

JOSEPHINUM ACADEMY OF THE SACRED HEART

# CONVERSATION PIECE

FALL 2022



**CHARTING A  
NEW COURSE** *Page 8*

IN THIS ISSUE: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND NEW WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

# Letter From **OUR LEADERS**

Dear Josephinum Academy community,

First and foremost, thank you for supporting our belief that every student is worthy of an excellent education and believing in our vision of every young person having the opportunity to pursue their goals and ambitions. As we open this school year, gratitude continues to be one of our dominant themes—and we are so thankful for each and every one of you.

We all know how challenging the last few years have been. From the pandemic to social unrest to political unease to economic struggles to the constantly changing landscape of virtual and in-person learning and work, we have been through so much.

Through it all, we have held tightly to hope. And through it all, God has been faithful and blessed our community.

Here at Josephinum Academy, we have a constant reminder that despite the challenges around us, the future is bright. It's in the smiles of our students. It's in their bold dreams, audacious aspirations, and yearnings for a good and impactful life.

We see endless potential. We see limitless possibilities. And so we are emboldened to invest in our students—to see them grow and succeed; to support and encourage them; and to assure them that they are loved, they are worthy, and that a whole community stands with them. Our hope for them is that they will find their path forward, with confidence and courage, and develop a clear and strong voice that advocates for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Most of all, we want Josephinum to become a place defined by this hope and promise. A place overflowing with opportunities. A place where girls become accomplished and confident young women who are stepping up to become the leaders, changemakers, and visionaries of tomorrow.

We invite you to be part of this powerful story by investing in these talented young people, championing their dreams, and encouraging them as they chart their paths forward. We cannot wait to see what they build, create, and discover—and we are so grateful to be inspired by them. Will you join us?

With gratitude,



President Richard McMenamin



Principal Colleen Schrantz

# OUR IMPACT

**134** Students

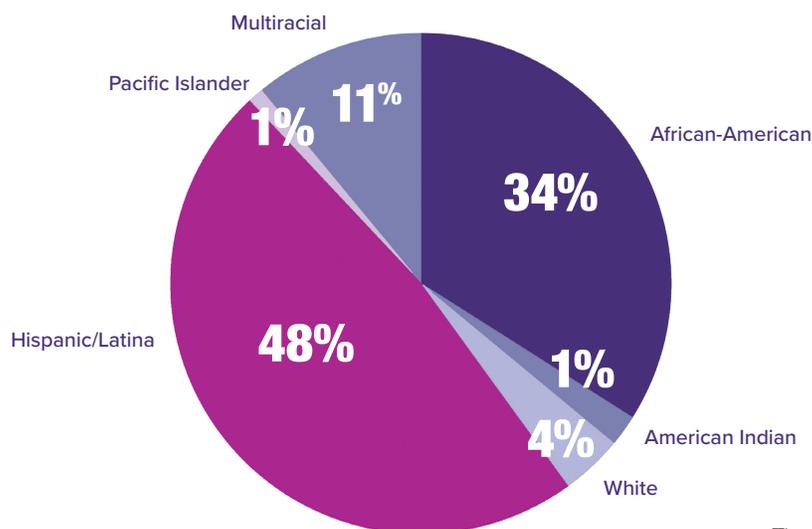
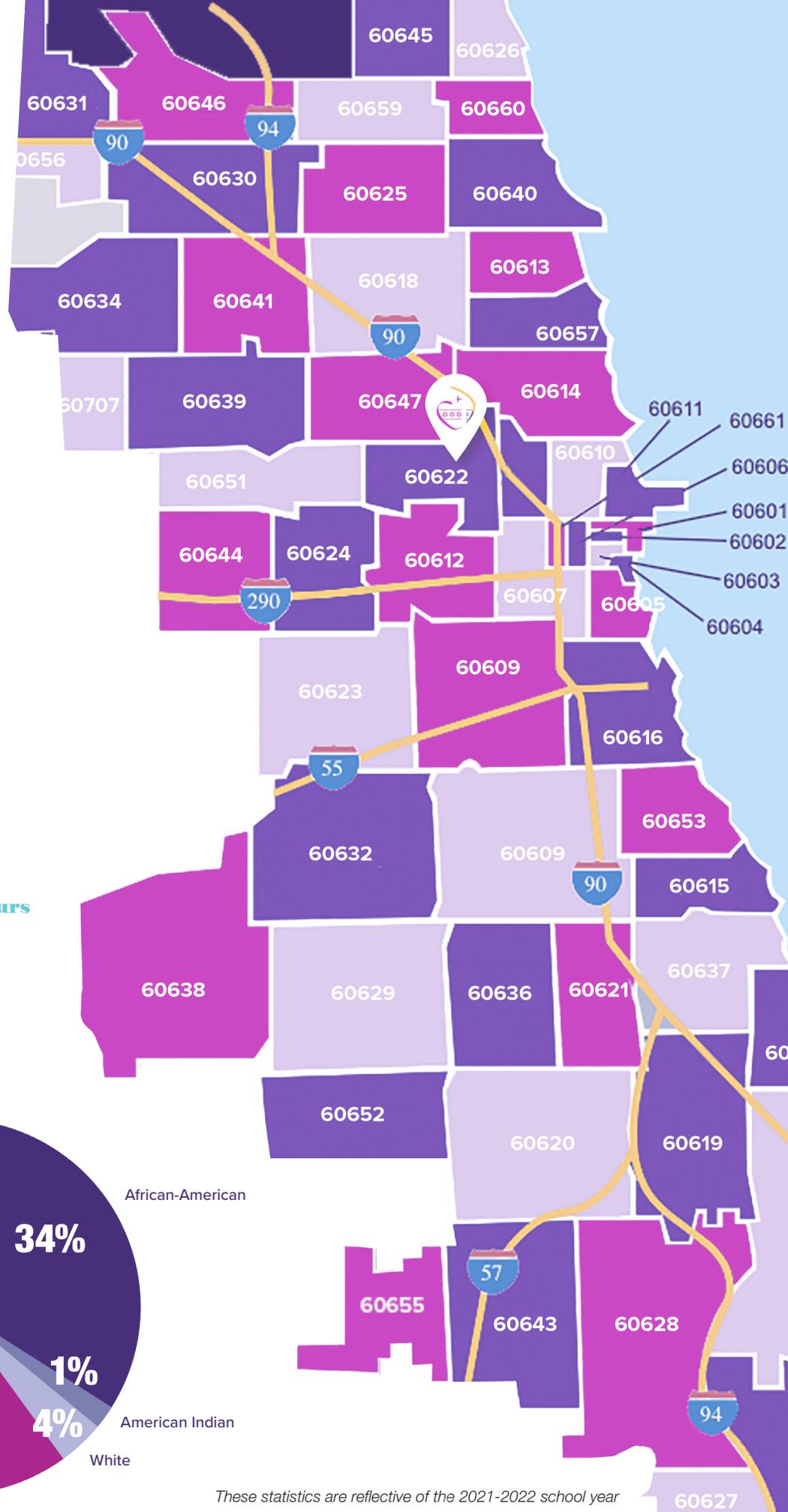
**45** Zip Codes

**20** Clubs and Activities

**7:1** Student-to-Teacher ratio

**880** Service Hours

**\$2.4M** Scholarships and Financial Aid



These statistics are reflective of the 2021-2022 school year

# Academic EXCELLENCE

## MEET THE CARRETO SILVA SISTERS



When sisters Maya and Maite Carreto Silva were four years old, their parents decided it was time they learned the three most-spoken languages in the world. With Spanish and English already covered at home, they started studying Mandarin.

"We were not iPad kids," Maite laughs. "We read a lot of books." Growing up in Pilsen with their parents, cousins, and chihuahua, their home vibrated with life and learning. The twins, in spite of their abundant distinctions, both developed a gift for languages and a passion for reading.

When their teachers suggested they study at The Jo for high school, their parents were won over by the educational rigor and the multicultural, warm community.

As freshmen, Maya and Maite had to learn more about their own learning styles—and how to make a new school work for them. Maya advises new students to "know what you need from the school, and you will know how hard you need to push yourself." And in her experience, Josephinum Academy will meet you right where you are.

Both students are now thriving with a diverse selection of academic and extracurricular interests. Maya loves her survey of literature and creative writing classes, and participates in Mass choir, guitar performance, and creative writing club, in addition to her honors classes. She looks forward to having even more freedom to choose her classes in the coming years, especially the intensive history classes that are famous for making the sophomores want to "run and hide."

Maite also loves history and their survey of literature class, but prefers to exercise her writing skills by penning an advice column for the school newspaper. Her academic dream is to turn her experience at The Jo into a degree from Yale—and while it feels like a bold, audacious goal, her experience has taught her that it's best to be open to possibilities.

"Have an open mind," she advises new students. "Don't set hard, solid expectations when you get into the school. **That's the beauty of Josephinum—it defies expectations.**"

# Exceptional FACULTY

## LEARNING SCIENCE WITH NANCY TO

Before becoming a teacher, Nancy To spent hours as a pharmacy technician speaking with unhappy patients in a cramped space. When she explored the steps required to be a pharmaceutical sales representative, she ended up devoting eight stressful months to sales at a paper company.

Then Nancy began to recollect her childhood. She remembered playing with her big family full of cousins: "I used to build things like kites with chopsticks and newspapers, and I also used to boss them around a lot and try to teach them," she remembers.

Eventually, Nancy allowed that same pursuit of joyful play and hands-on learning to bring her to teaching—which opened the door to 10 wonderful years as part of the faculty at Josephinum Academy.

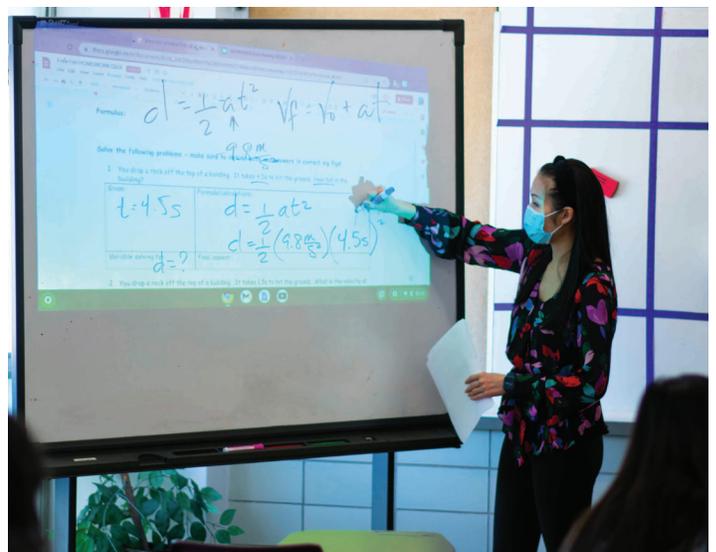
"For me," Nancy says, "it's been amazing, just because I feel like the students here are really authentic."

Nancy also loves being part of such a dynamic and intelligent team of educators at The Jo. "We're not just teachers—we're experts in our field[s]," Nancy says.

Throughout her tenure, she has taught biology, chemistry, and physics at The Jo. Now, she is leading the science department and Dean of Instruction. She continues to learn something new from her students every day.

During the months of virtual school, it was hard for Nancy's students to engage in virtual labs, which just couldn't replace the real thing. She confessed her relief at seeing students in person again. Students and teachers, she insists, offer one another a mutual comfort produced through a consistent presence in each other's lives. And much of what Nancy learns from her students does not involve classwork.

When she thinks about her students, dozens of characteristics come to mind. Creative. Driven. Funny. But when asked about one of the biggest things she's learned from them, she says, "I think something that I take away from the students is just how brave they are."



# Getting INVOLVED

## MONIQUE NORINGTON-JOSEPH BRINGS VIBRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO THE JO

When Monique Norington-Joseph's grandparents told her where she would be attending high school, she was not thrilled, to say the least.

"I found out that it was an all-girls school—I don't think I talked to them for like six months," she recollects, laughing.

Now serving as The Jo's Director of Student Life and Partnerships, Monique, Class of 1992, has returned to her alma mater with a different perspective. "It ended up being the best opportunity that shaped and directed my life," she says.

Born to a teen mom and raised by her grandparents on the West Side of Chicago, Monique developed new perspectives and values at Josephinum Academy.

She credits the Sisters of Christian Charity, who directed her Catholic education, with first teaching her the importance of academics and social justice. The former, she asserts, is the reason she attended the University of Illinois and later earned a masters degree from DePaul University. The latter developed her compassion.

Monique launched her career in corporate branding and marketing, then started her own business, became

a mom, and wrote several children's books. Then, she decided it was time for her life to pivot again. Monique moved back to Illinois in June 2021 and was recruited to apply for a position at The Jo.

"I said, 'This is an opportunity for me to pay it forward and love "my" school.' I always attribute a lot of my passion to my foundation at Josephinum."

Today, much of her work revolves around community partnerships and student leadership. But she also enjoys teaching students life skills—like the power of networking and how to make the most of their own Josephinum experiences.

"I understand these young women because I was once in their shoes walking these same halls. I believe in the power of education and Josephinum is the pathway to a very bright future. **I know what is possible with a Josephinum education.**"



## Student Life AND LEADERSHIP

This summer, eight students participated in our intensive, four-week Josephinum Ambassadors Council (JAC) Summer Leadership Program. Through workshops focused on personal and professional development, community service, and mentorship, students were empowered as school leaders and prepared to serve as Josephinum's ambassadors in the year ahead.

# AALIYAH AND VERONICA



Theater at The Jo was the highlight of Aaliyah's day, offering her both playful creative expression and the chance to make new friends. "I really liked it because it helped me to develop some of my social and communication skills," she says. "It also got me closer to some of the people I didn't expect to."

Her friend Veronica came into Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart her freshman year with a horrible case of stage fright—but today, she speaks with animation and confidence about her experience and ideas. And she knows she's not the only one. "It's kind of amazing to see these girls come really shy," she says. "But then the years pass by, they just get so confident."

Veronica and Aaliyah also share a host of other interests and clubs, from softball, to bowling club, to the National Honor Society. Both students see their extracurriculars as opportunities for fun and exploration—and a chance to build skills they can use elsewhere. Aaliyah, who loves math and numbers, hopes to attend mortuary school and use her analytical mind to help others. Veronica

## Project BRIGHT HOUR

Project Bright Hour is a new eight-week, paid internship for rising Juniors and Seniors. Students spent the summer researching the top business professionals in Chicago and learned to work in Salesforce. In the process of completing tasks that will benefit the future of Josephinum Academy, they also learned more about the careers of successful Chicagoans and built skills that will serve them throughout their future endeavors.

hopes to pursue a career that combines her skills in data analysis with her gift for person-to-person communication.

Both students attribute their range of interests and developed confidence to the teachers and staff supporting them. "All our teachers are super understanding and super supportive," Veronica mentions, describing times when teachers supported students by attending performances, being flexible with deadlines, and even providing hygiene products. For Aaliyah, who had the idea for a student tennis program, her teacher's willingness to help with her vision was incredibly important to her.

"I feel like it's so cliché to be like 'we're a big family,' but it's true," Veronica says.





# CHARTING A NEW COURSE

## SISTERS HERU AND LYDIA SHARE THEIR STORY AS REFUGEES

In 2011, the simmering conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia flared up once again with a series of incidents along their shared border. The onset of violence prompted thousands of families—including sisters Heru and Lydia—to pack their things and seek safety in Ethiopia.

Although their maternal grandmother had ties to Ethiopia, their family only had citizenship in Eritrea. Given that the political conflict created mistrust between the two nations, the family was surprised at how warmly they were received. “The Tigray people were very generous, very awesome people,” Heru explains. “They opened their houses to Eritrean people. Even though we were still in conflict and we never lived with each other, they still opened their doors for us.” The girls called the refugee camp where they lived “a little city” decked out with cafes and amenities for the displaced community. And for almost six years, this little city was their home.

Then Heru and Lydia’s family received word that they were moving to Chicago.

The moves, first from Eritrea to Ethiopia, and then from Ethiopia to America, each posed unique challenges. In Ethiopia, the girls had to get used

to walking long distances for water that was once available by tap. But during the move to America, the biggest challenge was cultural integration.

In 8th grade, Lydia’s teacher observed how shy she was in the face of so many adjustments, so she recommended that Lydia consider Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart for high school. It seemed like a great fit for her—a diverse student body, small class sizes, and lots of opportunities to grow.

At The Jo, her confidence and comfort blossomed. She loved her Spanish and computer science classes, and she enjoyed making friends while playing sports like badminton. When it was Heru’s turn to attend high school, she followed her sister to The Jo.

Heru found her own passions playing volleyball and in math class. “When it comes to English, it’s all about how you see things,” she explains. “But with math, everybody comes up with the same answer.”

According to Heru, the best part of Josephinum is “the connection...Every time [people] talk about Josephinum—that’s what they talk about.”

And it’s not just a connection between students. Teachers are invested, too—paying attention to students’ personal and academic interests.

“They want you to learn, but at the same time they care about how you are personally,” she explains.

For Lydia, her academic dreams have been inspired by the people she misses in Eritrea—including her late landlady and close friend.

“She used to work in a hospital. She’s like my favorite person in the world. I used to call her my grandma for like nine to ten years—she was so fun and humble.”

Now Lydia is following in her footsteps. She graduated from Josephinum Academy in 2022 and is attending Aurora University’s nursing program, with plans to help those around her—just like all the people who helped her along the way.

Heru is excited for her future, too. This summer, she participated in the Project Bright Hour summer internship—an incredible opportunity to build her skills and add professional experience to her resume. Now, she is looking forward to even more opportunities during her last two years at Josephinum Academy.

# Summer BRIDGE PROGRAM

Summer Bridge is for our incoming Freshman and Transfer students. This week-long program takes place at the beginning of August and is led by our Admissions team to help foster community with our incoming students through a series of workshops, social events, and creative expression. A favorite activity is writing a letter to themselves which is returned to them on graduation day. A warm welcome to all of our new students!



## Members of the Class of 2022 are currently studying at:

Arrupe College  
Aurora University  
Clark Atlanta University  
Columbia College (Chicago)

DePaul University  
Dominican University  
Illinois College  
Louisiana State University  
Loyola University Chicago

North Carolina A&T University  
North Park University  
Saint Xavier University  
Savannah College of Art & Design

University of Chicago  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee)  
Western Illinois University

## HELPING STUDENTS TAKE THEIR NEXT STEPS



After spending her career as a high school counselor and retiring early, Dr. Mary O'Reilly-Kehoe decided to volunteer at Josephinum Academy. On her first day, Dr. O looked lost and a fellow staff member befriended her and made sure she knew where she was going.

Eighteen years since that fateful day, those same friendly relationships are what fuel Dr. O's love of Josephinum Academy.

"The Jo is a special place given the connections with all of the faculty," she says. "I think everyone takes a genuine interest in each one of our students and gets to know them and help them. The kids really count on that."

Dr. O works in the counseling office helping students plan their futures after high school. From college and scholarship applications, to making sure seniors know how they will get to their college campuses, Dr. O invites students to consider their options and expand their beliefs about their own potential. "If you decide you can't do something, you won't! But if you think you can, you have a much better chance," Dr. O says.

**"At The Jo, students have a unique opportunity—not just to get a college prep curriculum," she explains, "but to grow and become all they can be."**

Dr. O is especially excited about the amazing things the alumnae do after they graduate from Josephinum. She organizes the 'Go, Stay, Graduate' event—an entreaty inspired by a former student's college prep presentation—where alums from The Jo return to answer questions about college life. Dr. O loves seeing former students excelling in their new environments—especially after walking alongside them for their four years at Josephinum Academy—and she keeps graduates on her radar, proudly celebrating them and sharing their updates with faculty and staff.

"We're really fortunate to work with our students very closely, and we're fortunate to see how they grow over their four years in high school," she says. "They're amazing."



## FINANCIALS



**605**  
Donors gave in FY21



**895**  
Gifts



**\$2,718**  
Average gift amount



**2M+**  
in donations

### Revenue

Tuition & Fees	\$312,000
Development	\$2,430,000
Other*	\$22,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,764,000</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,906,000</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>(\$142,000)</b>

\*Previously included the PPP funds

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