



Parent Perspective

Issue No. 5, March 2020

Impressive Research Award for SDA Student

Nicole Fitzgerald '22 has been selected for the third annual New York Institute of Technology Mini-Research Grant Award for her research proposal, "Antibiotic Producers in Our Soil," with her mentor, Cristina Manuel. Nicole's proposal states, "Antibiotic resistance is a growing worldwide problem, as researchers are striving to find new anti-microbial agents. One common source is in soil, which contains microbes that fight other microbes. The aim of my science experiment was to collect and test soil samples from three major parks in Jersey City and identify potential antibiotic producers within the bacterial content." The Grant Review committee determined her submission to have scientific merit and potential impact in the STEM fields, including health. For her outstanding accomplishment, Nicole was recently featured as News-12's Viewer of the Day with news anchor Della Crews.



Honor Societies Induct Outstanding Students

SDA recognized academic excellence with the inductions of students into the National Honor Society (NHS) and Mu Alpha Theta, the Math National Honors Society.

NHS honors commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. These four pillars have been associated with membership in the organization since its inception in 1921. To be considered, a student must have a career average GPA of 3.5 or higher. Our new NHS members:

CLASS OF 2020: **Dafna Banach, Fiona Erebor, Gianna Farulla, Yasmine Idrissi, Annabel Payamps, and Makaela Santos.**

CLASS OF 2021: **Olivia Aidukas, Avery Aquino, Milani Bethel, Amanda Diaz, Charlotte Hennessey, Gabriella Lamantea, Caroline O'Donnell, Jennifer Parra, Gabriella Playa, Julianna Sabia, Olivia Smith, and Kayla Sullivan.**

Mu Alpha Theta is comprised of students who have taken Algebra I and Geometry and are enrolled in or completed a third year of mathematics. To be considered, a student must have an overall GPA of 3.5 or higher in math. This year's inductees:

CLASS OF 2020: **Logan Hart, Aylin Molina, Annabel Payamps, Jaiden Winters.**

CLASS OF 2021: **Olivia Aidukas, Avery Aquino, Milani Bethel, Allison Castaldo, Kaitlyn Flores, Alyssa Fuentes, Gabriella Lamantea, Jennifer Parra, Julianna Sabia, Olivia Smith, Kayla Sullivan, Alexandria Taveras.**

A hearty congratulations to all of our inductees!



JOIN US FOR

Upcoming Events!

-  **Sunday, March 1**
NJCDCA State Dance Championship
-  **Mon-Fri, March 2-6**
Disney YES Program
-  **Thurs-Mon, March 5-9**
NDA National Dance Competition, Florida
Senior Trip to Disney World
-  **Saturday, March 7**
SDA Parents Association Designer Bag Bingo
-  **Thursday, March 12**
Alum. Assoc. Mtg. Madonna Hall 6:30pm
-  **Friday, March 13**
End of 3rd Marking Period
-  **Fri-Sun, March 13-15**
Indoor Track Nationals, NYC
-  **Wednesday, March 18**
Honor Societies Induction ELAN 6 pm
-  **Friday, March 20**
Report Cards on PowerSchool
Young Women's Conference in Stem at Princeton University
-  **Saturday, March 21**
23rd Annual Spring Thaw 5k, Liberty State Park, 9 am
-  **Monday, March 23**
Juniors—College Admissions Speaker, Elan 6:30 pm
-  **Friday, March 27**
Glee Club Pueri Cantores New York Catholic HS Choral Festival, St. Malachy's Church, 1 pm
-  **Wednesday, April 1**
National College Fair Meadowslands Expo Center, Juniors, 9 am
-  **Saturday, April 4**
Gala, Il Villaggio, Carlstadt



ARTS IN ACTION



Students Experience NYC Art and Culture

Since SDA is located so close to Manhattan, our students are fortunate to visit New York City often to enrich their high school education. Here's a recent sampling:

Students in Ms. McKenzie's Spanish Heritage class visited Repertorio NYC to see the Spanish language play, *La Gringa!* Our ladies attended the weekday matinee, listened to a pre-performance lecture and participated in a post-performance Q&A. *La Gringa* is the comedic story of a young woman from New York who goes to Puerto Rico in search of her extended family and is confronted by complicated misperceptions about both herself and her family.

Drama Club and Glee Club members attended a performance of *Beetlejuice!* Based on Tim Burton's film, this musical tells the story of

Lydia Deetz, a strange and unusual teenager whose whole life changes when she meets a recently deceased couple and a demon with a thing for stripes. The Drama Club studied the performance and acted out the song "Deyo," a number from the play, and performed it during class.

The Dominoes once again graced the stage of Radio City Music Hall on Monday, December 12, and sang a collection of Christmas songs preceding the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular.

Ms. Lewis' AP Art History and Studio classes were treated to a day at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

in Manhattan to study a number of the museum's collections. The group spent time at the Fifth Avenue location studying art from the Classical World, Africa, Asia and South America. Once at the museum, the students were tasked with finding and examining several pieces of art, architecture and artifacts and determining how and why they were made and how they relate to each other, as well as other works within AP Art History. As part of the assignment, they answered questions such as: What do you see that helps you know what the object is made of and how it was formed? What do you see that is a clue to inform you when it was made? The trip was an opportunity for students to connect the art they discovered at The Met with the art they have been studying in class.

ARTS IN ACTION

SDA's Theater Arts Program performs *Hairspray*

SDA's Theater Arts Program performed *Hairspray* on January 16 and 17. The musical centers on Tracy Turnblad, a wide-eyed, enthusiastic high school student, who dreams of being on the local TV show in her hometown of Baltimore during the 1960s. She is a kind soul who spreads her infectious positivity throughout town, fighting traditional views on body image and racial integration along the way.

Rachel Perrie '20, a veteran fourth-year theater cast member, delivered a dynamic performance as Tracy. The theater program has grown in size and strengthened due in no small part to Rachel's efforts and commitment.

She was ably assisted by **Veronica Dominguez '20** as the ditzy Penny. Theater Arts newcomer **Avery Aquino '21** was a wonderful Cory Collins, the media man; senior **Emily Perrie '20** was engagingly comical as Edna; and **Alyssa Fuentes '21** was a suitably narrow-minded Velma. **McKayla Cintron '20** impressed the cast with her incredible voice as Motormouth Maybelle.

While it is important to give credit to the main characters, this production was truly an ensemble piece. Ensemble cast members included **Miya Morrison '21**, **Lyeba Jadun '22**, **Sylvia Mansour '22**, **Hannah Lance '24**, **Mia Barth '25**, and **Isha Qaisar '22**. There was a great sense of company, and the dancing, choreographed by eighth

grader Jasmine Ibrahim (assisted by eighth grader Gabby Beredo) was full of energy and fun. Guest performers included Link Larkin played by Kevin Torres, Abigail Rowan Degnan as Lil Inez Stubbs, and Salvatore DeSarle-Scarpulla as Mr. Pinky.

Whatever obstacles came their way, SDA's dedicated production team brought audiences a fabulous show. This year's stage crew members were **Jennifer Parra '21**, **Grace Dirkin '21**, **Elizabeth Rodriguez '24**, **Mia Mendoza '23**, **Delaneys Drougas '20**, **Avery Williams '22**, and **Persia Valdivisio '21**. This was a real feel-good production that played sold out shows. Students were treated to a repeat performance of selected numbers from the play during Spirit Week.

hairspray



BLUE DEVIL PRIDE

Our winter sports teams had a wonderful winter season. Here are some high points:

Basketball

For the first time in five years the basketball team boasted a winning record of 12 and 5! Basketball is currently 18-7 with two games to play.

The SDA basketball team came to watch Coach Pat McGrath at the Hudson County Bravest vs Hudson County Finest game at the Dan Finn Classic. They honored slain Jersey City Detective Joseph Seals at halftime.

Indoor Track



SDA won the 3200-meter relay with a time of 9:56:13 at the 38th Annual Yale Invitational. Congrats to **Avery Sullivan '21**, **Suhayla Johnson '20**, **Kayla Sullivan '21**, and **Milani Bethel '21**.

Swimming

Marcella Figueroa '22 qualified to swim in the TYR Pro Series in Tennessee. This is a huge meet and only the best of the best make the time cuts. She competed in the same groups as famous Olympic swimmers and world record holders.



Congrats to the swim team on their third place win at the HCIL Swimming Championship. **Marcella Figueroa '22** won both the 50 free and 100 free and broke her own county record in the 50. **Mia Martinko '23** took second place in

both the 200 M and the 500 freestyle. Our 400 free relay took first place. That relay consisted of **Mia Martinko '23**, **Gianna Artusa '21**, **Ella Scarsi '23**, and **Marcella Figueroa '22**.

Dance



Congratulations to our dance team on their win at DTU Regional Championship!



Alumna Tracy Kelly '15 returned to SDA as a member to the NY Jets Flight Crew. She and Flight Crew member Kristen spoke to the girls about what's like as a dancer and professional cheerleader for the Jets. The Jets have a grassroots campaign, in which they give back to home their communities. It was truly a great afternoon!

SAVE THE DATE!

The 23rd annual Spring Thaw 5K Run will be held Saturday, March 21 at Liberty State Park in Jersey City. Come run the 5k or one-mile fun run to benefit Blue Devil Athletics. As always, sponsorship and volunteers are welcome and appreciated.

Please sign up here: runsignup.com/sdaspringthaw



LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE

Sending Support to the Bahamas

Students came together to raise funds for The Abaco Assistance Fund, which has been set up to aid in the education of students in Marsh Harbour, Bahamas, at St. Francis de Sales School, where the Dominicans of Caldwell served from 1969 to 1995. Prior to Hurricane Dorian, the school was attended by 360 students from preschool through 12th grade in the Archdiocese of Nassau. The Abaco Assistance Fund will also help families to restore their lives on the island of Abaco. Students raised a grand total of \$700 through tag days, bake sales, and matching donations.



Souper Effort!

Students at SDA were issued a challenge for this year's "Souper Bowl" and were asked to collect 2020 cans to stock Our Lady of Sorrows Church's food pantry in Jersey City. With the help of faculty, students and friends SDA collected 3289 cans of soup and other non-perishables goods to help those in need.

Class of 2020 College Acceptances*

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| Alvernia University | Pennsylvania State University |
| Arcadia University | Providence College |
| Barry University | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute |
| Bryant University | Rider University |
| Chapman University | Rowan University |
| Coastal Carolina University | Rutgers University |
| Columbia College Chicago | Saint Joseph's University |
| Duquesne University | Saint Peter's University |
| Endicott College | Santa Clara University |
| Fairfield University | Savannah College of Art and Design - Atlanta |
| Fairleigh Dickinson University | School of Visual Art - Manhattan |
| Felician University | Seton Hall University |
| Fordham University | St. John's University |
| High Point University | Texas A&M University |
| Hofstra University | The University of Arizona |
| James Madison University | The University of Scranton |
| Kean University | University of Delaware |
| King's College | University of Massachusetts, Amherst |
| Loyola Marymount University (Honors Program) | University of New Haven |
| Loyola University Chicago (Honors College) | University of Rhode Island |
| Loyola University Maryland | Ursinus College |
| Lycoming College | Villanova University |
| Manhattan College | Virginia Commonwealth University |
| Marist College | West Chester University of Pennsylvania |
| Monmouth University | William Paterson University of New Jersey |
| Montclair State University | |
| Mount St. Mary's University - Maryland | |
| New Jersey City University | |
| Pace University, New York City | |

*As of February 1

SDA Parents Association News

Bag a Great Accessory

The SDA Parents Association will hold its fourth annual Designer Bag Bingo on Saturday, March 7. We are asking for donations, including designer bags, tricky tray items, and financial assistance to defray costs related to this event. Bring your friends, snacks, and libations to this fun social event to support SDA—and possibly win a Louis Vuitton bag! Please

contact Gigi Diaz at gigi914@yahoo.com with any questions. Tickets can be purchased here: signupgenius.com/go/5080e4aaca72caaf85-designer1

Thanks are in order for Frank Pinto (father of Danielle and Natalie '20) and Brian Murphy (father of Erin '20) chairing the annual Father-Daughter Dance on Friday, January 24. Everyone had a wonderful time!

2019-20 OFFICERS AND THEIR LEGACY

MARIA SASSO '78
President
(MARISSA '16, DANIELLE AND NATALIE '20)

JANE MATTIELLO
Vice President
(REAGAN '22)

KRISTIN MARTIN
Treasurer
(COURTNEY '21)



LETTERS

A Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents:

Spring will be here before we know it and another school year is flying by. Our parent newsletter this season showcases some of the outstanding achievements of our students in academics and athletics and highlights many of the events that took place over the preceding months. I'm certain you will all enjoy reading about all the young ladies of Saint Dominic Academy are achieving.

In the coming weeks, please look for your re-registration information, which will be sent via email and regular mail. Senior parents, information regarding the Senior Trip to Walt Disney World will be coming via mail and email as well. As always, I encourage all parents to monitor students' academic progress via the Power School platform- the 3rd marking period will conclude in March and report cards will be out before Easter.

Easter...it will be here in the blink of an eye and with it, the beginning of all of our "end of the year" functions; it seems the school years move more quickly each and every year. I sincerely hope you enjoy this edition of our Parent Newsletter and I look forward to seeing you at events throughout the spring.

Most sincerely,

Sarah Degnan

LETTERS

A Message from the Academic Dean

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At our most recent class assemblies, we handed out Honor Roll certificates to students who made it to the Academic Dean's List for the first semester of this school year. It is with great pride that I called on 89 students who earned First Honors (GPAs of 3.75 and above) and 31 students who earned Second Honors (GPAs of 3.50 to 3.74). These numbers account for more than half the student population of SDA, which has been quite the trend for a good number of years now.

I took the opportunity to highlight the above fact with our young ladies, referring to it as Saint Dominic Academy's USP, our unique selling proposition. That, given the way our classes are conducted, it should come as no surprise that our students are truly learning and, as a result, are bringing home good grades, and the recognition that goes with such.

I have come to realize that we are not your typical high school. When I do my regular rounds during the day, the halls echo our teachers' voices either in serious presentation of the lesson or engaged in light-hearted exchange with their students, or I see a class busy with relevant hand-on activities in their Science labs, the Art room or just trying to get out of an "Escape Room" activity in Brit Lit, among many others. Our dear teachers make it a point to create classroom atmospheres where students listen and learn and where we, too, listen and learn from them. I always proudly say that here, we hardly have discipline issues in the classroom, which translates to genuine teaching and learning.

The assemblies were the perfect occasion to remind students of the basics, whether they are our 7th and 8th graders or the Seniors who are bound to leave us for college in about 3 months. Let me share these with you:

- ✓ I underscored the value in coming to school regularly, on time, and prepared; the wisdom in listening attentively and participating actively during class discussions; and the reward that there is in diligent and responsible work.
- ✓ I also bragged about some alumnae and their recent accomplishments and involvements, i.e. making it to their colleges/universities Dean's Lists, an alumna coming out with her first published book which she started writing while she was in the 11th grade here.
- ✓ I posed the challenge of giving their best while they're here in preparation for college and for life beyond it, i.e. real life. I invited them to picture themselves a few years from now giving us updates on their adventures and accomplishments, joining us during Open Houses as proud alumnae with inspiring testimonies, and just visiting to say that "SDA prepared me well".

Once again, parents, you are part of the equation that results in your daughter's success here. We are a team! And the better we work as one, the better we'll be able to bring out the very best in the young ladies we all love and support. Let's aim to make it work...Teamwork!

My warmest regards,

Mrs. Guen Farrales