

THE WORD

FALL/WINTER 2020-2021

INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY MAGAZINE

Coach Rick Perez Celebrates 20 Years at IWA



**Student
Entrepreneurs
Show Business
Savvy**

**Who Are Those
Masked Girls?
IWA Students Share
Their Stories**



COVID-19 meant our traditional graduation cap toss photo needed to happen a little differently. On July 25, we photographed the students in two groups outside the Co-cathedral of the Sacred Heart, marking out social distance. Turn to the inside back cover for the second photo celebrating the Class of 2020.



THE WORD

FALL/WINTER 2020-2021 | VOL. 15 NO. 1

MISSION

Incarnate Word Academy provides young women with a Catholic college preparatory education, helping them grow in their relationship with Jesus, the Incarnate Word, and live according to His values. Our cornerstones are academics, values and spirituality

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ON THE COVER

L-R: Amaya Pitts '21, Alexandra Ortiz '21 and Athletic Director Rick Perez

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14 | WHO ARE THOSE MASKED GIRLS?

Six IWA students share their stories.



30 | FALCON ENTREPRENEURS

AnaSofia Aragon '21 and
Lily Collora '21 upcycle
fast fashion.



4 | FALCON NEWS

Class of 2021 Ring Ceremony Mass, hybrid learning on campus, the IWA choir's virtual performance, meet our Falcon Election Day 2020 poll worker, Emily York '21 is cheer captain and more

22 | ATHLETICS

Falcons rank in State TAPPS Top 10, Volleyball wrap-up winter sports preview

32 | CLASS NOTES

32 | ADVANCEMENT

2020 IWA Gala goes online and we've revamped a giving opportunity

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As this issue was going into layout, I spoke to our students as part of Vocations Week, discussing my call to religious life. At one point, Avery Garig '21, who was interviewing me, asked if I'd ever wondered if I'd picked the wrong path. The question brought me up short, but I'll share with you what I told her: Sure, I have. But I don't think that's a negative. Many people who are solid in their life commitments question them from time to time. God gets us through the tough spots in life.

The pandemic has rocked our world, and caused us to question so much. Besides the horrific loss of life and pain, it has upended our schedules and routines, forcing us to make changes to how we operate. At IWA, we have had fewer students on campus each day, challenges with remote learning, Zoom meetings and "happy hours" that started out a blessing (but are now less enticing), the loss of enjoyable school events, and family gatherings having to be postponed or cancelled. When I speak with parents, faculty, staff and even students, the common response is that all this is sad and exhausting. We wonder how we will get through it.

I'm here to tell you: God will get us through it by helping us to see the bigger picture that allows us to put the tough times in perspective. I continue to be grateful for the many bright spots that happen day in and day out:

- Our faculty and staff, who have been "heroic," as our principal said, taking on extra duties and looking after the educational and emotional health of our students.
- Being able to celebrate one of our beautiful traditions, the Ring Ceremony and Mass, at Annunciation Church, with masks and all. Through the power of technology, classmates, family members and friends were also able to participate remotely.
- Falcon Theatre is back and working on a production.
- Seeing our students work so hard academically in a challenging environment and still be able to enjoy life.
- Looking on in amazement at our Young Leaders Program class, Leading With Business, that launched a very successful business, *Cocoa and Bark* — pretty amazing and delicious, I might add. What an incredible experience for high schoolers to create a viable business while implementing the skills they learned in class around teamwork, business planning, marketing, finance, and dealing with success and stumbling blocks.
- Seeing our student ambassadors do a wonderful job giving tours to prospective Falcons and their parents at our Experience IWA events.
- Cheering on our sports teams who carry on with such energy and enthusiasm.
- Enjoying our IWA choir and the St. Thomas Singers perform a beautiful choral rosary
- Watching members of our Campus Ministry Team take part in a project to donate supplies and assemble care packages to distribute to the homeless.

I could go on and on!

As I think about all of these bright spots happening in the midst of a pandemic, it lifts my spirits and reminds me that God walks with us each day through the gifts, commitment and generosity of others. It also reminds me that our mission is alive and well.

Now, *that* puts a smile on my face and gives me concrete evidence that God gets us through it!

Praised be the Incarnate Word,



Sr. Lauren Beck, C.V.I.
President





The Class of 2021 at Annunciation Catholic Church



FALCON NEWS

A Tradition Endures

**IWA's Ring Ceremony and Mass is
Reimagined for the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Junior Ring Ceremony is a rite of passage. Typically held in the spring, it's when those in Incarnate Word Academy's junior class who choose to purchase one are given their class rings, and when they are recognized as heirs to the current senior class.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed back the tradition, but there was never a question of not having it. Held Sept. 30, in a socially distanced Mass at Annunciation Catholic Church, the Class of 2021 had their rings blessed and took the Women of the Word Pledge, a promise to look first to God for happiness, to uphold His teachings, and to be women of peace and mercy. Fellow students and families watched the Mass via livestream.

"I hope that every time you look at [your] ring, it will be a reminder to remain faithful to what you have learned," said the Rev. David Michael Moses, who presided over the Mass. "Because faith will give you wisdom for salvation."

The Women of the Word Pledge echoes the beatitudes, drawing on Jesus' lessons of the relationships we have with God, as well as with one another. Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., Incarnate Word Academy president, asked the students to consider the sacrifices made by their families and the support they received from family, faculty and each other during their time at Incarnate Word. She noted that the freshmen, sophomores and juniors look up them, and with the privilege of being seniors comes the responsibility to be role models.

"You all have been real troopers," she said, thanking them for their steadfastness. "There are many verses in Scripture that I love, but the one I want to say for today is, this is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad. And I think that today more than ever, we need to hear something like that."

Each senior received a rose as she exited the church, and there was a reception for the students hosted by the IWA Mothers' Club following the Mass.

"The experience of the ring ceremony was definitely different than previous ceremonies," said Mia Mendez '21. "But it was worth it, just to share that moment with close friends."

— Nia Alexander '22 and Kambili Nwora '23
contributed to this report

Welcome Back!

IWA Campus Opens for Hybrid Learning

When the IWA students, faculty and staff left for spring break back in March, no one imagined the pandemic would mean they wouldn't return to the 609 for the remainder of the school year. And certainly no one imagined that as the 2020-2021 academic year began that we'd still be fully remote.

All that changed Sept. 21, when IWA welcomed students back with a hybrid learning model. Students were divided into groups A and B, depending on last name. Students had two days of on-campus, in-person class and two days of remote learning. All students were remote on Wednesdays, which were dedicated to teacher office hours.

"It is wonderful to back together as a community!" said Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, IWA's principal. "This was a long time coming, and we were very cognizant that the safety of our students, faculty and staff was paramount in how we paved the road to return to campus."

Safety precautions included one-way traffic in the halls and on stairwells, using the auditorium as an overflow lunch room and seating students two to a table in the cafeteria, daily temperature checks and health screens, and hiring a COVID-19 coordinator to ensure the school was complying with mandates from both Houston and Harris County, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Coming back to campus meant that upperclassmen could see pals they hadn't seen in person since March. (In some cases, it also meant making new friends, especially when a girl's core friend circle wasn't in her newly assigned group.) But the freshmen had a different experience; prior to hybrid learning, they hadn't seen each other as a full group at all.

"It's been a real blessing to get to finally meet our freshmen girls face to face," said biology teacher Stephen Comer, who teaches all the freshmen. "I can't describe how much I missed getting to see my kiddos every day. I love getting to hang out with these amazing freshmen four days a week. It's great to start building relationships again."

School counselor Erika Eberhart agrees.

"Peer interactions are so important to them at this age," she said. "It's really wonderful having them taking part in classes and activities together."

IWA will return to 100 percent on-campus instruction Jan. 11, 2021.





Freshman Retreat is a Time for Reflection

Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed many things about school life at IWA. But one of the things it can't change is our commitment to helping young women live out their faith and be sisters to each other.

Every year, the school offers retreats for each of its classifications. They are days of activities, discussion and prayer, designed to help the students bond, learning more about each other and themselves.

This year's Freshman Retreat, "Fly High: Break Out of Your Shell and Grow Into Your Butterfly Wings," took place Oct. 28. In a nod to the precautions necessary because of the pandemic, the event was held on campus (retreats are usually held at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart or a retreat center) and hosted on a Wednesday, which is an all-remote learning day for the student body.

They took part in activities that centered on how they could grow, as high school students, in their sisterhood together and in their faith. The day's agenda was designed by IWA's Campus Ministry Team. There was even a special DIY retreat for IWA's remote learners, which offered self-guided reflections and activities.

"I am so proud of the work the CMT put into this event," said Ana Paula Panzarini, IWA's campus minister. "They have been so creative and so dedicated to finding ways to keep us together as a community."

Faculty and students clearly felt the event was a success.

"It was so great to hear them giggle and bond together," said Kathleen Kelly, who teaches freshman English. "It really warmed by heart."

"The Freshmen are beaming this morning!" reported Catherine Neaves, who teaches freshman social studies, the day after the retreat. "Everyone did such a great job!"

The senior class had their retreat on Nov. 13 as this magazine was in final layout. The sophomore and junior retreats were in December.

The Up in the Air Films crew records Alyson Ubungen '22 for the new school video.



Ready for Their Close-Up

IWA Students Star in New School Marketing Video

It took two weeks to write the script. It was another two weeks to coordinate the shooting schedule.

And it took close to three to line up the three students who would have starring roles in Incarnate Word Academy's new marketing video.

The monthlong project took two days to shoot and a little over a week to edit. The result is a glimpse of what the spirit of sisterhood looks like at IWA, and explores our pillars of academics, values and spirituality.

"I love how beautifully the girls capture the heartbeat of IWA and show their school pride," said Sister

Lauren Beck, C.V.I., president of the Academy. "They did such a great job showcasing our strengths and our unique opportunities as a downtown school."

Randi McBride '21, Karen Rodriguez '21 and Alyson Ubungen '22 worked with IWA's director of marketing and communications and Up in the Air Films on the project. All three students are IWA Ambassadors, volunteering with the Office of Admissions to give tours and otherwise promote the Academy. The shoot took place throughout the school, using the library, gym, Matel Center and the sixth-floor rooftop. The storyline emphasizes all the possibilities IWA

offers potential students.

"It was an amazing experience where I got to share more about what makes IWA unique," said Karen. "My favorite segments were probably the one on the roof and the one in front of the school because it got to show how IWA was truly in the center of downtown."

Randi agreed.

"It was really fun and a bonding experience for me and some of the other ambassadors," she said. "It was interesting to learn how many takes you have to do for one clip."

The video is on the homepage of the IWA website.



Mary Julliette Billings '21



Sofia Garza '21



Anna Hartman '21



Allison Huddleston '21

Four Students Earn National Kudos

Mary Julliette Billings '21, Sofia Garza '21 and Anna Hartman '21 are Commended Scholars in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. They are among 34,000 students nationwide to receive the designation.

Allison Huddleston '21 is one of 5,000 students from around the country named to the College Board's National Hispanic Recognition Program.

Of the more than 1.5 million students across the country who took the 2019 Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, Juliette, Sofia and Anna placed among the top 50,000 scorers. Allison's recognition is also tied to her performance on the PSAT. All received letters of commendation on their accomplishment.

Buzz Correspondents Cover High School Life

Lily Cromeens '21 and Lauren Fuller '21 are two of "The Buzz" Magazines' School Buzz correspondents for the 2020–2021 school year.

The monthly magazines have a circulation of 58,000 throughout Bellaire, Memorial, River Oaks and Tanglewood, and West University. Students apply to become School Buzz correspondents and write one article each month that is published online.

"I thought that this would be a fun thing to do because I love writing," Lily said. "I wanted to get more professional and grow my knowledge about writing, especially for a publication."

She doesn't see herself becoming a journalist but hopes one day to write books with a journalistic feel to them.

Lauren doesn't plan to go into journalism either — she's interested in a STEM career — but realizes that being able to

write well is important.

"Being able to effectively convey a message and even persuade an audience is a skill that transcends all distinctions of fields and is a skill that is required for success in every job," she said. "This opportunity to be able to grow and develop my writing skills will help me in any career I decide to pursue in the future."



Lily Cromeens '21

"This opportunity to be able to grow and develop my writing skills will help me in any career I decide to pursue in the future."

— LAUREN FULLER '21



Lauren Fuller '21

They feel their work is an important way to capture a slice of high school life in 2020. Lily's pieces have been reports about fellow students' activities and perspectives. Lauren's stories so

far have been personal essays about navigating remote and hybrid learning. Readers can check out their work at <https://thebuzzmagazines.com/columns/school-buzz>.

Song of Praise

Incarnate Word Academy Choir and St. Thomas Singers Join Together for an Innovative Collaboration

Each October, the Incarnate Word Academy Choir and St. Thomas High School's St. Thomas Singers host a joint concert. Conducted by IWA choir director Josh Wilson, who also directs the St. Thomas Singers, the concert is an opportunity to showcase the talents of both ensembles.

This year was different.

"The challenges of the COVID era temporarily made standard concerts difficult to impossible to put on," said Wilson. "I had the idea for doing a concert based on the rosary, using various settings of the Ave Maria (Hail Mary) and the Our Father, so I decided to make it a recorded project that we could share with the IWA and St. Thomas communities."

"A Choral Rosary" made its debut Nov. 20. In addition to the two school ensembles, the concert also featured Nora Navarro '23 on the harp and Anna Gardner '23 on flute. They were accompanied by Aaron Hervey on piano and Dr. Crista Miller on the organ of Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Wilson said the project's creation was challenging, because the full choir was never in the same place at the same time.

"At both schools, we had hybrid models [for classes] that meant I only got a portion of the students in on any given day," he explained.



Members of the IWA choir rehearse in our courtyard.

Some choir students spent the semester fully remote and were never at in-person classes. They used Zoom to be part of daily rehearsals.

"Working on this project felt harder than our other projects because I had to learn the songs and record them from home without being surrounded by the voices of my peers," said Iman Haddad

'23. "It was a fun challenge and I think it helped me to learn a lot about my abilities to learn as a singer."

"We recorded our songs in class, but then I had to edit together all the takes from the four groups of singers plus the individual singers from their homes," said Wilson.

He also recorded video collages to

IWA Singers Earn Spot on Regional Choirs

Five members of our Incarnate Word Academy Choir were selected for TPSMEA All-Region Choirs. Katherine Dickinson '24 (alto 1), Iman Haddad '23 (soprano 1) and Elise Potier '22 (alto 2) were named to the All-Region Mixed Choir. Persia-Mari Fombin '22 (soprano 1) and Sofia Garza '21 (soprano 1) were named to the All-Region Treble Choir. Selection is by audition only. The students are among those from 21 schools around Houston to be honored.

In addition, both Iman and Elise were named to the TPSMEA All-State Choir. This is the second time the girls have made it to the All-State. Congratulations to all.



Katherine Dickinson '24



Iman Haddad '23



put together with the sound. The result was a beautiful rendering of the prayers so deeply rooted in Catholic tradition. "I feel so blessed that during this time when we are unable to gather together with our IWA Choir sisters and with our brothers in the St Thomas choir, we can instead use technology to unite

our voices as one and be a symbol of hope and recovery in these trying times," said Amelia Horner '22.

The concert is available for viewing on St. Thomas High School's YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/STHCatholic>.



IWA Junior Rocks the Music Word

Incarinate Word Academy's Amelia Horner '22 and her band, Quantum Souls, took White Oak Music Hall by storm with their Oct. 25 concert of Halloween-themed, retro rock music. The group played songs like "GhostBusters," "Mr. Blue Sky" and "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

Amelia plays bass and has helped lead the band for over a year; this was her 30th concert.

"I would never have guessed that a high school student could lead a band, excite the audience and be good at playing a difficult instrument," said Hanna Lee, a Houston high school student in the audience.

Amelia says her interest in music was inspired and formed by her time at IWA.

"The IWA Choir has helped to inspire me by starting my interest in music theory," she said. "I want to use that theory to help develop my own unique style and to reach my full potential as a bass player," she said.

Amelia also credits IWA's Young Leaders Program, which helped her gain confidence in leading her band. "Through the leadership program at IWA, I can be a more effective leader for my band, and it has helped me to contribute better constructive feedback," she said. "It has also made me more communicative when disagreements arise among the band."

— Story by Lily Cromeens '21



Elise Potier '22



Persia-Marie Fombin '22



Sofia Garza '21

Women of Service

IWA Seniors Create Care Packages to Help the Homeless

Every day on my drive to school I see many homeless people,” said Tessa Watson ’21. “I never know whether or not to give out money so when I can I’ll buy extra Chick-fil-A nuggets and give them to someone at a red light. It just hurts to see all these people, who are just like me, with no one.”

Tessa wanted to do more to help, though. It occurred to her that she could make care packages, but admits she wasn’t sure what the best way to do that was. She texted her friend Emily York ’21. It turns out Emily, too, was looking for a way to help the homeless.

“We came together to start collecting donations to make care packages that we could hand out to some of the people we see on our drive to school,” Emily said.

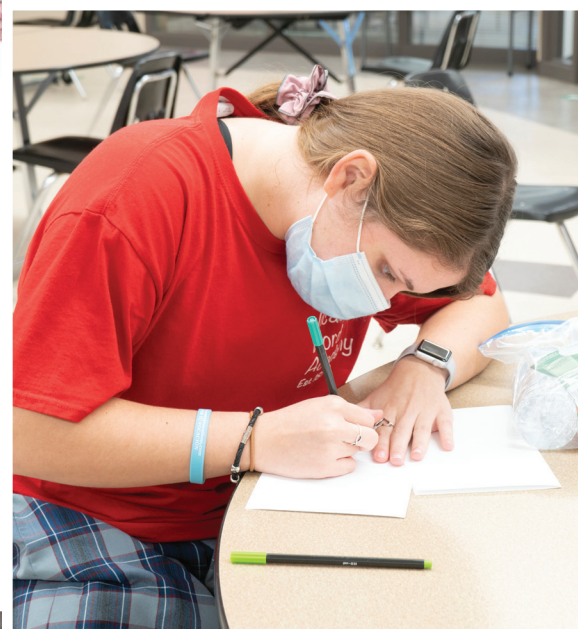
Campus Minister Ana Paula Panzarini helped them spread the word about their work, encouraging other IWA students to help out. They hosted care package creation sessions during Flex Time this fall and, in the end, with help from their classmates, they created nearly 100 care packages. In addition to snacks and personal care items, the bags contain socks, water, T-shirts



Tessa Watson '21

and notes of encouragement. Tessa and Emily plan to give some of the bags to individuals, as well as donate some to Magnificat Houses’ Loaves and Fishes, a Houston non-profit that helps the homeless.

“Homeless shelters can only do so much,” said Tessa. “Sometimes they have to turn people away and then who is left? That’s why Emily and I want to individually deliver them and write notes. That human connection is so very important.”



IWA students filling care packages and writing notes



Watching Democracy in Action

Emily Chaires '22 Volunteers on Election Day

Voting in Houston this year set records. And one IWA student got to see some of that happen in real time. Emily Chaires '22 spent Election Day 2020 as a high school electronics support specialist.

She applied for the position last summer and trained on polling place procedures and systems. On Election Day, she volunteered at a Kingwood elementary school polling place. Emily set up the voting machines, greeted voters, ensured no one was wearing political attire and helped two Spanish speakers cast their ballots. She also manned the judge's booth control (JBC).

"We scanned the photo ID the person gave us and gave them an access code to vote," she explained. "The access code came from the JBC and is important because the access code is unique for that person to cast their ballot."

Emily said volunteering was a great way to see how American democracy works. She liked seeing how the voters came from different backgrounds and also learned a great deal about the voting process.

"When it is my turn to vote for the next election, I will know how to cast my ballot," she said. "And I can look back on how I helped people cast theirs."

She chose to wear her IWA letterman jacket along with a school spirit shirt for her shift.



Students in our Spanish Club and Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica hosted an ofrenda for Dia de los Muertos. The IWA community was invited to place photos of those who've passed away on the altar, which included such traditional Dia de los Muertos objects as pan de muerto (bread of the dead), brightly colored paper decorations and candles.



Our Leading With Business class was launching Cocoa & Bark, a candy and hot chocolate company, as "The Word" was going to press. We'll have the full scoop on the tasty treats business in our Spring/Summer 2021 issue.





WHO *are those* MASKED GIRLS?



The Community Builders

Dana Theroux '21 and
Madeline Taylor '21

Since their freshman year at IWA, Dana Theroux '21 and Madeline Taylor '21 dreamed of the day they'd lead IWA's Student Council as president and vice-president. When the pair were elected to the positions last spring, they couldn't wait to plan school activities such as Winter Ball and put their own stamp on IWA's morning announcements.

As the COVID-19 pandemic dragged on and the 2020-2021 school year started remotely, then segued into a hybrid learning mode, which divided the school into two groups, each spending two days on campus, Dana and Maddie found themselves having to create community and enthusiasm in new ways.

"We film morning announcements every day to try to keep a sense of normalcy and make people feel connected even if they can't be at school," said Maddie. "We also created a Back to School Spirit Week with daily activities that went along with a bingo board. Squares on the bingo boards included things like staying hydrated, going outside, calling a friend and asking three teachers about their summer."

Bingo cards were tallied up by classification; the freshmen won.

"I really hope that through the



Dana Theroux '21

elaborate morning announcements (and [Campus Minister] Ms. Panzarini's superb editing skills), we're able to make it feel a little bit more like every day IWA," said Dana.

Both girls are actively involved in several IWA activities, including the Campus Ministry Team and the cross-country team. They've both served on StuCo since they were freshman, and have an incredible enthusiasm for the Academy. In taking over the top student leadership roles this year, they've not only led meetings with fellow students, but also met with members of the administration to voice students' concerns over learning new protocols. As "The Word" went to press, they were planning a fall get-together for students that included a movie, crafts and trivia.

Dana and Maddie readily admit it's been a challenging beginning to the school year. But they know they — and their fellow students — keep moving forward.

"It's important to remember who we have to fall back on, and that is God," said Dana. "Faith is a big part of our community, and it's important to remember that God's got our back. I know that God has a plan for each and every one of us, and I hope that IWA will continue to grow in faith, especially in this time apart, and that God continues to guide our hearts to Him."



Madeline Taylor '21



"Community Is So Important"

Sofia Garza '21

"I'm a learner, naturally." That's how Sofia Garza '21 described herself. "There's never been a subject I've disliked, really." The senior said she's always asking questions in class. Her interests are so diverse, she's just as intrigued by how cells respond to different pathogens as she is about why an author chooses to explore a particular topic.

"I just have this desire to know things," she said.

That desire has been nurtured during her time at IWA, and Sofia loves the sisterhood she shares with her fellow students, along with the variety of classes offered here.

She is looking at pursuing M.D./Ph.D. programs in college and wants to minor or double major in creative writing or English, fueling her twin passions of reading and research.

"I took part in a summer research program at Berkeley a couple of years ago and had the chance to learn the basics of lab work," she said. "I'm really interested in neurodegenerative diseases, like ALS."

Sofia is also president of the IWA Choir.

"I love mentoring younger students," she said. "And the choir is really an embodiment of community, where we meld all our voices to make one sound. Community is so important."

Making Music

Isabelle Lavoie '23

Isabelle Lavoie '23 came to IWA from a Pearland public school, where she was a member of her middle school's marching band. The ability to play music in high school was a must for the bassoon and violin player.

One of IWA's selling points, in addition to its small size and strong academics, is that IWA students can play in the ensemble in the St. Thomas High School Pep Band. Isabelle plays the baritone.

"Band was where I made my first friends," Isabelle said. "I was the only one from my middle school to come to IWA, and being in band, it was like we all already had something in common."

She also plays bassoon with the Houston Youth Symphony. She really likes the contrast between classical music and the music she was playing during marching season. She plays a lot of Vivaldi and Telemann and being in the HYS has boosted her confidence.

"You're playing with the best kids in the city," she said. "And it really pushes you to be your best, so you create a great experience for everyone."



Risk Taker

Fiona Cosgrove '22

As she was deciding where she wanted to go to high school, Fiona Cosgrove '22 said her parents encouraged her to “take the risk.”

That risk was coming to IWA from a public school environment, and it paid off. Fiona is an active part of the Incarnate Word community. She's on the soccer and track and field teams, and she's a delegate on the student council. She loves math, and took IWA's Python programming and web design classes.

“IWA has really allowed me to be able to try new things,” she said. “I joined the track and field team as a way to make friends and the coach said to me, ‘You’re tall, you’re doing high jump.’”

She'd never done that before; now her personal best is a jump of 5'4".

“Having those kinds of opportunities here has been fun,” she said. “Before I came here, I never really thought much about riskiness,” she said. “But the great payoff of taking a risk is that you get to discover so many opportunities.”



Team Player

Claire Michael '23

Falcons volleyball player Claire Michael '23 noticed something last year when the team would travel to other schools for matches.

“We’re a real family,” she explained. “We hang out before our matches, during and afterwards. There’s this real sense of community with us.”

That’s important to Claire.

“Everyone talks about the sisterhood [here], and it’s real,” she said.

The volleyball team just completed its season. Claire was a setter, and she said Coach Whitney Moffitt encouraged the team to become more well-rounded players.

“You can really just feel it when you mesh as a unit on the court,” said Claire, who is also a sophomore representative on IWA's student council and a member of Teens for Unity and Falcons for Life. “You can read each other's thoughts. There's a real vibe when you're in the zone.”

She's considering a future career in medicine.

“I think orthopedics,” she said. “I’ve been involved in sports for a long time, and I’ve definitely had my fair share of injuries. That gives me a perspective to help others.”



ATHLETICS



The IWA cross-country team at the TAPPS State Meet



Cross-Country Team Finishes in State Top 10

At the TAPPS State Meet in Hewitt, Texas, Nov. 2, Incarnate Word Academy came away fifth in the state, with two runners, Anora Lee '22 and Amanda Stockton '21, finishing seventh and eighth individually.

"If you put together a team with the best girls in the state, Anora and Mandy would be on it," said Head Cross-Country Coach Chris Warren. "They really are among the best in Texas. They worked so hard to break into the top 10. They're also both Academic All-State students. I am incredibly proud of them."

The accomplishment for those two runners individually is among several highlights Warren points to this year. In addition to the strong showing at the state meet, IWA's cross-country team also won three meets this year, two in LaPorte and one in Huntsville.

"And Anna Hartman '21 won the Huntsville meet overall," said Warren. "She and Anora and Mandy have been leading the way all year."

Warren said the team's hard work this season paid off, especially in the face of challenges posed from the COVID-19 pandemic, which cut into practice and training time and saw events canceled.

Anora comes back to the team next year, along with some other runners, including freshman Esperanza Vazquez '24, who's proving to be a strong athlete. She finished in the top five in races at least three times over the season, and Warren said she led the team twice.

"These girls are so dedicated, and they are really team oriented," said Warren. "This is the first year we've had students finish in the top 10 and place in the top five as a team. That is just awesome."



Volleyball Faces Rebuilding Year

When Head Volleyball Coach Whitney Moffitt looks back on the 2020 season, she's grateful to have had so many players return from 2019. But she also acknowledges the challenges she and her team faced this year.

"We didn't have a preseason [because of the COVID-19] pandemic," she explained. "And we use those games to really settle in and mesh as a team."

And then, there were rules about wearing face masks and not having spectators in the stands.

"It's hard not having your parents and friends cheer you on," Moffitt elaborated.

Still, Falcon volleyball persevered, and by the second half of the season, the team had upped what Moffitt calls its "volleyball IQ."

"That's really a term we use in the sport. It's about how you increase your knowledge of the sport, of your court awareness, and how you harness what you know, then build on it to become a

better player."

She said that was in evidence in the team's game against St. John XXIII High School.

"Mary Turner '22 had such a great game. She really showcased that it's not about how hard you swing, but about figuring where on the court to place the ball. And Jasmine Valladeres '23 placed really well through the whole game. So it was a cool moment seeing all that come together."

As she looks ahead to next year, Moffitt is encouraging her team members to play more volleyball during the off-season to better build where the team left off this year. She's also excited to have both Jasmine and Mary, along with several other players returning to the squad.

"These girls are more mature than some 18-year-olds I've coached," she said. "They are a pleasure to be around. They are so responsible and adult-like and intellectual. That stems from their academic environment, and they can not only understand things but apply them. That's the really cool thing about IWA."

2021 play begins next August.



IWA Students Cheer on St. Thomas

Thirteen IWA students — one of the largest numbers in recent history — made the St. Thomas High School cheer team, including Emily York '21, who was named captain (see story, page 25). They are: Front row (L-R): JV team members Denver Fowler, Claire McTaggart '23, Kady Gidney '23; Middle row (L-R) varsity team members Emily York '21, Joelle Alvarez '21, Allie Mercier '21, Anna Bourgoyne '21, Gemma Rabo '22; Top row (L-R) Varsity team members Stephanie Fish '23, Jade Muse '23, Carson Chesnut '22, Alex Robey '22, Nicole Fish '21. The team cheers for St. Thomas football and basketball games.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

WINTER SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Dec. 18-19

Frassati Catholic High School Tournament

Jan. 14

St. Agnes (Home)

Feb. 8-13

District Tournament

SOCCER

Dec. 10

The Village School (Home)

Jan. 2

Blitz Soccer Tournament (Sugar Land)

Feb. 9

St. John XXIII (Home—Senior Night)

FALCON PROFILES



'Just Me and the Ice'

Emily Gentry '22 on Her Experience
as a Competitive Skater

Ever since Emily Gentry '22 put her first blades to the ice at the age of 2, figure skating has had a special place in her heart. The competitive, yet graceful sport, “gives me a sense of relaxation and comfort,” she said. “It’s just me and the ice.”

Emily recently won the Skate Houston competition, thanks in part to her complexly choreographed routine. Judges lauded her grace and careful attention to skating’s precision moves. The win means she was tapped to perform “The Nutcracker” opening sequence at The Ice at Discovery Green Dec. 6.

Figure skating has become a meaningful part of her life, giving her a “family at the rink” and a sense of accomplishment in every competition and show.

“My favorite part of skating is the feeling I get when I land a new jump or when I skate a perfectly clean program during a competition or show,” Emily said, “My favorite jump is the axel and double loop. My favorite spin is the Biellmann spin.” (That’s the spin a skater performs on one foot, holding the other behind and above the head.)

Emily hopes to continue figure skating well into the future, learning more about the sport’s intricate steps. She also wants to be sure she continues applying the irreplaceable lessons she has learned throughout her time figure skating.

— Story by Lily Cromeens '21



Leading the Cheer

Emily York '21 Takes on an Important Role

Emily York '21 is captain of the St. Thomas High School cheerleaders. The squad includes girls from Incarnate Word Academy, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart and St. Agnes Academy. They cheer at St. Thomas varsity football and basketball games.

During remote learning last spring, Emily recorded herself doing some of the team's cheers, as well as breaking them down piece by piece and sharing them on the shared drive the cheerleaders use. She also worked to clear the drive of information that was no longer up to date. She believes those efforts are part of why she was named captain.

"It's a chance for me to serve and help my team be the best we can be," she explained. "But this year, the majority of the team is made up of IWA girls. I think that's cool."

She said being named captain has made her think more deeply about ways to be involved and to give of herself.

"I love being part of a team that looks good and performs well," she said. "Being captain has me thinking about ways the team can grow, and I want to help that happen any way I can. But I know I'd want that even if I wasn't captain."

"God FIRST"

Athletic Director Rick Perez Reflects on 20 Years at IWA

Faith, family, sportsmanship. Those could be considered the cornerstones of Rick Perez's life. A passionate supporter of athletics and its ability to transform lives, and a devout Catholic, Perez has spent two decades helping Falcons achieve their potential.







This page, below and opposite: Coach Rick Perez through the years.

“Swim team to the bus on Capitol! Soccer team to the bus on Jackson!” The words puncture the afternoon atmosphere, ringing from the intercom through the corridors of Incarnate Word Academy. They’re delivered with a staccato cadence that is the unmistakable voice of Athletic Director Rick Perez. In their wake, feet stomp down the stairs, girls chatter and doors bang as the teams head off to practice and meets. Perez, standing arms folded by the front desk, cheers them on. “Good luck, girls!”

“Coach Perez” (or simply, “Coach”), as he’s known, is a beloved figure at the school. Any student who’s taken part in IWA athletics, or signed up for his popular weight training class, can talk at length of the care he has for his students, his good humor, his encouragement.

“Coach always said, ‘You get out of it what you put into it’ and it was great seeing how we all improved as the semester went along,” said Julia Romualdo dos Santos ’20 who took Perez’s weight training class as an elective. “We all made so much progress!”

That’s exactly what Perez hoped for when he created the class.

“The girls sign up for that class for a reason,” he said. “And from day 1, you look ahead. You have a goal to achieve. If they take it in the fall, by November or December, they’re seeing and feeling results. I just love it when they email me and tell me how much they love the class or how it’s helping them physically. When we

were in remote learning last spring and at the beginning of the year, they told me the workouts were helping them with stress and keeping them motivated.”

Motivation is only one of the things Perez hopes IWA students learn from IWA’s athletics and physical fitness offerings. The others include grit and gratitude, as well as learning to work together.

“Athletics teaches so many important life lessons,” he said. “You learn about sacrifice. You learn about failure. Whatever happens, it’s important to get back up. There’s camaraderie in athletics. But you see that all over the school here.”

Perez came to IWA at the start of the 2001–2002 school year, taking a job as the physical education or health and psychology teacher. At the time, he’d been teaching physical education at Mt. Carmel High School, but he had something of a relationship with IWA. His wife, Patricia (Trostmann) Perez ’84, is an alumna. So are his sisters-in-law. One of Perez’s daughters, Lisa, graduated in 2014. Several nieces are also alumnae.

“The whole building was so different back then!” he remembered. “I walked through this single gray door, and there was this one, slow elevator. There was a stage in the cafeteria. The library was on the first floor. There’ve been so many changes.”

One of them, of course, was Perez’s promotion from teacher to athletic director in 2003. At the time, IWA offered six sports for its students; over the last 17 years, Perez



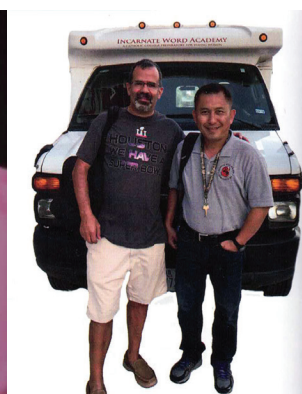
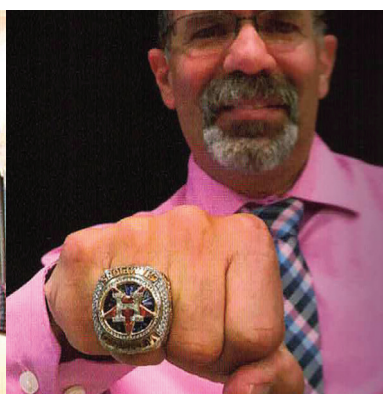
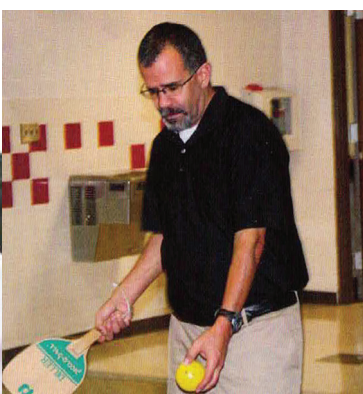
added swimming, golf and cheerleading, which is offered at St. Thomas High School.

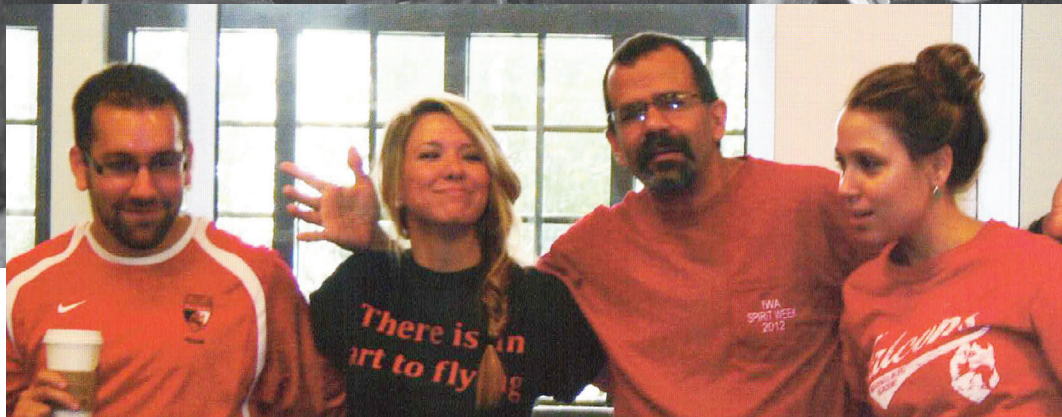
“Those additions help us with enrollment,” he said. “When we first began offering them, you could see how excited the 8th graders who came to tour, that they had those options here.”

Perez feels IWA’s size and the sisterhood of its students help prospective Falcons see all the school has to offer. He also believes that it gives the girls here opportunities they might not have in other high schools.

At IWA, students often land on varsity teams in their freshman year. One is Claire Michael ’23 (see page 19). Another is Lily Hatcher ’17, who is now a senior marketing major at Lee University. She transferred to IWA the second semester of freshman year and immediately found a home on the softball team. She now plays the sport in college. And she keeps in touch with Coach.

“I love Coach Perez!” she said, her affection evident even through the static of her car’s Bluetooth system. “He’s a really great person. He was always pushing me to be my best, and wanting the best for me. For all of us. He still is.”





Hatcher and Perez call and text regularly, and she said he joins her family for dinner a few times a year. That mentorship is important to her, and she said the lessons she learned playing softball for him still resonate.

"He taught me to work hard and how to be a leader," she said. "How to stay calm, be humble, to lead my team by example."

Fellow IWA alumna Hallie Lyons '19, now a sophomore at Texas A&M majoring in environmental studies, agrees. She played volleyball and basketball at IWA.

"He has this sort of relentless attitude," she said. "He always pushed us to do our best, to never give up. And he was always there. Coach put in a lot of late nights. If there was a game, at night, on the weekend, he was there, cheering us on."

"Rick always wants what's best for the students," said Assistant Athletic Director Bryan Gonzales, who's worked with Perez for six years. "He does whatever needs to be done to help the athletic department stand out."

For Perez, all of it — the hard work, the support of students, the love of athletics —

is part of the job. But it's also part of his own set of principles. He grew up in southeast Houston, attended the University of Houston, received a master's degree from Grand Canyon University, and has been a middle school and high school football, basketball and softball coach. As a kid, he played baseball. He's devoted to his wife of 27 years, as he is to his faith.

"God first," he said. "And my wife and kids — wow. "When I have a rough day, I know I'm going home to them, and it keeps me grounded. 'Don't bring it home,' I tell myself. They're everything to me."

When he's not cheering on IWA teams, Perez is a vocal supporter of Houston's major-league sports, especially his beloved Astros. A recent showdown on IWA's Instagram asked who was a bigger 'stros supporter, Perez or IWA math teacher Kristan Siegel. The competition was close, but Perez claimed the victory. "We both got a good laugh out of it," said Siegel.



Rick and Patricia (Trostmann) '84 Perez

"I love watching sports, but I have to be active, I have to be moving," he said.

That's exactly what he plans to continue doing with IWA athletics: Moving the program forward, building on its success.

"Our girls can really shine here," he said. "I want them to know they can come to IWA, be part of a team and go on to play in college. Even if they don't, I want them to realize they can accomplish whatever they set their minds to."

THE CRAWFORD CLUB

A Special Giving Opportunity for Alumnae

Alumnae who donate \$100 or more to the Annual Fund are recognized as members of this exclusive club.

www.incarnateword.org/giving

BUSINESS

IWA Seniors Launch Sustainable Brand

Savvy



Like many young women their age, AnaSofia Aragon '21 and Lily Collora '21 love trendy clothes. But earlier this year, the pair became aware of the perils of so-called “fast fashion,” mass-produced, inexpensive items made from inferior materials. These clothes are often worn only a few times before they’re discarded, only to be replaced by more of the same.

So they created LANA Thrift Flips in order to do something about the problem. Launched in June 2020 and bankrolled by a \$150 loan from their parents, the pair headed to thrift stores, purchased clothing and upcycled it, creating blouses from square, silky scarves and adding ornamentation to pants and jeans. Most sell for between \$10 and \$20.

“I’ve always had an entrepreneurial spirit,” said Lily, who wants to study business in college. “And we both love fashion. So, we thought this was a great way to help the environment, as well as offer unique, affordable options.”

“We really wanted to create a business with a purpose,” added AnaSofia.

They sell their creations from their Instagram page



AnaSofia Aragon '21



Lily Collora '21



and on Depop. Since opening, they've made about \$650, they estimate, enough to have paid back their initial investment and turn a profit. The pair have been diligent about investing their profits back into their business. Currently, they have around 56 items in their inventory, and they plan to keep adding more.

In addition to being a money-making opportunity, LANA, a combination of their first names, has allowed both girls to get hands-on experience in running a business.

"I've really learned how to handle finances," said AnaSofia. "And how we communicate as a team."

"The marketing!" echoed Lily, in discussing what they've learned.

"And we've developed a relationship with the post office," AnaSofia laughed. Lily, who handles most of the company's shipping, nodded in agreement.

A news story about their business posted in IWA's "Weekly Word" newsletter attracted the attention of alumna Jeanice (Guzzetta) Netzel '79, who spent most of her career with Foley's and Stage stores in retail merchandising. She met with AnaSofia and Lily and was impressed with their business acumen.

"I was amazed that they were so sound on the business side," she said. "They have a great idea of who their customer is and have worked out what they should pay for goods and what the markup needs to be to be profitable. And they've got foresight over what they want to do with this business. That's a real testament to their families, and to the education they've received at IWA."

AnaSofia and Lily agree that IWA has helped them. They point to Leading With Service, where students work in teams and each person has a specific job to do, and Textile Art and Design, offered through IWA's fine arts program, as inspirations.

Netzel is helping the pair with their business efforts. She's put them in contact with fashion blogger Roz Pactor, who she feels can further help get exposure for LANA.

"I am also going to join them on a shopping trip to the resale shops to see how they work," Netzel said. "I want to be able to look at a before and after of what they buy and what they create."

The students are excited to have Netzel's support. Going forward the girls are increasing their inventory and

firming up plans for how they'll continue their business in college.

In the meantime, they'll be hitting the thrift stores, searching for fast-fashion pieces they can turn into new treasures.



CLASS NOTES

Class of 1980

Members of the Class of 1980 gathered at Seasons 52 Restaurant in March to celebrate their 40th reunion.

Photo: Class of 1980 reunion. Seated from left to right: Lucille (Lazarone) Richardson, Karen (Hablizel) Bedore, Teresa (Tamayo) Wright, Rose (Gonzalez) Davis, Monica Renee (Garcia) Rescino, Lily (Lopez) Campos. Standing from left to right, Margret (LaChapelle) Sonnier, Beverly (Mallet) Williams, Denise (Freitag) Kubecka, Ginger (Medina) Sarabia, Mary (Quartaro) Rossi, Margaret (Gentempo) Bader, Carol (Saldivar) Hernandez, Annette (Vasquez) Delgado.



Patricia (Martinez) Rios '83

Patricia recently celebrated her 35th wedding anniversary with husband Ray. She enjoys spending time with her two sons and three grandchildren, reading and traveling. Pictured here is The Rios family, Patricia '83, husband Ray, and sons Michael and Matthew.



MaryAlice (Riemann) Hertauss '06

MaryAlice has spent the last 10 years as an active-duty Army nurse. Her duty stations have included Washington, Germany and Hawaii. She currently works as the clinical nurse officer in charge of the OBGYN clinic at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. She lives with her husband, Ben and two kids, Annie (3) and Benji (1), seen here, and Baby No.3, who is due in December.



Patricia (Sass) Jackson '11

A 2015 graduate of the University of the Incarnate Word, Patricia now lives in Alexandria, Virginia. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Patricia has been working in the ICU, caring for COVID-positive patients. She is seen here in her protective gear.



Mary Elizabeth Amsler '16, Jhena Patriarca '16, Julia Heiser '16 and Shannon (Stokes) Gonzalez '16

These four best friends who met at the Academy are celebrating their recent graduations from Texas A&M University (Bachelor of Business Administration in management, with minors in economics and psychology), Texas Woman's University (Bachelor of Science in Nursing), Texas State University (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) and the University of Houston (Bachelor of Science in exercise science).

IN MEMORIAM

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.*



Caroline Luera '16

Caroline graduated from Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. As an undergrad, Caroline was involved in multiple student organizations. She is excited to start work at the Woman's Hospital of Texas in the pediatric ICU.

Karen McCloud '89

Nina Marie Parrish Neisig '61

Doris Olexa '44

Mary Pedraza '61

Mary Catherine Sanders '55

Virginia "Ginger" Tamborello '71

Billie Ellis

Friend and supporter of Incarnate Word Academy

Maria Flores

*Grandmother of Cristina Flores '10 and
Jessica Flores '16*

Robert "Bobby" Doerfler

Uncle to IWA math teacher Kristan Siegel

Vincent Mandola

Friend and supporter of Incarnate Word Academy

Frank Stowell Jr.

Husband of Vera Stowell '45



Lauren Marie Reyes '16

Lauren graduated from the University of North Texas with a Bachelor of Science in speech-language pathology/audiology, with a specialization in Childhood Development. She is currently pursuing her master's in speech pathology and hopes to one day work as a speech pathologist for children and adolescents.



Chrysta Joy Jaucian '17

Chrysta Joy Jaucian graduated cum laude from the University of Houston in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and an honors minor in medicine and society. She is currently serving as a small group leader through the University of Houston Catholic Newman Center, while taking prerequisite classes for graduate school and applying to Doctorate of Physical Therapy programs.

ADVANCEMENT

IWA's Online Auction Is a Virtual Success

When the COVID-19 pandemic meant the cancellation of Incarnate Word Academy's annual Gala and Auction last spring, the school was left with a challenge. How could it host the vital fundraising event when people couldn't gather together in a group?

The answer? Host it online.

What would normally be an evening of dinner and an exciting live auction instead became a weeklong virtual event, complete with video presentations, an online auction and an impressive prerecorded finale that was emailed to IWA supporters Saturday, June 20. The event netted \$243,000 for the IWA community.

"We were so fortunate to be able to move the auction to a virtual event so that everyone could still support the school while getting away with some amazing prizes," said Mappy, who co-chaired the event with her husband, Steve. The Laughlins have been auction supporters since their daughter Lilian '21 was a freshman and were excited for the chance to lead fundraising efforts for the event.

Each day during the auction week, the IWA community and other supporters were sent an email teasing some of the



*Online auction co-chairs
Steve and Mappy Laughlin,
parents of Lily Laughlin '21*

great packages available for purchase, including private wine tastings, a Mexican dinner with IWA President Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I. and Athletic Director Rick Perez, a stay at the new C. Baldwin Hotel in downtown Houston and a stunning handmade IWA quilt made from pieces of the school uniform and spirit shirts.

Like its in-person counterpart, the virtual auction honored the Reverend Joseph Cahill, Bishop of Victoria, who provided a special videotaped message that was sent to IWA supporters. Other messages included one from Lauren Self

'10, who talked about how IWA prepared her for success in college and her career, and a special thank you from members of IWA's student council. The auction's finale, a longer video structured like a telethon, featured a performance by the Incarnate Word Academy Choir singing "Praised Be the Incarnate Word," and was hosted by IWA biology teacher Stephen Comer and IWA supporter Clare Kafoglis.

"I am so proud of how everyone came together for this cause," said Perla Herrera, IWA's director of advancement. "It shows such great love for our school and our mission."

Currently, plans are in the works for IWA's 2021 Gala and Auction, "Love Is All You Need REMIX," which will take place March 27, 2021, at the Hilton Americas-Houston Hotel.

See you there!



*IWA biology teacher Stephen Comer and
IWA supporter Clare Kafoglis recording a
segment for the online auction*

Part of the Community

Joi Moseley '11 on Why She Gives Back to IWA

Most people agree that four years of high school go by in the blink of an eye, and many look back on their high school days as some of their fondest memories. That is especially true for smaller, close-knit communities, such as the one here at IWA.

Joi Moseley '11, J.D., had what she readily calls “a well-rounded” experience at IWA. That’s just one of the reasons she put her love for the school into action by supporting the IWA Annual Fund as a member of the Crawford Club.

“IWA balances the educational curriculum with a focus on the teachings of Christ, which is important,” she said. “My time at IWA helped form my study habits and helped me succeed in my higher educational endeavors.”

Moseley is currently a legislative assistant for a congressman in Washington, D.C. She said her time at IWA stands out not only because of the education she received, but also by the people who made her years at IWA special. Some of her fondest memories are “the fun times and conversations [with] friends around the lunch table... and [the] Red Check program senior year,” she said, giving a special shoutout to past teachers Sister Carmel O’Malley and Ms. Beatriz Romo, who she considers her mentors. They offered their knowledge in the classroom and encouraged Moseley to succeed.

Moseley gives back to the Academy through the IWA Annual Fund, both to show her appreciation for her own IWA experience, as well as to help other young women have their own.

She also gives as a way of staying connected to the school.

“IWA is a community and the community does not end when the students graduate,” she said. “I still feel connected to and part of the [IWA] community.”



THE
CRAWFORD CLUB

A Special Giving Opportunity for Alumnae

The IWA Crawford Club is open to all alumnae who give gifts of \$100 or more to the IWA Annual Fund.



ANNUAL REPORT

Throughout our nearly 150-year history, Incarnate Word Academy has been blessed to have the support of many generous benefactors, including our founders, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, the IWA Board of Advisers, corporate benefactors, foundations, families, faculty, staff and friends. Each individual gift ensures that we are able to continue our mission to provide young women with a rigorous college preparatory education, rooted in the values of Jesus, the Incarnate Word. We are thankful for these gifts and proud to recognize the donors who helps our traditions endure. The following donors contributed to Incarnate Word Academy between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020. We thank them all for their support!

Barbara and Larry Fraser
Pattie and Charles Kafoglis
Helen and Larry Kaiser, Sr.
Katy and Todd Theroux
Genny and Tedd Winter

Leadership Circle \$2,500-\$4,999

Betsy and Kemp Culbreath
Robin and Mark Douglass
The Fish Family
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Jan Koehn
Mapsita and Steven Laughlin
Brigit and Mathew Michael
Stacey and John Moffet
Christi and Dean Quinn
Rhonda and David Stryk
Elizabeth and Edward York

Fidelity Circle \$1,500-\$2,499

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Karen Domingue
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Perla and Alex Herrera
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Lorrie Matula '69
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Sonja Earthman Novo '59
G. Edward Powell
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Thelma and Miike Sanchez/ Anne G. '84
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ACADEMY STEWARDS

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continued on next page

ANNUAL FUND 1873 SOCIETY

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 Mary Ann Zimmerman '58

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Up to \$249

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 Theresa '71 and Bob Briggs
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Mary Wheeler '59
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Amelia '67 and Paul Webb
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Charlene '68 and Stephen Wright
Sally '63 and Charles Woodard

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Mary '72 and Stephen Auzenne
Theresa '71 and Bob Briggs
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Dolores '48 and Lee Thomas
Russell and Dottie Tillman
Candice '72 and Edward Tyrrell
Darlene '77 and James Villarreal
Marjorie and Paul Villella
Mary Ann Weishaupt '48
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Darlene '77 and James Villarreal

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continued on next page

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*Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., IWA president
(right) and her sister, Dorothy Cannella*





Congratulations to the Class of 2020, photographed in two groups outside the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on July 25, 2020. (To see the first group photo, turn to our inside front cover.)



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