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# ECHOES OF CARMEL

*Mount Carmel Academy's Special Edition:  
A Look Back at Our First Semester!*

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*I am so excited to present this beautiful edition full of new and exciting articles written by your fellow students. Enjoy!*

*We are so grateful for our collaboration with National Honor Society and have enjoyed working with all of you.*

**SELENA ELORZA (CLASS OF 2023)**  
Editor-In-Chief



## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MCA

**BY LEXIE DECASTRO (CLASS OF 2023)**

In middle school, Mount Carmel's Open House was an event I always looked forward to. Next thing you know, I am now able to represent Mount Carmel Academy firsthand as an Ambassador. This different perspective gave me a new appreciation for the dedication and teamwork that it takes to put on this incredible event for potential students. As an Ambassador, I had the opportunity to guide many groups of visitors throughout the entire school. I gave them a tour of our buildings while giving them a glimpse into what life at MCA will truly be like. Not only did I provide helpful insight for many future Cubs, but I was also able to see for myself the diverse organizations, academics, and faith cultivation our school provides. It was such a blessing to have the opportunity to represent the school I take so much pride in. The enthusiasm and excitement that radiated from each room was incomparable to any other MCA experience. Open House truly showed the community and united family that we are under Mount Carmel Academy.



So excited to be an Ambassador along with Avery Barfield and Carley Kronlage!

## FIVE LESSONS I LEARNED FROM AMBASSADORS BY LORRAINE STEIGNER (CLASS OF 2022)

- 1. Smile.** No, really! People can tell when you're tired or bored or unhappy, and it makes them tired and bored and unhappy, too. There's nothing wrong with feeling exhausted (trust me, I know), but I never realized just how much my own exhaustion would bleed over into the events I was working and the kids with whom I was working. It's hard, but just smiling or laughing or being excited about an activity will get other people excited, too. It's like a weirdly positive form of peer pressure. Put your best foot forward, and you'll cheer everyone up - and you'll feel better as well!
- 2. Ask people about themselves.** When you're leading a tour or working an event for prospective students, many times you will run into kids who are shy and unsure and seem overwhelmed. To make them feel welcome, I always try to ask prospective students about themselves when I'm working- not just how they feel about Mount Carmel, but what they like to do for fun, who their friends are, their favorite songs...It's a great way to make someone feel comfortable, and you never know what you might learn, too!
- 3. Everyone has a place.** I don't think I realized just how big the city was until I saw just how many middle schoolers come to summer camp, Open House, and MCA Your Way. Guess the number of people that come to any event, and I promise you there will be more than you think. But the beauty of MCA is that there really is something for everyone, and all of those kids show up because they want to find it here. In every place, there are friends and teachers and clubs that people will love, and we have to be open to finding those people wherever we go. It's important to encourage people to get involved and find their people, but we have to remember to find ours people, too.
- 4. Find your team.** I don't think I realized just how big the city was until I saw the line around the block for Open House, and I won't lie and say it wasn't terrifying. But we don't call ourselves an Ambassador team for nothing. Every single one of us was working together to do her part to represent the school and working to cheer each other through it. I realized what it really means when we say we're an Ambassador team: we help each other. Find your team of people who will be there to support you- and be there for them, too.

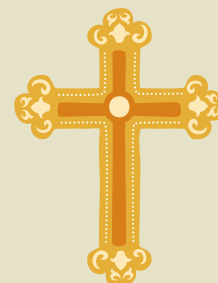
**5. It's all about others.** Ambassadors is a service-based club, and it's easy to think about service in terms of time, or money, or, yes, the service hours you might get from volunteering. But ultimately service isn't about what you get out of it. It's about what you can give to the people you're working with: the 5th grader on your tour who wants to wear that blazer when she's a Senior, the new students who will remember that you were kind to them at Cub Connection, or your fellow Ambassadors with whom you're forging bonds. Think about the who and not the what, and you'll begin to appreciate all the things you missed before- and know what service is as Christ meant it.

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## CHRIST WITHIN THE WALLS OF OUR SCHOOL

BY CATE STILLER (CLASS OF 2022)

Faith life at MCA is seen everywhere, including the school masses, Wednesday chapel masses, monthly rosaries, and Friday CLJ meetings. What I love most about MCA is the Wednesday chapel masses. I believe this is the perfect time for me to reflect on myself and open myself to the community. I also feel God's presence in the chapel as Father Colm Cahill gives his touching homilies as well as through the brightly lit stained glass windows, representing the different titles given to Mary, including Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Receiving the Eucharist is another way I feel His presence, and the word "communion" further exemplifies that we are becoming a community with Christ as our guide. When I leave mass, I feel relieved, like a weight has been lifted off of my shoulders. I know God handles it all because through Him, nothing is impossible. He is standing right beside me in the chapel as well as in the halls of the school and outside of school. I am grateful to have the ability to go to mass during IS every Wednesday because I know this same opportunity is not available elsewhere.





# REMEMBERING SPIRIT WEEK: A WORD FROM THE MASCOTS

BY SHELBY BLALOCK (CLASS OF 2023)

Spirit Day is one of the top two most important social events that occur every year at Mount Carmel Academy. A traditional MCA Spirit Day consists of yelling, cheering, costumes, and most of all, spirit. Every year, a Board of girls is appointed from each grade level to create cheers and costumes. Of these girls, a mascot is chosen to represent each grade level. Being a mascot comes with pressure and great responsibility.

I prompted each mascot with the same question: "If you could describe the feeling of Spirit Day in one word, emotion, or sentence, what would it be?"

8th grade Mascot, Keri Neumann, described her first spirit day as "a joy and a relief to see how well everything came together after all the hard work myself and everyone else put in."

Freshman Mascot, Casey Swanson, expressed her feelings as "exhilarating because [the freshmen] left it all out on the floor, and [Spirit Day] was so thrilling and fun!"

Sophomores finally were able to show their pink pride for the very first time as Pink Panthers! Sophomore Mascot Emmy Cohn narrated her first Panther Spirit Day as "rewarding."

Junior Butterflies spread their wings with their Mascot, Ava Seube, for their Practically Perfect Spirit Day! Ava would describe Spirit Day as "the most amazing feeling in the world."

Seniors celebrated their final flight of Spirit Day with a two-time mascot, Amelia Ott. With Senior Spirit Day being the most memorable, Amelia would describe their special day as "[The] Best. Day. Ever."

This year's Spirit Week was very magical and memorable. Especially with the recent events of Hurricane Ida and Covid, Mount Carmel students were able to bond in their sisterhood and celebrate a start of a new school year.



## **MCA: THE MOST AMAZING PLACE ON EARTH**

**BY MADDIE MAURIN (CLASS OF 2023)**

Mount Carmel Academy has many admissions events that allow middle school girls to attend and have fun! The MCAmazing Race is an event where the girls can meet new friends and explore the Mount Carmel campus. This race is similar to a scavenger hunt where the girls are given trivia questions about MCA and have to figure out where to go next on campus. They learn more about the school while also becoming familiar with the campus in a fun, engaging way! Throughout the scavenger hunt, they visited places such as the gazebo, the Maker Lab, the kitchen, and the chapel. They split up into groups organized by colors and were able to play games and compete. I worked this event as an Ambassador with Ms. Hode in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ms. Hode taught these young girls how important faith is in a Mount Carmel Cub's life. She explained to each group of girls that faith is the center of the MCA spirit. Working with Ms. Hode was such a pleasure. She truly is an inspiration to not only me but everyone around her. The girls learned that they each have talents that God gave them. They learned that they are unique children of God and that God's spirit is alive and thriving in the Mount Carmel halls. My overall experience working with Mrs. Hode at the MCAmazing Race was an experience I will cherish forever.

### **ADVICE ON MAKING FRIENDS: FROM AN 8th GRADER**

**BY REBECCA VINDEL (CLASS OF 2026)**

Mount Carmel Academy is one of the biggest schools in New Orleans, so at times, it may seem difficult to make friends. Do not worry, though! I interviewed a few 8th graders to get the best advice possible for making friends at this amazing school. The most common answer was to forget being scared and just talk to people. Maybe you are too scared to talk to someone randomly, but "start by talking to people in your class," as Anna Hemelt put it. Make a goal to talk to at least one person in every class. Start a simple conversation about something you are discussing in class or a special interest you have. Another word of guidance from Keri Neumann is to talk to one person because "you meet a lot more people through them." I could not agree more! Many of my friends at Mount Carmel are girls I met through a mutual friend from a class. That is how several people find their lunch groups. A suggestion from Ava Walker is to "join clubs you are interested in because then you can find people that enjoy the things you enjoy." For example, if you are a member of PAWS, you already have something in common with everyone in that club, which is your love for animals. That is something you can easily start a conversation with. My last word of advice is to always be yourself. Make friends who like you for who you truly are! I hope that every Cub at MCA learned some new tips from our awesome 8th graders!

*Interested in joining our team? We are always thrilled to welcome new writers and photographers! We meet in Room 1202 at 7:30 am on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. Email [jcarroll@mcacubs.org](mailto:jcarroll@mcacubs.org) for more information.*

## **COME, LORD JESUS!**

**BY BERIT DYER (CLASS OF 2022)**

For many years now, Mount Carmel has adopted and practiced the tradition of Come Lord Jesus. Come Lord Jesus (also known as CLJ) is held every Friday, and each homeroom reads and discusses the Gospel reading of the day. These sessions are led by teachers, people in the community, and even Seniors. Come Lord Jesus is a personal and relaxing experience as the lights are turned off and the students sit in a circle on the floor. These sessions are a special time for the students to forget about all of their school work and stress and spend a few minutes with the Lord. Additionally, these sessions allow the students to share aspects of their faith or just talk about issues in daily life. As a senior leader myself, I always look forward to Come Lord Jesus on Fridays, and I love discussing the Gospel reading with my eighth-grade group. It is a very special time when I get to hear other people's interpretations and opinions of the scripture. Overall, Come Lord Jesus is a major aspect that contributes to Mount Carmel's strong faith life.

More awesome articles to come...stay tuned for an exclusive Clubs & Sports edition!

