



ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall



HALLMARKS
SQUARED

V1.2025



120 Looks good on us...Head of School Beth Coyne joins the 120th Birthday Gala Committee Co-Chairs and fellow celebrants in a joyful confetti toss, marking the school's milestone 120th Birthday Gala. Pictured left to right: Nikki Woel Tirone '09, Gala Co-Chair; Dana Scinto Colangelo P'23, P'25, Gala Co-Chair; Beth Coyne, Head of School; Charlotte Evans '64, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees; and Yvonne Fosse-Previs '90, P'27, Director of Enrollment.

A CULTURE OF SERVICE AT LAURALTON HALL

A LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Catherine McAuley believed that true service comes from a heart filled with love for God and others. As she said, "If the love of God really reigns in your heart, it will quickly show itself in the exterior." This spirit of service is deeply embedded in the culture of Lauralton Hall, where our students live out the core value Compelled by Mercy—demonstrating responsibility to serve, empathy, and compassion as they have for 120 years.

I am continually inspired by the ways our students give of themselves, both within and beyond our school. Bridget Vitti, '25, recently earned the Bronze Medal President's Volunteer Service Award, reflecting her impressive 150 hours of community service last year. Bridget has been an incredible tutor for WorldTutors, a program providing virtual tutoring to underserved middle school students in East Palo Alto, California.

Service also takes our students across the globe. Seven Lauralton girls dedicated their winter break to serving in Panama, where they helped build a playground, laid cement, and painted a classroom through our partnership with School the World, founded by alumna Mary Kate Curran, '81. Closer to home, our Catherine McAuley Club prepares sandwiches for the Beth El Shelter in Milford, while members of our Yarn Ministry knit sweaters, scarves, and hats for those in need. These are just a few examples of how Lauralton students shine their light in the wider community.

Service is not limited to off-campus initiatives—it thrives within our own halls. Students act as tour guides for prospective families, mentor their younger peers as Big Sisters and Peer Mentors, lead Morning Meetings through Student Council, and even transform Lauralton's halls for Christmas in the Mansion. No matter the task, our students always rise to the occasion with a resounding yes!

This commitment to service is modeled by the adults in our community as well. Our Board of Trustees ensures the integrity of Lauralton's mission, strategic direction, and financial health. We are deeply grateful to all members, especially those completing their terms this June, for their countless hours of dedication. Parents also play a vital role through the McAuley Parent Association (MPA), strengthening our community through events that enrich student life. Many parents have also stepped up as Parent Ambassadors, supporting our enrollment efforts at Mornings in the Mansion, our signature open-house series.

Our alumnae continue to give back in meaningful ways. Many return to campus to share their expertise during Career Day and Career Seminars, offering guidance and inspiration to our students. Looking ahead, we are excited to launch the Lauralton Alumnae Council for Engagement, which will foster networking opportunities for current students, recent graduates, and alumnae at all stages of life. If you are interested in being part of this initiative, I encourage you to reach out—we would love to have you join us. You can send your interest to Kathleen Kearns Donahue '80, P'06, P'14 at kdonahue@lauraltonhall.org.

It is my privilege to serve this wonderful community as Head of School. At Lauralton Hall, service is more than an expectation; it is a way of life. As we continue to be Compelled by Mercy, may we always remember Catherine McAuley's vision: to let our love for God and others shine through our actions, bringing light to all those we encounter.

I look forward to meeting more of you in the year ahead.

Every good wish,

Beth Coyne

Beth Coyne



Photo Credit: ???

Head of School Beth Coyne and seven Lauralton students embarked on an inspiring journey to Panama during their February break as part of the School the World service trip. Together, they built classrooms and playgrounds, taught local children, visited families, and immersed themselves in the vibrant culture.

Happy Birthday, Lauralton!



"I was profoundly blessed to have parents who wanted me to attend Lauralton Hall. I have wonderful memories of the dedicated teachers (mostly nuns), classmates and school activities—all of which positively enriched my life. As co-class agent with Alba Roessle—we had fun planning for reunions, and later meeting for Golden Girls luncheon. Congratulations Lauralton Hall on your 120th! May future young women reap all the bounty you have to offer."

- Edla Caldwell Saffo '55

120th Celebration Timeline



January 17, 1905

With the aid of the Rev. Peter H. McClean and the approval of the Rt. Rev. Michael Tierney, Bishop of Hartford, Mother Superior Mary Augustine Claven purchased the Lauralton Estate from the Taylor family heirs for \$35,000.



May 1914

Work on Mercy Hall began. Construction was completed on February 11, 1917. The new building housed a reference and fiction library, offices, reception rooms, the chaplain's suite, and a wing containing the Chapel, known as the "heart of Lauralton", auditorium, and dining room.



June 1950

Lauralton Hall boarding students and proud "Lifers" enjoy a quiet moment in the dorm. "Lifers"—students who were at LH since kindergarten—proudly carry the legacy of a lifelong Lauralton journey.



1993

Lauralton names Karen McGroary Yardly as our first school president. During Karen's ten-year tenure as president, the school saw the conversion of the old gymnasium to the Helen Meloy Schwalje Library Media Center, creation of the new Athletic Center, a growing endowment, and enhanced education programming.



2011

Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall was listed on the State Register of Historic Places by the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council and was also added to the Federal Register of Historic Places.



September 2020

Lauralton pivots from fully remote, pandemic learning to a hybrid model offering in-person learning and "Lauralton at Home," allowing students to return to campus or Zoom into classes. Returning students were greeted with reminders about social distancing, and LH masks became part of the year's uniform.

September 12, 1905

Lauralton Hall opened its doors to twenty-five girls in high school and grammar grades. By December, enrollment had risen to ninety students.



February 28, 1966

Student cafeteria services opened after many delays. Operated by Navin Brothers Food Service Inc, this provided the first opportunity for day school students and faculty to purchase both hot and cold foods. Prior to this date, students had to bring lunches from home.



2025

Lauralton celebrates a historic \$350,000 gift and marks its 120th anniversary—a tribute to our proud past, vibrant present, and promising future. Here's to another 120 years!



THE TRAPP FAMILY SINGERS



December 14, 1941

After fleeing Nazi-Austria, the Von Trapp Family Singers performed a private concert in the Mansion, and a public Christmas concert at Lauralton Hall. Tickets were \$3.30. The school hosted the women and youngest son while the men of the family found lodging with local families.

2005

Lauralton celebrates its centennial with the renaming of the Sacred Heart Administration Building to Mercy Hall in honor of the Sisters of Mercy during the Mercy Day celebration. Father Robert J. Terentieff, faculty member and artist, created commemorative stained glass windows honoring Lauralton's legacy and 100th Anniversary.



Acknowledging Dedicated Service and New Board Leadership at Lauralton Hall

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Lauralton Hall Board of Trustees members who will be cycling off this summer:

- **Patrick Lagrange P'19**, who has served with dedication for six years, including the past three as Board Chair
- **Charlotte Evans '64**, who also dedicated six years to the Board and served for the last three years as Vice Chair
- **Stephen Ball P'16, P'18**, who contributed six years of service as Finance Chair
- **Dr. Peter Jokl GP'21**, who has served the Board faithfully for the past three years

We thank them for their leadership, time, and commitment to Lauralton Hall. Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce new leadership roles:

- **Lisa Shea P'14, P'21** will serve as Board Chair
- **Ray Peloso P'14, P'16, P'21** will assume the role of Vice Chair
- **Glenn Elia P'08, P'13** will take on the position of Finance Chair
- **Sheila Scullion Sullivan '84, P'16** will continue as Board Secretary



Incoming Board of Trustees Chair Lisa Shea P'14, P'21, and Head of School Beth Coyne celebrate Lauralton Hall at the 120th Birthday Gala held on April 26.

Photo Credit: Shades Shutters Photography

A Legacy of Giving: Historic Gift to Lauralton Hall

As Lauralton Hall celebrates its **120th anniversary**, a remarkable act of generosity is shaping the future for generations of students to come. **The Kathleen Spencer and Gerald T. Sargent Jr. Scholarship Fund**, a \$350,000 endowed gift, marks the largest single contribution in the school's history—an extraordinary tribute to a family whose unwavering dedication to Lauralton spans more than six decades.

The scholarship, established by the family of **Kathleen Spencer Sargent '58** and her husband **Gerald T. Sargent Jr.**, honors their parents' 65 years of service to the school. Kathleen, a proud member of the Class of 1958, began volunteering just two years after graduation, and alongside her husband, remained deeply engaged with Lauralton, despite not having daughters to attend.

They were thrilled that their granddaughters, 2016, 2018 and 2027, share Kathleen's Lauralton legacy. For her service and commitment to her Alma Mater, Kathleen was awarded the 1993 Mother Mary Augustine Claven Award. Jerry followed, receiving the 2022 Reverend Peter H. McClean Award.

"Lauralton Hall has been a constant presence in our parents' lives, and it would be hard to imagine a greater believer in Lauralton's mission than our mother," shared the Sargent family. "We felt the 120th anniversary was the perfect moment to recognize our parents' commitment and create a lasting legacy that will support young women seeking to experience the same transformative education our mother cherished."

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the scholarship will provide essential financial aid to incoming freshmen, ensuring that the next generation of Lauralton students can grow into compassionate, confident leaders.

A Celebration of 120 Years

Lauralton Hall's anniversary year is filled with special events honoring our rich history and looking ahead to a bright future. The **120th Birthday Gala on April 26, 2025**, was a spectacular evening of celebration, marking this occasion as we raised vital funds for scholarships. Other highlights include the **Lauralton Golf Tournament** (June 16, 2025), a free **Concert on the Lawn** (July 17, 2025), **Alumnae Weekend** and **Claven Awards** (September 20-21, 2025), **Christmas in the Mansion** (December 6-7, 2025), and **Irish Night** (February 28, 2026)—each an opportunity for alumnae, parents, students, and the broader community to come together in support of the school's mission.

A Future Built on Generosity

The impact of gifts like the Sargent family's scholarship fund extends far beyond financial support—it is a testament to the enduring spirit of Lauralton Hall and the belief in **the power of young women to lead and excel**.

"This historic gift is a transformative investment in the future of our students," said Head of School Beth Coyne. *"It reflects the deep and lasting commitment of our alumnae and families to empowering young women through education."*

As Lauralton Hall celebrates this milestone year, its mission remains steadfast: to nurture and educate the next generation of leaders, just as it has for the past 120 years. And thanks to the generosity of donors like the Sargent family, that legacy will continue to thrive for years to come.

For details on anniversary events or to support Lauralton Hall's scholarship initiatives, visit lauraltonhall.org/give.



Kathleen Spencer Sargent '58, GP'16, GP'17, GP'27, and her husband, Gerald T. Sargent Jr., beam with pride as their family honors them with a scholarship established in their name.

Retirement News



We share bittersweet news as we announce the retirement of Kim Bernier P'19 who has devoted an impressive 25 years to private Catholic education. Her career included 13 years at Fairfield Prep and the past 12 years at Lauralton where she served as the Counseling Office Administrative Assistant and Athletic Office Manager. Joining her in this new chapter is her husband Bob Bernier who is also retiring after nearly 40 years of dedicated teaching and coaching at Fairfield Prep.

Kim expresses her heartfelt gratitude for the support, opportunities, and cherished memories she has experienced throughout her career at Lauralton Hall: "This is a very exciting time for us, but at the same time a little scary! Nonetheless, we are looking forward to the next chapter in our lives!"

As they embark on a new adventure in Williamsburg, Virginia, we wish the Berniers a well-deserved break filled with relaxation and joy. Please join us in sending our best wishes and prayers for safe travels!

Please keep us up-to-date on your latest moves at:
LauraltonHall.org/myinfo

Lauralton Hall Unveils Upgraded Weight Room, Thanks to Generous Donors

The Lauralton Hall Athletic Department is dedicated to offering a comprehensive and dynamic athletic program that aligns with our school's philosophy and mission. We are thrilled to announce the recent updates to our weight room, now equipped with new state-of-the-art equipment, thanks to the generosity of two anonymous donors. This enhancement benefits all 15 of our sports teams, allowing our athletes to continue excelling both on and off the field. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these donors for their support in fostering the development of our student-athletes, who embody the spirit of competition and sportsmanship enriched by Mercy values.

To support the continued growth of Lauralton Athletics, visit lauraltonhall.org/give today!



For a list of Lauralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit:
LauraltonHall.org/inmemoriam



Congratulations to the Class of 2025 who received acceptances to 166 colleges and universities and will matriculate to 53 different campuses in the Fall.

Celebrating the Class of 2025

The Lauralton Hall Class of 2025 is a remarkable group of young women defined by their dedication, resilience, and relentless drive to excel. Entering high school in the lingering shadow of COVID, they transformed from tentative middle schoolers into confident go-getters, eagerly embracing every opportunity to engage with their new environment. This diverse and dynamic class includes ambitious leaders, high achievers, and creative innovators who not only joined but founded and led clubs—showcasing both intellectual curiosity and a deep sense of teamwork. They were athletes, equestrians, rowers, dancers—and above all, compassionate individuals who lived out the values of service and mercy. Together, they supported one another through challenges and triumphs, cultivating a sisterhood rooted in perseverance, personality, and purpose. With these qualities, the Class of 2025 is ready to take on their next chapter with courage, confidence, and unwavering determination.

Exciting News from the Enrollment Office

Our enrollment plan is grounded in Catherine McAuley’s spirit of hospitality. Mornings in the Mansion are held weekly throughout the fall and spring, offering 7th and 8th grade girls the opportunity to shadow classes while their families learn more about the Lauralton experience. Once a student is accepted, she and her family are invited back for lunch and an afternoon designed to offer a meaningful glimpse into the heart of Lauralton—our sisterhood, school spirit, and Mercy tradition.

Catherine’s hospitality works! Lauralton Hall is thrilled to welcome a wonderful group of incoming freshmen to the Class of 2029—our largest in six years. These young women bring a vibrant blend of talents, passions, and promise, and we can’t wait for them to officially join the Lauralton community.

We’re also delighted to welcome several transfer students joining the Classes of 2028 and 2027. We’re honored that they’ve chosen to make Lauralton their new home.

Please keep all new members of the Lauralton Hall community in your prayers as we look ahead to Matriculation 2025. If you would like to help us extend a warm welcome by sending a card to one of our new students, please contact Yvonne Fosse Previs, Director of Enrollment ’90, P’27, at yfosseprevis@lauraltonhall.org.



Gabby Meda, Bella Cappelletti, and Kali Curseadan—a few of our newest Crusaders—proudly wearing their Class of 2029 hoodies.

Cultivating Excellence in Young Women

At Lauralton Hall, we believe that every young woman has the potential to blossom into her best self, and our academic program is thoughtfully crafted to nurture this growth. This March, we were thrilled to host a series of Theater Arts Masterclasses led by alumna Brenna Donahue ’14, which provided students with invaluable hands-on experience. These Masterclasses pave the way for an exciting new theater arts course debuting this fall, promising to enrich our curriculum further. Additionally, we proudly celebrate Computer Science Teacher Danielle Sarrafpour for her exceptional dedication in the classroom. Her efforts have been instrumental in Lauralton Hall receiving the College Board’s AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award, recognizing our commitment to expanding young women’s access to AP Computer Science Principles. These initiatives exemplify our dedication to fostering an empowering and inclusive educational environment where every student can thrive.



Brenna Donahue ’14 welcomed colleague Alex Deleo, Broadway performer and choreographer, as Guest Artist for a Wicked dance call class and mock audition.

Join Us for the 2025 Claven Awards



2025 CLAVEN AWARDS
EXCELLENCE · SERVICE · MERCY

The Claven Award Ceremony is designed to recognize exceptional individuals who have made significant contributions to the Lauralton Hall community. We are pleased to announce the 2025 inductees:

Mother Mary Augustine Claven Award
Charlotte Evans ’64
Marianne “Mimi” Nelsen P’07
VADM Joanna M. Collins Nunan, USMS ’83

Reverend Peter H. McClean Award
Patrick Lagrange P’19

Reverend Cornelius J. Doherty Distinguished Service Award
Peggy McGowan
Janet Powers ’75

The Claven Awards will be presented during Alumnae Weekend, Saturday, September 20. Please join us as we honor these six remarkable individuals and recognize their outstanding contributions. Visit lauraltonhall.org/claven for more information.

SAVE THE DATES

July 17, 2025
Concert on the Lawn
featuring the RumRunners

September 20-21, 2025
Alumnae Weekend

September 20, 2025
Claven Awards

December 6, 2025
Christmas in the Mansion Preview Party

December 7, 2025
Christmas in the Mansion

February 28, 2026
Irish Night

March 28, 2026
Lauralton Gala



Jillian O'Neil '11 is the founder and CEO of Eat.Train.Love.NYC. With a background in fitness and Jillian's mission is to empower others to create lasting change through balanced, nutrition, habits.

Engaging Events for Student Enrichment

The Counseling Office was thrilled with the success of their Career Speaker series, welcoming five LH alumnae back to campus to discuss their various jobs. While their daily tasks may differ, all our alumnae spoke to the preparedness they felt graduating from Lauralton to pursue their various degrees and career opportunities.

Additionally, Lauralton's counseling team organized four Wellness Assemblies for the entire student body, covering important topics such as breast health awareness, mental health, nutrition, and informed decision-making.

Lauralton Hall

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ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY
Lauralton Hall
CONCERT ON THE LAWN
featuring
RUMRUNNERS
FREE
JULY 17, 2025 6-8PM



Lauralton Hall is a sponsored ministry of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and is a member of Mercy Education.