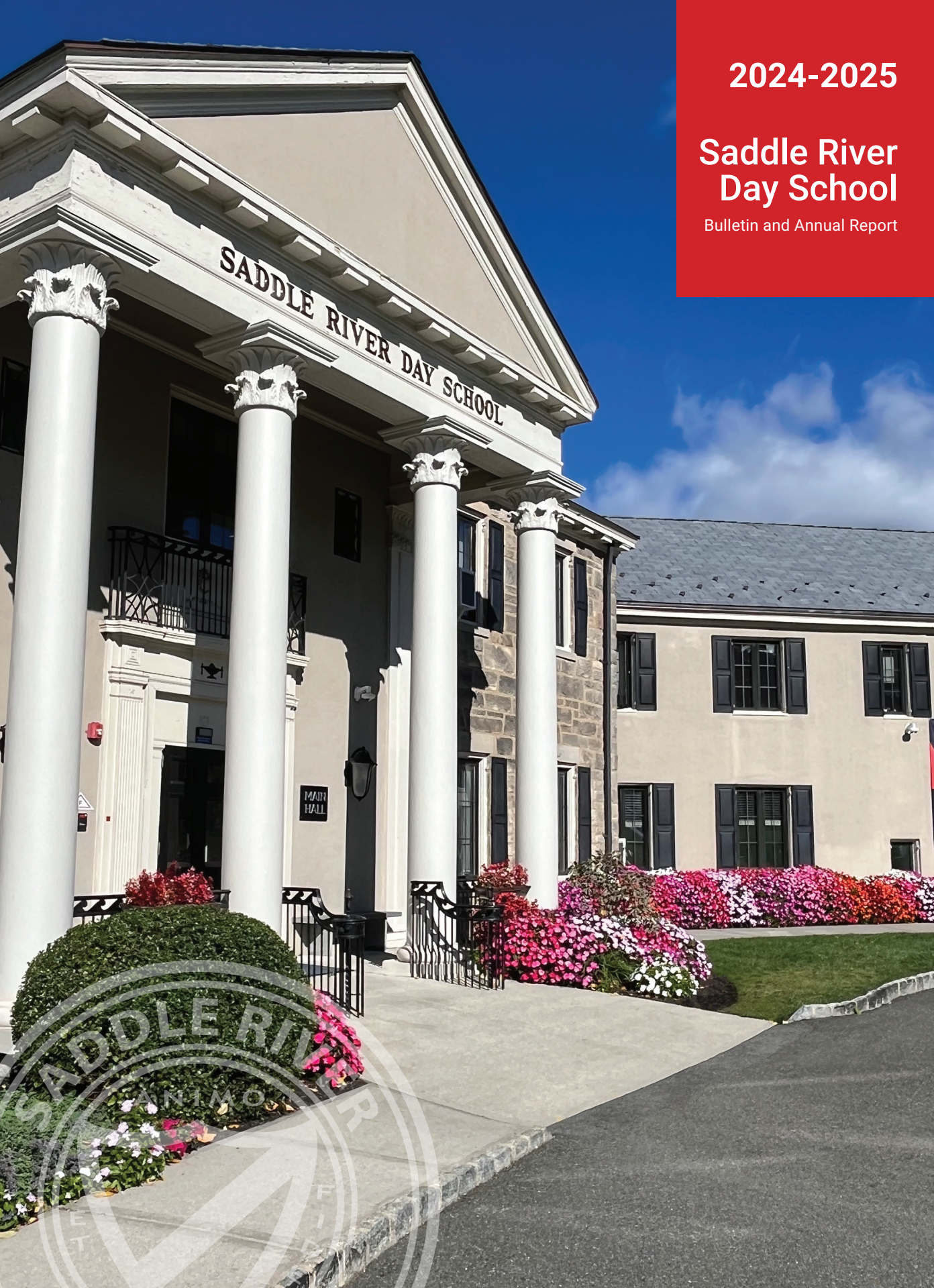


2024-2025

# Saddle River Day School

Bulletin and Annual Report





# 2024-2025 Board of Trustees

## Executive Committee

- Mr. Wes Powell – President
- Mrs. Kimberly Lawrie – Vice President
- Mr. Scott Braen – Secretary
- Mr. Rosario Ruffino – Treasurer
- Mr. Bryan Hekemian ’83 – Officer

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- Mr. Abe Han
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- Mr. William Cassidy III
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- Mr. Lawrence C. Raia
- Dr. Mary Clark Romney ’67
- Mr. Lawrence Salameno (deceased)
- Mr. Robert Sivori
- Mr. Stuart Steckler
- Mr. Edward Tafaro

## Founders

- Mr. John & Mrs. Diane Alford (both deceased)

## SRDS Board of Trustees

The Trustees of Saddle River Day School provide commitment and leadership for the advancement of the School's mission, vision, and growth, as well as the preservation of the School's rich legacy.

In partnership with the Head of School, the Board of Trustees oversees and ensures all legal obligations are met and works to build a strong endowment by supporting annual fundraising and capital campaigns. The Board plays a vital role in guiding Saddle River Day School forward and ensuring that the institution is run with the utmost professionalism, while remaining at the forefront of educational and technological development.

The Board is comprised of parents, alumni, and community members with a deep affection, affiliation, and commitment to the school. They are highly skilled in their outside professions and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that allows them to work together toward the best interests of the school.



### OUR MISSION

We inspire each child to achieve personal and academic excellence and to become a caring and ethical contributor to society.

### OUR CORE VALUES

#### Everyone Counts:

At Saddle River Day School, all children and adults matter, their contributions are prized.

#### Love of Learning:

Saddle River Day School engenders a life long love of learning in our students with a caring and committed faculty, staff and administration.

#### Intellectual Risk-Taking:

Intellectual risk-taking is encouraged and celebrated through a nurturing, intimate environment that ensures the physical and emotional security of the child.

### CREDITS

Editor-In-Chief: Gretchen Lee Kuhlman

Design: Don Farrell Design

Photographers: Richard Formicola, Gretchen Lee Kuhlman, Neal Magnus, Susan Stava, Christy Van Buren

Special thanks to Beth Meleski for her insightful and keen contributions.



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# Empowering Students Through Innovation and Opportunity

Jalaj Desai, Head of School

This is an exciting era for Saddle River Day School! Our strong academic foundation, coupled with increasing enrollment and financial stability, reflects our commitment to excellence and the school's continued success.

Our dedication to providing an exceptional education is evident in the significant advancements we've made. The curriculum now includes more than 30 AP and college-level courses, along with accelerated math and science tracks in the Middle and Upper Schools. In the Lower School, we've introduced Dimensions Math, a comprehensive program designed to prepare students for pre-algebra by 6th grade. Additionally, we've expanded our electives to include cutting-edge subjects such as computer science, business and entrepreneurship, and multivariable calculus. These initiatives align with our mission to inspire students to be intellectual risk-takers while equipping them with a well-rounded, challenging education that sets the stage for lifelong success.

Our academic innovation extends to unique experiential programs across all divisions. The Gateway Diploma Program, developed after months of research and collaboration, allows Upper School students to specialize in academic tracks such as STEM, Entrepreneurship, Arts, Medicine, and Civic Engagement. Middle School students take



**"OUR ACADEMIC INNOVATION EXTENDS TO  
UNIQUE EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS ACROSS  
ALL DIVISIONS."**



part in the Capstone Project, where 100% of students conduct original research and present their year-long projects, guided by core values. In the Lower School, Project-Based Learning engages students in cross-curricular initiatives like running a restaurant or designing a zoo. Across all grades, students participate in various math, science, business, and arts competitions, fostering critical thinking and creativity.

To further enrich learning opportunities, the Coaching Academy and SRDS Music Institute provide after-school enrichment classes and one-on-one tutoring.

Our Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, established in 2019, empowers students to approach community and global issues as opportunities for innovation and design. This initiative emphasizes project-based, student-centered learning while encouraging collaboration across grade levels. We were proud recipients of the prestigious Edward E. Ford Foundation grant to expand these programs and advance our academic mission.

Building on this momentum, we introduced the Center for Technology and Computer Science (CTCS) and integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) into our educational framework. This cutting-edge initiative will create new standards in interactive and experiential learning, fostering a dynamic and diverse



academic environment. By incorporating AI, we aim to offer personalized learning experiences tailored to each student's unique style, pace, and interests. These advancements will also enable global collaboration with international students and educators, preparing SRDS students to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

As we look to the future, we are committed to creating the *campus of tomorrow*. This transformation will honor the vision of our founders, John and Diane Alford, as well as the teachers, administrators, trustees, and families who have shaped the thriving community we have today. My deepest gratitude goes to our Board President, Wes Powell, for his leadership and dedication, and to all who have contributed their time, talent, and resources to bring our vision to life. Now, we invite you to join us in this journey to build an even brighter future for Saddle River Day School as we continue to provide opportunities to transform today's students into tomorrow's leaders. 🌐





## Saddle River Day School Breaks Ground on the new Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship

Every day at Saddle River Day School, we create an entire experience designed for students to take charge of their future. Building an excellent education that will propel our students to success in college and beyond requires continual progress and innovation. On February 28th, the school held its groundbreaking for the **Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship**, a significant milestone in our commitment to educational excellence and student success.

The new Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship will serve as a hub for Upper School students, with cutting-edge science labs, collaborative workspaces, AI-driven educational environments, and specialty learning spaces. Designed to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and hands-on learning, the facility aligns with the school's vision of transforming the campus of today to build the leaders of tomorrow. The event also celebrated the generosity of donors who made this transformative project possible through the school's *Building the Future* capital campaign.

Head of School Jalaj Desai opened the ceremony with heartfelt gratitude to Saddle River Day's supporters, especially the Walsh family, saying: "This is not just a building; it is the beginning of something extraordinary. To the Walsh family, we extend our deepest appreciation. Your passion for education and commitment to empowering the next generation are truly inspiring. This hall will bear your name, but more importantly, it will reflect your spirit and unwavering belief that every child should have the opportunity to explore, grow, and achieve greatness."

Dr. Kristen Walsh's husband, Francis J. Walsh III, was joined by their son Francis J. Walsh IV, who added: "Education has always been at the heart of our family's mission. We firmly believe that knowledge is the foundation of opportunity, and opportunity is what allows young minds to dream, innovate, and shape a better future. This school is more than just a new building; it is a symbol of hope, learning, and the boundless potential of every student who walks through its doors. Our greatest wish is that

each student who studies here feels empowered to chase their dreams, overcome challenges, and make a meaningful impact on the world." Saddle River's Mayor, Albert Kurpis, spoke of the "symbiotic partnership between the school and the Saddle River community" and the "lasting impact that the school would have for years to come." Building and Grounds Committee Chair and Trustee Bryan Hekemian '83 expressed his gratitude for the impact the school had on his life when he attended. Finally, SRDS Board President Weston Powell issued a call to action for the future sustainability and growth of SRDS as an "exceptional institution." The *Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship* is expected to open in the Fall of 2026, and will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Saddle River Day School as it continues to grow and innovate.



### Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship

- 33,000 square feet of new instructional space
- Advanced, modern faculty resources to provide outstanding academic experiences
- Exhibition space in the lobby
- Upper School commons
- Open, multi use spaces to foster collaboration and social connection
- New admissions center
- Support for advanced math and science courses, applied physics and engineering, and AP courses
- A home for AI discovery, robotics, a financial lab, Coaching Academy, Saturday STEAM Bootcamps and more
- 15 additional classrooms
- 4 state-of-the-art science labs
- 3 specialty learning spaces

In addition, a brand new fitness center was completed in the fall of 2024 and a new turf field is slated to begin construction in the spring of 2025, along with increased parking. These enhancements will separate SRDS from its competitors and allow us to provide the absolute best for our students, our faculty and our community. At the end of the day, it's about our students – those who came before, those here today, and those yet to come; education that teaches our youth how to lead lives of character, purpose and achievement. 🏆

**INNOVATORS** have an entrepreneurial mindset.

**THINKERS** learn and grow by doing.

**LEADERS** excel with confidence.







Class of 2024 College Acceptances

The Class of 2024 was accepted to a list of schools as varied and accomplished as they are. The strength of college guidance at SRDS is in the care and attention given to each student and family. At SRDS, our families receive expert college guidance from seasoned professionals that gives our students an advantage in the college admissions process. Over 100 colleges and universities visit the SRDS campus each fall, and many of the best schools in the country admit our students because they know an SRDS graduate is an inspired learner who is confident, creative and accomplished. 61% of our students enrolled at a first-choice college through Early Decision or Early Action.

Congratulations to the Class of 2024!

Arcadia University (1)	Indiana University (Bloomington) (5)	Rowan University (1)	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2)
Arizona State University (1)	James Madison University (1)	Rutgers University (New Brunswick) (2)	University of Maryland (College Park) (1)
Babson College (2)	Lafayette College (1)	Sacred Heart University (3)	University of Massachusetts (Amherst) (1)
Barnard College (1)	Lehigh University (1)	Seton Hall University (1)	University of Massachusetts (Boston) (1)
Bates College (1)	Loyola University Maryland (2)	Siena College (1)	University of Miami (1)
Binghamton University (2)	Lycoming College (1)	Skidmore College (1)	University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) (2)
Boston College (1)	Manhattan College (2)	Stevens Institute of Technology (2)	University of Mississippi (2)
Boston University (3)	Michigan State University (2)	Stony Brook University (3)	Villanova University (4)
Bryn Mawr College (1)	Monmouth University (1)	SUNY at Albany (1)	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1)
Butler University (1)	Montclair State University (1)	SUNY at New Paltz (1)	Washington University in St. Louis (3)
College of Charleston (1)	Muhlenberg College (1)	SUNY Oneonta (1)	Wellesley College (1)
Colorado College (1)	New Jersey Institute of Technology (2)	SUNY University at Buffalo (2)	Wesleyan University (1)
Dickinson College (1)	New York University (6)	Syracuse University (3)	William Paterson University of New Jersey (1)
Drew University (1)	North Carolina State University (1)	The College of New Jersey (1)	
Drexel University (2)	Pace University (New York City) (2)	The Ohio State University (3)	
Elon University (1)	Penn State University (Abington) (1)	The University of Alabama (1)	
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (1)	Penn State University (University Park) (10)	The University of Tampa (2)	
Emerson College (1)	Point Park University (1)	Tufts University (2)	
Fairleigh Dickinson University (1)	Princeton University (1)	Union College (1)	
Florida State University (1)	Providence College (1)	United States Naval Academy (1)	
Fordham University (2)	Purdue University (2)	University of California (Irvine) (1)	
George Washington University (2)	Quinnipiac University (2)	University of Colorado Boulder (1)	
High Point University (1)	Ramapo College of New Jersey (1)	University of Connecticut (2)	
Hobart and William Smith Colleges (1)	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1)	University of Delaware (3)	
Hofstra University (1)	Rochester Institute of Technology (1)	University of Hartford (1)	

The following awards were given to members of the senior class during the Senior Awards Ceremony in May.

Head of School Honor Roll

Julianna Almeida, Theodore Basa, Luke Esteban, Ansh Ghayalod, Lucia Guardascione, John Ligresti, Elizabeth Missbrenner, Kateryna Peresvvetova, Junyu James Tong

English Award of Excellence

John Ligresti

Mathematics Award of Excellence

Junyu James Tong

Science Award of Excellence

Lucia Guardascione, John Ligresti

World Language Award of Excellence

Payton Lieberman

History and Social Sciences Award of Excellence

Michael Pasenchuk

Visual Arts Award of Excellence

Kateryna Peresvvetova

Performing Arts Award of Excellence

Kateryna Peresvvetova

Female Athlete of the Year

Nia Carrera

Male Athlete of the Year

Maximilian Rathod

Senior Outstanding Improvement in the Upper School Award

Luke Esteban

The Jeremy L. Glick Freedom Award

Maximilian Rathod

The SRDS Humanitarian Award

Theodore Basa

The Upper School Citizenship Cup

Lucia Guardascione

The Head of School Award

Jacob Ulrey

The SRDS Scholar

John Ligresti

SRDS Lifer

Alex Hollis

Officers for the Class of 2024

President – Theodore “Teddy” Basa  
Secretary – Kateryna “Kate” Peresvvetova  
Treasurer – Deirdre Dasil

Student Council Executive Officers 2023-2024

President – Lucia Guardascione  
Vice President – John Ligresti  
Secretary – Faith Williamson  
Treasurer – Alessia Riera





# A Tribute to the Class of 2024

The Class of 2024 celebrated together in May as they anticipated their upcoming Graduation on the 22nd. The class enjoyed time together at the Blue & White Senior Breakfast, waved their final farewells to the rest of the student body in a campus drive-by, pulled off a few Senior pranks (with the exception of one), and spent time bonding with their classmates and families at a celebratory dinner at Seasons restaurant. It was a wonderful way to send them off to the next chapter of their journey and we look forward to seeing what these newest alumni of Saddle River Day will accomplish in college and beyond!



## The Class of 2024 Signs Twelve to Continue Athletic Careers in College

- DI**  
**Cristina Parrella** - Princeton University; basketball  
**Aliyah Strickland** - High Point University; rowing  
**Julianna Almeida** - United States Naval Academy; basketball  
**Abbi Holland** - Manhattan College; lacrosse  
**Nia Carrera** - Boston University; lacrosse  
**Lucia Guardascione** - Binghamton University; lacrosse  
**McAllister (MC) Salter** - Siena College; lacrosse
- DIII**  
**Ron Lyubman** – Tufts University; swimming  
**Jeremiah Samuel** – Penn State University, Abington Campus; basketball  
**Ansh Ghayalod** – New York University; fencing  
**Deirdre Dasil** – Bryn Mawr College; volleyball  
**Jake Ulrey** – Dickinson College; tennis





*Honoring Excellence:*  
**Distinguished Alumni Award  
Presented to Cameron Chuback '14**

A thirty-seven veteran, retired SRDS English teacher Kathy Philipp presented the Distinguished Alumni Award to Cameron Chuback '14 at the reunion event on September 29th. Here's what she shared:

"Cameron Chuback entered my AP English class impeccably dressed and always ready with witty, insightful comments that added depth to our literary discussions. From the moment he set foot on campus, his poise, sophistication, and natural leadership abilities were unmistakable. A highly dedicated Honors student, Cameron took on numerous roles at SRDS. He served as a peer leader, showcased his talent on stage in several theater productions—including "Rent" and "Lend Me a Tenor" where he earned a Metro Award—and excelled in Varsity tennis, both as a singles and doubles player. He and his doubles partner claimed victory at the Bergen County Championships during his senior year.

After graduating from Saddle River Day, Cameron attended New York University, where he earned his B.A. in English and American Literature—an achievement that comes as no surprise—with a minor in Business Studies, graduating cum laude. He then moved to the South to pursue both his J.D. and MBA at the University of Miami, where he excelled as Valedictorian of his class and graduated cum laude from the law school. During his time there, Cameron served as the Eleventh Circuit Editor for the University of Miami Law Review, contributing two published articles.



Throughout his academic journey, Cameron volunteered at Philip's Academy Charter School in Newark, completed internships with the Office of the New York State Attorney General, the University of Miami Health System, and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, all while also engaging in pro bono work.

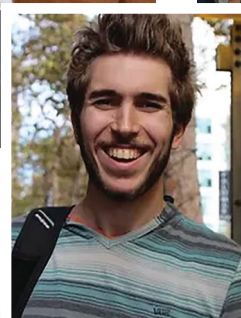
Cameron was an attorney at Fox Rothschild LLP in Miami, FL for two years where he focused on corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and



securities. He now serves as a Business Development Specialist for VitasupportMD. He recently married his wonderful wife, Maggie, who is also an attorney at one of Miami's leading law firms.

It is an honor to present Cameron Chuback with our Distinguished Alumni Award. He truly does represent Saddle River Day School's mission of 'achieving personal and academic excellence' and 'becoming a caring and ethical contributor to society.' Congratulations Cameron!" 🎉

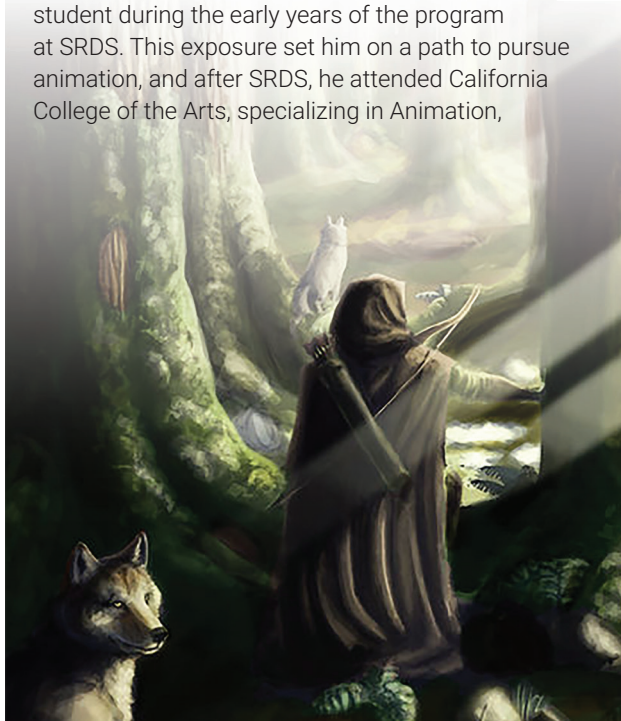




## A Celebration of the Arts

### Willi Anton '14

Willi Anton was a highly talented graphic arts student during the early years of the program at SRDS. This exposure set him on a path to pursue animation, and after SRDS, he attended California College of the Arts, specializing in Animation,



post grad career at Wevr as an Animator/Motion Capture Actor, creating animated content for the Harry Potter VR experiences; *Chaos at Hogwarts* and *Wizards Take Flight*. Willi has also worked with The Third Floor Inc. doing animation for Marvel's *Ant-man & the Wasp: Quantumania* and with DreamWorks Animation as a trainer. Most recently, Willi completed the Unreal Animation Fellowship and is a proud badge holder. He also enjoys teaching Character Animation at the college Gnomon in Hollywood where he lives with his wife Faustina and their pet rabbit Bourbon.



Interactive Technology, Video Graphics and Special Effects. He started his career credits as a student by producing and animating an award-winning short film called *"Brush, A Fox Tale."* After earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts, he began his



### Jared Fink '14

Jared Fink is no stranger to music. Classically trained in piano and trumpet as a child, Jared shifted to studying Jazz piano as a

teen, which began a deeper relationship with music for him. Jared's immense talents were on full display during his years at SRDS as he performed in the Men's Choir, Chorus, Show Choir and numerous theater productions. His role in "Rent" earned him a nomination for the "Actor in a Lead Role" award at the 2014 Metropolitan High School Theater Awards. Jared was also a keyboardist in the Rockland Youth Jazz Ensemble and during college, played as an accompanist for Ithaca College's musical theater and Jazz Vocal Ensemble. He currently works as a financial planner for Planning Alliance, a local company that provides comprehensive wealth and risk management solutions to individuals, businesses, and family offices across the country, but makes time to play as often as he can, including sitting in with



the Rockland Youth Jazz Ensemble as a volunteer accompanist. Jared says he is so thankful for his time at Saddle River Day and how it helped to shape who he is today. 🎷



Each of these Hall of Fame inductees contributed significantly to the ongoing success of the REBEL athletics program. SRDS athletics have seen standout moments across the years, including the thriving soccer program led by former Athletic Director Joe Augieniello in the '80s and '90s, the golf team's Bergen County and State Championship victories in 2009, and consistently competitive boys and girls tennis teams at the state, county and league levels. Now, for the first time in the school's history, additional SRDS teams—volleyball, basketball, lacrosse, and soccer—have risen to new levels of competitiveness. True to the SRDS REBEL spirit, many of these athletes competed in multiple sports, and in doing so, elevated the program across the board.

*Lee A. Wilson Athletic Hall of Fame  
Inducts Five from the Class of 2018:*

**Caroline “CC” Carrera, Damien Giannotti, Garrett Kuhlman, Michaela McMahon, Alexa Tsahalis**

The women's soccer program began to build the foundation toward future success under the direction of current SRDS A.D. PJ Petrow, winning their first State Section Title in 2019. The Rebels also won their first Bergen County Basketball Championship and the North Jersey Non-Public B Sectional Basketball Championship in 2016 and have continued as a highly competitive program in New Jersey and in the tri-state area. Since then, they have gone on to win nine consecutive Bergen County titles, breaking the previous Bergen County record held by Paramus Catholic. Most recently, the women's soccer program, under the coaching of PJ Petrow, took the NJIC title in 2024 with an undefeated record in the league.

In addition, the newly formed girls lacrosse program experienced a meteoric rise under the coaching leadership of Paul and Karen McMahon. Led by



sisters Izzy and All-Americans Dani and Michaela McMahon, the women's lacrosse team defeated lacrosse power house

Mountain Lakes to win their first ever Section 1, Group 1 NJSIAA State Championship. CC, Michaela and Alexis were all highly contributing members of the lacrosse team, in addition to playing soccer and basketball.

The men's basketball program also began to experience great success. Damien and Garrett were both instrumental members of the basketball program that saw a bid in the Bergen County Jamboree and an NJIC Patriot League Championship with a perfect 16-0 league record, ending the season with a 20-5



record overall. Both of them were key components in the soccer, lacrosse and track programs during high school.

These five athletes represent the best of what it means to be a “REBEL.” More importantly, their success didn't stop after high school. Each of them have gone on to establish themselves as confident and accomplished in their own rights, excelling in their young careers and continuing to carry the Rebel spirit with them. Caroline Carrera had an outstanding lacrosse career at the University of Vermont, earning accolades like America East Defender of the Year in 2023. She's now coaching at the University of Oregon, where she helped guide the Ducks to their first winning season since 2017.

Damien Giannotti pursued Finance at Providence College and remained involved in sports through intramurals. He now works as an auditor for BNY Mellon in NYC.

Garrett Kuhlman attended the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University, where he stayed connected to basketball as a team manager for the men's team while pursuing his degree. He is currently a Customer Success Manager for a startup company Fieldtech Software in NYC, and both he and Damien continue playing basketball in men's leagues in Hoboken.

After SRDS, Michaela McMahon continued her career playing lacrosse at UPenn where she received an Honorable Mention (All-Ivy) and helped win a Gold Medal at the 2019 U19 World Championships with Team USA. The 2020 season was canceled due to COVID and Michaela transferred to the University of Southern California to complete her education, where older sisters Gabby and Izzy also played lacrosse. She is currently a Retail Marketing Associate at LEAP in NYC, a company that specializes in all aspects of retail marketing on a national level.

Alexa Tsahalis played lacrosse at Villanova, earning a spot on the All-BIG EAST Second Team. She studied Marketing at Villanova's School of Business and now works as a Marketing Analyst at American Express in NYC.

We applaud their dedication both on and off the field; each has left a lasting impact on SRDS, both in and out of the classroom. Their determination, compassion, discipline, and leadership were strengthened through their experiences as student-athletes at SRDS, supported by coaches and faculty who continually encouraged them to excel. 🏆





## Empowering Education through Innovation

AI at the Heart of Learning: Saddle River Day School's Futuristic Approach

Preparing **students** not just for college, but for life beyond.

**AI-powered** interactive tools create engaging and dynamic learning environments.

[Let's Explore](#)

Revolutionizing learning experiences with innovative features

## Customized Learning Journeys with Interactive Environments and AI Insights

### Teacher's AI Assistants:

Our platform features AI assistants to help teachers with lesson planning, grading, and educational content creation, significantly enhancing teaching efficiency.

### Interactive Learning Tools:

Engage students with a range of interactive tools, from multimedia content to collaborative projects, encouraging active participation and deeper comprehension.

### Parental Involvement and Monitoring:

Features for parental involvement allow monitoring of progress, fostering a comprehensive educational experience that bridges home and school learning.

## AI Advancements in the Classroom: Enhancing Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum Innovation

By Roman Paolucci  
SRDS Computer Science Teacher & AI Integrator



The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the classrooms at Saddle River Day School has ushered in a new era of educational transformation, enhancing both instructional efficiency and student engagement. Through sophisticated AI tools like SRDS.ai, teachers are equipped to streamline daily tasks—lesson planning, grading, and progress tracking—allowing for a shift in focus toward creating a deeply personalized learning experience for each student. This increased efficiency translates into valuable time for teachers to engage with students in ways that enrich comprehension and accelerate mastery.

These AI tools enable tailored content that reflects the individual interests and learning styles of each student, creating an adaptable and responsive classroom environment. Lessons and exercises are customized to incorporate familiar, relatable examples, sparking curiosity and enhancing retention. By continuously monitoring student

performance, these tools offer real-time insights into individual learning trajectories, allowing educators to identify and address knowledge gaps as they arise. This approach not only deepens foundational understanding but also builds confidence, allowing students to progress toward more advanced concepts with a solid grasp of essential material.

For educators, the implementation of SRDS.ai and other advanced AI resources also presents new avenues for professional development. Teachers at SRDS have access to specialized training in AI integration, equipping them with the skills to infuse AI into their curriculum creatively and effectively. This training enables educators to enhance their curriculum design, elevate project-based learning, and cultivate a more interactive classroom experience that

mirrors real-world applications. By fostering a culture of professional growth, SRDS empowers its faculty to remain at the cutting edge of educational innovation, capable of continually evolving their teaching practices to meet the demands of an AI-enhanced educational landscape.

Complementing this AI-driven instructional model, SRDS offers a suite of advanced computer science courses that extend well beyond the typical high school curriculum. Classes in Natural Language Processing, Data Science, and Artificial Intelligence provide students with hands-on experience in fields that are shaping modern industries. These post-AP courses expose students to complex concepts typically reserved for higher education, preparing

them to navigate and contribute to an AI-driven world with a depth of knowledge rarely found among high school graduates.

Through the integration of these sophisticated AI tools and the development of forward-thinking educational practices, Saddle River Day School exemplifies a modern, adaptable approach to learning. This commitment to innovation not only prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing technological landscape but also positions teachers and students as leaders in AI-enhanced education, creating a lasting impact on the future of learning.

### Accurate Student Assessments:

Leveraging AI for in-depth student assessments, our system identifies individual interests and learning gaps, tailoring lessons to each student's unique needs and interests.

### AI-Powered Personalization:

SRDS.ai customizes learning experiences by adapting to each student's learning pace and style, ensuring a highly individualized educational journey.

### Differentiated Learning Support:

SRDS.ai recognizes the diverse learning speeds and styles of students, providing content that aligns with each student's specific trajectory.

### Instant Assignments and Grading:

Streamline the evaluation process with AI-driven instant assignment creation and grading, allowing for more timely feedback and continuous learning.





## How Saddle River Day School Offers Insight into Navigating the Complex College Admissions Landscape

Over the past five years, the college admissions process has undergone enormous changes; submitting test scores was optional but now it might not be anymore, AI has entered the conversation and the future of the college essay is in doubt, the value of Advanced Placement classes and tests has been questioned, and the cost of a college education has continued to increase.

For parents and students, the constantly shifting landscape of college admissions has become even more stressful and uncertain. Which is why it's comforting to have a knowledgeable, experienced partner for a process and choice that will certainly be one of the most consequential of most high school student's lives up to this point. Beginning this fall at Saddle River Day School, there will be not one, but two full time college admissions counselors in the College Counseling Office to help families navigate the process successfully.

Most Saddle River Day School families are familiar with Director of College Counseling, Karen Ferretti. Last fall, she was joined full time in the CCO by Ms. Jackie Williams. A veteran on both sides of the college admissions process, Jackie comes to Saddle River Day from Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School where she has worked since 2022. Prior to that,

Jackie spent time in college admissions at Stevens Institute of Technology, the College of Mount Saint Vincent, and NYU. She has an undergraduate degree from Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, and a Master's Degree in public administration from NYU. Her extensive knowledge and her network of contacts make her an invaluable and welcome addition to the Saddle River Day School community.

Karen and Jackie have already been hard at work, devising a framework within which they will have the opportunity to really get to know each SRDS Upper School student on an individual basis. Because seniors are so deep into the admissions process, Karen will be their main point person. But Jackie will be teaching the Junior's fall seminar and then moving on to working with the Sophomores as they start their college process each winter, when Karen transitions to instruct the Junior seminar. Their intention is to have a comprehensive understanding of each student's academic record, extracurriculars, and personality in order to help develop a list of colleges and universities that suit their unique needs and preferences.

So how does a student begin to narrow down their choices, and what exactly is the latest on what's happening with all the changes in the college admissions process?



Karen Ferretti says the best way for students to start to understand their choices for college is still to visit the campuses. Students will very quickly begin to identify the factors that will be important to them during their process. These factors include, but are not limited to: location, distance from home, degrees conferred, research opportunities, campus culture, facilities, investment in career counseling services, and cost. Karen says that often, the university of a student's dreams is just that - a dream. When faced with the reality of a campus in a rural area that's difficult to travel to, or an urban area without a true campus, or a campus that's sprawling (or too compact), students will reevaluate their preferences and priorities. It is the ultimate goal of the College Counseling Office to educate students enough that they go into the application process with more than one ideal school. To this end, Karen and Jackie will be taking the entire Junior class to NYU so they can experience an information session and tour as they begin their process.

There is also, according to Ms. Ferretti, a trend back toward requiring ACT or SAT test scores as schools shrink their admissions departments and need to efficiently differentiate between applicants. She suggests that the fears about AI taking the place of a good, old fashioned personal essay, crafted by a student, are premature. It's still pretty easy for a savvy admissions counselor to tell the difference between an essay written by a student, a robot, or a well-meaning parent. Advanced Placement (AP) classes will still exist and, she suggests, even more of

them might be developed as colleges and universities grapple with how to value these test scores and assess college credit for them.

She hopes that the oversaturation of applications to the same small number of well-known schools will trickle down to students paying attention to often overlooked colleges that have interesting, innovative programs, committed and creative faculty and staff, or other unique, differentiating factors. To foster this, one of the first assignments for students in her seminar is for them to choose a lesser known college to research and present to their class. This exercise often leads students to discover a school (or schools) that would never have been on their radar otherwise.

In the end, the college application process is all about finding the place from which a student can launch their career. Karen and Jackie believe that Saddle River Day School students have a distinct advantage because in their classrooms and with their friends, SRDS students have developed an acute self-awareness, and a confidence in their intelligence that enables them to assess critically, question rigorously, and choose decisively. This is the hallmark of a Saddle River Day School education, and this is one of the many factors that set SRDS students apart from their peers. 🌟





## Discover the Saddle River Day Middle School Difference: **Where Growth Meets Opportunity**

The Middle School years are a time of enormous growth and change for our children. Cognitively, they are becoming more aware of the world around them and are able to grasp, and articulate, increasingly more intricate concepts and ideas. Academically, expectations as well as stakes are rising, and at the same time, their social interactions are changing in ways both big and small. It's a lot to handle and requires students to remain flexible, inquisitive, and open. It also requires their support systems to maintain continuity while also creating room for them to develop into the people they are becoming. Not only do SRDS Middle School faculty and administrators understand the complexity of the Middle School years, they welcome the challenge, and take great pleasure in helping each of their students achieve success in their own personal and particular ways.

The Middle School at Saddle River Day School has seen unprecedented growth in the past few years. Families who are new to SRDS still cite some of our traditional hallmarks like breadth of enrichment offerings, low student-to-faculty ratio, the tight-knit community, and opportunities to try new things as reasons their children have found their home at SRDS. But it's some of our signature academic and student-focused programs, along with new programs, designed to help students succeed and excel in high school, college, and beyond that have made the SRDS Middle School highly desirable, academically rigorous, and competitive with top Middle Schools all over the tri-state area.



As parents, it is both gratifying and comforting to know that our children have trustworthy adults in their lives who challenge, guide, teach, and care for them when we aren't around. This is the intention of the Middle School Advisory Program. Students meet regularly in small groups with a faculty or staff member who provides information, direction, and advice. Through field trips and overnights, students build community with their groups, and advisors have the benefit of getting to know their students as individuals outside the classroom setting. According to Middle School Head, Anastasia Kelly, the advisory program is "an extension of the SRDS value pillar that 'everyone counts.' The advisors are the point people who are really focused on student's social-emotional growth, and their academic path. Advisors learn their students' passions, skills, and talents and can guide them toward classes, extracurriculars, and enrichment opportunities that advance the big picture and help students plan their futures."

Students are able to participate in enrichment classes that can either deepen their knowledge and skills in an area of interest, or give them exposure to a new discipline they'd like to learn more about. Best of all Middle School students aren't required to choose between an athletic team and a club or an enrichment class. The Middle School schedule has



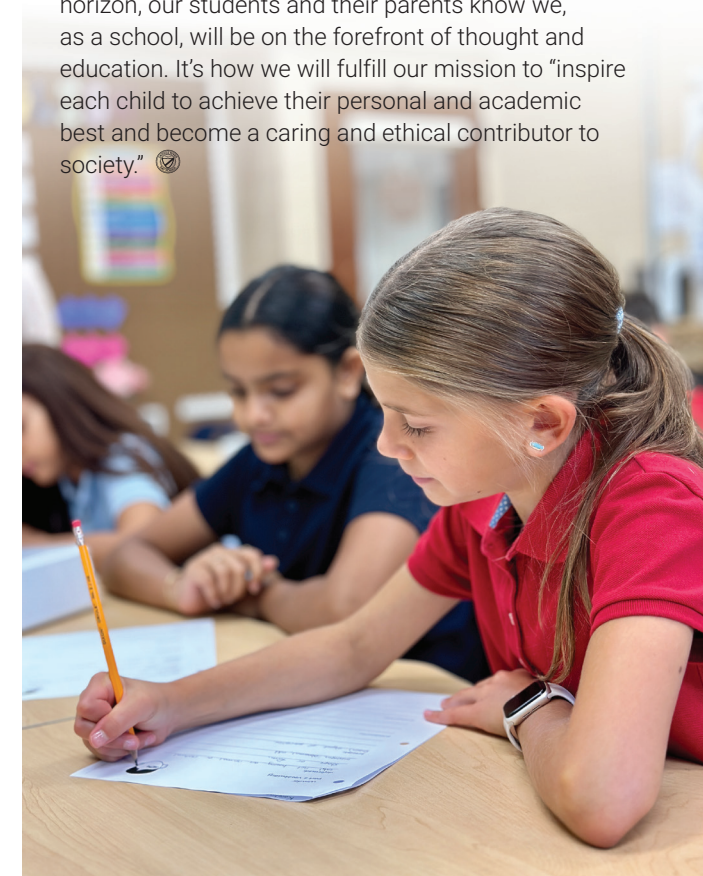
been specifically structured so they can do both. Because we know all our students are multi-faceted and deserve the opportunity to excel at both a sport and Odyssey of the Mind, or robotics, or debate. Or, they can try their hand at the performing or visual arts. Or, they can participate in non-competitive sports like bowling or fencing. The combinations and options are as varied and unique as our students.

In addition, students are encouraged to use their Middle School years to experiment and try new things. But for students who want to more deeply immerse themselves in the study of math or science, and who have demonstrated aptitude for higher level work, Saddle River Day School offers the opportunity to apply for an accelerated curriculum that will enable them to take advantage of upper and college level classes, as well as AP classes, once they reach the Upper School. Newer to the program is a selection of business, entrepreneurship, and computer science classes that also lay the groundwork for more advanced coursework in these disciplines once students reach the Upper School.

Regardless of the track our students are on, each Middle School student will participate in a multi-year research curriculum that culminates in an 8th Grade Capstone project that readies them for the demanding work and research that will be critical to their Upper School and college success. Students begin by mastering the fundamentals of research, gradually advancing to deeper analysis of information and sources. This journey culminates in a final presentation that addresses a problem within their chosen area of interest, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. With increasing emphasis on literacy and critical thinking skills for

college-bound students, Saddle River Day School equips its students with the tools they need to excel and thrive.

Research indicates that the success of first year college students directly correlates to the preparation they received in their pre-college years. It is also becoming evident that the skills students need must be embedded in their academic pursuits as early as possible. Saddle River Day School cultivates an environment of curiosity, innovation, imagination, experiential learning, and personal achievement, all within a supportive, family oriented community. In short, SRDS Middle Schoolers get 'big school opportunities' with all the benefits of a small school setting. With exciting new transformations on the horizon, our students and their parents know we, as a school, will be on the forefront of thought and education. It's how we will fulfill our mission to "inspire each child to achieve their personal and academic best and become a caring and ethical contributor to society." 🌟







## Creating Caring & Ethical Citizens

The Lower School's Project-Based Learning initiatives are a cornerstone of an SRDS education. Each grade participates in age-appropriate, yearlong, cross-curricular experiences that integrate both core subject and special area teachers. The 4th Grade monthly projects embody one of the school's core values of "creating caring and ethical citizens," as students embark on a journey of service, learning how small actions can create a ripple effect of kindness throughout their community. Through this experience, they have discovered firsthand that this value is more than just words—it's a way of life.



### September: A Lesson in Giving

The school year began with an inspiring presentation about fundraising and giving back. A guest speaker from St. Joseph's Hospital shared stories of how acts of generosity impact lives. Inspired, the students brainstormed ways to make a difference in their own community, setting the foundation for a year of service projects.



### October: Pink Pop-Up Shop

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the students launched the Pink Pop-Up Shop. They collaborated with the Graphics and Ideas Lab to design flyers, social media posts, and unique products to sell. The proceeds were donated to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. When the students handed over their check, they saw firsthand the impact of their efforts, reinforcing the power of collective action.



### November: Fighting Hunger

As Thanksgiving neared, the focus shifted to those struggling with food insecurity. Students organized a food drive, designing posters and emails to spread awareness. They took a field trip to the Ridgewood Food Pantry, where they stocked shelves, checked expiration dates, and learned about the families they were helping. Seeing the direct results of their work, they left with a renewed commitment to ongoing service.

### December: Spreading Holiday Cheer

During the holiday season, the students turned their attention to the children at St. Joseph's Hospital. They collected toys and created heartfelt cards to bring joy to young patients. The experience reminded them that even small gestures, like a handwritten note or a donated toy, could brighten someone's day.



### January: Preparing for More Impact

In the new year, the students dove into planning their upcoming fundraisers. Using the Graphics and IDEAS Lab, they designed promotional materials for two major events: Jump Rope for Heart and Pennies for Puppies. Through this process, they honed their leadership and teamwork skills, understanding the logistics of organizing a successful campaign.

### February: Compassion in Action

The month was packed with activities that combined fundraising with education. In Pennies for Puppies, students collected spare change to support The Seeing Eye, an organization that trains guide dogs for the visually impaired. They eagerly brought their collected coins to a coin drop and counted their donations before delivering them to the organization.

At the same time, they participated in Jump Rope for Heart, raising awareness for the American Heart Association. Through jump rope challenges, they learned about heart health while raising funds for cardiovascular research. The event was not just about fitness—it was about understanding the importance of helping others.

As the year progresses, SRDS students continue to see that being caring and ethical citizens means more than just donating—it means understanding the struggles of others, spreading awareness, and taking action. They have begun to understand that they are not only changing the lives of those they help, but are also transforming into young leaders, ready to make a lasting impact on the world. 🌍





## Inspiring the Next Generation: TEDxYouth@SRDS Celebrates a Decade of Ideas Worth Sharing

By Laura Hollis  
Director of Technology

The 10th annual TEDxYouth@SRDS event's theme was "TEDx: Ten Years of TED" and featured themes of XPloration, XPlanation and XPosition. Student speakers, performers and crew were all involved in making our tenth year a resounding success as they presented to SRDS students in grades 8-12 on April 16th.

Recognizing the power of young voices, TEDxYouth@SRDS provides a platform for students to share their "Ideas Worth Spreading." Launched 11 years ago by four Saddle River Day School Upper School students, this initiative encourages students at SRDS to challenge assumptions, engage in critical conversations, and make their perspectives known. Under the guidance of SRDS Director of Technology Laura Hollis, the program continues to thrive as a space where technical skills intersect with creative vision, empowering students to express their ideas and inspire meaningful action.

Each year, TEDxYouth@SRDS evolves as students bring fresh ideas, introduce new activities, and creatively expand the event's impact, making each iteration a unique reflection of their interests and innovations. The TED organization recently



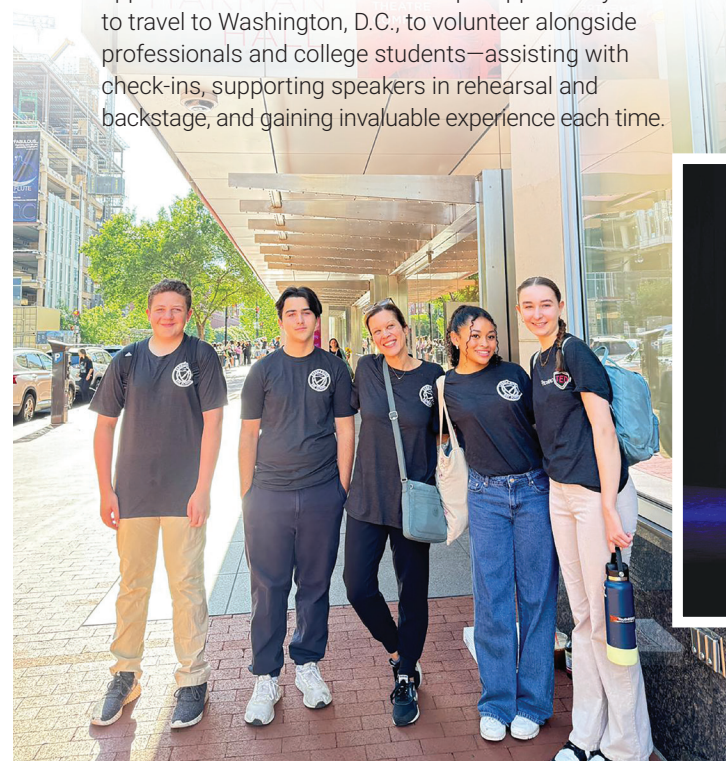
updated its tagline to "Ideas Change Everything," and TEDxYouth@SRDS aligns with this vision, emphasizing student ideas as catalysts for real-world impact and action.

The 11th annual TEDxYouth@SRDS event will be held on April 16, 2025, during the school day, bringing together students in grades 8-12 to experience talks and performances in the school's Performing Arts Center. Student leaders Jonathan Fromm, Bella Harrison, Mason Lusk, and Josie Brooks—returning TEDxYouth@SRDS speakers—are facilitating the program, which includes organizing talks, artistic performances, and production.

Planning begins each September, with students selecting their own topics and working alongside a faculty mentor. They curate the program, choose a theme, select a faculty speaker and a community keynote speaker, design the event logo, and manage all event-day details from production to the stage. Reflecting on their experience, SRDS seniors Jonathan Fromm and Annabelle Harrison shared, "TEDxYouth pushed us to step outside our comfort zone and explore topics we wouldn't have had the chance to before. More importantly, though, we learned about the power of advocacy when standing up for ourselves and others."

Giving a TEDx talk can be an incredibly powerful experience for student speakers, allowing them to practice research, writing, and public speaking skills in a real-world context. "TEDxYouth@SRDS has taught me to love public speaking. Before joining the club, I thought that people were either natural public speakers or they weren't. It's amazing to see how much improvement is possible with practice. Having delivered three TED talks, I'm now a confident public speaker and even get asked to speak at events in my community," says Josie Brooks, SRDS Junior. This experience is also valuable for students and faculty in the audience, who are exposed to these fresh perspectives and inspired by important messages about big ideas and their impact on the world and the future.

TEDxYouth@SRDS also has a long-standing relationship with TEDxMidAtlantic in Washington, D.C. From 2016 to 2019, and now again in 2024, SRDS upper schoolers have had the unique opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., to volunteer alongside professionals and college students—assisting with check-ins, supporting speakers in rehearsal and backstage, and gaining invaluable experience each time.



Reflecting on this opportunity, student volunteer Mason Lusk shared, "It was amazing to see our TEDx event compared to this larger one, and to connect with experts like the Surgeon General of the Army and NASA's Deputy Administrator." As Valentina Vasquez reflects, "I loved meeting speakers and seeing how they prepared, reminding me of the same mix of nerves and pride I felt as a TEDx speaker."

TED's tagline shift from "Ideas Worth Spreading" to "Ideas Change Everything" reflects its mission evolution from merely sharing ideas to empowering change. TEDxYouth@SRDS embraces this approach, encouraging students to tackle topics such as environmental challenges, mental health, and social justice. By using their voices to spark meaningful conversations and actions within the school and beyond, SRDS students embody the transformative power of ideas. 🌱

To view previous TEDxYouth@SRDS talks, visit our YouTube channel: TEDxYouth@SRDS







## Spotlight on Success

### Saddle River Day School Earns Highest Platinum Distinction on 2024 AP® School Honor Roll

Saddle River Day School earned a place on the prestigious AP® School Honor Roll for the 2023-24 school year for promoting a college-going culture, expanding opportunities for its students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness. SRDS received the **Platinum designation**, the highest of the AP® School Honor Roll's four levels of distinction, for exceeding thresholds as set by the College Board in:

**College Culture:** for the Platinum designation, 80% or more of the graduating class must have taken at least one AP Exam during high school. SRDS significantly surpassed this criteria with 100% of the graduating class taking at least one AP Exam.

**College Credit:** for the Platinum requirement, 50% or more of the graduating class must have scored a 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam during high school. SRDS exceeded this criteria with 83% percent of students earning a score of 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.

**College Optimization:** for Platinum Honors, the minimum requirement is that 15% or more of the graduating class must have taken five or more AP Exams during high school, with at least one of those exams taken in the 9th or 10th grade to ensure that students spread their AP experience across multiple years. SRDS significantly outperformed this requirement, with 44% of students meeting these criteria.



### Faith Williamson '25 Named National Merit Scholarship Finalist

Faith Williamson '25 has been named a NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP FINALIST in the 70th annual competition. Finalists qualified by taking the 2023 Preliminary SAT (PSAT) & National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST). Students and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors/ awards received. The nationwide pool of Finalists - representing less than 1% of high school seniors - includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state and is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors, without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin or religious preference. Congratulations to Faith on this prestigious and well-deserved accomplishment!

### Students Compete in New Jersey Regional Science Olympiad

Saddle River Day School proudly sent its first-ever Middle and Upper School teams to compete in the prestigious New Jersey Regional Science Olympiad, held at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Students competed in a diverse array of STEM-focused challenges including Codebusters, Disease Detectives, Geologic Mapping, Optics, Fabrication, Fossils, and Metric Mastery, testing the students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork in biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and earth science. With this successful start, the team is already setting its sights on bigger goals, including qualifying for the New Jersey state finals and, potentially, the national competition in the coming years.



### In other news...

Congratulations to the **RoboRebels** robotics team for their 2025 tournament victory, qualifying them for STATES! The team continues to be ranked as one of the top-contending teams in Bergen County and was recognized for their "ingenuity, creativity, and inventiveness" in their designs. The **Coding Club**, advised by Mr. Paolucci, won 2nd place out of 30 high school teams in Monmouth University's Hawk Hackathon programming competition! The Middle School **Odyssey of the Mind** team qualified for States after their tournament victory.



### Coaches PJ Petrow and Hank Saxon Honored for Exceptional Leadership

PJ Petrow Head, Athletic Director and Head Coach for the SRDS girls soccer program, was named the 2024-2025 North Jersey Interscholastic Conference (NJIC) Coach of the Year. Petrow has been the head coach since 2018. Adding to the honor, Coach PJ Petrow, was chosen to lead the Premier Team alongside Assistant Coach Hank Saxon. Chosen to represent SRDS and the All-NJIC Premier Team in the Girls Soccer All-Star Game were Olivia DiDomizio and Isabella Ratsprecher '25. In addition, Hank Saxon, who has served alongside Coach Petrow for eight years, was honored with the prestigious Dr. Gabe Vitalone Coaching Award. 🏆





## We Thank You, Kathy Philipp, for 37 Years of Transformative Teaching

*Presented by English Department Chair, Jennifer Maylath at the 2024 Faculty & Staff Awards Ceremony*

In 1985, the average cost of a new home was \$89,000; Live Aid raised money for famine relief in Ethiopia; and a gallon of gas was 89 cents. It's safe to say a lot has changed. But here at SRDS, there have been two constants stemming from that same year: Kathy Philipp, and because of her, excellence in teaching.



As we commemorate her longevity that boasts an attendance record that would make Cal Ripken Jr blush, we would be remiss to ignore Kathy's ability to adapt, create, and innovate. Whether you've been teaching for 5 years, 10, or 20, you have to acknowledge the tremendous changes in education that can arise suddenly and frighteningly. From shifting values to changing technology, our jobs are quite different now than what they were only a few years ago. Kathy has not only weathered 37 years of those changes, she has often been at the forefront of what the school and the English department have produced.

What others sprinkle in conversation as educational buzz words, Kathy has long been putting into practice in her class teachings. Ask about student centered learning, and her Middle School students will tell you about staging different scenes from Romeo and Juliet. Project-based learning? Watch as her students from her Humor course elective script and perform their own stand-up routines. Whole child pedagogy? Kathy has been asking students to connect their reading to their own lives for years, including a family reflection project her juniors would spend weeks creating.

Remaining current and relevant over the span of a long career does not happen accidentally. Kathy has served on the Curriculum Council, Judiciary Committee, Admissions Committee, among others.

She has been department chair and grade dean, club and grade advisor. She continued to attend professional development conferences and faculty retreats as recently as last summer. Having a foot in all these worlds kept her teaching fresh and inventive, not to mention the humility it shows to say after four decades of teaching, "I want to attend because there is still something for me to learn." May we all be that open.

Kathy's most important role at SRDS has been as a friend. I knew we would hit it off when I became her secret santa one of my first years here, and she had included travel wine glasses on her wish list. This was my girl! Whether it was an early morning check-in in N103 where we talked about our favorite books, the latest episodes of Saturday Night Live, the current happenings at school, or shared a bus ride home from seeing Spamalot where we talked about the challenges of being imperfect mothers, Kathy was never too busy to lend an ear, and most importantly, a guiding hand.

In Poetics, Aristotle writes of the unity of time, action, and place. Shakespeare spent most of his career violating that notion. Kathy, as a true Shakespearean scholar, I hope you follow the bard's example and destroy the unity between time, action, and place and come see us again at your home, SRDS, even as your life takes you beyond this campus. Thank you for your service and best wishes on a long, healthy, and fruitful retirement filled with good friends, good books, and good drinks! 🍷





## Performing Arts

### Upper School Theater Presents *SHReK!*

Tyler Capa doesn't get much down time, and he likes it that way. In his seventh year, now as the Performing Arts Department Chair, Theater Coordinator, Upper School Vocal and Drama teacher, Tyler directed the Upper School musical production of *SHReK*, performed Thursday, March 7th - Saturday, March 9th. Lead roles were played by Teddy Basa '24 as Shrek, Kate Peresvyetova '24 as Fiona, Hailey Murphy '26 as Donkey and Alex Hollis '24 as Lord Farquaad.

With approximately 30 Upper School students participating in *SHReK*, much like *The Addams Family* (2023), the production brings together actors and crew members from a diverse array of disciplines at SRDS. Mr. Capa highlights that many performers in his shows are students who are actively involved in other programs, such as athletics, who discover – often to their surprise and delight – that they can sing, dance, and, most importantly, enjoy being on stage.

But if there isn't an adage that everyone can find a home in the theater, there should be. Students who aren't interested in being on stage can join the crew, working and learning alongside theater professionals from New York City to design sets, lighting and costumes. Students help run the sound boards, maintain props, function as wardrobe, hair and makeup artists, and occasionally join the orchestra made up of professional, working musicians, also mostly from New York City.



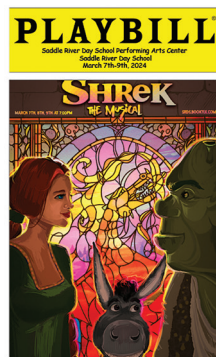
One of the best things about his work at Saddle River Day School, says Mr. Capa, is the willingness of the administration to invest in the arts. The shows being staged at Saddle River Day School aren't the average high school productions and the creative team strives to raise the bar every year in order to give the students the best experience possible.

With a roster of shows this robust, it's no wonder that prospective students are beginning to pay attention to Saddle River Day School as a place to hone their acting, singing, and performing skills. And this is just the way Tyler Capa wants it. He's here to develop, encourage and support each performer and crew member who steps on his stage. But he knows that the director just points the cast and crew in the direction they need to go and then nudges them along the way. It is the students who will create the magic and this, according to Mr. Capa, is the other best part of his job; the moment when he can step back and witness the camaraderie, trust, and faith that each cast builds among themselves. Then, at show time, when he gets to watch these talented students take what they've created and share it, confidently and courageously, with their audience. What better way to embody the part of the SRDS Mission that compels the community to 'achieve personal excellence and to contribute positively to society' than this?



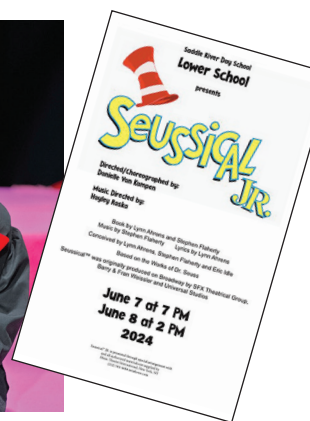
### Middle School Production of *Annie Jr.* is a Smash Hit!

For the third year in a row at SRDS, the Middle School performed a full musical production, *Annie Jr.* The show ran for two performances on May 3rd and 4th before a packed house and showcased some of our incredibly talented Middle School rising stars! In the lead roles were Kristen Mansfield '29 as Annie, Cece Rozzi '28 as Miss Hannigan, and Dastan Dorri '30 as Oliver Warbucks, alongside 20+ other Middle School students who were part of the cast and crew. The show was produced by Tyler Capa and directed by Justine Verheul. The crew included Upper and Middle School students as well as faculty/staff members who worked together to ensure this show was a smashing success from beginning to end!



### Lower School Musical *Seussical Jr.* Performs before a Full House

As in the Middle School, the Lower School also put on a full musical production of *Seussical Jr.* on June 7th and 8th. What a joyful display of sight and sound as these young students – many for the first time – performed for their families and friends! In lead roles were Chloe Ford '34 as JoJo, Emily Pollack '32 as The Cat in the Hat, Michael Moldavskiy '31 as Horton the Elephant, Kolson Bloch '32 as Mr. Mayor, Mehr Desai '32 as Mrs. Mayor, Mikayla Yerger '32 as Gertrude McFuzz and Sage Simela '32 as Mayzie La Bird. Choreographed by Ms. Danielle Van Kampen, the production showcased many of our incredibly talented Lower School students. The audience was treated to truly delightful performances full of pageantry, beautiful sets and costumes and presented the opportunity for high student engagement to our Lower School students. 🎭

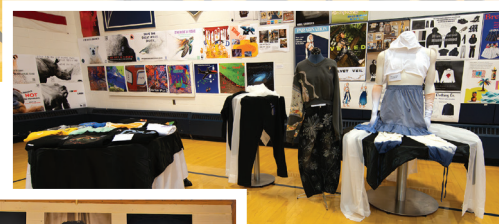






## Annual SRDS Art Show

The Annual Art Show was held on campus in the spring of 2024 for the SRDS community to enjoy the culmination of an entire year's work for students in PreK-12. The visual arts at SRDS provide a means to gain personal satisfaction through individual accomplishment in the creation of images and forms. The program is solidly based on a respect and understanding of where students are creatively, what they require from their work, and the means to move them from one developmental stage to another as they become more expressive, inventive, and perceptive. Through creative experiences, students become familiar with facets of artistic thinking such as the ability to formulate problems and create multiple solutions, the ability to pursue a project over time, the willingness to solve problems inventively, the ability to take risks, and finally to reflect critically on one's own work providing valuable skills that function beyond the studio into other areas of the curriculum. The program has gained recognition for its innovation and cutting edge technology as it continues to challenge students to not only develop their abilities, but to learn 'real world' skills as they must navigate in a highly technological and visual world. 🌐







## REBEL Athletics Celebrates a Year of Outstanding Success

At Saddle River Day School, we believe athletics are an integral part of the SRDS experience. We strive to provide an environment that promotes achievement, fair play, integrity, sportsmanship, and overall health and fitness. We believe the values taught through participation in athletics are an extension of those taught in the classroom at SRDS. Developing a strong work ethic, working as a member of a team, respect for leadership and peers, self-discipline, commitment, loyalty, perseverance, communication, accountability, conflict-resolution, and pride in accomplishments are all life skills that a strong athletic program enhances. We couldn't be more proud of our REBEL student-athletes! GO REBELS!

### Highlights include...

Girls soccer had their most successful season to date under the leadership of Athletic Director PJ Petrow, finishing with a stellar 14-3 record overall, advancing to the semifinal round of the NJSIAA Non-Public B State sectionals. The team was named "NJIC Team of the Year" with a 10-0 record in NJIC play. Junior goalkeeper Jillian Gomez was named All Bergen County First Team and NJIC First Team.

Girls volleyball also experienced their most successful season in many years in 2024 under the new leadership of Coach Nick Esposito, led by the efforts of Ava Manolis '25, Kayla Cha, Lauren Cassels '26 and freshman Bianca Kaiser. The highlight of the season was a thrilling win over Gill St. Bernard's in the NJSIAA Quarterfinal round of the NJSIAA Non-Public B North tournament.

Boys and girls basketball once again produced admirable results for REBEL Athletics. The girls team continued to be ranked as one of the best in the tri-state region. Under the leadership of Coach Joe Pedone and the efforts of Seniors Julianna Almeida and Cristina Parrella (two time McDonald's All-American nominee), and Junior Faith Williamson, the No. 10 Rebels defeated Teaneck to win their 8th straight Bergen County Tournament CHP in 2024 and finished with a solid 22-4 record. Julianna Almeida and Cristina Parella '24, and Faith Williamson '25 were named to the First Team All-Bergen County.

The boys finished strong again in the second year playing an independent schedule against some very stiff competition. They advanced to the quarterfinal round of the NJSIAA North Non-Public B Tournament. With only two graduating seniors, the team looks to maintain a strong presence for the 2024-2025 season, led by the efforts of Preston Neuenhaus, Jack Reichertz and Jacob Carmona '25. Junior Shawn Spencer was recognized for All-Bergen County post-season honors.

The 2024 girls tennis team was a powerhouse again, reaching the Non-Public, North sectional final where it lost to No. 1-ranked Pingry. The team finished with a 13-2 record overall and took the NJIC Patriot Division championship for the third year in a row and for the fourth time in six seasons. In addition, Saddle River Day was named Team of the Year by NorthJersey.com. In addition, the team cruised to the Bergen County Fall Invitational team championship, led by Sophomore and 2024 All-North Jersey First Team award winner Kylee Hung. The Rebels dominated, as Rachel Magnus '26 (second singles), Jackie Sidler '25 (third singles), Olivia Fujita '26/Alison Rosenson '27 (first doubles) and Emma Yelsky '26/Eva Burgis '27 (second doubles) all came out on top at their respective flights too. Kylee also finished 12-3 in dual matches, garnered a No. 9-16 seed for the NJSIAA singles tournament and reached the state's Round of 16.

Boys tennis also finished with a winning season (spring 2024). Senior Jake Ulrey was named the North Jersey Interscholastic Conference Player of the Week in April as well as to the First Team All Singles.

Misha Theberge, Saddle River Day sophomore (6th, Non-Public B, 17:59) was the first Rebel to ever qualify for the Meet of Champs and was the first runner from SRDS to run in an NJSIAA cross-country championship race. He had an excellent year with a third place finish in the NJIC Meadowlands race... more to come from Misha!

Girls lacrosse had a strong showing once again, finishing the season with a 14-6 record overall. The team defeated Morris Catholic and Princeton Day to advance to the NJSIAA Non-Public B Semifinal round. Senior goalkeeper McAlister (MC) Salter was named to the 2024 All-North Jersey First Team as one of the all-time saves leaders at 820. In her fourth year in the starting net, she stopped a career-high 55.8 percent. Junior midfielder Isabella Pedone was also named to the All-North Jersey First Team. No one in North Jersey scored more points last year than Pedone, who carried on the Rebels' tradition of producing Division I midfielders. She racked up 86 goals and 33 assists and threw in 80 draw controls. Senior midfielder Nia Carrera and senior attacker Abbi Holland were also named to the second team for All-North Jersey. The Rebels also had their first commit to Brigham Young University for boys lacrosse. Congratulations to goalie Zion Alburo '25!

The SRDS golf team finished over .500 with an 8-4 record overall and 5-1 play in the NJIC. Bowling continues at a varsity level, as well as crew; fencing is now being offered as a club. 🏹





## We Couldn't Do It Without Them!

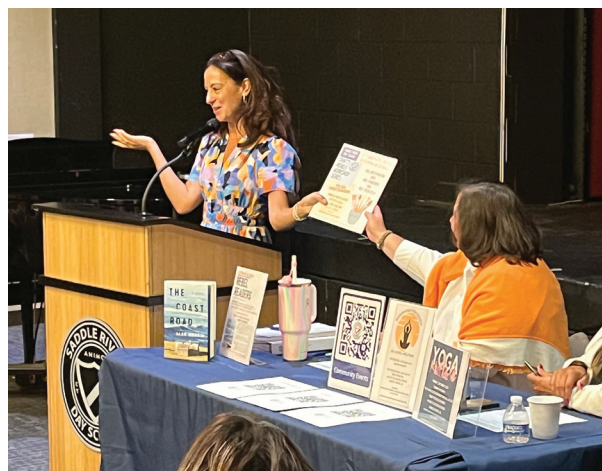
### SRDS Parents Guild Offers Key Support

The SRDS Parents Guild is an integral and energetic part of our community. Their greatest goal is always to focus on our community by engaging families and welcoming new volunteers, so that the Parents Guild can continue to not only support the programs and experiences at SRDS that enrich our children's lives, but also maintain the wonderful tight-knit community that makes the SRDS experience so special. This body of parents organize and support events throughout the year such as a New Parents Reception, Men's Night Out, Ladies' Night Out, Love and Kindness week, and our Annual Gala, just to name a few. We cannot express our gratitude enough for their undying support and commitment to our students and our community!



#### Ladies' Night Out

What began over 20 years ago as a small social event to enjoy a time of bonding and raise financial support for the school has evolved into one of the highlights of the year for the women of Saddle River Day School. Each year, the Parents Guild hosts our annual Ladies' Night Out event for an evening of fun, friendship, food and fundraising. This year was no exception as 250+ women gathered at The Tides Estate in North Haledon, NJ to enjoy a festive evening of camaraderie with a "Denim and Diamonds" theme. A grand time was had by all!



#### Gala

Each year, the Parents Guild hosts our Annual Gala, a spectacular event for parents, guardians, alumni and friends of SRDS with a focus on significant fundraising. Last year's Gala was held at the Alpine Country Club with a "REBELVERSE" inspired theme to raise funds for AI and Global Initiatives as well as new programs. It was a night to remember for all. 🌟

#### Executive Board 2024-2025

Heather Holder: Co-President  
 Jacqueline Vasquez: Co-President  
 Allison Berkowitz: Co-Vice President  
 Alana Murphy: Co-Vice President  
 Beatrice Burgis: Co-Treasurer  
 Michaela Siegel: Co-Treasurer  
 Cindy Mueller Giardina: Secretary  
 Division Representatives:  
 Lower School - Tanya Hall & Alyson Sugar  
 Middle School - Sara Aufgang & Monica Jain  
 Upper School - Shulamit Gershenson  
 Nassdja Anthony: Past President  
 Amy Sneyers: Past President  
 Rosanna Young: Past President  
 Chrissie Signore '85: Director of Alumni & Special Events







# Homecoming & Alumni Events



## SRDS Alumni Council

- Alex Rathod '88: President
- Billie Singer '05: Vice President
- Mark Buchakjian '15: Treasurer
- Rufina Yusupova '10: Secretary
- Jonathan R. Kuhlman '84: Past President
- Penny Makris Bullen '84: Past Parent Coordinator
- Kathy Philipp: Faculty Representative
- Chrissie Signore '85: Director of Alumni & Special Events
- Gretchen Lee Kuhlman: Director of Communications
- Lynn McCormack: Director of Development
- John Azarian '78: President Emeritus

## Council Members:

- Amy Fisher '86
- David Leffler '04
- Kimberly Moussavian '87
- Ryan Neumann '16
- Grace Pak '05
- Glenn Popowitz '86
- Michael Rosen '82
- Jill Rosker '11





Dear Saddle River Day School Community,

As a new year begins, I am proud to share the incredible strides we have made as a school. SRDS continues to redefine success, by surpassing Excellence, and attaining *exceptionalism*—a standard we are proud to say we have achieved. At Saddle River Day, “Everyone Counts” is more than a mission statement; it is the essence of who we are. Every member of our community—students, educators, staff, and parents—play an integral role in shaping a culture of collaboration and growth that inspires us all.

Under the leadership of Head of School Mr. Desai, we have expanded and enriched the educational offerings across our Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools. Led by Dr. Zacaraev and his team, the Upper School has introduced 13 new Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the Humanities, STEM, government, law, business, and music—many of which were inspired by our students, showcasing the creativity and initiative we foster. Additionally, our students have broadened their community outreach efforts, reinforcing our commitment to making service and giving back a cornerstone of the SRDS experience.



In Middle School, Ms. Kelly and her team have cultivated an environment of exploration and achievement. Students now have access to a diverse range of STEM electives and proudly participate in the National STEM Honor Society. Academic placements in advanced subjects, such as Pre-Calculus and world languages, are based on ability rather than grade level, ensuring a personalized and challenging learning experience. Additionally, Middle School students have embraced new opportunities through clubs like coding, math, and robotics, while also benefiting from six new athletic offerings, including fencing and strength conditioning.

Ms. Stern and her dedicated team foster a love of learning that begins in Pre-K and continues through Grade 4. Through engaging, project-based learning experiences, they integrate core subjects in meaningful ways, aligning with our mission “to inspire each child to become a caring and ethical contributor to society.” These formative experiences create a strong foundation for lifelong curiosity, growth, and a passion for learning.



The remarkable growth in our academic offerings has been paralleled by a significant increase in enrollment, creating an exciting opportunity to expand our campus. Our most ambitious project yet—the construction of the **Dr. Kristen Walsh Hall of Science and Entrepreneurship**—is already underway. This state-of-the-art facility will provide unparalleled opportunities for students to excel academically, socially, and creatively. The project reflects our commitment to offering a well-rounded educational experience within a single school day. With flexible schedules, comprehensive academic support, and enriched extracurricular opportunities, students can seamlessly engage in research, athletics, music, and more—ensuring that families never need to look beyond our campus to meet their children’s needs.

Our vision for the future is clear: to continue providing the tools, resources, and opportunities that empower our students to thrive. By extending the school day and tailoring academic support, we aim to create an environment where every child can achieve exceptionalism in all aspects of their education and personal development.

As we move forward, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to every member of our community. It is your unwavering support, dedication, and shared belief in the power of education that makes Saddle River Day School a place where exceptionalism is not just a goal—it is a reality.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. I look forward to the many achievements and milestones that lie ahead.

Warm regards,  
Weston Powell  
President, Board of Trustees  
Saddle River Day School



# SRDS Annual Giving for 2023-2024

It is with gratitude that we share the philanthropic contributions made to SRDS during the **2023-2024** school year, between **7/1/23 and 6/30/24**. This includes SRDS Fund gifts, Building the Future capital campaign gifts, restricted gifts and grants, and Gala contributions. The Office of Development has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this report. If there is an error or omission, please notify us at 201.327.4050, x1124 so that we can amend our records.

**Legacy Club (\$50K+)**

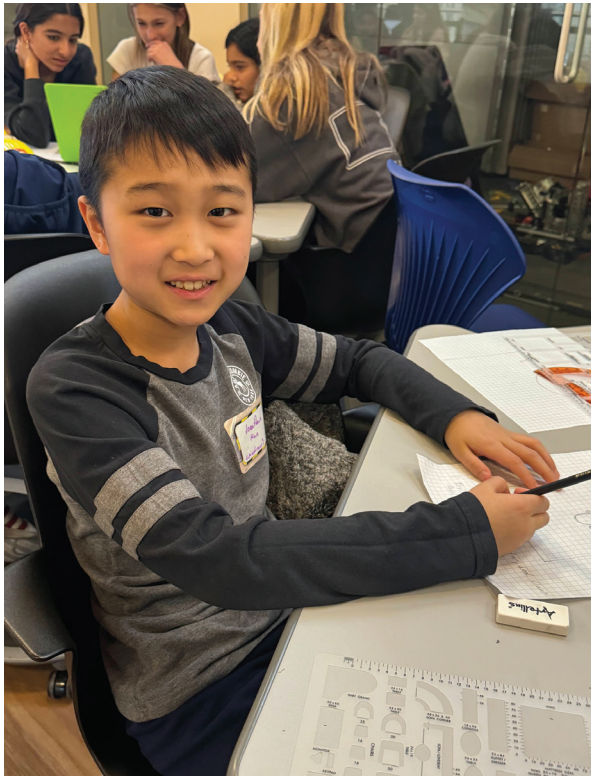
- The Botta Family
- The Coyne Family
- The Han Family
- The Regular Family
- The Rosenberg Family
- Mr. Charles and Mrs. Susan Snyder
- The Snyder and Schulze Family
- The Solovey Family
- The Sugar Family
- The Copper Beech Foundation, Inc.
- The F. Walsh Family

**Founders' Club (\$25,000.00 + )**

- F & P DeRosa Memorial Fund
- Kulite Semiconductor Products, Inc.
- The Felitti-Powell Family

**Trustees' Club (\$10,000.00 + )**

- The Aufgang Family
- The Braen Family
- The Dimentman Family
- The P. Feldman Family
- The V. Feldman Family
- The Gaibi and Salima Family
- The D. Hekemian Family
- The B. Hekemian Family
- The Katsnelson Family
- The Landau Family
- The Lieberman Family
- Mr. and Dr. Deep Patel and Family
- Dr. Mary C. Romney '67
- The Rosenson and Gofman Family
- The Shnayder and Kotlyar Family
- The Simela Family
- The Thomas Family
- The Trivedi Family



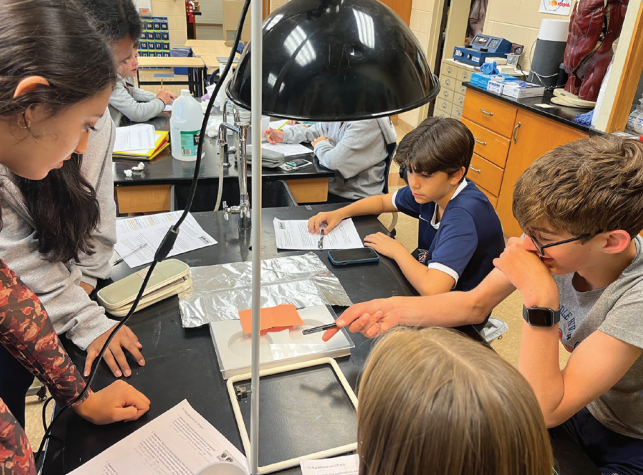
**President's Society (\$5,000.00 + )**

- The Abdy Family
- The Berger Family
- Ms. Barbara Abney Bolger
- The Desai and Mehta Family
- The Esteban Family
- The Goldberger Family
- The Greenberg Family
- The Lawrie Family
- The Murphy Family
- The Polepalle and Kolisetty Family
- The Quines Family
- The Savas Family
- The Sneyers Family

**Headmaster's Society (\$2,500.00 + )**

- The Brooks and Graves Family
- The Fata Family
- The Ford Family
- The Guang and Peng Family
- The Hall Family
- The Holder Family
- The Holmes and Gouldailler Family
- The Khanchandani and Tandon Family
- Dr. Jeffrey R. Kuhlman '81  
and Mrs. Amy F. Kuhlman '81
- Mr. and Mrs. Chris Mathisen
- The Moskow Family
- The Parmar and Tandon Family
- The Ruffino Family
- The Smigel Family
- Mr. and Mrs. Dale T. Smith
- The Tretola Family
- The Vasquez Family
- The Young Family
- The Zhao and Gong Family





### Leaders' Society (\$1,000.00 + )

The Abu-Rustum Family  
 The Anthony Family  
 The Boyajian Family  
 The Dorri and Hazhin Family  
 Ms. Ashley Floto  
 The Gallo Family  
 The Goodrich and Mackenzie Family  
 The Hotz Family  
 The Khurana Family  
 Mrs. Judith Kuhlman  
 The Lee and Im Family  
 The Magnus Family  
 The Minnella Family  
 The Munzer Family  
 Mr. and Mrs. Darshan Patel and Family  
 The Popowitz Family  
 The Sartor Family  
 The Sasso Family  
 The Stewart Family  
 The Tada and Fujita Family  
 The Terranova Family  
 The Tsimpedes Family  
 The Tucker and Waldman Family

## Make your gift to the SRDS Fund today!

To make a donation, please visit  
[www.saddleriverday.org/giving](http://www.saddleriverday.org/giving),  
 or call the Development Office  
 at 201.327.4050, x1124.

### Patrons' Club (\$500.00 + )

APEX International Education Partners  
 The Auty Family  
 Mr. Jason Carini  
 The Geller Family  
 The Meuller Giardina Family  
 Ms. Jill Goldstein, '82  
 The Governale Family  
 Mr. and Mrs. Phil Horowitz  
 Mrs. Nancy Hostler '91  
 The Kass Family  
 The Lewis Family  
 The Moussavian Family  
 The Rathod Family  
 Mrs. Darcy Siegfried '76  
 The Silva Family  
 The Stotesbury Family  
 The Toboroff Family  
 The Todd Family  
 The Toufayan Family  
 The Zhang and Wang Family  
 Ms. Zhen Zhu  
 Ms. Elizabeth R. Zust '72



### Friends (<\$500)

Anonymous  
 Ms. Sara Alders  
 The Allwaters Family  
 Mr. Kenneth Alrutz  
 Ms. Deirdre Angrick  
 The Baer and Fromer Family  
 Ms. Alexandra Baro  
 The Basa Family  
 Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Bowman  
 Ms. Genevieve Brinkman  
 Ms. Colette Brown  
 The Burgis Family  
 Ms. Maria Campiglia  
 Mr. Tyler Capa  
 Mr. Mark Carter  
 Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Castelli  
 The Centrella Family  
 Mrs. Joanne Ciuccio  
 Ms. Erica Cohen  
 Ms. Susan Collantes  
 Mr. and Mrs. Christopher T. Cosgrove  
 Ms. Joan Cotellessa '82  
 Ms. Kaitlyn Cotter  
 Mr. William D. Craig '64  
 The Cristian Family  
 Mr. Joe D'Amato  
 Mr. Brian Devlin and Ms. Xiaoqin Su  
 Mr. and Mrs. Leo Donnelly  
 Mr. Fred D'Onofrio  
 Ms. Erika Ehrlich  
 Mr. Craig Feist  
 Ms. Kane Ferguson  
 Ms. Karen Ferretti  
 Ms. Jacqueline M. Finestone '80  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Finkel  
 Mr. and Mrs. Barry Fixler  
 Mr. Adrian Ford  
 The Gaft Family



Mr. Anthony Gallo  
 Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Gerity  
 Mrs. Alexandra Giannotti  
 Mr. and Mrs. Dugald Gillies  
 The Glasser and Davenport Family  
 The Gregerson Family  
 Mr. Jason Gu '12  
 Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Hanna  
 The Harinstein Family  
 Ms. Amy Hesse  
 Mr. Keith Hickey  
 The Hoffman Family  
 The Hollis Family  
 The Horowitz Family  
 Mr. Tristan Hughes  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Iommazzo '93  
 The Itin Family  
 The Ives Family  
 The Kaniuga Family  
 Ms. Alexandra Kelly  
 Ms. Anastasia Kelly  
 Mr. Robert Kettlewell  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alex S. Kim  
 Ms. Joan T. Kloth-Zanard '78  
 The Kruse Family  
 Mr. Jonathan R. Kuhlman '84  
 and Mrs. Gretchen Lee Kuhlman  
 Mrs. Michelle Lanks  
 Ms. Christine Lebovits  
 The Leigh Family  
 The Lubin Family  
 The Luisi Family  
 Ms. Natalia Lukina  
 Mr. Anthony Maccarella



Mr. Bruce Mactas, '78  
Ms. Sefida Martinovic  
The Matthews Family  
Ms. Jennifer Maylath  
Mr. and Mrs. James Mazarin  
Mr. Michael McCarthy  
The McChesney Family  
Ms. Lynn McCormack  
The McLaughlin Family  
Mr. Joseph McMenamin  
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Merges  
Mr. Thomas Moore  
    and Mrs. Janet Hawley Moore  
The Mrsich Family  
Ms. Kristin Myers  
The Nadler Family  
Ms. Frances Nicoles  
The Olstein Family  
The Orta Family  
Mr. Steve Osvold  
Mr. Roman Paolucci  
Ms. Gina Patelsky  
Mr. and Mrs. PJ Petrow  
Mr. Paul Parsekian  
    and Ms. Katherine A. Philipp  
Ms. Alicia Pooley  
Mr. Antonio Puig  
Ms. Tami Radfar  
Ms. Hayley Raska  
The Raval Family  
Ms. Wendy Rhoads  
Ms. Laura Richetti  
The Riera Family  
Mr. Colin Riley  
Dr. Vanessa Robinson  
Ms. Samantha Ross '03  
Mr. Carlos Sanchez  
Mr. William S. Sands Jr. '74  
Mr. Mohammad Sarhan

The Schneider and Gershenson Family  
Mr. Greg Schreiner  
Mr. Eric Schulze, '23  
Ms. Rhonda Shafei  
The Shah Family  
The Sheikowitz Family  
The Sidler Family  
Mrs. Christina M. Signore '85  
Ms. Billie Singer '05  
Ms. Susan Stava  
Ms. Alice Steinke  
Mr. Edward Stengel  
Ms. Dana Stern  
Mr. and Mrs. Evan C. Strager  
Ms. Danielle Sun  
Mr. and Mrs. Denis Sweeny  
Ms. Mona Tavana  
The Theberge and Soumas Family  
Ms. Megan Thomas  
The Cosgrove and Tramutola Family  
Mr. Daniel Van Kampen and Ms. Ruth O'Hara  
The Van Buren Family  
The Williamson Family  
The Yelsky Family  
Mr. and Mrs. Shai Zacaraev



SRDS Fund



Campaign

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## Saddle River Day Honors Faculty and Staff

Head of School Jalaj Desai took time last spring to recognize a number of faculty and staff members that have served the SRDS community for many years and gone above and beyond the call of duty, in and out of the classroom, to ensure the success of the school. We congratulate each of them and thank them for their contributions.



### 10 Years of Service

**Amanda Bieglecki**, Middle School Teacher  
**Ruth O’Hara**, Front Office  
**Chrissie Signore ‘85**, Director of Alumni & Special Events  
**Megan Thomas**, Lower School Teacher



### 20+ Years of Service

**Gretchen Lee Kuhlman**, Director of Communications (25 years)  
**Linda Mallaney** (retired), World Language Department



### 41 Years of Service

**Daniel Van Kampen** retired after 41 years as the Head of Maintenance at SRDS. We are grateful to him for his dedicated service throughout these many years in keeping our campus beautiful and running efficiently. We wish him the BEST in his well-deserved retirement!



### Robert A. Finkel Distinguished Service Award

Bob Finkel retired in 2021 after eleven years of dedicated service to the Saddle River Day School. Recipients of this award embody the characteristics of Bob’s time at SRDS: dependability, integrity, compassion, loyalty, and an undying dedication to ensuring the success of Saddle River Day School.  
**Maggie Cosgrove**, Assistant to the Head of School  
**Joe McMenamin**, Dean of Faculty



### Katherine A. Philipp Award

Kathy Philipp retired from teaching English at SRDS after 37 devoted years. In honor of her long-time dedication, a new faculty award was introduced this year by Head of School, Jalaj Desai to recognize teachers whose love of learning for its own sake is transmitted to students through enthusiastic, creative, intellectually stimulating teaching that acknowledges the uniqueness of each student.  
**Janet Moore**, PreK 4 Teacher  
**Dr. Vanessa Robinson**, Science Dept. Chair, Biology Teacher



### Lucille P. Mazarin Award

This award is given annually to a member of the Saddle River Day School faculty, staff or administration in honor of Lucille P. Mazarin, who retired from SRDS after 25 years of devoted service. The recipient embodies the characteristics of Lucille’s time at SRDS: honesty, compassion and a commitment to all members of the community.  
**Lynn McCormack**, Director of Development  
**Chrissie Signore ‘85**, Director of Alumni & Special Events



### Yvonne T. McCort Award

In honor of longtime highly dedicated SRDS retired Lower School teacher Yvonne McCort, this award is given annually to a teacher who possesses a passion for education that radiates through every lesson in the classroom, and creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm and lifelong curiosity.  
**Dana Stern**, Head of the Lower School



### Student Choice Award for Excellence

A new award was created this year to be determined by the student body through a vote. The recipients actively encourage and reward excellence and generate superior scholarly and creative work from their students.  
**Jason Carini**, Business & Entrepreneurship  
**Joe D’Amato**, Middle School Science Teacher





SADDLE RIVER DAY SCHOOL

147 Chestnut Ridge Road

Saddle River, NJ 07458

201-327-4050

[www.saddleriverday.org](http://www.saddleriverday.org)