## THE WORD







#### THE WORD

WINTER 2024 | VOL. 19 NO. 1

#### **MISSION**

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

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#### ON THE COVER

IWA's Track team exemplifies the idea of Sisterhood with their diversity and mutual support. Photo by Bradley Collier/Vype Media.

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#### **INSIDE COVER**

Spanish AP 4 students enjoy a festive moment in the courtyard celebrating "Dia de Reyes" and savoring slices of King Cake. Photo by Lin Zhao.

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we wind down our 150th anniversary year-long celebration, I feel nothing but gratitude for the founding Sisters and the many Sisters and lay staff who followed, for sharing their time and talent over the years. Who could have imagined what would have taken place over these 150 years? The accomplishments of staff and students can only make you proud and amazed.

As we fast forward to 2024, all I can say is "Wow, we've come a long way!" Looking through this issue of Word Magazine, I am excited to recall all of the involvement and accomplishments in the various areas of Academics, Leadership, Fine Arts, and Sports. I also love to see that the students' relationship with God is important to them. After all, that is where the solid foundation for a happy life begins.

It is great to see and feel the excitement among faculty and students about being a part of the IWA experience. To me, that is what makes IWA a great school, when people are committed and happy to be part of the mission.

As you read this magazine, take a look beyond all of the activity that is showcased within to identify the underlying values taught at IWA. Of course, activity is so important but there are values embedded in our mission statement to help students learn to go much deeper. It is about empowering minds and hearts. It is about caring and supporting. It is about helping them to deepen their relationship with God. It is about enjoying the gift of their high school years and cherishing the bonds they create with their classmates and teachers. I believe this is what makes attending IWA special. You can prepare for college while feeling "at home." What a blessing!

May God bless each of you and your families as we look to what the future holds. The best is yet to come!

As always, please know that you are remembered in the daily prayers of the Sisters.

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Ar Lauren Buch C.V. J.

Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I. President



#### FALCON NEWS





### A Sentimental Journey

"I loved the rare chance to see a display of IWA memorabilia all in one place." s part of the year-long celebration of Incarnate Word Academy's 150th anniversary, the school hosted "Blast Through the Past," on January 28. The open house featured hundreds of visuals and artifacts dating back to the birth of the school: photos of IWA's first buildings, with correspondence from city planners and architects; literary magazines from the past 70 years; sports and cheerleading uniforms throughout the decades; newsletters from the 1950s; report cards; and even a 1901 diploma.

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, who founded IWA, share a rich history with the school. For that reason, heirlooms of the Congregation that originated in Lyon, France, were also included in the exhibit. One highlight included a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary that was brought to the United States in 1872 and displayed in the school foyer when the doors opened for students in 1873.

The crowd of more than 100 cherished their chance to travel down memory lane, flipping through yearbooks, admiring artifacts, and reconnecting with former teachers—lay persons and Sisters. The classes of 1967 and 1976 were tied for the largest number of attendees. Student Ambassadors hosted tours for alumnae who hadn't visited "the 609" in recent years.

"This is such a unique event," observed Margret LaChapelle Sonnier '80, echoing the sentiments of many. "I loved the rare chance to see a display of IWA memorabilia all in one place." Fidelity to you!



## TWO SENIORS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED SCHOLARS

The National Merit
Scholarship Program named
seniors Lauren Gentry and
Reese Mason Commended
Students. Commended
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Commended Students are recognized for the exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT/ NMSQT qualifying tests.

"The Commended Student recognition acknowledges these students' high academic achievement among their peers through the National Merit Scholarship Program," says Dr. Talia Penningtom-Dorsey, director of College Counseling. "This recognition speaks to their individual talents, as well as their high level of academic preparedness."

These young women took the PSAT last year and scored in the top 3-4 percent of high school juniors nationwide. "Not only are these two students talented in academics, they are well rounded," adds Dr. Pennington-Dorsey. Lauren is senior class president, a basketball player, and one of the best softball catchers in Houston; and Reese performs with Falcon Theatre, the IWA Choir and St. Thomas High School Theatre.





## ALUMNAE RETURN TO SHARE TIPS FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

"Because of IWA, I was prepared for college," says Katie Bourgeois '23, a freshman at Texas A&M.

atie's assertion was a common refrain from former students who returned to campus for the annual Alumnae College Panel. More than 20 alumnae from the classes of 2019-2023 visited on Thursday, January 4, to participate in discussions about life in college. The alumnae represented colleges with diverse locations and environments, including Emerson College, The University of Texas, Texas A&M, and the University of Mississippi.

Panelists described college life and all that transition entails, such as school choice, self-care, time management, study abroad programs, and staying true to yourself and your values. Director of College Counseling Dr. Talia Pennington-Dorsey, who moderated a panel for current IWA freshmen, says, "I am in awe at how prepared the alumnae were for college—they shared that IWA prepared them not only to be studious, but to be a leading lady and a Woman of the Word on their respective campuses."

Tips included ideas for creating study habits, as well as advice for navigating the first year on campus such as taking advantage of professors' office hours, or strategies to make a large college smaller by joining clubs and extracurriculars. The panelists applauded the academic preparation they received at Incarnate Word, especially in STEM and writing courses. They reminded current students to remember to seek balance in college with interactions that bring joy, like preparing a home-cooked meal or volunteering for a favorite charity.

Thank you to the candid alumnae panelists, our Counselors Dr. Talia Pennington-Dorsey and Amie Gray, as well as Young Leaders Program Director Antoinette Hernandez, for organizing and moderating this important event for IWA students.

### FALCON NEWS



# TEACHER? ENGINEER? ENTREPRENEUR??? DOCTOR? LAWYER? ACCOUNTANT?

## CAREER DAY PANELISTS SHARE THEIR PROFESSIONAL PATHS

Keynote speaker Ashtyn Duncan '13 set the tone for a dynamic and informative Career Day. She shared her experience as a Microsoft executive, her travel goals, and the importance of boldness and resilience. "Have the courage to be yourself!" she told students.

enior Cecilia Martinez praised Ms. Duncan's presentation for emphasizing the power of grit and resilience. "She was so young and relatable," says Cecilia. "I liked hearing how she had to pivot when her volleyball career in high school didn't pan out, and later when her first college wasn't the right fit."

Following Ms. Duncan's keynote, students moved through a series of four panels, depending on their interests. Panelists represented all fields, from medicine to entrepreneurs, and engineers to educators. They shared the ups and downs of their careers as well as information

about degree requirements, salaries, and opportunities in their fields. The Engineering panel, led by parents Cameron Rempel (Kaitlyn '27) and David Gold (Drew '23, Devin' 24 and Dale '26) explained cartoonist Scott Adams' concept of Talent Stacking as a strategy to excel in your career. "While it's almost impossible to be the very best at one thing, it is possible to be very good at a few things, and that makes you a valuable employee," advises Gold.

With many alumnae presenting, as well as parents, friends of IWA, and even faculty family members' children, Career Day provided students with pragmatic suggestions and approaches for shaping bright futures.

#### **CAMPUS MINISTRY**

# ANJA OZOLS BRINGS ENERGY AND CELEBRATION TO CAMPUS MINISTRY



s. Ozols admits that it is a dream come true to be both a theology teacher and a campus minister. "I see Christ in each of my students, and my greatest joy is creating a classroom where each one of them is seen, known, and loved. My goal every morning is to let the Word of God become Incarnate through the way I show love to those around me, and to empower young women to let the Word be Incarnate through them," she continues. "I've already been amazed by the way I've seen the Lord at work in this school... students engaging in service projects, sharing their faith with one another, and making strides to grow in prayer."

A native of Wisconsin, Ms. Ozols came to the 609 after a 2-year stint working in middle and high school youth ministry at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church in Cypress. "After graduating from Benedictine College in 2021, I began working on my Masters in Theology through the Echo Graduate Service Program at the University of Notre Dame. Echo sends its students all over the country to serve the church while studying theology, and my work placement for two years was at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church."

As her Echo assignment wrapped up in April 2023, she was planning to return to Wisconsin to be closer to family. "My car was already packed to drive back up North, but the Lord had other plans!" she exclaims. "I received an invitation to interview at Incarnate Word Academy, and said yes, even though I was planning to move home, simply because it was an excuse to see the inside of that beautiful school and spend a day downtown. When I walked in, I fell in love with the community, the mission, and the spirituality, and couldn't imagine a world in which I was not a part of this school." Part of what sold her was Principal Cathy Stephen's invitation to help create a "culture of celebration" during IWA's 150th year. "I've been so impressed and grateful for her leadership and support," adds Ms. Ozols.

Some of her favorite moments have been planning and attending retreats, and praying together as a full community at school Masses. "I've also loved having opportunities to share my experience of living in the Holy Land to help our students know how to respond to the conflicts in Israel." During her undergrad years, she spent a semester in Israel as a missionary. The experience made her realize that all people want the peace and freedom that we take for granted in the United States.

"We're doing our part to become people of peace, and make our school a place of peace. We've got a wonderful Bible Study going, have had some great times of prayer and praise in the chapel, and I'm looking forward to helping the Campus Ministry Team continue growing as leaders on our campus through prayer, service, and sisterhood. The year 2024 is the Year of Eucharistic Revival,' and I'm honored to help students encounter Jesus in the Eucharist like I did in high school.

"Thankfully, I have the most incredible team of theology teachers–Mr. Jameson Labadie and Ms. Maria Virginia Fraguio–backing me up in my work as campus minister, too. It's clear to me that the Holy Spirit is alive and working at IWA, and I'm excited to be a part of it all," she concludes. "Praised be the Incarnate Word, now and forevermore!"



## FIA THE ARTIST'S LEGACY TO THE ARTIST'S LEGACY THE ARTIST'S LEGACY

Fia Dehais '25 is one of IWA's standout artists. Each MLB playoff season, she impresses pedestrians on their way to MinuteMaid Park with her Astros chalk art, where she's drawn detailed portraits of Jeremy Pena and Jose Abreu on the Jackson Street sidewalk.

ia, who went to middle school at St. Ambrose, likes being on a campus with so many talented artists. "You'd be surprised how many incredible artists there are at this school," she exclaims. "IWA's a supportive environment for creatives. Even the faculty are very interested and ask me about my latest projects."

Her recent success was launching Tink's Designs. She sells whimsical, limited edition ink-and-watercolor greeting cards in the Home section of the Asch Building, a collective of stores in the Houston Heights. Her cards are also available via her website, *tinksdesign.com*. Her most popular card themes are birthdays, babies, and celebrations. "When I have time, I've also accepted commissions for custom invitations or sketches," she shares.

Though Fia never took formal art lessons, her mother's dad—a first-generation Sicilian—taught her to draw using a dip pen and inkwell, and he inspired her passion for art. "My grandfather was an amazing artist," says Fia. "He loved the television artist Bob Ross, and he also enjoyed using his signature pen and ink technique—and sometimes watercolor."

When Fia was young, he would draw with her whenever he visited. "I always cherished those times. He died when I was about 7 or 8 years old, but I remember him so well. Many members in my family say I was given his hand and eye, because my art style is quite similar. My uncle tells me, 'I see dad so much in your work Fia.' It always makes me so happy to hear that!"

After IWA, she may go to art school in London or in France, where her father's parents live. "I'd love to live in Europe near a variety of art museums that I could easily visit. I've got a year to think about it—we'll just have to wait and see!"









TENNIS AND HARP STRINGS

## MIRANDA RINALDI

Miranda Rinaldi '24 fully embraces IWA's location in downtown Houston. She loves the cityscapes, the energy, and as an accomplished harpist, she appreciates going to high school near the city's performing arts district.

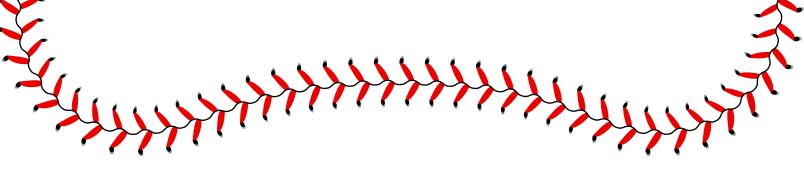
Miranda attended St. Martha's in Kingwood and learned about IWA while her brother went to St. Thomas High School. She met IWA students at sports events and musical performances and set her sights to join the Falcons at 609 Crawford—in the heart of the city.

iranda's adventurous spirit has led to a variety of accomplishments–from playing tennis to playing the harp. Although she recently picked up the tennis racket to join IWA's inaugural tennis team in 2023, Miranda has played the harp since 6th grade. Miranda says she started with a small harp, then progressed to renting a larger pedal harp before buying her own.

"The harp is not that complicated to learn to play," she explains, "especially if you think of it as a stand-up piano. Your right hand is for melody, and the left hand is for bass." It took her four years to reach a level of proficiency that's earned her many accolades. Regular hand exercises keep her glissandos and arpeggios flowing. She admits the harp is not an easy instrument to transport. While Miranda is 5'6", her harp is 6 feet tall and weighs 90 pounds. "I use a harp dolly when I perform with the Houston Youth Symphony or play at local events."

While she can't bring her instrument to college, she plans to locate a harp on campus that she can borrow for practice. "I'm not majoring in music, but I'll continue to perform at weddings and other celebrations," she says. "Music is a great way to relax and unwind."

A co-founder of IWA's Computer Science Club and Honors Engineering student, Miranda says she'll pursue engineering in college. "Mrs. Girardot, our engineering teacher, has really inspired me. She's also a musician who's performed with many choirs, and she draws the connections between math and music during class. She's made engineering such a fascinating subject that I can't wait to delve into it next year!"



## A FORCE ON AND OFF THE FIELD LAUREN GENTRY

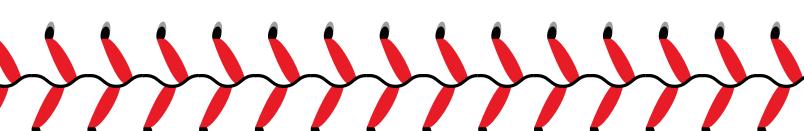
"You can't beat the sisterhood at IWA," says Lauren Gentry '24. "My sister, Emily, graduated from here in 2022, and I expected the school to be welcoming because of her positive experience. Still, going to school here has exceeded every expectation–from friends, to sports, to academics."

auren is not only one of her class' top scholars and a National Merit Commended Student, she is also one of the best high school softball catchers in Houston. She's been recognized as a TAPPS All-District and All-State player as well as made the Houston Chronicle Private School All-Star list for multiple years. Head softball coach Rick Perez notes that being a catcher is physically and mentally demanding. When Lauren gets on the field, he adds, "she's locked in and her energy elevates the team."

"Our softball team is so much fun," says Lauren. "Coach Perez is a motivator, and the team is talented and resilient. Even when we lose a tough play-off match, we bounce back. I predict big things for the 2024 season."

Besides enjoying a fantastic academic and sports experience at IWA, Lauren credits the Young Leaders Program and Director Antoinette Hernandez with helping her develop leadership skills. "First of all, Ms. Hernandez models amazing leadership qualities. And secondly, she emphasizes that good leaders make adjustments depending on the individuals they lead. A true leader is adaptable and flexible, adjusting her style to fit the situation and the team. I know I've put these ideas into practice on the softball field, and the skills will be invaluable in graduate school and in my career."

Lauren plans to major in Biomedical Engineering in college, with a goal to become both an inventor and a surgeon. "My dream would be to help develop medical devices that save patients' lives and also treat patients in a clinical setting. I realize it's an ambitious goal to set, but I look forward to the challenge."





## OFFICE HOURS



s. Noel Bartniski '16 grew up in Houston and attended Catholic Schools, including St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Rose of Lima, and St. Ambrose, before attending Incarnate Word Academy. At IWA, Ms. Bartniski discovered her love of Latin and Roman History, even playing Julius Caesar in Falcon Theatre's Shakespeare production. She also participated in St. Thomas (STH) Band throughout high school. After graduating from IWA, Ms. Bartniski went to school to study Flute Music Performance before changing her focus to Ancient History and Latin at Texas Tech University. She graduated from Texas Tech with a Bachelor of Arts in History with a Minor in Classics and received the Jirgenson's Latin Award. Ms. Bartniski then accepted a scholarship to Brooklyn's College's (CUNY) Latin/Greek Institute where she completed an Intensive program in Ancient Greek Language, before returning to Texas Tech's Classics program to begin her master's degree.

Ms. Bartniski returned to IWA in the Fall of 2023 as a History teacher excited to see all the changes to the school and meet the next generation of students, "IWA was such a home to me that returning was one of the best decisions I have ever made. The culture hasn't changed, and the Sisterhood continues to grow stronger."

#### QuickQ&A

#### What's tops on your playlist?

Lots of Broadway show tunes, Disney music, Reba McIntyre and George Strait.

#### What career would you choose if you weren't a teacher?

If not a teacher in a classroom, I'd be a teacher on the History Channel, in Documentaries. I enjoy sharing information, especially when it comes to Ancient Rome.

#### What qualities do you admire about IWA students?

I strongly admire the leadership capabilities of IWA students as well as their compassion for people. As an alumna, I have seen firsthand the support and Sisterhood that IWA students build. IWA allows these girls to foster ideal values of caring for people even if they are different from them. It's a beautiful part of not only having attended IWA, but also teaching these students.

#### Did you have a mentor or role model who inspired you to become a teacher?

As an undergraduate and graduate student at Texas Tech University, I had a few teachers in the Classics department who were extremely supportive of my education and goals. They unknowingly inspired me to become a teacher even when my initial goals were different. The light and positivity that they had every day made me realize how much I wanted to do the same for others.

#### What's your favorite vacation spot?

Cliché as it seems from a history teacher...Ancient Rome! I traveled there for the first time this past Thanksgiving, and it was amazing!



WORLD HISTORY, U.S. HISTORY, U.S. GOVERNMENT TEACHER

### OFFICE HOURS



#### AP SEMINAR TEACHER

## BRITTANY REVIA

"As an alumna, it's so special to be able to return and teach at IWA," says AP Seminar instructor Ms. Brittany Revia '07. "I've taught at several schools, and this school provides a level of support and commitment to students that's unique. I am gratified to join the ranks of amazing IWA teachers and pay it forward to the next generation of IWA graduates."

Prittany joined the faculty this year to teach a new course, AP Seminar. "One of the things I love most about bringing AP Seminar to our Young Leadership Program is that it is a skills-based class instead of content-based, which allows our scholars flexibility and freedom to explore the problem-solving and collaborative skills needed in their adult lives in ways that appeal to them now," she explains.

The course emphasizes critical thinking, seeking reliable sources to establish opinions, and finding solutions with an awareness of realistic limitations and implications for how the solution would affect others. A major element of the class is identifying real-world issues that are relevant to the scholars and empowering them to consider how they would fix them, she adds. "I've watched students explore the fight for women to be represented in leadership positions, funding related to college athletics, coral bleaching, political polarity in the United States, unregulated supplements, the domestic animal breeding industry, and so much more. Over the course of a year, I've observed timid scholars speak up to defend their ideas, scholars with a history of 'following' take the lead in group efforts, and high schoolers challenge themselves at a level most people don't reach until they are in college or their careers. As one of my scholars said, 'This isn't just a class; it's real life."

Brittany says she's a born-and-raised Houstonian who attended Catholic schools around the Archdiocese from kindergarten at St. Mary in League City, middle school at True Cross in Dickinson, high school here at Incarnate Word Academy, and then graduated from the Honors Program at the University of St. Thomas. Ms. Revia feels "blessed" to have the support of her parents, her sister (Katie Revia, IWA Class of '13), and her daughter, Rosemary (future IWA Class of '35). "In my spare time, I read, write, and go on trips around Texas with several of my friends from the IWA Class of 2007."

#### QuickQ&A

#### What's tops on your playlist?

Broadway showtunes, podcasts, and hits from the '80s.

What career would you choose if you weren't a teacher? Therapist.

#### What qualities do you admire about IWA students?

IWA students challenge themselves to be their best and don't settle for mediocrity.

#### Did you have a mentor or role model who inspired you to become a teacher?

My mother has been a teacher in the Archdiocese for over 30 years, and I always wanted to grow up and follow her example. The support of brilliant IWA teachers like Ms. Pankau and Mr. Mooneyham helped me decide that this is how I want to dedicate my life.

#### What's your favorite vacation spot?

Assisi, Italy-but my wallet often reminds me that Brenham, Texas, is a lovely place to visit!

#### **ATHLETICS**

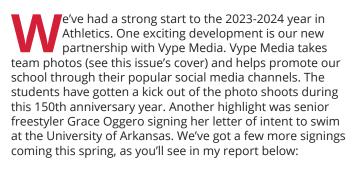




#### **ATHLETICS**

#### ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

#### Rick Perez



#### **CROSS COUNTRY**

The Falcons took 2nd place at the Brenham Hillacious Invitational. Senior Esperanza Vazquez finished in 2nd place. Seniors Kate Holden and Jane Volf finished 7th and 8th. At the TAPPS State meet the Falcons finished 5th overall. Esperanza earned 9th place overall. Esperanza and Kate will be signing their Letter of Intent to run in college. Esperanza will be signing with Trinity University and Kate will be signing with Ouachita Baptist University.

#### **VOLLEYBALL**

The season started off a little slow, but after the girls understood what system the new head coach, Britni Villarreal, was teaching, the offense began to gel. Coach Villarreal was the head coach at IWA back in the 2017 and 2018 seasons. She is a great coach, and players really liked her. These girls improved as the season kept going. The girls never gave up and played with so much heart. Freshman Ava Bocock was named All-District Honorable Mention.



#### **BASKETBALL**

Our basketball team is led by head coach Fernando Villasana. Coach Vee came in the season with only 10 wins needed to get to 500 in his coaching career. He stands at 499 as we enter district play. The girls are led on the court by seniors Lauren Gentry and Brianna Reagins. Freshman Ava Bocock is leading the team in scoring as she's averaging 18.0 points per game. The future looks great for the program as the starting lineup includes 2 freshmen and 1 sophomore.

#### SOCCER

The soccer team is doing well this season. They started the season 2-1 after beating The Woodlands Christian Academy 2-1 then beating The British School 9-0. They are currently 2-2 in district. They beat Concordia Lutheran 2-1 and beat IWHS by the score of 6-2. Junior Ava Baughman scored a hat-trick as she made three goals against IWHS on January 18.

#### **SWIN**

The swim team has been going strong since the second week of September. Four seniors lead the team: Flinn Burell, Autumn Hunter, Grace Oggero, and Kate Holden. The girls repeated their success in the individual and relay events at the TAPPS South Regionals at UH on January 25. Our swimmers qualified for 8 events in the State meet, setting a new school record!

Be sure to follow us on our Instagram account, *iwa\_falconathletics*, for the latest updates.

Go Falcons!

















#### ARTS





The 2024 Texas Private School Music Educators Association (TPSMEA) All-Region Choir clinic and concert was held on January 12-13 at St. Agnes Academy. Three of IWA Choir members were part of the All-Region Mixed and Treble Choirs. The Mixed Choir was conducted by guest clinician Ms. Denise Eaton of Sam Houston State University. The Treble Choir was conducted by Mr. Theron Jenkins of Lutheran South Academy in Houston.

Students were selected through a competitive audition process as one of the top singers in their voice "part" from among all the private schools in the region. Choir students earning All-Region Recognition this year were Katie Dickinson '24 and Issa Moore '26 in the Mixed Choir and Eleanor Seaton '24 in the Treble Choir.

At the end of January, two students, Katie Dickinson '24 and Issa Moore '26, traveled to Richardson, Texas, to participate in the 2024 Texas Private School Music Educators Association All-State Choir on January 27-28. These students were selected for the honor of TPSMEA All-State Musician through a rigorous process of auditions last fall. They joined with the best private school student musicians in Texas to prepare and perform a concert at the highest standard of excellence.

The TPSMEA All-State ensembles met on Thursday, January 25, to begin a process of rehearsals with their clinicians, culminating in concerts held at the McFarlin Auditorium on the campus of Southern Methodist University on Saturday, January 27. The All-State Choir was led by associate professor and assistant director of choral activities at Syracuse University, Dr. José "Peppie" Calvar. The 200-voice choir amazed the audience with a performance that ranged from chant to gospel, through Handel, to Cuban music, and even an arrangement of a classic pop song by the Eagles.

## DIADE LOS MUERTOS

Ms. Josie Postel's art students are so talented it's scary. Each year their Dia de los Muertos creations of papier-mâché sugar skulls and embroidery squares showcase the abundance of talent at IWA. The Day of the Dead tradition honors those who have died by making altars and telling stories to honor them. The project teaches sculpture techniques, embroidery stitches and the importance of eye-catching display. Says Ms. Postel, "This year, the students created altars to honor women who have impacted society. The sculptures represented diverse fields, from Queen Elizabeth II to Georgia O'Keeffe. This is a great practice to remember those who have uplifted others, whether family members or famous people."



## LEADERSHIP LIVE TAKES A TECH TWIST

Leadership Live, a student-run speaker series that focuses on career, leadership, and life skills, kicked off their 2023-2024 season with a presentation on Cybersecurity.











or National Cybersecurity Day in November, the STEM+ Club asked Math Department Chair and STEM+ Club sponsor Mrs. Karen Douglass if they could run a "mock" phishing attack at IWA and then analyze the results to measure the resilience of IWA's online security.

After consulting with IWA Director of Technology Tim Moudry, the club realized they could pull it off with his guidance, says Hannah Richard '24, a STEM+ Club president. "So along with Mr. Moudry, our AP Statistics class created and executed the phishing attack in November," Hannah explains. "And fortunately, when we analyzed the results with Mrs. Douglass, we learned that IWA is actually a digitally aware community. We fell well below the 'mean' for phishing attacks."

That initial phishing experiment blossomed into an idea for an all-school seminar for Leadership Live, with local female leaders in STEM discussing cybersecurity as well as careers in technology.

Three guest speakers, Dawn Huber from Arctic Wolf, Tressa Comeaux from Veeam Software, and Julie Cipolla from Converge Technologies Solutions Corp., offered tips for keeping email and social media accounts secure from the pervasive threat of identity theft and hacking. Suggestions for keeping digital lives safe include choosing strong passwords, enabling multi-factor authorization, and updating software. "Think of these steps as a security

system for your digital home. Protect your social media, computer, and and email so they are less likely to be broken into," says Cipollo.

The universal use of cell phones and our connections to people and businesses throughout the world escalate cybersecurity issues. Adds Huber, "At Arctic Wolf, we have 4,000 customers and yet we see 3.4 trillion security threats each week."

Because of these growing threats, the field of cybersecurity is booming. All three speakers encouraged IWA students to consider careers in technology. "You don't have to be a programmer to thrive in this field," says Comeaux. "There are a variety of jobs in sales, management, and data science. We are paid well, have great benefits, travel to conferences—and yes—we have fun."

Before closing, Huber, Comeaux, and Cipolla shared advice for landing careers in the field of technology, suggested college majors, and recommended ways to stand out with recruiters. One of the session's biggest takeaways was that all tech fields are eager to recruit more women.

Stay tuned for the next Leadership Live program on March 8 featuring Soul Singh, Houston-area educator, motivational speaker, and author.



PHOTO BY PRISCILLA DIXON





#### DREAM GIRLS SHINE ON THE CATWALK AT JUNIOR LEAGUE OF HOUSTON

WA hosted its Dream Girls Style Show on October 14 featuring IWA students at The Junior League of Houston.

The event paid special tribute to the Senior Class while celebrating the 150th Anniversary year for the Academy. More than 200 guests attended the pink-adorned ballroom with a pre-reception hosted in the League's lush courtyard followed by a delicious seated lunch.

Show producer Lenny Matuszewski had the girls dressed in style while strutting down the runway like pros. Special thanks to Dillard's Post Oak who donated the use of the clothing for the day.

#### **ADVANCEMENT**

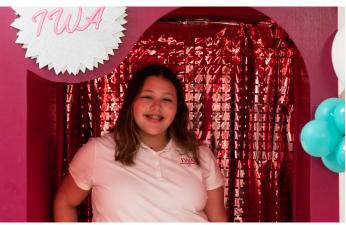
#### FALCON STUDENTS SURPASS GOAL WITH "RAFFLE IN THE DREAMHOUSE" CAMPAIGN

For a second year in a row, Falcon Students earned a day off for surpassing their Raffle goal of \$150,000, topping \$176,000 at the conclusion of Raffle In the Dreamhouse. The holiday takes place on February 16. The theme was chosen by the student committee in which Barbie and Ken were inspirations for school-wide communication and signage.

his annual student-led fundraiser supports general operations and programming for Incarnate Word Academy. Throughout the 6-week campaign, students sold tickets to generous donors for cash prizes while competing to win top incentive prizes each week for top sales. Congratulations to Rebecca Petersen who sold the most number of raffle tickets overall with \$2,660. Other top sellers included:

- Iulia Alderete '26
- Madeleine Bartholet '27
- Veronica Burger '27
- · Camilla Cotto '26
- Jordan Fowler '24
- Mia Howard '26
- Gabrielle Maggio '27
- Faith Puzan '27

Special thanks to the IWA Faculty and Staff who also joined in the fun, and to the Raffle parent committee and student committee who reconciled tickets and promoted the fundraiser.











### GIVING TUESDAY Brings in Historic High for IWA

ncarnate Word Academy launched a seven-part video series featuring students and Sister Lauren Beck during Giving Tuesday on November 28. Videos highlighted students addressing IWA Academics, Leadership, Spirituality, Downtown Location, Athletics, and Sisterhood. The school received two matching gifts which brought total funds for the day to \$77,000. All proceeds from Giving Tuesday benefit each student every day at IWA.

Special thanks to our participating students, staff, and generous donors who contributed to the campaign's overall success.



### MOTHER-DAUGHTER MASS BRINGS CONGREGATION TO JOYFUL TEARS

everend T.J. Dolce, Pastor of St. Martha's in Kingwood, celebrated Mass on January 12 when mothers joined their daughters for IWA's Annual Mother-Daughter Mass at Annunciation Catholic Church.

Father T.J. called volunteers up to the altar asking them to switch roles. Daughters gave advice as Mothers would and vice versa. He instilled in the girls that what your mom does for you doesn't limit you but helps you, even if you don't recognize it at the time. Recognition and appreciation of our mothers' gifts come later in life. At the closing, on behalf of all students, a few girls read aloud heart-felt notes to their mothers, thanking them for their unconditional and loving support.

IWA's award-winning choir sang during the ceremony which was followed by a festive and memorable reception in the auditorium.



### **SWEET ON IWA**

On Friday, February 2, the school hosted its annual Grandparents' Mass & Reception. More than 400 grandparents, guests and students filled Annunciation Catholic Church for the Mass. Father Luke Millette presided and blessed all the grandparents in attendance. Afterward, students and their grandparents filled the auditorium for a seated reception themed with hearts, baked treats and punch. Long-time grandparent and supporter Larry Kaiser addressed the crowd, underscoring the importance of grandparents' influence in their grandchildren's lives, especially education. He thanked IWA for preparing his three granddaughters, Hannah '17, Julia '20, and Olivia '24 for college and meaningful futures. He especially appreciates the discipline, faith formation and values his granddaughters learned at IWA. "IWA is a great school," he said. "It checks all the boxes!"

# ALUMNAE

### **ANNUAL ALUMNAE FIESTA!**

IWA hosted its annual Alumnae Fiesta, Saturday, September 16. More than 100 alumnae attended to catch up while they enjoyed Mexican fare, margaritas, t-shirts, koozies and a whole bunch of laughs and fun.









### **CLASS OF 1962**

The Class of '62 members met for lunch on Thursday, October 12, at Christie's Seafood Restaurant. Those present were: *Sitting from left to right*: Maria Villagomez Buzek, Irene Oliveres Brizuela, Teresa Ramirez, Christine Micklitz Womack, Teresa Medina Martinez, Jake Martinez, Larry Sanders, Judy Carrabba Sanders.

Standing from left to right: Lena Schuttee Tomasino, Janet Hamala Huber, Loretta Prazak Kasowski, Edward Kasowski, Lillian Cegielski Kozel, Peggy Schulin.



### **CLASS OF 1976**

Class of 1976 members celebrated memories of Incarnate Word Academy with classmates from 1975 and 1977 at Kenny & Ziggy's New York Style Delicatessen Restaurant and Bakery in The Schmooze room. There were so many wonderful stories shared by each alumna that will always be cherished and remembered. We received a great education and a lifetime of friendships.

Andrea Davidson '76, Tracey Hager '76, Phyliss Camaratta '76, Jo Ann Labropulos '77, Jill Benge '77, Darlene Hanks '77, Kathleen Curl '76, Annette Michaels '76, Michelle Galfione '76, Elsa Krauer '76, Ann Marie Paradowski '76, Cindy Leija '76, Hilda Rader '75, Connie Rabbit '76, Maggie Arroya '76, Katherine Roeder '76, Mary Donna Moceri '76.



### ALUMNAE

### **IWA STYLE SHOW**

Our IWA Style Show hit the runway on Saturday, October 14, at the Junior League of Houston. We opened the floor to not only current IWA students, but to Alumnae as well. Jacque Bergeron Hoard '17 and Olivia Bergeron Giese '15 joined the girls on the catwalk and strutted away!



### NOEL BARTNISKI '16

Noel Bartniski '16 just got engaged to Remy Ingoldsby over Thanksgiving break in Rome! See her profile on page 18.



### IN MEMORIAM

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Dolores Williamson Adlong '54

Betty York Beier '56

June Sparks Clark '60

Judy Broussard Duckless '73, sister of Glenda Broussard Jackson '72

June Flaherty '63

Panny Gilbert Harris '60

Carol Ann Horst '53

George I. Janecka, husband of Ronnie Janecka '61

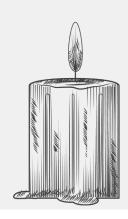
Zayd S. Kaylani, M.D., husband of Belinda Postman Kaylani '67

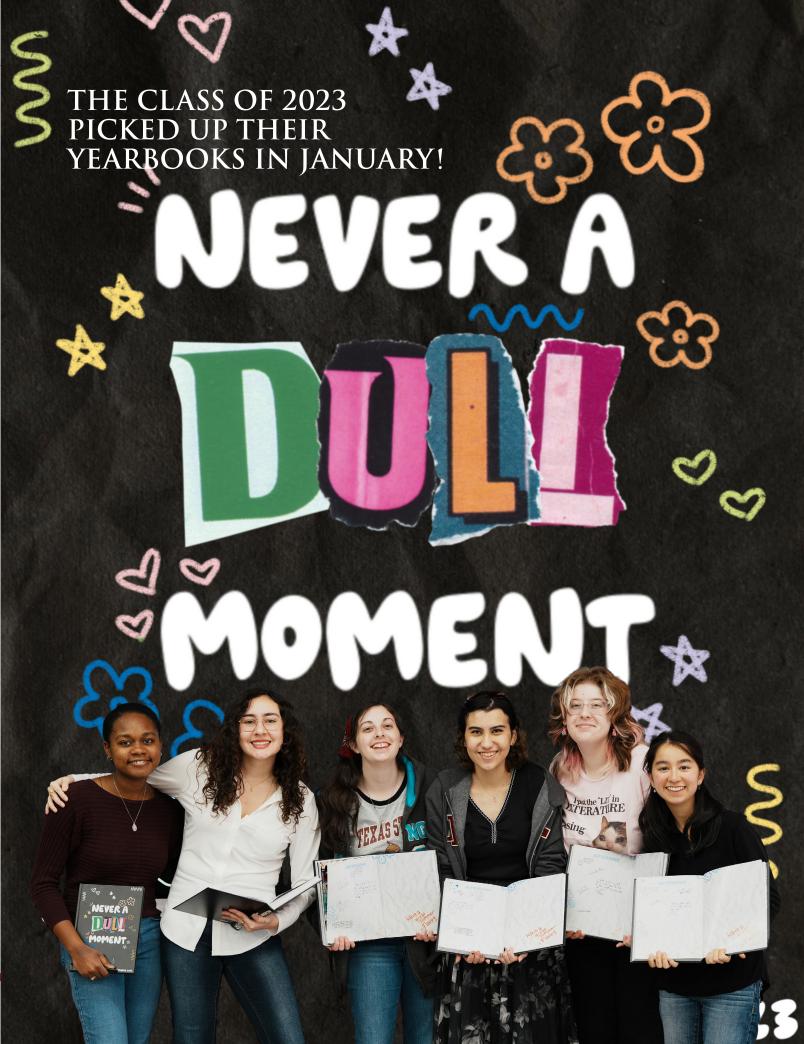
Lois Marie Cullen Keith '58

Gregoria Garcia Kelly '51, aunt of Teresa Ramirez '62 and Mary Helen Ramirez Lopez '63

Carolyn Cavanaugh Marrero, '57

Evelyn Francis Ohel Roberts '62







# SISTERHOOD: 150 YEARS STRONG

In 1873, when Incarnate Word Academy was founded by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, the group was bonded by their shared faith and mission. Through mutual support, grit and determination, those Sisters not only established Houston's first Catholic school, but created an atmosphere of Sisterhood that has inspired student success for more than 150 years.

Today, whenever alumnae or current students are asked to describe the top characteristics of IWA, the term "Sisterhood" is a unanimous response. As Senior Class President Lauren Gentry exclaims on page 16, "You can't beat the Sisterhood at IWA!"

"The relationships I built during my four years at IWA are for a lifetime, and are honestly more of a sisterhood than anything else. We have attended each other's weddings, become mothers together, cried, laughed and cheered each other on over the last 22 years, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Not only do we as classmates remain close, but I am also still in touch with some of the faculty who impacted my life as a young student. I have continued to go back and visit as the years have passed and still feel like a part of me remains forever at the 609."

- Manuelita "PJ" Barnett '02

"Good relationships are everything! They give us a safe space to share our joys, our fears, our burdens and our dreams--to see the face of God.They help us to grow. At IWA, the Sisterhood builds lasting relationships among students. We are so fortunate to have a loving community here that is supportive, favoring encouragement over competition, bonding over isolation. I see IWA as a place to make forever friends. What a blessing!"

- Sister Lauren Beck, C.V.I., President

"There is no other opportunity to experience success in the classroom quite like here at IWA. Our students rely on the Sisterhood bonds we encourage among our students. As principal, I am a witness to the encouragement and support given to one another in the classroom, while partnering for a project, and during other learning times throughout the day each and every day. Our students are connected through Falcon Families of all classifications with differing opportunities to lead in courses, sports, clubs, and other student organizations. This Sisterhood experience allows them to continue to foster relationships at school and even beyond graduation. It is imperative that we build on positive successes and encourage one another to overcome the obstacles experienced in life so that we can share in the celebration of one another as God has planned."

- Principal Cathy Stephen

### 2022-2023 SNAPSHOT

During the fiscal year 2022-2023, our revenue from tuition and fees represented 70% of our total revenue. The cost to educate each student is \$25,508 while tuition was \$17,150. The difference is made up through fundraising and the generosity of donors.

### **REVENUES**

\$ 4,307,125
\$ 1,381,000
\$ 434,643
\$ 6,122,768
\$ \$ \$

### **EXPENSES**

Salaries and Benefits (67%)	\$ 4,853,055
Education (26%)	\$ 1,837,136
Administrative (5%)	\$ 347,965
Fundraising (2%)	\$ 179,600
TOTAL	\$ 7,217,756

### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

General Scholarship Fund	\$ 3,325,021
Named Scholarships	\$ 3,623,521

Richard Adkins Scholarship

Vera Hope Barbosa Scholarship

Joseph Cahill Scholarship

Sister Brigid Cummins Scholarship

Gil and Chris Dieteman Scholarship

Billie and Ann Ellis Scholarship

Guokas Girls' Scholarship

Knight-Powell Scholarship

Patricia Dossman Kubin '50 Scholarship

Most Rev. John McCarthy Scholarship

Sr. Brendan O'Donnell Scholarship

Sister Virginia O'Donnell Scholarship

Bernice Stansy Purcell Scholarship

Christi Quinn Scholarship

Hugh Rafferty Scholarship

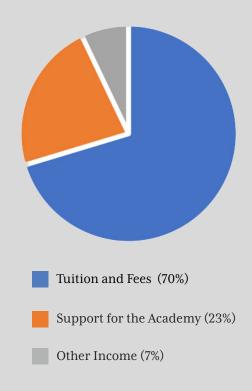
Most Rev. Vincent Rizzotto Scholarship

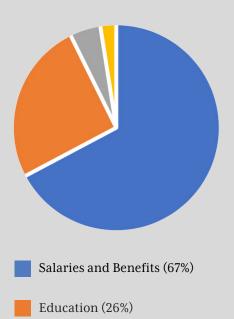
Bishop George A. Sheltz Memorial Scholarship

Margaret Sheltz Scholarship

Perry Dean Thomas Scholarship

TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS \$ 6,948,542





Administrative (5%)

Fundraising (2%)

### ANNUAL FUND

Throughout our 150-year history, Incarnate Word Academy has been blessed to have the support of many generous benefactors including the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, foundations, board members, alumnae, families, faculty, staff, and friends. Each individual gift not only supports the current students, but also ensures that the traditions and values of Incarnate Word Academy will continue for generations to come. We are so thankful for these gifts and proud to recognize the donors whose names are listed on the following pages. The following donors contributed to the Academy between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

#### SISTER'S LEGACY CIRCLE

#### \$15,000+

Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word

Harry S. and Isabel C. Cameron Foundation Sacred Heart Society of Little York

The Hildebrand Foundation

### MISSION CIRCLE

\$10,000 - \$14,999

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Fabrice Dehais

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Deborah and Russell Thoede

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Danielle Torres '09

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Haley Turner '17

Lauren M. Turner '17

Mary Turner '22

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Familia Flores Mendoza

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Caroline and John Gardner

Kady Gidney '23

Reagan Hucke

Donna and Phillip Hunt

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Tina and Joshua Kahn



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Cheri Van Hoeven

Mynette Vanacor

Liliana Wagner

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Lea Weatherall

Mary Ann Weishaupt '48

Christine Westman

Cathlyn Binder Widner '56

Bessie Adams Wilhelm '60

Rosemary Bua Williams '67

Laureta Williams-Cuny '54

Ioshua Wilson

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100% Faculty and Staff Participation

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Christina and Fernando Navarro

Nyamekye and Jason Peugh

Hieu and Diep Phan

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Mynette Vanacor

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Rebecca and Paul Hanks

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Joellen and William Hunter

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Gabriella Lopez '24

Flor and David Martinez

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Jane and Jim McMahon

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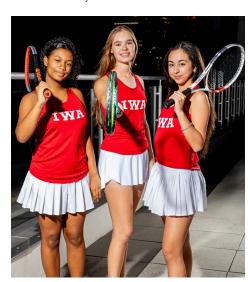
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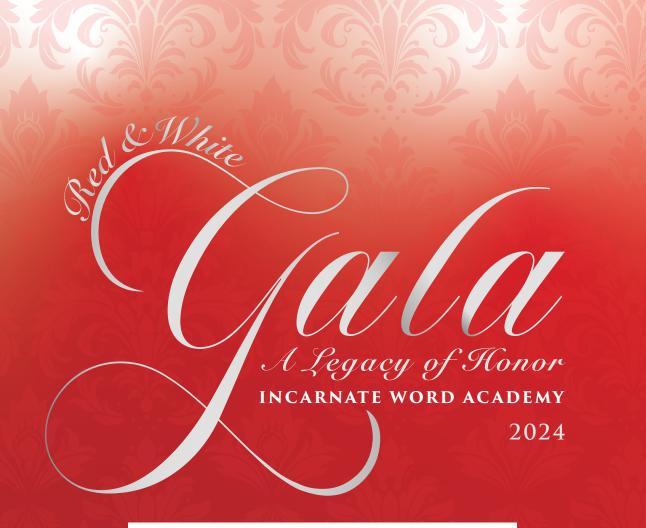
Sandy and Bob Sweeney Lesli andi Kurt Tentinger Yvonne and Raymond Turner Darlene Hanks Villarreal '77 Theresa Rose Wagner '77

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