

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall



Lauralton Hall music students returned to Italy during their Easter Break, performing in stunning historic churches including Chiesa della Pietà in Venice (pictured here).

NEW BEGINNINGS

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

To the Luralton Hall community:

As we reach the end of another school year, Luralton faces a time of transition and renewal.

We bid farewell to our departing Head of School, Mrs. Elizabeth Miller. Her six years of strategic vision and devoted leadership brought our School through the challenges of the financial crisis of 2017 and the COVID pandemic. We also say goodbye to Kathleen Shine, Luralton's Director of Enrollment who is retiring after 28 years of service to our School. Kathy's hard work, enthusiasm, and continuous energy will be missed tremendously.

On behalf of the entire Luralton community, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to Elizabeth and Kathy for their service to our School.

We welcome Beth Coyne as our new Head of School and look forward to her energy and enthusiasm coming to Luralton. Beth will assume the role formally on July 1. Meanwhile, she has begun the transition process in earnest.

Beth gained a good sense of the perspectives of students, parents, alumnae, faculty, and staff through interviews conducted during the search process. She also gained an appreciation of our challenges and opportunities and an understanding of the deep love our community has for our School.

Beth has shared that she is inspired by Luralton's Mission of empowering young women to pursue their highest potential through lifelong learning, compassionate service, and responsible leadership. We excitedly await her becoming part of the Luralton community and helping us advance this Mission.

I hope you all have a great summer.

Patrick C. Lagrange P'19
Chair, Board of Trustees



FLY LIKE AN EAGLE!

This inspiring picture, taken earlier this spring, is one of a pair of eagles, birds we are proud to claim as campus residents. In collaboration with a state wildlife biologist, National Geographic-Certified educator, Luralton science teacher, and alumna Mrs. April Oberempt Kelley '85 has confirmed that the pair are likely 4 or 5-year-old first-time nesters. The bald eagle is currently listed as a threatened species in both the state and nation, so we celebrate Luralton's designation as the 65th recognized bald eagle territory in Connecticut.

These thrilling and inspiring animals are an affirmation of the [Sisters of Mercy Critical Concern for the Earth](#), which calls us to act in harmony with and sustain all creation. Over the course of several months, we have eagerly, sometimes anxiously, monitored the nest-building, egg-laying, and brooding of the majestic pair, and the successful hatching and growth of the two eaglets. Their success is familiar in many ways—a great deal of preparation, shared hard work, and commitment that our students make every day to reach their goals.

We are similarly inspired by Mercy tradition, the [Luralton Mission](#) and our shared goal to empower young women to soar to their highest potential by supporting the [Annual Fund](#). Your charitable donation has an immediate impact on today's student as they are the beneficiaries of your loyal support. Please help us reach our goals by making your gift today.

To make your contribution, please use the enclosed envelope, visit our website to make a gift, use Venmo (@LuraltonHall), or call the Advancement Office 203-877-2876, ext. 129.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Whether you are looking to engage with fellow alumnae, connect with current and past LH parents, or support the Luralton Mission with your time and talents, the Office of Alumnae Relations has a volunteer opportunity for you. Our success depends on the support of our dedicated community—we look forward to working closely with you to reach our goals!

Luralton is looking for volunteers to help with our 2023-2024 events—Homecoming-Reunion Weekend, Athletic Hall of Fame, Christmas in the Mansion, and Irish Night. If you are interested and available to help, please email alumnaerelations@luraltonhall.org or call 203-877-2786 ext. 129.



(Left) Longtime LH volunteer Mary Lou Conforte Castracane '63, P'93 joined Alumnae Relations & Media Manager Nicole Benson-Ayisi '04 to celebrate the Class of 2023 Alumnae Induction Ceremony on Friday, May 19. (Above) Claven and McLean Award recipients Bob and Kathy (Miller) Chimini '71, P'98 who volunteered at Irish Night in March, look forward to assisting with Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday, September 9.

SUMMER @ LAURALTON

www.luraltonhall.org/summer

JUNE 26- AUGUST 4

SPORTS AND ENRICHMENT FOR KIDS

SAVE THE DATES

Athletic Hall of Fame
September 9, 2023

~
Homecoming-Reunion
Weekend
September 9-10, 2023

~
Fall Musical
October 28, 2023

~
Christmas in the Mansion
Preview Party
December 2, 2023

~
Christmas in the Mansion
December 3, 2023

~
Christmas in Song
December 5, 2023

~
Irish Night
March 2, 2024

SLAINTE! AN EVENING FILLED WITH LH TRADITION

Thank you to all who attended Irish Night on March 4! This ever-popular event brought the Luralton community together to celebrate the school's long affinity for Irish culture and hospitality with an evening of fun, good cheer, and entertainment featuring The Highland Rovers Band in the first of their six final "Parting Glass" shows in 2023, the Fairfield Gaelic Pipe and Drum Band, and Brennan-Lucey Academy of Irish Dance. LH English Department Chair Mrs. Catherine Gallagher '85, P'15, P'16, P'18 enjoyed a wonderful evening of laughter and conversation: "I caught up with my own classmates, some of whom are also current or past parents, friends from the greater Milford and Irish-American communities, former colleagues, music-lovers-all manner of friendly folk gathered to help support Luralton and have an excellent time!"



Six years of dedicated service represented in one photo! Pictured above (L-R): Sally McNeela P'13, Board Chair (2017-2019) Patrick McNeela P'13, Board Chair (2019-2022) Paul Fama P'17, P'26, Stacy Fama, P'17, P'26, Head of School Elizabeth Miller (2017-2023), Board Chair (2022-present) Patrick Lagrange P'19, and Julia Lagrange P'19.



Photo Credits: Shades Shutters Photography

Debbie Reyes-Williams '88 shows off her class ring while posing with her daughters Ella Williams '23, Toli Williams '23, Addie Williams '23, and Maya Williams '24 at the Class of 2023 graduation on Saturday, June 3.

-Congratulations- Class of 2023!

Family and friends shed happy tears as members of the Class of 2023 made their way across the stage in the Athletic Center to receive their diplomas during the 117th commencement of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall. Luralton's highest honor, the Catherine McAuley Award, was presented to Alexandra Miller (pictured bottom right). During her four years at LH, Alex consistently demonstrated the Mercy values of compassion, courage, spirit of volunteerism, and sound academic performance.

Valedictorian Malulani Mountcastle, daughter of Paul and Sunny Mountcastle of Shelton (pictured with her parents, in bottom left), was a top high-honors student at Luralton who demonstrated an unparalleled intellectual curiosity in the classroom and beyond. Malulani will attend

Fordham University in the fall where she earned the prestigious Fordham Recognition Scholarship. She plans to pursue her interest in mathematics and physics.

Salutatorian Margo Katz (pictured bottom center), daughter of Steven and Jenna (Giaimo) Katz '92 of Branford, has been an active and dedicated member of the Luralton Hall community, faithfully reading morning announcements, encouraging her athletic teammates, and leading her peers in the classroom. Margo plans to pursue her love of engineering at the University of Michigan this fall.

Malulani and Margo addressed their classmates with heartfelt messages of excitement for the future and a reminder to cherish those special memories made during their time at Luralton.

To read more about the Class of 2023 including a List of College Acceptances and Senior Awards, visit www.luraltonhall.org/Classof2023.

AN ITALIAN ADVENTURE

The following was adapted from contributions by Advanced Vocal Ensemble members Margo Katz ’23 and Molly Ciuci ’24.

Our travels in Italy technically began with our arrival at the airport in Milan, but it was the tolling bell of Venice’s St. Mark’s Clock Tower that was the first musical beat of our journey. In the Piazza San Marco, or St. Mark’s Square, we toured the Palace of the Doge, the residence of the leader of the Republic of Venice before a united Italy, and St. Mark’s Basilica. We were mesmerized by ornate, gold-plated ceilings, beautiful frescos, and dazzling buildings—testaments to the wealth and genius of Italian craftsmen. We enjoyed a special tour of the Murano Glass Factory where we were able to purchase souvenirs reminding us of the elegance of Venice.

After lunch and the first of many gelatos, we reconvened by the Two Columns of San Marco and San Tod for our first concert rehearsal. Then, there was still time to experience the city and culture—gondola ride? Check!

Three different groups performed at each concert: Concert Choir, Advanced Vocal Ensemble, and Chamber Choir. In Venice, an orchestra member and a vocalist volunteered to help us with accompaniment. Our voices echoed inside the Santa Maria della Pietà church, creating a quality of sound. After the concert, the ferry brought a boatload of exhausted, yet deeply content Lauralton girls back to mainland Italy.

Our next destination was Florence. At a scenic overlook of the entire city, we stopped for an awe-inspiring view and photos, a magical moment. We toured the Academy of Fine Arts; its museum is dedicated to Michelangelo and showcases the musical instruments of his time, his Prisoners statues, and, of course, his masterpiece, David. We learned of the development of art and techniques used by artists. That night, we were very thankful to the small parish community of Montecatini for allowing us to join their Easter Mass. Celebrating Easter in another country taught us a new perspective on the holiday. Although we picked up just a few Italian phrases, it is clear that Christians around the world are all part of the same community with the same beliefs. Jesus has risen, and He loves us so much.

The second day in Florence was filled with visits to many historic sites, including the Baptistry, the Duomo, the Ponte Vecchio, and Dante’s birthplace. The cathedral, an exquisite place of worship, is the largest building in Florence. Florentine neighborhoods are characterized by quiet, narrow streets of cobblestone and hidden shops. Our tour ended in the plaza of Santa Maria at a local glass and leather store. The women working in the store showed us products unique to Florence, sentimental and memorable gifts for our family and friends. That night, we participated in our second concert at the Basilica di Santo Spirito.

The next morning, we said goodbye to our Montecatini hotel rooms. Enjoying aerial views of treetops and vineyards, we journeyed by bus up the mountain to Assisi. A guided tour through the quaint town shared the history and architecture. After some free time to clamber the cobblestones, pause for a prayerful moment, and browse the charming shops, we gathered again for the highlight – the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi. It was stunning! The Basilica is known for its extravagant stained-glass windows and double-level churches. Too soon, we were trekking back down the mountain and on to Rome.



(L-R) Juliana Fiumidini ’24, Emily Lamphier ’23, Laurel Micholovich ’23, Ginny LeVasseur ’25, Rhianna Solli ’24, and Emmy Casini ’24 pose for a photo outside the Vatican Museum as they take in the view of the Dome of St. Peter’s Basilica.

Our first day in Rome focused on the history of the region with visits to the Colosseum, revealing centuries of change, and the Roman Forum, full of beautiful gardens and ancient myths. However, regardless of the intriguing mystery of ancient Rome, all was quickly outshone by the Vatican. The privilege of singing Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica is a lifetime highlight. As St. Augustine proclaimed, “Singing is like praying twice,” so this Mass was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to unite with God through prayer and song. Our day concluded with our final performance at Chiesa di Sant’Ignazio di Loyola. Singing our Italian swan song was powerful, emotional, and fulfilling. It was the rawest, purest, and best performance of the tour.

Our final day in Rome was rooted in religion with the tour of the Vatican Museum. We were able to see the Hall of Maps and the Sistine Chapel, and we were guided through the Basilica of St. Peter. In the afternoon, we ran down the Spanish Steps. The group then visited the Trevi Fountain, where taking three coins in your right hand and throwing them over your left shoulder will grant you three wishes. One wish must be to return to Rome! God and His love echo through the streets of Italy, connecting us to our faith. We await our inevitable return (all Trevi fountain wishes must come true, after all).

Many people worked very hard to make this trip a success. Thank you, bus drivers and tour guides, for navigating, explaining, and teaching. Thank you, Lauralton, for providing us with this experience. Thank you chaperones for keeping us safe and on time. Thank you, Sarge, for coordinating the trip; we would never have made it to Italy, much less have made it back, without you. Lastly, thank you, parents, for supporting us through Lauralton, trusting us in Italy, and loving us across oceans. Thank you for an Italian adventure that we will never forget.

KAIROS

SPIRITUAL STUDENT RETREAT

For three days in early March, 58 energetic and committed students, assisted by 13 student leaders, joined together on campus for this year’s Kairos VII religious retreat. The word kairos, whose Greek origin is the “right time” or the “opportune moment,” has been adapted by Christian theology to mean “God’s time.” During these three days of retreat, the students truly were on “God’s time!”

Guided by Kairos Moderator and Religion teacher Ms. Anna Wiciorkowska ’10 and Religion Department Chair Mrs. Erin DaCosta, the retreatants refreshed and deepened their faith as they listened to talks from their peers and faculty members, met in small groups, and shared many meals together. Ample time was also given for silent reflection, community building, and fun.

Kairos this year was made extra special because all activities were held on campus. Familiar academic spots became contemplative spaces for students to focus on their relationships with self, others, and God- at night, students “camped out” in the historic Pond-Taylor Mansion.

On the final day, students celebrated Mass with Fr. Norbert Siwinski of the Diocese of Bridgeport in Lauralton’s cherished chapel.

The retreat was transformational for attendees, with many eagerly applying to be leaders for next year’s Kairos VIII, continuing a trend of steady growth. The expansion of the program and the enthusiasm the Kairos retreat inspires are testaments to its power and potential; participants leave the retreat with a new outlook and a refreshed faith.

KAIROS OFFERS STUDENTS A REFRESHED FAITH



Members of the Class of 2023 who participated in Kairos last year were eligible to apply to be a Kairos Leader this year. Pictured here is this year’s leadership team:
Back row: Colette Burke, Tomiko Case, Margo Katz, Betsy Ford
Middle row: Toli Williams, Ella Williams, Isabella Thomas, Julianna LaMagna, Caroline Newton, Emily Lamphier, Liz Long
Front Row: Iliana Christakos, Hailey Black

ATHLETIC Hall of Fame

Inaugurated in 2012, the Luralton Hall Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding individuals who are nominated for performing with athletic distinction or having been instrumental in the overall development and success of athletics at Luralton. We are pleased to announce the 2023 inductees will be:

1. Captain Patricia Miller (U.S. Navy-Retired), Class of 1968
2. Heather O'Donnell Figmic, Class of 1989
3. Eileen Flaherty Moore, Class of 2003
4. Keylantra Langley, Class of 2010
5. Coach Lucille Pyrch (*posthumously*), Swim & Dive
6. Coach Fran Pfeiffer, Swim & Dive

We are delighted to host the Athletic Hall of Fame during Homecoming-Reunion Weekend! Please join us on Saturday, September 9 to honor these six remarkable individuals and recognize their contributions to the Luralton Hall Athletics Department. Visit www.luraltonhall.org/athletichalloffame for more information.

Please keep us up-to-date on your latest moves at:

LURALTONHALL.ORG/MYINFO

For a list of Luralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit:

LURALTONHALL.ORG/INMEMORIAM

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