

# SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY

*Empowering Women for Leadership Since 1878*

## Parent Perspective

Issue No. 1, Fall 2021

### Junior Sinmi Ajao Hosts Exhibition and Charity Event for Hoboken Shelter



**Sinmi Ajao '23** of Hoboken ended summer vacation with a tremendous undertaking that not only showcased her artistic talents but also brought much needed relief to homeless people in Hoboken. She created eleven original paintings in both acrylic and gouache and sold them through a charity exhibition hosted by Tresorie Gallery and Framing. Proceeds from the sale of Sinmi's paintings benefited the Hoboken Shelter. The Hoboken Shelter provides food, shelter, case management, counseling, skills-training workshops, and permanent supportive housing solutions to those in need. Sinmi's art exhibit and sale was a huge success, with all of her 11 pieces being sold surpassing her goal of \$1000.

Sinmi volunteered at the Hoboken Shelter with her mother and through Saint Dominic Academy. When asked about her motivation for this project she stated, "During the pandemic, I noticed more homeless people on the streets and worried about them. They didn't seem to have anything and I wanted to help them. The one thing of value that I did have, that I could donate, would be my art."

Sinmi approached Heba Elbanna, owner of the Tresorie Gallery, asking if she would be willing to host the event in her Hoboken Gallery. She graciously held the one night show and even offered to frame the artworks. In collaboration, they decided on the eleven pieces, a few from Sinmi's collection but most to be created in preparation for the event. Ms. Elbanna was quite impressed not just with Sinmi's technical skill but also with her dedication, "Pulling together an exhibition is hard and while I appreciate her talent I am even more impressed by her effort and approach. She really is invested in our community and I was happy to help her make this exhibition and charity event a reality."

At Saint Dominic Academy young women participate in projects that utilizes their graces in a variety of positive ways. This project gave Sinmi a chance to showcase her talents through charitable giving and put a special emphasis on our faith and helping those in need. Please consider volunteering your time or donating goods to the Hoboken Shelter. <https://www.hobokenshelter.org>

JOIN US FOR

## Upcoming Events!



**Wednesday, Oct 20**

Junior Retreat Day-Siena Hall



**Thursday, Oct 21**

Junior Ring Ceremony-St. Aedan's



**Friday, Oct 29**

Halloween School Celebration



**Monday, Nov 1**

All Saints Day Mass St. Aedan's  
Thanksgiving Food Drive Begins



**Thursday, Nov 4**

1st Marking Period Ends  
Junior Ring Dance



**Friday, Nov 5**

No School for Students-Faculty and Staff in-school



**Monday, Nov 8**

2nd Marking Period Begins



**Tuesday, Nov 23**

1/2 Day - Thanksgiving Prayer Service



**Wednesday, Nov 24-29**

Thanksgiving Break



**Tuesday, Nov 30**

Giving Tuesday



## Senior, Carolina Rial Awarded The Kathryn Budinich Scholarship



On September 20, 2021, 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 a high school rising senior that have demonstrated a spirit of creativity, vision and entrepreneurship in their high school careers. The 2022 recipient of The Kathryn Budinich Scholarship is Carolina Rial '22.

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.



## Freshmen Emily Sullivan and Shaista Khatoon Awarded The Cento Amici Scholarship

Cento Amici (100 friends) is a community-based, member organization dedicated to providing scholarships to students in New Jersey. Their mission is to enhance the educational opportunities for those who need it most and who are most under-served by existing programs. Cento Amici currently supports scholarships at New Jersey high schools and colleges. The 2021 recipients of The Cento Amici Scholarship are **Emily Sullivan '25**, (left) and **Shaista Khatoon, '25**, (right)

Emily Sullivan - Is a freshman from Harrison NJ and has always wanted to attend SDA. She loves reading, writing and volunteering time at a North Jersey animal shelter.

Shaista Khatoon is a freshman from Jersey City, NJ who loves art. She is always up for a challenge, inquisitive and always willing to help others. She is looking forward to learning all about what SDA has to offer.

## Welcome to The Class of 2025

Saint Dominic Academy welcomed our new 7th grade class, the Class of 2025 and transfer students to our family this fall!

### Legacy Students – Daughters or Granddaughters of Alumnae

#### Class of 2025

- **Maryann Burt** – daughter of Margaret Horsfield Burt '90
- **Cherubim Cruz-Perez** – daughter of Jillian Cruz '01 and sister of Evangeline Cruz-Perez '24
- **Emma Geerin** – granddaughter of Jane Geerin (nee Deitrich) '48
- **Tatiana Kushnir Borges** – daughter of Dr. Marusia Kushnir '89
- **Ava Petrecca** – granddaughter of Carol Haggart Seborowski '65 and sister of Samantha Petrecca '25
- **Samantha Petrecca** – granddaughter of Carol Haggart Seborowski '65 and sister of Ava Petrecca '25
- **Sofia Vacca** – daughter of Lisa Santoniello '92







## Welcome New Faculty Members

The Saint Dominic Academy family warmly welcomes our new faculty members.



Barbara Santoro is excited to join the Saint Dominic Academy staff as an English teacher. She earned a BA in English at Boston College and an MAT in English from the University of New Hampshire. Barbara is passionate about inspiring her students to explore literary works as both windows that provide views into new worlds and other people's lives as well as mirrors that reflect students' own experiences. As a seasoned educator, Barbara has gained a reputation for teaching with enthusiasm, developing a strong rapport with students, and maintaining high standards. She is looking forward to a productive and engaging school year with her students.



Alyssa Ruiz joins SDA as an interim Guidance Counselor. Ms. Ruiz graduated from Saint Peter's University with both an undergraduate and graduate degree. She believes learning is a life long process. "Whether you are a child or someone who has lived a lifetime, there is always something that can make you stop for a second and think, "Wow, I didn't know that." The more we learn about the world that we live in, the more we will be able to help those around us." She is looking forward to working with the young ladies at SDA and to help empower women for leadership.



Yvonne Provost, new to our math department, feels blessed to have this second career with the young women of SDA. She has always known that education would be her ticket to success. Hard work in high school turned into an Ivy League college education with a concentration in Applied Mathematics and then a first career as a vice president of a Fortune 100 company. However, her true dream has always been to teach, so she pursued teaching credentials through Caldwell University. Having raised three daughters with her engineer husband, She knows that a solid background in math and science for young women, regardless of their future career choice, provides enormous opportunities for them.



Mr. Flaviano Claudio, III. joins SDA's Math department. He is a graduate of New Jersey City University's School of Business with a degree in Business Management. He also is a small business owner of Ahead of the Curve Tutors (atctutors.com), an online tutoring company for students in grades 1-6. He is thrilled to be here ushering in the future of our community and of our country.

## 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.

### 2021-2022 OFFICERS AND THEIR LEGACY

**President:** Jane Mattiello, P '22

**Vice President:** Mary Dowden  
'79, P'18, P '23

**Secretary:** Stacey Janeczko  
P'23

**Treasurer:** Margaret Horsfield  
Burt '90, P'25

PLEASE GIVE ON

#GIVING  
TUESDAY

**November 30, 2021**



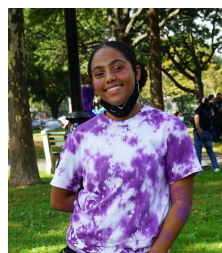
## Fun Fall Events

### Opening Liturgy

SDA was elated to formally begin another school year by gathering together in prayer. Mass at St. Aedan's Church focused on our school's ability to face challenges of this school year with resilience, innovation and determination, a community effort of our teachers, school staff, students, parents and administrators. We asked for God's blessing as we navigate the school year and as tradition dictates the liturgy ended with students, faculty and staff bestowing the Dominican Blessing upon one another. We welcomed the talents of our cantors **Carolina Rial, '22, Elena Hernandez, '22** and **Avery Williams, '22** as well as Mr. Claudio's wonderful guitar accompaniment. Thank you to our Campus Minister Mrs. Armea, Peer and Eucharistic Ministers, cantors, and Fr. Rocco Danzi, S.J. for giving a lovely homily.



### Walk - A - Thon Donation Record Broken



Walk-A-Thon was a resounding success! Students begin the loud, proud party and fundraiser with a grand procession through Jersey City to Lincoln Park. Sporting their class year banner dressed head to toe in their class color. Each class has its own color, 7th grade is pink, 8th grade is orange, freshmen are purple, sophomores are green, juniors are red and seniors are blue. Some students choose to design tee shirts, others wear colorful accessories. The best students wear costumes or even paint themselves a completely different color. Games and a dance party rounded out the days events. This years fund raising efforts totals 34,201, with an all time donation record set by **Jailynn Davis '25** (top right) with a total of \$1580. Proceeds from Walk- A-Thon support student activities.

### Open House Events an Overwhelming Success

Saint Dominic Academy's Open House events were a huge success with over 110 families in attendance. The events featured club and athletic demonstrations, presentations by academic departments and the administration, tours 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 events. Private tours and Student for a Day opportunities are available and interested families should contact our Enrollment Manager, Kristen Mallon via email at [kmallon@stdominicacad.com](mailto:kmallon@stdominicacad.com).



Student for a Day Registration Link:  
<https://www.stdominicacad.com/studentforaday/>





## BLUE DEVIL PRIDE

### Natalie Spiska '23 Wins Two Junior Golf Tournaments

Junior **Natalie Spiska** has won the Invitational North East Championship and the The Kelley Brooke/Bethpage Open under Hurricane Junior Golf Tour. Natalie Spiska '23 has been playing competitive golf since the age of 10, Her love of golf began as a family activity, tagging along to golf courses with her parents who now accompany her tournaments to cheer her on. When asked how she splits her time between school and competitive sports, She stated, "I try to practice everyday, and often end up practicing 5-6 times a week. Since school has started it's been a bit more hectic, but I've managed to keep a balance between the two. My goal in golf is to play at a D1 school in college!"



The Invitational North East Championship was a 2-day tournament, and Spiska had best ever 2 day cumulative score, which also helped win her division. Natalie played 36 holes that weekend on a par 72 course, her combined score through two days was +8, her best tournament score yet. She is currently ranked 16th overall in Girls 14-18 in the Hurricane Junior Golf Tour, also she is ranking 709 Nationally in AJGA Rolex Rank (American Junior Golf Association) and 1912 Nationally in Junior Golf Scoreboard.

"I'm super proud of winning this tournament, because I was able to push past previous results that weren't so great, and come back to shoot one of my best scores so far in competitive play. I'm super excited to keep working at my game so that I can be even better, and hopefully win even more tournaments in the future!"

### Fall Sports Highlights

**Tennis:** **Nicole Reynoso, '23** and **Mia Mendoza, '23** as team captains were instrumental in leading the team in practice, coordinating information and making sure we have players for matches. After dropping the first 4 regular season matches, our SDA Girls tennis team didn't give up. They stormed back, winning the next 4 regular season matches, with all of the players stepping up as we juggled our lineup throughout the season due to illness and injury. We look forward to playing in the Hudson County post season tournament. Of special note, **Cosima Wilkens, '23** from Germany and **Beatrice Crespo, '23** both won all of their matches. And **Mia Mendoza, '23** who gave us our first team win and first 3rd singles win, as well as our first 1st doubles win. In every team win we have had, she has won her match. And in a couple of her losses, she had close 3 set matches.

**Cross Country:** Cross Country began their competition schedule hosting the 27th Annual SDA Invitational.

Twenty schools attended, some of which represent New Jersey's best. St. Dominic Academy's program, the four time defending County champions and 2020 State Sectional champions earned 13 medals. The Freshman finished 3rd with six medals. The participants were **Emily Harrington, Janiyah Capers, Avery Grant, Ava DeJoy, Julianna Brandt and Victoria Brown**. The JV team, with 8 medals, **Emma Lee, Liv Lekovich, Natalia Roman, Lainey Nguyen, Carolina Quito, Keira Ang, Carmelle Sullivan and Kelly Hester** finished 3rd.

**Volleyball:** The Saint Dominic Academy Blue Devils Varsity Volleyball team proudly holds the record of 4-4 in the Hudson County Interscholastic Athletic League (HICAL) National Division. During the 2021-2022 season, the Varsity Volleyball team has achieved many major accomplishments. They ended their regular season with an 8-10 record. They have participated in the Harrison Tournament at Harrison High School against a variety of competitive high school girls volleyball teams.

They concluded the tournament with a 3-5 record, bringing home second place in the Silver Bracket. The Varsity Volleyball team obtained their first win in the HICAL County Tournament in program history defeating Snyder High School. The SDA Volleyball team's success can only be credited to the hard work and dedication of all the members of the team.

**Soccer:** The SDA soccer team had a rough start to the season but under the leadership of the senior captains, **Makenzie Kwiatkowski, Isabella Goncalves** and junior captain **Olivia Torres**, the team practiced ball skills, plays, tactics and teamwork. To teammates, they were supportive, cheering each other on, consoling when there was a loss and encouraging each other to be the best they can be. The team has improved their skills and broadened their understanding of the game. Coach Jessica Ioria is sad to see this year's season end but is looking forward to next year.



## Letters

### A Message from the Interim Head of School

Dear Families and Students,

What an amazing three weeks becoming a member of the Saint Dominic Academy community! The warmth, well-wishes, and hopes that have been shared with me are inspiring and affirm the commitment to the school's mission and goals.

When I sit at my desk, I look directly at a framed version of our mission. Every day, I read it as I sit down. I am asking our Leadership Team, our faculty and staff, and our student leaders to ponder and be able to answer: How is this action, this activity, this tradition supporting our mission? How is it building the culture of the school? Over time, these answers will affirm what we are doing, encourage us to evolve or tweak, or demand that we change. Again, all in time, and all with a deep commitment to empowering women for leadership in our global society.

An immediate action the Leadership Team is taking is working on our communication. We are looking at how we communicate, when we communicate, and why we communicate—within the building and with families, alumnae, and with potential supporters. Our first goal is clearer information on the website calendar. We are getting insight from many stakeholders on what specific information would be most helpful to make the changes most effective. Please know it is a work in progress.

Our strong focus on community demands that we work together to provide a safe and healthy learning environment. Decisions made seek to stabilize learning and build community. We are committed to building a fulfilling school experience within the specific parameters required of schools.

Clear guidelines used in decision making are mission driven.

- Support the physical and mental health and safety of all students, faculty and staff.

- Stay aligned with the guidelines from the State of NJ, the CDC, and our local data.

- Use an in-person academic environment to foster student growth.

- Return traditions, and promote a strong sense of community.

To allow for all of the above as safely as we can, Saint Dominic Academy STRONGLY encourages all eligible community members to be fully vaccinated in order to protect the health and safety of our whole community. We do not want to have to limit access to events or experiences because students are not vaccinated. Since we do not provide weekly testing or expect families to provide it, we will be vigilant and strict in adhering to state and local guidelines. We reserve the right to limit participation in school experiences based on vaccination status. And, as we learn more and assess the compliance of our community members, we will continue to evaluate if we will require the vaccine.

If your child has been vaccinated, please send a copy of the card to the school nurse. Likewise, If you have questions about the vaccine, please also contact the nurse at [dbutto@stdominicacad.com](mailto:dbutto@stdominicacad.com).

We are a community of faith, a community where the care of others is paramount. Having the vaccine is a gift to self and, in the words of Pope Francis, it is an “act of love.”

We are full of love here at SDA, and we are here to work together.

Peace,  
Liz Christou-Woodall





## Letters

### A Message from the Academic Dean

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are, thankfully, starting our 6th week and we are doing very well. Along with the cheer and chatter that come with catching up after a school year and a quarter of hybrid learning, we are happily back in the classrooms and bravely taking on the challenges of the times that we are currently in.

For me, each day is a cause to celebrate. Every step we take, big or small, is a move forward. Every activity we could 'normally' conduct is a victory. Indulge me in enumerating them, as follows:

- Our Big Sister/Little Sister Social, where the newest members of our SDA family, our 9th graders, were able to meet and get to know their Big Sisters in the 11th grade. This program is key to a smooth transition to, and a better understanding of, high school at SDA.
- Link Crew has also started meeting with the 9th-grade classes during Homeroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They are hosting a Halloween Movie Afternoon on October 28th. Their 7th- and 8th-grade sisters will be joining them.
- Our Opening Liturgy on September 17th at Saint Aedan's was a wonderful way to start the school year, where students from each grade, Faculty and Staff, declared their commitments to the mission of SDA. We have also resumed our Tuesday early-morning Masses at the Chapel.
- Our Mother-Daughter Brunch at The Chandelier in Bayonne was a very well-attended event, made even more special because it was Ms. Woodall's, our Interim Head of School, first-ever event with us.
- Our Glee Club's voices have again filled the halls of SDA, during their practices, and at our well-attended Open House on October 17th.
- Our various Clubs are back up and running, excited to welcome both new and returning members, and raring to celebrate special events and occasions throughout the year.
- Our school calendar is filled up with fall sports schedules. I have had the opportunity to watch 3 of the soccer games so far and I am so proud of the energy and the passion that our players bring. I'm pretty sure that, knowing our young ladies, this is the standard across all of our sports activities, which I hope to see more of in the coming days.
- We had PSATs on October 13th and we'll be hosting HSPTs on November 5th.
- As of this writing we are in the thick of preparations for, and are excitedly looking forward to, our Junior Retreat, the Junior Ring Ceremony and Dance.
- Last on my list, at least for the time being, is our students', especially our dear Seniors', all-time favorite activity, Walk-a-thon, where we raised over \$34,000, our top grosser over the last 5 years!

The above, and the host of activities that happen in and outside the classroom, would not be possible if not for the dedication and genuine concern of our teachers, staff, and administrators at offering nothing less than the very best for every young lady entrusted to our care. Each day's lesson is thoughtfully planned and prepared for, and communication with both students and you, parents, is a top priority. As I have always encouraged you, let us work as a team knowing that we have one common goal in mind, that together we'll be able to raise up well-rounded women in "a community of academic excellence, empowered for leadership in this global society." This is, after all, the mission of Saint Dominic Academy.

We continue to entrust school year 2021-2022 to our loving Father in Heaven, who has faithfully watched over, enabled, and blessed us through the last 143 years.

Cheers to a great school year!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Guen Farrales