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Cardinal Newman High School: 2005-2009

Cardinal Newman High School has long been a beacon of academic excellence, athletic achievement, and deep rooted Catholic-identity. The genuine relationships built, outstanding student and faculty work ethic alike, and consistent progress towards improvement make this school a truly unique place- a community where everyone is embraced and feels grateful to be part of. Reflecting on the years from 2005 and 2009, we see how the school has evolved- shaped by a series of key events, changes in leadership, shifts in cultural dynamics, and the everlasting legacy of its strong athletic and service-oriented community. These transformative years laid the foundation for Newman's growth on several fronts and set the stage for its future success, which remains evident today.

In 2005, Cardinal Newman was a relatively small, separate school for boys, with Ursuline serving as its counterpart for girls. The two schools, although physically adjacent, had distinct identities, but this would change as the years went on. Mr. Rutherford, who would remain principal throughout the years, led Cardinal Newman with a steady hand, fostering both academic rigor and a strong sense of unity. During this period, significant milestones in both academic and extracurricular activities took place. One key event of this era was the continued prominence of sports, particularly football. In 2005, the Cardinal Newman football team was continuing to build its culture and sense of pride. Football related festivities, like homecoming, included the crowning of both a king and queen, which would change in 2008 when only a homecoming queen was crowned, a tradition that still exists today. Football was integral to school spirit, with students rallying around the team, particularly during the rivalry games against schools like Rancho Cotate and Piner. Additionally, the formation of the "Danger Zone", a student section dedicated to cheering the team on, added a new dimension to school pride and solidarity, continuing to this day.

The performing arts were also on their rise as a flourishing part of Cardinal Newman. The dance program, initiated under the guidance of Ms. Thompson, began gaining popularity. By 2006, Newman had expanded its arts electives, introducing new programs like photography, music, and design. The school also embraced new technologies, such as the integration of computers in classrooms, which would become an increasingly important feature for years to come.

Another notable tradition that held great value in these years was the Junior Ring Ceremony, which became a key milestone of the high school experience. This rite of passage, still celebrated today, symbolized the student's transition into the final years of their education and solidified Cardinal Newman's deep sense of tradition.

By 2007, Cardinal Newman had already experienced several changes. One of the most significant was the introduction of lights on the football field, which shifted the dynamic of football games from afternoon events to evening gatherings as we know them today. This seemingly trivial shift had a profound impact on school culture, creating a new tradition of "Friday Night Lights", which would remain a hallmark of Newman athletics. This change also allowed for more student participation and engagement in sports events, with fans flooding the stand to cheer on their teams under the night sky. In 2007, football first made it to the championship game, deepening the connection between students, alumni, and the staff, as everyone got involved to support the team. As a part of this legacy, students like Kate Swet, a member of the class of 2007, remember attending games with great enthusiasm. She recalls the intensity of Cardinal Newman's athletic culture during her time, particularly the legendary reputation of the girls' soccer team and the unparalleled excitement around football games. She states, "Football was king. When I was a senior is when Newman's team made the first-ever state championship game down in LA. I was the athletic trainer at the time, taping ankles and doing first aid for the team—it was epic. Football was what literally everyone came to." At the same time, other sports, such as lacrosse, tennis, and water polo, and even diving, began to make their mark, with lacrosse in particular becoming a new addition to Cardinal Newman's athletic culture.

Academically, the school had seen a boost in its digital technology programs, expanding students' access to tools and resources that would shape their learning experience. The arts also continued to thrive, with Cardinal Newman's and Ursulines' combined drama program producing public plays like *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 2006 and *Grease* in 2008. Meanwhile, the music department, which had featured an instrumental orchestra and choir, began to see its focus shift toward modern performing arts as the dance and drama programs gained popularity.

The final year of this era, 2009, was marked by continued growth and evolution. Cardinal Newman and Ursuline were still two separate schools, but there was more collaboration than ever before. Events like rallies, dances, and the much-anticipated Welcome Week increasingly unified, with ASB leading the charge to bring students together.

By this point, Cardinal Newman's football program had firmly established itself as a powerhouse. The "Friday Night Lights" culture was in full swing, and the school's athletic programs were thriving. Track and Field, in particular, had seen remarkable growth under Coach Pat Lafortune, who was widely respected for his dedication to the team and its athletes. While sports were central to Newman's identity, the sense of pride was not confined to athletics alone- service, Catholic faith, and leadership were key values that continued to be emphasized across all aspects of student life.

As we consider Cardinal Newman today, many of the traditions, values, and cultural markers that defined the years between 2005 and 2009 have continued to thrive. Football is still a central part of the school's identity, with "Friday Night Lights" games drawing large crowds and igniting school spirit, and the "Danger Zone" student section still being a vibrant part of the football game atmosphere. Athletics also remain a cornerstone of the Newman experience. Baseball and Softball have reached new heights of success, with both teams winning NCS titles last year. Lacrosse, which first began at Newman during the early 2000s, is now an integral part of the athletic program. The school is also making great progress in revitalizing the Track and Field program, echoing the glory days when it was only one of the most popular sports at Newman under the great Pat Lafortune, whose everlasting legacy will continue to inspire our community.

The performing arts, especially dance, continue to play a pivotal role in student life. Ms. Thompons's leadership of the program remains a point of pride, and the dance performances are eagerly anticipated. The drama department, which has had a public performance tradition since the early 2000s, still allows students to enjoy expressing themselves through the arts.

Cardinal Newman also continues to place a strong emphasis on Catholic values and service. Campus Ministry remains a vital presence and has come back stronger than ever, organizing liturgies and encouraging faith among students as they have for years. Reflecting on faith in the Newman community, 2006 alum Ryan Corriveau describes the role of the Father at the time, Father Alvin, who was an integral part of the Newman community. Not only did he run the campus snack bar, but he also coached tennis. Corriveau explains how he was someone that students could really relate to, and his presence made the faith aspect of Newman feel much much more personal and connected. This insight reinforces the importance of faith and mentorship at Cardinal Newman, such as that of today's Chaplain, Father Girolo, and how this religious leadership has shaped the school's identity. Additionally, the service requirement, which was just as prominent in the 2000s as it is now, remains a central part of student life, fostering commitment to social responsibility and helping students make a positive impact on the community.

Perhaps the most significant parallel between 2005-2009 years and today is the school's commitment to building and improving facilities. Just as new buildings were constructed in 2008 to enhance the athletic program and overall student experience, Newman continues to invest in its infrastructure, ensuring that students have the best possible learning environment. This is evident in the beautiful structures on our campus- the chapel, Student Life Center, and many new classrooms, to name a few.

Looking back at the years 2005-2009, we see a period of significant growth for Cardinal Newman High School. The school's commitment to its Catholic identity, academic excellence, and united community laid the foundation for the success of Newman today. From the rise of Friday Night Lights and the continued prominence of athletics to the expansion of the arts and service programs, Cardinal Newman has maintained core values that have defined it for generations. As we enter 2024, it is clear that

the spirit of the school, as conveyed by the experiences of alumni like Kate Swet and Ryan Corriveau, remains as strong as ever- anchored in tradition, pride, and a sense of belonging.