

# #VILLA VOICE

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## Field Hockey Spotlight: District and States

Villa Maria's Varsity field hockey team finished their season by defeating Palmyra to win the state championship. Their game showed the determination that this team had to beat out Palmyra in a second half victory.

**■ Erin Mitchell '25, Lauren Kurek '25**  
Reporters

Villa Maria field hockey has a well-known reputation. Tallying a total of 18 district championships and 5 state championships, Villa field hockey has continued to hold an excellent record. The team played this season to its full length which has not been done since 2017. They finished with a record of 24-4 and ended with an impressive win against Palmyra who has appeared in the state championship for the past 10 years.

In addition to their remarkable states win, they also defeated Radnor in double overtime with an amazing reverse shot from leading goal scorer, Caitlin Connell '26. Connell said, "The team this season really came together and grew closer. With each win confidence grew both individually and as a team. We stepped up into important roles and relied on each other in high stakes moments."


moments. In the end we proved that we were stronger together pulling out an amazing state championship win and the district title for the second year in a row!" By winning this, Villa field hockey became back to back district champions. Connell herself has scored in almost every game this season and finished with a total of over 80 goals. She also assisted two of the three goals scored in the State Championship.

The team itself has held a strong team culture, and is known for their effort. The team motto this season was "stronger together," to which senior captain Callen Todd '24 said, "Our team motto this year was picked early in the season. We felt that the most important thing for our team this year was support. We knew that support and a sense of togetherness was what it would take to make us successful

and that intuition we had at the start of the season proved to be true throughout the duration of the season!"

Throughout the season Villa's field hockey team has worked together to achieve such an amazing accomplishment, with their balance between work and fun. They routinely play "football Friday" almost every week which gets the girls both warmed up and in an excited mood. Villa field hockey also worked mentally to become stronger by reinforcing this theme of "stronger together." They carried through the mental toughness to finish out their season and bring home a state championship to Villa.

Even though the team has lost some key players, they continue to hold their standard high with hopes of growing from their success and coming back even stronger next season.



PIAA Field Hockey State Champions // Linda Ryan

**Student Spotlight: Alana Whitwell, the 2-Time "Most Valuable Player"**

Senior athlete, Alana Whitwell, was bestowed the AACA Conference "Most Valuable Player" title for the 2023 volleyball season. This makes her 2nd MVP title, after sharing it in the 2022 season as co-MVP.

**■ Megan Ronan '24, Mackenzie Melcher '26**  
Copy Editor-in-Chief, Contributor

Life as a student-athlete can be an arduous but fulfilling road. Volleyball player, Alana Whitwell '24, has proven that hard work and effort can be rewarded as she earned her 2nd Conference MVP title this season, accumulating 950+ kills throughout her career. Whitwell stated, "Being named Conference MVP for the 2023 season truly meant a lot to me and I couldn't have done it without my teammates and coaches. Day-in and day-out they pushed me to be the best player I could possibly be."

The road to become a successful athlete comes with much dedication outside of school. As Whitwell described, "During the summer, when we had open gyms, I would go to my gym (Ascent Athlete), warm-up and lift for around 2 hours, then grab a protein shake and drive up to Villa for our open gym." Head Coach Peggy Evans added, "Alana is exceptional when it comes to working out and practice. She practices like she plays, always 100% and works out at the gym outside of practices."

Between school and volleyball, Whitwell dedicates much of her time towards the sport, noting that, "When we are in-season, the whole team would go into the Ostrowski Center for our quote

of the day, then discuss our practice plan. After we have gone over what we are going to work on that practice, we watch film if we have an upcoming match. If we do not have a match the next day then we break

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Alana Whitwell '24 // Lifetouch

**Student Spotlights**

**Lula Meyers and Caroline Mooney with The Maternity Heaven**

Lula Meyers '26 and Caroline Mooney '26 partner together to create The Maternity Heaven to help mothers in need.

**■ Laura Esgro '25, Kaelyn Stek '25**  
Reporters

Two ambitious students at Villa Maria Academy, Lula Meyers '26 and Caroline Mooney '26, came up with an idea to make a big difference. That idea grew into what they called a "charity organization where people donate baby supplies and postpartum care," said Meyers. The Villa Maria sophomores began their organization in hopes to help "new mothers, mostly single, who don't have the supplies that they need," continued Meyers.

The two girls, Meyers went on to say, "knew they wanted to do something to help a charity and [she] had always been interested in childbirth and nursing so this would be the perfect thing to start." For a similar reason, "we wanted to start something that would help other people and we think of each other as great business partners," Mooney stated.

The organization asks for donations from family members and friends to create baskets that include "onesies, baby clothing, diapers, and wipes, as well as postpartum care," said Mooney and Meyers together. The effort is all in hopes to relieve the mothers in need from the hardships they are facing.



Lula Meyers '26 and Caroline Mooney '26 with donations // Lula Meyers

## Villa on the Fox 29 Game Show

A firsthand look into the emotions and efforts of Villa Maria students who will be participating in The Class H-Room trivia-based game show.


**■ Kendall Nevins '24, Ashlee Hill '25**  
Reporters

Villa Maria was invited to compete on The Class-Room H, a student versus teacher trivia game show aired on Fox29. The game show features three students and three teachers from the same school competing against each other in subjects ranging from math, science, history, music, art, and more. Villa Maria was eager to cheer on students Lucy Conish '26, Kaitlin Maguire '25, and Sarah Nardone '25 who represented our community. These students were interviewed on their emotions prior to venturing to the Fox29 Philadelphia studio on December 2nd for the episode taping.

In order to qualify as the Villa Maria representatives on the show, Conish, Maguire, and Nardone had to answer many trivia questions, qualifying based on how many questions they answered correctly. They were then required to join a zoom call in order to train for the

show. When asked how they have been preparing for the show in addition to the zoom calls, they all similarly responded that they have been watching previous episodes of Class H-Room. Maguire also said, "My younger sister is really big in the Quiz Bowl scene in her middle school. She learns a lot of trivia through that and I learn a lot when I watch her in competitions."

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Sarah Nardone '25, Lucy Conish '26, and Kaitlin Maguire '25 // Elizabeth Conish



# Dancing Through Another Season with Villa’s Dance Company

Miss Christie Lawler, the Director of Dance at Villa Maria, speaks on the year for dancers so far and what’s to come.

■ Monica Young ’26, Alyssa Shoukri ’25, Erin Foy ’26  
Section Leader, Reporters

The Villa Maria Dance Company is an auditioned group of dancers at Villa Maria. Dancers spend time in class honing technique, strengthening, learning dance history, gaining new skills, and working on dances for upcoming performances. The two company classes are especially busy this time of year, and dancers are very excited about the many events and performances to come.

The most recent performance was a highly anticipated one: the Christmas dance showcase! What made this event extra special, according to dance program director, Ms. Christie Lawler, was that the Villa students and faculty had the chance to watch the dancers perform.

“The thing[s] that I most looked forward to,” Lawler said, speaking on the Christmas showcase, “there’s two [things]: one was that all the dancers got to showcase their talents to their classmates and faculty, and the other was to help spread the Christmas spirit and the warm, happy feelings of the holiday season through dance.” According to Lawler, this exciting showcase featured both the two Company classes and the Dance Workshop class.

There were a variety of styles showcased, including jazz, ballet, hip-hop, pointe, and contemporary. Additionally, there were two student-choreographed pieces highlighted, which will also be

“I thought, as a female academy, it was important to support other things for women.”

submitted to the National High School Dance Festival in the Spring. Along with the Christmas showcase, there were other opportunities for our Villa dancers as well as many more great upcoming opportunities this school year.

Dance Company has participated in several notable events this year, including their performance at Villa’s Open House, an event for prospective students and their parents. The company performed a piece entitled “Girl on Fire.” This piece was also brought to the “Dance for Her” fundraiser in October at West Chester University. The proceeds of this event were donated to the “Unite for Her” foundation, which supports those diagnosed with ovarian and breast cancer. Lawler believes the nature of the fundraiser made it a valuable one for the dancers to perform at: “That was an important event for me to bring girls from an all-girl academy to,” Lawler said. “I thought, as a female academy, it was important to support other things for women.”

Following the Dance for Her event, in November, both the company and workshop dancers participated in an in-house convention at Villa Maria. A variety of talented dance instructors and choreographers came to Villa Maria, and dancers spent the day learning, working hard, and having fun! One of the highlights for Lawler was the contemporary movement and embodiment class: “One of my favorites,” Lawler said, “was to watch the dance movement therapist work with our girls. That was just a really unique experience that I hope maybe more students at Villa could experience.”

“I just look forward to growing with the dancers and this program.”

There is another experience in the spring that has dancers excited about the rest of the season. Dance Company and Dance Workshop members have been working hard this past year on all of their performance opportunities and in March the Dance Company members have the opportunity to perform at the National High School Dance Festival in Norfolk, Virginia. “We recorded those on December 11th and hopefully performing them in the festival for adjudication and feedback,” Lawler said. The dancers have been working hard since before school started on these pieces and are wishing for the best once they submit them in January. “So the National High School Dance Festival is something I’m looking forward to bringing the dancers to,” Lawler said. All of these pieces will be performed at their Spring Dance Showcase in April for all students and faculty to see. Looking forward, Lawler is excited about future endeavours within the dance program. “I just look forward to growing with the dancers and this program. Being relatively new to this role, I feel like I’m learning new things every day,” Lawler said.



Dance Company // Lifetouch



Dance Company // Lifetouch

## Lights, Camera, Campli

Students in the Digital Photography Class got a behind the scenes look at the Campli Photography Studio, a local business in Malvern.

■ Maggie McHale ’26, Kara Mudrick ’26  
Reporters

A field trip to Mr. David Campli’s Malvern studio gave students an inside look at what it is like to experience photography on a business and professional level. The class’ passion for learning more about the world of photography and Campli’s ties to the school as a former Villa parent sparked the adventure of this learning opportunity.

Students gained skills and experience by using new cameras, lighting, framing and composition tips, and business management strategies.

“I feel like they gained a lot of insight into what it’s like to run a business, but also what it’s like to be a full time photographer. I think they definitely got to learn more about the framing and composition we talk about specifically in terms of portraits,” McLaughlin said.

The trip was not only insightful to the students, but to McLaughlin herself, who found the business side to be really interesting. The insight came with a hands-on experience, where students were able to further their understanding and knowledge by experimenting with new equipment. “[Students] got to experience a mirrorless camera, which is different from the ones we use here,” McLaughlin said. While using the mirrorless camera, students were able to experiment with natural lighting, spotlights, and softboxes.

Although students had previously learned about framing and composition in McLaughlin’s class, they were able to learn more about it through a different perspective, especially through portraits. In addition to learning more about the ins and outs of photography, students also got an inside look at what it is like to run a business in this field. They learned

about the outsourcing process that takes place with Campli’s printing, editing, and retouching.

This field trip was an amazing learning opportunity for the students, especially if they did not have much prior experience concerning photography. Mr. Campli’s knowledge in his field, as well as his friendliness and enthusiasm made for a memorable trip.

“It was a great experience. He’s really warm and welcoming,” McLaughlin said. She hopes to continue the trip to Campli’s with future classes and continue to expose her students to the world of photography and the business that comes along with it.

Though photography may seem intimidating at first, McLaughlin encourages her students to be confident and give it their best effort. “Don’t be shy about it or nervous. You learn from any mistakes... Just get out there and shoot as many photos as you can,” McLaughlin said. “Use whatever camera you have... The more you do it, the more you learn.” Through passionate and dedicated teachers like McLaughlin and the opportunities and connections Villa has to offer, students are able to explore the creativity that lies in the world around them.



Students with Campli // Maggie McHale

## DEIB Visits Washington DC

Members of DEIB attended the IFTJ Conference and visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

■ Madelyn DiBoniventura ’26  
Reporter

The DEIB leadership attended the Ignatius Family Teach-In for Justice (IFTJ) Conference, a prominent Catholic social justice conference, as well as the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This weekend trip to Washington DC allowed members of the club to learn about various social justice topics and interact with students from schools throughout the country.

The club’s President, Ariana Butler ’24, shared her experience at the conference, listing the multiple activities the club took part in. “There [were] multiple keynote speakers, as well as many different breakout sessions for attendees to choose from,” Butler stated. “We [were] also given opportunities to interact with people... to share ideas on how to improve our communities at home.” Butler found the speakers and the topics of which they spoke about to be “extremely impactful.”

Butler also reflected on a presentation that she found to be very educational. Butler stated, “One of my favorite presentations from the conference was about the war that is currently happening in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas... The speaker was amazing, as they provided a different perspective than I had heard before, allowing me to take away a lot of information.”

Butler highlighted how the conference was very beneficial for both the club and the Villa community. Butler stated, “Though we attend this conference to further educate ourselves on different topics in order to present them to Villa and create a more inclusive community, the conference allows the [executive] board of DEIB to bond with each other, which is one of my favorite parts.” Additionally, mentioning the information they learned about various social justice topics, Butler stated, “This is

“...I feel that it allows us to work better together and put our best work forward for the Villa community.”



DEIB on their way // Gigi Hawkins

really helpful to us because we will use this information to plan DEIB Day in January.”

As well as attending the conference, leaders of DEIB had the opportunity to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture. “It was a wonderful experience, as it provided us with a lot of history of African Americans from the time of the

slave trade to the present-day United States,” Butler stated. “As many may know, this history is very sad, as there were just so many injustices against the Africans who were stripped of their homes and cultures, taken to a new country, and forced to work under terrible conditions.”

Overall, the trip was a very positive and educational experience for the members of DEIB, as it allowed them to not only learn more about social justice topics, but grow closer together as well. Butler stated, “This is important to me because I feel that it allows us to work better together and put our best work forward for the Villa community.”



EDITORIAL

Christmas Consumerism

The local Scrooge discusses the materialistic culture behind Christmas.

■ Caroline Naughton '25  
Editor-in-Chief

I have a confession—I hate Christmas.

Now, before all you Christmas lovers try to skewer my head onto a candy cane, hear me out.

As soon as Thanksgiving passes, my heart shrinks to two sizes too small. I hate the tinsel on the trees, the pine needles all over the floor, the cinnamon scented candles, and the same ten songs on repeat. But, most of all, I hate the Christmas mentality. Don't get me wrong, I love winter, I love being with my family, and I love the true meaning behind Christmas. There's just something so off about the way modern society tackles the Christmas season. The modern Christmas is no longer focused on the root of the holiday, instead it centers around the gifts we exchange. That's why I hate the holiday.

According to the National Environmental Education Foundation, a single week in the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas contributes an average of 1 million extra tons of waste than a normal week. 500 billion dollars of items are bought, returned, and thrown away by retailers, with their packaging making up around 30% of America's trash. For the holiday season is a time to overspend. Even giving hits, all are flooded with advertisements. They show smiling children with women squealing with joy wearing new jewelry, and families hugging under brand new Christmas lights. Corporations push images of love and family to get consumers to associate their products with a happy holiday season. And honestly, if you thought that purchasing their product would help show your love for your loved ones, would you not want to spend the money?

Many people think that giving gifts is what strengthens relationships, that spending more means loving more. However, the Christmas season makes up 20-40% of all retail companies total income each year. Companies manipulate the love that American consumers have for their families in order to get them to spend more and more every year. In the 50s, the hottest Christmas gifts for children were Frisbees and Barbies. Now it's a shiny new iPad.

In addition to dramatically increasing spending, the rise in materialism has decreased the sentimentality of gifts over the years. Every person I know has a Christmas list and has certainly checked it twice. We make slideshows with color coded price sections, pictures, detailed descriptions, and convenient links attached on each and every item. All family members need to do is click. While this is terribly convenient, it feels so impersonal. It's as if everyone's Christmas list is just an assembly line for family members to purchase from, slowly

Every person I know has a Christmas list and has certainly checked it twice.

checking off the boxes until the list is empty. Yes, everyone will get what they want, but that momentary happiness directly takes away from what could have been a truly thoughtful gift.

When thinking about this topic, I talked to my mom about different Christmas gifts that she had received over the years. One year, the hottest gift around was Cabbage Patch dolls. Parents drove hundreds of miles, riots broke out in stores, and people paid double the retail price all for a stuffed doll. My grandfather spent hours and hours on end in store lines to get my mom one of these dolls for Christmas. The best part of this story is that my mom was in eighth grade. She hadn't even touched a doll in two years. But despite my grandfather's slight lapse in judgment, his heart was in the right place.

Online shopping makes Christmas gifts easier to get than ever. Previously, shopping for Christmas gifts could take days, but now, all that needs to be done is a simple click of a link. Yes, my grandfather's gift of the Cabbage Patch doll may not have been the most insightful of a gift, but the amount of time and the lengths that he had to go through to purchase that doll can demonstrate his appreciation for my mother. While the gift might have not been meaningful, the gesture was. But, for the most part, people don't even need to leave their homes to buy Christmas presents anymore. There's a lack of time and thought put into countless Christmas gifts and honestly, I'd rather not receive anything than receive a gift that someone only bought me because they felt obligated to.

My hatred for the materialism that comes with Christmas has nothing to

do with gift-giving. I love giving people gifts. I'll buy little things that remind me of a person, make something that I specifically thought of for them, or just get them something I saw that I think they would like. I have absolutely no problem with gift-giving, except when it's only out of obligation. I feel that the almost mandatory gifting of gifts during the Christmas season detracts from the value of the gift itself. Many people think that buying a gift for a person will show their love for them, but the meaning behind a gift isn't its materialistic value, rather it is in the thought and effort that comes with the gift.

I'm not going to tell you to not make a Christmas list or to hand make each and every one of your gifts, but, this Christmas, try to focus on why we are celebrating and on the people around you.



Caroline "The Grinch" Naughton // Paige Devine '25

Senior Sophia Conish Answers Your Questions!  
YOU ASK... I ANSWER!

How do I stop my obsession with Chick-fil-a?  
-#chickfilas#1fan

Hey girl!

I wish I could tell you! At one point in my life I was going to Starbucks close to everyday before school. The reason why I have really cut back ever since is because my dad told me I was spending too much money (it's ok you can laugh!!!). So, #chickfilas#1fan, my advice would be just to stop going. Cold turkey. Set a strict limit for yourself, like maybe only stop in once a week and keep to that. Easier said than done, but if you really hold yourself to it, you will definitely cut back!

How can I be a big part of the Villa community?  
-Hoagie

Hey Hoagie!

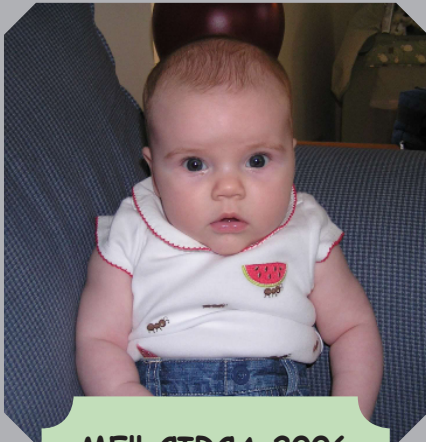
This is such a critical question, so everybody listen up!! The secret to being involved with the Villa Community is two things: get involved and take risks! By getting involved in new clubs and extra curriculars you'll meet new people and learn new skills and ideas. If you take these risks, like trying something brand new and out of your comfort zone (Obviously within reason!), the same will occur. I can personally attest to this. My freshmen year I was in a grand total of 2 clubs. My sophomore year I really kicked it up a notch and joined so many new clubs. My closest friends (and best memories) were made sophomore year. I urge **everyone** to take this advice and before you know it, you'll feel like an integral part of our community!

"I'm hungry" "Hi hungry, I'm dad" :)  
-LolzDadJokes

YESSSS!

Please send more dad jokes! One thing about Sophia Conish is that I love super cringe dad jokes/middle school humor.

To be Frank... I'd have to change my name!



... AND THAT'S WHAT SCONISH SAYS!



# Christmas in the Convent

Villa’s beloved IHM sisters share their favorite holiday traditions and cookie recipes.

■ Annabel Shin ’25, Sophia Snyder ’25  
Section Leader, Reporter

With the holidays around the corner, the IHM sisters are baking up annual traditions. There is never a dull moment in the Advent season in the convent as it is filled with celebrations of traditions, decorations, and treats. Sister Kathleen noted that around the Convent, they take in time to soak in the precious time of Advent. “We move into full Christmas decorating a bit later than you probably do in your own home,” she stated. “I think this makes our Christmas season even more meaningful when the time to celebrate finally arrives.”

When it comes to decorations in the Convent, Sister Marie Claire described the Christmas tree that is “beautifully decorated.” In addition to the tree, Sister Marie Claire described their Nativity Scene as, “surrounded by poinsettias and evergreens. Every nook and cranny is alive with Christmas,” she said.

Sister Kathleen also noted that Head of School, Sister Regina, is the cookie baker of the convent. “It’s not unusual for her to spend hours making batches of chocolate chip cookies on a Saturday morning,” Sister Kathleen added.

In addition to chocolate chip cookies, Sister Marie Claire shared her favorite cookie recipe: Hungarian Nut Sugar Cookies. “These [cookies] are a flaky, cream cheese pastry wrapped around a homemade walnut filling,” Sister Marie Claire shared. “I used to help my mother make these cookies. Even now, when my niece is the one making them, I enjoy every single bite– and remember the fun I used to have helping my mother bake all kinds of Christmas cookies.”

Since the holiday season is busy with gifting and celebration, make sure to keep in mind the words of Sister Marie Claire: “The Season of Advent is a special time to remember the first Christmas and to reflect upon the days of God’s continual birthing in our lives.”



## Sister Regina’s Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe:



- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups (12-ounce package) Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels
- 1 cup chopped nuts (Optional. If omitting, add 1 to 2 Tbsp. of all-purpose flour.)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Combine flour, baking soda, and salt in a small bowl. Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in morsels and nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Enjoy!

Graphics // Kayla Malicki ’28

## Sister Marie Claire’s Hungarian Nut Sugar Cookies:



- ½ lb. butter
  - ½ cup flour
  - 2 cups nuts or coconut
  - 5 tablespoons sugar
  - 2 tablespoons vanilla
  - 1 teaspoon ice water
- Mix ingredients butter, flour, sugar, vanilla, ice water in large bowl until light and fluffy. Add nuts (pecans or walnuts) or coconut and mix on low speed. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Shape slightly mounded tablespoonfuls of dough into oval-shaped logs about 2 ½ inches long. Place on baking sheets about 2 inches apart and curve them into half circles. Bake for 12 minutes at 350 degrees. Let cool on baking sheet for ten minutes before transferring to a bowl of powdered sugar. Dredge them while warm, then transfer to a cooling rack set over a baking sheet to cool completely. Once cool, sprinkle with additional powdered sugar. Store cookies between layers of parchment paper.

# ‘Tis the Season of Cheer, the Holiday Menu is Here!

Here is a direct review of the favorites of this year’s Starbucks Holiday Menu.

■ Riley Meriwether ’25  
Editor-in-Chief

Officially putting an end to the Halloween season, Starbucks brought back favorite seasonal sips, along with some new ones, on November 2nd of this year to all their locations across the United States. Customers can indulge in sweet treats and drinks at any time while also enjoying the start to the holidays with new colorful holiday cups!

A brand new drink, the Gingerbread Oat Milk Chai Tea Latte, has made its way to the hearts of Starbucks customers. It holds the spotlight for this year’s entire menu and contains a beautifully blended mixture of ginger, cinnamon and, of course, chai tea. It is said to be a “love letter to ginger and gingerbread.” I, personally, am a die-hard fan of chai tea and adore this drink! All Chai lovers should give it a try!

Another incredibly popular drink that continues to warm the hearts of people across the globe is the Peppermint Mocha. Returning for its 21st consecutive year, the Peppermint Mocha is a wonderful sweet addition to your day. It can come iced, hot, and as a Frappuccino if you want! I definitely recommend this one. It really has the perfect holiday flavors in it. Back for its third holiday season is the Iced Sugar Cookie Almond Milk Latte, featuring sugar cookie flavored syrup, combined with Starbucks Blonde Espresso, ice, and almond milk, topped with red and green sprinkles. I am in love with this drink though I do switch out the almond milk for oat milk. It is not too sweet or too bitter and it hits that sweet spot between the two. I also love the little Christmas sprinkles! When it comes to the Starbucks cafe, I am more inclined to buy a drink rather than a sweet treat, but every once in a while, I get both. One of those treats was the Gingerbread Loaf and it was pretty good. I am not one to eat gingerbread, but the treat was delicious, and I was not overcome with gingerbread flavor. The Peppermint Cake Pop was amazing as well! They both really made me feel ready for Christmas! Starbucks did a phenomenal job bringing back the Holiday Cheer! No matter how warm it is this winter, it will still feel like the holiday season with this menu!



Graphics // Sarah Nardone ’25



# Carol and Ring: A Celebration of Sisterhood and Faith

In the joyous ceremony of receiving their class rings, the Class of 2025 takes part in one of Villa’s oldest traditions.

■ Bella Licwinko ’25  
Editor-in-Chief

A new generation of young women are welcomed into the long line of Villa Marians who have tread the same festive path before them

On the night of December 7th, 2023 Villa Maria Juniors gathered on campus, ecstatically anticipating the long-awaited occasion of Carol and Ring. This long-standing tradition marks a new chapter for the Class of 2025 as they receive their class rings and take their first steps as upperclassmen, as well as sing Christmas carols to celebrate the Advent season.

This evening was surely a surreal one for many, as they finally zipped up their red robes and waited with all their classmates for the go-ahead in the Multi-Purpose Room. “I’m really excited to get my class ring and be connected to all my sisters,” Emilia Falcon ’25 said. “I think the feeling of Junior year is all about bonding.” Even with all the energy buzzing in the room, no one missed their cue to begin walking towards the Marian Center.

As the tune of “O Come All Ye Faithful” started playing, a procession of girls flowed into the Auditorium, where the smiling faces of proud parents were hard to miss. “I am so proud and just amazed at how quickly this has all happened,” the father of Riley Meriwether ’25 said. This ceremony understandably garners many emotions from parents as they’ve watched their daughter become a woman throughout highschool for the past 2 ½ years. “We’re very excited and happy for her,” the parents of Lauren Kurek ’25 said. “I can’t believe she’s a Junior already, it went by so fast.”

After the welcoming remarks by Class President Kelsie Goane ’25, the beautiful ceremony commenced with a performance of “O Holy Night” by a small group of Villa’s most distinguished singers. “Being on the stage, singing “O Holy Night” was a very special experience. I loved expressing the joy and love I feel for everyone through song,” Maura Gallagher ’25 said.

The night went perfectly thanks to the dedication of Sr. Marie Claire and Ms. Madeline Harkins, who put in much of their time working with the juniors to make this celebration special for everyone involved.

The ceremony continued, alternating between speakers telling the story of Christ’s birth and classic Christmas carols sung by the entire Junior Class.

Finally, the moment came when everyone’s names were called onto stage and they were given their class ring by the Head of School Sr. Regina Ryan. “Receiving my ring was exhilarating and it inspired me to remember the past of Villa while making a new future for myself,” Rosie Dugery ’25 said. “I am so lucky for everything that Villa has given me, and it compiles into the ring that I will wear with pride.”

Closing off Carol and Ring was a performance of “In Old Judea,” a student-body favorite, and the recessional song of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” By finally truly being a part of the upperclassmen, the Juniors began to reflect on the importance of this enduring tradition, especially those who have had relatives here at Villa Maria before them. “I feel honored that I’m continuing my family’s legacy,” Lauren Carpenter ’25 said. “I truly feel that I’m a part of the sisterhood and I’ve been waiting for this for so long from watching my sisters do this and crying for them, and now I get to do it”.

This celebration, being a milestone of every student’s experience, marks a new beginning for Villa Maria’s Juniors. Although this joyous new chapter is exciting, it can also be daunting to fill the shoes of those who have come before you. Sharing her guidance for the young women of the Class of 2025, Sr. Mary Jo Ely said, “Stay close to Jesus and stay close to one another.”



“O Holy Night”// Lifetouch



Villa Voice editors // Bella Licwinko

## Hallmark: The Epitome of Christmas Spirit

Hallmark movies, while not loved by all, truly embody what the Christmas season is about

■ Madison Scaggs ’27, Emerson Harmatuk ’27  
Reporters



Graphics // Kayla Malicki

While there have been debates over the popularity of Hallmark movies and whether or not it is well-deserved, it cannot be denied that these cheesy and often predictable films add a bit of sparkle to the holiday season.

Since the year 1951, the channel known as “Hallmark” has been making an impact on the world with their Christmas movies. It started as a little girl’s dream and became a brand that impacts people’s lives on a day-to-day basis.

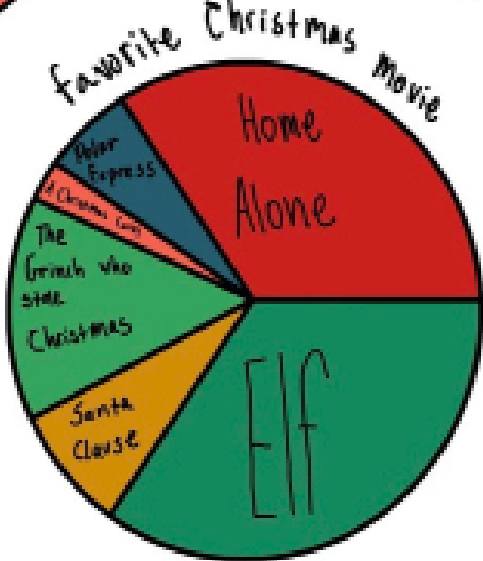
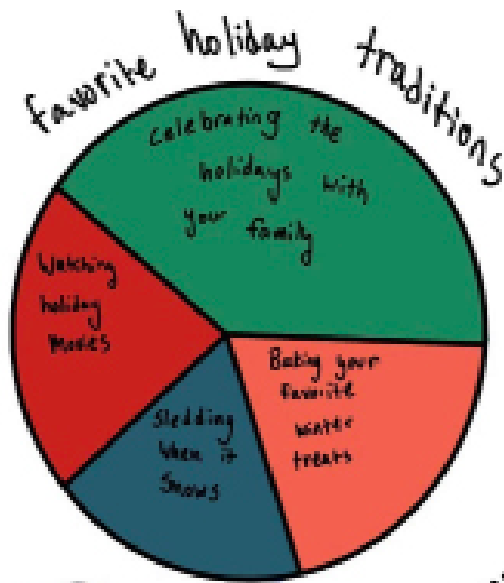
The question is, how have these festive films captured the hearts of millions around the world? Even though the answer varies from any one Hallmark lover to the next, a common and definitive response would be the comforting and positive feeling one receives from each and every heartwarming movie Hallmark creates.

Each Hallmark movie, for the most part, starts off with someone experiencing a rough patch in their life. Then, here comes a conventionally attractive love interest who they just so happen to hate. Along the way, the unlikely pair start to fall for each other, and they are in a relationship just in time for the peak of the holiday season.

As their love for one another builds, so does the audience’s attachment to and relationship with the characters. The characters’ love brings the joy that the holiday season is truly about. This basic structure, used by nearly every Hallmark film, finds a way each time to bring to its viewers feelings of love, warmth, and most importantly...Christmas Spirit..

## CHRISTMAS POLLS

■ Mia Ceritano ’25  
Reporter



Graphics //Paige Devine



# Christmas Concert: Behind the Scenes

Dr. Anthony Mosakowski reveals the secrets that make Villa’s Christmas concert so special!

Siena Fontana ’26 , Riley Fedgchin ’25  
Reporters

The Christmas concert is a beloved tradition of the Villa family. Dr. Anthony Mosakowski, the chair of the Fine Arts Department, gave a deeper insight into what goes on behind the scenes. Mosakowski explained, “The Christmas concert is a cherished Villa tradition, and it shows how a large group of students can work together to create something really special.” He continues to explain that this Christmas concert is so important to the Villa community because it creates something for students and their families to look forward to every year. He also described the long process of planning and preparing for this concert. Mosakowski said, “We start planning for the Christmas concert from the beginning of the fall semester,” which depicts the immense amount of time and planning that goes into this. Mosakowski also said that music is hard work and that we should consider the multitude of hours of hard work that go into preparing for the concert to fully appreciate it. Mosakowski next explained that “rehearsals can be pretty intense and require a lot of concentration” but then adds that they “have a lot of fun too.” Mosakowski also hinted that the concert has “a bit of a Nutcracker theme”, foreshadowing the upcoming amazing songs sung by Chorus, and played by the Orchestra and the Handbell Choir, which “includes a surprise!” Finally, Mosakowski teased the finale this year, which will be “Jesus, Joy of Man’s Desiring!” Overall, Mosakowski and the entire music program hope that everyone enjoys the concert, and that the students performing feel a sense of accomplishment and pride and that they all enjoyed sharing their talents. He also adds that he feels that the audience will

be very impressed by all the talent on stage! Villa has extremely talented musicians among us, and if any student would like to join in on the fun that the program brings, contact Dr. M or Ms. Leah! This tradition is highly valued among all the Villa family. Everyone loves music and the portrayal of the fellow sisters’ talents. All the hard work and dedication that goes into the planning and execution only add to the appreciation that the whole villa community has for the music department and the concert as a whole. We are very lucky to have such amazing musical talent at Villa and cannot wait to see all the future accomplishments our musicians have to offer.



Villa’s handbell choir // Lifetouch



Villa’s Chorus // Lifetouch



Alana Whitwell ’24// Lifetouch

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ALANA WHITWELL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

into our lifting groups and complete the lift plan on the board. Our lift usually lasts about an hour and afterwards we go into the gym, complete our dynamic warmup, and then play speedball for around 10 minutes. Afterwards we start our practice and that usually runs for a little over 2 hours.” To balance her commitment towards athletics and schoolwork, Whitwell shared, “I like to use my planner on my iPad. I also go to Starbucks before practice and bring my homework. Sometimes I’ll stay at school instead and do my homework in a study room.” She self-advocates by “going to teachers during Flex-Time or using my RFTs during school to try and get ahead on any homework later in the week.” Many athletes also know of the hardships and challenges posed by the recruitment process. This past summer, Whitwell was given the opportunity to play volleyball at College of the Holy Cross. She said, “Being able to commit to Holy Cross has been such an amazing experience. If you had told me my freshman year that I would be committed to a Division 1 college I would not have believed you. The recruitment process is very long and can be discouraging, so being able to commit before my senior year of high school volleyball was such a relief. I am so grateful for the opportunity and I am really excited for next year. I love playing volleyball and being able to play it for the next 4 years in college is a dream come true!” Alana has the grit, determination, and talent that is attributed to an MVP, and it is quite notable. Evans shared, “I was so proud and felt she more than deserved her 2nd MVP. In the conference voting, coaches vote (ranking every nominated player from 1-20) for the top player that the coaches nominate (I am not allowed to vote for any Villa players). Usually after the 1st Team is selected there is another vote for MVP, however this year, there was such an overwhelming ranking of #1 for Alana, they did not need a second vote!”

It is rare an athlete is awarded the title MVP in back-to-back seasons, but it is a testimony to Whitwell’s impact on the volleyball program. She said, “The legacy I hope to imprint on future players is to give 110% everytime you step onto the court. No matter how many points you are winning or losing by, always give it your best and a little bit more. Even in practice, always try to give full effort on every play. The effort you show in practice correlates with your effort in games. Something that I think is really important and is sometimes overlooked is the saying ‘practice how you would play in a game.’ You create habits in practice so if you create bad habits then those will translate over to the game. Even if you don’t think you can make a play on the ball, try anyway because if it is successful, that play can change the momentum of the game instantly. Every touch matters and you never know when it could be your last... so give it your all.” Whitwell truly embodies the concept “team is family” noting her favorite memory to be the Spike Out for Cancer game against Sacred Heart: “This game was in dedication to our Head Coach, Coach Peggy’s husband who passed away from Pancreatic Cancer. Helping put this event together and dedicating this game to our Coach and her family truly meant a lot to my teammates and I. Just being able to see all the hard work and dedication the entire team put into this event come together made this night really special. It is a memory I will never forget and I hope it becomes a tradition for years to come.” A commit to College of the Holy Cross, 2-time Conference MVP, and 1st Team All-Star Whitwell said, “After this season I feel very accomplished not just because I was named Conference MVP but because of the bonds my teammates and I created this year. We overcame a lot together and I am so happy to have been a part of this team.”

## STUDENTS ON FOX29, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The three students explained what sparked their initial interest to participate in the Fox29 game show. Nardone shared, “Before learning Villa had the opportunity to be a part of the show, I knew the show from my Grandma since she loves watching game shows. I also feel like this is a once in a lifetime experience, so I wanted to be a part of something I can tell stories about.” Maguire also explained her Grandma’s impact on her interest, “My grandma loves watching different game shows. When I heard about this opportunity, I wanted to do it for her. Her eyes really lit up when I told her that I was going to be on TV for a trivia show, so I definitely made the right choice.” Additionally, Conish shared, “I’ve always enjoyed trivia, so when I found out that I had an opportunity to participate in a trivia event I had to do it! And to do all of this on TV sounds so cool! I also may never get an opportunity like this again, so I knew I had to give it a try.” The students were asked about their

emotions as the game show is approaching. “I am super anxious but excited at the same time,” Nardone said. “Like a test, I feel like I’ll forget everything I know once I get to actually competing, but I hope that doesn’t actually happen! I’m mostly grateful to get this opportunity and compete with the teachers!” Conish also explained her excitement, “At the moment I’m definitely feeling very excited to test my personal knowledge and to represent Villa on TV, but I also feel nervous at the same time, as I have never been on TV before and I really hope that Kaitlin, Sarah, and I can win!” Despite her nerves, Maguire added, “I’m more confident because I’m competing with two amazing girls, and I know that we’re going to succeed.” The Villa Maria community is looking forward to watching this episode of Class H-Room on the Fox29 channel, featuring Villa’s very own students Lucy Conish, Kaitlin Maguire, and Sarah Nardone!



Villa on set! // Elizabeth Conish



# Sparking a New Age of Theater at Villa

Villa’s theater class explores a world without fire, putting on a gripping performance of the play Spark by Tom Arvetis.

■ Siena Fontana ’26 and Alison Legaard ’24  
Contributors

Taught by Mr. Cucinella, Villa’s theater class explores the ins and outs of the world of theater. Students choose a play to perform and then engage in the casting process. Every member of the class works together to create the environment in which they will perform by designing the set, styling the costumes, and getting in touch with the world and characters within the play. Countless rehearsals during class provide the actors time to learn lines and become one with the characters they portray. And finally, the pinnacle of the class and the conclusion of the students’ hard work is the performance, when the cast brings to life onstage the play they have been practicing =and perfecting for the past four months.

Choosing the fall play is a long and rigorous procedure. When asked about this, Cucinella said, “this process was probably the longest process that we’ve had.” He normally goes through multitudes of different plays, exploring each one and trying to find one that speaks to him and his class. Finally, after a long period of careful consideration, Spark was chosen to be Villa’s fall play.

When questioned why he chose Spark, Cucinella said, “We liked the story. We liked the challenge that it was going to be. This was by far the most unique piece we’ve ever done here at Villa.”

The plot of Spark, though intricate, is both entertaining and thought-provoking to witness. “The show is about a society of people who have gone to live underground due to occurrences in the world. Within that society, they train their children with something known as the “Game” in order to see their role in society,” Cucinella said. “The main character, Pan, is more curious than the other children, and wonders what the world above is like.” For any lovers of Greek mythology, the play also references Pandora, Prometheus, and the importance of fire. The structure of the show also utilizes colored lights and video projection, making for a visually intriguing and spectacular performance. The structure of the show also utilizes colored lights and video projection, making for a visually intriguing and spectacular performance.

After settling on Spark, the class got to work. They engaged in a table read, in which the students would read lines as each character, and Cucinella would make the casting decisions from there.

Once receiving their parts, the girls began to rehearse their lines, becoming in tune with the characters they were playing, and understanding their role in the performance. The students then set to work designing the fictional world, Sanctuary, and all that occurs in it. They were split into three groups to execute this: costumes, set, and props.

The costume crew would design and develop the clothes that each cast member would be dressed in. They would create the pieces that made each character unique and distinguishable from the others. The set crew would create the world in which the characters would be performing in, everything from the backdrops to the furniture. The props crew would mainly focus on constructing the wearable technology, called Gear, that the characters in Spark would use. These three groups worked in tandem to create a ver-

sion of the underground world of Sanctuary that was unique to them. “Everything that is going to be seen on stage really did come from their brain,” Cucinella said.

As opening day drew nearer, the nerves of the cast were running high, but there was also palpable excitement in the air. The girls were extremely enthusiastic to show the audience the culmination of their intense work over the past few months. This play showcased their drive and passion for acting and theater, as well as how much time and energy each and every one of the students put into their performances.

Detailing her experience with the production, Marian Masques President Brynn Washbourne ’25 said, “The smaller cast is more impactful. You have to rely more on each other. We all have certain designated roles, and we get to see the other side of theater. It gives us the opportunity to expand on what theater really is.”

Cucinella loves teaching the theater class. “In general I love this class because I get to show my students the complete build of a show,” Cucinella said. “From choosing a play, casting it, rehearsing it, performing it. As well as tearing it down. This year, by far, I’ve loved the collaborative nature of me and my students.”

Cucinella enjoys teaching this course because it enables him to share the magic of theater with his students, as well as to help them become the best actresses they can be. This class allows for a more one-on-one experience between him and each member of the class, something he is very appreciative of.

The theater program at Villa now has its sights set on its greatly anticipated spring production: The Sound of Music. Do not miss this iconic musical gracing the Marian Center stage in 2024, when cast and crew will yet again share their love of theater with the Villa community!



Mr. Cucinella and “Spark” Cast // Laurie Scaggs



“Spark” Cast // Lifetouch



“Spark” Cast // Lifetouch

## The Hunger Games: A Review and Debate

The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes hit the big screen, leading a new legacy for The Hunger Games franchise.

■ Maura Gallagher ’25, Sarah Duffy ’25  
Reporters

Over ten years since the first film was released, a blockbuster prequel for The Hunger Games franchise was introduced on the big screen this past November. The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes, based on the 2020 novel by Suzanne Collins, follows the life of Coriolanus Snow. Introduced in the original 2008 novel, The Hunger Games, Snow is the antagonist and tyrannical president of Panem, a dystopian society in which “tributes” between the ages of 12-18 from the 12 “districts” are forced to fight to the death for the entertainment of the wealthy citizens of the “Capitol.”

In the original trilogy, the “good” and “bad” are almost nearly black and white, where readers cheer Katniss on as she overthrows the villainous Snow. However, the new prequel allows fans a glimpse into Snow’s past, occurring 64 years prior to the original trilogy, and it provides them a new understanding of the events that warped him into the tyrannical president he eventually becomes. It is an incredibly powerful film that turns the black and white into shades of gray, leaving the audience almost sympathetic for the character responsible for so much destruction and horrific crimes. The film is equipped with an incredible cast and soundtrack, featuring original songs and Olivia Rodrigo’s new hit “You Can’t Catch me Now,” and brings with it cliffhangers, tears, and laughs. It features a fresh perspective on the discriminatory abuse of the districts and the growing, blind oppression of the Capitol.

Capitol “Academy” students are assigned to mentor the tributes picked from the reaping for the Tenth Annual Hunger Games. The movie wel-

comes a young girl from District 12 by the name of Lucy Gray Baird, played by Hollywood newcomer Rachel Zegler. A growing connection is shown between Lucy Gray and Snow, played by Tom Blyth, in which Snow tries everything he can to keep Lucy Gray alive in the games. But, as Snow’s life changes in an instant, along with Lucy Gray’s, we are met with the dangers of power and what it can do to those who are surrounded by it their whole life. The movie brings a question that extends beyond the dichotomy of good and bad, and instead the idea of good for all or good for one. It grapples with themes such as love, corruption, and the ‘power of a voice,’ a theme which Lucy Gray embodies in song. As power warps Snow’s mind and actions into

injustice and distrust, we can understand him as a victim of cruelty in his own sense, and how parts of his past can forever haunt him, bringing into question who he could have been without these negative influences. The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes brings action and feeling and even leads the viewer to question the longing, power, and love that is present in our own world.

**Sarah’s take? Here it is:** “I read The Hunger Games for the first time as summer reading in seventh grade. I read the first book in a day, finished the second one almost as quickly, and devoured the third. Yet, seventh grade me had a massive problem with the ending. She picked Peeta? How could Katniss possibly pick Peeta when she had Gale? I thought everyone would be just as outraged, but I soon found out that my friends thought I was the crazy one. Sure, Peeta threw her a loaf of bread. Meanwhile, Gale had been hunting with her and supplying food for her family for years! And then, I was often faced with: [spoiler alert!] “Gale literally killed Prim!” as a rebuttal to my apparently radical

opinion. Yes, Gale did design the bombs that unfortunately killed Katniss’s little sister, Prim. He did not, though, know who the bombs would be dropped on. He only thought he was helping the cause, just like Katniss. Gale also provided food for Katniss’s mother and sister while she was away, keeping them alive. They created an unbreakable bond through the difficulties they faced together, one that Peeta could never understand. Peeta was just thrown into the mix when his name was chosen in the reaping. If you look a little closer and read between the lines, Gale is the obvious choice for Katniss, and Peeta is just a boy who burned some bread.”

**Maura’s take?** Here it is: “I first read The Hunger Games when I was in sixth grade and to this day it is still one of my favorite book series. To me, the ending holds no error or question. Peeta was the obvious choice for Katniss! Their relationship and story goes far beyond the phrase the boy with the bread. I do not deny that Katniss and Gale had a meaningful friendship, but it should not be anything more than that. After the games, Peeta shared a connection with Katniss that Gale would never be able to obtain or understand. Peeta shared the same experience that forever changed Katniss, a change that he himself was also a victim to. They understood each other on an unreachable level and were consciously, or unconsciously, each other’s solace in the trauma and grief. In the midst of the Quarter Quell Hunger Games in the second novel, Catching Fire, Peeta famously says how nobody needs him, a statement which Katniss refutes in her expression of care. Even after the capital’s hijacking, a type of torture that brainwashed Peeta into believing Katniss was the villain, he was able to fight through the horrible fear and pain that clouded his mind by remembering the love he held for her. The difference between Gale and Peeta was that Peeta wants Katniss to be happy, and Gale selfishly wanted her.



Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes // Maura Gallagher and Sarah Duffy

After the games, Gale consistently tried to bring someone back who was not there anymore, and in many instances he only prioritized what he wanted. Gale thought he was entitled to Katniss love whereas Peeta earned it. Katniss had to ask Gale to help provide for her family, but Peeta always did everything because he wanted to. Peeta made Katniss a whole garden where she could mourn her sister, a garden that was filled with primrose. Peeta holds a kindness and empathy he freely gives, something Gale believed Katniss should never need. Peeta accepted who she was in her entirety and in the end, after everything, chose Katniss by coming home to District 12. And, we cannot forget the one major detail, Katniss chose Peeta as well.”



# The Eagles Fight for Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Eagles have been making the city proud, beating high- caliber teams and involving themselves in the Philadelphia community.

■ Emerson Cassalia ’25 and Rose Dugery ’25  
Reporters

The 2023-2024 football season has been both exciting and nerve-racking, especially since the Eagles have been making the city nervous every game, but nearly always pulling through in the second half. Junior Caroline Capaldi d’25 said, “This season has been very exciting because they have a 10-1 record.”

As much as the Eagles have succeeded on the field, they have also won the hearts of Philadelphians. Three Eagles players - Jordan Mailata, Jason Kelce, and Lane Johnson - put out their second Christmas album this year, raising money for Philadelphia Area charities, like the Children’s Crisis Treatment Center and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Their album raised \$1.25 million last year, and this year’s album, whose sales look promising, is being released on December 1st. The entire city of Philadelphia is greatly awaiting the release of the album, as well as the premiere of an animation featuring Kelce, Mailata, and Johnson, in which they attempt to gather their friends to perform a holiday show, with a special feature of one of the songs from their album.

The Philly Specials, as they are called, embody the meaning of brotherly love through their albums and charity work, even if they are playing a rough sport. “It makes me like them even more because it shows their bond as a team and how fun they really are,” said Julia Holdsworth ’25. Every dollar they raise means even more to the community than the games they win. Capaldi said, “The eagles being the community connected they fans and the city.” are extremely ant as well. Many predicting a Super Bowl repeat, with different outcome, ary. Holdsworth said, “I think the Super Bowl will be the same as last year: Chiefs and Eagles. They are both doing really well and it will be another great game!” The city of Philadelphia is hoping for a second Super Bowl win this year. The city is due for a win after losses last year in the playoffs from the Eagles, Phillies, Union, and 76ers. Hopefully, the Eagles will be able to pull through and become Super Bowl LVIII winners. Capaldi said, “I think they are going to win the Super Bowl this year, it is our year.” Jalen Hurts, the Eagles quarterback, along with the rest of the

“[Their music] makes me like them even more because it shows their bond as a team and how fun they really are”

team is hoping for a win as well. Jalen Hurts is an unbelievably talented and popular quarterback. He was the MVP runner-up last season and has impeccable numbers again this year. Hurts has a 94.9 rating and is in the top 6 quarterbacks ranked by total QBR. Capaldi said, “Jalen Hurts is my favorite player because he loves to win just as much as Philadelphia does and he works really hard so that he can win.” Hurts is not alone in popularity. Devonta Smith is another fan favorite with 738 yards so far and 5 touchdowns. Holdsworth said, “My favorite players are Hurts and Devonta Smith because they make a great pair and both have great fashion senses.” The Eagles have been working hard for Philadelphia. Hopefully, their good fortune will continue through the post-season and the release of the second Christmas album. Philadelphia would not be the same without the Eagles, as they pull on our heartstrings in more ways than one.



“Sko Birds!” // Sarah Nardone ’25

# The Starting Point for Winter Sports

Villa Maria Winter sports are starting to begin and all members are looking forward to successful seasons.

Abigail Ferry ’25, Kiley Delfra ’26, Sophia Tray ’26  
Reporters

Villa Maria Academy supports many sports teams through all the seasons. Winter sports have started and are working very hard to achieve great years. The members of Villa sports are determined to better themselves and their teams.

The basketball season has just started and the team is very excited. When asked about the season, head coach Kathleen McCartney said “I am mostly looking forward to the journey and watching my kids get better everyday.”

The basketball team is going to work hard to improve themselves every day. Senior captain Carly Catania ’24 said, “I am looking forward to spending my last year with the best team and making great memories.” The basketball team looks forward to spending lots of time together and winning many games!

The Rowing team has been doing very well this year. During the winter season, the team prepares for the spring season by conditioning and using the rowing machines. Junior Paige Devine ’25 said, “The winter season will make us stronger, faster, and more ready to win in the spring.”

The Swim and Dive team began practicing at 6:00 am each morning before school. Lila Traynor ’25 expressed her ex-

“My favorite memories from last year were the early morning practices and car rides to school.”

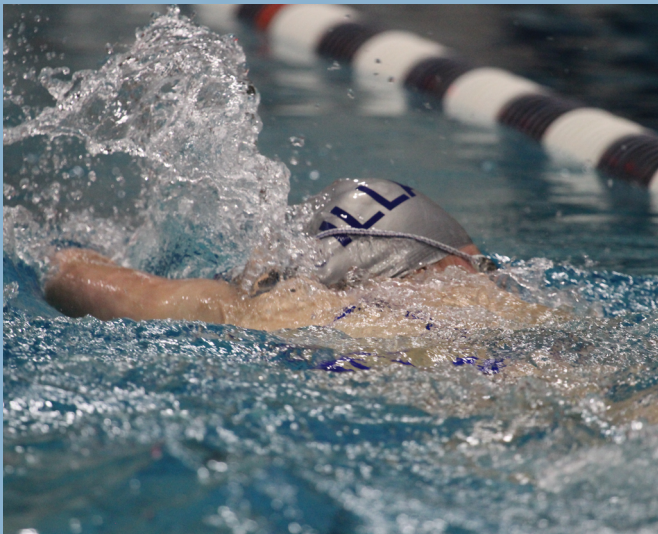
citement for the season. Traynor explained, “We are looking forward to meeting new freshmen and spending time with the team and supporting one another.” The Swim and Dive team graduated a large number of seniors last year, so it is time for other members to step up and take over their leadership roles.



Villa Basketball in a team huddle// Linda Ryan

Traynor said, “My favorite memories from last year were the early morning practices and car rides to school.” The team enjoyed every minute spent together and definitely made the early morning wake ups worthwhile. We look forward to seeing the Swim and Dive team compete in all of their meets this year and what they can accomplish as a whole.

Winter track is a great opportunity for runners to continue to learn to compete, and for fall and spring athletes to stay in shape. Track participants are eager for their competitions to begin. Marita Irvine ’26 said, “The thing I am most looking forward to this track season would definitely be the meets, it’s always such a great bonding experience with the team.” This winter sport allows the athletes to not only get better at running but to meet more familiar faces at Villa. Many memories are made with new people during winter track. Irvine said, “My favorite memory from last track season was cheering on my teammates when they would run their races.” We all look forward to watching everyone run to the finish line during all of their track races this winter!



Swim and Dive // Linda Ryan



Winter Track and Field Captain Rileigh O’Neill ’26 // Lifetouch

## Submissions

Submissions from any students in the Villa Maria community are encouraged, specifically letters to the editor and feedback. Submissions must include name and email verification, and anonymous submissions will not be accepted. Not all submissions are published.

## Mission Statement

The Villa Voice is a student-run publication created to inform the Villa Maria community with truthful and relevant information. We strive to give students a safe outlet for their opinions and accurately represent the student body of Villa Maria.

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