

Oxbridge

Today

**Free Enterprise
Institute Launches**

**Travis Homer
#4 Jersey Retired**

**Sixth Grade Opens
2023-2024**

THE ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF OXBRIDGE ACADEMY



Board of Trustees

William I. Koch

Chairman, Board of Trustees

David Rosow

President & Chief Executive Officer,
Chairman, Finance Committee

Robert Kaufmann

Chairman, Executive Committee

Sean McGould

Chairman, Investment Committee

Amanda Schumacher

Chairman, Development Committee

Jay Boodheshwar

Trustee

Darlene Jordan

Trustee

Robert Simses

Trustee

Matthew K. Smith

Trustee

Executive Leadership

Dr. Ralph E. Maurer

Head of School

Dr. Courtney Portlock

Assistant Head of School

Rebecca De Jesús

Chief Business Officer

Scott Siegfried

Director of Advancement

Communications

Dana Lombardo

Director of Communications

Scott Benarde

Associate Director of Communications
& Editor of *Oxbridge Today* Magazine

Jackson Conner

Advancement Coordinator

Arden Jurskis

Graphic & Video Content Creator

*Articles written by Scott Benarde unless
otherwise noted.*

Design by Blue & Co. Design

Oxbridge Today

- 4** Welcome Message from Head of School,
Dr. Ralph Maurer
- 5** Koch's Corner:
Message From Our Founder, Bill Koch
- 6** Entrepreneurship
- 14** College Bound
- 20** Staff Stories
- 28** Academics
- 36** The Arts
- 46** Athletics
- 64** Culture of Kindness
- 74** Class Notes
- 80** Message from Director of Advancement
- 81** Message from Director of Giving
- 84** Honor Roll of Donors 2021-2022

Welcome Message from Our Head of School

Welcome to the second issue of *Oxbridge Today*, our annual magazine that provides an in-depth look at the year's programs, activities, and achievements. The 2022-2023 school year has been exhilarating. We welcomed 200 new middle and upper school students and 16 new faculty from Palm Beach County and around the world. The calendar was packed with events, including Spirit Week, the Homecoming Game, alum and NFL player Travis Homer's jersey retirement, the Homecoming Dance, a Halloween-inspired performance at the 'Hauntedorium,' and an outstanding winter concert. It has been fantastic to see the school in full swing!

This growth continues with our new sixth grade opening in the fall of 2023, complementing our seventh and eighth grades that opened in 2021. The addition of a sixth grade is a natural progression. It gives us more time to nurture students, instill Oxbridge values, and cultivate minds through our carefully honed curriculum and teaching methods. Through earlier engagement, we can build a stronger foundation and better prepare students for success in upper school and beyond. We look forward to having students spend seven years with us before college.

Our programs are expanding. In October, we launched a new signature program, the Free Enterprise Institute, a learning hub that brings together the topics of entrepreneurship, financial markets, economics, new product development, and artificial intelligence. The Free Enterprise Institute offers students formal and informal opportunities to learn about capitalism, markets, and the economy on a local and global scale. In athletics, we all were excited to see the return of Oxbridge football after a four-year hiatus, with an initial JV football program playing to an impressive 4-2 record, undefeated at Oxbridge Stadium. Go Thunderwolves!

Our core programs continue to thrive. The Cambridge Scholars program enables select juniors to experience a two-week interdisciplinary course at prestigious Cambridge University. Aviation and debate programs remain extremely popular, and we continue to offer unique, new electives. This year we are offering an Honors Seminar in History that



covers the World's Fair, its origins, its impact on science and society, and the significant architectural marvels it left around the globe. As always, the arts are delivering another fantastic year of concerts, plays, art installations, exhibitions, dance performances, and visits from renowned artists and acclaimed musicians.

The roots of our school are strong. We remain laser-focused on a higher academic standard, continuous innovation, experiential learning, and a collaborative approach in the classroom. Our faculty are experts in their fields, and our unique curriculum helps prepare students for demanding work in the upper school, college, graduate studies, and advanced professional careers. Most importantly, we work to fulfill Oxbridge's vision of meeting the world boldly with initiative and kindness. Oxbridge is a welcoming place where students can learn in an environment that values knowledge, hard work, and mutual respect.

To maintain Oxbridge's success, we have begun working on strategic and facilities master plans to help guide us through the next phase of our school's journey. Keep a look out for opportunities to provide feedback. We value the opinions of the Oxbridge community as we move into our second decade. I look forward to the results of this work and the future of this great school. We are poised for tremendous advancement, growth, and success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ralph E. Maurer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ralph E. Maurer, Ph.D.
Head of School



Koch's Corner

I am thrilled to see that Oxbridge Academy, the school I founded in 2011, continues to grow, succeed, and become an integral piece of the fabric of Palm Beach County. The pursuit of knowledge, friendship, human kindness, and a love of learning were the core elements I wanted to see realized when I started Oxbridge 12 years ago. Today, I see my vision has come to fruition in so many ways. We want our students to have the skills and ability to achieve individual goals and happiness.

I began this journey with the goal of creating a school that would provide life-defining educational experiences, one that would benefit all students and their families — regardless of economic backgrounds — as well as our community. We have achieved that goal. Oxbridge is a school that offers extraordinary opportunities in academics, athletics, and the arts. Our students are learning how to make independent decisions without interfering pressures.

I am so proud of the work we have done so far, making Oxbridge one of the best schools in the region, state and country. This is just the beginning! With your support, Oxbridge will continue to provide renowned academic experiences, and prepare students for success beyond Oxbridge. Oxbridge will always be one of my greatest accomplishments and I want it to be yours as well.

Last May, I had the opportunity to shake hands with the 2022 graduating class, as I have done for most of our graduations. Each year I look forward to this day, when I meet each of our graduates and know that Oxbridge has given them the fundamentals for a successful future. In many ways, every graduation day is a heartfelt reminder of my vision coming full-circle and why I started Oxbridge in the first place.



Artwork by art teacher Melissa Lemus.

The stories and achievements of our students throughout this magazine bring me great joy and I look forward to graduation day 2023 when I once again get to shake the hands of our future leaders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Koch".

William Koch

Founder, Oxbridge Academy





School's Entrepreneurship Program Inspires Student Start-Ups

What do the following businesses have in common: A&B Pressure Washing, Caveman Board Company, NightCap, Solemates Customs, Sully's Junk Removal, and The Wig God Collection? The answer: they were all founded by Oxbridge students while they were still in high school.

Oxbridge, it appears, is a hotbed of entrepreneurship. Much of this can be attributed to the school's philosophy of encouraging students to innovate, explore, and unleash their curiosity through rigorous independent study projects. Oxbridge has also offered a course in entrepreneurial studies since its founding in 2011. Students credit the class in numerous ways: sparking an idea, providing simple encouragement, learning how to make smart decisions, budgeting and estimating expenses, marketing and sales knowledge, business advice, and more.

According to Sedric Simon, former entrepreneurship teacher, students who enroll in the course "share the same ambition and a desire to create — two characteristics that lead to continuous innovation, something which I believe has no limits." He adds that, "The school is very supportive of students taking initiative and problem solving, which are critical traits necessary

for becoming a successful entrepreneur."

Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer notes that entrepreneurship adds enormous strength to Oxbridge's curriculum. "We have always emphasized 'learning by doing,' and there are few better examples than creating your own business. Students must bring together knowledge from many fields — finance, economics, psychology, and others — to run a successful company."

A successful entrepreneur, says Simon, also possess passion. "Only passion can give us the resilience we need to go through the good, bad, and the ugly without losing focus. Passion is the only thing that separates opportunists from entrepreneurs," he says. Amani Atoki, who was a junior when she founded The Wig God Collection, echoes that sentiment. To be successful, she says, "You cannot be in it only for the money; you have to have a passion for what it is you do."

Atoki was inspired to start selling wigs when she realized, "There were people who could not afford good, quality wigs. I wanted to provide something that was missing." Her Wig God Collection was born in the summer of 2021 after creating a business plan in the entrepreneur class the previous spring.

Citing Atoki as an example, Simon points out an unexpected obstacle for teenage entrepreneurs — their youth: “She has had to avoid using her age with international suppliers because they would never believe that they were negotiating prices and talking logistics with a 16-year-old.”

The Wig God Collection isn’t the only business to sprout from Oxbridge’s entrepreneurship program. Shawn O’Sullivan, now an FAU freshman, founded Sully’s Junk Removal in 2020 after taking Simon’s class his junior year. “We had to start a business as a part of the class, but I knew that I wanted to start something that I could grow and scale outside of school and I have done just that.”

He certainly has. After starting with just one truck and trailer, his business has multiplied in size, adding a second truck and trailer as well as a pair of full-time employees. He’s planning to buy a dump truck within the next year.

O’Sullivan and many of his classmates agree that running a business is a major learning experience, often teaching what the classroom can’t provide: “There are a lot of lessons I’ve learned, including time management, people management, and customer service,” O’Sullivan says. “It’s allowed me to gain more knowledge of business than any class would have taught me.”

While a class project evolved into a real business for O’Sullivan, classmate Wilder Breckenridge says he saw a need in his neighborhood for a pressure cleaning service and pounced at the opportunity to provide it. “Many people wanted their driveways cleaned,” he says, adding that the company expanded to cleaning sidewalks and pool patios. Something else also motivated Breckenridge, now a freshman at Wake Forest University, to open A&B Pressure Washing in November of 2021: a passion “to start something of my own.” Having a reliable partner in

his friend Christian Azqueta, a Cardinal Newman High School student, also helped. Their young business is doing just fine, thank you. During his senior year, Breckenridge says, “We made four times our initial investment into the company.”

Other students, such as Nicholas “Cole” McIlvaine, now at Tufts University, and Will DiMaio, now at Santa Clara University, built their businesses as a way to creatively occupy their time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sitting on the beach, they got an idea. “We decided to do something



Clockwise from left: Shawn O’Sullivan; Mya Deve; group shot: Sedric Simon, Shawn O’Sullivan, Amari Atoki, Nicolas “Cole” McIlvaine, Wilder Breckenridge, Will DiMaio





productive and make something with our hands,” says McIlvaine. After a trip to Home Depot and hours of work, the pair created a beach toy for themselves: a wooden skim board. Realizing something was missing, McIlvaine took a piece of charcoal from DiMaio’s backyard grill and wrote the word CAVEMAN on the center of the board. As they were finishing their inaugural board, it occurred to them that they might be able to turn their creation into a business. Why not? The two “were very passionate and interested in surf, skim, skate, and apparel,” McIlvaine says. “Everything we make is something that we would want to use or wear ourselves and are all our own designs.”

Two years later, Caveman Board Company had developed into not only a skim board manufacturer, but a successful brand that includes skateboards and apparel ranging from surf t-shirts to fleece hoodies. The company also has a large social media following. With an appreciation for nature and conservation, for every product sold on its website, CavemanBoard.com, Caveman Board Company

donates to One Tree Planted, an international non-profit that helps global reforestation. It also has other eco-friendly plans in the works.

Of all the lessons the two ThunderWolves learned from starting a company, the most important might be the most obvious. “It is incredibly beneficial and okay to ask for help,” says McIlvaine. “You can learn from anybody, and there is no reason not to ask questions.”

Alumnus Mya Deve, who graduated in 2021, also

formed her business — custom-painting shoes — during quarantine in the summer of 2020 just before her senior year. “I started my business,” says Deve, “because I noticed that a lot of people would wear the same shoe at the same time, so I thought why not wear different, fashionable types of the same shoe! Then in my entrepreneurship class, I learned how to market and grow

my custom shoe business.” She has found a substantial market among high school and college students who love to order shoes painted with school mascots and logos to wear to sports competitions.

Another notable ThunderWolves success story is NightCap, Inc., co-founded by siblings and Oxbridge graduates Michael and Shirah Benarde. In 2019, while an Oxbridge junior, Shirah came up with the

idea for a hair scrunchie that contains a pull-out cover to put over drinks to deter spiking. Michael, Class of 2015, partnered with her that summer. When the lockdown hit in March 2020, the pair used the quarantine to fill out the seemingly endless paperwork to apply to the hit TV show *Shark Tank*. They were accepted; their episode aired in February of 2021; they struck a deal with Shark and QVC



Clockwise from top: Amani Atoki; Cole McIlvaine and Will DiMaio; Michael and Shirah Benarde

mogul Lori Greiner, and the business has thrived ever since. Shark Tank featured the Benarde siblings in an update in April during which they proudly announced they had surpassed \$2 million in sales. By November they had reached \$4 million.

Even though running a business on top of a school workload can be stressful, these young entrepreneurs derive immense satisfaction from their work. “The knowledge that people across the world use my boards and wear the apparel that I designed is for sure the most satisfying thing about having a business,” says Caveman Board’s McIlvaine. For The Wig God Collection’s Atoki, satisfaction comes from, “seeing how good customers feel when they are wearing our products, and how anyone can afford it no matter what their financial status is.”

Some lessons and words of wisdom stay with students long after graduation. “Mr. Simon always talked about the ability to have professional freedom and becoming your own boss,” says alumnus Deve. “That has stuck with me for a long time because it opened a whole different path for me and my future.” She adds that, “Watching my mom have a successful career and have her professional freedom put into prospective the true meaning of what it means to be an entrepreneur and made me value the class even after I left.”

Graduate’s business sense brings ‘Serenity’

Not all Oxbridge students who are successful entrepreneurs took the entrepreneurship class. But at least one alumnus credits her total Oxbridge experience with helping her reach her goals. “Oxbridge as a whole,” says 2015 graduate Nicole Zarcadoolas, “helped me overcome a lot of hardships I went through at a younger age. I truly don’t think I would be where I am today if I went to school anywhere else!”

In 2021, Zarcadoolas started Serenity Now, a custom gift box business described as, “a collection of products hand-picked to make customers feel good and shake that anxiety, delivered right to your door, four times per year.”

To find out more about these businesses, contact:

A&B Pressure Washing

(561) 758-7393

Caveman Board

cavemanboard.com

NightCap, Inc.

nightcapit.com

Serenity Now

serenitynow.world

Solemates Customs

instagram.com/solemates.customs

Sully’s Junk Removal

(561) 229-2523

The Wig God Collection

thewiggodcollection.org



She bought a second similar business not long afterwards. She continues to expand her business, adding

that, “I have pivoted my focus and am launching another part of my business for corporate gifting, since that is what really took off last year.” Her corporate clients include: Boca Regional Baptist Health, State Farm, Ram Tool, AIG, and Paychex.



A Capital Idea: Oxbridge Launches Free Enterprise Institute

By Arden Jurskis

Lately, it feels like everything we knew about economics and financial markets has changed. From “meme stocks” to cryptocurrencies and NFTs, there always seems to be something that promises to shake up the way the world does business. Instead of confusion and concern, Oxbridge students had a different reaction to what was happening to financial markets during the pandemic. “We saw during the first couple of months of the pandemic that the students were getting really engaged in markets and their power to shape the world,” says Oxbridge Academy Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer. “We saw the potential to create a hub of learning around some vital topics, and commerce and its role in society was one of them. We took a hard look at how those concepts connected with the school’s other courses and recognized the opportunity to take the subject matter to the next level.”

The “next level” was the launch of Oxbridge Academy’s Free Enterprise Institute (FEI), a one-of-a-kind incubator for the next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs. Offering an environment rich in expertise in entrepreneurship, finance, economics, new product development, and artificial intelligence, FEI provides formal and informal opportunities for students to come together with peers, teachers, and industry experts to learn about capitalism and its influence around the globe. “In our financial markets classes, we’re covering topics that other high schools don’t,” says Oxbridge economics teacher and FEI Coordinator Robert Frackelton. “FEI allows us to engage students more broadly with capitalism and the free market and supplement their studies in the classroom with activities in the broader financial community of Palm Beach County and beyond.”

FEI launched in October 2022 with guest speaker Dr. Michael Munger, Department Chair of Political Science and the Director of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Program at Duke University. During his presentation, Dr. Munger discussed the “sharing economy” and the disruptive impact of gig platforms like AirBnB, Uber, and Doordash. With a goal of providing students a myriad of unprecedented opportunities (like the visit from Dr. Munger) to further their economic studies and entrepreneurial pursuits, FEI is poised to grow into a site of intellectual production, creating knowledge that will improve teaching and learning in areas outside of Oxbridge. “We want to bring people together and engage with different viewpoints. Business leaders from all walks of life have contributed to our free enterprise system, so we’re excited to expose students to ideas they might not have considered before,” Frackelton says.

Enthusiasm for FEI is percolating throughout Oxbridge and the school plans to establish a speaker series, host competitions, and help students to obtain internships, offering new ways for them to get excited about what the free enterprise system can offer. Everyone agrees that the possibilities the FEI will provide are unique to Oxbridge. “Students will get that real-world experience., with bigger ‘Aha!’ moments than ever before,” Frackelton says.

Former entrepreneurship teacher and current FEI Advisory Board member, Sedric Simon, describes FEI as “a maker-space where like-minded students can practice different ideas and take action on some of the biggest economic issues we have.” For students specifically interested in entrepreneurship, Simon says that eventually, “The plan is to create a curriculum that teaches students the steps to get started in business from beginning to end.”

Thomas Coates, a member of Oxbridge’s Class of 2023, was elated to learn FEI was becoming a reality. “I’ve always had an interest in pursuing a career in investment banking



Top: Duke University’s Dr. Michael Munger; Bottom, left to right: FEI Coordinator Robert Frackelton, Dr. Michael Munger, Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer

and dealing with stocks and the financial markets. I’m so thankful to Oxbridge for giving me the chance to pursue that path.” He adds that, “The FEI will give students like me the ability to learn more about what I am most passionate about.” With more opportunities than ever for students to explore their interests, FEI is a great example of how Oxbridge Academy is boldly teaching what is worth learning and changing the paradigm for educational opportunities that can be provided at the high school level.



Game On!

Oxbridge Launches Esports Team

By Dana Lombardo

Oxbridge is continuing its history of offering exceptional educational experiences with the launch of its new Esports initiative. Esports, a term used to describe competitive video gaming, is taking high school classrooms by storm, with thousands organizing gaming clubs on campuses across the country.

“We are excited to bring Esports to Oxbridge,” says Dr. Ralph Maurer, Head of School. “The idea was initiated by Oxbridge student Alex Bories during his freshman year. With the pandemic complicating logistics, the idea was on pause and came together this year, Alex’s senior year. A special thanks to Jacques and Diana Bories for their generosity, which enabled us to get this program started.”

At Oxbridge, Esports players compete in a designated gaming area, which currently has five stations outfitted with Nintendo Switch OLED Gaming Consoles and top-of-the-line gaming PCs thanks to the generous contribution of the Bories family. Students compete in regional leagues playing Valorant, a futuristic 5v5 team-based shooter, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, a platform-fighting game with dozens of unique playable characters. The team is open to adding more games in the future.

Like football, lacrosse, and basketball, Esports is

recognized as an official sport by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and is considered an innovative opportunity to hone players’ skills in technology, science, math, and engineering. In addition, Esports is a booming, new industry offering opportunities after graduation for college scholarships and careers in STEM, finance, marketing, and communications.

Similar to traditional athletic competitions, Esports involves team practices, scrimmages, and requires critical-thinking skills to effectively compete in sanctioned tournaments. Coaches teach strategic planning, effective time management, and integrated communication skills, preparing team members to compete online and enhancing traditional academics in an engaging environment.

“Gaming and esports is a huge part of my life,” says senior Alex Bories. “It helped me make friends when I moved to Florida, and I knew it would contribute to a sense of community at school. It was exciting to have the support for such a new and different type of team sport.”

Above: The Thunderwolves inaugural esports team top row (l-r) Matthew Stoessel, '25; Alex Bories, '23; Alejandro Lugo Cortes, '23; Tre Brown, '25; Arabella Sanchez-Garcia, '24; bottom (l-r) Cormac Toner, '28; Drew Sachs, '28; Dylan Donigan, '25.

COLLEGE BOUND

Class of 2022

Benjamin Barron

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Lauren Bauder

University of Florida

Ignas Berciunas

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Brayden Bernstein

Arizona State University, Tempe

Sabrina Bernstein

Villanova University

Spencer Hamilton Bernstein

Villanova University

David Michael Blatt

Camila Bonilla

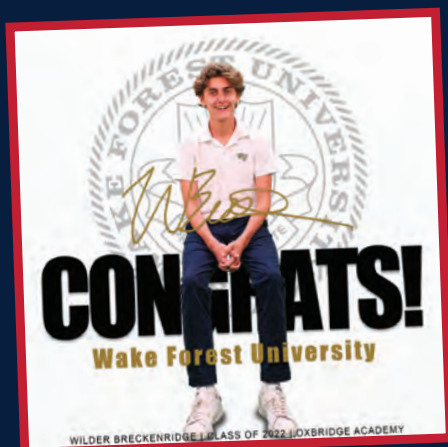
Amherst College

Mia Katie Bonutti

University of Virginia

WILDER BROWN BRECKENRIDGE

Wake Forest University



Paige Nicole Brewster

University of South Carolina

Skye Bruan

Palm Beach Atlantic University

Lila Winslow Burns

Florida State University

Sadie Nicole Burns

University of Central Florida

Bridget Burt

The University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill

Ryan Burt

The University of Alabama

Matteo Cappella

Florida Atlantic University

Ryan Daniel Casey

University of Notre Dame

Patrick John Paul Cerasuolo

Florida Atlantic University

Alexander Michael Checetto

Florida Gulf Coast University

Joseph Thomas Coates

University of Florida

ANGELINA COELHO

Florida Southern College

Jessica Chase Cohen

Ohio State University

Luna Marissa Curran

Western Kentucky University

Jane Avery Custer

University of South Carolina, Columbia

Kallie Elizabeth Davenport

Syracuse University



TAYLOR DAVIS

Florida Atlantic University

TYLOR DAVIS

Florida Atlantic University



Lynn DeFrances
Florida State University

Spencer Diamond
University of Southern California

SOPHIA ISABEL DICKENSON
University of Florida



William Michael DiMaio
Santa Clara University

Elijah Dixon
Wilkes Honors College of Florida
Atlantic University

Hayden Dodge

Brandon Alexander Dorsey
Ohio State University

Nataly Duarte
University of Southern California

Ava Farahani
Ringling College of Art and Design

Nadia Faraj
Florida Atlantic University

Lilly Feder
University of Miami

Sophia Ella Fenster
Bryn Mawr College

Avery Mitchell Finch
Wake Forest University



Hadley Meadows Finch
Southern Methodist University

Harrison Fisher
Southern Methodist University

Parker Lyons Fite
Villanova University

Jinheng Gao
New York University

Bryce Ashton Gardiner
The University of Alabama

Antonio Gaudino
Santa Fe College

Owen R. Gelberd
Texas Christian University

Addie Yerkes George
College of Charleston

Sara Maria Gil
University of Colorado, Boulder

Selah Girard
Lynn University

Hayden Hofmann Gramm
Florida Gulf Coast University

Lars Guzzanti
Rollins College

Mackenzie Hannan
University of South Florida

Iris Eliot Hedley
University of St. Andrews

Louis Helton
Florida Memorial University

James Maury Hoffman
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Jonna Leigh Hubbs
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Zachary Ryan Jassenoff
University of Central Florida

Bijou Joaseus
Ithaca College

Christian Alexander Johnson Creazzo
Boston University

Liam Johnson
Palm Beach State College

Lily Faith Josephson
Florida State University

Andre Karlson
Trinity College

Kennedy Knight
New College of Florida

COLLEGE BOUND

Dakota Florida Konrad
University of Wisconsin, Madison

LILLIAN LANGBEIN
Brown University



Ayden Lapon
Middlebury College

Noah Hunter Ledis
Elon University

Patrick Loveday
Liberty University

Nicolette Luce
Savannah College of Art & Design

Carmen Nicole Majano
Florida State University

Giselle Rose MarcellinoNova
Southeastern University

Mariana Martinez

Jenevieve D. Mauney
Florida State University

Robert Salvatore Mayotte
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
Daytona Beach

Nicholas Reed McIlvaine
Tufts University

Nethanya Adukwei Merlain-Moffatt
Washington University in St Louis

Isabelle Pearl Moross
Michigan State University

Madison Solei Mossop
Rollins College

Isabella Munoz
Florida State University

FINLEY KEEFE MURRAY
University of California-Berkeley



Noah Norwitch
University of Florida

Shawn O'Sullivan
Florida Atlantic University

Seray Elsen Ozgenc
Syracuse University

Peter Panagoulas
Florida Atlantic University

Lillian Grace Parr
Syracuse University

Samantha Grace Pope

Alexander Mann Ream
Florida Gulf Coast University

Fisher Everett Reimer
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
Daytona Beach

Caden Leonard Riccardo
Santa Fe College

Owen Root
University of Miami

Emily Paige Rosenrich
University of Central Florida

Tyler Benjamin Roth
Elon University

Daniella Russo
Florida Atlantic University

ANDREW MICHAEL SABATINO
Vanderbilt University



Max Cortright Sandstrom
High Point University

Danielle Satchell
Louisiana State University

John Michael Schumacher
Southern Methodist University

Alexandra Severs-Turner
Southern Methodist University

Elle Cathleen Simmonds
University of Florida

Grace Elizabeth Singer
Florida Gulf Coast University

Margot Josephine Smith
Southern Methodist University

Boaz Avery Solomon

COLLEGE BOUND



Elle Madison Spencer
Denison University

Adam Christopher Stowell
Flagler College

Charles Swank
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University,
Daytona Beach

Ava Tarone
Texas Christian University

THEODORE THOMAS TARONE
University of Virginia

Olivia Thomas
University of Miami

Abigail Reese Vecchia
Syracuse University

Sydney A. Wagner
University of Central Florida

Alexander Walsh
University of Miami

George Spence Wandoff
Brown University

Howard Todd Willson
Florida State University

Xuanting Xiong
University of Rochester

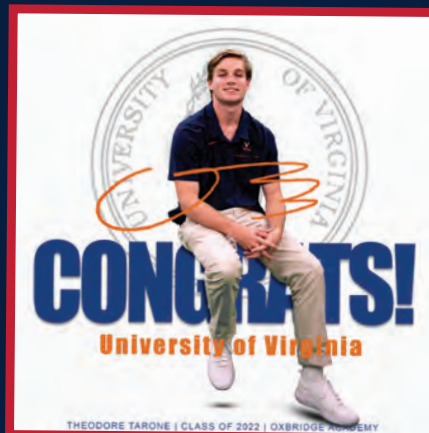
Ava Yavinsky
Rollins College

Matthew Conner York
University of Mississippi

Ke Zan
Northeastern University

Zihan Zhao
Boston University

Junjia Zheng
Northeastern University



Yijia Zheng
Boston College

Yang Zhou
University of Southern California

Scan QR code to access an
interactive map of Class of '22
college choices

**OXBRIDGE
ACADEMY**

**CLASS OF 2022
COLLEGE
DESTINATIONS**



2022 Overview

123 Oxbridge Academy
graduates

54% matriculated to a top
100-ranked U.S. University
or top 50-ranked U.S. liberal
arts college

59% matriculated to a college
or university outside of Florida

29% matriculated to a Florida
public college or university



They Still Got Game

ThunderWolves Playing at the Next Level

Eight ThunderWolf student-athletes from the Class of 2022 committed to play sports at the college level. One graduate has the prestigious role at Syracuse University serving as the school's 26th Orange Girl, fronting the marching band.

The outstanding athletes include, Angelina Coelho, who plays soccer for Florida Southern College; Luna Curran, has joined the Western Kentucky University softball team; Sofia Fenster, plays tennis for Bryn Mawr College; Jonna Hubbs, golfs at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington; Adam Stowell, plays lacrosse for Flagler College in St. Augustine; Abigail Veccia, is carrying the torch for the Syracuse University Orange Girl baton twirlers; Alexander Walsh, has joined the University of Miami baseball team as a pitcher; and George Wandoff, is playing lacrosse for Brown University.

All of them are sterling examples of "student-athlete." Curran has her professional sights on becoming a veterinarian. Fenster plans to study biology. Veccia is interested in a career in computer science or possibly computer art and animation. Wandoff's favorite class at Oxbridge was entrepreneurship. He plans to study economics at Brown. Both Curran and Wandoff were awarded the 2022 Oxbridge Athletics Award, which celebrates the athletes who "best represent the ideals of

competition and sportsmanship." Coelho, who lettered in softball, swimming, and lacrosse as well as soccer, won the Oxbridge Personal Achievement Award, given annually to the senior who "best optimized the opportunities provided to them at Oxbridge Academy."

Coelho's favorite class at Oxbridge, by the way, was sports medicine, not surprise considering she was a sports-playing machine. But it was the academic side of the subject that inspired her — in a big way. "Sports medicine was the best class I have ever taken," she says. "It really taught me a lot of things. I learned a lot and enjoyed it so much I decided to pursue a career in it."

In fact, with this group, the emphasis seems to be on the "student" half of the phrase.

Coelho defines the term this way: "A student-athlete is someone who can get their work done and maintain good grades and then go play a sport without having to worry about not doing well in school. A true student-athlete will take whatever free time they have and use it to do work because being an athlete is not easy. It should always be student first, athlete second, no matter what."

Left to Right: Alex Walsh, Abigail Veccia, Jonna Hubbs, Adam Stowell, Angelina Coelho, Luna Curran, Sophie Fenster, George Wandoff

She had a plan. “I have always been someone to play many sports, so it really wasn’t a big task for me. I traveled a lot for travel soccer so when I was on the plane I was working; when I was at the hotel, I was working. I was able to keep up with school because I knew that soccer was a reward.” She credits Oxbridge with helping her maintain that student-athlete balance, adding that, “With all the sports I have played I have been taught how to manage time and how to allow others to help me when I need it. Oxbridge taught me that I can do things that are out of my comfort zone.”

Curran echoes Coelho and credits Oxbridge with helping her grow as a student-athlete: “Oxbridge taught me life skills, leadership responsibilities, and balance,” Curran says. “Being an athlete and a student at Oxbridge taught me many ways to handle stress and overcome adversity.”

Those lessons should serve all these student-athletes very well! Go ThunderWolves!



Clockwise from lower left: Angelina Coelho, Jonna Hubbs, and George Wandoff.

Hidden Talents

Faculty and Staff Have Hobbies, Interests, and Passions
Far Afield from Their Jobs

Did you know that an Oxbridge Spanish teacher also teaches freediving; the Chair of the World Language Department performs as a member of an improv comedy troupe; the head of the Health & Wellness Department is a competitive dancer; or the all-business Chief Business Officer soulfully sings in church on Sundays? Of course not. That's why *Oxbridge Today* is pulling back the curtain and not only revealing surprising talents and skills Oxbridge teachers and staff possess, but how, in some cases, those outside interests help them do their jobs!

Kelly Prisco, DPT Director of Health and Wellness

Dr. Kelly Prisco always enjoyed dancing, but watching the 1998 film, *Dance with Me*, starring Vanessa Williams, turned that joy into an all-encompassing passion. "It was a movie about a competitive, Latin ballroom dancer," Prisco recalls, "and I remember thinking one day I am going to compete in ballroom dancing." (What Prisco describes as "a combination of athleticism and artistry," is also known as Dance Sport.)

By 2012 she was dancing competitively in the sport's



Pro-Am Division, which pairs an amateur dancer with a professional to compete against similar teams, most often teacher/student couples. Her choice of dance category: American Smooth, which includes waltz, tango, foxtrot, and Viennese waltz. She and her current professional partner Paolo DiLorenzo also compete in the International Ballroom Division, comprising slow waltz, tango, Viennese waltz, slow foxtrot, and quickstep. In 2015, just six months into their pairing, she and DiLorenzo

began winning competitions, including the Ohio Star Ball, considered the most prestigious ballroom competition in the United States.

The satisfaction Prisco derives from ballroom dancing — and all the preparation that it requires — is almost indescribable. "My lessons, coaching sessions, and practices are a true escape for me from the stresses of everyday life ... I love to compete and perform. I don't get nervous, I get excited. It is my time to shine and give the judges and audience a beautiful performance. The dance floor is my happy place."

Prisco formed a Ballroom Dance Club at Oxbridge a few

years ago at the suggestion of several students. She sees the club as “a chance to help students build their confidence, give them a glimpse into the world of ballroom dance, and maybe inspire them to take up something new.” That sounds suspiciously like what the sport initially did for her: “Ballroom dancing,” she says, “taught me that you have to push yourself and function outside your comfort zone for real change to happen. One motto I always try to stick to is: Practice like you’ve never won; perform like you’ve never lost.”



Marisa Palazzotto **World Languages Dept. Head**

Marisa Palazzotto has been a member of improvisational comedy troupe Mod 27 since 2013. The group has performed at Arts Garage in Delray, Respectable Street Café in West Palm Beach; the Kelsey Theatre in Boca Raton as well as the Miami Improv Festival, the Gainesville Improv Festival, the Palm Beach Improv Festival, and, she says, “any assortment of bars and playhouses in Palm Beach County that will have us.” At first glance, it might seem a stretch for a language teacher to make people laugh in her spare time. Then again, we’re talking about the woman who won the superlative for Funniest Girl in her senior year at Conard High School in West Hartford, Connecticut. We’re talking about someone who counts the clever and creative Tina Fey as one of her heroes.

Palazzotto had begun acting classes for fun when she happened across an Improv class in 2013 and signed up.” I always thought of myself as a funny person, but I wanted to hone my skills and try to make people laugh,” she says. The class and the troupe have taught her a lot more than how to elicit laughs. “I’ve learned, for instance, that it’s ok to lose a fight; listening well is the key to effective communication; and most importantly, you’re never too old to play with your friends!”

As a teacher, she says, improv, “helps me remember not to take things too seriously, to always try to savor the goofy moments during a class and heighten them rather than quash them. If I’m up there having fun, there’s a good chance my students will have fun too, and that makes for a more pleasant day for everyone. Teaching, by the way, was a great help when I started performing, because there is no tougher audience than fifteen tired teenagers on a Monday morning.”



Rebecca De Jesús **Chief Business Officer**

In her role as Oxbridge’s Chief Business Officer, Rebecca De Jesús juggles numbers all day. It’s serious stuff. So it’s surprising to click on a YouTube video and watch and hear loving, soul-filled notes emanate from De Jesús. Then again, she has been singing most of her life. “I’ve been singing since I was 5,” she says. “I was in every choir I could be in; I sang for churches, weddings, and in one-too-many karaoke bars. I love

singing, harmonizing, playing around with what you can do with music. I learned to play the piano when I was 6 or 7, and I quickly learned to read music.” She adds that, “I was inspired as a kid by voices like Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Celine Dion — it was the ‘90s.” And here’s where the numbers come in: “Harmonies, singing, playing the piano is very math-based and I caught on well.” She says she doesn’t see a direct correlation of how her melodic hobby might help her in her profession. But it must be a potent stress reliever.

If you want to see her perform live and in person, you’ll have to attend Sunday services at Connect Church in Royal Palm Beach.

Errol Putigna Spanish Teacher

Spanish teacher Errol Putigna doesn't hesitate when asked how freediving and spearfishing help him as a teacher, though initially there seems to be no connection at all. Freediving and spearfishing, he says, have taught him patience and to "live consciously, not sweat the small stuff, understand that life is temporary, and live it to the fullest! I take all these lessons and philosophies and share them with my students and colleagues."



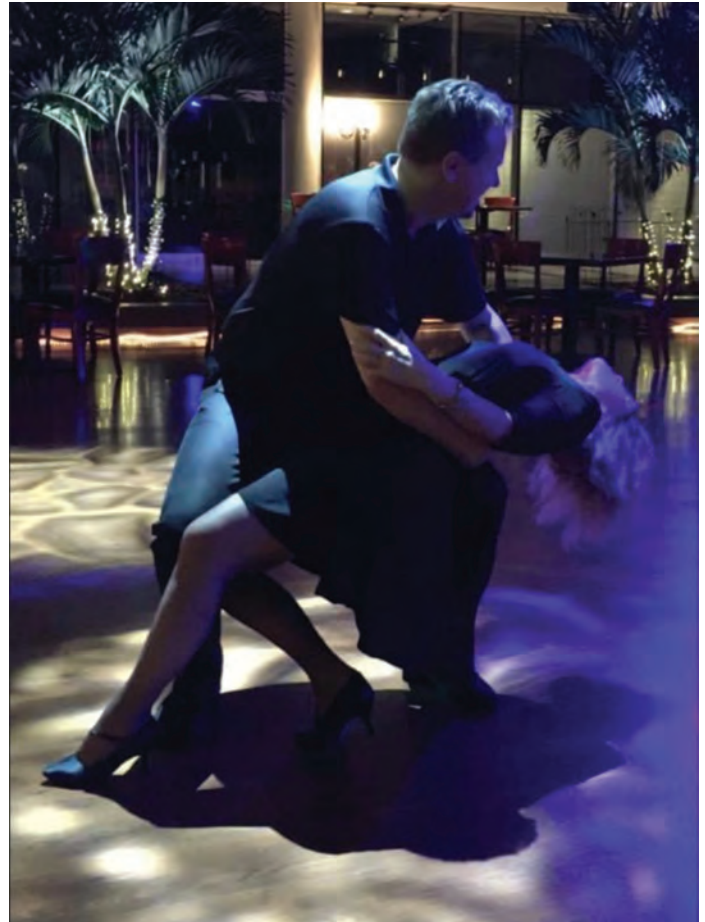
Putigna has been freediving and spearfishing since his father taught him and his brother when they were young boys. He became a professional freediving instructor and spearfishing guide about 14 years ago. (One of his more recent students was ThunderWolf Maxim Tipperman, Class of 2023, who reached a

depth of 123 feet.)

The life lessons learned and satisfaction Putigna derives from these passions are literally (pun intended) breathtaking.

- No. 1: "The Breath and how important it is. You are born on an inhale and you will pass on an exhale. Every breath you take in-between must have meaning and purpose."
- No. 2: "In the water, you truly understand what it means to be in the 'now.' In the water, the past or the future is insignificant."
- No. 3: "The ocean is the ultimate equalizer. It doesn't care who you are or what your beliefs might be. You discover what true reverence means."

Putigna enjoys plenty of simple satisfaction from these lifelong pursuits, including what he describes as, "the freedom of the underwater world and the ability to take from the ocean in the most sustainable way known to man." The ultimate satisfaction, however, is teaching freediving. "Watching my students' faces light up and seeing them discover something they've always possessed is so satisfying! I help them unleash their aquatic mammal!"



Sheron Hunter Dean of Students' Office / Attendance

Sheron Hunter, along with Marie Reese, sits at a lobby desk taking attendance, signing students in and out of school, making sure they have proper passes or permission when arriving late or leaving early. She also answers an array of questions from students, parents, and visitors. It's not surprising that after work she wants to move, keep on moving, and move around some more. What better way than ballroom and Latin dancing socially and competitively, which she discovered about six years ago. "I was looking for something fun to do," Hunter says, "and came across an ad for Ballroom and Latin Dancing classes at a local high school. I signed up right away!"

Getting into dancing turned out to be great decision. "When I dance, it takes me to another place, away from any worries I may have," she says. "When I am dancing, that's all I think of, and I enjoy every moment." (At the moment her favorite dance is something called West Coast

Swing.) Hunter adds that she has learned many life lessons through dance, especially perseverance. “I have been on a few dance teams and thought I wouldn’t get some of the steps, but as I persevered each time, I finally got it. I’ve also learned to be the leader in some of the dances and would have never thought I would have been able to do that!”

Aside from occasionally helping Dr. Kelly Prisco with her after-school Ballroom Dance Club, Hunter gets philosophical when explaining how her passion for dancing helps her do her job: “My dancing has helped me in my work at Oxbridge because it has made me a happier person all around!”

Nick Agress **Assistant Athletic Director**

Here’s a case where a staff member does not leave his work at the office — even during the summer. As the ThunderWolves’ Assistant Athletic Director since 2019, Agress eats, drinks, and breathes high school sports daily during the school year. After planning, arranging, and scheduling all manner of sports activities, Agress spends most of his free time immersed in basketball — not as a player, but as a referee! “Officiating is my passion,” he says.

Agress dreams of officiating NBA games one day and is using every opportunity to achieve what is an elusive and competitive goal that very few reach. The good news: The NBA has taken notice and invited him to participate in its Referee Development Program.

Realizing his playing days were over after four years as a member of the Eckerd College Tritons basketball team and desiring to remain involved in the game, Agress took his father’s advice and set his sights on officiating. He also credits his father, Keith, a longtime high school referee, as his greatest mentor along the way.

“I first picked up a whistle in 2013, officiating five-to-seven-year-olds at a local recreational league in Miami,” Agress says. Later that year, he began officiating high school basketball games. In 2016, he refereed his first college game. Today, he works NCAA Division I and II, NAIA, and JUCO basketball games as well as semi-pro/professional summer league games. This is one of the primary reasons he makes time to work out regularly in the Oxbridge weight room. “Keeping fit is of primary importance in refereeing basketball,” he explains.

Officiating has provided Agress with plenty of teachable

moments. “Making the right foul call is easy,” he explains, “but learning how to communicate with hostile coaches, players, and fans when they disagree with you is 80% of the battle. You have to learn how to diffuse situations and make tough decisions in a very short amount of time.” He adds that, “Officiating also demands high ethical standards. You can’t walk into a game with any preconceived notions about any coaches or players. The decisions you make every night must be for the good of the game.”

And there’s one more essential lesson: “You have to have courage to be a leader of your fellow officials, courage to make the right call even if it is an unpopular one, and courage to have difficult conversations with coaches and players. Many officials shy away from conflict. The good ones have the courage to take that conflict head on.”

During the school year, Agress tries to instill these traits — communication, ethics, and courage — in all Oxbridge students. “I believe if we can teach all our students to have these basic fundamentals in life, along with the importance of hard work and dedication, many of our ThunderWolves will go out into the world and do something special.”





Left to right: Sedic Simon, Marion Baldwin, Ed Bianco, Lareese Jackson

Serving Our Country; Serving Oxbridge

Oxbridge Staffers Recount Lessons Learned in the Military

Oxbridge Academy is fortunate to have half a dozen veterans on staff as well as one trustee. We'd like to introduce you to them and share how their military experience has served them in work and life. We thank them for their service.

Lareese Jackson

Hometown: Riviera Beach, FL

Branch: Navy

Dates served: 1990-1993

Title / Rank: E-3 Fireman

Where based: Mayport, FL

Job title at Oxbridge: Culinary Services

When the call sounded off the coast of South America, the Navy ship prepared for the rescue of a boat in distress. As the first person to assess a situation, it was no surprise to Lareese Jackson when he was called to crew a rescue boat as it fought 16-foot waves and crashed

against the ship, while he prepared for the mission. Jackson chuckled as he recalled the heart-pounding moment and said, "You find out that the water is very powerful." The Navy completed a successful mission, thanks to engineer and investigator fireman Jackson. In retrospect, the circumstances were nothing to laugh about, but that's all Jackson could do even before he told his story.

Jackson planned to attend Long Beach Community College to play football until his father's back injury caused him to stay closer home. He chose the Navy because "I wanted something different in my life." Firemen Jackson also mentioned the opportunities that would be available through the Navy. He and his friend, Henry, joined the Navy together and he remains close with another friend, Ray, due to the strong bonds formed in the military. Jackson also wanted a



job which would lead to a certification, so he became an engineer working with the engines on a ship and also trained as a firefighter.

Jackson believes the military is humbling because, "You learn to work and appreciate your fellow man, you have to, your life depends on it." He uses the life lessons learned in the military in his position at Oxbridge.

Lareese and his wife Michelle, who works at the local VA, view Oxbridge students highly, and believe in their potential. “I see the future world leaders of this country coming through my lunch line,” says Jackson.



Ed Bianco
Hometown: Sandwich, MA
Branch: Army
Dates served: 1993-2001
Title / Rank: PFC 4
Where based: Fort Benning, GA
Job title at Oxbridge: Head Chef

.....
“It’s just the people I met along the way,” Chef Ed Bianco recalls as he reflects on his time in the Army. Bianco joined the Army at 17 because he wanted to go to culinary arts school after basic training, “You were sent to school for your specific job duty.” He enjoyed his education and role as a chef in the military, getting up at midnight to begin preparing breakfast for 4,000 servicemen and women at Fort Benning. He learned the skills of teamwork and being organized. In recalling life lessons

learned in the army, Bianco doesn’t hesitate: “You learn respect.” He adds that, “I was taught how to work as a team; be organized; and how to get the job done under any circumstance. Traits I still use today.”

While thinking back, Bianco recalls a time when he was working security at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta and the contrasting emotions of seeing people from all over the world, but also the tragic bombing which took place in Centennial Olympic Park. He recalls in the military, “one is forced into growing up really fast.” However, he states that, “I would do it all over again.”



Kevin Drake
Hometown: Boston, NY (Yes, New York)
Branch: Army
Dates served: 1979-1982
Title / Rank: Infantryman E-4
Where based: Schofield Barracks, Hawaii
Job title at Oxbridge: Athletic Maintenance, Head Softball Coach

.....
Coach Kevin Drake, who joined the Army when he was 20, smiles when

remembering being stationed in Hawaii. When serving in the military, Drake loved all the places he visited, stating, “that, and the comradery” made up his favorite memories. He enjoyed military hops to the Hawaiian Islands, but Auckland, New Zealand became his favorite place because of the lifestyle. “I traveled a lot.”

Coach Drake describes his military experience in Hawaii as “a lot of walking, a lot of hiking,” which included survival training where a helicopter dropped him off in the jungle and he had to evade capture and make it back to base. He decided to serve his country after playing minor league baseball for the Seattle Mariners and Milwaukee Brewers and remained in the Army for four years. (His brother served in the Marines at the same time. Both left military service simultaneously to help care for their mother.) Coach Drake has three daughters, and one is considering joining the Air Force.

Reflecting on his time in the military, Coach Drake believes it “makes you stronger” and he would make the same choices all over again. “The leadership I learned carried over to what I do daily. What I’ve done, who I’ve become, has a lot to do with the military. Learning respect is a big part of it. I was young and wasn’t sure where I was going in life.

The military has a lot to do with my coaching. I let the players know the good and the bad. I emphasize and check academics. I don’t want kids on the team if they’re going to be a problem academically. If you’re a good student, you’ll be a good athlete and you’ll be happy.”

VETERANS ON STAFF



Lareese Jackson's 1990 Fireman Apprentice Class; Jackson is to the right of the sign.

Marion Baldwin

Hometown: Pompano Beach, FL

Branch: Army

Dates served: 1971-1973

Title / Rank: Spec 4th Class (Corporal)

Based: New Jersey, Central & South America

Job at Oxbridge: Maintenance Supervisor (retired)

When asked about his favorite part of Oxbridge, former maintenance supervisor Marion Baldwin, who retired in June, doesn't hesitate to say, "The students." Baldwin has been at Oxbridge since the beginning of the school's history when only about one hundred students walked the high school hallways. When asked about lessons he learned from the military, he responded, "Be prepared to adjust for changes."

As a high school student, Baldwin dreamed of being a systems engineer before he was drafted for the Vietnam War at 19. Some of his friends lost their lives in combat. Baldwin's response to not being sent to Vietnam: "I was lucky." His specialty of working in communications and microwave systems repair, known then as the

beginning of cell tower construction, was needed more in Central and South America. He appreciates the opportunity to see "places I had never seen" such as Arizona and seeing snow for the first time in New Jersey, "The military was a good place." After leaving the military, Baldwin worked at Bell Systems before joining the Oxbridge family.

Sedric Simon

Hometown: Riviera Beach, FL

Branch: Marines

Dates served: 2004-2009

Title / Rank: Sergeant

Based: Cherry Point, North Carolina

Job at Oxbridge: Former Entrepreneurship Teacher, FEI Advisory Board Member

Sedric Simon describes his experience of serving in the Marines as, "the brotherhood." Good, bad, or ugly, the team experienced it together and created a lasting bond. Two cousins had previously joined the military and his family was supportive of his decision.

Simon consistently asks himself the questions, "Where are you going to go? How are you going to get there?"

Focusing on a plan for his life helped him not only during the time of his military service, but also in his teaching and as a successful entrepreneur. He was meritoriously promoted three times and feels proud of his promotion to sergeant.

When asked about humorous experiences, Simon explained, "all the bad decisions were the fun things." He served in Iraq, but did not stay in the military because, "I'm an entrepreneur." He smiles as he remembers of his friends, "hopefully they are telling the same stories."

Life lessons Simon learned from the Marines included not worrying about things out of his control; learning to say no; and being a good listener. He observes that sometimes people don't know how to say no, but that saying no to one thing means saying yes to a larger priority. Simon feels becoming an effective problem solver is the skill from the Marines he most frequently applies to his life. He believes, "problems are fun." He shared his successful mindset with his students at Oxbridge and concludes with the advice, "Time is our most valuable asset."

Note: Sam Provo, Oxbridge Athletic Dept. Equipment Manager served in the U.S. Army from 1979-1983.

Interviews, reporting, and writing by the Creative Writing 2 class: Ignus Berciunas, Lila Burns, Jamie DeFrances, Brandon Dorsey, Ava Farahani, Avery Finch, Jaidalyn Gromadzki, Miles Lee, Sophie Limbourg, Nicolette Luce, Ale Lugo-Cortes, Giselle Marcellino, Elle Simmonds, Wilson Stewart, Reid Swank, Poppy Westwood, Will Willson.



David Rosow

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Branch: Navy

Dates served: 1964-1967

Title / Rank: Ensign

Based: Norfolk, Virginia

At Oxbridge: President & Chief Executive Officer, Oxbridge Academy Foundation, Inc.; Chairman of the Finance Committee

Oxbridge Trustee David Rosow was witness to some grim history. Here is his account in his own words:

I went through Navy OCS from July to November of 1964 and was commissioned an Ensign. My next duty station was Defense Information School from which I graduated in early February of 1965. I traveled to Rota, Spain and was flown out to my home for the next several years, the USS Forrestal. Through the years on board, to October 1967, I was principally a watch officer, the Public Information Officer, and for a short period Ship's Secretary.

In July 1967 while in the Gulf of Tonkin, I was scheduled to fly to Saigon for briefings and to meet various members of the international news media; by then I was the General Quarters Officer of the Deck, and my team was responsible for operating the ship while in war time and hazardous situations. My Junior Officer of the Deck replaced me during my absence. However, before I was flown off, and just after we recovered our first strike of the morning and were preparing for the second sortie, a missile was accidentally fired, hit a fuel tank and a 500-pound bomb on a plane across the deck. The missile wasn't armed. Since all 60 planes had their engines running and the fuel tank ruptured, we instantly had a fire which spread, igniting another eight bombs, mostly 1,000 pounders (all WWII leftovers). We had a massive fire and casualties with 134 killed and dozens injured. Our men fought the fire for more than 24 hours.

Five days later, we sailed to Subic Bay in the Philippines, and repaired the ship to the best of the men's ability. We then began the long journey back to Norfolk. I was supposed to remain aboard the ship until the following April, but instead, given the short time remaining in my active-duty status, the Navy opted to shorten my service.

Life lessons: "Discipline, time management, and working with people in all age groups and seniority. Our days were long, our responsibilities enormous and the learning curves were steep. Living in a confined space such as an aircraft carrier (significantly larger than a destroyer) with 5,000 other men, from diverse backgrounds, made us aware of our situations and conscience that our decisions could impact thousands of people."

Impacting my role as a Trustee: "As a former longstanding trustee of a K-9 school, a father of two sons, a husband and a businessman, my military service provided me with the ability to make informed and confident decisions. The Navy connected me with a diverse group ranging in demographics, education, and experience. Education was knowledge and more education provided the ability to reach beyond your current situation. Some education came from books, some from learning from an experienced person, and some came from the school of hard knocks. But education was the key to making a person reach their highest potential."



ACADEMICS





Oxbridge Middle

In Year Two, Students Continue To Thrive

By Rainey Wyatt, Director of Oxbridge Middle

Oxbridge Middle School jumped out of the gate this year! With new classrooms, course offerings, teachers, and most importantly, an excellent new and returning group of middle school students. Last year's successes helped solidify what worked and informed what needed to be tweaked. We saw that our students thrived in our upper-level math courses, made considerable strides in their critical thinking in humanities courses, and discovered new passions in our elective wheels. Our new Science and Art classroom, a true collaborative "maker" space, has a wonderful creative energy buoyed by the curriculum of the art and science teachers.

Another crucial inaugural-year element that has carried over is Oxbridge Middle's welcoming atmosphere. One parent recently recounted how important that was in building her eighth grader's confidence: "The other night, my son told me how grateful and happy he was that he went to middle school here," she said, adding that now in ninth grade, "He feels comfortable and acclimated to the school, the people, and everything you guys do. This year, he was even able to help other people find their way around."

In year two, the most profound achievement is the success of the students. Oxbridge has always been a place where we educate students by solving problems through teamwork, ingenuity, and skill building. We know

that students learn best in an atmosphere that balances structure and input, where kids know what to expect, but have the agency to help create. When you hear various conversations, you can tell that our returning students eagerly welcomed the new students into the fold. They've been demonstrating our culture of kindness, assisting each other in figuring things out while exceeding expectations.

Our new students have also embraced both the freedom awarded and the responsibilities associated with stretching their brain cells and learning new skills. They've proposed clubs (Yay, Robotics Club!), used initiative (volleyballs for recess, please!), led classroom discussions, and ardently enjoyed our new snack cabinet and the outdoor space.

It is in the students that we see the vision of Oxbridge Middle come to life. A nurturing and exploratory school that helps students build the foundation to meet the world boldly with kindness and initiative.

Thrilled at the success of seventh and eighth grades, Oxbridge is adding a sixth grade, beginning August 2023. "This will give us more time to instill Oxbridge values and cultivate curious minds through instruction, exploration, and experiential learning to better prepare students for success," said Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer.



A Middle School is Planted, and A Garden Grows

When the new Oxbridge Academy middle school sought ideas from students for school clubs, Gabriela “Gabby” Caban, a seventh grader at the time, didn’t hesitate to suggest a Gardening Club. “I have always loved the idea of gardening clubs at schools,” says Caban. “I think they make great touches to school campuses.”

Led by Caban, the Garden Club formed in October of 2021 and set about planning a greenhouse and planting a variety of flowers, shrubs, and herbs. Not just any species, however. Before planting, Caban and company researched which plants grow well in Florida, what “starter plants” to consider, and “What works best for our situation,” says Caban. Club members chipped in and bought a pup-tent-sized starter greenhouse via Amazon. In just a few months, the club nurtured “a huge variety” of flora, including: sage, tomatoes, hibiscus, jalapeño, peppers, sunflowers, wildflowers, and basil. The greenhouse and surrounding area where students have planted is so welcoming that some growth is unintentional. To the club’s delight, daisies, for example, unexpectedly bloomed in the greenhouse. “We have been focusing on flowers, but soon we will add different herbs, and foods,” Caban notes.

The fact that a garden club even exists has surprised Middle School Director Rainey Wyatt. “It’s one of the most dedicated clubs I have seen in all of my time at Oxbridge,” Wyatt says. “Over the years, a lot of students have

suggested clubs, but not all of them follow through. It’s impressive that seventh graders persisted and through a lot of dedication created a club, planted a garden, and made it flourish.” Wyatt adds that, “It took middle schoolers to do it. They came up with an idea, executed it, and they follow through every single day!”

Dedication is definitely a requirement. A club like this is labor and love intensive and demands commitment and teamwork. Without those traits, a garden won’t get very far. “We must check on the garden every single day. You miss a day, and suddenly everything is dead,” Caban explains. “We have to prepare for weekends and holidays to make sure everything will be fine.”

Club co-leader and classmate, Jayla Miranda, has always had an interest in gardening and loves learning about plants in science class. Working in the garden provides her with “a visual representation to really understand what is happening in science,” she says. She also thrives on the responsibility that comes with being a club leader.

One of the best lessons Miranda has learned through the club was unexpected. “I learned that you must have a lot of patience! Patience is the key to gardening. The hardest thing is waiting for anything to bloom.”

Sounds like more than a garden is growing here.

Kennedy Space Center: An Out-of-This-World Learning Experience

By Arden Jurskis

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Oxbridge students took an all-school field trip to learn more about outer space. The entire student body, grades 7-12, packed into a fleet of charter buses and traveled about 150 miles north to the Kennedy Space Center in Merritt Island, Florida. The trip was an opportunity to immerse students in an aerospace engineering, astrophysics, and interstellar adventure, supported by and related to our summer reading assignments: *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams.

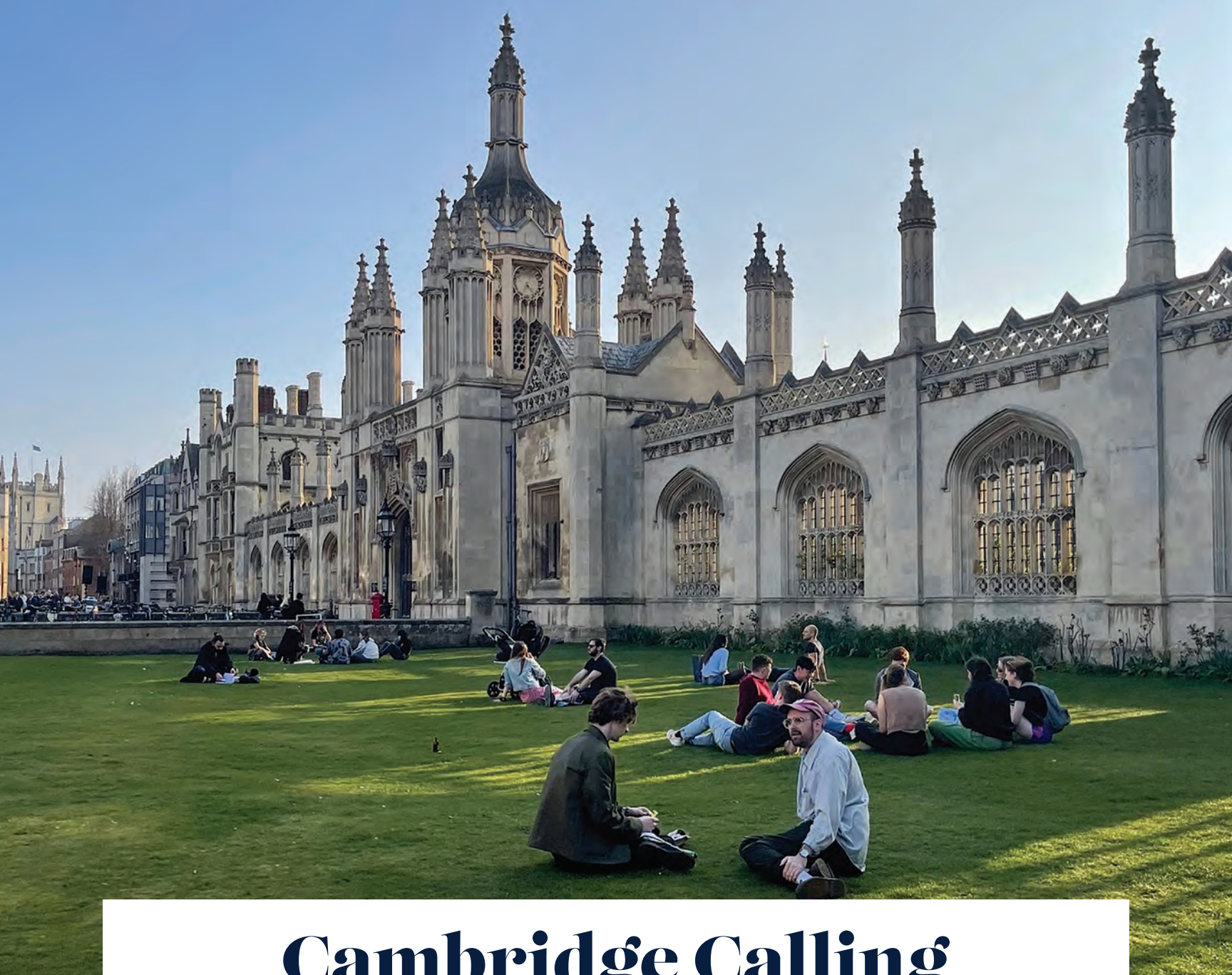
“Providing students with a 360-degree look at our country’s accomplishments in space and the future of space exploration, the trip was a great way to connect summer reading to real-world applications of mathematics, science, and technology,” said Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer. “It also allowed us to appreciate the history of the space program and the brave astronauts who made sacrifices to advance our knowledge.” He added, “Our teachers always find creative ways to explore the annual summer reading assignment, which has become an important Oxbridge tradition.”

A unique opportunity to delve into the themes of these stories, the trip provided students with a behind-the-scenes look at NASA and explore the burgeoning private space travel industry through unique tours and exhibitions showcasing the past, present, and future of the space industry. Students experienced the thrill of space travel through interactive motion simulators, blasting off into Earth’s orbit via the Shuttle Launch Experience and traveling to distant worlds on the center’s newest attraction, Gateway.

“The trip provided a great opportunity for students to explore the history of the space program, the role collaboration and cooperation plays in innovation, and ways that current space program projects will help us deal with emerging challenges: all topics that tie in directly with our summer reading books,” said Oxbridge Academic Dean Amy Jurskis.



After the visit, students were tasked with synthesizing the summer reading by creating a TikTok-style video answering a question about the way the space program has shaped our world. This trip was an unforgettable, outside-the-classroom learning event that gave students a quintessential Oxbridge experience.



Cambridge Calling

A Signature Program is Re-established

One of the most disappointing academic delays at Oxbridge was the forced two-year hiatus of the signature Cambridge Scholars program, due to the pandemic. Active since 2014, the program has sent 15 juniors to the prestigious Cambridge University in England every spring to study history and literature for an intense two-week learning experience. The program returned in the 2021-2022 school year. That trip included 15 juniors, as well as seniors who were unable to go the year prior.

Understanding their good fortune, the 2022 Cambridge Scholars took full advantage of their opportunity despite a five-hour time difference and enthusiastically hit lecture halls and libraries. “We had a fantastic first day of lectures,”

reported Academic Dean Amy Jurskis, who served as one of the group’s chaperones. “The morning began with a traditional English breakfast, followed by two history lectures on the American and French Revolutions and ties to the Enlightenment by Dr. Sean Lang, lunch, and a lecture on the Cambridge Platonists by Dr. Andrew Lacey. Students also had a meeting to discuss the technicalities of writing their (2,500-word) papers.”

During a very busy two weeks, the group also would study Mary Shelley’s classic novel *Frankenstein* and Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*; the theories of English philosophers Thomas Hobbs and John Locke and mathematician and scientist Sir Isaac Newton; even how the development

of 18th-century English gardens evolved into the field of landscape architecture. These lectures and classes led to the writing of papers on themes such as: How far would you agree that “Enlightenment Philosophy Was a Façade to Disguise the Revolutionaries’ Lust for Power and Profit;” “Does Victor Frankenstein Get What He Deserves?;” “Why did Hobbs Believe in the Need for a Science of Politics?;” “Can the American Revolution (1775-1783) Be Called a War for Democracy?” According to Jurskis, the Cambridge professors told her some of the resulting essays were among the best they’d ever read!

It wasn’t all study and no play. The students had time to visit museums, gardens, explore the city and in the process learn a little about another culture. Elena French-Nino recorded the following in her course diary: “I feel I should share and include the following,” she wrote: “Chips=fries, pop/fizzy=soda, pepperoni pizza, is ‘American pizza’; traffic in England is opposite to the American direction; motorcycles EVERYWHERE; dangerous bicyclists that will run you over, cheerio, chaps, have a think, Marks and Spencer’s=Walmart, Sainsbury’s=Publix, pounds vs. USD (conversion rate is 1.40), double-decker buses, no license needed to drive motorcycles, and shockingly, vinegar on fries.”

English Department Chair John Klemme was thrilled with how smoothly the program got back on track and how well the students responded. “It was wonderful to participate in the Cambridge Scholars Program again after a hiatus,” he said. “Connecting with our colleagues there once again and watching our young Oxbridge scholars engage in the most sophisticated study of this year’s subject — the Enlightenment — was a true thrill. As in past years, Oxbridge students demonstrated their capacity for college-level study, and their articulate expression of ideas in discussions and writing made me once again so proud of what our students can do.”

The students won’t soon forget the experience either. Alejandro Vera put it this way: “There are not nearly enough words to describe how incredible Cambridge was: the architecture, history, and culture truly are awe inspiring. I was particularly blown away by the caliber and prestige of the professors that taught and engaged with us in thought-provoking lectures and sessions.”

Camila Bonilla realized the magnitude of this opportunity. “Cambridge University is known for its renowned professors



Left to right: Victor Dehm, Jonathan Schram (standing), and Max Mogilevsky “punting” on the River Cam.

and history of cultivating knowledge. Studying there allowed us to learn about and understand human nature in ways we couldn’t do in the United States.”

Oxbridge Student News



Senior Andrew Dagher Receives Three Patents For a Revolutionary “Thermo-Electric Engineering” Device

During the summer before his freshman year at Oxbridge, Andrew Dagher, '23, began developing an idea for a “metabolic charging apparatus” that produces an electric current. In essence, he explains, “It is a device that takes the body heat emitted from your hand, for example, and turns it into an electrical current that can be used to charge any device ... you could be holding your phone and charging it or sitting in the seat of a Tesla and using the current from your body heat to charge the car.”

By the end of his first semester at Oxbridge he had signed multiple contracts with the Florida Institute of Technology to produce a prototype and conduct additional research. Additionally, he established an LLC for his three current patents as well as any future patents to be issued. Currently, he is working on nine other patents for various companies, including Proctor & Gamble, which owns some of the biggest household brands in the world.

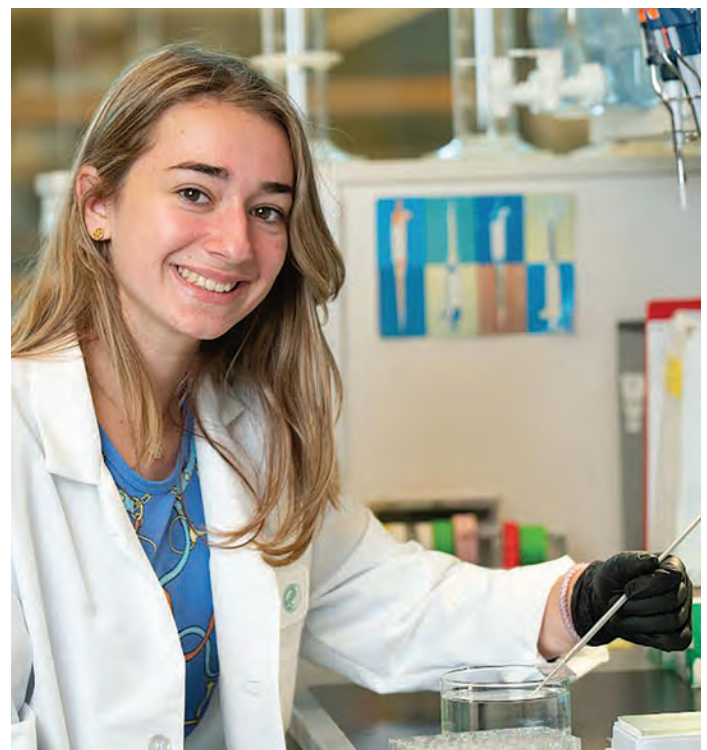
Though he cannot reveal much about the new patents he has applied for, Dagher named the P&G brands that will roll out new products “if my next patent applications are successful.” They include: Ariel, Bounce, Downy, Tide, Gain, Febreze Gillette, Venus, Head & Shoulders, Old Spice, Pantene, Cascade, Mr. Clean, Crest, Oral B, Scope, and

Olay. As for his next steps, Dagher says, “I plan on attending college and will most likely major in finance or take a double major in business and engineering.”

Arielle Schwarzborg Goes From Intern to Employee at Max Planck Institute

Arielle Schwarzborg, class of '23, interned this summer at the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience (MPFI) in Jupiter. Prior to the summer internship, Arielle competed on Oxbridge's Brain Bee team during her junior year, coached by science teacher Benjamin Matzen. The competition, held at MPFI, was a great introduction to the company and a natural fit for her to foster her interest in neuroscience.

Arielle's research focused on “Reconstructing the Complete Morphology of the Developing Neuron,” and because of her successful internship, she was hired to work there part time as a research technician!





Thunderwolf Team Finishes Second in Statewide Stock Market Contest

Alex Bories (from left), Thomas Coates, Finn Johnson, and Max Mogilevsky — students in Robert Frackelton's economics class — earned second place in the statewide Spring 2022 Florida Stock Market Challenge competition. Competing against thousands of teams, the group grew its mock portfolio by 24% during a very turbulent time in the markets. Congratulations to the team!



Murray and McIlvaine Win Pathfinder Awards

Finley Murray won first-place in the Communications category of the 2022 Pathfinders Awards that were announced last spring by *The Palm Beach Post*, which has sponsored the college scholarship awards for the past 39 years. Murray, who attends the University of California-Berkeley, received a \$3,000 scholarship. Classmate Nicholas "Cole" McIlvaine, now at Tufts University,

was awarded third place in the Literature category and received a \$1,500 scholarship. Ava Farahani (Art) and George Wandoff (Sports) were Pathfinder semifinalists.

Winners of The Annual Sons of the Revolution Essay Contest Announced

Sons of the Revolution Essay Contest winners are:

- First Place: Wilson Stewart, '24
- Second Place: Alex Smyth, '24
- Third Place: Juliana LaPapa, '24

The topic of this year's contest was: "What is the purpose of the Constitution as you understand it?" The winners of the contest, which is judged by members from the Sons of the Revolution, are awarded cash prizes of \$750, \$500, and \$250.

Three years ago, with the goal of increasing high school students' knowledge and understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the rights it guarantees, the Palm Beach Chapter of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Florida created an annual essay contest exclusively for Oxbidge 10th-grade students. Each January, eligible students are invited to submit 600-word essays on a topic dealing with the Constitution of the United States. The contest has become so popular that SOR chapters around the country are working to implement it in their regions.



Contest winners pictured from left: Juliana LaPapa, third place; Sons of the Revolution's Joseph A. McChristian Jr., Alex Smyth, second place; and Wilson Stewart, first place.



A young man with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a black suit, white shirt, and black tie, is seated and playing a double bass. He is looking down at his instrument. In the background, other orchestra members are visible, including one playing a violin and another playing a double bass. The scene is set in a rehearsal or performance space with a white wall and a dark floor. The text "the arts" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

the arts

Portrait of A Stellar Oxbridge Arts Season

A perceptive person once said, “Without art, planet eARTh is eh.” That’s quite true for all the arts. It’s also true that Oxbridge Academy is committed to introducing all of the arts to our students, to ensure planet Earth never becomes “eh” due to a lack of music, theater, dance, painting, sculpture, photography, animation, or creative writing. This season, Oxbridge presented a complete calendar of in-person performances that were energetic and incredibly beneficial to ThunderWolf artists. Witnessing their substantial talent was a joy for members of the Oxbridge community.

Music

In March, “An Evening of Jazz” featured the Jazz Ensemble, Strings Ensemble, Concert Band, Choir, and Dance Repertory groups. The presentation also featured New York-based guest artist Dan Freeman a musician/producer on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music and New York University’s Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music. Freeman was on campus as a guest instructor.

In mid-April, Rock Night warmed the hearts of Boomers who delighted in hearing classics such as a “Somebody to Love” by the Jefferson Airplane — props to Hadley Finch (winner of the Class of ’22 Creativity Award) for her emotive channeling of Airplane singer Grace Slick — as well as more contemporary tunes by the likes of John Mayer.

Kudos to all-purpose artist Ryan

Burt, ’22, for soulful, fluid guitar playing throughout the evening. Kennedy Knight and Ariana Prophete performed “a really cool” duet on the Talking Heads classic, “Psycho Killer” and Henry Hagerman produced some nice guitar work and singing on “Good People” by Jack Johnson. One highlight from early in the evening that merits mention was the robust rendition, complete with zealous horn section, of the classic 1970 hit, “Vehicle,” by one-hit wonders The Ides of March. More brass, please; more brass!

The annual Winter Concert and annual Spring Concert highlighted the beautiful, collective voices of the school’s chorale as well as the orchestra and other ensembles.

Dance

An impressive Spring Dance Concert included original numbers, “Hopeless Wanderer” and “The Wheel” choreographed, respectively, by seniors Lily Langbein (now at Brown University) and Abigail Veccia (now at Syracuse University, see story page 57). Dance instructor Alyssa Thompson choreographed the lion’s share of the 14 numbers performed with additional contributions from Health & Wellness Director Dr. Kelly Prisco and guest artists Kenny Fowler and Jon Lehrer. The number “Breathe,” choreographed by Thompson, was confidently performed by middle schoolers Jessica Jerabek, Leah Marino, and Jayla Miranda. Accompanying music ran the gamut



Photo: Jeremy Moore



Abby Veccia and Lily Langbein at Future Stars competition.

from classic Donna Summer to the more contemporary Mumford & Sons, Bruno Mars, Ellie Goulding, and Adele.

Theater

A sold-out spring presentation of the international hit musical *Mamma Mia!*, inspired by and brimming with the '70s and '80s hits of the Swedish pop band ABBA, highlighted the theater calendar. A professionally constructed set was even trucked in to add luster to the production, which featured a cast of more than two dozen — highlighted by leads Paige Brewster (now at the University of South Carolina) and Selah Girard (winner of the Class of 2022 Performing Arts Award and now at Lynn University). A tech crew of seven deserves a shout out as well.

The school's theater season began, however, in early December, with a dress rehearsal for the one-act play, "The Summoning of Everyman," in the Oxbridge Theatre. The primary purpose of the presentation was to

give the actors a chance to perform in front of an audience before participating in the Florida International Thespians One-Act Competition later that week. The competition counted towards the troupe's induction into the Thespian Honor Society and gave them the opportunity to perform the play in Tampa in March at the State Festival! Though the troupe was not selected to compete in Tampa, the performance of "Everyman" received a superior rating, Kaya Kutner, Class of '23, was named

the Festival's Top Actress, and Paige Brewster, '22, was named an All-Star Cast Member. In fact, Oxbridge took home seven superior ratings in the Individual Events portion of the competition!

The thespian schedule also included a revue titled "Oxbridge on Broadway" — directed by Brewster and Burt and features numbers from musicals like *West Side Story* and *Oklahoma* and more recent smash, *Hamilton*. The season wrapped in May with "Annie's Kids", based on the Broadway hit, *Annie*. That production showcased the acting and singing skills of Oxbridge middle schoolers led by Jayla Miranda — a seventh grader at the time — in the lead role of Annie.

Public Performances

Many ThunderWolves had the opportunity to perform outside of school. On the strength of their Oxbridge theatrical performances, Paige Brewster and Ryan Burt, '22,

were among 120 seniors from a dozen high schools invited to perform in June at the Dream Awards at the Kravis Center. The Dream Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of high school musical theater students in Palm Beach County. Kravis Director of Education Tracy Butler described the Drama Awards as, "the epitome of how the arts can catapult a young artist to the next level ... This program shines a bright light on the next generation of impressive performing artists in our community." Dream Award winners go on to participate in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards — also known as the Jimmy Awards — in New York City. While our ThunderWolf thespians did not win the competition, here's what Brewster had to say about the experience: "Ryan and I worked very hard every day for a straight week at the Kravis Center getting ready to perform on the Dreyfoos Hall stage on Sunday, June 5th. We had so much fun working with all the professionals and the amazing students from different schools in Palm Beach County. Ryan and I made lifelong friends and experienced a true working theater industry. We performed with all the nominees and the other student ambassadors in a variety of different numbers. Getting invited to be a part of this experience was once in a lifetime opportunity and I am so grateful for it. I hope for the future of the Oxbridge theater program other students get to be a part of the Kravis Center Dream Awards like Ryan and I were because I know I will never forget that outstanding night."

Earlier in the school year, just before Winter Break, Clara Nevers, '23, a member of the Oxbridge

Dance Ensemble, performed in the Ballet Palm Beach production of *The Nutcracker* at the Kravis Center as well with the Oxbridge Dance Ensemble and choir in the school's Winter Concert. The Oxbridge Repertory Dance Ensemble auditioned in February to compete in the annual Future Stars competition presented by The Rotary Club of Boca Raton and made the cut. The dance competition was held at Mizner Park Amphitheater in Boca Raton in early April. The ensemble was comprised of Charlotte Baeumler, Ella Carver, Jourdane Celis, Gigi Giliberti, Adora Girard, Lily Golish, Brianna Gonyea, Emma Jassenoff, Lily Langbein, Elizabeth Marchant, Clara Nevers, Katherine Shumway, and Abby Veccia, and performed a jazz piece titled "Bad Girls." Langbein and Veccia also performed solo numbers respectively titled "Alternate World" and "Love I'm Given."

Visual Arts

Performing artists weren't the only ones who shined this past year. Fine artist Ava Farahani (now at the Ringling College of Art & Design) was one of four senior ThunderWolves who made the cut as prestigious Pathfinder Awards semi-finalists. And Alejandro Lugo Cortes, '23, won Gold Key Awards in the Regional 2022 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, presented by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. "Ale," as he is known at school, received a Gold Key in the Novel Writing category for his work, *Journal of Apache Sitgreaves National Forest Ranger*, and another in the Short Story category for his work, *Heart Rate Monitor*.



Alex Bories as Beetlejuice

Ensemble 2022-23

In October, to kick off the 2022-2023 Oxbridge arts season, all components of the Performing Arts Department joined forces to present "Hauntedtorium." The production was a pre-Halloween treat from the moment attendees entered the theater foyer with a choice to take the "safe side" or the "scary side" to reach their seats to the closing all-cast dance number choreographed to the Michael Jackson classic, "Thriller." (The scary side featured screaming mechanical mummies and monsters.)

The hour between featured performances by singers, dancers, and musicians that would put a smile on Frankenstein's face. The Oxbridge Performance Ensemble kicked off the evening with a confident performance of "The Whole Being Dead Thing" from *Beetlejuice the Musical*; Conrad Luce, '23, delivered a muscular version of "Confrontation," from *Jekyll & Hyde*; the Dance Foundation kicked things up a notch with a presentation titled

"Haunted House."

And on and on it went, with one seamless performance after another, including solo numbers by Gigi Giliberti, '23, and Kaya Kutner, '23, the Oxbridge Chorale doing Kate Bush proud with an ethereal rendition of "Running up that Hill," and the Oxbridge Rock Band performing "Werewolves of London" and "Sympathy for the Devil." Kudos to drummer Yadi Rivera-Delgado, '23, on the latter number for powering the band through the song's complex rhythmic pattern. Extra candy to the stage crew for the accompanying sound and lighting which added to the ambiance. And a shout out to the compiler of the compilation trailer of classic horror films which set the tone as attendees arrived.

Bravo to all these blossoming actors, singers, dancers, musicians, artists, and writers — and let's not forget the lighting, sound, tech, and stage crews! Thanks to you, planet Earth will not be "eh."



Clockwise from top left: Cast members from the 2022 production of “Mamma Mia!”; Repertory Dance Ensemble members (l-r) Ella Carver, Jourdane Celis, Lily Langbein, Clara Nevers, and Katherine Shumway rehearse; Yadi Rivera-Delgado, ‘23, performing during the “Hauntedtorium.”



Performing Arts Calendar

October 18: *Hauntedtorium*

November 16 & 17: *Hard Candy*

December 6: Winter Concert

December 13: *Elf Jr. The Musical* by seventh grade performing arts students

January 9: Intro to Performing Arts Showcase

March 9-11: The musical *Into the Woods*

May 4-5: Spring Dance Concert

May 9: Spring Music Concert

May 22: Intro to Performing and Visual Arts Showcase

May 23: *Seussical Jr.* by seventh grade performing arts students



Left, Ryan Burt, '22, performs a number from "Hamilton" in the production of Oxbridge on Broadway and Selah Girard performs "Under Attack" from "Mamma Mia!"



2022 Regional Scholastic Arts Awards Gold & Silver Key Winners



Gold Key Winners

Clockwise from top: *Newfound Warmth*, colored pencil on paper by Arabella Sanchez-Garcia, '24; *What Lies Beneath*, digital art by Abigail Veccia, '22; *Tea Time*, acrylic on canvas by Ava Farahani, '24.



Silver Key Winners

Clockwise from top: *Nethanya*, photography by Avery Finch, '22; *Disconnecting*, acrylic on Canvas by Arabella Sanchez-Garcia, '24; *John Lewis Print*, printmaking by Hadley Finch, '22.

Avery Finch was also awarded a Silver Key for a photographic work titled *Nepali Guard*. Twin sister Hadley also won a Silver Key for a ceramic work titled *Homme*.



Guest Musicians, Dancers, Artists Add Color to the Curriculum

Last February, dance instructor Alyssa Thompson invited professional dancer Alexandra Dow to teach her students some musical theater choreography. Dow, who has a reverence for the likes of legendary choreographers such as Bob Fosse, Gower Champion, Michael Bennet, and others, and has spent more than a dozen years visiting schools across the country, was happy to oblige. She spent the day teaching a number — “All that Jazz” — from the hit musical *Chicago* to Thompson’s classes.

But there’s literally more to it than meets the eye. “What I try to do and accomplish as a guest artist in a short span of time is to help students find their balance,” Dow explains. “I’ll usually warm them up, then break down and teach them a dance combination. We don’t just dance and talk about the work. We talk in depth about it.” She adds that, “Any chance I get to pass down Fosse’s movement is a great day. The students were very eager to learn the detail and history of the choreographer himself and the piece he created.”

And that’s exactly why Thompson brought in a pro for a day and hoped would happen. “I try to bring in new artists each year to expose the dancers to different styles and challenge them with new ideas,” Thompson says.

Dow perceives her role as not solely imparting new ideas, but also teaching a bit of the art’s history. She sees the role of guest artist “as one who has great respect and admiration for the craft, with the knowledge and skills to

pass down to the next generation of young artists.”

Guest artists are also cognizant of what goals the faculty members want to achieve. “When I come in as a guest artist, I try to impart new information and ideas while still connecting to their current curriculum and what their teacher already is teaching,” says Jon Lehrer, Artistic Director of the Jon Lehrer Dance Company, who Thompson invited to Oxbridge on several occasions. Lehrer loves to get feedback from students, “Many students say the same thing to me — ‘I never thought of dance in that way before. I can’t wait to use this new information in my daily dance classes.’”

Some guest artists end up surprising students by demonstrating how the arts are related to math, science, and technology. Musician Dan Freeman, an artist on the faculty at the acclaimed Juilliard School in New York, has proven he is much like a computer scientist during his most recent visit to Oxbridge. “I really enjoy sharing some of the ideas and music technologies that I’m working on at a university level, Freeman says, “and hope that students can connect some of what they’re studying to its relevance in the world.”

Freeman, who has also served three tours as a State Department Arts Envoy in more than a dozen countries, adds that, “I really like how Oxbridge has embraced cutting-edge technology and the ideas that go along with it. On



my last visit, I did a presentation on Artificial Intelligence in music for students, including an AI class taught by Dr. Maurer. I can't think of another high school that I've been to where the students have had the opportunity to delve into these concepts."

Freeman is a bit of a ringer and has a special, longtime Oxbridge connection: Music Department Chair Ernie Mills was Freeman's counselor and teacher at music camp in Maine in 1989 and 1990 when Freeman was in high school. "Even as a young teacher, he had a powerful effect on how I came to see music," Freeman says. "Mr. Mills has a profound respect for the art and the discipline that is required to excel in it. At the same time, he deeply cares about the students and their progress. I saw that as his student many years ago, and I see it in his work with the students at Oxbridge."

That may be because Mills benefited from guest artists as a college student. "Having the good fortune to work with mentors like the great (jazz trumpeter and composer) Clark Terry inspired me to take my musical education to another level," Mills says. "The lessons learned from a truly great artist are hard to place a value on."

Something all guest artists appear to agree on is the joy they get from working with students. Dancer Alexandra Dow says, "The most satisfying thing about being a guest artist and teacher is being able to give back. The only thing I love



Opposite: Dan Freeman; top: Alexandra Dow leads a dance rehearsal; bottom: Architect Zach Busman talks to an honors portfolio art class.

more than performing, is sharing the craft. I love seeing students take risks, push boundaries, step out of their comfort zone, feel the freedom to express oneself, and learn that it's OK to fall forward."

A close-up photograph of a red athletic jersey. The jersey features the name 'HIDMER' in white, block letters with a dark blue outline on the upper left. A large, white, stylized letter 'H' with a dark blue outline is prominently displayed on the right side. The word 'ATHLETICS' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. The background shows a green grassy field.

ATHLETICS



In Travis Homer's World, Actions Speak Louder Than Words

The Star Athlete, Whose Jersey Was Just Retired,
is All About Putting in the Work Required to Succeed

Travis Homer was one of the most accomplished, decorated, and lauded athletes in Oxbridge Academy's brief history when he graduated in 2016—and he remains so. Homer is now the first ThunderWolf to have a jersey retired.

The honor is well deserved. In his senior year, Homer was a finalist for the Lou Groza High School Player of the Year Award, named to the *Sun Sentinel's* Super 11 team, ranked as the No. 6 running back in the state, and was the first ThunderWolf recruited by a "Power 5" university. Football powerhouses Alabama, Notre Dame, FSU, and UF courted him before he chose to become a University of Miami Hurricane. Homer's ThunderWolf career included more than 3,200 rushing yards, an eye-popping average of seven-plus yards per carry, and 50 touchdowns--many of them the stuff of highlight reels. Today, he's in his fourth season playing for the NFL's Seattle Seahawks.

Every yard and score, it must be emphasized, was hard-earned. Not one was a gift. It would remain that way as a running back for the Miami Hurricanes where he was named Second Team All-ACC in 2017 and 2018, and it continued that way as a running back and special teams ace for the NFL's Seattle Seahawks who drafted him in 2019.

Maybe some players were a little stronger, a little faster,

or a bit shiftier, but no one at any level of the game practiced and prepared more diligently than Homer did. No one outworked him. As one ThunderWolf teammate recalls:

"Even during practices no one wanted to tackle him." That singular, focused work ethic is the way it has been since he first strapped on a football helmet for the WCFL Ravens in Boynton Beach at age seven and dreamed of playing in the NFL. "During my off-season," Homer explains in understated fashion, "I train in the morning with fieldwork, go home for lunch, then lift in the evening. That is the typical day for me."

What is atypical is that in his free time Homer rarely watches football. He watches enough football studying game film each football season, he explains, adding that Super Bowls are an exception. He prefers to relax by playing video games — Yes, "Call of Duty" is a favorite — and watching anime shows like "Attack on Titan," "Naruto," and "Dragon Ball Z." (This might explain why Digital Design was his favorite class at Oxbridge.)

ThunderWolves Head Football Coach Jonathan Stellman, an assistant coach during Homer's Oxbridge playing days, remembers that Homer "bought into the strength and conditioning aspect of the game early in his high school career; he was never outworked; he truly led by example.

When your best player is working as hard as he was, it is tough not to follow.” Stellman adds that Homer, “exemplifies everything we hope for in our football program—tough, strong-willed, academically focused individuals. Travis is and will always be Oxbridge Academy Football.”

The Seattle Seahawks must be pleased with the player they picked in the sixth round of the 2019 draft. Homer has become a reliable pro running back and perhaps an even more valuable member on special teams. Last season, Homer scored two of the more dramatic touchdowns of the year, both on special teams, both rare, and both requiring what basketball great Bill Bradley called “a sense of where you are.”

The first was grabbing an onside kick against the Jacksonville Jaguars and instead of falling on it, dashing for 44 yards for the first touchdown scored on an onside kick in Seahawks’ history, and punctuating a much-needed win. The second came against the San Francisco 49ers on a fake punt with Homer sprinting 73 yards to open the scoring. He also rushed for 80 yards in that 30-23 victory. Asked how he felt during those moments, which required laser-like awareness, Homer replied: “The feeling is one of excitement, but I feel that it’s supposed to happen. What goes through my mind is: ‘See what I can do!’”

One thing he’s doing is giving back to his community by holding youth football camps, one of which took place on the Oxbridge campus in July. A careful observer might get the feeling more than football fundamentals were being taught on that tandoori-oven like morning. Printed on the backs of camp shirts was what appears to be Homer’s philosophy of life: “When you’re afraid — just train! When something doesn’t feel right — just train! When you don’t believe you can do anymore — just train! The only thing that won’t betray you is your training!” In a word: Put in the work and you’ll be fine.

Only 24, Homer is already putting in the work for his post-playing days. Plans call for opening a string of gyms throughout South Florida as well as “getting into real estate.” But that’s for later. Today, he’s in the midst of his fourth season as a professional football player. His advice



Lower left: Travis Homer’s mother, Kerri Valot, holds her son’s Thunderwolf jersey while friends, family, and former teammates enjoy the October 13 retirement ceremony.

for succeeding, however, sounds wise no matter what it is you choose to do: “Come to work every day to be the best version of yourself that you can be — and bring others along on the way.”



Field of Dreams

The Future Looks Bright for Thunderwolves Football

*By Jonathan Stellman,
Head Coach of the ThunderWolves football team*

On August 31, a near-capacity crowd of vociferous ThunderWolves fans attended the first home football game on Oxbridge's campus since the fall of 2017. Despite a roster with fewer than 10 players with high school football experience, the team treated fans to a 19-0 victory over rival St. Andrew's School. Oxbridge student-athletes were quick to pick up the schematic nuances of the game. The team, required to play a JV schedule in its inaugural year, finished 4-2 with three consecutive multi-touchdown victories to conclude the season. The future is bright, as the ThunderWolves return 15 of 22 starters.

Offensively, Noah Prissert, '23, led rushing efforts in Oxbridge's unconventional Unbalanced Single Wing offense. In six games, Prissert rushed for more than 500 yards and



scored nine touchdowns. Tailback/fullback Remington DeOrsey, '26, showed promise as a runner and blocker. Up front, Nico Aloï, '24, and Jack Bauer, '26, led the most important group on the team, the offensive line.

Defensively, the ThunderWolves were led by the outstanding linebacker duo of Wilson Stewart, '24, and Koury Dowd, '25. Smart and instinctual, the two multi-sport athletes anchored the 3-4 defense the ThunderWolves employed. In the back end, the secondary was

led by the physical play of twin brothers Campbell and Quinn Zegras, '25.

The ThunderWolves finished their inaugural schedule of the new football era in mid-October and look forward to competing on the varsity level in 2023-2024.



A Quiet Pitch For Greatness

Luna Curran Has Humbly Set the Bar for Softball Excellence

To watch Luna Curran, '22, interact with friends, teammates, teachers, and administrators before or after games, on or off the field, one would have no idea that the soft-spoken girl with the perpetual smile was one of the best softball players in the state, perhaps in the country. During the 2021 and 2022 softball seasons, Curran was the heart and soul of a ThunderWolves team that went 43-4-2, reaching the state semi-finals last year, losing a heartbreaker, 4-2. Practically unhittable, Curran's record as a pitcher during her Oxbridge career was an incredible 42-3. She was also intimidating at the plate with a batting average last season of .470 and a team-leading 46 RBIs. (When she wasn't playing for the ThunderWolves, she was playing in a Tennessee-based travel league for a team called the Fury Platinum.) Curran is now a freshman at Western Kentucky University, pitching for the Lady Hilltoppers.

"Luna is what a coach dreams about having on their team," says ThunderWolves softball coach Kevin Drake. "Her team leadership was outstanding and was a big part of our success. She cared about winning as much as I do. She kept her teammates focused, wanted to work hard after last season's loss in the Regional Final. She made everybody better."

Curran has been making everybody better since about

the age of six when she followed in her two older sisters' footsteps, began playing softball, and discovered she loved it. By the time she was eight, she was playing in a 10U league. In middle school, she was named Softball MVP and Female Student-Athlete of the Year. "As a kid," she recalls, "I always played with girls three or four years older than me. I was able to compete, and my parents saw my potential. I never really thought about it." She does recall a moment when she realized she was making a name for herself in the softball community. "One time, a parent told me she knew who I was and that my reputation preceded me."

That reputation would grow – and the awards would pile up during her junior and senior years at Oxbridge: 2022 Palm Beach County High School Softball Player of the Year; Palm Beach Post 2022 (and 2021) All-County Softball Player of the Year; South Florida *Sun Sentinel* 2021 All-County Softball Player of the Year. Land Rover Player of the Week March 2022; FPL Next Generation Athlete Player of the week; SBLive Florida Player of the week; SBLive Florida Top 20 High School Pitcher (rated #2). Her sophomore season was canceled due to the pandemic, but the *Sun Sentinel* already had her on its radar as a freshman, naming her to its All-Palm-Beach-County Softball Second Team.

Curran also was offered — and accepted — a spot



Clockwise from lower left: Luna Curran in action on “Senior Night,” her last home game as a ThunderWolf; Curran is all smiles on National Signing Day as she commits to play for the Lady Hilltoppers of Western Kentucky; Curran shares “Senior Night” festivities with her parents, Maritza and Jim.

on the Colombian National Softball team to play over the summer in the Bolivarian Sports Games (Juegos Bolivarianos) a competition among a dozen South American and Caribbean countries held every four years. “This is an incredible opportunity for a high school student,” Assistant Softball Coach Brittany Velez said of the invitation to play for Colombia. “This will open the door for Luna to compete in the 2024 Olympics!”

Accolades and records like Curran’s aren’t automatic. Though naturally talented, she works diligently at her craft, taking nothing for granted, refusing to rest on any laurels. “I devote hours each day to practice, some days more or less than others,” she says. “Typically for pitching, I spend at least an hour and for hitting, I spend at least 30 minutes. On the side, workouts take around an hour. When I practice, I have intent and set goals. I make sure when something

is off that I work through it, and I make sure to make adjustments.”

Making adjustments, sports or otherwise, is something she credits Oxbridge with helping her learn how to do. “Oxbridge has taught me life skills, leadership responsibilities, and balance,” Curran says. “Being an athlete and a student at Oxbridge has taught me many ways to handle stress and overcome adversity.” Those skills will probably be useful at Western Kentucky University where she plans to major in Animal Science and Agriculture with the goal of becoming a veterinarian. “It is my dream,” she says, “to one day open my own sanctuary to help animals and provide shelter to those in need.”

Until then, Curran says, her college coaches told her: “Be ready to work and excel.” For Luna Curran, that should be as natural as throwing a strike.



Athletics Awards & Accomplishments 2021-2022

Palm Beach Country All-County Awards

SUN SENTINEL FALL SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

First Team

Jonna Hubbs (girls golf)

Second Team

Ava Cavataio (girls golf)

Honorable Mention

Skye Bruan (girls golf)

Lexi Figoras (volleyball)

Claire Luce (girls golf)

Jenna Mauney (volleyball)

Arielle Schwarzbarg (volleyball)

Logan Stachkunas (boys golf)

PALM BEACH POST FALL SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

All-County

Jonna Hubbs (girls golf)

Honorable Mention

Ava Cavataio (girls golf)

Nick Skully (boys golf)

SUN SENTINEL WINTER SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

First Team

Angelina Coelho (girls soccer)

Second Team

Cheasney Carjuste (boys basketball)

Mallory Forgatch (girls soccer)

Honorable Mention

Camila Bonilla (girls soccer)

Thomas Coates (boys soccer)

Antonio Gaudino (boys soccer)

William Gudbrand (boys soccer)

Jarret Mauvais (boys basketball)

Aniyah Seedeem-Vargas (girls soccer)

Bo Squitieri (boys basketball)

Geroge Wandoff (boys soccer)

PALM BEACH POST WINTER SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

All-County

Angelina Coelho (girls soccer)

Aniyah Sedeem-Vargas (girls soccer)

SUN SENTINEL SPRING SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

Luna Curran (softball)

****Sun Sentinel Player of the Year****

Kevin Drake,

Softball Coach of the Year

First Team

Chandler Barry (softball)

Luna Curran (softball)

Sophie Fenster (girls tennis)

Murielle Jeanite (track & field)

Paticake Parke (softball)

Bella Ruggiero (softball)

Adam Stowell (boys lacrosse)

George Wandoff (boys lacrosse)

Second Team

Dawson Brown (boys lacrosse)

Kaiya Glucksman (softball)

Amaya Jeanite (track & field)

Akari Marshall (track & field)

Alexa Muller (softball)

Aryssa Sinclair (track & field)

Alex Walsh (baseball)



The 2022 Oxbridge Academy girls 4x100 relay team won the state championship in that event! The team of Raniya Tyson, '24, Murielle Jeanite, '23, Aryssa Sinclair, '23, and Akari Marshall, '26, as well as alternates Amaya Jeanite, '26, and Amiyah Williams, '23, earned the fastest time in the FHSAA Class 1A State Final with a time of 48.31. The time and finish are the highest in Oxbridge history, and the school's first state championship in track & field since 2018. The *Palm Beach Post* also named Bijou Joaseus, '22, Aryssa Sinclair, sisters Murielle and Amaya Jeanite, and Akari Marshall its 2022 All-County Girls Track & Field Team.

Oxbridge 2021-22 girls' track & field team (from left): Bijou Joaseus, Murielle Jeanite, Akari Marshall, Octavia Massena, Aryssa Sinclair, Amaya Jeanite, Raniya Tyson, Amiyah Williams.

Oxbridge Academy Track & Field

4 x 100 Relay Team:

Murielle Jeanite, Akari Marshall, Aryssa Sinclair, Raniya Tyson

Honorable Mention

Hannah Altman (girls tennis)
Spencer Bernstein (boys tennis)
Patrick Cerasuolo (boys lacrosse)
Kelley Dever (softball)
Gabrielle Edwards (softball)
Avery Finch (girls tennis)
Parker Fite (boys lacrosse)
Mallory Forgatch (girls flag football)
Leah Forman (track & field)
Liani Gil (girls flag football)
Ava Gronberg (girls tennis)
Bijou Joaseus (track & field)
Christopher Lawrence (boys lacrosse)
Miles Lee (boys tennis)
Octavia Massena (track & field)
Noah Prissert (boys lacrosse)
Caden Riccardo (boys lacrosse)

Taje Warrick (girls flag football)
Amiyah Williams (track & field)

PALM BEACH POST SPRING SPORTS ALL-COUNTY

Luna Curran (softball)

**Palm Beach Post 1A-5A

Player of the Year**

Kevin Drake,

Softball Coach of the Year

All-County

Chandler Barry (softball)

Luna Curran (softball)

Liani Gil (girls flag football)

Murielle Jeanite (track & field)

Amaya Jeanite (track & field)

Bijou Joaseus (track & field)

Akari Marshall (track & field)

Paticake Parke (softball)

Caden Riccardo (boys lacrosse)

Bella Ruggiero (softball)

Aryssa Sinclair (track & field)

Adam Stowell (boys lacrosse)

Honorable Mention

Serena Faraj (girls flag football)

Parker Fite (boys lacrosse)

Mallory Forgatch (girls flag football)

Alexa Muller (softball)

Taje Warrick (girls flag football)

OTHER INDIVIDUAL ATHLETICS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Florida Athletic Coaches

Association All-State Class 1A

Flag Football All-State

Mallory Forgatch (Honorable Mention)

Liani Gil (Honorable Mention)

Florida Dairy Farmers 2022

Class 2A Softball Player of the Year

Luna Curran

2022 FLORIDA LACROSSE SOUTH ALL-REGION TEAM

Dawson Brown

Patrick Cerasuolo

Noah Prissert

Caden Riccardo

Adam Stowell
George Wandoff

2022 FLORIDA LACROSSE SOUTH ALL-AMERICAN

George Wandoff

FLORIDA STATE LACROSSE COACHES ASSOCIATION

Dawson Brown

Noah Prissert

Caden Riccardo

Adam Stowell

George Wandoff

TRACK & FIELD 4X100 M RELAY FHSAA STATE CHAMPIONS

Murielle Jeanite, Akari Marshall,
Aryssa Sinclair, Raniya Tyson

SBLIVE'S TOP 20 SOFTBALL (STATEWIDE)

Luna Curran

Paticake Parke

Bella Ruggiero

SBLIVE'S FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE OF THE WEEK (STATEWIDE)

Luna Curran (softball)

FHSAA INDIVIDUAL STATE QUALIFIERS

Amaya Jeanite (Long Jump, Triple
Jump – track & field)

Murielle Jeanite

(Long Jump, 400 M – track & field)

Bijou Joaseus

(High Jump – track & field)

Akari Marshall (100 M – track & field)

Octavia Massena

(400 M – track & field)

Aryssa Sinclair

(100 M, 200 M – track & field)

Max Timperman

(50 Freestyle, 100 Freestyle –
swimming)

Amiyah Williams (High Jump, Triple
Jump – track & field)

ATHLETICS



IEA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER/HIGHEST POINT EARNER – ZONE 4 (EQUESTRIAN)

Taje Warrick (3rd place)

NEW SCHOOL RECORDS

Amaya Jeanite – Long Jump, 18 feet
.57 inches (track & field)

Murielle Jeanite – 400 M, 58.60
(track & field)

Max Timperman – 50 Freestyle. 21.94
(swimming)

Max Timperman – 100 Freestyle. 48.63
(swimming)

LAND ROVER PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Luna Curran (softball)

Jenna Mauney (volleyball)

FLYRA MIDDLE SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS QUALIFIER

Leah Forman (3K – cross country)

PALM BEACH POST PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Caden Riccardo

(boys lacrosse – April 10-16)



INDIVIDUAL PALM LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Aryssa Sinclair (200 M, track & field)
4x100 M Relay Team
(Murielle Jeanite, Akari Marshall,
Aryssa Sinclair, Raniya Tyson)

ATHLETICS TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Softball

Advanced to the FHSAA Class 2A
State Semifinals

FHSAA Class 2A Regional Champions

FHSAA Class 2A District 14 Champions

Palm League Champions

Record: 23-2-1

Track & Field

FHSAA Class 1A Regional Champions

FHSAA Class 1A District 13 Champions

Girls Tennis

Advanced to the Regional Finals

Boys Lacrosse

FHSAA Class 1A District 13 Champions

Record: 18-5

Flag Football

Advanced to the FHSAA District

Semifinals

Girls Soccer

Advanced to the Regional Quarterfinals

FHSAA Class 3A District 12

Runners-Up

Record: 11-4-1

Girls Golf

Placed 10th at the FHSAA

Class 1A State Championships

FHSAA Class 1A District 13

Runners-Up

Boys Golf

Placed 9th at the FHSAA

Region 4 Tournament

FHSAA Class 1A District 13

Runners-Up

Swimming

Placed 3rd at the FHSAA Class 1A
District 10 Meet (girls/boys)

Placed 3rd at the Palm Beach County
Championships (boys)

Record: 5-0 (boys, head-to-head
matchups)

Record: 4-1 (girls, head-to-head
matchups)

Girls Lacrosse

Advanced to the District Semifinals

Record: 8-6



Hoops! She Did it Again!

Girls' Basketball Coach Tracy Wolfe Led ThunderWolves to Back-to-Back State Championships and Is Seeking a Third

Not so long ago, in 2018 and 2019, the Oxbridge girls' basketball team won back-to-back FHSAA Girls 5A state championships. They also reached the final four in 2017. Their three-year record: 81-13! The team improved and added more wins each year. Several team members went on to play Division I ball in college: Kaylon Smith (Vanderbilt), Aaliyah Stanley (Eastern Michigan) and Alex Zaph (FAU). The head coach of those teams, Tracy Wolfe, who also teaches English at Oxbridge, returned as coach last year, after a hiatus. She has a pretty good idea of what made those teams so successful and what it will take to win a third. As she explains their success, it becomes clear that there are life lessons here beyond sports.

Some of it is the same old song: collective determination, selfless teamwork, individual dedication to a common goal. A little luck was involved, too. The core team members — Kaylon Smith, Taylor Race, Alexa Zaph, Aaliyah Stanley, Haley Howarth, Natalie Zoller, Nashani Gilbert-Taylor — arrived at Oxbridge as freshman at the same time, got to know each other early, grew together, stayed together throughout high school. And they shared the goal of

winning it all. “They were determined to be the best, and they collectively worked harder than any team I have ever coached,” Wolfe recalls. “They came in all summer long to work out in the weight room and improve strength and conditioning. We worked as a team 12 months out of the year.” Somewhere along the line, those 2018 and 2019 teams evolved beyond the concept of a team and, says Wolfe, “truly became a family.”

In 2017, the group was one win away from playing for the state championship and lost in overtime, 57-56, to eventual state champion Jones High School in Orlando. The silver lining in that loss was an intense focus and desire that spread through the team to use the loss as fuel to propel the ThunderWolves to the championship in 2018. Former ThunderWolf Alexa Zaph, a point guard on those championship teams who now plays for FAU, says, “When we set our team goals in 2018, we used the loss as our motivation and the reason we woke up every morning. Nothing was going to stop us. We were very competitive against each other in practice. We went by the philosophy that iron sharpens iron.”

Coach Wolfe vividly recalls that go-for-it-all attitude. “The 2018 team was extremely determined to win a state

Above: 2019 championship team



Top: Bill Koch congratulates coach Wolfe (2019); Bottom, left to right: Players Nashani Gilbert-Taylor, Dallas Carter, Jen Pryor

championship. We made it to the Final Four in 2017 and we lost in overtime. That loss really hurt the girls and it drove them to come together and work incredibly hard to win the championship in 2018. The focus that team had was unmatched.” That 2018 win is also her most rewarding coaching memory. “In that season, I watched what had been a team of individuals that loved to play basketball transform into a team of people with a common goal who truly loved and cared for each other. Winning the championship felt like the culmination of an entire year of hard work, tears, and successes, and most importantly it was the year I watched the girls transform into young women who truly cared for each other and for Oxbridge.”

The following year, the players were primarily the same, but the team vibe was different. “We didn’t have the same drive to seek revenge like we did in 2018,” Wolfe says. In

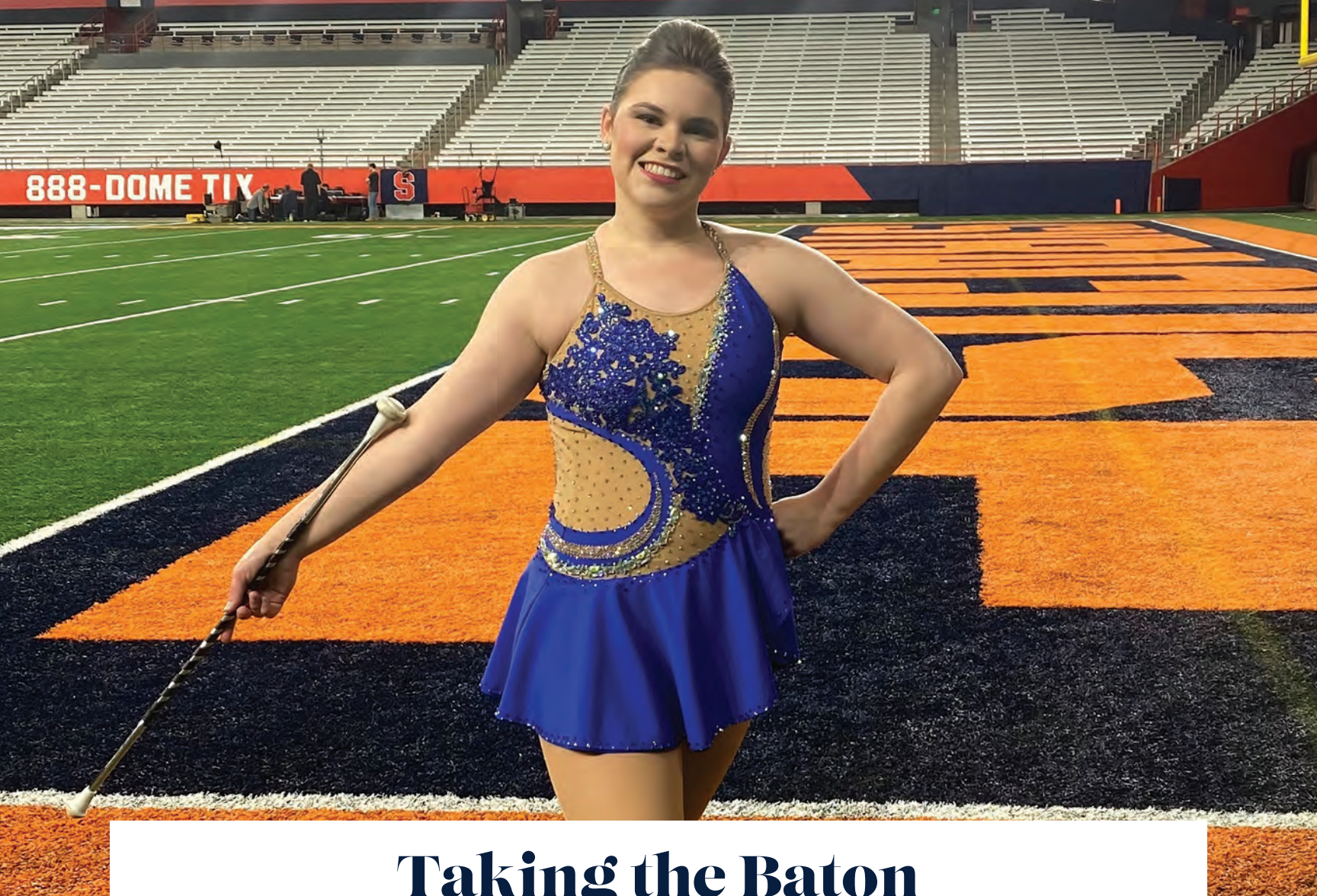
2019, most of the team was comprised of seniors playing their final season there was a desire to go out as champions; eight players had been together since they were freshman! Pressure to repeat the feat added to the team’s motivation and determination.

One should not underestimate what coach Wolfe brought to the team when she arrived in 2015. Ironically, had she not torn an ACL in her senior year playing for Benedictine University, she might not have become a coach. “I had a decision to red shirt and play for another year, or to move on,” Wolfe says. “I was approached by a high school coach who was looking for a JV Coach, so I made the decision to end my playing career and begin coaching. I fell in love with it, and I knew that I wanted to stay involved with basketball and coaching throughout my career. I had the opportunity to coach and build some very successful teams in North Carolina, and when I saw the opportunity to coach at Oxbridge, I knew this was a place I wanted to be.”

She brought with her a deep love and understanding of the game. She became a student of basketball; studied its every aspect. She fine-tuned practices, plays, defenses to the strengths of every team she coached. But it was her overarching philosophy that probably mattered most: “I have learned,” she says, “that it doesn’t matter how much you know about the game if you don’t build a team where players care about each other and feel that they are cared for. In the end, playing a sport in high school is bigger than the game itself. Athletes make lifelong friendships and learn lessons that will carry them through life. This is what is most important in coaching.”

Alexa Zaph describes her former coach’s best qualities as, “dedicated with a positive attitude, and a great communicator. She always had our backs and was always finding ways to make us better on and off the court. As a mom of two young girls, she dedicated herself to making sure our team was ready for each and every game, practice, or event that we participated in.”

Wolfe’s dedication and teaching philosophy applies to the students in her English classes as well as her players. She also loves the challenge of turning students who are not frequent readers or confident writers into lovers of both. “I have had students come into the school year telling me that they are terrible at English and leave the classroom requesting to be placed in Honors the next year,” Wolfe says, adding that, “These are the moments that I love — being a part of a student’s journey to self-confidence and aiding in their love of learning and discovery.”



Taking the Baton

Abigail Veccia Carries on 75-Year Tradition as the Syracuse University Orange Girl

This season, when the 100-strong Syracuse University Marching Band (aka “Pride of the Orange”) is on the field, it will be led by Oxbridge graduate and award-winning baton twirler Abigail “Abby” Veccia who the university selected as its 26th Syracuse Orange Girl. Earning that title is quite competitive and requires impressive acrobatic skill and hand-eye coordination, which might be why Syracuse treats it like signing a star athlete and endows the position with a scholarship.

“With the long tradition of the Orange Girl, it has long been a sought-after position in the twirling community,” explains Dr. Timothy Diem, Syracuse University Director of Athletic Bands. A group of former Orange Girls helps with the selection process, which includes reviewing application materials, in-person interviews, and watching candidates perform live. “Abby impressed the committee on all fronts and was selected from a very impressive group of twirlers,” Diem says. “We believe that she is not only a great

performer on the field as well as a wonderful ambassador off the field.”

Veccia began taking baton twirling lessons at the age of four. “I fell in love with the sport and treasure everything about it,” she says, “from the girls who I’ve made lifelong friends with to the long days of practicing and performing at competitions.” Her coaches then, remain her coaches today. Why mess with success? Veccia has traveled throughout the country and to Europe (Croatia and France) to compete in national and international twirling competitions. She proudly says, “I’ve been a finalist in every category I’ve competed in and am a silver medalist.”

For those surprised that twirling is an international event requiring substantial skill and devotion, you haven’t been paying attention. At Oxbridge pep rallies over the years, Veccia was a highlight wowing the student body with her dramatic twirling routines and choreography. It doesn’t come easy. “I practice about four to five times a week

ATHLETICS

when competition season starts and even more during the summer preparing to go to big competitions such as Nationals when there's no school," Veccia explains. "One of these practices is always a team practice and another a private lesson with my coach, Lindsey Finkel. The other days are when I practice on my own or are mandatory practices added for my team. My schedule changes slightly every year, but my team practice and lesson have been a constant since I was in elementary school."



Over the years, she has had to defend twirling as a sport. There were plenty of non-believers early on. "I can remember this one classmate telling me that if baton twirling is a sport, then so is chess. It was frustrating growing up, but I never backed down because I knew then, and still know today, the difficulties the sport carries. I know what it takes to be at this level of competition, the dedication and grueling hours put in to get where I am. What someone else says doesn't change that."

Oxbridge, she points out, "has always been supportive of my twirling." She credits that to students and teachers being able to see her perform "up close and personal" as the saying goes. She also credits joining the Oxbridge Dance Ensemble with helping her improve as a twirler. "I decided to join the Dance Ensemble to help me improve technique and learn other skills for twirling and ended up loving it," she says. Initially nervous when she joined because she didn't feel like "a legitimate dancer, she credits dance instructor Alyssa Thompson with supporting her and encouraging her to remain in the ensemble. Thompson's

support paid off. Not only does Veccia say she grew into "the role of a dancer," she was also named one of the ensemble's two dance captains last year.

Thompson says that by her senior year, Veccia was such an integral part of the group, that many of the dancers referred to her as 'the dance mom' because she was always prepared. "She helped students with choreography; checked in on them when they were having a bad day; built camaraderie; and always cheered for her classmates when they nailed a routine or mastered a new skill Abby was always full of spirit and drive to be better. It was a natural fit for her to be a dance captain. Syracuse is lucky to have her. She will definitely bring the school spirit."

Aside from discovering and falling in love with the Dance Ensemble, during her years at

Oxbridge she also enjoyed taking classes in U.S. history, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Animation. "These classes stood out to me and pushed me in multiple ways, whether it was academically or creatively," says Veccia, who plans to study Computer Art and Animation along with computer science at Syracuse. "I've loved being able to explore both the academic side of classes, but also be creative in other classes at Oxbridge." She adds that, while looking forward to college, she'll miss her Oxbridge teachers. "It was always comforting to know I could go up to them and ask them any question or talk about what was on my mind."

Still, twirling rules. And it appears that all the twirling (and dance) practice and competitions paid off. Syracuse University named her the newest Orange Girl to lead the school's marching band. "It's an honor to have that title," she says, "not only at the school, but in the twirling world. Twirling in college," she says. "It's something most of us strive for, so being able to have this position is incredible and I'm so grateful for all that's happened to lead me to this point."

Keeping Score

When it Comes to Reporting Oxbridge Sports, Mitchell Bernstein Covers All the Bases

Some people love to play sports. Others prefer to watch and cheer. Yet others are passionate about covering sports and reporting about their favorite teams. Enter ThunderWolf sophomore Mitchell Bernstein, who as a freshman began covering Oxbridge sports with boundless energy and enthusiasm.

Bernstein's desire to be a sports reporter/broadcaster was inspired by his love of golf, the sport he most loves to play. (He not-so-secretly harbors dreams of joining the PGA Tour one day, but until then, reporting on a variety of sports suits him just fine.) "My favorite sport is golf," he says, "but in broadcasting, you have to be open to all sports and put in the same effort and quality for all of them. I became interested in sports journalism/reporting and announcing by watching and imitating golf commentators. I believe one of the most interesting parts of sports is being able to hear and visualize the event as it is happening."

He finds inspiration from an array of sports figures, including Miami Heat TV commentator Eric Reid, golf commentator Jerry Foltz, NBA All-Star Russell Westbrook, and Hall of Fame golfer Phil Mickelson. All of them, Bernstein says, "have shown me the endless possibilities of what you can do if you put in the work." He also credits friends and family, who, "do the world to teach me and provide me the best opportunities."

The result: In just his freshman year, he created an



impressive social media presence promoting and reporting on ThunderWolves' athletes, teams, and games. "My involvement," he explains, "would be through social media posts on Instagram, Tik Tok, Twitter, and YouTube, relating to the sports and players I am covering."

He doesn't hesitate when asked his most memorable Oxbridge sports reporting moment: Last year, "when

Oxbridge Academy's boys' lacrosse team won the District Championships. I felt emotionally attached to covering this team, like all teams at Oxbridge. To see friends and players around me succeed means the world to me."

To improve his reporting and broadcasting chops — and his golf game — Bernstein spent the summer practicing for golf season and honing his broadcasting skills at what he calls the best sports broadcasting camp in the United States: Play-By-Play Sports Broadcasting Camps. He also covered Oxbridge teams while they were training ahead of the 2022-2023 season. It's also not surprising that his favorite class at Oxbridge is debate because, "It helps me with presentation skills, teaches me to think on my feet, and understand the perspectives of others. I look forward to advancing my craft and continuing to provide thoughtful and consistent content covering athletes at the high school and the professional level."



KAIYA GLUCKSMAN



H.J. STUART



AKARI MARSHALL



AMAYA JEANITE

Rising Stars

Middle School Student-Athletes Making Varsity-Level Impact

During a playoff softball game in early May the second baseman for the ThunderWolves confidently stepped to the plate, crouched into her batter's stance, and ripped a line drive into short centerfield for a solid single that advanced base runners. She would score, and later in the game earn a walk, steal two bases, and score again. Not bad considering the player, Kaiya Glucksman, was only in the eighth grade at the time, but good enough to start for the ThunderWolves, a juggernaut of a softball team that was 18-1-1 when she took her first at-bat that day.

That was not an unusual game for Glucksman. Her teammates almost expected it from her. Luna Curran, the ThunderWolves star pitcher who now plays for Western Kentucky University, said last season, "Having an eighth grader makes no difference to us; she's just as much a part of the team and is extremely valuable. Kaiya brings a young fire and great potential."

Softball coach Kevin Drake was initially surprised at Glucksman's talent, her softball IQ, and the ease with which she meshed with the older teammates. "She played hard; was our lead-off hitter for 24 games; and had above-average defensive skills for a second baseman," Drake says. He adds, "Kaiya's knowledge of the game is advanced. She was a big part of our success (last) year." The softball team went on to compile a 23-2-1 season record and reach the state championship semi-finals, losing 4-2. In that game, Glucksman had two of the team's three hits and scored a run. And the South Florida *Sun Sentinel* named her to its 2022 All-County Softball Second Team.

Glucksman, however, was not the lone middle school student-athlete who brought "a young fire and great potential" and was talented enough to play for Oxbridge on the varsity level.

H.J. Stewart, whose calm, quiet personality belies the fact that he was only in seventh grade when he began

playing for the varsity tennis team. The rising tennis star (who also loves basketball) gravitated to the sport as a toddler. "My mom said that I had a toy racket, and it was in my hands when I took my first steps at nine months old," Stewart recalls. So, it might not be surprising when Oxbridge Tennis Coach Ted Sawyer describes Stewart's athleticism as "exceptional."

Sawyer adds that, "He came in essentially ready for our team and responded well to play at the high school level. He was a huge contributor by the end of the season. He won a lot of close matches someone else might not have."

Amaya Jeanite was in seventh grade and Akari Marshall in eighth when they won a 2022 state championship as members of the ThunderWolves track & field team, which finished first in record-setting time in the 4x100 relay. Both seem to be natural speedsters with long-jump talent as well. In fact, Marshall, who anchored the 4x100-meter relay team, set an Oxbridge school record in her first competition last season, winning the 200 meters with a time of 25.46, which was fourth best in the state! But she wasn't done. She also set a personal record in the 100 meters (12.36), which also was fourth best in the state! Her coach, Bayardo Sinclair, describes Marshall as "gifted," and "an extremely rare athlete" with the physical traits and confidence "to excel at every level." Her competition stats, he adds, put her in the Top 20 in the country.

Sinclair also coaches Jeanite, calls her "gifted" and "energetic," and says, "I can definitely see her competing at the next level and beyond." During the Regional Championships last May, Jeanite placed first in the long jump and the triple jump. In fact, Sinclair says, "Amaya was our point leader all season long. Combined, she brought a total of 20 points each week by consistently winning the long and triple jumps. She also expanded her range to run the 100 and 200 meters."

Very impressive considering, says Sinclair, that there was “a bit of adjustment for both Akari and Amaya because of the maturity and age difference (between them and the rest of the team), but eventually they all learned that without each other they wouldn’t be able to capture as many wins as they did.” Both were named to the South Florida Sun Sentinel All-County Track & Field Second Team.

Here is additional background and insight into these young sports stars:

KAIYA GLUCKSMAN

Glucksman started playing baseball when she was four years old. Her

grandfather was a baseball player and “started my interest when I was young,” she says. She adds that, “My primary position is second base, but I am a utility player and can play middle infield, catch, and outfield.” At age six, she was the sole girl on a boys’ baseball team in the Royal Palm Beach Recreational

League. “I was the only girl nominated for the All-Star team when I was six-years-old,” she says. “My coaches always complemented me on my eye-hand coordination and athleticism.” After that All-Star season, she switched to softball, joining the 8u Wellington Wild travel team. These days, aside from starting for the ThunderWolves, the 14-year-old plays for the Power Black Hinds 16U!!! travel softball team (the exclamation points are hers).

Sports hero/role model: “All of my Coaches. Coach Ashton, Coach Kaser, Coach Bianca, Coach Giana, and my high school coaches, Coach (Kevin) Drake and Coach Ed (Bianco). They have always supported me and believed in me even when I didn’t believe in myself. They have motivated me through hard practices, and always pushed me to play my best.”

Best advice from a coach: “Remember who you are



and why you play this game.” This, Glucksman says, “is meaningful to me because it shows me someone believes in what I can accomplish on the field.”

Best sports moment: “During one of our travel team showcase tournaments, there was one out with a runner on third. I was playing left field when a line drive was hit in my direction. I made the catch and the throw home for the double play. This was a special moment for me, not just because of the reactions of my teammates. but it taught me that even playing out of my primary position I was still able to make big plays.”

Favorite subject at Oxbridge: Physical Science. “I

am interested in becoming an anesthesiologist, so science is a subject that helps me get to my career goal.”

H.J. STEWART

H.J., or Horace-John, was a busy kid at an early age. He started playing drums at three (He still plays in church), and taking tennis lessons at age four. He was

also exposed to swimming, soccer, and flag football, but it was tennis that took. These days, he takes tennis lessons several times a week and competes in USTA-sanctioned tournaments several times a month. A passion for basketball developed relatively late for him at age 11. Last season he also joined the ThunderWolves JV basketball team. His goal “is to attend Duke University for both tennis and basketball.” Though he comes from a sports-playing family, his mother, Esmeta, says, “We never really looked at sports in terms of HJ’s athletic ability, but more as something that is necessary and should be a part of every kid’s life, regardless of ability. Sports participation supports good health, discipline, confidence, and social skills.”

Sports hero/role model: “Roger Federer and Serena Williams for tennis. LeBron James is my basketball role model.”

Best advice from a coach: “Focus on playing your game and on your style. Don’t try to be like others.”

Best sports moment: “Winning my first tennis tournament. I was proud of myself because I had to defeat five players before winning.”

Favorite subject at Oxbridge: Spanish and science

AKARI MARSHALL

“When I was younger, I would always just run. I tried basketball, but I didn’t like it, so I tried track. I fell in love with it and have been running since then,” Marshall says.

“Technically, I’ve never taken lessons, however, I joined a local track team and was taught about the sport and taught proper techniques, terminology, and events. I also take part in a track and field team where we visit different areas, sometimes out of state for different meets.” She adds that, “I have come a long way and have grown a lot from that 6-year-old runner to the now 13-year-

old multi-sport athlete.” Her mother, Bridgette Marshall, proudly agrees: “From the moment Akari could run, she has been doing just that. To see the person she has grown to be, both on and off the track, is truly a lesson and blessing! Akari is very motivated, resilient, dedicated, and goal oriented with a desire to continue to progress. She has a high level of inner strength along with an unshakable faith in herself.”

Sports hero/role model: “Ever since I started running track, Allyson Felix has always been someone that I consider my hero/role model even though we don’t run all of the same events.”

Best advice from a coach: “When you think you did a good job keep going because you are great”. She also was told: “Akari, you are an amazing runner and naturally talented, with hard work you can be just as good if not

better than Allyson Felix.”

Best sports moment: “My mom drove overnight from the Junior Olympics in Lawrenceville, Kansas, to Detroit, Michigan, so I could compete in my second Junior Olympics. That day I ran a 27 (seconds in the 200 meters) as a 9-year-old in the final event of the triathlon that allowed me to capture and break a 13-year-old AAU Junior Olympic record.”

Favorite subject at Oxbridge: Photography and Spanish

AMAYA JEANITE

When Jeanite was nine years old, her parents signed her up for the Delray Track Club, run by her uncle. “She took off from there with her speed and ability to jump far,” says her mother, Nicole May. Now, Jeanite practices 11 months a year and when not competing for Oxbridge, competes for the Delray Track Club. Since almost all her time is spent on sports, when not training and

competing, she rests her body watching shows on Netflix and YouTube. Confident of her ability, she’s not resting on her laurels. “I think I’m a pretty good athlete, and did well as an eighth-grader, but I have plenty of time to improve and can get better.”

Sports hero/role model: Track & field stars Allyson Felix, Malaika Mihambo, Ese Brume and NBA basketball champion Stephen Curry.

Best advice from a coach: “Run how you practiced. You’ve trained for this moment; give it your all.”

Best sports moment: “When I broke the school record” (for the long jump, which was held by her older sister Murielle).

Favorite subject at Oxbridge: “Lunch, because to be a good athlete, you need to have a good diet and Oxbridge offers plenty of delicious and healthy options.”





CULTURE of KINDNESS

The Oxbridge Culture of Kindness encourages values such as integrity, honesty, respect, empathy, and gratitude, while emphasizing compassion and cooperation, helping students develop character and explore their passions. Oxbridge students go beyond the classroom to make a difference in the world.



Oxbridge Students Act Quickly to Help Victims of Hurricane Ian

By Dana Lombardo

In early October, Florida was hit with the devastating and destructive force of Hurricane Ian. Although the east coast was mostly unscathed, our Gulf Coast neighbors suffered debilitating damage and unimaginable loss. As Oxbridge students watched the destruction unfold, they began thinking of ways to help with emergency relief and long-term recovery efforts. Several students reached out to Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer with suggestions. After listening to many excellent ideas, Dr. Maurer and the team at Oxbridge decided to move forward immediately with two student-driven initiatives: a supply drive and a direct donation drive.

The supply drive, initiated by students TJ Goberville, '25, and Elizabeth Marchant, '24, encouraged Oxbridge families to purchase much-needed items and drop them at Oxbridge. At school, students volunteered to pack trucks – operated by the non-profit Captains for Clean Water Organization – that would deliver the supplies to those affected by the storm. As an added incentive, students making donations qualified to participate in a Kick Ball competition led by the Athletic Council, with

the winning team competing for a chance to battle the faculty for bragging rights. (The event was a wonderful success thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity our Oxbridge students and families.)

In tandem with the supply drive, students Thomas Coates, '23; Declan Coates, '25; Eleanor Hall, '25; and Stephen Hall, '23; spearheaded a campaign for families to contribute to the Town of Palm Beach United Way Hurricane Ian Recover Fund. The student initiative raised \$2,450 and helped provide immediate assistance, including food, water, medical supplies, and shelter to victims on the west coast.

“One of the best things about Oxbridge is our culture of kindness,” says Head of School Dr. Ralph Maurer. “I often describe this as a continuum. In the most everyday sense, our culture of kindness means Oxbridge is a pleasant, generous, and considerate place. In the strongest sense, however, it means that students give of themselves to others. I admire our students’ instinct to help and live out our culture of kindness at such a crucial time.”



Captain of Kindness

Senior Rafe Cochran Has Been Working to End Poverty Since Third Grade

Last May, Rafe Cochran, a junior at the time, hosted his sixth annual Rafe Cochran Golf Classic. The event raised \$160,000 to construct two new buildings for a high school in Treadway, Jamaica. That brought the total amount his annual tournament and other activities have raised for building houses in Haiti and building and repairing schools in Jamaica to more the \$600,000. Not too shabby an accomplishment for a 17-year-old.

Then again, Cochran has been organizing the tournaments since he was 11 and raising funds for these causes since he was nine, combining his two passions – golf and helping the less fortunate. He partners with the international relief and development organization, Food For The Poor, which inspired him during a class visit when he was in the third grade. Food For The Poor works to feed families living in poverty in 17 countries in the Caribbean and Latin America and provides them emergency assistance, clean water, medicine, educational materials, skills training, and more. He held his first fundraiser at age nine, raising \$6,000 by obtaining pledges for donations every time he made an eagle, birdie or par during nine holes of golf at a course in Boca Raton. He would create his annual golf classic two years later.

His parents, Jay and Diahann Cochran are beyond proud

of their son's accomplishments. "Honestly," says Diahann, "We find it extraordinary that at such a young age, nine-years-old, he came to us and said, 'I am so fortunate, so I feel a need to help others.' Now, eight years later, we see that Rafe has stayed committed to his promise, raising over \$600,000 to fund 10 homes in Haiti and five schools in Jamaica. As parents, we couldn't ask for anything more in our son. He is truly kind. It is a wonderful thing to see our son so determined to help others and making such an impact on the world."

In the following Q&A, Cochran explains how he was inspired, became involved, and stays engaged to, as the song "The Way It Is" says, "give those who ain't got a little more."

Q: What kind of home environment did you grow up in?

A: My father is a former professional race car driver and my mother is a former fashion stylist. I am an only child who grew up in a close, supportive household. From a young age, my parents have always encouraged me to pursue my goals and my interests. It is through their example that I have been taught to always believe in myself, to have confidence, to have integrity, to be empathetic, and to be kind. It is because of the values my parents instilled in me, that I felt at nine years old that I could make a change in the world.

My parents instilled in me that, 'You are never too young to take action and make a difference.' My passion for others started at a young age when Food For The Poor came to speak to my third-grade class. It was at that moment I recognized how fortunate I am, and I knew I had to give back. I galvanized the whole family and others into service to help those less fortunate.

Q: What were your first impressions and thoughts when you first visited Haiti and Jamaica to see how the money you raised was used?

A: I believe to understand the plight of others and see the impact I was making, I needed to visit the countries and meet the people and work on the projects that I am raising money for. From that money, ten homes were built in Haiti. I believed it was imperative that I go and truly understand the impact I made. I asked my parents and Food For The Poor to bring me to Haiti and Jamaica. I knew it was going to be an eye opener, especially knowing that Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world!

You don't truly understand devastating poverty until you are breathing the country's air, standing on its soil, and feeling the people's pain. Haiti's terrain is a harsh, dry, treeless wasteland. My heart dropped into my stomach when I saw where these people are living. Honestly, it is hard to express in words the feelings I started to have about this environment. It's one of those situations where unless you're seeing the poverty and experiencing it, you will never understand it. My visit to Haiti was life changing.

"I was able to meet the President of Haiti at the airport. Especially because I was so young, it was a rare and awesome welcome into the country. The President was extremely gracious. He told me, that he was appreciative of all the help I was giving to his people. However, I couldn't help but think to myself, 'How is this man who is living so comfortably able to digest what is happening in his own country.' I wanted to understand, yet I was a bit confused

on how he was helping his people. Everywhere I looked felt like an economic and cultural disaster ... Not one building, road, or home was inhabitable. Everything was dilapidated. There was no infrastructure; there were no street and traffic lights. Sanitation was non-existent! Garbage...diseases were a huge issue."

When we arrived at the diplomatic hotel that was securely behind a guarded wall, it was like we stepped into a different reality... a familiar place that had all the amenities we would

expect. I felt almost guilty, staying at this hotel, which was neatly tucked away and literally hidden from the turmoil of the country. On the other side of the hotel's wall, there were destitute people just trying to survive. It was heartbreaking to see.

The next morning, we went to visit several villages. On our van ride, we traveled through the squalor of downtown Port-Au-Prince, which led to dirt roads, which led to each village that we visited. At our first stop, I met with the village leader and spoke to their community on why I was visiting their country. I told the village that I was visiting to help and bring supplies. They were so welcoming and thankful.

I visited the ten families I built homes for and brought them supplies such as toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, flashlights, batteries, and even toys for

the children. At one time, these families had lived in one-room huts with thatched roofs, walls made out of mud and sticks, and dirt floors. Thankfully, I was able to supply each family with a safe, concrete, two-bedroom building with a bathroom. The fact that these families now had a toilet and running water was life changing. Being able to meet these families was one of the best experiences of my life. In time, I am hopeful that Haiti will eventually become a productive country.

My visit to Jamaica was a different experience. Jamaica has tourism and people with vacation homes. But it is also saturated in poverty and in need of a lot of help. The schools are lacking in facilities, which completely stifles



learning. I felt that if the educational system was improved, learning would be facilitated, which I believe is the vehicle to end poverty. My approach to helping Jamaica is very different from my approach to helping Haiti. I changed from providing homes to providing education. I visited different schools to see where help was most needed. I was shocked to see children were being taught outside, under trees, or in deteriorating buildings with bathrooms that were filthy, broken, and open to the outside elements. Learning was based on the weather. If it was raining, there was no school. No one could possibly learn in such an environment. I felt I could be helpful by providing school buildings and schools to Jamaica. I feel education is what creates change in a society and country.

Q: What drives you to keep helping and not lose interest in the cause?

A: I keep moving forward because I see the impact that I am making. Each year when I go back to Jamaica to inaugurate a new school that I have raised funds to build, I also visit all the other schools I raised money to build. That's when I see the difference I have made. It is incredible to see teachers excited about teaching again, to see students excited about learning again, and to recognize that generations of students will have the opportunity to make a difference in their own lives and in the life of their community. This is what keeps me engaged.

Q: How has running your golf tournament changed you?

A: It has encouraged me to keep doing more because my event has been very successful and I can see the impact that I am making by providing homes in Haiti and education to various communities in Jamaica. Also, the event has exposed me to many supportive and caring people who want to also give back. Running my golf tournament has not only afforded me a means to help others, but it has allowed me to be exposed to many influential people from all walks of life.

Q: Do you think your friends understand what they have and what others don't have — and how do you explain that to them and others?

A: I believe that my close friends are aware of what they have and, to some extent, what others don't have. Yet, for anyone to truly understand the poverty and devastation of these countries one must have to see it firsthand. My friends



Cochran accepts 2021 Sportsmanship Award from American Junior Golf Association.

and I have had discussions concerning my philanthropy and mission trips to Haiti and Jamaica and been very supportive of my passion for giving back. So, I hope they are more aware of their position in life compared to others. However, I do feel there are people my age who are naive about what they have compared to others. I hope, through my work, I can encourage and educate and enlighten them about the poverty that does exist.

Q: Do you see this as a lifelong pursuit or obligation?

A: Absolutely, I want to continue to run my annual RAFF COCHRAN GOLF CLASSIC to raise funds for projects I feel passionate about. I want to continue to help one person, one family, and one school at a time. I am hoping as I get older my event will grow and I will be able to make an even stronger impact in the world.

Q: How has being an Oxbridge Student benefited you?

A: Oxbridge has been incredible! The school and the teachers have been so supportive. Their understanding has allowed me to balance my academics, my philanthropy, and my golf. I appreciate being able to go to a school that embraces each student's diversity and needs. Oxbridge creates an environment that helps and allows each student to achieve their goals and flourish. Oxbridge truly embraces a culture of kindness, which I believe is one of the most important qualities to possess.



Making “Young Friends”

Siblings’ Nonprofit Aims to Connect Oxbridge with Schools in Costa Rica

When it comes to living the Oxbridge credo of “meeting the world boldly with initiative and kindness” as well as feeling empathy for those less fortunate, siblings Conrad and Claire Luce, classes of ’23 and ’25 respectively, walk the walk. Among the many experiences they enjoy are trips to Costa Rica where they stay at a 3,000-acre farm the family has owned for the past 25 years. For visitors, the country is a tropical paradise.

Conrad and Claire, however, observed that for many locals Costa Rica was far from paradise, especially for schools near the family farm in the northwest part of the country. A luxury Four Seasons resort had sprung up on farmland and nearby mansions were selling for millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, they learned that local students went without school supplies, school kitchens didn’t have working stoves or proper refrigeration for food, and sports fields were pitted and filled with weeds. Unwilling to ignore the disparity in prosperity, they founded the non-profit Jóvenes Amigos (Young Friends). As they state on their website (www.jovenesamigos.org), “The local schools were in the dark ages! Cooking lunch on a cement slab using a wood fire, no working refrigerators ... no air-conditioning ...” Despite these disadvantages, the Luces were heartened by the students’

morale. “Seeing kids so eager to learn when they had so little was inspiring,” the Luces said.

The Luces started modestly, collecting 200 new book bags, filling them with supplies, and delivering them to three local schools. Next, they set out to upgrade facilities. Conrad contacted nearby resorts and asked them to aid the neighboring education institutions. The Four Seasons sodded a soccer field; Sherwin Williams is donating materials and labor to paint school buildings; another company donated materials and labor to secure school grounds with a much-needed fence. The Luces also raised money to purchase a refrigerator and stove for meal service. And a computer company is providing the schools with Wi-Fi. To improve attendance, the siblings partnered with a zipline, horseback riding, and ATV recreation park, to create an incentive program: A free day at the park for students who achieve perfect attendance.

The mission of Jóvenes Amigos also includes creating relationships between the schools and Oxbridge Academy, and eventual reciprocal visits to learn more about each other’s countries. The Luces feel good about what they’ve accomplished, but are far from satisfied. “We’ve barely touched the surface,” says Claire.



“What Could Be My Way to Give Back?”

Mia Bonutti Found the Answer by Helping Homeless Veterans

No one should be surprised that on graduation day last May, Oxbridge Academy announced Mia Bonutti, '22, as the winner of its annual Character Award. The award is given to the senior who best represents the school's core values of “Discipline, perseverance, confidence, personal responsibility, service, integrity, respect and compassion.” She wasn't trying to win any awards, but all those characteristics were evident and on full display in one Herculean project she undertook beginning in her junior year and completed during her senior year: provide a place to live for a homeless veteran — in this case a large, completely renovated camper. That goal checks the service, respect, and compassion character boxes. But it would take those other traits to bring the project to fruition.

Bonutti, the oldest of six siblings — three at Oxbridge at the time — is

quite aware of her circumstances. “I come from a very fortunate family,” she says. Her father, Peter, is an orthopedic surgeon who holds some 450 patents mostly in the medical field. Her mother, Simone, recently completed six years serving as the vice mayor of Manalapan. As the pandemic grew worse in 2021 and the news was full of stories of people losing homes and jobs, Mia Bonutti wondered: ‘What could be my way to give back?’”

Now a freshman at the University of Virginia studying chemical engineering, Bonutti always liked building with LEGO, working with her hands, and doing metal and wood working in shop class at school. So, she initially thought she would build a house for someone in need — the kind that are known as “tiny houses.” The original plan was to construct an eco-friendly, green home for an independent study

science project, but she soon realized that she could donate the house to someone in need. “I’ve always been fascinated with the idea of tiny homes. The first idea was to build a home on a trailer base,” she says. Part of that idea came from photos of horse-drawn gypsy caravans. Her science project was originally titled Environmental Learning and Eco-House Design, but morphed into Camper Project, when installing plumbing from scratch proved to be too complicated.

Plan B was to renovate a camper/trailer. It took several months scouring the likes of eBay, Craigslist, and Facebook Marketplace to find the right type. The trailer that worked turned out to be a 30-foot long, eight-foot-wide 2010 Travel Trailer that also had a two-foot by 13-foot pop-out on one side. Purchase cost: \$7,500. Another \$5,000 was spent on materials for

CULTURE OF KINDNESS

renovations. “Deconstruction” took one month, including removal of a hornet infestation under the kitchen sink. Brother Marc, an Oxbridge junior at the time, pitched in to help.

Mia remained focused and undeterred throughout what turned into an arduous process. Sometimes trying to do good requires more work than one bargains for. Then again, her quiet tenacity didn’t surprise her parents. “We get mad at her all the time as she is very independent and determined,” says her mother, adding that, “at the same time, she’s very by-the-book, diligent, and studious, but incredibly creative.” Those sound like some of the same traits that probably earned her the role of captain of the ThunderWolves girls’ lacrosse team for which she played goalie. (She also was goalie for the Oxbridge girls’ soccer team; played travel lacrosse; and served as assistant soccer coach for the AC Delray travel soccer team, for which her sister played.)

Despite all the hours devoted to sports and schoolwork, Mia made time every week for a year to turn the trailer into a modern, clean, sparkling living space with the intention of donating it to someone in need of housing or a group that helps homeless veterans. In the process, she learned woodworking, electrical wiring, flooring, A/C maintenance, and more. She also learned, “I can push myself on days when I’m just not in the mood. This project taught me not to give up; taught me that I can do a lot more than I thought I could do.” It also garnered a good deal of media attention with local NBC and CBS TV affiliates airing feature stories on her project that were picked up by stations throughout Florida.

Last spring, the trailer was picked



up and transported to its new home in Stuart, Florida, where it is being used by the non-profit group House-A-Vet as transitional housing for former servicemen and women. In a letter to Bonutti, House-A-Vet Director Kevin Donahue wrote: “This will be a big savings to our organization as last year we spent more than \$6,000 in hotel rooms for temporary housing.” He added that in the future, the renovated camper will be used “as a tiny home

when we realize our goal of a veteran Tiny Home Village serving the Treasure Coast.”

Bonutti had mixed emotions as the old camper/trailer she had put so much energy and effort into transforming was hooked to a pick-up truck and driven north. “It’s bittersweet to see it go. I spent ... a year working on it,” she says. “But I’m happy it’s going to be someone’s home.”

ThunderWolves' Best Friend?

No Doubt, it's Buddy, the Therapy Dog

If there was a popularity contest at Oxbridge, a good bet is that it would be won by Buddy, a six- or seven-year-old golden retriever that is in his second year as the school's official therapy dog. Buddy seems to be a natural-born healer, a canine who can sense when kids need comforting. Students in need of an uplifting moment easily gravitate to Buddy, and it's not uncommon to see faculty and staff members stealing a moment with him.

Maybe that's

because Buddy knows when humans are having a not-so-good day. You see, Buddy is a rescue dog adopted from South Florida Golden Retriever Rescue by faculty member Tracy Wolfe and her family. His actual age and background are mysteries. It didn't take long, however, for Wolfe to realize the newest member of the family was "a natural therapist."

Wolfe noticed that Buddy could be great in this role when she saw him interact with her nine-year-old daughter, Jayden, who has severe anxiety and is on the Autism Spectrum. Wolfe observed that when Jayden, who is a budding equestrian, was stressed or upset, Buddy would lean against her to support her. The family started taking Buddy to Jayden's horse shows, and, says Wolfe, "many of the kids would lay on him and pet him before showing their horses when they were nervous. This all came about very naturally, and I realized that Buddy was made for this job."

Working with a local AKC (American Kennel Club) certified trainer (Ace Dog Training), Buddy went through an



accredited therapy dog training program, and passed the AKC Therapy Dog test to earn his license.

It didn't take long for the Oxbridge Learning Support Department to recognize that a therapy dog could be a huge benefit to students. After Buddy earned his certification, he went through an approval process to work at Oxbridge.

Buddy and Oxbridge appear to be a great fit. According to Wolfe, Buddy "LOVES" coming to school. "He wakes

up with my alarm clock in the morning and waits at the front door, tail wagging, with so much excitement to come to Oxbridge," Wolfe says. "When we walk in the building each morning, his tail is wagging, and he has a giant smile on his face." Wolfe adds that, "Buddy doesn't get overwhelmed by people; he wants the attention, and he is extremely gentle. He just senses when people are sad or anxious and has a desire to help them to feel better."

ThunderWolves have come rely on the golden retriever being here for them.

Students who are nervous about an upcoming test, or who might have had a hard night at home, or with a friend, or received bad news come to see Buddy in the Learning Center. After a dose of puppy love, Wolfe has watched students leave with "giant smiles on their faces, ready to finish their day." Wolfe adds that, "I have seen him bring out the best and so much kindness in our students. He truly has brought such a positive energy and excitement to the Learning Center and Oxbridge as a whole."



Left to right: Lareese Jackson, Colbert Gentilhomme, John O'Connor, Gregory Hudson, Vanessa Carter, Anthony Bradley, Lauriamar Saint Jean, Ed Bianco, Mitrel Geffrard, Ryane Keller, Musset Borgallas

Secret Sauce

Fantastic Culinary Team Puts Love into the Food

During the New Parent Social in September, a parent wandered over to a staff member and asked: “How do I get to eat lunch here?” School was only a few weeks old and already parents new to Oxbridge had heard rave reviews about the gourmet quality of the food. While the inquiring parent was new, the quality, variety, and nutritional value of the food has been constant since the school opened in 2011. Rumors are some students attend Oxbridge not only for signature programs like Aviation and Cambridge Scholars, but for “signature” dishes like chicken parmesan.

Executive Chef Ed Bianco is proud of the culinary department’s reputation for outstanding meals and strives to maintain it. “The quality,” he says, “is in how we cook. We start from scratch, and we put love into the food.” One example: “We season our chicken wings, then marinate them, pre-bake them, then fry them. It’s extra effort. A lot of places don’t do that.” (The Oxbridge culinary experience also includes keeping the facility clean. Bianco is proud to say, “We have perfect health inspection records.”)

Besides seasonings and TLC, however, something else is crucial: Call it his ‘Soup-er Bowl’-caliber team. “It doesn’t get done without the whole team. Everybody is important, especially for special events, from set up to break down, including dishwashers,” he says. He proudly cites the

value and strengths of each member: Sous chef Johnny is a leader. When Bianco is not on campus, he knows “the place is not going to miss a beat.” Ryane is an expert in nutrition and vegetarian and vegan diets. Tony always goes the extra mile. Greg is a utility player who can prep anything and repair anything. The front-of-house staff (Vanessa, Lareese, Lauriamar) are customer service reps who work with the students every day. “They make more friends than anybody,” Bianco notes. Colbert and Musset are more than dishwashers; they check orders, stock shelves, and are a vital part of the equation.

While Bianco is happy to consider meal suggestions from the school community, there is one frequent request he will not ask his championship team to undertake: “We can’t do sushi. Sorry, we’re not making 6,000 sushi rolls.”

The Soup-er Bowl Team: Ed Bianco, Executive Chef; Musset Borgallas, Dishwasher; Anthony Bradley, Chef; Vanessa Carter, Front-of-house server; Mitrel Geffrard, Prep cook; Colbert Gentilhomme, Dishwasher; Gregory Hudson, Prep cook; Lareese Jackson, Front-of-house server; Ryane Keller, Chef; John O'Connor, Sous chef; Lauriamar Saint Jean, Front-of-house server.

Class Notes



2014

VINCENT “VJ” HOLMES Upon graduating from Oxbridge Academy in 2014, VJ’s basketball playing career has included stops at IMG Academy (2015), James Madison University (NCAA D1, 2015-2017) Lamar University (Beaumont, Texas) from 2017-2020, graduating with BBA degree in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. He has been playing professional basketball in Europe (Portugal and Armenia) since 2021.



IVANA MESARIC graduated from Babson College (Wellesley, Massachusetts) with a degree in Marketing & Entrepreneurship. She is a self-proclaimed “serial entrepreneur, marketing wizard, and local philanthropist.” Having moved back to Palm Beach, following a few years of marketing in Los Angeles, Mesaric decided

to use her skills to make a mark on the Palm Beach “scene.” She is the marketing director for “MoviesMakingADifference,” a local charity aiding human trafficking survivors; models for Palm Beach luxury magazines and boutiques; has her own freelance social media marketing firm; manages an online consignment store; and is in the process of writing a children’s book about the Island of Palm Beach. She credits Oxbridge — where she took four business courses and helped start the Wolf Den — for her work ethic, and for sparking her interest in entrepreneurship.

MEGAN ZIMMERMAN attended the University of Florida and received her Bachelor’s degree in Biology. Upon graduating, she moved to Atlanta to complete her Masters of Medical Science degree in Anesthesiology at Emory University’s School of Medicine. She began working as a Physician Assistant specializing in Anesthesiology (Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant, CAA) in Marietta, Georgia, but recently returned to Palm Beach County to work as an Anesthetist at Good Samaritan Hospital in West Palm Beach. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the West Palm Beach campus of South University. During her time at Oxbridge, she



served as captain of the Varsity Cheerleading squad. She married Zach Busman, Architectural Associate at the Thomas / Melhorn architecture firm in Jupiter.

YUVAL PRITZ graduated with a B.S. in Sociology and Political Science from Florida Atlantic University in December 2018 and is currently pursuing her Master’s degree in Leadership from the University of Miami. She also currently works at the school as a Senior Programs Manager, overseeing three departments at the University of Miami: the Graduate School, Office of Postdoctoral Programs, and Office of Faculty Affairs.

CAYLIN LEVIN attended the University of Central Florida and received a BA in Preclinical Health Sciences in 2018. After graduation she moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to complete her Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry



degree (DMD) at the University of Louisville School of Dentistry. During her second year of dental school, she commissioned into the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant through the Health Profession Scholarship Program. Now, after graduating dental school, Caylin is a Captain in the U.S. Army completing a one-year Advanced Education in General

Dentistry (AEGD) Program at Joint Base Lewis-McChord near Tacoma, Washington.

2015

KEEHLE AMICON After graduating from Rollins College in 2019, Amicon moved to Manhattan and worked in corporate luxury fashion for Loeffler Randall, Bergdorf Goodman, and Christian Louboutin. Those experiences inspired him to pursue a career in fashion law and he is currently working as a litigation paralegal at a boutique IP firm in the New York. “I’m looking forward to continuing my journey by attending New York Law School this fall,” he says, adding that, “I’d like to thank (Oxbridge English Department Chair) Mr. (John) Klemme for honing my writing skills. The success I’ve achieved in my career thus far is a



result of his rigorous coursework ... I’m truly grateful for the opportunity to have been his student and attended the Cambridge Scholars program.”

SOPHIA HOANG graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting in 2019 and Master of Accounting (MAcc) with a major in Taxation in 2020. After graduation, she started working at a



Jack Maloney

Jack Maloney ('14) recently graduated from the Pennsylvania State University's top-ranked Musical Theatre program with a BFA in Musical Theatre. Jack also minored in Creative Writing and Business, graduated Summa Cum Laude, earned honors from the Schreyers

Honors College, and was the Summer 2022 College of Arts and Architecture Student Marshal, an honor given to the student with the highest GPA and most interdisciplinary academic and extracurricular pursuits.

In addition to performing, Jack cultivated his passion for the film industry, screenwriting and comedy through classes at the University of Southern

California's prestigious School of Cinematic Arts during Summer 2021. There he wrote his first feature film, the *QueerEye*, which also served as his honors thesis. Jack has also taken courses in Sketch Writing from the Upright Citizens Brigade and was accepted into the Comedy Studies program at Chicago's famed Second City Theatre for Summer 2023. Jack also performed with the Nittany Wits, Penn State's top sketch group.

Jack now lives in New York City where he is pursuing a career as a multi-hyphenate actor/comedian/writer/producer. He recently music directed *SCHOOL GIRLZ!* at Broadway's Nightclub, Feinstein's 54 Below. He is currently working as a Production Assistant for NBC's crime procedural drama *FBI*. This fall, he will be performing stand-up at the Comedy Cellar and taking courses in TV writing through the Playwright's Center. He is grateful to Oxbridge for teaching him how to initiate his own work and expand his artistry past performance and into creation.

Top 10 accounting firm, focusing on tax services for small, family-owned businesses and partnerships. She is a licensed certified public accountant (CPA) in the state of Florida.

2016

TRAVIS HOMER attended the University of Miami where he studied business and went on to be a starting running back for the Miami Hurricanes football team. Homer left UM early to enter the NFL draft in 2019. He was selected by the Seattle Seahawks and is in his fourth year with the team. In the off-season Homer continues his studies at the University of Miami as well as trains for upcoming football seasons. He also has started his own apparel business called Akimbo Apparel, and takes pride in managing his product from start to finish. He enjoys giving back to the communities where he resides. Last summer, for example, he hosted his first football camp, which he held at Oxbridge Academy. (See article page 35)

MADISON SACKS graduated UCF in 2020 with a Bachelor's in Science and is currently in her first year of medical school at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She is interested in the fields of orthopedic surgery and oncology. Preceding medical school, Sacks took a gap year to do some traveling and also served as a medical scribe at a women's clinic.

JUSTIN WISNIKI graduated from Tulane University in 2020 with a degree in business and marketing. He lives in New York City and recently became

Elvis Harvey

After playing Division 1 college basketball for the Illinois State Redbirds, and later, the Nicholls State University Colonels (in Thibodaux, Louisiana), Elvis Harvey, '15, traveled to Europe to play professionally in Cyprus and Germany. He spent part of last summer coaching at a basketball camp at Oxbridge and using the facilities to prepare for the current European basketball season. He says this about the impact Oxbridge has had on his life:

"Oxbridge helped change my life in a major way. Growing up in the Glades area of Palm Beach County, life was hard; you were surrounded by poverty and violence every time you stepped outside. The transition to Oxbridge showed me that there was another side of life that I had never had an opportunity to be a part of. This opened my eyes to many different avenues and gave my life a great deal of versatility. In my hometown, the only way to have success for the majority living there is through sports, and even though I became successful in basketball at Oxbridge and being surrounded by students who came from opposite places compared to mine, I began to learn about things such as investing, becoming an entrepreneur by starting business, and most importantly, I learned that nobody is going to give you anything in this world except for an opportunity at the most. The culture of Oxbridge was also very important to me. Founder Bill Koch wanted to bring diversity to the school and give kids like me opportunities to flourish."

Harvey adds that, "My plans for the future include playing pro basketball until I retire. After that, I would like to become a coach/skill-development trainer, hoping my experiences in basketball from high school to the pros — both good and bad — can help prepare kids for what is to come."



a consultant for Lancor, a search firm, "placing C-suite executives in private equity-owned companies." He also got married this year in France to his college sweetheart, Elise.

2017

NICOLE SCHNEIDER graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Honors College at the University of South Florida with a BS in Cell and Molecular

Biology. She is currently a second-year medical student at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

2018

SARAH BOWLBY graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology. She is currently a graduate student at Vanderbilt University working toward a Masters in Biomedical Sciences while



cheering for D-1 SEC members, the Vanderbilt Commodores. She plans to go on to medical school and become a sports medicine orthopedic surgeon. In her spare time, Bowlby takes CrossFit classes, coaches cheerleading, works at lululemon, and attends bible study classes.

KAITLYN GREEN is a recent graduate of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. She studied sports journalism and double-minored in Digital Audiences and history. Her goal is to run the social media account for a professional sports team or league, specifically the NFL or the PGA. In the fall, she began studying at the University of Florida to obtain Master's in Social Media.



JONATHAN HORBUND graduated in the fall of 2023 with a Bachelors degree in Computer Science from Georgia Tech. For the past two summers, he worked for Walmart Global Tech



as a Technical Program Manager, helping launch Walmart+ to continue improving the service for millions of members.

KEIDRON SMITH, a standout defensive back for the ThunderWolves football team, committed to Ole Miss (NCAA D-1) to continue his athletic career. He spent four years at Ole Miss where he was the 2021 recipient of the Chucky Mullins Courage Award, given annually to the upperclassman defensive player who embodies Mullins' spirit of "courage, leadership, perseverance, and determination." Smith recently transferred to the University of Kentucky (NCAA D1) where, during his last year of eligibility, he is a major piece of the Wildcats defense. His goals: Play in the NFL, then become a sports agent or financial advisor.

Joan Fyfe

We are thrilled to announce that new Health and Wellness Instructor Joan Fyfe is the first Oxbridge alum to be hired as a full-time faculty member. A 2017 graduate, Fyfe lettered in soccer, lacrosse, and cross country while at Oxbridge. She went on to earn a BS in Exercise Science and Health Promotion from FAU in 2021 and is one of 16 new ThunderWolf faculty members.

"Working where I graduated from feels strange, but comfortingly familiar," says Fyfe. "The strangest thing for me is realizing how quickly time flies and that you never know where you'll end up! Working at Oxbridge, I feel welcome and love seeing so many familiar faces. I am happy for the opportunity to teach in the field that I am passionate about and at such an amazing school."



MAYA THOMPSON recently graduated from the University of Tampa and started work at an agency called Strategic Marketing as the Digital Media Specialist. She manages digital marketing campaigns for more than 30 clients in the paid social, and organic spaces.

2019

ERIK PARRY is a senior at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, majoring in Clinical Psychology with a minor in Peace & Conflict Negotiations, and is also on the school's lacrosse team. He says,



"I often reflect back to the solid foundation I received and the relationships I formed at Oxbridge. I'll forever thank Oxbridge staff, coaches, and friends that have positively influenced my life." Late last year, along with a teammate, he began putting the Oxbridge "Culture of Kindness" to practice when he accepted an invitation to help a 35-year man with autism whose life had been disrupted by the pandemic by simply calling him once a day to add some structure and human contact to his schedule. The college newspaper as well as the *Baltimore Sun* wrote about Parry's act of kindness. "Helping him every day," Parry notes, "continues to help me put perceived challenges in perspective. Given the difficult times we've all been through over the past few years, I've learned to embrace difficult times as well as unexpected joyful surprises."

MARY ELAINA DUCKWORTH is a senior at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) pursuing degree in Finance and Real Estate. She spent the summer in Manhattan interning for Carrier and Company, an interior design firm, and is looking to study interior design after she graduates.

2020

AJ CAJUSTE Upon graduating from Oxbridge Academy in 2019, AJ played at Indian River State College for three seasons. AJ was awarded multiple awards for his athletic success playing for the Pioneers. He was regarded as one of the best players NJCAA D1 during the 2021-2022 season. AJ has committed to

finishing is collegiate playing career at Stephen F. Austin (NCAA D1) and has two years of playing eligibility remaining.



DANTE WILCOX Upon graduating from Oxbridge Academy in 2019, Dante has been a member of the Florida International University Men's Basketball Team (NCAA D1). Dante committed to the FIU Panthers in November of 2018 and was one of only a few players in South Florida to commit to an NCAA D1 school during the early decision period. Dante currently has two years of playing eligibility remaining.

2021

MAYA DEVE Since graduating from Oxbridge, Deve has grown her own small business, Solemates Customs, "using all the lessons I've learned from Mr. (Sedric) Simon's entrepreneurship class" (see entrepreneurship article page 6). Deve started her business of putting customized artwork and designs on sneakers in 2020 during

CLASS NOTES



the pandemic. She also recently obtained her real estate license and is now an agent at Century 21, alongside her mother, a 20-year real estate veteran. She undertakes all this while double majoring in music and business at FAU and volunteering in her community.

RAQUEL SHULMAN

Shulman, a sophomore English major at Tulane University, is also a member of the school's sailing

team which won a 2022 national college sailing championship in May. Tulane hosted the College Sailing Co-Ed Fleet Racing National Championship at Lake Pontchartrain, where Shulman's team won the Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) Open Dinghy National Championship. Shulman is one of



HEATH BAUER is busy pursuing a degree in Homeland Security from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Along with his classes, he stays busy by volunteering with the Emergency Response Team, a student run volunteer EMS organization. Heath is still seen part-time around Oxbridge working on various sports fields.

CAMPBELL TAYLOR is "having a great time" as a crew member on the Wake Forest University sailing team, playing lots of flag football and pickle ball, and is "excited Oxbridge has football again!"

Share your story! For future Class Notes or to stay in touch contact: Molly Miller, Director of Alumni Relations at mmiller@oapb.org.

eight Oxbridge ThundeWolves from the Class of 2021 who received scholarships to compete in sports at the college level.

Michael and Shirah Benarde

Michael Benarde, '15, and sibling Shirah Benarde, '20, who are partners in NightCapit LLC, which provides innovative drink-spiking prevention products, visited Boston University in September at the invitation of the school's sororities and fraternities to give out pre-paid NightCaps to members of the student body. They distributed 1,000 drink-spiking prevention hair scrunchies in just two hours. While in Boston, where drink spiking appears to be a widespread problem, they also distributed NightCaps at Suffolk University as well as other venues. The duo incorporated their company in the summer of 2019; appeared on the popular TV show Shark Tank in early 2021, striking a deal with Shark Lori Greiner; and were featured again in a program update in April of this year. They have sold NightCaps in 40 countries, generating more than \$4 million in sales. (See entrepreneurship article on page 6)





Message From the Director of Advancement

It is an exciting time at Oxbridge Academy. As we move into our second decade the future is bright as we continue our journey of excellence in education. Enrollment is strong as we grow both the middle school and upper school student-body. Next year we will add Grade 6 to complete the middle school years and have more than 600 students on campus, the largest enrollment in the history of Oxbridge Academy.

The following pages of our Honor Roll of Donors celebrate those who have given generously to Oxbridge Academy during the last fiscal year. Molly Miller, Director of Giving & Alumni Relations, has done a fantastic job of engaging our community and explaining the importance of their donations and how vital they are to the continued success of our students and programs. As with most independent schools, tuition alone does not cover the cost to operate a school; Oxbridge is no different. Generous donations from our community fill the gap that tuition does not cover and allows us to thrive, add new initiatives such as the Free Enterprise Institute, Esports, the return of ThunderWolves football, and much more.

The *Oxbridge Today* magazine is one of the ways we celebrate all that we do as a community. It is a collection of stories from the past year and the beginning of this year. While we cannot tell every story, we hope you enjoy the collection of stories showcasing the breadth of Oxbridge Academy. There are many ways to stay connected to all the excitement of Oxbridge. Check out our new APP and subscribe to the weekly newsletter so you always know what is happening around campus.

I hope you enjoy this second edition of *Oxbridge Today*. A special thanks to the Communications team, *Oxbridge Today* editor Scott Benarde, Associate Director of Communications, and everyone who contributed to this issue.

Also, a thank you to all who continue to support Oxbridge Academy. Go ThunderWolves!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Siegfried". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Scott Siegfried
Director of Advancement



Two Great Events Supporting Oxbridge

Each year, the Oxbridge Development Office hosts events that bring our community together to celebrate our school and raise money for support. This past year we hosted two great events — the Oxbridge Academy Annual Golf Classic and the Ten-Year Celebration Cocktail Party. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Annual Golf Classic

The Oxbridge Academy Annual Golf Classic took place on Monday, February 7, 2022. We enjoyed a great turnout on a beautiful day with 96 foursomes taking part in the fun. The teams challenged the Breakers Ocean Course and participated in various contests, such as longest drive, closest to the pin, and others, throughout the day. After the event, Oxbridge hosted an awards ceremony and cocktail party on the Main Lawn of the Breakers Hotel.

A special thank you to all our sponsors, players, donors, auction item buyers, and others who contributed to the wonderful day. The event raised more than \$230,000 in support of Oxbridge.



Matt Smith, Golf chair and Oxbridge Board Member, Tyler Holts (VistaJet), David Rosow, President & Chief Executive Officer of Oxbridge Academy Foundation, Inc.

The Annual Golf Classic for this academic year took place on November 14, 2022, at the Breakers Ocean Course. Visit www.oapb.org/support/golf-classic-fall-2022 for highlights of this year's tournament.



Cocktail Party

On April 23, 2022, we celebrated Oxbridge Academy's Ten-Year Anniversary. More than 200 Oxbridge parents, alumni parents, faculty, staff, and friends gathered under a huge tent to enjoy sips, bites, and more. Founder Bill Koch thanked everyone for their support of Oxbridge and received a gift from our students (the iconic photo turned into a painting of Bill with students). The event raised over \$200,000 in support of Oxbridge.



From the top: Class of 2022 members (l-r) Teddy Tarone, Finley Murray, Shawn O'Sullivan, Angelina Coelho and Tylor Davis present Mr. Koch with a gift at the April Cocktail Party; Greg and Kristen Norman, Simone and Peter Bonutti, TEN event Co-chairs, Kelly Rooney and Beth Lang; Guests enjoying the cocktail event.

