

THE WORD

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY MAGAZINE

Sweet Success

From beginning to end



**Celebrating Academic
Achievements**

**Ashtyn Duncan '13
Gives Back**



Celebrating the Class of 2021.

The Incarnate Word Academy Class of 2021 has been accepted to 36 colleges and universities across the United States and around the world, and has been awarded nearly \$6 million in scholarships and awards.

THE
WORD

SPRING/SUMMER 2021 | VOL. 16 NO. 2

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.

LEADERSHIP

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

Principal
Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC

THE WORD MAGAZINE TEAM

Director of Marketing and Communications
Holly Beretto

Graphic Designer
Desiree Rodriguez '99

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
Reach out to us at:
hberetto@incarnateword.org
"The Word" Magazine is published semiannually by Anthony Rivera of Publication Printers and is free of charge. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

Incarnate Word Academy
609 Crawford St.
Houston, TX 77002

ON THE COVER
Regan Hucke '23 serves a cake pop from 609 Coffee Street, one of IWA's student-run businesses.
Photo by Desiree Rodriguez '99

PHOTO CREDITS
Holly Beretto
Desiree Rodriguez '99

24

SWEET SUCCESS


Leading With Business classes tickle taste buds

A photograph showing three students at a business fair stall. One student in a black shirt and mask is handing something to another student in a white apron and blue mask. A third student in a blue shirt and mask is also present. A sign on the stall says "COCONUT BARK".

36

RED CHECK

A beloved tradition marks an important rite of passage

A photograph of two young women in red dresses taking a selfie. In the background, there is a banner that reads "ACADEMICS | VALUES | SPIRITUALITY" with a heart in the center containing the word "AMOR".

4

FALCON NEWS

Foundation Day celebrations, honoring award winners, Latin students excel in national exam, see creativity in the classroom and more.

42

CLASS NOTES

Catch up on all the news from our alumnae.

22

ATHLETICS

Two IWA students sign with colleges, Carson Chesnut '22 is head cheer captain, Olivia Hill '23 breaks records.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Have you ever been involved in a meeting's icebreaker and asked to describe yourself in two words? It is an impossible task. No one can be described in only two words, but the words that are chosen give some insight into what qualities are prominent in a person's life. As I was thinking about how I might describe myself, I came up with two qualities: resilient and hopeful. As I face life's normal ebbs and flows, I find that I am able to bounce back when life gets tough and I am hopeful for the future.

This past year has been one "for the books" in all aspects. There has been every reason to feel down and defeated from the ravages of the pandemic. The national death toll, the death and severe illness of family and friends, the loss of income and livelihoods, the isolation from family and friends, along with the regular disappointments of life, have definitely taken a toll.

And yet, as a believing community, we know that is not the end of the story.

Signs of hope shone through. Our faculty and students navigated the rigors of remote learning, which was new and challenging to everyone. As tough as that was, everyone survived the setback and in the second semester we were able to open the campus once again to relieved students and we began to get back on track.

Elsewhere, life has begun to come back. Most of us are feeling more and more comfortable being out and about these days and attending events. Our successful gala was a perfect example. We had a happy crowd, enjoying one another and supporting the IWA mission. The evening was perfect!

Despite the challenges of this year, we have so many student accomplishments to celebrate. First of all, they were able to stay focused on their school work. Our Young Leaders Program was able to launch two successful student-run businesses, learning about the value of teamwork, business planning, marketing and finance while successfully facing inevitable stumbling blocks. The end products were crowd pleasers that allowed our YLP students to donate their profits to those in need. Two students made perfect scores on the nationwide Latin exam. We had a student present a paper at a national conference. We had a well-done student-directed play and a successful spring musical. Our students received top honors in art competitions and our choir received superior ratings in their competitions, in addition to individual students receiving honors. We had our best-ever Foundation Day celebration with everyone pulling together to overcome obstacles to provide a day enjoyed by all. We celebrated the Class of 2021, who received nearly \$6 million in scholarships and awards, and were accepted to 136 colleges and universities across the country and around the globe.

Am I hopeful? You bet I am! The best is yet to come. As you're reading this, we're laying the groundwork for success in our 2021 - 2022 school year. We are excited for what is to come. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Sr. Lauren Beck C.V.I.

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



Honoring Our Traditions Foundation Day 2021 Celebrates IWA's Past

It's one of the most loved events on the Incarnate Word Academy calendar: Foundation Day. The annual celebration commemorates how three members of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament came to Houston to open a school for the city's youth. They celebrated their first Mass May 5, 1873, in a chapel at 609 Crawford Street, the very spot where our academy now stands.

On Foundation Day, the academy cancels classes and offers a day of reflection and celebration, a reminder of where we came from, where we are and where we want to be. Held April 30, 2021, this year's festival began with a socially distanced Mass at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Members of our Class of 2021 took part in a procession into the church, placing roses at the feet of a statue of the Blessed Mother. Dana Theroux '21, our Woman of the Word Award winner (see Page 11) placed a crown of flowers on Mary's head.

"Our foundation really is Jesus, the Incarnate Word," said the Rev. Tom Rafferty, the pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church, who celebrated Mass. "All of us have been beneficiaries of that legacy, not just today, but for many, many more tomorrows."

At the conclusion of Mass, Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., IWA's president, presented the Jeanne de Matel Award to Eric Kerr-Herally, director of our Young Leaders Program. Named in honor of the founder of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, the award recognizes a faculty member who has been a role model who embodies the academy's pillars of academics, values and spirituality.

Following Mass, students, faculty and staff returned to the academy for a day of festivities. Members of the Mothers' Club (see Page 36) grilled burgers and hot dogs and served lunch. An ice cream truck offered frozen treats. There were tricycle races in the gym, karaoke in the auditorium (where even Sister Lauren joined in the fun), trivia in the conference room and Dance Dance Revolution in our Young Leaders Program classroom. Throughout the academy, there was a feeling of jubilant sisterhood.

As last year's celebration was canceled in the wake of the pandemic, this year's seemed all the more precious.





Freshmen Ace National Latin Exam

Two Incarnate Word Academy students made a perfect score on the National Latin Exam. Abigail Christensen '24 and Devin Gold '24 aced the test, given annually to students in the United States and around the world. "In all my years teaching Latin, I've only ever had one student earn a perfect score on the exam, so having two was a delightful surprise," said Dr. Brian Apicella, IWA's Latin teacher. "Earning a perfect score is very difficult; about 140,000 students from 20 different countries take the test each year and less than 1% earn a perfect score." Abigail and Devin received a medal and a certificate touting their accomplishment, along with a hand-lettered certificate announcing the test results. "I decided to study Latin because I was fascinated by how Latin is intertwined with the words many people speak on a daily basis, even though the language has not been officially spoken for many years," said Devin. "I'm enjoying diving further into the rich history of Latin and how my vocabulary has expanded since taking the class." Abigail likes that, too. She decided to take IWA's Latin I class to help her learn new vocabulary words. She certainly did that and discovered something else. "I enjoy how I can find correlations in words with what we have been learning in class," she said. "In addition, I like how the stories we read in class have interesting storylines." Abigail and Devin aren't the only IWA students to win awards on the National Latin Exam. Brianna Reagins '24 and Reese Mason '24 earned gold medals. All four students will have their names published in Torch U.S., the publication of the National Junior Classical League. The league is a national nonprofit that encourages an interest in and appreciation of the language, literature and culture of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as imparting an understanding of the debt contemporary culture owes to that of classical antiquity. "We are very proud of these two young ladies," said Principal Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC. "This is a tremendous accomplishment. And we're thankful to Dr. Apicella for his hard work preparing them for this exam, as well as his enthusiasm for all things Latin."

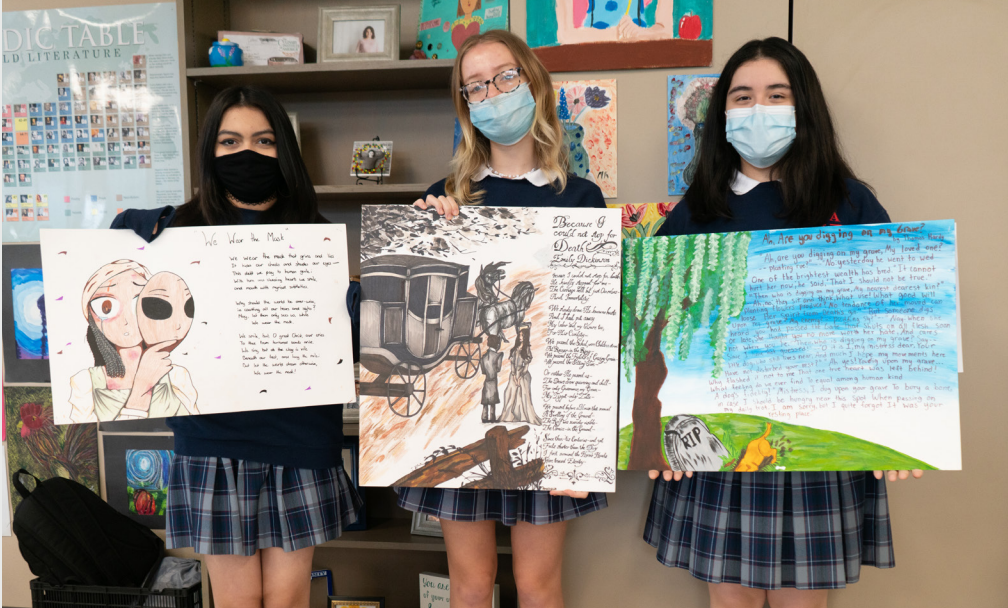
IWA Student Presents Paper at National Conference

When Kate Sullivan '21 presented her research at the fall meeting of the American Geophysical Union Dec. 10, she had no idea the conference was the largest gathering of Earth scientists in the world. What she did know was that what she was doing was a big deal. "Getting an abstract accepted to this conference is a great accomplishment, and I am very proud of Kate," said Dr. Michael Farner, IWA's AP chemistry and physics teacher. Kate's presentation was a team effort, presented with a group of students who are all part of GeoFORCE, a program run by the University of Texas at Austin's Jackson School of Geosciences. Designed to encourage middle and high school students to learn more about — and consider future study and careers in — the Earth sciences, it's a competitive program, with admission offered by application only. Kate applied as a student at Hogg Middle School and has been involved with GeoFORCE for the last four years. "My role in our presentation was as the hydrologist on the team," she explained. "Our team's research was based on what we did for our senior project for GeoFORCE. We were assigned a fictional planet with certain parameters, and we were required to pitch why our planet was worth terraforming." Kate researched ways to obtain water from underground and on the planet's surface. For the conference presentation, the team focused on how their previous work could apply to terraforming planets. While it's common practice for college students to present their research on conferences like this, it's less so for high school students. Kate and her team were asked to present their work at UT's Jackson School of Geosciences Symposium in March. "These past four years with GeoFORCE have been a wonderful experience," said Kate, who was able to travel to places like the Grand Canyon to study science. "I've learned way more about geology than I could possibly imagine, and I love it! One of the wonderful things about GeoFORCE is that it continues to reach out to students even when they're in college. So no matter what I do or where I go, I will always be a part of the GeoFORCE family." Kate, has applied to be a counselor on a future GeoFORCE trip, sharing her love of this program with middle and high school students. She will attend the University of Dallas this fall. And while she isn't sure if she'll study science in college or beyond, she said the lessons she's learned in this program, and the experiences she's had, will stay with her all her life.



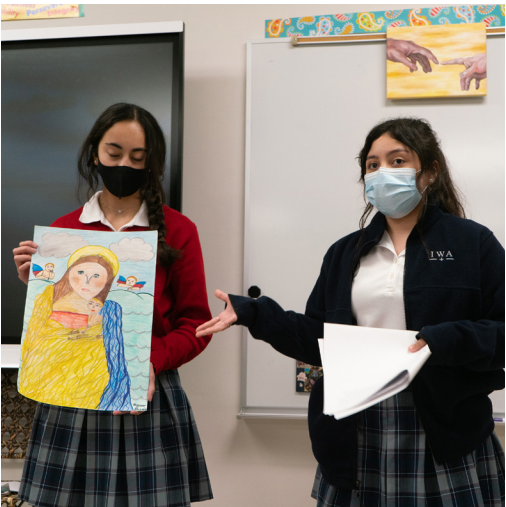
Creative Academics
IWA Classes Allow Students to Blend Learning and Imagination

Academics at Incarnate Word isn't just a series of lectures in a classroom. Our dedicated faculty bring lively discussions and opportunities for students to showcase their creativity to their classrooms, giving students the chance to demonstrate what they know.



Poetic Artistry

Students in Mrs. Kathleen Kelly's freshman English classes read classic poems this year, a vital part of understanding the broad scope of literature throughout the centuries. She then encouraged them to create artwork, to bring those poems to life. The finished projects offered a variety of interpretations on the selections, demonstrating a diversity of personal taste and style.



Making History Come Alive

Mrs. Catherine Neaves asked the freshmen in her World History and Geography From 1500 course to "go down the rabbit hole" and research any subject that interested them. They would present that subject to the class in any way they chose. The results showed individuality and ingenuity. Jazmin Garza '24 played two pieces she prepared on her viola to show the changes in musical styles during the period of 1500–1700. Scout Hatfield '24 researched Renaissance fashion divas and had a friend model a simple peasant dress. There were also several recreations of works of art, along with experiments and original inventions.



Hands-On Learning Helps Cement Concepts

During the last week of school, our on-level and AP chemistry classes got together for a titration lab. They were asked to combine hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide to find the neutralization point in order to determine an unknown concentrate in their sodium hydroxide. Led by Dr. Michael Farner and Mrs. D'Arby Garza, the class allowed students to learn from each other, as well as take part in hands-on learning. "They were able

to get different perspectives on the material by helping each other," said Dr. Farner, who teaches AP Chemistry. Titration is typically one of the last chemistry labs of the year, but last year's chemistry students — many of whom were now taking AP Chem — weren't able to do it because of the pandemic. Those students, however, had done a lot of equilibrium work and had studied titration theoretically. "So this was a chance for them to apply their theoretical knowledge and make it applied knowledge," said Mrs. Garza.





Living The Word

During our annual Academic Awards night celebration, we celebrated the scholastic accomplishments of our students. We also handed out three awards to young women who exemplify our values.



Woman of the Word Award Dana Theroux '21

This award is given to a senior who embodies a mastery and love for academics, a firmly rooted value system and an active Christian spirituality. She serves as a leader in living out her faith, maintains a GPA of 3.6 or above and has exceeded our 75-hour service requirement. Dana's teachers describe her as dedicated, a leader and a joy to teach. This year she served as our Student Council president, where she exhibited both leadership and creativity. As a member of the cross-country team, she encouraged her fellow Falcons. She was an active member of our Campus Ministry Team. She's going to Texas A&M University this fall, where she'll major in computer engineering.

Spirit of the Word Award Avery Garig '21

This award is presented to a student who exemplifies school spirit, showing her love of the academy on campus and off. She also maintains a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Avery's positive attitude and her ability to seek creative solutions to problems are recognized and admired throughout the IWA community. She was instrumental in creating a "day in the life" video for our admissions office, showcasing for prospective students what being an IWA student was like. She's a natural student and leader and regularly shares her experiences and ideas with everyone from classmates to IWA visitors. Avery will be attending New York University this fall.



Servant of the Word Award Madeline Taylor '21

This award is given to the senior who makes a meaningful impact on IWA and the larger community, and has shown the ability to enlist and inspire others. Maddie is our Student Council vice president this year, where her positive spirit was always on display. She volunteered with the DeBusk Enrichment Center for Academically Talented Scholars and attended Christian Leadership Training at Camp Cho-Yeh. Maddie was also a strong leader on the cross-country and track teams, leading Sunday runs to help keep the team motivated. Maddie has a true servant heart and seeks to inspire happiness in those around her. She will attend the University of Notre Dame.

Celebrating Academic Accomplishments

Incarnate Word Academy is proud to offer our students challenging coursework that prepares them for college and beyond. We're also proud to share their academic success.



2021 Graduates of Distinction:
Top row: Mary Juliette Billings,
Lauren Fuller, Sofia Garza,
Anna Hartman and Leah Lucas
Bottom row: Sara Roldan,
Madison Seymour, Madeline Taylor,
Dana Theroux and Evelina Torres

DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

AnaSofia Aragon
Noor Beidas
Kyndall Broussard
Lily Collora
Merissa Dias
Samara Estrada
Lauren Fuller
Avery Garig
Isabella Garza
Sofia Garza
Lily Laughlin
Sofia Martinez
Randi McBride
Alexandra Ortiz
Isabela Perez
Jada Pierre
Amaya Pitts
Karen Rodriguez
Sara Roldan
Sophia Schlak
Amanda Stockton
Kate Sullivan
Sandra Taboada-Palau
Madeline Taylor
Evelina Torres

MARGARET SHEL TZ ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Emma Nguyen
Kati Rzasnicki

CHARLENE BARRY THEOLOGY AWARD

Sofia Martinez

RENSSELAER AWARD FOR ENGINEERING

Mary Turner

SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS AWARD

Mary Juliette Billings
Jacqueline Kaase

NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED SCHOLARS

Juliette Billings
Sofia Garza
Anna Hartman

NATIONAL HISPANIC RECOGNITION PROGRAM SCHOLAR

Sofia Garza
Allison Huddleston
Lindsey Marquines
Sara Roldan
Evelina Torres

PRESIDENT'S EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE GOLD AWARD

Ana Sofia Aragon
Alexandra Benedict
Mary Juliette Billings
Katelyn Blade
Anna Bourgoyne
Kyndall Broussard
Anna Cook
Nicole Fish
Lauren Fuller
Avery Garig
Sofia Garza
Cecilia Hall
Anna Hartman
Allison Huddleston
Jacqueline Kaase
Quynh Le
Leah Lucas

Lindsey Marquines
Catherine Miller
Cassandra Nunez
Gia Ochsenbein
Alexandra Ortiz
Sara Roldan
Sophia Schlak
Madison Seymour
Kate Sullivan
Madeline Taylor
Evelina Torres
Elena Westby
Emily York

SILVER AWARD

Joelle Alvarez
Piper Bratton
Lily Cromeens
Danielle Detoto
Felecia Gonzalez
Karley Kieschnick
Lauren Lee
Ruth Linbeck
Sofia Martinez

2021 VALEDICTORIAN



Mary Julliette Billings

Randi McBride
Holly McLeod
Isabela Perez
Karen Rodriguez
Dana Theroux
Allison Tirado

SCHOLAR ATHLETE

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Nia Alexander
Joelle Alvarez
AnaSofia Aragon
Danielle Bartholet
Britney Bell
Ana Sofia Bello
Rose Bieszke
Katelyn Blade
Kaitlyn Bourgeois
Madeleine Bourgeois
Anna Bourgoyne
Piper Bratton

Liliana Cantu
Lauren Castex
Mackenzie Castillo
Catherine Cerda
Emily Chaires
Ashley Chavez
Eva Cheng
Carson Chesnut
Isabella Coenen
Lila Coenen
Kate Conti
Allyson Cortes
Fiona Cosgrove
Fiona Coulbourne
Nicole Cross
Marie Culbreth
Itzel DeLeon
Dani Detoto
Merissa Dias
Olivia Dickens
Amelie Dinh
Sarah Douglass
Elizabeth Drake

Leah Dumanlang
Emily Dulce
Thanh Truc Duong
Anna Eckelkamp
Chimere Egesi
Alessa Elkareh
Mariana Ferrell
Madelyn Figueroa
Nicole Fish
Stephanie Fish
Julia Fisher
Mary Flaherty
Persia-Marie Fombin
Denver Fowler
Devin Fowler
Anna Galan
Alexandra Ganim
Claire Garcia
Anna Gardner
Emily Gentry
Kady Gidney
Audrey Gillespie
Felecia Gonzalez

2021 SALUTATORIAN



Madeline Taylor

Emily Green
Grace Guillory
Iman Haddad
Elizabeth Hatten
Vivian Hernandez
Olivia Hill
Amelia Horner
Vanessa Hosman
Elizabeth Hunt
Sophia Hunt
Ciara Juanico
Leila Khan
Karley Kieschnick
Makynzie Kitzmann
Erin Koehler
Kathryn Koerner
Isabelle Lavoie
Quynh Le
Erin Lenahan
Anora Lee
Lauren Lee
Ruth Linbeck
Emilie Lynch
Jordan Mahoney

Gabrielle Mamaradlo
Julia Marrow
Klarrisa Martinez
Randi McBride
Claire McTaggart
Claire Michael
Paola Minces
Evalyn Navarro
Nora Navarro
Ann Nguyen
Emma Nguyen
Jorri Odom
Sarah Olmos
Alexandra Ortiz
Kennedy Parker
Isabela Perez
Mackenzie Peugh
Tam Phan
Elise Potier
Emily Quin
Gemma Rabo
Lucia Rager
Lauren Richards
Alex Robey

Alexis Roca
Raquel Rodriguez
Sara Roldan
Kaitlyn Rzasnicki
Mia Salinas
Xiomara Salinas
Elyse Scheller
Isabella Smetana
Julia Smith
Colleen Sontheimer
Sarah St. John
Amanda Stockton
Sandra Taboada-Palau
Maya Tihami
Tosha Tkaczyk
Lauren Trahan
Mary Turner
Alyson Ubungen
Mary Elizabeth Uyenco
Pia Valenzuela
Ellia Volf
Abigail Waggoner
Sofia Wagner

MU ALPHA THETA

AnaSofia Aragon
Britney Bell
Ana Sofia Bello
Mary Juliette Billings
Katelyn Blade
Kyndall Broussard
Lauren Castex
Eva Cheng
Anna Cook
Fiona Cosgrove
Nicole Cross
Olivia Dickens
Emily Dulce
Chimere Egesi
Alessa Elkareh
Nicole Fish
Persia-Marie Fombin
Lauren Fuller
Avery Garig
Sofia Garza
Emily Green
Anna Hartman
Elizabeth Hatten
Vivian Hernandez
Allison Huddleston
Jacqueline Kaase
Karley Kieschnick
Makynzie Kitzmann
Kathryn Koerner
Lilian Laughlin
Lauren Lee
Leah Lucas
Lindsey Marquines
Sofia Martinez
Catherine Miller
Paola Minces
Evalyn Navarro
Colleen Newman
Ann Nguyen
Emma Nguyen
Cassandra Nunez
Alexandra Ortiz
Rebeka Popek
Elise Potier
Emily Quin
Gemma Rabo
Lauren Richards
Karen Rodriguez
Sara Roldan
Kaitlyn Rzasnicki
Sophia Schlak
Madison Seymour
Colleen Sontheimer
Kate Sullivan

Victoria Swanson
Daniela Taboada-Palau
Madeline Taylor
Dana Theroux
Auburn Thomas
Maya Tihami
Evelina Torres
Lauren Trahan
Mary Turner
Mary Elizabeth Uyenco
Ellia Volf
Abigail Waggoner
Elena Westby
Emily York

INTERNATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY

Amelia Horner
Reagan Hucke
Lindsey Marquines
Sara Roldan
Alyson Ubungen
Denise Walsh
Emma Welsh
Nanea White
Zoe Yokubaiti

SPANISH HONOR SOCIETY

AnaSofia Aragon
Britney Bell
Madeleine Bourgeois
Liliana Cantu
Lauren Castex
Ashley Chavez
Eva Cheng
Fiona Cosgove
Nicole Cross
Jizelle Dominguez
Thanh Truc Duong
Alessa Elkareh
Vivian Hernandez
Vanessa Hosman
Quynh Le
Paola Minces
Evalyn Navarro
Ann Nguyen
Emma Nguyen
Fabiola Pulido
Sophia Schlak
Isabella Smetana
Colleen Sontheimer
Mary Turner

IWA Students Stand Out in Speech Competition

The IWA Speech and Debate Team competed in the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools statewide speech competition. Hayden Coogan '24 placed fifth and Denise Walsh '24 placed seventh in the Poetry Interpretation category. Mr. Darrell Yarbrough, who teaches English at St. Thomas High School and coaches the debate team, helped them with preparations. Congratulations to Hayden and Denise!



Hayden Coogan '24



Denise Walsh '24



2020 AP[®] CSP
Female Diversity Award



Praise for IWA Computer Science

Incarnate Word Academy has earned the College Board AP[®] Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles. We are one of 831 schools nationwide to receive the honor. The College Board presents the Female Diversity Award to schools that have expanded girls' access in AP computer science courses. IWA offers both AP Computer Science Principles and AP Computer Science A, along with several other courses in computer programming and digital design. We're proud to have earned this honor.

Write On!

IWA Student Shines in Essay Contest

Last winter the Veterans of Foreign Wars hosted its 2020-2021 Texas Top Ten Voice of Democracy banquet aboard the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi. Ashley Chavez '22 placed first in Houston for the Voice of Democracy Essay Contest and seventh overall in Texas. The theme for this year's essay was, "Is this the country the founders envisioned?" Congratulations to Ashley!



Ashley Chavez '22 (third from left) with other Democracy Essay Contest winners.

Witnessing History

IWA students watched the inauguration of Joseph R. Biden Jr. as he became the 46th president of the United States Jan. 20, 2021, witnessing the transfer of power from one administration to the next. Many IWA humanities teachers paused their lessons so the students could see Kamala D. Harris sworn in as the first woman, first African American and first Asian American vice president. The inauguration was broadcast live in the cafeteria, the auditorium and in several classrooms.



Principal Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC said that having the students watch this historic moment dovetailed with the school's commitment to encouraging young women to be leaders.

"Watching Kamala Harris sworn in as vice president shows our girls that the sky's the limit," she said. "It was very important for them to be able to see what they can achieve."

Smith pointed out that it was also useful for the students to see that even in a period of pandemic and social unrest, "the world moves on and important decisions are still being made. We'd have been cheating our students if we hadn't allowed them to watch this historic occasion."



Channel 2 News interviewed IWA students on Inauguration Day.

IWA's morning announcements that day included a special prayer for the inauguration, asking the Holy Spirit to instill the new administration with righteousness, to honor God and to help us live in peace as a nation.

IWA Students' Podcast Picked Up by Apple Podcasts

Best friends Olivia Dickens '22 and Ana Sofia Bello '22 launched their podcast, "Let's Chat With Ana Sofia and Olivia," as a way to stay connected last summer at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. "It was a quarantine impulse," laughed Olivia. "We talk about everything.



Olivia Dickens '22



Ana Sofia Bello '22

Ana Sofia has a job at a water park, we interviewed my mom, we discussed Taco Cabana."

While the content might seem light, the podcast was picked up by Apple Podcasts, which gave the girls a platform for others to tune in and download. That was a surprising, but welcome, development.

"We don't have a huge audience," Olivia explained. "Mostly, it's friends and family, but we do have someone who tunes in from Singapore."

Olivia and Ana Sofia continued podcasting when they came back to school. This spring they discussed bitcoin, a topic neither knew

anything about and wanted to explore. They plan to continue their podcasting until they're out of things to talk about — which doesn't seem likely.



Healing Art

A Japanese legend says that 1,000 cranes can bring health and healing from illness. That legend inspired Evalyn Navarro '22 and other members of IWA's newly formed Origami Club to create a stunning art installation made of paper cranes. Each



colored strand represents one of the Academy's classifications, with the shortest strand representing our faculty and staff. White cranes surround them, symbols of prayers and hope in this pandemic year. The installation hangs in the foyer by our auditorium and offers a powerful reminder about the beauty of creativity and the need for care and healing in our world.



IWA Band Students Receive High Marks

Katie Koerner '22, Kate Conti '22, Elizabeth Hunt '23 and Anna Gardner '23 are part of the St. Thomas High School Band and entered a flute quartet performance in the Texas Private Schools Music Educators Association ensemble contest. They received a 1 (Superior) rating for the performance. Donald Thoede, St. Thomas High School's band director, told them that they should be proud of themselves for putting together the entry on their own. They received a medal for their efforts. Congratulations, ladies!



Sofia Garza '21



Elise Potier '22



Katherine Dickinson '24

Choir Members Hit High Notes

Three IWA Choir members received ratings of 1 (Superior) by the Texas Private Schools Music Educators Association. Sofia Garza '21, Elise Potier '22 and Katherine Dickinson '24 entered the organization's online competition. Congratulations to these wonderful singers!



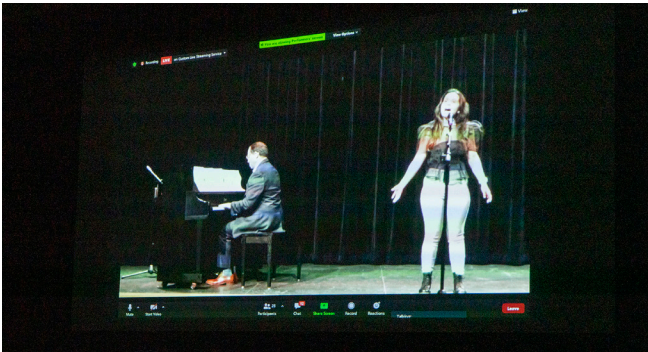
Award-Winning Playing
Harpist Ranks High in Competitions

As this magazine is landing in mailboxes, freshman Miranda Rinali '24 is likely playing the harp at Miller Outdoor Theatre as part of the American Festival for the Arts Symphony Orchestra, which preforms at the theater in Hermann Park July 2. She's one of only three high school harpists selected for the festival. That honor is on top of also winning third place in her division of the American Harp Society Greater Houston Chapter Harp Competition earlier this year. She and other winners of that event will perform in the Milligan Competition Winners Recital this fall. Miranda has been playing harp since 2017. Right before this magazine went to press, she won the Cynthia Cooper Memorial Harp Scholarship Competition, sponsored by the Gulf Coast Harpers, the local chapter of the International Society of Folk Harpers and Craftsmen. She received a full scholarship to attend the Houston Summer Harp Festival.



Hybrid Talent Show a Success

The annual Teens for Unity Talent Show is one of the highlights of the IWA calendar. Students from across the academy show off their singing, dancing and other talents to an audience of family and friends. This year, however, pandemic audience capacity limits meant some changes were in order. The result: a hybrid show that combined live and prerecorded acts shown via Zoom. Thanks to the computer savvy of both IWA's technology director, Tim Moudry, and campus minister Ana Paula Panzarini, the program went off without a hitch. Members of the Teens for Unity student organization served as a live audience in the IWA auditorium, while family, friends and some of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament tuned in at home. Acts included students from IWA and our brother school, St. Thomas High School, as well as some family and friends. Sofia Garza '21 and her father, Christian, shared a duet; he accompanied her on piano while she sang Demi Lovato's "Stone Cold." "I really enjoyed performing the song and being accompanied by my dad on piano," Sofia said. "The talent show was definitely different from last year, but it was rewarding nonetheless." Her father felt the same way. "I will always cherish the memory of playing piano while my daughter performed on the IWA stage during her senior year," he said.



There were several musical performances, a Bollywood dance number and a ballet selection. The grand finale featured some Teens for Unity members dancing to "Dynamite." "It was a challenging year all around and it was such a gift to be able to adapt and reimagine the show so that our students could share their gifts and talents," said Panzarini. "The talent show theme was inspired by the life of Carol Acutis, who challenges each of us to recognize that we were so loved by God and created as a unique individual. As we accept this gift, we are called to share it with others."



A Tradition Endures

This year proved unusual in many ways, one of which was having not one, but two, ring ceremonies. Last fall, we held the Ring Ceremony and Mass for the Class of 2021, which had been postponed because of the pandemic. This April, we held the Junior Ring Ceremony and Mass for our Class of 2022, where they received their class rings and were officially recognized as our incoming senior class. The Mass took place at Annunciation Catholic Church. Prior to the blessing and distribution of the rings, Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., IWA's president reminded the students that the class ring will forever connect them to IWA and their memories of good times, challenges, successes and values they embraced, as well as the strong bonds of sisterhood among them. The Class of 2022 recited the Women of the Word pledge, based on the Beatitudes, promising to make every effort to live these gospel values each day. "It is inspiring to watch these young women take such a stand," said Sister Lauren. "They really serve as wonderful role models for the rest of the student body. Personally, I am bursting with pride to know that all of us at the academy has been privileged to help them along the way."



ATHLETICS

Two IWA Students Commit to College Athletic Programs

IWA seniors Isabella Garza '21 and Amanda Stockton '21 will play with the NCAA

They stood out on the athletics field as IWA Falcons. Now, Isabella Garza '21 and Amanda Stockton '21 are heading to the NCAA.

In a signing ceremony held May 14 in the IWA cafeteria, both girls signed their letters of intent in front of a crowd of coaches, their families and fellow classmates. Isabella signed with Bethany Lutheran College, where she'll play soccer and golf. Amanda will run cross-country and track for the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Both schools compete in NCAA Division III, Bethany Lutheran as part of the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in the American Southwest Conference.

"I feel like I've been working for this my whole life," said Isabella, who plans to major in nursing.

As a center forward for IWA's Falcons soccer team, she served as team captain and helped lead the Falcons to their first playoff berth in school history. She finishes her high school career with 30 goals.

At the signing ceremony, soccer coach Bryan Gonzalez praised her for "always doing everything she can to help our team."

Amanda committed to Mary Hardin-Baylor in part because its cross-country program felt a lot like IWA's in how it seemed like a family.

"I love that the cross-country coach there really puts the team ahead of the individual," she said. She plans to major in international business or computer science and minor in graphic design.

IWA cross-country coach Chris Warren described Amanda as someone who always helps others, praising her for leading running sessions and encouraging her team members.

"I know you'll do great and wonderful things," he said.

Amanda finished in the top 10 at the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) state cross-country meet last fall, and has earned a spot on the all-TAPPS academic team for the last two years. Her two-mile time is 12 minutes. On IWA's track team, she's been to the TAPPS regionals for the last four years, and landed in the state track finals, running the 800m in 2018 and 2019.

"It's great to see our athletes excel both on the playing field and in the classroom," said Principal Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC. "We're proud of their accomplishments, and know that they leave IWA prepared to succeed in college academics and athletics."



Amanda Stockton '21



Isabella Garza '21



Anna Hartman Named 2021 IWA Scholar Athlete

It's not easy to be named the IWA Scholar Athlete. In addition to having a GPA of 3.0 or higher, she has to have played two or more sports during her career at the Academy. Anna Hartman '21, the 2021 Scholar Athlete, has done all that and more.

She's one of our Graduates of Distinction, a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta and the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica and a 2021 National Merit Commended Scholar. She also participated on IWA's swim team from her freshman through her junior year and ran cross-country and track all four years of high school.

"I love seeing hard work pay off and coming together as a team to support each other and make each other better," she said about being an athlete. "It's super rewarding to be able to be there for others and have a close team bond."

"Anna is always so positive and willing to go the extra mile, literally," said Athletic Director Rick Perez. "She worked so hard on the cross-country course and on track, as hard as she did in the classroom."

Anna chose to attend IWA for its strong emphasis on faith and sisterhood, and its welcoming atmosphere. This fall, she'll be attending Texas A&M University, where she'll study chemical engineering in the school's Engineering Honors Program. She plans to play intramural sports and is thinking about training for a marathon.

No matter what, she knows she can handle it. The lessons she's learned in athletics have dovetailed with her approach to academics.

"Success is all about how much effort you put in," she said. "Being an athlete taught me to always give 100 percent every day and allowed me to also put in the work in school as well."



Something to Cheer About

When Carson Chesnut '22 learned she was named the head cheer captain for the St. Thomas Cheer Team, she jumped up and screamed with joy. Her mom caught the whole thing on video. She had reason to be excited: she's the first person ever to hold that title.

Typically, there are two co-captains for the cheer team, which is made up of students from IWA, St. Agnes Academy and Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart. Carson, however, received the most votes from both the JV and varsity cheerleaders who elect the captains. Because she was such an overwhelming choice, the position of head cheer captain was created just for her. The other co-captains are students from St. Agnes and Duchesne, marking the first time the team's leadership has seen all three schools represented.

"Carson always takes a lead role, collaborating on ideas for the team," said cheer coach Paola Boitel '14, who has watched Carson grow over the last three years. "This is definitely more of a leadership role, and she will do a great job."

Carson is also a member of the National Honor Society, captain of the swim team and on the track and field team, as well as serving as a Falcon Ambassador and on the Campus Ministry Team.

"I cannot wait to help the cheer team become stronger and closer, uniting our three schools together," said Carson. "I look forward to my last year and all of the new opportunities that I hope to bring as the head captain!"

Record Breaker: Olivia Hill '23 Shines in the Pool



Olivia Hill '23 has been swimming since she was 6. She loves that the sport has allowed her to make some best friends and that it pushes her to be her best.

That best was on display this year at IWA, as Olivia broke a school swim record — twice. She broke the 100 butterfly record with a time of 1:07. Then, in the TAPPS State Meet, she swam the same event with a time of 1:05:76.

"I was so excited!" she said. "It had been my best time at IWA."

Swimming for the Falcons has not only allowed her to compete in a sport she loves, it's also allowed Olivia to create friendships and memories.

In addition to swimming, Olivia is an altar server and sacristan, as well as being a member of the National Honor Society. She chose IWA for its unique class offerings, especially in the Young Leaders Program.

"I had this feeling that I would be proud and honored to graduate from this school and it would not just be another typical four years of my life," she said.

Olivia knows there are still plenty of opportunities ahead. And she's got another record to shatter.

"[At the TAPPS State Meet] I was [excited for my butterfly time but also] so sad because I was so close to beating the 500 freestyle time, but missed it by seconds," she said. "Next year, that is my goal!"

Track and Field Team Members Finish in State Top 10

Four IWA track and field athletes finished in the Top 10 at the state meet this spring. Fiona Cosgrove '22 finished second in the high jump. Stephanie Fish '23 finished third in the 100m hurdles, Amaya Pitts '21 grabbed fourth place in the shot put and Anora Lee '22 placed seventh in the 400m. That's a great finish for our athletes!



Fiona Cosgrove '22



Softball Finishes Third in District

The IWA Falcons softball team had a great 2021 season. The team beat Concordia Lutheran Academy 21-9 to finish third in our district. Lauren Gentry '24 was 3-4 at the plate for the game; Ava Canales '23 and Emma Lynch '22 were both 3-6. Klarissa Martinez '22 went 2-2.

While the Falcons fell to Antonian College Prep Academy in the second round of the TAPPS state playoffs, nothing could diminish the team's accomplishment.

"It's been seven years since we've finished that high in district," said IWA Athletic Director Rick Perez. "We're so proud of our girls!"



Sweet Success

IWA's Leading With Business course teaches the necessary skills to successfully launch creative, student-led businesses that share profits to serve others.

One of the most popular classes at Incarnate Word Academy is Leading With Business. Offered through IWA's Young Leaders Program, the course allows students to spend a semester creating and launching a successful company. The hands-on experience means students do everything from writing a business plan and pitching it, to creating teams of students who can execute it.

This year, IWA launched two companies. Cocoa and Bark, a hot chocolate and candy company, made its debut in the fall. 609 Coffee Street, an in-house coffee shop serving flavored coffee drinks and cake pops, opened in the spring. The businesses not only teach students about the importance of how to run a successful operation, they also provide a chance for the students to give back to the community. Profits from student-run businesses are donated to local charitable organizations. Together, the companies netted close to \$3,000. 609 Coffee Street donated their profits to United Against Human Trafficking, a Houston-based organization that aims to prevent exploitation, educate the community and assist survivors. Cocoa and Bark shared their wealth with Rainbow of Hope Texas, an organization that offers equine therapy for youth with developmental disabilities.

Running a business, of course, is not without its challenges. Cocoa and Bark launched during IWA's hybrid learning days, with part of the student body learning from home, while others were here on campus.

"Sometimes we didn't have enough physical bodies to make the bark," said Mrs. Stacey Kornegay, who taught the class. Usually, the students would be the ones creating any baked goods or snacks they intended to sell. Kornegay pitched in as needed to help them create the bark to sell.

"This business really united the IWA community," said Sofia Martinez '21, who worked on Cocoa and Bark's management team.



In addition to being sold before and after school with tasty hot chocolate, the bark was offered in a gift bag at our Admissions Open House for prospective students, and goodie bags of bark were given to IWA's board of advisers as Christmas gifts.

"I never expected to go to high school and be a chocolatier," joked Sofia. "But I really liked making the bark. I'm really proud of what we created and it was fun to share it with everyone."

"I didn't know we'd be so successful!" said Denver Fowler '22, who worked on the 609 Coffee Street project. "I had no idea

iced coffee would be so popular."

It turned out the flavored coffees were a hit with the IWA community. Blenders whirled in the school kitchen, as students created iced concoctions laced with

hazelnut and vanilla. On the other side of the room, students clustered by the counters, wrapping handmade chocolate and strawberry cake pops for sale and display.

"It was so fun to try out the recipes and do taste

tests to figure out what we would sell," said Allison Tirado '21, who worked on 609 Coffee Street's finance team along with helping to prepare the iced coffees.

"It was so fun to try out the recipes and do taste tests to figure out what we would sell."



"I came to IWA because of the Young Leaders Program, and projects like this taught me about teamwork. It's really important to be able to work with everyone."

That's a sentiment Sofia shares. "Having the space to share ideas and brainstorming about what would help the business and help the school community was so important," she said.

In addition to being known as a fun class, where students develop an actual product, Leading With Business also hews to IWA's value of giving of our time, talents and treasure. At the conclusion of each business, students present the organizations they've decided to donate to with a check. The

ceremony of giving the funds to the organizations brings home to students how important giving back really is.

"I am so proud of how these young women lean in to challenges and ideas," said Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., IWA president. "Both of these businesses gave students multiple opportunities to lead and to innovate. And the products they made were great!"

Following their donations to United Against Human Trafficking and Rainbow of Hope, there was about \$1,000 left. That money will be used as startup funds for the companies created by next year's Leading With Business classes.



THE THESPIANS

Students at IWA have many opportunities to showcase their talents on stage and off. They can work with Falcon Theatre or St. Thomas High School Theatre. Some even act in the wider Houston community. Here are just a few of our talented Falcons.

Star Turn

Gia Ochsenbein '21 Shines in "Steel Magnolias"



Those who saw IWA's production of "Steel Magnolias" earlier this year agreed on two things: the production, directed by Kate Sullivan '21 (see page 31), was a great success, and Gia Ochsenbein '21 was riveting as M'Lynn Eatenton, the mother who struggles to accept her daughter Shelby's choices.

Gia who's been acting since she was 3, said the role has become one of her favorites that she's performed, alongside Daisy Hilton in "Side Show" and Miss Trunchbull in "Matilda."

"I saw 'Seussical' and I said, 'I want to do that!'" she recalled. "I remember being so excited. I haven't stopped loving acting ever since."

She hasn't stopped doing it, either. Gia's performed in productions across Houston, including at the Alley Theatre, with StageWorks, the Houston Family Arts Center and Main Street Theater's Theater for Youth. She was part of the children's chorus in Houston Grand Opera's "The Little Prince" and performed at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Bayou Bend.

"I always liked being able to be someone else," she said. "And figuring out what it meant to be that character."

This fall, she starts college at the California Institute of the Arts where she'll major in acting.

"I'm really looking forward to who I can be," she said.



Gia as M'Lynn in "Steel Magnolias."



Kate on opening night for "Steel Magnolias."

Leading the Way

Kate Sullivan '21 Helms IWA's Student-Directed Play



After serving as the assistant director IWA's 2019 musical, "Jane Eyre" and the 2020 production of "Hamlet," Kate Sullivan '21 knew she wanted to direct a production of her own, even if she wasn't sure what that production should be. But when her mom introduced her to "Steel Magnolias," she

knew she'd found the right vehicle.

"I loved that it was about female friendships," she said. "There aren't a lot of plays where you have all-woman cast on the stage. And I really loved its message of hope and healing."

Working with IWA theater director Iris Michelle, Kate directed a cast of seven and worked with the team backstage to bring the show to life. "Steel Magnolias" was her final production at IWA, but she was involved in the school's theater program for years. She acted in "Much Ado About Nothing," served as the assistant stage manager for "Into the Woods," and was the dramaturg for "Inherit the Wind. She also performed in middle school shows.

"Theater taught me to be confident," she said. "I was always shy and nervous. In theater, I learned to support my friends and how to inspire others."

Directing the show forced her out of her comfort zone, something she appreciated in hindsight.

"My favorite moment in the show was seeing it all come together on opening night," she said. "Everyone really surpassed my expectations."

Kate will attend the University of Dallas this fall.

Broadway Bound

Madison Willett '21 Heads to New York City



Madison Willett '21 has spent half of her life on stage. She began acting when she was 9, performing in shows such as “Mary Poppins,” “The Lightening Thief” and “Carrie” with Inspiration Stage, a student and community theater group in northwest Houston. “I learned to be a more empathetic person through theater,” she said. “I’ve had to play a lot of characters on opposite spectrums of society, and I’ve had to be able to connect with them and understand why they do what they do, where they are in their life.”

Working in musical theater, Madison’s had to hone her singing, dancing and acting skills, which she’s done through lessons and rehearsals. She spent part of last fall auditioning for colleges and was accepted to her top choice, Pace University in Manhattan. She’ll study musical theater there, and she has her sights set on Broadway.

“That’s my end goal,” she said. “But I’ve always wanted to perform on a cruise ship so I can get all the traveling I want to do done before I settle down, hopefully in New York and then begin Broadway auditions.”

She’s felt lucky to have played several of her dream roles, including Wendy in “The Addams Family” and the title role in “Carrie.” She feels those performances are what she’s worked for throughout her childhood and adolescence.

“When my mom first took me to a performance, I remember so clearly, at intermission I turned to her and said, ‘that’s what I want to do for the rest of my life.’”

She can’t wait for what’s next.



Madison as Cinderella in Inspiration Stage’s “Into the Woods.”



Mel in St. Thomas High School’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

freshman, where she landed a small role.

“Everyone was so welcoming to me,” she said. “It really made me gain confidence.”

She knows that confidence will help in her life. Mel doesn’t plan to major in theater in college; she really wants to be a park ranger and is interested in studying biology, agriculture and geology. But she knows that the skills of improvisation and being able to talk to people will be useful.

“I didn’t really like to work in groups,” she said. “But in theater, you have to. You’re forced to rely on others and learn to trust everyone else. That’s another thing theater has helped me do.”

When Mel isn’t on stage or in the classroom, she’s rolling around Houston in Buttercup, her purple VW Beetle Art Car. Earlier this year, she received an Executive Decision “Watch For Art Car Award” by the executive director of The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art, which hosts the annual Art Car Parade.

Artistic License

Amelia Horner '22 Gets Creative



Mel Horner '22 first performed on stage in kindergarten, in a production of “Seussical.” She’s been taking acting classes and performing ever since.

She’s one of several IWA students who performs with St. Thomas High School, where she’s been in “Guys and Dolls,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “Anything Goes” and this year’s series of radio plays.

“I love that I can step into another world,” she said of theater. “In my daily life, I’m awkward and shy and with theater, I get to be outgoing and I get to be someone I’m not.”

She said she loves the family aspect of being with her fellow thespians. She first auditioned for a show with St. Thomas as a



Emily in the IWA Falcon Theatre booth.

hands in a lot of the writing, costumes and choreography. But I wasn’t on the set team or in the booth. That’s where I relied on Reagan [Hucke '23], Hayden [Coogin '24] and Denise [Walsh '24]. And no matter how good a director is, you can’t hold the hand of the cast as they cross the finish line. Our cast was so great. They really stepped up.”

In the end, the theater students performed two shows of the musical, which incorporated songs from “Les Misérables,” “Newsies” and “The Lion King,” one for families and friends, and another Flex Time performance for the student body.

Emily said that while she may have stepped into the director’s role, the shout-outs go to the cast and crew, who leaned in to a challenging situation and put together a great performance. She’s proud of herself, and of their efforts. She’s also unruffled by the experience. Shortly after school let out, she and her fellow thespians were back at IWA, organizing the costume hold, making sure the proverbial show would be ready to go on next year.

Ensemble Player

Sara Roldan '21 Knows There are No Small Parts



One of the benefits of being an IWA student who loves theater is that our students can perform on our stage and with St. Thomas High School’s theater department. Sara Roldan ’21 performed on our brother school’s stage, as well as with TUTS’ production of “All Shook Up” as a member of the chorus.

“Acting has helped me work with people better,” she explained. “I consider myself shy, but the energy of performing helped me grow in confidence a lot.”

Sara’s a classically trained dancer, having studied with the Houston Ballet, which is what led her to audition for TUTS’ Humphreys School of Musical Theatre. Those experiences showed her that she could push herself beyond her own comfort zone. Performing also helped her be more observant, she said.

Most of all, though, she credits IWA for helping her with her onstage success.

“I really learned time management,” she said. “And how to multitask. I’ve learned to be very disciplined.”

She’s also an accomplished student; Sara was one of IWA’s Graduates of Distinction this year. She’s heading to Baylor University this fall.

The Show Must Go On

Emily Quin '22 Steps Up



IWA prepares its students to be leaders and to take on big tasks. There’s not much bigger than directing a musical. And, while there were some anxious moments for the cast and crew of our spring production, “Musicals Medley,” luckily Emily Quin ’22 was ready to take the lead.

“When something needs to be done, you should do it if you can do it,” she said. “I’ve always been that way. I didn’t second guess myself.”

Emily was originally heading up the show’s costume team, but she’s done a great deal of theater work with IWA, either performing or working backstage on shows such as “Steel Magnolias,” “Puffs” and “Hamlet.” To bring the spring musical to the stage, she relied on the lessons she learned from both theater director Iris Michelle and former theater teacher Katy Mulvaney.

“It was nerve-wracking,” she said about the experience. “I had



Sara backstage at TUTS’ “All Shook Up.”



In Gratitude Ashtyn Duncan '13 Gives Back

Ashtyn Duncan '13 knew she wanted to do something big the year she turned 25.

Eight years out of high school and four years after graduating from Texas Southern University with a B.B.A. in accounting, she has an established career at Microsoft, working in the company's internal auditing services division. She feels blessed by the opportunities she's had. So, she wanted to give back.

This year, she established the Perry Dean Thomas Scholarship at Incarnate Word Academy, \$25,000 that will help a young woman of color pay for her IWA education. The scholarship is named for her grandmother.

"Since I graduated from college [in 2017] I remember thinking back on all the good things I got from IWA, whether it be that solid foundation in my faith or that solid foundation in my academics, and I always wanted to give back to a student who looked like me and had the opportunity to go to this amazing school," she said. "This school gave so much to me."

So did her family. Her parents provided for her school tuition, and her grandmother pitched in for things like books and the school uniform and volleyball team trips. Duncan wanted to honor that support in the scholarship, knowing that her family's sacrifices helped her achieve her success.

She said that the academics at IWA "over prepared" her for college, allowing her to handle the transition from high school to college with ease, and be able to help her college classmates who were struggling. IWA also helped her grow in her own confidence to advocate for herself and others, to set goals and to more deeply explore her Christian faith.

"I was a scholarship recipient at IWA," she said. "And it had such an impact on my life. I kept thinking, 'someone gave to me, how can I give to others?'"

With the establishment of the Perry Dean Thomas Scholarship, Duncan is looking toward the future. She's hoping to visit all seven continents by the time she's 27 (she has two left to go), and she continues to look to God for His gifts and guidance.

"I want others to know they should never stop trying," she said. "Just pray crazy prayers because God will truly give you the desires in your heart."





Above and top: Parents wrap christmas gifts to help busy IWA faculty and staff during the holidays.



Mapsita Laughlin and Nicole Benedict.



Samantha Edwards



Setting up snacks for Falcon Family reveal.

Moms (and Dads) Get it Done

IWA Parent Volunteers Play a Pivotal Role in School Life

When it comes to lending a pair of helping hands, nothing tops the IWA Mothers' Club. This dedicated group of volunteers has pitched in on everything from the IWA Admissions Open House, cooking the Thanksgiving luncheon, serving breakfast during Teacher Appreciation Week, wrapping Christmas gifts for the IWA faculty and staff — and more. In fact, when help is needed at IWA, it's often the Mothers' Club that comes running.

"We have a great group of volunteers," said Nicole Benedict, mother of Alex '21 and Kayla '20 and the outgoing Mothers' Club president. "And it's not just mothers. We have so many fathers who volunteer as well."

Benedict said that having parents present in the school shows the students that families have pride in the IWA community. On any given day, they might see moms and dads working with the advancement team to stuff envelopes with invitations to the IWA Gala and Auction or working in the kitchen to create special treats for a reception. Parents even run the IWA Spirit Shop. Samantha Edwards, mother of Katie '18 and Sarah '23, has spearheaded the Spirit Shop for the last several years.

"I love working with the students to get ideas for things they'll enjoy," she said. "And all of the money raised from Spirit Shop sales goes back to the Mothers' Club fund. We use the fund for activities throughout the year, including the Mother/Daughter Mass reception, our annual IWA Thanksgiving lunch and Teacher Appreciation Week."

Being part of the volunteer group has proven a great way for parents to meet each other and share experiences at IWA. That's how Mapsita Laughlin, mother of Lili '21, got involved.

"I started working with Sam in the Spirit Shop," she said. "We might not have met otherwise. I'm a worker bee, and I like being part of things."

In talking about volunteer commitment, Benedict said, "If someone only has a two-hour window to help with administrative work, that's fine. If someone else can spend an evening cooking at home and dropping off baked goods the next morning, that's ok, too. Any level of volunteering is helpful."

"It's great for our daughters to see that we're invested in the school," said Benedict. "It shows them we really are a family. We do this for them."

Interested in being involved with our Mothers' Club? Visit www.incarnateword.org/parents/mothers-club.



IWA dads grilling on Foundation Day.



From Senior Class to Alumnae

At IWA, the seniors mark the transition from graduating class to alumnae with a pair of events at the end of the year. Collectively called Red Check, the celebration includes a luncheon for the graduating seniors, after which they perform a production they've written and produced. The Red Check Assembly pokes gentle fun

at the students' days here at the Academy, showcasing sisterhood and shared memories. This year, the Class of 2021 presented a show that borrowed heavily from "Saturday Night Live" and awards shows like the Academy Awards. It offered a send-up of Zoom classes, the personalities of favorite teachers and even a slide presentation that echoed award shows' "in memoriam" segments that showcased teachers they've had who have now left the school.

The Class of 2021 sings the Alma Mater at the Red Check Assembly.



A Loving Tribute

When the Class of 2020 returned to IWA Jan. 7 to collect their yearbooks, we held a special, socially distanced Mass in the school's chapel. The service included a blessing conveyed upon the stained-glass picture the Class of 2020 gave to IWA in honor of Rebecca Hasker. Rebecca passed away due to cancer in 2019, but would have graduated in 2020. Her sister Anna '20, and her parents, Peter and Pam Hasker, took part in the Mass. The stained-glass image now hangs in our IWA chapel in Rebecca's memory.



CLASS NOTES



Twelve members of the **Class of 1962** are seen in the photo (left) spending time together at Artesian Lakes Resort in Cleveland, Texas. The attendees placed roses in the lake to remember the 22 deceased classmates from the Class of 1962, saying their names and a prayer of remembrance. Front row sitting: Elizabeth (Barrett) White, Loretta (Prazak) Kasowski and Lena (Schuttee) Tomasino. Back row (L-R): Janet (Hamala) Huber, Lillian (Cegielski) Kozel, Peggy Schulin, Maria (Villagomez) Buzek, Cynthia (Beam) Higginbotham, Christine (Micklitz) Womack, Teresa Ramirez and Teresa (Medina) Martinez. Standing at top: O'reen Fires Johnson



The **Class of 1962** looks forward to its next reunion. Seated around table from left to right, Christine (Micklitz) Womack, Felicia (Caporina) Cox, Janet (Hamala) Huber, Loretta (Prazak) Kasowski, Theresa Ramirez and Maria (Villagomez) Buzek. Standing (L-R): Lillian (Cegielski) Kozel and Peggy Schulin



Jasmine (Owens) Ross '08 and her husband recently celebrated the birth of their second child, Martin Alexander Ross, born on Feb. 25, 2020.

Virginia Birkofer '14 wed Nicholas Lee Oct. 3, 2020. The ceremony was held at St. Ann Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., with a reception at 101 Constitution Ave., overlooking the Capitol Building. The couple now resides in Houston, with frequent trips back to D.C. for Virginia's role at Deloitte.

Sisters **Bria '11 and Zoria Temple '15** founded the Black Informed Women's Academy, a collective of Black and African American alumnae dedicated to uplifting the community, navigating educational systems and professional networks, and practicing self-efficacy and agency to accomplish academic, professional goals.



Jessica Flores '16 graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in elementary education. She is currently finishing her first year of teaching first grade and is excited to continue her career.

Hannah Lucia Tello '16 earned a Bachelor of Arts in advertising from the University of Houston Honors College in the fall 2019. She graduated with a Master of Science in Global Retailing in spring 2021. She is a member of the collegiate honor societies Omicron Delta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi, and is also an alumni of Zeta Tau Alpha. She will continue her career in the luxury retail industry.



Julia on a beach in Brazil

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.*

Rosalie Marie (Lorino) Altomari '56

Gloria (Skobla) Buxkemper '59

Carliss (Kuhn) Carney '49

Donna Jean (Marshall) Pollard '55

Rose Marie Patronella '56

Sister Roseanne (Annie May) Plagens '56

Bena Mary (Smith) Stampke '49

Catherine Rose (Scardino) Vairin '46

Sandy (Matula) Winzig '71

Janelle (LeBlanc) Wright '53

Madora "Dodie" Mae (Cernosek) Zenner '44

Sister Zachary Bertrand, C.V.I.

William Collora

Father of Lily Collora '21

Ellen Kay Ginn

Daughter of Barbara Ginn '58

Barbara Hofer

Mother of Cindy (Hofer) Kenne '67

Joe and Mary Mendoza

Parents of Rosemary Sepulveda '71, Mary Ann Rosas '73, Beatrice Licea '76, Margie Cortinas '77, Cynthia Castillo '81, Gilda Mendoza-Trostmann '84, and grandparents of Hannah Licea '15 and Maria Trostmann '20

Sister Josephine Nolan, C.V.I.

Richard O'Brien

Husband of Mary (Scherer) O'Brien '48

Richard Parsons

Husband of Peggy (Krengle) Parsons '63

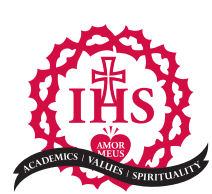
Hugh J. Rafferty

Friend of IWA

Frank Stowell, Jr.

Husband of Vera (Barbosa) Stowell '45

Julia Romualdo dos Santos '20 was excited to spend a semester back home in Brazil this spring, where she spend quality time with her entire family. After five years away, she enjoyed the beautiful beaches and the familiar faces.



INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY

609 Crawford Street ♦ Houston, Texas 77002-3668

IWA

PLANNED GIVING SOCIETY

Her Future is Your Legacy

Become an inaugural member of our new Planned Giving Society. Your planned gift to Incarnate Word Academy allows us to continue our mission of providing a Catholic college preparatory education for young women, rooted in the values of Jesus, the Incarnate Word. If IWA has already been included in your will or estate planning, or to learn how you can make IWA part of your legacy contact Perla Herrera, director of advancement, at 713-227-3637 ext. 105 or pherrera@incarnateword.org.