

THE GAELE

SPRING/SUMMER 2024 VOLUME 38

KCPS Girls Basketball Wins Two Championships!



*President's Dinner
Honors Special
People and Students*

*Congratulations Class of 2024!
It Was a Great Year for KCPS
and SMA Students –
Learn What They Did*

*"Loyal Alumni"
Bonnie and
John Gould '62*

President's Message



Fellow Gaels and Friends of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School,

It gives me great pleasure to announce to you the fall groundbreaking of our new athletic facility, the Sr. Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center. After having raised \$1.2 million for the campaign, we are soon ready to begin phase 1 of the project – building the structure. As phase 2 gets underway we hope to quickly furnish the facility with state-of-the-art fitness equipment to ensure that all our students stay strong and our varsity athletic programs continue to thrive. With our Boys Baseball program rated number one in the Mid-Hudson Valley and our Girls Varsity Basketball program achieving the City Championship, it is very evident that our athletic programs are more than just successful – they are exceptional!

Exceptional as well are our alumni who have really stepped up to support our Kennedy projects by attending reunions, reinvigorating the Blue and White charitable giving foundation, and of course



helping us build the Sr. Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center. For all your support, your fellow Gaels thank you!

And we continue to expand our curriculum as we strengthen our relationships with the College Board, St. John's University, Iona University and SUNY Albany. And of course, our partnership with the Pace University Lubin School of Business continues to inspire and form our students for careers in finance and investing. Together with their love of learning and the gift for teaching, our instructors in both the Prep and the Academy have shown themselves time and again to be the best at what they do. From top SAT scores to tremendous college placements, our school has time and again proven itself to be an academic institution positioned for success.

So, I say to our Kennedy Catholic community and all of our alumni that there has never been a better time to be a Gael! May God and His Blessed Mother shower many blessings upon you and yours, and remember – you always have a home at Kennedy Catholic!

In Christ,

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

Fr. Mark Vaillancourt, Ph.D.
President

Events at Kennedy Catholic

Golf Classic: October 3, 2024

Homecoming: October 4, 2024

Open House: October 26 and October 29, 2024

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UPDATE YOUR ALUMNI RECORDS

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John and Bonnie Gould '62

Strong Roots and Love Lead to a Lifetime of Service and Success

Before there was John F. Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School, there was St. Mary's High School in Katonah, NY. And two of its most loyal alumni, Bonnie Jenkins Gould and John Gould, are still actively supporting Catholic education in Westchester County, primarily Kennedy Catholic.

The Goulds recently received the Lux Christi Award at the annual President's Dinner, held on May 23, 2024, at the Villa Barone Hilltop Manor in Mahopac, NY, for their leadership and stewardship of the Blue and White Fund, a fund that will provide scholarships to future Gaels. The Goulds, along with this year's other honorees, were chosen "for being true examples of Christian Service and testaments to the values of Catholic Education."

"Belonging to a church and parish are very important to us, and an entirely Catholic education from grammar school through college has helped guide our lives," said Bonnie, when explaining why they believe supporting Catholic education is so important. John agrees, saying that, "St. Mary's High School definitely helped us grow up in a culture of real values, while also encouraging us to strive for excellence in our studies."

The Goulds have fond memories of their time at St. Mary's, where Bonnie said they had enjoyed learning, thanks to the nuns who "encouraged us to have fun while also studying hard." The couple began dating at St. Mary's in their senior year, graduated in 1962, and were married in 1967. It was fate, because they first met in the sixth grade when both attended St. Joseph's Grammar School in Croton Falls. Bonnie got the romance ball rolling when she invited John to the annual Sadie Hawkins Dance in late 1961. Today, they are still close friends with many of their 68 classmates from St. Mary's High School, including three other married couples from their class.

Bonnie noted how the Class of 1962 has reunions at least every five years. "Very strong bonds and lasting friendships were made between the classmates, due in part to the great education we received," she said. The couple learned many values at St. Mary's, including the value of friendship.

"Catholic values were imparted to us by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion, and by a small team of archdiocesan priests, all of whom were excellent teachers," said John, who noted that you had to pass a competitive entrance exam to be accepted into St. Mary's High School. "They prepared us well for the Regents exam, college and graduate school," he added.

Both Bonnie and John would stay committed to education after graduating from St. Mary's. Bonnie attended Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and earned a bachelor's degree in nursing. John attended Fordham College in the Bronx, and upon graduation went on to earn a law degree from Harvard Law School.

While John attended law school, Bonnie joined the faculty of the Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing, and after John graduated, she became the founder and Director of the Nursing In-Service Education Department at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Tarrytown. John joined the Webster & Sheffield Law Firm in Manhattan, becoming a partner in 1977.

After retiring from Phelps in 1984, Bonnie earned a graduate degree in education at the Fordham Graduate School of Education. She then joined the graduate school's faculty and taught there until her retirement in 2001. After 21 happy years at Webster & Sheffield, John moved in 1990 to the Gould & Wilkie law firm where he continued happily practicing law in Manhattan for the next 19 years (he had no relation to the founders of the firm that was established in 1892, just fate again.) John then served four more years as in-house Executive Vice President and General Counsel of CH Energy Group, Inc., a long-time client.

Residing in Scarsdale, NY, since 1980, they are parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish in Hartsdale, where Bonnie served as an Eucharist Minister and both work with the parish's program that provides food to local families and to the White Plains Food Bank. Believing in the Catholic social teachings of charity and service, and that people should be involved in and support their communities, the couple are very active in other areas. Bonnie has volunteered with the Cancer Support Team (CST) of Westchester for many years, and served as its Chair from 2020 to 2023. She was honored in 2023 as the "Outstanding Board Member of the Year" in Westchester County by the Association of Development Officers for her work with the CST. Bonnie has also served on the boards of the Scarsdale Adult School and the Alverno College Alumni Association.

John served for over 20 years on the Boards of Gerber Life Insurance Company and Veramark Technologies, Inc., as well as serving as the President of the Fordham College Alumni Association, the Scarsdale Golf Club and the New Choral Society of Westchester (of which Bonnie is a founding member and has sung in the alto section for almost 30 years),

“Very strong bonds and lasting friendships were made between the classmates, due in part to the great education we received.”



as a Vice President and Governor of the Harvard Club of New York City, and as a Director of the Harvard Law School Association of New York City.

Upon the invitation from Cardinal Timothy Dolan, John also served as a member of the Archdiocesan Advisory Group from 2018-2020. He is currently Chairman Emeritus and Treasurer of the American Geographical Society, Vice President and a Trustee of the Westchester County Historical Society and a Director of the Friends of the Weinberg Nature Center in Scarsdale. Bonnie and John continue as active members of the Scarsdale Golf Club.

The Blue and White Fund

John helped set up the Blue and White Fund, Inc. in 1999 after being asked by Sister Mary Christopher for help setting up a tax exempt “rainy day fund” for Kennedy Catholic to provide scholarship aid to students and to meet unexpected expenses. With his colleagues at Gould & Wilkie, John prepared the incorporation papers for the Blue and White Fund, Inc. and he has continuously served as one of the fund’s Directors since its founding.

With generous contributions from alumni, parents and friends of Kennedy Catholic, this fund has provided scholarships and helped the school with special projects over the past 25 years, such as the installation of a new roof for the school building in the early 2000s, the

renovation of the library in 2014, and now a \$100,000 contribution towards the construction of the Student Fitness Center.

Kennedy Catholic views the Blue and White Fund, Inc. as a legacy fund intended to grow in value over time, and thus serve as a reliable on-going source of financial support for the school and its students. It is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt not-for-profit corporation with its own Board of Directors; Father Mark Vaillancourt (President of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School) serves as its current President.

John points out that the Blue and White Fund’s original corporate documents stress that the fund is “formed for the exclusive purpose of providing support” to the school and its students. He adds that, “Bonnie and I hope that all alumni, parents and friends of the school will seriously consider adding a provision to their wills leaving a legacy bequest to the Blue and White Fund, Inc. We are pleased to say that each of our wills provide for such a bequest to the fund.”

It is also hoped that people will donate to the fund now to help support Kennedy Catholic’s mission of making a difference for Christ in our world and the lives of others by allowing strong and committed Christian leaders to help develop the mind, body and spirit of students while always striving for excellence and the highest standards in Catholic education. *“We are Courageous and Compassionate.”* If you still feel this mission, please reach out to advancement@kennedycatholic.org.

KENNEDY ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

Kennedy Catholic loves to hear from our alumni, and share your updates and good news with the Kennedy Catholic 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, X, YouTube and LinkedIn! Reach us also at (914) 232-5061, ext. 110.



Sabrina Rehfield '17 is a J.D. Candidate at Pace University's Elisabeth Haub School of Law and has accepted an Assistant District Attorney position for the fall Class of 2024 at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. "Working at DANY has truly been my dream job for a very long time, and I can't believe it has finally come true! I am so thankful for the wonderful experience I had there this summer as a summer Law Fellow. I also am beyond grateful to all of my friends, family and the incredible mentors that have supported me throughout my law school journey. The support I have had means everything. I look forward to this new exciting role and serving the people of New York!" she said.

Lauren Ruggiero '18 is a Medicolegal Investigator at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in NYC. Lauren previously worked for the Dutchess County Medical Examiner's Office and graduated Liberty University in 2022, where she majored in Criminal Justice, Crime Scene Investigation.



Charles Doelker '14 is now a full-time Firefighter/EMT at the City of Fairbanks Fire Department. "After my time at Kennedy Catholic High School I chased an adventure to the northwest. I received my bachelor's degree at the University of Northern British Columbia, Canada, then placed my roots in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Fire Service has been an exciting career. My time with the department has been rewarding as I serve the people of Fairbanks in many ways. I can attribute the foundation of my success to the work ethic I gained by attending Kennedy. I feel humbled to belong in a place like Fairbanks where you can enjoy the outdoors in many different ways outside of work," Charles explained.

Cameron Crane '20 (pictured far right) was honored at the International Symposium on Artificial Life and Robotics in Beppu, Japan, as part of a team of students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute that developed a prototype of a robotic surgical instrument that won a Best Paper Award. While at Kennedy Catholic, Cameron was a member of the Robotics Team and a medal winner for competing on the Science Olympiad team. He was also a member of the Kennedy Catholic Debate Club, National Honor Society and Student Council as well as a two-time recipient of the Patricia Moore Sportsman Award for serving as captain of the Varsity Tennis Team. Cameron, as a member of the Student Council, worked to make the quarantine commencement ceremony possible by securing a Jumbotron screen to show the graduation speeches and diploma distribution so that families gathered in the parking lot of St. Joseph's could observe the milestone event while social distancing.



Christina Rowland '16 is now a Neuro/Trauma ICU Nurse in Washington, D.C.



Caroline Rowland '21 finished her junior year at Penn State and is applying to graduate school to become an Occupational Therapist.

Once A Gael, Always A Gael

The Alumni Association meets bi-monthly via Zoom to discuss upcoming events and ideas for how to get more alumni active in the Kennedy Catholic Community. The next confirmed event is the Annual Turkey Bowl Football game on Friday, November 29, on the Kennedy Catholic turf.

Girolamo '14, Elizabeth Turner '14, Yaroslav Jakymec '14 and Justin Ferraro '17. The panelists presented about their collegiate experiences and careers so far, answered questions from students, and enjoyed meeting the next generation of Gaels.



10 Year Reunion News: The Class of 2014 is planning their ten year reunion! Save the date for Friday, November 29, at 7:30pm at the Lazy Boy Saloon in White Plains. Follow their Instagram @kennedycatholic2014 for updates and to register via RSVPify.

We are excited to plan more events and invite all alumni back to campus to meet current students and share their collegiate and professional experiences. If you are interested in joining the Alumni Association or visiting campus, please contact Fred Compton at advancement@kennedycatholic.org or call the school at (914) 232-5061 and ask for Advancement.

The Alumni Association is also looking for more alumni to participate in future career panel events like the one hosted in February 2024. Seven GOLD (graduates of the last decade) alumni joined current juniors and seniors for our **Alumni Career Panel**, organized by the Alumni Association. The panelists included Kim McCarthy '13, Amber Castellanos-Girolamo '14 and Tommy



2024 Kennedy Catholic President's Dinner Gala Honors Those Devoted to Christ, KCPS



On May 23 at the Villa Barone Hilltop Manor in Mahopac, NY, members of the Kennedy Catholic community gathered at the annual President's Dinner to celebrate this year's honorees, who were chosen for being true examples of Christian Service and testaments to the values of Catholic Education.

In addition to the Lux Christi Award, Divine Compassion Award, Sr. Christopher Principal's Award and Teacher of the Year honorees, Students of Excellence were honored for being "strong and committed Christian leaders who are determined to make a difference for Christ in our world and in the lives of others." Congratulations to this year's recipients:

The Lux Christi Award was presented to Mr. John '62 and Mrs. Bonnie '62 Gould for their leadership and stewardship of the Blue and White Fund, a fund that will provide scholarships to future Gaels.

The Divine Compassion Award was presented to Mrs. Maria Abbamont P'19,'24 for her dedication and leadership in countless

events for the Kennedy Catholic community.

The Sr. Christopher Principal's Award was presented to Mrs. Nancy Knight '76, P'07,'10 for her unwavering support of our President as they move the school forward.

The Teacher of the Year was presented to Mrs. Moira Normile, English Teacher, who was chosen by her fellow faculty for providing exemplary education and service to



her students this past year.

The Student of Excellence Awards were presented to members of the Senior Class who best represent the qualities of courage, compassion, service and academic accomplishment: Christopher Abbamont, Adrianna Antenucci, Joseph Bally, Andrew Bentivenga, Ashley Browne, Nicholas Cardarelli, Robert Cross, James Dever, Riley Evers, Brigid Foley, Mary Gilmore, Maggie Gordineer, Matthew Lorusso, Caroline Majano, Hannah Noreika, Edoh Ogbue, Erin O'Mara, Gabriella Rado, Amanda Rial, Colin Spidal, Neil Thumma, Reilly Tuck, Alejandro Velez, Sanai Williamson.

Thank you to these honorees for their outstanding service and to all those who support the mission of Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School.



KCPS Students Enjoy **Greece and Orlando**



The Spring of 2024 saw Gaels jetset to two sunny locations - Athens, Greece, and Orlando, Florida. While the Gaels who explored the ancient ruins of Athens were partaking in the annual European Easter Excursion, the seniors who took on Universal Studios Park were doing so for the first time.

At the end of March, 17 sophomores, juniors and seniors took the long flight to Athens, where they spent nine days touring the famous sites of the Parthenon, Olympia, Delphi and the Meteora Monasteries and also took a traditional Greek dance lesson and a cooking class. Shortly after in mid-April, 80 seniors hopped down to Orlando for a long weekend exploring Universal Studios, the Islands of Adventure and Volcano Bay. The leaders of both trips look forward to their next great adventures in spring of 2025.



CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2024

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School's Class of 2024 earned acceptances to over 250 colleges and universities for a total of over 930 acceptances, with merit-aid awards of \$34.5 million dollars! Among the students who received merit-aid awards (over 50%), the average award amount exceeded \$400,000 over the course of four years. 99% of our graduates are going on to college, while the remainder are serving in the military, preparing for NCAA D1 sports, learning the trades and even attending a professional ballet school! Some of the prestigious colleges, universities and military academies our students have been accepted to are:

Boston College
Bucknell University
Cornell University
Georgetown University
Howard University
New York University
Northeastern University
Northwestern University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Skidmore College
Tulane University
United States Naval Academy
University of Georgia
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
University of Notre Dame
University of Virginia
Villanova University

We are proud of all of our graduates, and grateful to Valedictorian Riley Evers, who will attend the University of Notre Dame to study Humanities, Salutatorian Robert Cross, who will attend the University of Michigan to study Business; and Invocation Speaker Chris Abbamont, who will study Electrical Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, for giving inspirational speeches at the Class of 2024's Graduation Commencement Ceremony on June 1 at St. Joseph's Church in Somers, New York.







ST. MARY'S



Saint Mary's Academy Blossoms! *Presenting the First Graduates*

St. Mary's Academy (SMA), a 6th through 8th grade co-educational Catholic Intermediate School located in a separate wing at John F. Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School (KCPS), completed its second full school year, and graduated 35 students, 31 who will go on to attend KCPS!

Valedictorian Madison Cullen and Salutatorian Joshua John took the stage at their moving up ceremony on Wednesday, June 6, 2024, and delivered speeches thanking their teachers and their peers for their middle school experience.

SMA first opened in fall 2022 with the mission to develop courageous and compassionate future leaders and develop each student's mind, body and spirit. Students receive a full academic curriculum in mathematics, sciences, humanities, arts and theology taught by

teachers devoted to their growth and development. Qualified and passionate educators who are dedicated to our St. Mary's Academy students provide the same time-tested Catholic school curriculum and values-centered education as the Catholic schools of the region and especially KCPS. The program fulfills the middle school educational standards of New York State and prepares students for College Board's Pre-AP

Program. Students are also eligible to take high school level courses in the 8th grade.

With challenging academics, state-of-the-art facilities on a beautiful campus and access to many extracurricular activities designed for them (such as performing arts, athletics and STEM projects), St. Mary's Academy offers a great opportunity for

aspiring grade 6-8 students to be part of the KCPS educational experience.

Congratulations to our graduates! We can't wait to see your achievements at the Prep next year! If you or anyone you know is interested in the Academy, admissions are rolling. To learn more about Saint Mary's Academy, go to www.kennedy-catholic.org/st-marys-academy/ or contact Director of Admissions Courtney Jackson at cjackson@kennedy-catholic.org



"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."

Why Attend Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School? *The Rado Family*

One family explains why they chose to send their daughter to KCPS:

“While in the 8th grade, Gabriella attended a STEM program at Kennedy Catholic. She talked for twenty minutes afterwards about how incredible Kennedy was and how much she loved it there,” said her mother Jeanine Agnolet-Rado. “I knew that attending Kennedy would help to broaden her horizons geographically and otherwise, helping her to meet new people, and with Kennedy I had hoped for a more rigorous academic environment and curriculum that would give her an edge when applying to colleges.” So Gabriella became a Kennedy Catholic Gael, and made the most of her experience, so much so that she is well-prepared to attend the prestigious University of Notre Dame in the fall. The university acceptance rate is only 13%, and she will join many other KCPS graduates who attended Notre Dame over the years.



Mrs. Rado also explained why she chose a Catholic high school for Gabriella. “I have learned that in addition to being armed with a solid educational foundation, it is most important to be



grounded in faith. None of us can predict what will befall us in life and the kind of challenges that lie before us, but faith can get you through anything, and this is something I want her to have as she goes through life. Gabriella needs to know that no matter what happens, she is never alone as long as she has God in her life, and Kennedy Catholic has reinforced this premise.”

She noted another reason the decision was made to attend KCPS: an engineering professor from Manhattan College School of Engineering (where Gabriella was later accepted) “applauded her decision and said his students from Kennedy Catholic are always the most well-prepared.” Mrs. Rado said that she does not believe the University of Notre Dame would have become a reality for Gabriella if she had not attended KCPS.

“Our daughter loves her teachers and the friendships she has

developed while at Kennedy Catholic. Choosing Kennedy is a wise decision if you have a child who wants to reach his or her full potential. It has provided a partnership between our family, the school, its teachers, administration, our parish and all the adults in various roles who have touched my daughter’s life and supported her in good times and in bad. It takes a village as they say to lead a child down the right path, and that path can certainly begin in a positive way at Kennedy Catholic,” Mrs. Rado said.

Gabriella Earns Girl Scout Gold Award

Gabriella will also receive her Girl Scout Gold Award for creating an organization during the pandemic called Sew Kind (SewKind.org.) The organization’s purpose is to teach children how to sew – children who might otherwise never have the opportunity to learn this skill. For nearly two years, Gabriella has been teaching at the Boys and Girls Club in the cities of Newburgh and Poughkeepsie during their Saturday night drop-in programs designed to



keep kids off the street. She has also gifted several donated sewing machines to children who want to continue to hone their craft. Gabriella’s program helps foster engineering skills in these children and teaches them to share the items they create with others. The idea is to have much of what they sew fulfill a local need.

One particular Sew Kind project required Gabriella to pull in her Gold Award team to help out after she learned that many Sisters in the Archdiocese have been living with collars and coifs that are fraying and falling apart, since nearly all the manufacturing companies that once made these items for nuns have gone out of business. With the help of her sewing mentor Debbie Fela and former Kennedy Catholic School Nurse Barbara Rendich, Gabriella delivered her first batch of 20 collars to the Sisters of the Oblates to the Blessed Trinity of Hopewell Junction. Sister Shyne Mathai, OBT, expressed the need for the collars and coifs after reading about Sew Kind in a local parish bulletin.

“This project was much more complicated than I first thought. To be honest, I had serious doubts as to whether I could pull this off, but the Sisters kept praying for us and, obviously it worked,” Gabriella said. To learn more about how you can help, visit SewKind.org, Facebook or follow on Instagram @SewKindNY. Read more at <https://hvp.com/parent.com/seo-kind>.

Student Success Stories –

Our Students Rock!

Caroline Majano Receives NHS Scholarship

Only 400 National Honor Society (NHS) scholarships are awarded nationwide, and KCPS senior Caroline Majano was one of the winners! It was awarded to her by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), who oversee the country's National Honor Societies.

To be considered for this scholarship one must be approved by his/her school's NHS adviser and then fill out a lengthy application. There are criteria for excellence in leadership, service, character and scholarship.

"I feel proud that all my hard work throughout my high school career has paid off. Throughout high school I have had various leadership roles, and documented over 1300 hours of service toward my community," Caroline said about the scholarship. "Students should know that high school is whatever you make of it; don't be scared to try new things and take every opportunity that comes your way. Those are most likely going to be the memories that last a lifetime," she added, and possibly lead to big things like honors and scholarships.

One of the activities Caroline participates in at KCPS is serving as the Assistant Producer, Director and Editor for Kennedy Live, the production enterprise behind daily broadcasts about life at the school. "I have always loved creating in various art forms. But a few years ago I found film and videos, and I fell in love. When I was originally looking at high schools all those years ago, Kennedy Live was one of the contributing factors in my decision to pick Kennedy Catholic. So when the option arose at the beginning of this year, I jumped at the chance," she said. Caroline is headed to Fordham University to study Film & Television.

"The best thing about Kennedy Catholic is the people. The warm and welcoming atmosphere here is what I believe has contributed to my accomplishments and opportunities," Caroline noted.



Character: The student of good character can be said to be one who upholds principles of morality and ethics; is cooperative and responsible; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and is a good citizen.

Rising juniors and seniors with the necessary cumulative grade point average are eligible to apply for membership in the St. Mary's Chapter of the

National Honor Society. Inducted students are required to provide in-school peer tutoring to fellow students. Recently inducted students are: Caroline Arrigale, James Badaracco, Hannah Bridges, Eleanor Brown, Markian Bumbar, Sarah Coughlan, Ethan Csakany, Michael Cunningham, Suriya Desjardins, Samantha DeVino, Christopher DiGiacinto, James Gorman, Emilio Granados, Joseph Grande, Ella Hovsepian, Joel Lopez, Marc Joseph, Zachary Kessler, Thomas Lao, Erin Lavelle, Matthew Lorusso, Gia Mobiglia, Cassidy Moriarty, Kate Mulcahy, Elijah Negron, Patrick O'Connor, Lillian Rivera, Hailey Robbins, Tucker Romagnoli, Brenna Rosario, Lucia Salvatore, Ashley Senese, Dylan Servidio, Victoria Sinchi, Neil Thumma, John Urbanowicz and Diya Vandanath.

Other Student Success Stories

The **KCPS Robotics Team** competed at the X Robotics World Championship (again!) in Dallas after impressive local and regional competition wins earned them a spot. With a record eight wins and two losses, the team ranked 16th out of 82 teams in their division, and after starting in the top five percent worldwide the team soared to the top two percent!

The **KCPS History Bowl** team competed in a national competition in Washington, D.C., one of nearly 200 teams to do so. The National History Bowl is a quiz competition for teams of students, testing knowledge of the history of all eras and all parts of the world. Juniors James Gorman, Ellie Brown, Dylan Servidio, John Urbanowicz and Kevin Finer first competed through the U.S. Division of the International Academic Competitions, winning against Fordham's B Team, Horace Greeley's B Team and Yonkers' A and B Teams.

Sophia Desimini '26 and **Monika Gojcay '26** raised nearly \$35k to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and were honored by the LLS Student Visionaries Gala.

Classmate Emma Smith also was part of the effort.

Zachary Kessler '25 went with a group of peers and Mrs. Kalantarov to present at the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center at Iona University about the impact of war on civilians.



National Honor Society Inducts New Members At KCPS

This school year, 37 seniors and juniors met the criteria to be inducted into the school's chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS). Known as the St. Mary's Chapter as it is named after KCPS' predecessor school, St. Mary's in Katonah, the NHS recognizes students who exhibit the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership and character.

Scholarship is demonstrated by maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 93.0. In addition, the other qualities are described as follows on the National Honor Society website:

Service: This quality is defined as the voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, without direct financial or material compensation to the individual performing the service.

Leadership: Student leaders are often viewed as those students who are resourceful, good problem solvers, involved in and promoters of school activities, idea contributors, dependable, and who are both organized and organizers.



International Student Program Brings “A Worldly View” to KCPS

Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School prides itself on giving its students many unique experiences, and one of them allows students to learn in a great diverse environment. Adolescents from over 60 communities/towns attend KCPS, as well as those from overseas thanks to Kennedy Catholic’s International Student Program.

“Not only does the KCPS’ International Student Program provide additional diversity to our school community, I think it offers our students a worldly view,” said Joanna Kalantarov, International Student Coordinator and Social Studies Teacher/ Department Chair. “As a college preparatory school, our mission has in mind the preparation of our students for the next phase of their lives and for their futures. I think the presence of international students offers an understanding and awareness of people who come from different parts of the world, and I think this experience also allows students to build inclusiveness for these international students,” she added.

Bringing Out The Best In ALL Students

Mrs. Kalantarov also feels that this program brings out the best in KCPS students, allowing them to show their caring and nurturing sides. “You would be amazed how open and helpful our domestic Kennedy students can be. As being both the coordinator and classroom teacher I have witnessed so many examples of this,” she said.

The international students are very involved in many activities at Kennedy Catholic, adding their vision and talents to band, football, Student Council, chorus, art shows and so many clubs, to name a few. These students also enhance the social and academic lives of all students; this year they hosted a Chinese New Year celebration and several scored in the top range at the American Mathematics Competition, especially Shi Yunfan, otherwise known as William, who finished in the top 5% nationwide.



Along with the International Student Program that enhances diversity, empathy and cultural and world learning at KCPS, all students can join clubs that further grow their experiences such as International Cooking & Culture, Italian, Latin American Heritage, Gaelic Society and more. Additionally, there are the annual Spring trips to Europe, with students most recently visiting France and Greece.

“Everyone at Kennedy Catholic is extremely proud with how much the international students immerse themselves in the school community. Seeing the growth from when the students start to where they end up in a few short months is remarkable; I am always so proud of them,” Mrs. Kalantarov said.

Hosts Are Needed

However, for international students to attend KCPS, hosts are needed! Mrs. Kalantarov encourages anyone to take on this opportunity, even for a few months or a year. “We have so many great students and this is such a wonderful opportunity. There are so many stories in which international students come back to visit the school and their host families years later just to reconnect,” she said, noting that the hosts, international students,

staff and domestic students all benefit long term from this shared experience.

In order to host a KCPS international student, a family or individual would need to get in touch with the school’s Homestay Coordinators or contact Mrs. Kalantarov. From there the hosts will be vetted and as students are accepted or need a homestay change the pairing begins. Currently Kennedy Catholic works with APEX, Cambridge, IVY, Three W and AUSA.

To learn more about Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School’s International Student Program and/or becoming a host, please email Mrs. Kalantarov at jkalantarov@kennedycatholic.org.





KCPS Athletics Highlights

Softball clinched their third consecutive CHSAA Tier 1 North Division Title this season. An extra inning 11-9 victory against division rival Maria Regina High School was led by junior Aine Curley's 4 for 4 day that featured a solo homerun. Then in Somers, the Gaels swept a division double header over Preston High School with fantastic 8-0 and 12-3 wins. Junior Cassidy Moriarity and freshman Nina Sanese-Cavone each belted out three hits in Game 1 while Marissa Ferrara '26 swung for two hits and two RBI in Game 2. The Lady Gaels finished their season 13-2. The ladies won their third straight CHSAA Tier One Division and reached the Semi-Finals of the CHSAA Archdiocesan Championship playoffs.

Baseball ended a regular season ranked #1 by Lohud. According to the write up, "Kennedy was busy, with four games in four days, but they stayed upbeat and got two thrilling wins over Iona Prep. Kennedy lost a heartbreaker in an April 17 suspended game that was resumed on Saturday and finished with St. Joseph's by-the-Sea enjoying a walk off win in the 12th inning. The Gaels got back on track with a win over Regis to start the week." Their overall record for the season was 15-4 League Record, and they won the "Gallo" Division. The Gaels lost in the Archdiocesan Championship 3-2 to St. Peter's of Staten Island.

Boys Lacrosse ended their regular season play with an 11-3 overall game record. Captain Fin McConnell has broken every scoring record previously held by Gerard Martirano '15 with 189 goals, 100 assists and 289

points. Previously, the team had won eight championships in a row and lost an extremely hard fought game to Monsignor Farrell 7-6 in this year's championship.

Off To Play In College

Fifteen KCPS graduating seniors committed to play their best sport at the college and university level. Congratulations to these student-athletes as they continue to excel athletically and academically and follow their dreams:

- Milaniya Acevedo – University of Mount St. Vincent Lacrosse
- Madison Carlo – Manhattanville College Basketball
- Lauren Fox – Southern New Hampshire University Soccer
- Omar Giret – Mercy College Baseball
- CJ Griggs – Hofstra University Baseball
- Aiden Hall – St. Thomas Aquinas College Football
- Mason Kauffman – Plymouth State University Lacrosse
- Madi Lopez – Springfield College Basketball
- Julia Marsich – Springfield College Lacrosse
- Elijah Negron – University of Maryland Eastern Shore Baseball
- Erin O'Mara – The University of Scranton Tennis
- Richard Ponzini – Western Connecticut State University Football
- Colin Spidal – Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Baseball
- Cam Stackhouse – Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Lacrosse
- Jack Williams – Rochester Institute of Technology Baseball



Girls Basketball Wins Two Championships After Notable Season Wins

Kennedy Catholic's Girls Basketball Team ended their first season under new coaching with two big championship wins and several notable season game wins against strong competitors. The team played hard for and gracefully won both the CHSAA Class A League and City Championships in March 2024. The Lady Gaels posted an 18-12 season and made it to the Catholic State semifinals, where they lost to St. Mary's High School of Lancaster.

This was the first season that the team was coached by KCPS Athletic Director Dominick Tassone, and the second season coached by Assistant Coach Michelle (Santora) Pandiscia '10. The partnership proved productive and successful. All together, they had notable regular season wins by defeating Somers High School, White Plains High School, South Glens Falls High School, Moore Catholic High School, Paramus Catholic High School and Arlington High School, among others.

There were many memorable moments during the season and playoffs, but Coach Tassone elaborated on these: "In the first round of the playoffs, we defeated rivals Maria Regina High School at home, then went on the road to defeat #1 St. Joseph Hill Academy High School 55-53 in the semi-final game, and then of course the league championship game where we were down seven points late in the game yet finished on a 10-0 run to win 53-50 over Moore Catholic (Staten Island) – those were some of the best moments."

One of the most exciting experiences was when the Lady Gaels captured the CHSAA Tier 2 City Championship with a score of 67-39 against Fontbonne Hall Academy at the Draddy Gymnasium at Manhattan College.

According to Coach Tassone, all the girls played great all season but there were some standout players, including seniors Madison Carlo, who made 84 three-pointers; Madi Lopez, who had 100+ assists, 100+ rebounds and

scored 150+ points; Lauren Fox, who led the team in rebounding and was second in scoring; and Gianna Carlo, who made 50+ three pointers at a 42% shooting percentage. "And junior Callie Arrigale was our defensive player of the year, leading the team in steals, charges taken and always defending the opposing team's best player," he noted.

"I think the team was so successful because it had the right ingredients. The players complimented each other on the floor, and were great teammates off the floor. They played for one another and not themselves – unselfish would be a great word to describe them," Coach Tassone

reported. Describing his coaching philosophy that helped the team excel, he says that, "It is to work harder than any other team in the league, play defense and share the ball. The idea to play for one another aren't just words; we try to instill that attitude in each player. When you start playing for a bigger reason than yourself the results come quickly."

Assistant Coach Pandiscia agrees. "The team definitely deserves all the accolades this year after the hard work they've put into the season. I think this season went exceptionally well for the ladies because they truly came together as a team, won together, lost together and fought to the end to win not only the Archdiocesan Championship, but the City Championship as well. They should be very proud of all

they have accomplished this season. I know I am!" she said.

Her ability to incorporate her expertise as a strength and conditioning coach into this season helped the girls perform better as student-athletes. Assistant Coach Pandiscia also coaches in the KCPS Volleyball Program, and last season her Freshman team went undefeated. Coach Tassone also draws on his experiences as Head Football Coach, Girls Flag Football Coach, and a teacher (U.S. History and Physical Education) at Kennedy Catholic for leading the Lady Gaels Basketball Team.



“The end of the season was very exciting! The ladies fought hard for two major wins to secure the CHSAA Archdiocesan League championship, one in the semi-finals against St. Joe’s Hill, followed by another close win against Moore Catholic. Those wins led to a Tier 2 City Championship win and an appearance at the State Championship, none of which has been done in the history of Girls Basketball at Kennedy Catholic! Every second of post-season play was hard earned and well deserved,” said Assistant Coach Pandiscia.

She knows about working and playing hard as a student-athlete at Kennedy Catholic. During her years at KCPS Assistant Coach Pandiscia played multiple sports, including Volleyball for all four years, Softball for two years, and Golf for one season during her Junior year. After graduating Kennedy in 2010, she graduated from Iona University (then Iona College) in 2013 with a degree in Public Relations and Marketing. In addition to currently serving as a coach in the Volleyball and Basketball Programs at Kennedy, Assistant Coach Pandiscia is a Marketing and Events Manager for a beverage company in Connecticut, the Assistant to the Director of Alumni Relations at Western Connecticut State University, and a travel advisor.

Coach Tassone is very positive about his team, and will miss the



five graduating seniors. “I would like to take this opportunity to thank Madi Lopez, Lauren Fox, Gianna Carlo, Madison Carlo and Tara Devaney. These girls inspired me with their work ethic, friendship, leadership and the way they were coachable all season long. I can’t thank them enough for accepting me as a first-year Head Coach, and I am so happy they were able to see the fruits of their labor with both the League and City Championships,” he said. Madison Carlo will continue her basketball career at Manhattanville College, and Madi Lopez will play at Springfield University.

The coaches also appreciate the support of others they received this season. “The school and parents are all very supportive of their teams. Students and faculty came out to support the ladies at games, and the parents go above and beyond throughout the season in so many ways. They are just as dedicated to the team as the student-athletes are, which is always appreciated by the coaching staff,” said Assistant Coach Pandiscia.

And as for current and future players, they both agree that while it’s always nice to have a winning record and collect championships, just as important is building a foundation of strength, dedication and trust among teammates. These are some of the values taught in all Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School programs.



SMA Students Join The Kennedy Players to Perform “Matilda”

This year’s Spring Musical was a little different, as the 35-person cast ranged from ages ten to 18 plus six-year-old performers Valentina Molina and Brigid McKeegan joining the Kennedy Players. As a result of all that talent, every Kennedy Catholic performance of Roald Dahl’s “Matilda” received standing ovations.

Despite the challenges, including complex music counts, extremely wordy lyrics and the need to perform with a British accent combined with choreography, fast changes and Matilda’s classmates moving their 12 desks on and off the stage, the cast shined and met their marks.

Also new this year was the inclusion of budding young talent from Saint Mary’s Academy, who for the first time were involved with a full Kennedy Catholic musical production. “I am personally thrilled that we can incorporate these young students at an early age. I am already envisioning the growth and future development of these young performers,” said Director Barbara Rue.

“Kennedy Catholic’s student performers are always the strong force in making the productions a success. They know that it’s going to take hard work, dedication and perseverance to put on a production that we can all be proud of. They do it and do it well!” she added.

Working with a group this size with various ages and abilities takes a lot of patience and teamwork. Everyone needs to pull together 100 percent to make the show work

seamlessly, and apparently everyone did. The young cast was able to do so because of the great leadership they had putting the production together.

“Mrs. Ines Wilhelm-Boston and Mrs. Maria Abbamont P’19,’24, our Production Team; Mrs. Annette Di Grandi P’09,’11,’16, our Costume Designer; Miss Chloe Bodt Sasson, our Musical Director; and I are all dedicated to teach as well as encourage each individual child to be their best. Although our task is to put on a show, our focus and concern are for the students,” Director Rue noted. “They are treated as professionals and are expected to respond in the same manner. That’s how we do it!”

Saint Mary’s Academy students Sofia Amone ’30, who played Matilda, along with her classmates on and off the stage – Johnathan Davis ’30 as the cake-loving Bruce, Alex Curra ’30 as the enthusiastic Nigel, Chiara Lepidi ’30 as the best friend Lavender, Erynn Lopez ’30 as outspoken Hortensia, and Victoria Petti ’29 as shy little Erica, worked hard daily on their lines, vocals, harmonies and dancing daily while keeping up with their schoolwork, according to Director Rue.

She also applauded Stage Managers Joseph Di Graci ’24 and Dee Dee Shapely ’24 for their attentiveness to the needs of the show and how they kept order on stage peacefully and gracefully. “All the stage, tech, sound and costume crews came into the show in February and our theatre

family grew into one big happy family working and collaborating to put the 'Matilda' puzzle together. Long hours, laughter and the famous, 'One more time...and 5,6,7,8' were heard often, but I think if you asked any of the cast they would say it was worth it," Director Rue said.

Kennedy Catholic and Saint Mary's Academy encourages all students of any age, level and school to participate in the musical theatre program. "No one does this alone, everyone has something to give and everyone is equally important. That's how we do it here. And that's how we did it!" Director Rue concluded. Everyone involved, take a bow!

Music at KCPS

The Kennedy Catholic Band had a very busy school year, performing for Open Houses and at the Christmas and Spring Concerts. Additionally, some of the band

Frank Zhang '27 on alto sax and Gavin Yin '25 and Richard Zhang '27 on trumpet. And this spring the NYSSMA (New York State School Music Association) solo festival had nine KCPS students participating on voice and various instruments. "Participating in this festival involves preparing a solo and performing for an adjudicator for a grade. This is an additional endeavor that students volunteer to participate in, demonstrating their commitment to the performing arts," said Music Teacher Chris Melito. The students were Nicolas Duque Chalarca '27, Diya Vandanath '25 and Chloe Murphy '30 on violin, John Cassidy '26 on trumpet and piano, Catherine Criscuola '27 and Ryan Tedesco '27 on voice, and Peter Stratman '26 on piano.

Also very active was the KCPS String Ensemble, led by Director Samuel Glazman. The ensemble consists of 12 musicians who play violins, violas, cellos and harp. This year the ensemble performed the following pieces at the

"Kennedy Catholic's student performers are always the strong force in making the productions a success. They know that it's going to take hard work, dedication and perseverance to put on a production that we can all be proud of."



students participated in the Northern Westchester Honors Band. This festival takes place every fall and this year Kennedy Catholic was represented by flutist Stevie Nadig '25, clarinetist Jared Delventhal '25, trumpeter John Cassidy '26, trombonist James Roche '25, mallet percussionist Erin Lavelle '25, and percussionist Christopher Cilaurio '25.

The band performs a wide range of music, from Sousa marches to pop music to movie themes and patriotic music. This year four international students became an integral part of the ensemble: Jocelyn Pan '27 on clarinet,

Fall Concert: Symphony No. 2 versions by Joseph Bologne and Chevalier de Saint-Georges and Broadway favorites including "Get Me to the Church on Time," "Edelweiss" and "Memory" from "The Phantom Of The Opera." The Christmas Concert featured "African Holy Night" by Robert W. Smith, "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" by Eddie Pola and George Wyle, "Christmas Fiddlers in the Hall" and "Merry Christmas Cha, Cha, Cha!" arranged by Deborah Baker. For the Spring Concert the ensemble performed rhythmical transformations and Bossa Rojo by Bert Ligon.

Support KCPS and SMA: CATHOLIC EDUCATION MATTERS



For those who believe that a faith-filled Catholic Education matters, there are many ways you can support us and guarantee that all students who desire an excellent, value-centered college prep education and daily life with God and Jesus can receive these gifts from Kennedy Catholic Preparatory School and Saint Mary's Academy:

- 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.
- The **Blue and White Fund - Leaving a Legacy for the Next Generation of Gaels**. The Blue and White Fund was incorporated in 1999 as a tax-exempt "rainy-day fund" for Kennedy Catholic to help the school provide scholarship aid to students and be prepared to meet unexpected expenses when they might arise. With contributions from alumni, parents and friends of Kennedy Catholic, this 501(c) (3) not-for-profit

corporation has functioned during the past 25 years in providing scholarships and in helping Kennedy Catholic with special projects.

- To donate to these Funds, go to www.kennedycatholic.org/giving/.
- Attend, donate to and/or sponsor our special events, such as the **Golf Classic and other fundraisers**. Contact advancement@kennedycatholic.org for more information on how to help.
- Join the **Alumni Association!** Stay in touch with your classmates, enjoy fun events and help us out! Providing a quality, affordable, faith-based education for nearly a century doesn't happen by accident. Gael alumni who remain grateful for their experiences as part of our school community can express that gratitude in the form of charitable contributions to their alma mater, ensuring that future generations of Gaels will continue to share the fullness of our Catholic high school experience. Contact us at www.kennedycatholic.org/alumni/ and alumni@kennedycatholic.org.

We Are Two Thirds of the Way to a Dream Becoming Reality!

Nearly three years ago KCPS announced that it would build and establish the Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center. Since then the outpouring of love for Sr. Janet and support for the project that we have received from alumni has been humbling and heartwarming.

As a school, we commit to forming the Mind, Body and Spirit of our students, and the Sr. Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center will help fortify the Body tenet of our mission. We would like to think she too would be humbled by this outpouring of love and support for this project, which has been extraordinary. Yet we had another hurdle to breaking ground in Summer 2024.

The Student Fitness Center will provide all Kennedy Catholic students with the ability to maintain healthy habits and build their physical strength, stamina and skills with new state-of-the-art

gym equipment. The facility will also allow student-athletes to train with weights and more to be competition ready.

From 1967 to 2015, Sister Janet impacted thousands of students through her teaching and commitment to athletics at the school. So while we reached \$1.2 million in our fundraising goal, thanks in large part to the generosity of so many alumni, we still need \$300,000 to build and outfit the new Student Fitness Center. Thank you to Mark Girolamo '71 for matching donated funds up to \$300,000. We hope to begin construction this fall after delays beyond our control, including the continually rising cost of building supplies. Still, the Fitness Center Committee is working with Class Captains to raise the rest of the funds needed. Class Captains reach out to classmates to share news of the new facility and ask for support. We are in need of Class Captains from the 1990s through the 2000s to help; if you want to allow Kennedy Catholic to continue to best serve our students by



gym equipment. The facility will also allow student-athletes to train with weights and more to be competition ready.

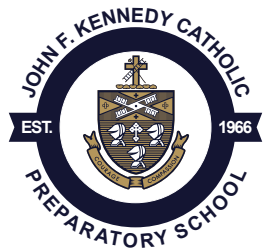
Rising senior, art student and track athlete Ellie Brown shared her excitement for the project, noting that her brother, baseball player Stephan '26, may be able to benefit from the building before he graduates. Ellie became involved in the track program her freshman year when she ran spring track, but has since joined all three seasons of the sport under the guidance of coach Courtney Jackson. "I love the track program because all of the athletes push each other. Even though it's an individual sport, we work as a team and celebrate each other's accomplishments. I am grateful to my coach for all of her support and guidance, and I think building a student fitness center in celebration of the person who founded the program is a great thing."

The new, separate 2,300-square-foot building (located in front of the convent and overlooking the turf field and track) will be named the Sister Janet Meehan Student Fitness Center to honor the beloved cross country & track coach and math and art teacher. A pillar of the Kennedy Catholic community for over 50 years, she was named Coach of the Year seven times and encouraged students to get fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

volunteering to be a Class Captain or by donating funds, please contact Fred Compton, Director of Advancement, at fred.compton@kennedycatholic.org or go to www.kennedycatholic.org/fitness-center/.

Let's see which classes can help push us to the finish line! So far, the alumni from the 1970s are in the lead, with the Class of 1971 donating \$329,169 thanks to Mr. Girolamo's pledge as mentioned above, and the Class of 1973 donated a total of \$33,450 with the Class of 1975 giving \$27,050 so far and the Class of 1972 raising \$18,600. For other decades, the Class of 1957 leads the way with donations totalling \$211,900 and the Class of 1968 tops out at \$19,850; The Class of 1983 leads the '80s with donations totalling \$10,722. The Class of 1992 leads their decade with donations of \$20,875. For the 2000s the Class of 2006 leads with donations totalling \$1,907. We would love to see what the other classes of the 2000's can do towards this effort!! In total, alumni classes have donated \$739,862 for the new Student Fitness Center project.

Your support will help educate generations of Gaels in health and wellness. A healthy body is necessary for peace of mind and spiritual connection. Please see what you can do. Your employer might also match your donation. Thank you in advance!



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

**Golf Classic:
October 3, 2024**

**Homecoming:
October 4, 2024**

**Open House:
October 26 and
October 29, 2024**

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



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