

# SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY

*Empowering Women for Leadership Since 1878*

## Parent Perspective

Issue No. 1, Fall 2020



### **Seniors Jennifer Parra and Miya Morrison Awarded The Kathryn Budinich Scholarship**

On September 21, 2020, 15 Fox Place hosted a Golf Outing at Skyway Golf Course in memory of Kathryn La Prete Budinich '65. Monies raised at this event were used to fund scholarships in Kathryn's name for two high school rising seniors that have demonstrated a spirit of creativity, vision and entrepreneurship in their high school careers. The 2021 recipients of The Kathryn Budinich Scholarship are Miya Morrison, (left) and Jennifer Parra (right).



Kathryn Budinich was a scholarship student herself, proudly attending SDA. With her many accomplishments in business, she was the embodiment of SDA's mission of empowering young women for leadership in a global society. She used her creative vision and love of life to spread joy through her businesses. Both Word of Mouth Catering and 15 Fox Place nurtured an appreciation for family, food and friendship in all who had the pleasure of enjoying her hospitality.

### **SDA Welcomes our Board of Trustees Members for the 2020/2021 School Year**

Mrs. Cathleen Callahan '73 Board Chair  
Ms. Jean Capparelli Boyko '73 Trustee  
Mr. John T.M. Chester Trustee  
Sr. Peggy Ann Clinton, OP, '75 Trustee  
Sr. Patricia Crowley, OP Trustee, Secretary to the Board  
Mrs. Sarah Degnan Barbi Ex Officio, Head of School  
Sr. Patricia Hogan, OP, '59 Trustee  
Ms. Angelique Jackson-Belle '98 Trustee  
Ms. Elizabeth Katusa '04 Trustee  
Ms. Maryanne Kelleher '90 Trustee  
Ms. Aida Meskel '01 Trustee  
Ms. Anne Dalton O'Brien '65 Trustee P'90, P'94  
Ms. Susan Mulvaney Odenthal '73 Trustee, Past Board Chair  
Sr. Lena Picillo, OP Trustee, Council Liaison  
Mr. James Rizzo P'13 Trustee  
Mr. George Taite, Esq. P'14 Trustee  
Sr. Patricia Tavis, OP Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Vicaress, Director of Sponsored Ministries

JOIN US FOR

### **Upcoming Events!**

-  **Tuesday, Dec 1**  
Class of 2025  
Application Deadline  
Giving Tuesday
-  **Monday, Dec 7**  
IBM Academy of Technology  
STEM Live Simulcast
-  **Tuesday, Dec 8**  
Feast of the Immaculate  
Conception
-  **Friday, Dec 11**  
Faculty Webinar - B Schedule
-  **Thursday, Dec 17**  
Connected Sisterhood-  
Meditation with Elizabeth  
Katusa '04 via Zoom 4PM
-  **Friday, Dec 18**  
Winter Recess Begins
-  **Friday, Dec 25**  
Christmas
-  **Monday, Jan 11**  
School Reopens
-  **Friday, Jan 15**  
End of 2nd Marking Period
-  **Monday, Jan 18**  
No-School - Dr. Martin Luther  
King Jr. Day
-  **Friday, Jan 22**  
Faculty Webinar - B Schedule



## SDA Creates Three New Elective Courses



**MEDQUEST Program:** This program combines theory and practical application with externships and volunteer work to afford students the knowledge, insight, and experience necessary to pursue various health careers. MEDQUEST provides classroom instruction, practical labs, and field experiences. The MEDQUEST simulation lab has four distinct parts: a reception area, an assessment room, a laboratory, and a hospital room. Students can earn CPR Certification, EKG Technician Certification and a Medical Assistant Certification through the National HealthCareer Association.

**Publications: Introduction to Graphic Design, Photography and Storytelling:** Students learn skills in layout, typography, photography, journalistic writing and graphic design by becoming part of the yearbook production team. Students will also use their yearbook production skills to help create our school literary magazine. Students are busily working on the 2021 yearbook and are excited to share their work in April.

**Creative Writing:** Students will examine how each political, social, and cultural development is reflected in the great works of literature. Composition and Critical Thinking Skills are enhanced through text-based writing and text-based projects. Students will learn to write for the screen, work on a memoir and novel, as well as writing multiple genres of poetry.

## Virtual Open House an Overwhelming Success

Saint Dominic Academy's First Virtual Fall Open House on October 18th and 21st were a huge success. The event featured club and athletic demonstrations, presentations by academic departments and the administration, a virtual tour of the school along with complete information about the application for admission process for all grades, including transfers. Live Q&A sessions with students, faculty and administration rounded out the evening and answered questions from students and parents. In person tours are still available and interested families should contact our Enrollment Manager, Kristen Mallon via email at [kmallon@stdominicacad.com](mailto:kmallon@stdominicacad.com).

## Welcome to The Class of 2024

### Legacy Students & Sisters

- **Evangeline Cruz-Perez**, daughter of Jillian Cruz '01
- **Kalista D'Elia**, daughter of Zoe Laros D'Elia '91
- **Meghan Dirkin**, daughter of Pamela Giacchi Dirkin '92, sister of Grace Dirkin, cousin of Nina '11 and Toni Giacchi '15
- **Ava Farulla**, sister of Gianna Farulla '20 and Sophia Farulla '21
- **Esperanza Hak**, daughter of Paula Mercado Hak '89
- **Kelly Hester**, sister of Megan '08, Katie '09 and Shannon '15
- **Isabella Playa**, sister of Gabrielle Playa '21
- **Elizabeth Rodriguez**, daughter of Patricia Bazo Rodriguez '92
- **Natalia Roman**, daughter of Jennifer Quinones '97
- **Carmelle Sullivan**, granddaughter of Margaret M. Ruppert '58
- **Giavanna Taite**, sister of Angelina Taite '22 and cousin of AriannaTaite '14

Saint Dominic Academy welcomes our new 7th grade class, the Class of 2024 and transfer students to our family this fall!







## Welcome New Faculty Members

The Saint Dominic Academy family warmly welcomes our new faculty members. Ms. Roxann D'Alessio, Ms. Emily Hamburger and Miss Samantha Heavner.

Ms. Emily Hamburger is completing her Masters in English Literature at Montclair State University this December, where she is the recipient of the Mary Bondon Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Literary Study and the Lawrence Conrad Prize for Excellence in the Study of American Literature. She has published literary criticism on John Steinbeck and Notable American Women Writers, both with Salem Press. Prior to her graduate work, Ms. Hamburger was an attorney and editor. She holds a B.A. from Yale (American Studies) and a J.D. from Columbia. She is the proud mom of two little children who are rapidly becoming bookworms themselves.



Miss Samantha Heavner is thrilled to be joining the SDA community! A first-year teacher, Ms. Heavner graduated from Harvard College, where she studied American history and literature with a minor in African-American studies. At Harvard, she sang in the Radcliffe Pitches and the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum. Now, as a member of SDA's English Department, she's excited to assist our ninth- and tenth-grade students with strengthening their appreciation for and understanding of literature!



Ms. Roxann D'Alessio has been teaching in Catholic high schools for over twenty-five years, her career began in Newark then Bayonne and now Jersey City. Additionally, She has written medical curriculum for a community college serves as the Evening Director of a small medical college in Essex County. In 2009, she wrote the MEDQUEST Program for an area high school, designed the simulation laboratory, directed and taught the Program until June, 2020 when the school closed. Ms. D'Alessio hold degrees from Kean University and Roberts Walsh Medical Assistant School and has continuing education credits from Stevens Institute of Technology, Eastern International College, Sanford Brown Institute and Union County College. And now, it is my pleasure to bring the MEDQUEST Program to St. Dominic Academy.



## Parent Association News

The Parent Association is always looking for volunteers for the events they sponsor. Please contact the officers of the Parent Association if you are interested in helping.

### 2020-2021 OFFICERS AND THEIR LEGACY

JANE MATTIELLO President  
(REAGAN '22)

GIGI DIAZ '78 Vice President  
(CASSANDRA '19 & AMANDA '21)

KRISTIN MARTIN Treasurer  
(COURTNEY '21)

PLEASE GIVE ON

#GIVING  
TUESDAY

December 1, 2020



## Summer Wrap Up

The school year was abruptly changed during the spring and summer months when we chose to move our students to a remote learning model and we were unable bring the accomplishments of our students to you in a spring newsletter - here are some recaps you may have missed.

## Saint Dominic Academy Recognizes AP® Scholars

SDA is proud to announce that eight members of the Class of 2020 have earned AP Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the AP exams. **Emily Perri** has been named an AP Scholar with Distinction for earning an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. Fellow Class of 2020 members **Sarah Jowett** and **Elyse Sanchez** have also been named AP Scholars with Honor for having received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. **Chyla Delima**, **Veronica Dominguez**, **Mimi McVey**, **Danielle Pinto** and **Claire Roake**, all recent graduates, were named AP Scholars for having received scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams. The Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) administered by The College Board provides students at SDA and other high schools with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement or both for successful performance on the AP Exams.

## Liberty Science Center STEM Fair Winners!

Stem students were invited to participate in the STEM Fair held at the Liberty Science Center late in the spring. Olivia Smith took silver with Women's Self-Esteem and Sports project. Nicole Fitzgerald took bronze with a project centered on The Search for Antibiotic Producers in our Soil and lastly Venessa Jaikissoon took bronze with Hydroponics Versus Traditional Farming.



## Summer Senior Gathering

In July our senior students, the Class of 2020 was brought together for one last gathering before heading off to college. Valedictorian Valentyna Simon and Salutatorian Elyse Sanchez delivered their graduation speeches to much applause, while students shared yearbooks and conversation. Sports awards were also delivered to our athletes. While this may have been the last gathering of the Class of 2020, sisterhood will keep these ladies sharing stories and friendship for years to come.







## BLUE DEVIL PRIDE

### SDA Welcomes Soccer Coach Jessica Iorio and Assistant Coach Anne O'Brien

St. Dominic Academy is proud to welcome Jessica Iorio as Head Soccer Coach for the 2020 season.

Jessica Iorio, '02, was a four-year standout who made an impact on the team from her first days at the Academy. As a player she was described as determined, talented and proactive. Following her time at SDA she was a four-year player at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut where she earned a degree in Finance and a soccer scholarship her junior and senior year. Jessica began her coaching career in 2006 working with and organizing a host of youth girl soccer clubs. She also coached Holy Family for 5 years prior to their closing in 2013.



The assistant coach for the Blue Devils will be Anne Dalton O'Brien, a name familiar to Hudson County soccer followers for her fine work at SDA. Ms. O'Brien, a 1965 graduate of the Academy, was asked to pitch in for the team's second year and forged quite a resume at SDA. After humble beginnings, the team at Anne's direction greatly improved. She is the SDA leader in years served (18), wins, games coached, and most every other SDA soccer school record. O'Brien guided the Blue Devils to the three consecutive HCIAA titles from 1999-2001. Anne had a record of 169-139 with five ties. She has stayed active at her alma mater serving on numerous committees and alumnae boards since she left the program in 2005.

### Senior Megan Dunne Beats School Scoring Record



Congratulations to senior Megan Dunne, featured in Jersey Journal NJ.com article, has scored at least 22 goals in every season, tallying 82 scores across her career, breaking Erin McNally's school record of 80 set in 2003! Read all about her and the SDA soccer season [here](#)!

### Cross Country Team Takes Multiple Titles

Congratulations to our cross country team and coach John Nagel on winning the North State Sectional Title! All seven runners made it to the top 13 spots beating Villa Walsh 31-39!

**Kayla Sullivan '21** took 1st with a time of 20:30  
**Milani Bethel '21** took 4th with a time of 21:43  
**Charlotte Hennessey '21** took 6th with a time of 22:04  
**Caroline O'Donnell '21** took 9th with a time of 22:43  
**Madison Cortes '22** took 11th with a time of 23:26  
**Tea Baramidze '21** took 12th with a time of 23:36  
**Lainey Nguyen '23** took 9th with a time of 23:41

The Cross Country team also won their 4th Hudson County Track Coaches Association Championship win!





## Letters

### A Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents:

With all of the written communication from my office this fall, I was at first hard pressed to find a new and creative focus for this, my autumn parent newsletter message. After all, if you follow my weekly blog, you know my thoughts on all we are coping with right now and as you get emails from me and the rest of the administration regarding SDA's current remote status, you know exactly how the school is working to manage our stellar educational program, winter athletic schedules, and the overall health and safety of all. In these trying times, what else could I possibly tell you?

Then, it occurred to me, that what I should be saying as we are heading into the holiday season is merely a simple but heartfelt THANK YOU! You've been so supportive, so understanding, so gracious when it came to every change that has transpired from last March till now. Our new parents, 9th grade parents, you entrusted your daughters to us at the height of a pandemic and have maintained that trust. Our parents from years past, you stuck by us as we navigated these waters together- never leaving our side because you trust in our devotion, not only to the mission of Catholic Dominican Education, but the devotion our faculty and staff shows toward your daughters. Today, and all this year, I am truly blessed to have such loyal and dedicated parents-not every school is as lucky as our school.

So, from my house to yours, from my heart to yours, I extend my thanks for your trust and support and my wishes for a beautiful, if perhaps unique, Christmas season.

Warmly,  
Mrs. Degnan Barbi  
Head of School





## Letters

### A Message from the Academic Dean

Dear Parents and Guardians,

You know how we have mostly made “How are you?” so commonplace that it’s lost its genuine meaning? Given everything that’s going on right now, I would truly want to know how everyone’s doing – you, your families, and especially our young ladies. I’m pretty sure you feel exactly the same way. Nowadays, the equally commonplace response of “Good” or “Fine” will not suffice. We need honest-to-goodness communication and genuine interpersonal interactions. As such, I am more than glad that, up until now, we have been able to manage physically opening the doors of Saint Dominic Academy to school year 2020-2021.

While our neighboring public school systems have remained virtual since March, we have made every effort to keep our students in school, albeit on weekly turns. One can’t help but just be proud of how every student, teacher, and staff has taken pains in observing mask-wearing and social distancing policies, how we have decked up our classrooms with desk shields and sanitation stations, how we are bravely conquering every non-stop six-period day, how teachers are balancing management of in-school and remote classroom combos...all in fulfillment of the desire to be in school...to be with each other...to keep the spirit of the SDA community alive, the spirit that has enabled our school to be the academic institution of excellence that it is.

Kudos to our teachers who have, on a daily basis, been taking one big step after another up the rungs on the ladder of tech ‘savvyness’. While it has proven to be ‘earth-shaking’ at times, we have taken big strides. I tell you, we have also tapped into our creativity reserves at record levels every time we plan our lessons, conduct our classes, and administer assessments, guided by our goal of delivering engaging, interesting classes, school day after school day.

Our vocabulary has focused on two words: flexibility and vigilance. We bear in mind that every student has her own way of dealing with the challenges of these extraordinary times and, as such, make it a point to promptly reach out when something out of the ordinary comes up. I’m sure some of you have noticed how we are in extra closer communication with you, parents and guardians.

I tip my hat off to all of you, as well, for how you are effectively partnering with us. Thank you for every survey question that you thoughtfully answered, for every word of encouragement that you have sent our way, for the attention you give our emails and phone calls, and for each day that you drop your girls at school trusting that we will take good care of them.

Considering everything that we are doing together as the team that we are, I can proudly say that, even in these difficult times, we aren’t just plain surviving, we are thriving! I see proof of that every day in the classrooms and hallways prior to these all-remote days. I still see it every day on the faces of the girls on computer screens and the voices of our teachers which seem to be ‘extra loud’ these days, in the activities on Google classrooms, and in the numbers on PowerSchool. I am in tears, right now, as I finish writing this. I just happen to be one proud teacher of the finest young ladies, the most supportive parents, and the most encouraging colleagues I have at Saint Dominic Academy. Praising and thanking our great and mighty God for this wonderful blessing!

Most sincerely,

Mrs. Guen Claudio-Farrales  
Academic Dean



## Letters

### A Message from the Campus Minister

#### ADVENT

From the Latin verb “advenire” (to come) and its derivative “adventus”, (coming), children learn from their Catechism classes that Advent means “the coming of Christ”, celebrated during the last four Sundays before Christmas. And as so often happens with profound truths that are slowly transformed into common folklore, Advent has become, through the years, synonymous with four candles –three purple and one rose - on an evergreen wreath, and a multicolored advent calendar which families put up yearly as part of their Christmas decorations, not even taking the trouble to find out what is behind each door of the calendar. In a more significant sense, Advent also means the beginning of parish choir practice for the Christmas Masses which will be celebrated during the Christmas season, so Advent has become a part of the specific colors, sounds, and rituals associated with the most joyous feast in the Christian world.

However, a brief look into the etymology and the history of this term - Advent – will quickly remind us that the “coming” referred to is not only the arrival in Bethlehem of the Son of Mary, but also the promise of the “second Coming”, when God renews His covenant of salvation with His people. This used to be a period of reflection and penitence (thus the three purple candles of the advent wreath) accompanied by fasting which, in many Christian traditions, was practiced until the beginning of the twentieth century. This period of forty days leading up to the birth of Jesus was not intended as a prelude to the explosion of joy and revelry associated today with Christmas, but rather a somber period of hopeful expectation of the fulfillment of the promise of the “second Coming.” In the words of the most beautiful and universal Advent song:

O come, o come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

In this critical pandemic period of 2020, it is particularly appropriate that we reflect once again on the true meaning of Advent as we light each candle of hope, peace, joy and love. We need, perhaps, to ask ourselves if we are being punished with one of the seven plagues, as we have wandered away from the righteous path of a holy Christian life.

At this tragic moment of the Covid scourge afflicting all of mankind, it is perhaps fitting that each of us renew our baptismal promise to live and love as God Our Father has mandated all His children do. And lastly, we need to remember that “God so loved the world” that, without merit on our part, God has given us His Son to rescue us from our own foolish, self-destructing ways.

In childlike wonder and expectation, we look forward to the special “Birthday” we celebrate at Christmas. Let us also, once again, amidst the devastation of Covid, remember that we have a Father in Heaven Who hears our prayers and will not abandon us.

This is the hope of Advent. This is the promise of Advent.

Blessings,  
Mahalia Armea  
Campus Minister