powerhouses such as Bergen Catholic and Don Bosco Prep in New Jersey, Calvert Hall in Maryland, St. Anthony's and Chaminade in Long Island and Brooklyn Poly Prep in Brooklyn, NY. This schedule is in addition to the team's league games (NYCHSAA "AA" Division) which begins in early April.

There also has to be support from the community, and for the baseball team that comes from both the outstanding quality of the KCPS athletic complex and baseball field and from the school's commitment to train and support student-athletes, and from the parents as well. "The team is heavily supported by the players' parents. The 2022 team was particularly aided

by Ellen and Joe Agresti as well as Tricia and Mark Mazzotta, and we are grateful to them and all of the players' parents who supported us and came out to the games," said Assistant Coach Delmonico.

The coaches also noted that KCPS Administration, including President and Principal Rev. Mark Vaillancourt, was supportive for allowing the scheduling and travel opportunities for the team, and Athletic Director Dominick Tassone was a "huge help" throughout all of the processes as well.

So be ready in 2023 and take yourself out to the ball game (and root, root, root for the home team) for some great baseball, Kennedy Catholic style!



Special Events at KCPS – Powered By Special People Like You!

Kennedy Catholic always works diligently to provide all of the stellar educational, extracurricular and spiritual programming our students deserve. That's what makes us one of the consistently highest-ranked private and Catholic high schools in our region. But we couldn't do it without you.

As you will see on pages 21-23, we have a large community of supporters to whom we are so grateful. Each and every contribution, whether it be in the form of treasure, time or talent, is truly appreciated and greatly contributes to our day-to-day service to our students. Twice a year KCPS holds a fundraiser to allow you to come engage with the faculty and staff of KCPS and SMA, and to further show your support while having fun.

Kennedy Catholic Golf Classic

On October 6, 2022, our sold-out Golf Classic hosted 96 golfers and raised \$43,000. Held at the Mahopac Golf and Beach Club, this year's event proceeds will support the new Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center still under construction. KCPS would like to thank everyone who attended, volunteered and supported us on this great day. Special thanks go out to our sponsors, including:

- Brian Baker, Baker Liturgical Art, LLC, and Mark '71 and Denise Girolamo, our Gift Sponsors (the Girolamos were also our Closest To The Pin Sponsor)
- Thomas G. Olin, President, Crystal Blue Cleaning Service, Inc., our Driving Range Sponsor and Cart Sponsor
- Warren '72 and Susan Lucas P'98, '00, '04, '10, our Longest Drive Sponsors





41st Annual Auction – Gifts Galore – SAVE THE DATE!

This year's Auction will be on **Saturday, March 18, 2023**. The event is held at KCPS in the Lakeview Room, the Bridge and the Commons, which are transformed into festive spaces.

There will be an amazing Live Auction, plenty of bountiful and beautiful themed gift baskets to take a chance on, and of course our **\$5,000 Raffle**. For more information, contact Fred Compton, Director of Advancement, at advancement@kennedycatholic.org. To register, bid and find out more, go to www.kennedycatholic.org/auction. Proceeds from the Annual Auction go to the Annual Fund to support Catholic education.

Your Help Is Needed for the Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center

Plans are well underway to construct the Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center on the Kennedy Catholic campus. To be located on the south end of the two main athletic fields, the new center will hold state-of-the-art athletic equipment for all students to improve their fitness and for student-athletes to train for competition.

Architect Mr. Paul Checco, AIA, of Brewster, is designing the building and preparing the drawings necessary for building permits. Mr. Checco has done other work for KCPS and we are very excited that he has taken on this transformative project. Support from the Kennedy Catholic family is instrumental, and we have raised approximately \$800,000 due to the generosity of a few large donors and almost 200 KCPS alumni, parents and friends.



Yet more is still needed from the Kennedy Catholic community, as this Student Fitness Center will cost about \$1.2 million. There is a generous \$300,000 matching gift thanks to Mark Girolamo '71, so any amount donated up to the total of \$300,000 will be matched dollar for dollar. At this point approximately \$120,000 is still unmatched and ready for your donation.

So, if you give \$1,000 it is instantly doubled to \$2,000. If you work for a company that matches charitable contributions, ask for their match. It's simple to do, just contact your company's HR

Department. In this way your \$1,000 will be increased to a total \$3,000.

You can also help by becoming a Class Captain. The role of Class Captain is to help in the fundraising effort by reaching out to classmates to tell them about the project and ask for support. The Advancement Team will provide contact information and assist with contacting prospects. We need a representative for each class (all 54 of the graduated Kennedy classes, plus our predecessor St. Mary's High School) to be the point of contact for their class. We can also use additional representatives from the Girls' Track & Field and Cross Country teams who were coached by Sister Janet. These people can also be Class Captains. Serving as Class Captains is also a great way to reconnect with your old friends and do a tremendous service to our Alma Mater.

Donations of any size are welcome and much appreciated. If you can help with this effort to enhance the lives of KCPS students, please contact Fred Compton at advancement@kennedycatholic.org, Thank you in advance!

Other Ways You Can Help Kennedy Catholic

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 as well as four years of theology to learn about God and His church and provide contemplative retreat programs, a strong sacramental life and a Christian Community Service program which sets Kennedy students apart. Students are well prepared not only for college, but for a successful life.

We can not achieve these important goals and overcome any challenges without the help of our many supporters. There are several ways that you can 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 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/

- Shop AmazonSmile and name Kennedy Catholic as your charity of choice. AmazonSmile donates .05% of your purchases to Kennedy Catholic. Sign into your Amazon account, search "AmazonSmile" and then search for Kennedy Catholic High School in Somers, NY.

- Attend, donate to and/or sponsor our special events, such as the Golf Classic and Annual Auction. Contact advancement@kennedycatholic.org for more information on how to help.



Annual Giving

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of our charitable patrons, Kennedy Catholic is able to flourish. From building improvements to educational scholarships, your donations help improve the excellent education Kennedy Catholic provides. If you haven't already contributed to our on-going success and you have the means to do so, please consider joining our cadre of supporters by contributing.

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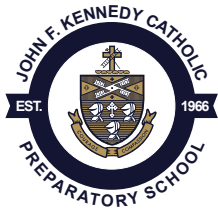
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 Dr. Mary Schratz '71
 Mr. Robert and Mrs. Patricia Serafin P'01,'04,'04
 Ms. Denise DiGrandi '85
 Miss Meghan Lynch '98
 Mr. Anthony Torres
 Mr. Brian '84 and Mrs. Anna '86 Trainor P'25
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“The SpongeBob Musical”

March 3-5

Annual Auction –

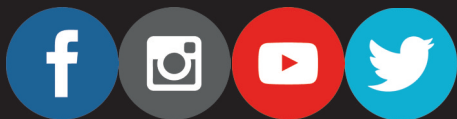
March 18

President’s Dinner –

May 11

Graduation 2023 – June 3

To learn about these events
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