

THE WORD



SUMMER 2022

INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY MAGAZINE

SALUTING THE CLASS OF 2022



Liliana Cantu '22



Mary Turner '22



Devin Fowler '22



Jizelle Dominguez '22



Lauren Trahan '22



Alexandra Robey '22

At our Style Show this spring, IWA students hit the catwalk, showcasing their fashion sense.

THE
WORD

SUMMER 2022 | VOL. 17 NO. 2

MISSION

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

LEADERSHIP

President

Sr. Lauren Beck, C.V.I.

Principal

Cathy Stephen

THE WORD MAGAZINE TEAM

Director of Marketing and
Communications

Holly Beretto

Graphic Designer and Multimedia
Associate

Kirk Hawkins

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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

Incarinate Word Academy
609 Crawford St.
Houston, TX 77002

ON THE COVER

Sarah Olmos '22 hugs Jizelle Dominguez '22 following our Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation Ceremony at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on May 21, 2022.
Photo by Kirk Hawkins

PHOTO CREDITS

Holly Beretto, Sue Blackmon and the staff of the Margil yearbook, Kirk Hawkins, Hannah Koepp '22, Rachel Ray



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

7•8•12•13•17•23•25•29
31•35•36•42

Look for our callouts to the Class of 2022 throughout the magazine.

04

FALCON NEWS

iLunch comes back, our annual Career Day gets a revamp, a hands-on approach to poetry, the importance of women's history and more.

20

ATHLETICS

It was a great year for Falcons spring sports, four students sign to play college sports, meet our 2022 Scholar Athlete.

32

LEADERSHIP

See how our students brought back a beloved leadership program and how our Leading With Business class shared their wealth for Ukrainian war relief.

38

VIVE LE FRANÇAIS!

See how IWA's French classes are offering students a deeper appreciation for the language and its rich culture.

40

HOW EVERYTHING IN THE
WORLD WORKS

Dr. Tim Daponte goes through some extraordinary lengths to make sure our students retain what they've learned in class.

44

ADVANCEMENT

The annual IWA Gala and Auction set a record this year and we launched a new scholarship.

46

CLASS NOTES

CORRECTION

In the winter issue of "The Word" magazine, we mistakenly ran an incorrect image of the students named to St. Thomas High School's homecoming court. Here is the correct image, properly recognizing Carson Chesnut '22, Alexandra Robey '22 and Eva Cheng '22 at the St. Thomas High School homecoming game. All three students were named to the homecoming court. We regret the error.



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As you're reading this magazine, we're preparing to head back into the classroom for another school year. But you'll notice our focus in these pages is the Class of 2022, who graduated in May. I am so very proud of them and their incredible accomplishments! Their wide-ranging interests and involvement in school life is an excellent way for you to see the many ways our students embrace the academics, values and spirituality offered at IWA.

We have students embracing academics and attending Ivy League universities, we have students who have signed to play college sports, we have students taking their love for the environment and turning it into a college course of study. We have young women who will be scientists and doctors, who will study business and French and game design. And all of them will take with them the lessons they learned here "at the 609."

We've shared several senior stories in these pages, but we've also put together stories that demonstrate the innovative learning, creative teaching and outstanding students that we have here at Incarnate Word Academy. One of the things I am very proud of is the ways our students commit to service to others, which you can read about in our Leadership section. You can also see how one of our science department teachers developed some memorable lessons for his students. Some of them may never study science again after they graduate, but we know they'll remember his unconventional teaching!

Student involvement in the performing arts not only shows performance expertise but also skills in directing, set design and working the sound and light boards to create enjoyable and well-orchestrated performances. Our excellent choir has not only entertained us but has also given IWA a strong reputation for excellence at the competition level. Our visual arts students and our Impact Dance Team have been amazing in developing their talents and they, too, have been recognized in regional competitions.

This beautiful magazine brings it all together to showcase the everyday heartbeat of the Academy. I am so excited for you to see all of the great things our students and teachers are doing every day, striving toward academic excellence and also living their faith in Jesus, the Incarnate Word. It really makes all of the hard work on everyone's part worth it.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and happy reading!

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Sr. Lauren Beck C.V.I.

Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I.
President



A WORLD OF FUN: The return of an IWA tradition

Around the world, many people mark Mardi Gras with eating and parties, a last hurrah of sorts before the solemnness and fasting of Lent. Think Carnival in Rio or the big bash in New Orleans.

At IWA, we celebrate Mardi Gras a little differently. The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is our annual iLunch. Short for international lunch, it's an opportunity for us to celebrate other cultures with food and fun. This year's iLunch marked the event's return following an absence last year thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Students, faculty and staff enjoyed a buffet of foods from around the world. Our families either created or bought dishes that reflected their heritage. The feast included African, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Italian, Mediterranean and Mexican dishes, among others, showcasing the myriad backgrounds represented here at IWA.

Following the lunch, members of our Impact Dance Team, African-American Culture Club (see story, page 19), Spanish Culture Club and Asian Culture Club performed routines in our Falcons' Nest Gym, and we hosted a fashion show of students and faculty wearing traditional dress to showcase their heritage.

The event was spearheaded by World Languages and Social Studies departments. Students, faculty and members of our Mothers' Club volunteered as well, assisting with decorating, set up, tear down and serving. Several tables were adorned with Mardi Gras "floats," created by students in our French classes (see story, Page 38).

We donated the leftover food to Casa Juan Diego, and were so very happy to share such bounty with them.





AN ANNUAL EVENT GETS A MAKEOVER

Giving students a glimpse at what their futures can look like is an important part of what we do at IWA. One of the ways we help students envision their future selves is with our annual Career Day, a showcase that brings professionals to campus to talk about their career paths, life lessons and more.

In the past, the event has been reserved for seniors, but this year's Career Day was reimagined to allow all our students to attend. During the half-day event, students attended four different 45-minute sessions, based on their interests. Panels covered professions in healthcare, technology, law, business, journalism and more. There were also sessions about resume building.

"It's important for our students to have face-to-face contact with professionals who have been where they are sitting now," said Mrs. Lesley Watkins, college counselor for the 2021-2022 school year, who coordinated the event. "This helps them see all the opportunities that are available to them, often in ways they haven't known about."

IWA seniors served as panel moderators, introducing the speakers and leading discussions. Many of the panelists were IWA parents, and it was wonderful to see them on



campus, sharing their stories. Students asked panelists questions about the education levels needed for certain industries, to how careers may have grown out of hobbies.

"I enjoyed the day," said Jordan Khan '23, who attended a panel on law. She's leaning toward a career in the legal profession or psychology. "I really liked that everyone on that panel was a woman."

We're already looking forward to next year's event.

"I am so excited to be back on a school campus, working with students and faculty every day," she said. "I look forward to bringing enthusiasm and joy to IWA, encouraging our students to dream big and achieve great things."

Stephen worked as a classroom teacher prior to assuming the assistant superintendent role. She and her husband have three grown children, all of whom attended Catholic schools. She graduated from the University of Houston in 1990 and earned her M.Ed. in 2003, specializing in education and curriculum instruction with a focus on gifted and talented students.

"Mrs. Stephen will bring incredible gifts to IWA," said Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., IWA president. "She has unlimited energy and a passion for Catholic education. We're excited to welcome her to IWA."

A NEW FACE AT IWA

When our Falcons return to campus in August, they'll be greeted by a new principal. Mrs. Cathy Stephen took over as principal on July 1. She comes to IWA from the Archdiocese of Galveston-



Houston, where she has served as assistant superintendent for seven years, held the role of principal in several Catholic schools for nine years and led the DECATS program, a summer enrichment experience for academically gifted students for 20 summers.

IWA WINS COMPUTER SCIENCE DIVERSITY AWARD

IWA has earned an AP Computer Science A Female Diversity Award from the College Board for the 2020 - 2021 school year. This is the third year in a row we've earned this distinction.

Schools earn the designation by having either 50% or higher female representation in one of the two AP computer science courses or if the percentage of female computer science students taking the AP exam meets or exceeds the individual school's female population. During the 2020-2021 school year, 23 students were enrolled in AP Computer Science A; this year 31 students are taking the class.

IWA is one of only 199 schools to be recognized for achieving this important result in AP CSA.



INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY
A Catholic College Preparatory for Young Women, Est. in 1873



Nearly 40 IWA students won Gold, Silver or Bronze awards or medals in the National Latin, Spanish and French exams. The exams, held annually, measure students' mastery of spoken and written language.

SENIOR Spotlight 2022

Erin Koehler



Erin is headed to Baylor University, where she'll major in computer science. Her goal is to work in video game development and design. "[At IWA] I took Digital Design and Media Production, which allowed me to learn how to navigate and use Adobe Photoshop, an application I will no doubt be using in college and in my career," she said. "I also took 3D Modeling and Game Design, which taught me how to look for objectives in video games, how to plan out a video game and how to make 3D models of virtually anything using Autodesk 3ds Max. These are skills I know I will definitely need." Erin said IWA "encourages students to make connections and come together in community." She's grateful for the friends she found here and her solid preparation for college and beyond.

RIISING SOPHOMORE WINS ALL-STATE AWARD



Bella Garza '25 received the All-State Award in Extemporaneous Speaking at the 2022 Texas Great Debate this June. The event, hosted by the National Hispanic Institute, took place at Schreiner University in Kerrville, Texas. Students from across the state participated. Bella was part of a team of students from Houston. She was the top seed coming out of the preliminary rounds and advanced to the semifinals. Way to go, Bella!



IWA STUDENTS SHARE IN BAND RECOGNITION

The St. Thomas High School Band won the Sweepstakes Award at the TAPPS Music Competition in April. Several IWA students play in the band, and we love this collaboration with our brother school. (Check out our day in the life of a "band girl" story in the Winter 2022 issue, page 14). At the competition, the band's pieces were ranked on a scale from one to five. The band received all ones, resulting in the Sweepstakes Award. Congratulations to all our "band girls" and the rest of the St. Thomas Band!

SENIOR Spotlight 2022

Lauren Castex

"I came to Incarnate Word Academy because the academics were so good, and I knew I'd be well prepared for college," said Lauren Castex '22. She was right. The recent graduate is heading to Xavier University of Louisiana on a full scholarship. Her goal is to be a pediatric orthopedic surgeon. At IWA, Lauren was a co-captain on the Falcons basketball team; a member of Mu Alpha Theta, the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica and the National Honor Society; and part of both the African American Culture Club and Made for Medicine. "Coming to IWA built my confidence," she said. "It helped me realize that what I say matters, and it matters that I say it."



IWA SENIOR EARNS GOLD AWARD

Isabella Terracini '22 earned her Girl Scout Gold Award this spring. The award, earned by fewer than 5% of Girl Scouts, is often likened to the more familiar Eagle Scout Award available to Boy Scouts.

To earn the award, each Girl Scout must complete a capstone project. Isabella offered a series of Zoom workshops to middle school students, helping them increase understanding of mindfulness and the need for self care.

"It was a chance for middle school girls across Houston to come together, form close connections and talk about their feelings and learning how important it is to gain mindfulness techniques," she explained. "Overall, 20 students participated across two weekends over Spring Break."

Isabella led workshops in art therapy, introducing students to growth mindsets and encouraging journaling. She had different speakers share their stories to underline the session topics.

"Mindset is so important to me," said Isabella. "And middle school is such an important time to talk about these things. I've seen firsthand how understanding mindset can make a difference."

Isabella is attending Fordham University this fall, where she'll major in journalism.



EXPRESSING THEMSELVES Freshmen create poetry chapbooks

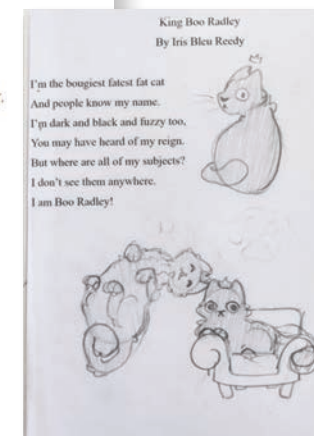
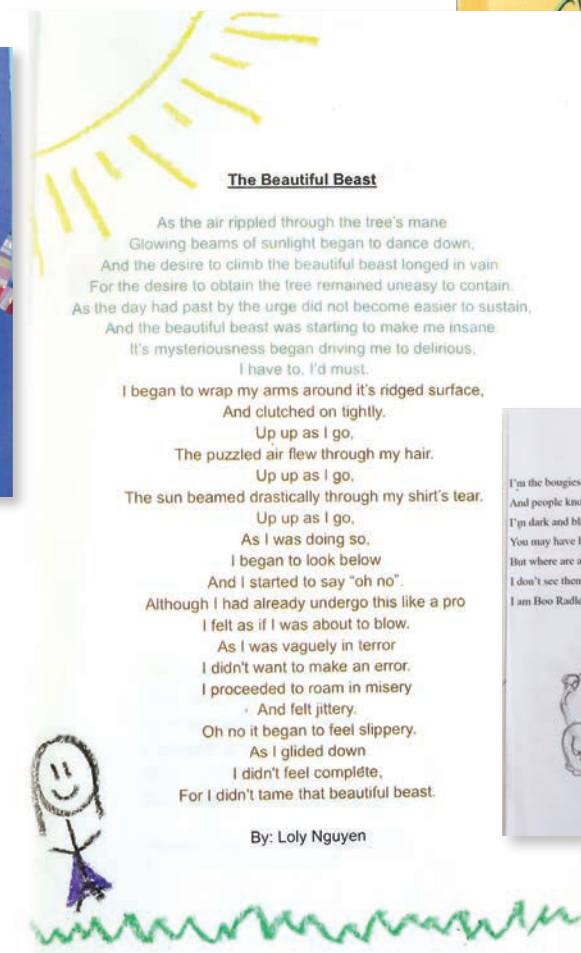
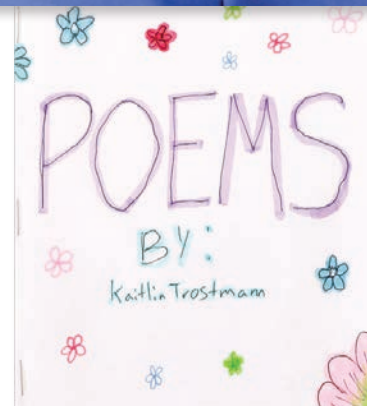
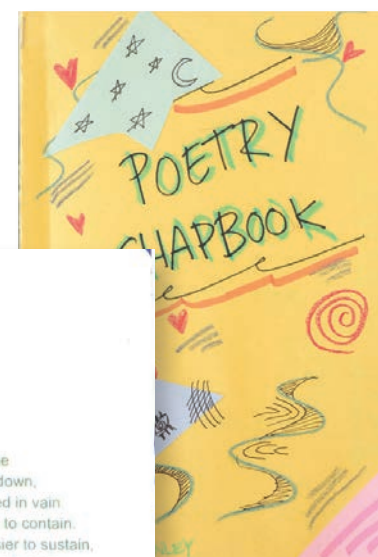
Throughout their journey at IWA, our students read poetry from across the centuries. Freshman English teacher Mrs. Amanda Snook this year took a centuries-old approach to poetry and allowed her students to get creative with it.

"Chapbooks are traditionally small pamphlets containing poems or short stories," explained Snook. "This assignment allowed the class to do original work, and show their personalities in decorating their books."

Snook asked the students to include several types of poetry, including free verse and a "mirror" poem, in which they selected a poem they liked, and copied its themes, meter or structure.

Students wrote about things that were important in their lives, including the young women they are trying to become, the things they think about for the future, their pets, nature and more.

"They were so expressive. It was a wonderful way to engage their imaginations."
—Amanda Snook



A WIDER VIEW OF THE WORLD

St. Augustine wrote, "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page." The students who headed to Europe for Spring Break this year, accompanied by some IWA faculty and staff members, certainly had the chance to fill in several pages in their book of life.

The trip to Paris, Strasbourg and Munich, coordinated in conjunction with ACIS Tours, allowed the students to learn about French and German culture and history. Far from hitting up only tourist spots, the trip gave students the chance to explore neighborhoods and get a feel for local cultures.

"The most interesting thing I learned about Paris is that it has neighborhoods which are called arrondissements, and you can find out what neighborhood you are in through the plaques on certain buildings," said Autumn Hunter '24. "The arrondissements go in a circle, so number of the neighborhoods is ordered in a spiral. Our tour guide compared it to a snail."

Britney Bell '22 also enjoyed Paris, and liked learning to play pétanque. But she said visiting the Dachau concentration camp was an extension of what she had learned in her AP World History class. "Ever since I can remember, we've always been taught about WWII and the Holocaust, but this is the first time I've ever been to a memorial relating to these topics," she explained. "It was so moving. While it's a sad topic, I also think it's an important one everyone should learn about."

Next year's Spring Break options are currently slated to include a leadership trip to Italy and a Teens for Unity mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Look for more details on these throughout the fall semester.



Zoe Mueser had her portrait painted at Strasbourg near the Cathedral

SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

Maya Tihami

"IWA teachers cared about me as an individual and created an example for me to model," said Miya Tihami '22 about her experience at IWA. "They taught me to approach people with the intent of understanding them rather than focusing on being understood." Maya is heading to the State University of New York's Environmental Science and Forestry College, where she will major in conservation biology. "The professors I met at ESF radiated enthusiasm and they were so willing to authentically engage with me that I felt part of the community already," she said. "The niche of the college aligns with what I want to do with my career long term." Maya, who came to IWA from Lanier Middle School, and was a member of the National Honor Society, the French Club, JSA and the chess club, intends to be a conservationist and ecologist.



WINNING
EFFORTS

For the second time, Incarnate Word Academy won the Steps for Students President's Cup. The annual archdiocesan event is a 5k walk and run that helps Catholic schools raise funds and engage in friendly competition. All funds raised by each school go directly to that school. The President's Cup is awarded to the high school with the most percentage of student body participation. In addition to taking home the cup, we offered multiple incentives for our students. The winners were:

Top Classification Class of 2025	2nd Place Fundraiser Stephanie Fish '23
1st Place Fundraiser Lara Rosenblad '25	3rd Place Fundraiser Makenzie Peugh '23



WOMEN'S HISTORY COMES ALIVE FOR
IWA STUDENTS

IWA's Women's History elective is a chance for students to see how women before them have cleared paths to opportunity, and how the example of those pioneers continues to uplift the future of women. Taught by IWA social studies department chair Mrs. Rachel Ray, the course covers topics such as the movement for women's suffrage and the fight for civil rights, examining the lives of women during those times and touching on important female figures in history. "I didn't learn anything like this growing up, in high school or college," said Ray. "And, as a school that seeks to empower women, I really love that I get to teach students about these incredible contributions by women."

Ray structures the course as a combination of lecture and hands-on learning. This year, students visited the Ruth Bader Ginsburg exhibit at the Holocaust Museum Houston and had to create a project of their own that they felt exemplified the accomplishments of a woman of their choice. Ray offered them options such as creating a children's book or drawing a quilt square. For that project, senior Madeline Bourgeois '22 made an actual quilt square showcasing Amelia Earhart's last flight. "This is a great class, where we explore what is often hidden history," said Ray. The semester-long class is offered once every year, usually in the spring.

IWA STUDENT TAKES THE STAGE AT
CARNEGIE HALL

There's an old saying that asks "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" and the answer is "Practice, practice, practice." Jazmin Garza '24 took that to heart. She performed this spring at Carnegie Hall as part of the High School Honors Performance Series. Jazmin began playing the violin in kindergarten and switched to viola in the fourth grade. She's played in the Houston Youth Symphony since the sixth grade. Two year later, she was recommended to an organization called WorldStrides, which offers travel and educational experiences to youth musicians. One of those is auditioning to play at Carnegie Hall. "The whole experience was surreal," said Jazmin about the process of auditioning, learning she was selected, learning her concert music and playing on the famed stage. "I got goosebumps when I realized that so many great artists have performed there. It was a truly amazing experience that has helped me realize the importance and beauty of music."



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

Lauren Richards

Lauren Richards '22 heads to Brown University this fall. She's taking the lessons she learned at IWA with her—especially what she learned about prioritizing. "There is always something [else] to be done and my time at IWA taught me the importance of prioritizing the meaningful things in life such as taking care of yourself and relationships and allotting time for other things," she said. Lauren came to IWA from the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy, drawn to our strong academics. "The sense of belonging is what sold me," she emphasized. "We all say that there is a sisterhood here and it's true. I was able to find lifelong friends and make lasting connections." At Brown, she'll major in economics and French, and hopes to go into entrepreneurship one day. Lauren notes that IWA's Leading with Business classes had a big impact on her. "That class allowed me to learn valuable skills and appreciate all of the hard work that goes into running a business," she said.



HONORS

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.



2022 Graduates of Distinction:
Top row: Fiona Cosgrove, Nicole Cross,
Elizabeth Hatten, Makynzie Kitzmann,
Evalyn Navarro.
Bottom row: Emma Nguyen, Emily Quin,
Colleen Sontheimer, Mary Turner,
Abigail Waggoner.

HONORS

MARGARET SHELTZ
ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIP

Mackenzie Peugh '23

CHARLENE BARRY
THEOLOGY AWARD

Kaitlyn Rzasnicki '22

RENSSELAER AWARD
FOR ENGINEERING

Marie Culbreth '22

SOCIETY OF WOMEN
ENGINEERS AWARD

Alessa Elkareh '22

Emma Nguyen '22

NATIONAL MERIT
SCHOLAR

Nicole Cross '22

NATIONAL MERIT
SCHOLARS PROGRAM
FINALIST

Emily Quin '22

NATIONAL MERIT
SCHOLARS PROGRAM
COMMENDED
SCHOLARS

Makynzie Kitzmann '22

Ann Nguyen '22

Colleen Sontheimer '22

NATIONAL HISPANIC
RECOGNITION
PROGRAM SCHOLARS

Julia Fisher '23

Mary Flaherty '23

Iman Haddad '23

Leila Khan '23

Xiomara Salinas '23

NATIONAL AFRICAN
AMERICAN
RECOGNITION
PROGRAM SCHOLARS

Anthonia Ogbo '23

Mackenzie Peugh '23

PRESIDENT'S
EDUCATIONAL
EXCELLENCE
GOLD AWARD

Britney Bell '22

Madeleine Bourgeois '22

Lauren Castex '22

Eva Cheng '22

Isabella Coenen '22

Fiona Cosgrove '22

Nicole Cross '22

Olivia Dickens '22

Anna Lee Eckelkamp '22

Chimere Egesi '22

Alessa Elkareh '22

Elizabeth Hatten '22

Amelia Horner '22

Vanessa Hosman '22

Ciara Juanico '22

Makynzie Kitzmann '22

Kathryn Koerner '22

Emilie Lynch '22

Paola Minces '22

Evalyn Navarro '22

Emma Nguyen '22

Ann Nguyen '22

Emily Quin '22

Lauren Richards '22

Kaitlyn Rzasnicki '22

Colleen Sontheimer '22

Auburn Thomas '22

Maya Tihami '22

Mary Turner '22

Mary Uyenco '22

Ellia Volf '22

Abigail Waggoner '22

Emma Welsch '22

SILVER AWARD

Ana Sophia Bello '22

Rose Bieszke '22

Liliana Cantu '22

Ashley Chavez '22

Kathryn Conti '22

Elizabeth Drake '22

Mariana Ferrel '22

Persia-Marie Fombin '22

Denver Fowler '22

Claire Garcia '22

Emily Gentry '22

Audrey Gillespie '22

Erin Koehler '22

Jordan Mahoney '22

Gabrielle Mamaradlo '22

Klarissa Martinez '22

Sarah Olmos '22

Tam Phan '22

Elise Potier '22

Fabiola Pulido '22

Isabella Smetana '22

Antonina Tkaczyk '22

Alyson Ubungen '22

2022 VALEDICTORIAN



Mary Turner

CLT AWARD

Marie Culbreth '23

SERVICE LEARNING
AWARD

Amelia Horner '22

NATIONAL HONOR
SOCIETY INDUCTEES

Cienna Adam '24

Mia Arroyo '24

Marianna Belisle '24

Whitney Bratton '24

Anastasia Burdzinski '24

Flinn Burrell '24

Ava Canales '23

Victoria Cassat '24

Katia Castillo '24

Jasmine Cavazos '24

Abigail Christensen '24

Hayden Coogan '24

Evelyn de Oliveira '22

Trinity DuBois '24

Sarah Edwards '23

Clover Focke '24

Jordan Fowler '24

Alyssa Garrido '24

Jazmin Garza '24

Lauren Gentry '24

Karissa Glover '23

Devin Gold '24

Isabella Gomez '24

Sophia Gracia '23

Madeleine Hanks '24

Susie Hinojosa '24

Reagan Hucke '23

Autumn Hunter '24

Natalia Juarez '24

Jordan Kahn '23

Hannah Koepf '22

Gabriella Lopez '24

Reese Mason '24

Catherine Mayeu '24

Julia McMahon '24

Gabrielle Murray '22

Jade Muse '23

Gabriella Nguyen '22

Isabella Osorio '24

Amy Phan '23

Kaylee Picard '24

Julia Pinell '24

Allison Porche '24

Noelyn Portilla '24

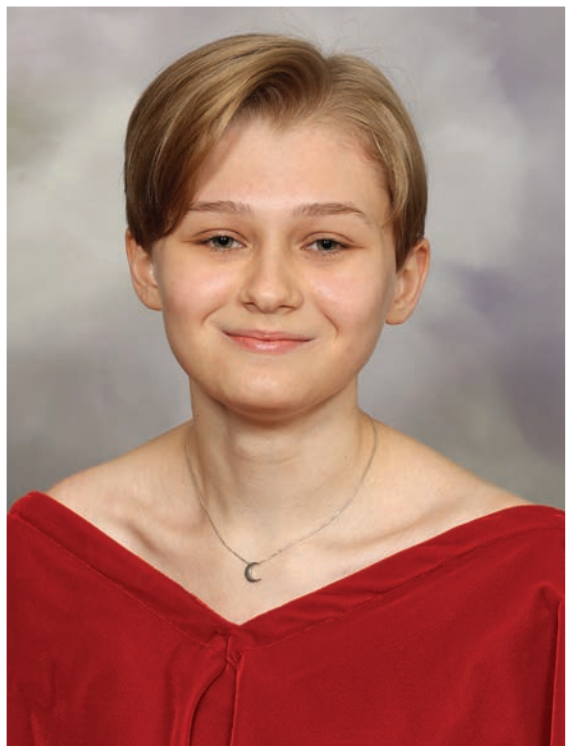
Fabiola Pulido Gonzalez '22

Brianna Reagins '24

Angelina Reyes '24

Hannah Richard '24

2022 SALUTATORIAN



Makynzie Kitzmann

Miranda Rinaldi '24

Valentina Salazar '24

Rachel Sanchez '23

Addison Solis '24

Auburn Thomas '22

Jasmine Valladares '23

Esperanza Vazquez '24

Jane Volf '24

Denise Walsh '24

Madison Whitley '23

Zoe Yokubaitis '23

MU ALPHA THETA
INDUCTEES

Danielle Bartholet '23

Kaitlyn Bourgeois '23

Catherine Cerda '23

Lila Coenen '23

Fiona Coulbourne '23

Marie Culbreth '23

Itzel DeLeon '23

Amelie Dinh '23

Sarah Douglass '23

Sarah Edwards '23

Stephanie Fish '23

Julia Fisher '23

Mary Flaherty '23

Devin Fowler '23

Anna Gardner '23

Kady Gidney '23

Iman Haddad '23

Olivia Hill '23

Vera-Faith Huddleston '23

Elizabeth Hunt '23

Anna Sophia Jansen '23

Isabelle Lavoie '23

Nicole Cross

Nicole Cross '22 has been named a National Merit Scholar by the College Board. This places her among an elite group of high school students from around the country who've qualified for the honor, based on their academic achievements, abilities and skills. Nicole is attending Texas A&M University this fall. At IWA, she was a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. She earned a Gold Award on the National Spanish Exam and was named a Champion of Character on our track team, where she qualified for the regional meet and was named to the academic all-state list. Congratulations to Nicole!



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

HONORS

Erin Lenahan '23

Claire McTaggart '23

Claire Michael '23

Anthonia Ogbo '23

Mackenzie Peugh '23

Amy Phan '23

Alexis Roca '23

Xiomara Salinas '23

SOCIEDAD HONORARIA
HISPÁNICA INDUCTEES

Cienna Adam '24

Mia Arroyo '24

Danielle Bartholet '23

Kaitlyn Bourgeois '23

Whitney Bratton '24

Anastasia Burdzinski '24

Jasmine Cavazos '24

Adriana Cerda '24

Lila Coenen '23

Allyson Cortes '23

Marie Culbreth '23

Itzel DeLeon '23

Amelie Dinh '23

Sarah Douglass '23

Leah Dumanlang '22

Madelyn Figueroa '23

Julia Fisher '23

Mary Flaherty '23

Alyssa Garrido '24

Lauren Gentry '24

Kady Gidney '23

Isabella Gomez '24

Chloe Green '24

Iman Haddad '23

Madeleine Hanks '24

Olivia Hill '23

Susie Hinojosa '24

Natalia Juarez '24

Jordan Kahn '23

Leila Kahn '23

Olivia Kaiser '24

Kathryn Koerner '22

Catherine Mayeu '24

Julia McMahon '24

Claire McTaggart '23

Claire Michael '23

Jade Muse '23

Anthonia Ogbo '23

Isabella Osorio '24

Amy Phan '23

Kaylee Picard '24

Allison Porche '24

Angelina Reyes '24

Miranda Rinaldi '24

Valentina Salazar '24

Xiomara Salinas '23

Addison Solis '24

Esperanza Vazquez '24

Zoe Yokubaitis '23

Woman of the Word Award
Alessa Elkareh '22

This award is for a senior who embodies a mastery and love for academics, a firmly rooted value system, and an active Christian spirituality, along with holding a GPA of 3.6 or higher. Alessa is an outstanding student, who has served on student council and was our student body vice president this year. She actively shared her faith as part of Teens for Unity and was the captain of our golf team. "Alessa quietly leads in ways that allow her classmates to shine," said former principal Andrea Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC at the annual IWA Academic Award Night. Alessa will attend Rice University this fall and will major in mechanical engineering.



Spirit of the Word Award
Mary Turner '22

This award is given to a senior who exemplifies a love of IWA and represents our community at school and community functions. She must hold a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Mary has been a pivotal member of the Campus Ministry team, where she planned events for her classmates. She is a talented athlete and shared her love of IWA with prospective students as part of our Falcon Ambassadors. She always strove to ensure her classmates felt loved and seen. Mary is our Class of 2022 valedictorian and will attend Baylor University, where she intends to major in health sciences.



Servant of the Word Award
Carson Chesnut '22

This award is for a senior who has made an impact on IWA and the community through service projects, and holds a GPA of at least 3.0. Carson's positive spirit and servant heart have been infectious to those around her. She has been part of our Campus Ministry Team, and was a Falcon Ambassador and head cheerleader for the St. Thomas Cheer Team this year. She was also captain of the swim team, and holds school records for the 200M Medley Relay, 200M Free and 50M Free. Carson will attend Texas A&M University.



MEMBERS OF THE CLUB

IWA's co-curricular offerings help students connect

High school is about more than what students learn in class. It's also a chance to explore shared interests through clubs and organizations. We're highlighting two in this issue, part of what we think will be an ongoing exploration of co-curricular opportunities here at the 609.



Jorri Odom '23, Lauren Richards '23 and Gabrielle Beckham '23

AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE CLUB

The African American Culture Club discusses events happening within the Black community and Black culture. Members also share African American culture with the wider IWA community. This year, the club amped up its efforts during Black History Month, creating slides to be shown on the TV screens throughout the school, sharing announcements about those who've had an impact on African American culture and playing music by Black artists on Falcon Fridays. Jorri Odom '23, the group's vice president this past year, loves sharing stories like these. She noted that often Black history focuses only on slavery or the civil rights movement. Those are obviously important, but there's much more to explore. "It should be about African Americans' creativity and their impact on the world around us," she said. "I feel it's important to share these stories with the IWA community so everyone can know the accomplishments made by those in the past, as well as those paving the way for the future."

MADE 4 MEDICINE

This club designed for students looking to pursue careers and opportunities in the medical fields has been part of IWA for the last few years. There were some significant changes this year, thanks in part to the efforts of its president, Tam Phan '22. Under her oversight, the group brought several speakers to campus this year, and has laid the groundwork for continued success. "A lot of us are interested in medicine but may not know how to get into the medical field," said Tam, who is heading to Trinity University this fall, where she'll enroll in pre-med courses. "We all know it's hard. So this group is a place to share resources and learn." Group members this year hosted on-campus speakers, as well as several Zoom calls with medical practitioners at area organizations such as Texas Children's Hospital. Phan and her team worked diligently to ensure participation from doctors, nurses and more.



GOLF TEAM EARNS KUDOS ALL SEASON LONG

The IWA golf team had one of its strongest seasons in recent memory this year, a testament to the commitment and skills of both the team's players and their coaches. "Our girls played with so much heart this season, and in the playoffs," said Rick Perez, IWA's athletic director. "I'm so proud of them."

The team finished second in district play April 11.

"This was big because two of the teams in our district have beaten them by just a few strokes in the last couple of tournaments," said Perez.

Golf team coach John Barron had a similar take.

"[Even though we're a small school] we're playing in 6A," he said. "We are doing extremely well."

Prior to their district appearance, the team took home third place in the annual Rosehill Invitational, and brought home a first place finish in the Allen Invitational in Bryan, Texas.

"It was so cold and the wind was blowing so hard at that tournament," recalled Barron. "I told the girls, it's just as cold and bad for everyone else. None of them gave up and we won. I'm very proud of them for that."

Barron said he's happy to see the team has improved over the last few years. And while three seniors have graduated, the coach is excited for what's next.

"We have some up-and-coming golfers, and I am feeling very positive," he said.

We can't wait to see what the team does next year. Go, Falcons!



SIGNING DAYS

Four IWA Students Sign to Play College Athletics



Emily Chaires '22 committed to Southwest University's cross country and track teams. She'll major in kinesiology. Here at IWA, Emily was on the Falcons cross country and track teams. "On the cross country team, Emily kept working hard to improve and not let anyone down," athletic director Rick Perez said. "She always has a smile on her face, and she really deserves this opportunity!"



Emma Lynch '22 signed with Marywood University to play softball for the Pacers. She'll major in architecture and her dream is to design sports stadiums. Emma played softball for the Falcons here at IWA, and knows she's well prepared for college. "I feel like the academics here are hard and that will make college easier to tackle," she said.



Klarissa Martinez '22 committed to playing soccer for Texas Lutheran University. She'll study biology, in preparation for a career in the medical profession. Klarissa played forward for IWA's soccer team and shortstop on the Falcons softball team. "IWA soccer helped me develop into the player I am today to play college soccer," she said.

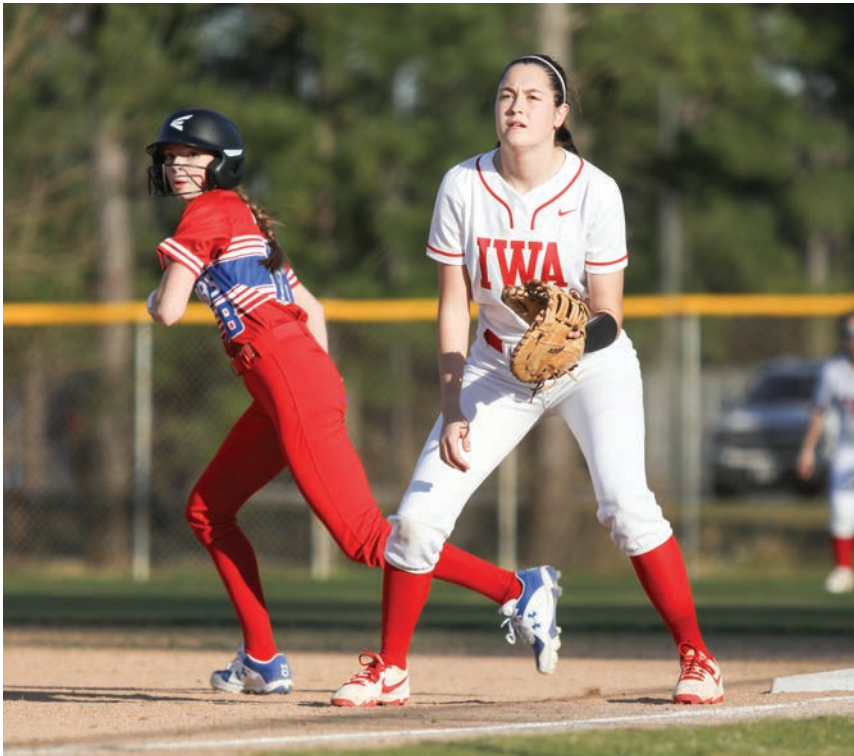


Kaitlyn Rzasnicki '22 will play basketball for Southwestern University, where she will major in kinesiology. IWA basketball coach Fernando Villasna called her the embodiment of a true student athlete. "Kati is committed to the team and leads by example," he said. "She's there at practice, she's there for games. She's evolved from being a leader in the background to one in the foreground."

SOFTBALL SHINES THIS SPRING

The IWA softball team had one of its best seasons ever this year, with a 15-3 win over St. John XXIII in early May sending them to the TAPPS area playoffs in San Antonio. While the team would ultimately fall to Antonian College Preparatory Academy 10-6, none of it diminished the team's accomplishments. "Our girls played with so much heart this season, and in the playoffs," said Rick Perez, IWA's athletic director. "I'm so proud of them."

He also offered a special shout-out to the team's six seniors, five of whom have played on the team all four years. Captains Isabella Smetana '22 and Emma Lynch '22, Klarissa Martinez '22, Mary Uyenco '22 and Jhelin Vasquez '22 were all four-year lettermen, and Emma signed to play softball with Marywood (see story above). The team was supported by managers Lauren Richards '22 and Isabella Rivera-Molina '22. "This team did such a great job," said Perez.



SENIOR Spotlight 2022

Fiona Cosgrove



IWA's Scholar Athlete Award is presented to a graduating senior who has earned a cumulative GPA of at least 3.6 and has participated in at least two sports during her senior year. Fiona Cosgrove '22 is this year's recipient. Fiona played soccer for the Falcons and has been a state qualifier in track for three of her four years at the Academy. She'll attend the University of Texas at Austin this fall. "IWA has really allowed me to try new things," she told us last year. "I joined the track team as a way to make friends [and became a high jumper]. Having those kinds of opportunities here has been fun." Fiona was recognized for her dedication to her teammates. "Her work ethic and positive attitude are on full display on and off the field," said IWA athletic director Rick Perez. "She is highly respected by her classmates and faculty, often going out of her way to help her teammates in the classroom."



TRACK TEAM MAKES GREAT STRIDES

Three Falcons grabbed top 10 finishes in the TAPPS State Meet in Waco in May. Stephanie Fish '23 placed third in the 100-meter hurdles, Fiona Cosgrove '22 took fourth in the high jump, and Eden Fuller '25 came in fourth in the open 200 and seventh in the open 400. Overall, the team placed 12th out of



Coming 2022-2023

We've added varsity tennis to the roster of Falcons Athletics offerings. The sport will debut in the 2022-2023 school year. Look for more details soon about tryouts, practices, schedules and more. Go, Falcons!

FALCON NAMED BEST CATCHER IN HOUSTON

IWA catcher Lauren Gentry '24 was selected by the Houston Chronicle as the top catcher of all private schools in the Greater Houston area. "Her hard work during the season and off season really pays off," said athletic director Rick Perez. "Lauren has a great future ahead of her."



the 25 teams competing. "I'm very proud of this team and these girls," said track and field coach Bryan Gonzales. "They really stepped up to any challenge given to them this year, and showed how hard work and grit can make a difference."

Their state finish follows a great show at the TAPPS District 4-6A meet in April, where the team finished third—just four points shy of second place. Eight students qualified for individual or relay team slots at the regionals.

Over the last three years, the team has worked diligently on technique and performance. We're looking forward to seeing what our Falcons do next year!

FRESHMAN WINS TENNIS ESSAY CONTEST



Erin Baumeister '25 won the 2021 National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) network's essay contest. The essay prompt asked writers to consider Bob Ryland and the obstacles he faced becoming the first African American professional tennis player. The winners spent an extended weekend in New York City this summer, on a trip that included tennis and culture. There was a luncheon in the Players Lounge at the National Tennis Center, home to the U.S. Open. Winners met Ryland's widow and former tennis pro Leslie Allen. Each winner gave brief remarks before receiving plaques commemorating their accomplishment, and had a tour of the facility, including the locker room and stadium grounds.

"We had about two hours to play on Practice Courts 1-5, which is where the pros warm up before their matches," said Erin. "It was a lot of fun to play with the other essay winners and some of the parents."

Participants also had a chance to see some of the city, with a boat tour and dinner in Times Square. They even attended a baseball game between the Yankees and the Astros (the 'Stros won!).

"The entire weekend trip was amazing!" said Erin.



WINTER SPORTS WRAP UP

It was a great season for our winter sports teams, and our Falcons athletes have a lot to celebrate.

The soccer team made its third playoff appearance in school history in March, heading to Dallas for the first round of the TAPPS playoffs. The team came up short against the Ursuline Academy Bears, but the team's overall record of 13-9-1 is the best in school history.

On the court, our basketball team also headed to the TAPPS playoffs. While they would be ousted by Bishop Lunch High School, the team still had a season of great play.



In the TAPPS state swim meet, the Falcons had multiple top-10 finishes, including Claire Fischbach's '25 7th place finish in the Girls 200 IM and Carson Chesnut '22 finishing 2nd in the Girls 50 freestyle. The Falcons swimmers spent the season smashing records. At the HAPPI Invitational, the 200m relay team finished with a school high finish of 2:04:24. Carson broke the 100m freestyle in the same meet, with a time of 57.61 and Claire broke both the 200 IM and 100m breaststroke with times of 2:22 and 1:13.4 respectively.

We are so proud of all our athletes!

SENIOR Spotlight 2022

Persia-Marie Fombin



Persia-Marie Fombin '22 said that her education at Incarnate Word Academy paved the way for what's next: the United States Military Academy at West Point. "The academics and athletics here definitely helped prepare me for the test I had to take for West Point," she said. At IWA, Persia was part of the Falcons basketball and cross country teams, as well as a singer in the IWA Choir and part of the Falcon Ambassadors. She was drawn to West Point, she said, because it was "an opportunity to make a difference and serve my country." IWA held a ceremony this May for Persia, where she was presented with a formal certificate announcing her commission to West Point. She'll major in chemical engineering.

CELEBRATING ATHLETES

Our winter sports banquet celebrated the accomplishments of our basketball, soccer and swim teams.



Most Valuable Swimmer Carson Chesnut '22

Champion of Character Olivia Hill '23

Newcomer of the Year Claire Fischbach '25



Most Valuable Player Kaitlyn Rzasnicki '22

Champion of Character Lily Cantu '22

Newcomer of the Year Amy Phan '23



Most Valuable Player Klarissa Martinez '22

Champion of Character Abby Christensen '24 (not pictured)

Newcomer of the Year Alexa Carrillo '24

A NEEDLE PULLING THREAD

IWA's Textiles class is a chance for artistry and skills-building

If you happen upon Mrs. Josie Postel's fourth floor art room, you're apt to find students doing any number of things: drawing, painting, collaging, sewing. Yes, sewing.

"I used to teach quilting in my Fundamentals of Art class," Postel said. "But the girls wanted to know more."

That desire to know more led to the creation of the Textiles class, which explores needlework in all its forms. Students learn embroidery, how to work with different fabrics and how they can showcase their creativity in a variety of projects. Among their creations are a custom-designed pair of canvas sneakers and original artwork on muslin squares.

"It teaches them so much," says Postel. "They need to learn how to organize a project, they need to learn how different fabrics work and what kinds of stitching or design will actually work on them. So, there's a lot of project management."

There's also history, both about art and society. Postel talks about everything from the rise of using sustainable fabrics in clothing, artists who are working with textiles, the samplers of colonial America and more. Postel feels its important for her students to not only understand different kinds of stitches, but also have an appreciation for textile work as an art form.

Caitlin Straw '25 came into the class with some sewing background; she'd taken lessons because her mom wanted her to have that skills set. She's enjoyed the variety of projects she's been able to create.

"It's calming and relaxing," she said. "I've learned how to work with yarn and done things with abstract colors."

"It's a different way to express myself," said Catherine Mayeu '24, who made a quilt square with a fox on it for one of her pieces. "I really liked working on the art cards with the thread accents."

For that project, Postel gave each student a postcard and asked them to select a dominant color in the image. They were then to use their embroidery floss to accent it.

"Completing these projects really gives them a sense of accomplishment," Postel said about the course.

Textiles is offered every year at IWA and is open to students of all art levels.



IWA STUDENT’S ARTWORK
DISPLAYED IN SHOWCASE



Itzel De Leon '23 won a Silver Key in this year’s Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Her piece, “Planet Explorer,” was selected from hundreds of artworks submitted by Houston area students for the annual contest. The piece was on display at Spring Street Studios earlier this year, along with those of other Silver and Gold Key winners.

“I’ve been doing art since middle school,” Itzel said. “It’s a place where I can throw my talents and focus on something, that really makes me happy.”

This was Itzel’s first time entering the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Jordan Mahoney '22 won an honorable mention in the competition.

Congratulations to both Itzel and Jordan!



CHOIR KUDOS

The Incarnate Word Academy Choir continues its tradition of excellence. In the Texas Private School Music Educators Association Concert Contest, held in April, the ensemble earned a Superior rating from all three competition judges. In addition, Elise Potier '22 and Zoe Yokubaitis '24 both earned Superior ratings for their entries in the State Solo and Ensemble Contest, held the same weekend.

At our Foundation Day celebration in May, the choir and choir director Joshua Wilson also received one of the

Academy’s highest honors, the Jeanne de Matel Award.

“They are always looking for ways to excel, and they know how to make people smile,” said Academy president Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I. in presenting the group with the award. “We’re so grateful for their creativity and the way they share their talents.”

The choir capped off its 2022-2023 season with a concert of Broadway and movie musical selections in May. They return to the stage this fall, opening the season with a concert at St. Thomas. Check our website for more details.



NEW DANCE CLASS HELPS
STUDENTS BUILD ON THEIR
SKILLS

IWA’s fine arts department offers a number of electives for students. Until this year, however, there was only one dance course, Dance I, which focused on the foundations of ballet, jazz and modern dance.

“What I love about our new Dance II class is that we can dive into more,” said Ms. Cloe Leppard, IWA’s dance teacher. “We do a whole unit on choreography, and they create their own routines. We build on their technique.”

The semester-long class is open to students of every dance ability. Having students from a variety of dance backgrounds, said Leppard, allows them to learn from each other and get a shared sense of excitement about the subject matter. Leppard also feels that offering Dance II shows IWA’s commitment to the arts, as well as the importance of moving on students’ mental and physical health.

“Dance can be a great break from academics, which are obviously important,” said Leppard. “And I love seeing how these girls support each other in class. They high five each other when they master something. They encourage each other. It’s been great!”



“I love seeing how these girls support each other in class.”
— Cloe Leppard



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022



Abigail Waggoner

Abigail Waggoner '22 said she felt so included when she visited IWA for a Shadow Day that she not only knew it was the right place for her for high school, she also wanted to make others feel the same way. In addition to being part of our Impact Dance Team, Abigail was also a Falcon Ambassador, leading tours for prospective IWA students. She’s attending Texas A&M University this fall, where she’ll study chemical engineering. “One of the biggest lessons I learned being on the dance team is how to work with a team and how to ensure that a team runs as smoothly as possible,” she said. “I also learned the importance of communication and collaboration. These are major lessons that I am glad I had the chance to learn because I know they will help me succeed in college.”

STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHERS SHOW THEIR STYLE

It was a busy spring for our IWA Impact Dance Team. The team attended several competitions, beginning in January. At one, Elizabeth Drake '22 and Abigail Waggoner '22 scored in the Top 5 overall for their solo work. The team also had the chance to explore various styles of dance at masterclasses, including in ballet, jazz, funk and Bollywood.

The team's spring dance concert reflected the things they learned, and featured several pieces choreographed by dance team members.

Rachel Sanchez '23 choreographed one of the show's selections. Her piece, "Emergency," was an upbeat number with jazz undertones.

"It was so high energy," she explained. "I really wanted the dancers to have a good time with it, because it's so sassy."

The number was Rachel's first outing as a choreographer. "It was so much fun to see what [the dancers] did with my choreography!" she said.

Rising sophomore Natalia Hernandez '25 also choreographed a routine for the show, "Lovely."

"I chose it because I liked the way [it would show] rhythm and ways you can move your body," she said of the contemporary choreography she incorporated into the number.

"The song is about being trapped in a particular state of mind, and my dance portrays that. I think a lot of people can relate to that."

Impact Dance Team director Cloe Leppard loves that students have these opportunities and she's excited for what's next with the dance team's 2022-2023 season.



Elizabeth Drake '22



Abigail Waggoner '22



LEADERSHIP LESSONS Emily Quin '22 and "The Alibis"

Emily Quin '22 is no stranger to being a leader, especially when it comes to IWA's Falcon Theatre. Last year, she stepped in to help direct "Musicals Medley," and she's headed costumes and other

backstage teams. On occasion, she's also acted.

With this spring's "The Alibis," however, Emily student directed, leading the production from play selection, through rehearsals and all the way to closing night.

"I admit, I may have underestimated the amount of work involved in directing a show," she joked.

The show, a mystery about the death of an eccentric billionaire, is actually seven short plays woven together. A favorite among high schools because it offers multiple parts for students, the comedy delighted IWA audiences in April.

Emily readily admits that she's "very type-A" and "likes things to be just so." IWA taught her, however, that leadership isn't always about who's in charge.

"Part of being a leader is listening to others and recognizing and implementing their brilliance, so we all shine brighter," she said. "Some of the best moments in the show didn't come from my brain but my team's."

Emily will attend Rice University this fall, and as she looked to the future, she reflected on her time with Falcon Theatre.

"I won't pretend like the last four years have always been smooth sailing, they haven't. But that's family for you," she said, noting Falcon Theatre is very much a community. "What we get is love. Love is all we have to give in this program, and we are privileged to reap more than we sow."

SENIOR Spotlight 2022



Emma Welsch

"One of my favorite things about theater is the community," said Emma Welsch '22. "Being part of Falcon Theatre gave me the chance to spend time and make friends with girls from other IWA classifications." Emma acted in Falcon Theatre shows such as "Puffs" and "Steel Magnolias," and also worked backstage. "I've had fun making props and projections, since it gave me a chance to see things I've made being used and appreciated," she explained. Emma is attending St. Mary's University this fall, where she'll study forensic biology. "At IWA, I've learned to delegate tasks," she said. "I've been in charge of a lot of the tech for the last few productions, and had to learn pretty quickly how important it is to split up tasks between other people instead of taking it all on myself. I think in college, the ability to communicate with my peers effectively when I need help is going to prove useful."



LEADERSHIP LIVE RETURNS!

Lauren Anderson and Jim Crane offer career lessons to IWA students

After a pandemic hiatus, Leadership Live returned this year, with guests Lauren Anderson and Jim Crane. The program brings Houston luminaries to campus to tell the stories of their career and leadership journeys.

Leadership Live is student run, with our young women spearheading the scheduling of guests and leading the events here on campus.

"It was awesome to help bring Leadership Live back!" said Elizabeth Drake '22, who coordinated Anderson's visit to campus. Elizabeth had been working with Hope Stone Dance Project assisting with the organization's social media when she met Anderson, the first African American woman to be named a prima ballerina at the Houston Ballet. "Last time we had a Leadership Live program, I was up on stage, helping coordinate."

Drake used her networking skills to convince Anderson to visit IWA. When she came to campus, Anderson talked to our students about everything from being an overactive kid who found discipline and joy in dancing to her regret about not going to college after high school. She also discussed what it was like to dance in every major ballet, including one created just for her.

"My story is about being ok in my own skin," she said. "I love talking to students to be able to tell them that the most magical thing is, no two of us are alike. That you need to embrace who you are and realize you are enough."

Crane, owner of the Houston Astros, talked about his business model for leading a major league baseball team. He spoke of the need to listen to others, understand when and how to take risks, and how to build a corporate culture that cares about people. Crane credited his mother for instilling in him a strong work ethic.

"I love seeing young people being so energetic," he said of the IWA students who peppered him with questions regarding the most important thing about running a business (a solid business plan), his favorite baseball player growing up (St. Louis Cardinals outfielder and first baseman Stan Musial), and his favorite ballpark foods (answer: the offerings in the Diamond Club). "I really like hearing what they're thinking about when they ask questions, seeing what they care about."

As we get ready to head back to school, plans are already in the works for what Leadership Live will look like this year.



DISTINGUISHED LEADERS

Nia Alexander '22
Alexandria Alvarez '22
Gabrielle Beckham '22
Britney Bell '22
Maya Benavides '22
Ela Sophia Betancourt '22
Madeleine Bourgeois '22
Liliana Cantu '22
Mea Carrasco '22
Lauren Castex '22
Carson Chesnut '22
Isabella Coenen '22
Kathryn Conti '22
Fiona Cosgrove '22

Elizabeth Drake '22
Leah Dumanlang '22
Anna Eckelkamp '22
Alessa Elkareh '22
Mariana Ferrel '22
Persia-Marie Fombin '22
Denver Fowler '22
Claire Garcia '22
Emily Green '22
Elizabeth Hatten '22
Amelia Horner '22
Vanessa Hosman '22
Ciara Juanico '22
Kathryn Koerner '22

Emilie Lynch '22
Jordan Mahoney '22
Olivia Mallett '22
Paola Minces '22
Gabrielle Murray '22
Evalyn Navarro '22
Ann Nguyen '22
Gabriella Nguyen '22
Sarah Olmos '22
Kennedy Parker '22
Tam Phan '22
Elise Potier '22
Fabiola Pulido '22
Emily Quin '22

Gemma Rabo '22
Lauren Richards '22
Isabella Rivera-Molina '22
Alexandra Robey '22
Kaitlyn Rzasnicki '22
Isabella Smetana '22
Colleen Sontheimer '22
Isabella Terracini '22
Lauren Trahan '22
Mary Turner '22
Alyson Ubungen '22
Mary Uyenco '22
Ellia Volf '22
Abigail Waggoner '22

The Class of 2022 set a record for the most students graduating with a Distinguished Leader designation. This year, 56 students completed the curriculum requirements necessary for the designation. We are so proud of their accomplishments!



HELPING MIDDLE SCHOOLERS SEE THEIR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

In May, a group of students in our Leading With Service class traveled to St. Rose of Lima Catholic School to host a workshop for eighth graders. The group led a leadership session, talking with the students about the attributes of a good leader and offering a discussion about how popular middle-grade book heroes embody those characteristics. The St. Rose students took a leadership profile survey that showed them which literary hero they are most similar to. There was also a teamwork challenge where the middle schoolers constructed towers out of marshmallows and toothpicks, working together under time constraints to build the tallest tower. Afterwards they discussed what the challenge showed them about leadership and teamwork. It's fantastic to see how our student leaders are sharing their skills and helping the community.



SENIOR Spotlight 2022

Alyson Ubungen



"When I left middle school, I had a very absolute idea of what a leader was," said Alyson Ubungen '22. "And that was not me. It was someone really strong and outgoing. My Leading With Character class showed me that leadership is really about authenticity, that you can be yourself and people will look up to that." Alyson served as the 2022-2023 IWA student body president. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and the International Thespian Society and graduated with a Distinguished Leader designation. She'll attend the University of Texas at San Antonio this fall, likely double majoring in psychology and business. She describes herself as someone who loves being able to give of herself and IWA helped her develop as a servant leader. "I really found myself in giving," Alyson said. "Being of service is so important. And I like knowing that the service work I do could benefit someone like me."



IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

Leading With Business class gives back

IWA's Leading With Business classes are among the school's most popular. Students enjoy getting the chance to build a business from scratch from developing and implementing a viable business plan, through creating the necessary teams to power it, to selling products to their fellow Falcons.

At the heart of each business, however, is a desire to serve. Profits from every student-run business launched at IWA are donated to charity. Over the last two years, IWA students have donated more than \$3,000 to nonprofits and charities. The students determine for themselves which organizations should receive the monies.

"One of the pillars of the leadership program is to become bold, authentic servant leaders," said Claire McTaggart '23, who served on the marketing team for Squeeze City, this spring's pretzel and lemonade business. "And an emphasis within that is giving back."

Squeeze City launched shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine. It became clear early on for the students running the business



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

Amelia Horner



Mel Horner will be a freshman at Mississippi State University this fall, where she is one of the university's Presidential Scholars. She received a full scholarship, and she'll represent the school at various functions and share her experience of being a student there. She'll be studying in the College of Forestry, majoring in wildlife, fisheries and agricultural science. "My concentration is in wildlife," she said. "I've always had an intense interest in parks and park rangers. For my service project, I worked with the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and I realized that helping animals isn't about saving an individual animal, but about helping educate people on the need to save species." She said she's looking forward to researching in college and hopes to be able to work in one of Mississippi State's labs where a faculty member is working with weasels. "At IWA, I had teachers who supported me," she said. "Mrs. Gibbons encouraged me to do a creative writing minor, and Mrs. Siegel believed in my ability. There's a connection IWA offers that I don't think you can find anywhere else."

that their profits should go to an organization helping the people of Ukraine. Squeeze City donated \$1600 to the International Red Cross for Ukraine relief.

That feels entirely appropriate to Kate Bauman '23, who was on the business' operations team.

"I feel so blessed to be at this private, Catholic school," she said. "Being here has taught me to see the good in every person. My education has shown me that giving back is important."

In addition to Squeeze City donating its profits to Ukraine relief, the business created special lemonade flavors inspired by the colors of the Ukrainian flag. Their promotions helped generate excitement and more sales.

While many teenagers may feel overwhelmed and unsure how they can affect change in a complicated world, IWA helps students realize they can make a difference in the lives of others.

"It's humbling," said Claire. "But we are taught to use our gifts to do what we can for those who are struggling."

Spoken like true leaders.

IWA STUDENT COUNCIL WINS STATE AWARD

IWA's student council has earned recognition from the Texas Association of Student Councils (TASC). Our "StuCo" is one of the state's Outstanding Student Councils and also received a Sweepstakes designation, the highest honor a student council can achieve.

"Setting the goal of [getting the Sweepstakes designation] made us more confident," said Isabelle Lavoie '23, who will be the 2022-2023 IWA student body president. "It helped push us to get projects approved and think of new things to do."

The group received a plaque commemorating their achievement and StuCo members attended the state conference in Irving April 9 and 10. We are so proud of our StuCo members and their sponsors Mrs. Antoinette Hernandez and Ms. Stacey Kornegay. Way to go, ladies!

Arc de
Triomphe

Arc de Triomphe, in paris, built
in 1806 by Napoleon to honor
victorious armies and
completed in 1836.



The eiffel tower was built from
1887-1889. In france they call her, "la
dame de fer", the iron lady. She was
built by 2 french engineers and is
one of the most visited monuments
in the world!"

Vive le Français!

IWA's French classes help students explore French culture

"French is a global business language and knowing how to speak it is more valuable than people realize," IWA's French teacher Mrs. Heather Frantz said. "And the language has such a connection to the roots of the school."

The order that founded IWA, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, was started by Mother Jeanne de Matel, a French woman from the town of Roanne. The first foundation of the order was established in 1639 in Avignon. Two hundred and forty-three years later, Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament established Incarnate Word Academy, a lasting legacy to Mother Matel's belief in Jesus, the Incarnate Word and in education.

Frantz has been teaching French for 14 years and loves what she calls the "lightbulb moment" when students understand a concept. She just completed her first year at IWA, where she's incorporated a number of real-world opportunities into her French classes. Students learned about French holiday traditions while learning vocabulary, presented skits as they completed a unit on ordering in restaurants and made Mardi Gras floats that were used for table décor at iLunch.

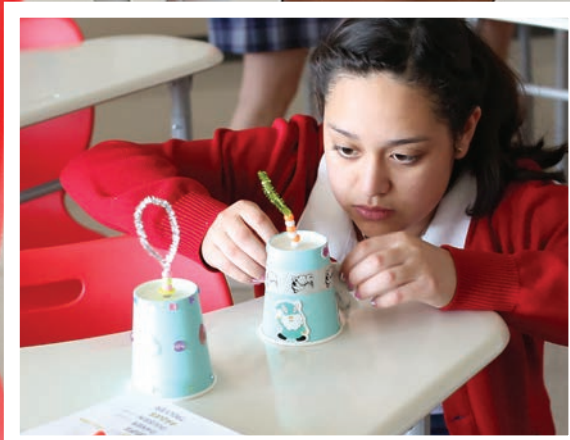
"Experiences like those make the language feel more real to the students and they can see opportunities where they can use their French skills and have fun with them," Frantz said.

"I've liked learning all the verbs and being able to know conversational, everyday language," said Julia Smith '23, who took Frantz's French III course this past year. "And it was really fun learning all the French Christmas vocabulary."

In addition to learning vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills, Frantz teaches the students prayers in French, allowing her to incorporate IWA's Catholic faith into her language lessons. During National French Week, her students made morning offerings in French on our daily announcements and decorated the cafeteria with French flags and fun designs.

"Having small classes makes it easier to speak in French class," said Hannah Richard '24, who took French II this past year. "I took Spanish in middle school, and this is so different!"

Frantz is glad her students are finding value in their lessons. And she's committed to ensuring her creativity continues to engage them. 🌸





How Everything in the World Works

It's not unusual to hear a racket going on in Room 216, where Dr. Tim Daponte teaches honors and on-level physics and his students spend a great deal of their time engaged in hands-on learning.

That's as it should be, Daponte thinks.

"Physics explains how everything in the world works," he said. "Except the ending."



Daponte just completed his first year teaching at IWA. Prior to joining the Academy, he'd been working with students at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center.

"The students here are highly motivated and engaged," he said of his classes. "Students genuinely like being here, and they are so positive and supportive of each other."

His classes are a mix of juniors and seniors, and he enjoys making sure they have ample opportunity

to put physics theories into practice. Daponte's led his students to Discovery Green, where they shot potato punts through a tube to test Boyle's law on pressure and volume. He brought in a bowling ball and let them bowl in the second-floor corridor to learn about momentum. And then, there was the time they set off bottle rockets in the courtyard.

"I chugged a whole bottle of Fanta for that!" laughed Reagan Hucke '23. "We were learning about velocity."

Regan finds herself surprised she's enjoyed the class so much. "I walked in on the first day and I said, 'I don't like this class. Physics hates me and I hate it,'" she said. "And Dr. Daponte looked at me and said, 'You've never taken my class.' I was in denial until the first lab. And then, I loved it."

That's exactly the sort of reaction Daponte loves.

"I want students to be able to appreciate the subject," he said. "Science really allows you learn a lot of concepts. For years in my physics classes, there were very few women. So, allowing the students to see that women can do well in science, that they can like it, that this door isn't closed to them is great."

There's no doubt that Daponte has done some unconventional things, both in class and in his life. He's a Fulbright Scholar. He's been an Army medic. He lived for years in India, teaching in the Kendriya Vidyalaya system, which has more than a million students in 10,000 schools. Throughout his teaching, he's retained a singular passion for his subject, which he hopes he's passing on to his students.

Itzel de Leon's '23 observation indicates he's doing something right.

"Before I took Dr. Daponte's class, I'd been told physics was difficult to understand," she said. "But the way he explains it, he

offers real-life examples, like with baseball or a book falling on the floor, that helps you visualize it." Itzel is looking to study engineering in college. "Taking this class has made me even more interested in engineering," she said.

One thing that certainly piqued Daponte's students' interest this year was the bed of nails. In one of the last lessons of the spring semester, he lay on a bed of nails and invited Britney Bell '22 to slam a sledge hammer into a cement block Daponte had on his stomach. The lesson, which was about weight distribution and energy, might have seemed bonkers, but Daponte knows it made an impact.

"They won't forget that anytime soon," he said.

Beyond the memory-searing lessons, though, Daponte wants his students to understand why physics matters. Aside from showing the building blocks of the world around us, from gravity to volcanic eruptions, to making planes fly and more, it's a foundational subject that compels students build on and develop scientific concepts.

"Physics makes you think critically," he said. "You learn physics, you can really do anything, science or not. Yes, it can be a complex subject, but I like making it real, so everyone can understand it." 🍓



SENIOR
Spotlight
2022

Evalyn Navarro

Evalyn Navarro's '22 service learning project at Memorial Hermann Hospital cemented her desire to be a doctor. She's enrolling in the Honors Program at the University of St. Thomas this fall, where she'll study pre-med biology and potentially minor in philosophy. "Physicians have direct involvement in helping the vulnerable in society," she said. "And I am interested in learning more about the brain." Evalyn attended The Branch School prior to coming to IWA. After losing their home in Hurricane Harvey, her family moved inside the Loop, and both Evalyn and her younger sister Nora '23 came to the Academy. Here, Evalyn was accepted to the NASA High School Aerospace Scholar Program, and qualified for a one-week summer intensive that simulated NASA's Artemis mission. "I created the IWA Origami club, of which I am extremely proud, because it brings joy," she said. "There isn't one thing alone from my IWA experience that prepared me for college," she mused. "My four years at IWA gave me the skills I need in the future."



Brittany Bell '22, Bella Coenen '22 and Lily Fisher '22 dressed as Dr. Daponte during Spirit Week.

GALA SETS RECORDS, RAISES MONEY FOR NEW SCHOLARSHIP

This year's IWA Gala and Auction, "An Evening in Dublin" raised a record-setting \$625,000 for the school, including \$106,700 for the newly established Sister Virginia O'Donnell, C.V.I. Scholarship. Named in honor of the gala's honoree, the scholarship will provide assistance for academically gifted students.

Sister Virginia O'Donnell, originally from County Mayo, Ireland, came to the United States following a visit to her hometown made by members of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word. She entered the order in 1949 and made her final profession of vows in 1955. Throughout her 73 years with the order, she has been a tireless advocate for Catholic education and for educational opportunities for young women. She served as a teacher and principal at schools within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for 31 years and worked for 25 years in pastoral ministry at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church.

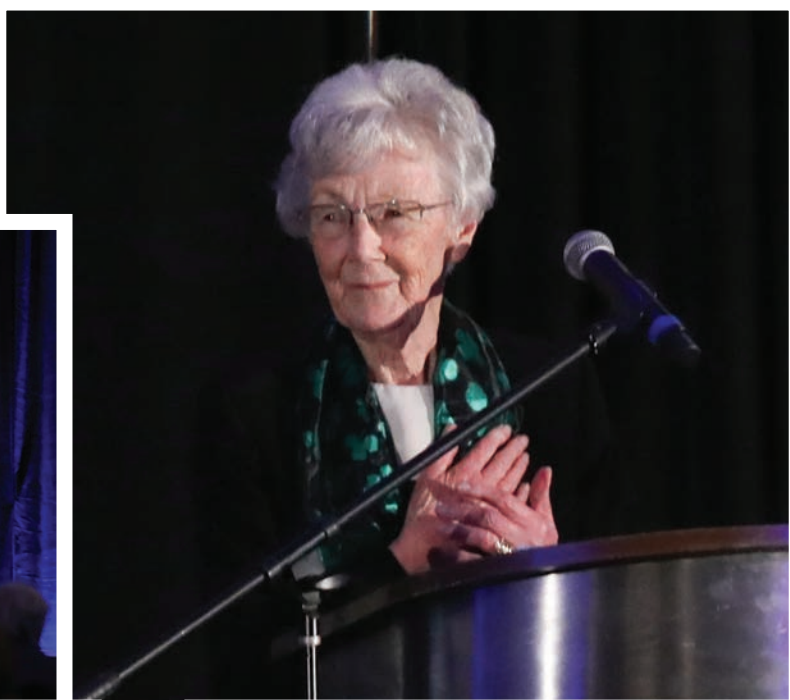
"Sister Virginia's love for Catholic education and for Incarnate Word Academy runs deep," said Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., president of IWA. "She has lived a life of strong faith and devotion, and the scholarship that bears her name is a lasting legacy to her unwavering commitment to fostering a love of learning and growing in the Catholic faith."

The gala, chaired by Olivia Bergeron '15, Mary and Chris Marten, and Katy and Todd Theroux, and held at the Marriott Marquis in downtown Houston, also set records for attendance. The Irish-themed evening featured a performance by an Irish step dance troupe, a specialty cocktail and several exciting live auction items, including an exclusive trip to Ireland with a private tour guide and an American Kennel Club-certified golden Labrador puppy. The evening's Paddles Up appeal brought in funds for the Sister Virginia O'Donnell Scholarship.



We are deeply grateful for our sponsors, underwriters, and supporters for their commitment to IWA. Their efforts ensure that we can continue to offer a Catholic, college preparatory education rooted in the values of Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

The 2023 Incarnate Word Academy Gala and Auction is April 14, 2023 and will kick off our year of celebrations marking our 150th anniversary. For details about sponsorship and underwriting, contact Kristine Rizzo, director of advancement at 713-226-3637 ext. 105.



CLASS NOTES



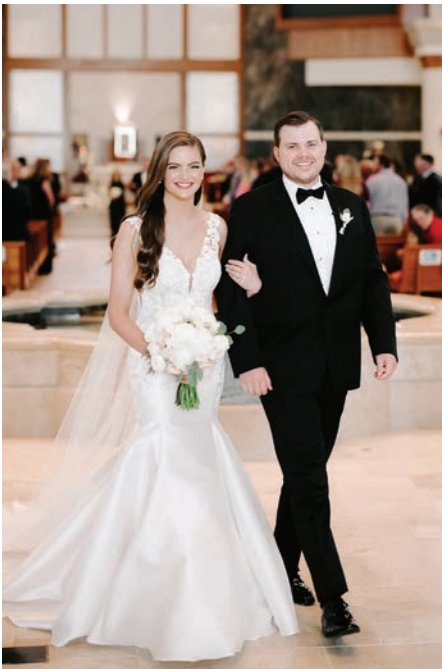
The Class of 1948 got together on May 17, 2022 for a reunion at Carrabba's on Kirby. Five of the 12 living alumnae attended: Betty (Wellman) Linkhart, Sister Jean Marie (Jo Ann) Guokas, Patricia (Gibson) Huebner, Clarissa (Porras) Schiefen and Vita (Sedita) Palermo. They had time to catch up, learn about their fellow classmates and get updated contact information for each other. The time passed quickly and the alumnae, several of whom were joined by their daughters, had great time. The group is looking forward to its 75th reunion and the IWA sesquicentennial in 2023.



Friends from the Class of '58 got together on Nov. 14 for fun and fellowship. Pictured are (Back row, left to right) Audrey Bertrand, Alice Reed, Sofie Szymanski, Mary Louise Guillory, Margaret Penn, Elizabeth Garcia; (Front row, left to right) Billie Conner, Dorothy Cegielski, Mary Pat Hoge, Irene Brotherton, Seraphine Brotherton, and Betty Hidalgo.



Members of the Class of '62 met on Oct. 21 at Maggiano's restaurant to keep in touch. Attending the event were (standing, left to right) Felicia Caporino Cox, O'Reen Fires Johnson, Lillian Cegielski Kozel, Maria Villagomez Buzek, Teresa Medina Martinez, (front row, left to right) Janel Hamala Huber, Lena Schuttee Tomoasino, Judy Carrabba Sanders, Peggy Schulin, Teresa Ramirez and Christine Micklitz Womack.



Lauren Self '14 married Andrew Vincent on May 21 at St. Martha Catholic Church and celebrated with a reception at the Houstonian. They honeymooned in St. Lucia and now live in Houston's Montrose neighborhood, where they love exploring the city, trying new restaurants and spending time with family, friends and their puppy, Rosie. Lauren is a CPA specializing in risk advisory and internal audits for energy industry clients and Drew is a chemical engineer at a midstream energy corporation.



Olivia Bergeron '15 will marry Noah Giese in May 2023. The pair met "in the middle of Covid-19," said Bergeron, who was also one of this year's Incarnate Word Academy Gala and Auction chairs (see story, Page 44). Their plans are to honeymoon in Greece. Noah will soon begin his residency in internal medicine, and the couple will move when that begins.

Ava Brendgord '19 is majoring in broadcast journalism at Pennsylvania State University. She interned at KPRC Channel 2 in Houston this summer, where, among other duties, she assisted health reporter Haley Hernandez on a story about high school students' feelings on school safety. She's pictured here (right) with Isabelle Lavoie '23, one of the Houston-area students who took part in the story.



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.

Alice (Boillin) Creppon '44

Catherine Davis Kerbow '44

Vera (Barbosa) Stowell '45

Antoinette Cashiola Pinina '48

Antoinette Mancuso Sacco '48

Margarette (Canzalo) Saculla '50

Joan (Koh) Thoede '50

Sally Evelyn Bayard '58

Marianna David Johnson '78

Lily Gribble '24



Sister Vincent Haverty

(Feb. 18, 1929 – April 14, 2022)

Born in County Galway, Ireland, Sister Vincent entered the Congregation of Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1949 and made her final profession of vows on Aug. 15, 1955. She earned her B.A. in education and mathematics from the University of Houston and attended the University of Notre Dame. Sister Vincent taught math at Bishop Byrne High School in Port Arthur, Marian High School in Houston and Incarnate Word Academy. She was preceded in death by her parents and three brothers, and is survived by her sister, Mary Kilconnon and brother Brendan Haverty, both of Ireland.



91

total
graduates



139

acceptances to
colleges and
universities



IWA



42

attending
top-ranked colleges
and universities



\$11.1+

million in
scholarships
and awards

Congratulations to the Class of 2022!



INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY

609 Crawford Street ♦ Houston, Texas 77002-3668

JOIN US FOR IWA ADMISSIONS EVENTS 2022-2023

Open School Visit Day

An opportunity for public school, home school, charter school and Montessori school students to spend a day on campus and see all that IWA has to offer.

Oct. 5, 2022

Open House

All families are invited to this on-campus event that shows what life is like here at the 609.

Dec. 4, 2022

www.incarnateword.org/admissions

Dates subject to change. For registration details and a list of additional events, visit our website.