COMMUNIQUÉ

THE MAGAZINE OF ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL

Fall 2025



CONTENTS

05
Expanding Vision: Introducing Two New Members of SJ's Board of Directors

06
Charting the Course: SJ's Alumni Career Fair Prepares Cadets for the Future

08
Building More Than Homes: Cadets Spend a Summer of Service in Guatemala

16
Two Teachers, Two Journeys: A Summer of Teaching in China

18
Celebrating Champions: Athletic Excellence and News

20
Notes from the Office of Alumni & Advancement

22
New Jumbotron Scoreboard: Enhancing the Game Day Experience

22
SJ Golf Tournament: A Winning Day for a Great Cause



Advanced Chamber Choir students enjoy a coffee break at Starbucks after their performance at the opening school Convocation and Mass celebrated by the Diocese of Bridgeport and Bishop Caggiano.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

10 **Living With Purpose:** Mari B. Andrzejewski '20 Shares her Journey on a Path Toward Healing and Hope for Others

12 **From Court to Career: How the Lessons of SJ Basketball Echoes Across Generations:** Patricia Zito '89 and her Daughters, Alyssa '17, Kathryn '19, and Nicole '21 Share the Impact St. Joes has had on Their Lives

14 **The Golden Butterfly:** An SJ Alum Shares the Story of True Faith After the Loss of a Sibling

15 **A Legacy of Love and Learning:** Honoring Joan Trefz GP '13, '15, '16, '16, '29

23 **A Golden Cadet Reunion:** Fifty Years, One Family











COMMENCEMENT 2025

On Saturday, May 30th, St. Joseph High School proudly celebrated the graduation of 180 senior Cadets. Although the rainy weather moved us indoors for the first time in more than a decade, the ceremony was nothing short of remarkable. It reflected the resilience, strength, and individuality that define the Class of 2025.

The celebration also honored two beloved retired faculty members, Patrick Pardee and Betsy Sorrentino '76, who together devoted 83 years of teaching and mentorship to St. Joes. Their legacy continues to inspire both students and colleagues. We extend our warmest congratulations to the Class of 2025 and wish them every success as they begin their next chapter. We look forward to welcoming them back and hearing their stories as proud alumni.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



Dear Friends,

As we share this Fall 2025 edition of the Communiqué, I continue to be appreciative of and inspired by the energy and momentum that define St. Joseph High School. This new school year is off to a promising start and clearly indicates continued forward progress, achievement, and generosity - each rooted in the enduring legacy of excellence built by our alumni and sustained by our current families, faculty, and students.

This issue provides an uplifting glimpse of the many exciting developments across our campus and alumni community. We are thrilled to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors whose leadership will help guide us into the future. On campus, our facilities continue to evolve. A new Jumbotron Scoreboard, generously donated by two SJ families, now proudly celebrates the achievements of our three 2024-2025 State Championship teams—Football, Baseball, and Boys Lacrosse. Our planned summer facility improvements included newly resurfaced tennis courts and the construction of a pavilion, scheduled for completion in October. In addition, critical infrastructure work this summer—installing plumbing, electrical, and communications systems, while relocating utility and sewer lines—enabled the next phase of intentional campus expansion.

> *"Thank you for being an integral part of the St. Joseph tradition—your continued involvement ensures that our mission not only endures but flourishes."*

Our students have also carried the Cadet spirit well beyond the walls of our beloved school. This summer, they volunteered in Bridgeport, Appalachia, and South America, serving communities near and far. Likewise, two of our dedicated faculty members shared their expertise abroad, teaching in China and extending the reach of an SJ education across the globe.

While the milestones are many, one truth remains constant: St. Joseph High School is a place where students seek out their talents, strive to fulfill their God-given potential, serve others, and thrive with confidence long after graduation. These core values, still nurtured on campus today, are inspired by the example and generosity of our alumni who paved the way and continue to inspire future generations. Some of their impactful stories are shared within the pages that follow.

I hope you enjoy the stories in this edition, which celebrate both our progress and the people who make it possible. Thank you for being an integral part of the St. Joseph tradition - your continued involvement ensures that our mission not only endures but flourishes now and for many years to come.

In Faith and Fellowship,



David J. Klein

St. Joseph High School is an independent Catholic college preparatory community that educates and motivates young women and men to live purposeful lives as ethical leaders committed to the common good of all.

Board Members

St. Joseph High School is a self-governing institution within the Diocese of Bridgeport.

CHAIRPERSON
Christopher Wilson P '08, '10, '14
Stonehill Capital Management, LLC

John Corraro '11
Barnum Financial Group

Michael De Vivo P '26, '28
De Vivo Financial Group

Patrick Donegan '83
P '11, '11, '14, '17, '24
The Riverside Company

John Fahey P '20, '22, '25, '27
United Rentals, Inc.

John Gschwind P '14
Rexel USA

Andrea Maldon '89 P '19
Lone Pine Capital, retired

Kenneth Martin '95 P '21, '23, '24, '28
Co-Owner, Colony Grill

James Woods P '96, '98, '00
Venman & Co. LLC

David J. Klein
President, *ex officio*

Stacie Stueber
Superintendent of Schools,
Diocese of Bridgeport, *ex officio*

Expanding Vision: Two New Members Appointed to the SJ Board of Directors

St. Joseph High School is proud to welcome two distinguished leaders to our Board of Directors. Their experience, professional accomplishments, and deep commitment to Catholic education will help guide the future of our school and strengthen the mission that has shaped generations of Cadets. We are grateful for their dedication and look forward to the insight and vision they will bring to our community.

JOHN CORRARO '11



John Corraro is a Financial Planner and Financial Services Executive with Barnum Financial Group in Shelton. A 2011 graduate of St. Joseph High School, he went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Government from Manhattan College.

Mr. Corraro currently serves as Chairman of the Board at Center Stage Theatre in Shelton and is an active member of the Capital Campaign Cabinet and Advancement Committee at St. Joseph High School. In addition, he serves on the Board and Allocations Committee for the Barnum Foundation for Life and was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees for Foundations in Education, where he also serves as a member of their Finance Committee.

A former President of St. Joseph High School's Alumni Association, Mr. Corraro was recognized as a 2019 Fairfield County Business Journal "40 Under 40" honoree. He resides in Shelton with his wife, Meghan, and is a parishioner at St. Lawrence Church.

MICHAEL DE VIVO P '26, '28



Michael De Vivo, CFP is the Managing Director and Private Wealth Advisor of De Vivo Financial Group, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial. He leads a group of advisors that have been recognized by Forbes as a Best-In-State Wealth Management Team for 2023-2025.

Mr. De Vivo held a leadership role at the MetLife Premier Client Group and was inducted into the MetLife Hall of Fame in 2013. He holds a Bachelor of Science in International Business from Plattsburgh State University that included studies at the American University of Rome, Italy.

Mr. De Vivo and his wife, Karen, have chosen Catholic education for their children from the very beginning, raising them within the Diocese of Bridgeport school community. Their daughters, Maria '26 and Michela '28, are proud Cadets. A man of deep faith, Mr. De Vivo and his family are active parishioners at St. Theresa Church in Trumbull. He also serves as a member of the Knights of Columbus and the St. Theresa Sons of Saint Joseph.

Charting the Course: SJ's Alumni Career Fair Prepares Cadets for the Future

On April 2, 2025, Nearly 40 Alumni Came Home to Joe for a day of Networking, Mentorship, and Inspiration



Rick Wilkins '87 P '21, '25 captures our Cadets' attention.

It was a brisk, cool day as our National Honor Society students assisted with parking signs and banners - welcoming SJ Alumni (from the Class of 1966 to the Class of 2021) back to campus for a powerful day of connection and career exploration.

The Alumni Career Fair, hosted in the school's gymnasium and auditorium, transformed the space into a vibrant hub of inspiration, where juniors and seniors engaged with alumni professionals across a wide range of industries—from law to business, engineering to health care, education, and more. Upon arrival, each alum was greeted with a personalized name tag that paired their SJ senior portrait with their current job title—a striking visual reminder of how far their St. Joe's journey has taken them and a fun icebreaker for student conversations.

"The Career Fair was a celebration of the Cadet spirit at every stage of life," said David Klein, President. "Our alumni brought incredible energy and wisdom to share with the next generation. It's moments like this that remind us of the lifelong connections that exists within our community."

In the weeks leading up to the Fair, the College and School Counseling department worked closely with students to help them make the most of this opportunity. Through workshops and guided discussions, students not only learned how to network but how to develop specific, intentional questions for those in attendance.



"Our goal was to empower students to be curious and confident," said Terence Houlihan, Director of College and School Counseling. "They walked into the gym prepared—not just to listen, but to truly engage. You could feel the buzz in the room."

Each Alum hosted a table, many of which were decorated with business cards, promotional materials, industry tools, and even photos from their time as a student. Juniors entered the gym first, exploring the tables and conducting mini-interviews with the alumni. Seniors followed shortly after and were then given the opportunity to attend up to three alumni panel discussions in the auditorium. These panels, which covered fields such as Law & Law

Tom Matthews '89, P '19, '24, '28 shares impactful stories and experiences.



"Our alumni brought incredible energy and wisdom to share with the next generation. It's moments like this that remind us of the lifelong connection that exists within our community." ~ David Klein.

Enforcement, Leadership in Business, Health & Wellness, and Engineering, were selected in advance by students and marked by color-coded lanyards—giving the event a professional, conference-like feel.

After a morning of discussion and discovery, alumni were then invited to join the Advancement Team and Mr. Klein for lunch in the Student Commons, where conversations continued in a more casual setting. They were also led on campus tours by Student Ambassadors, or in some cases, alumni took the lead on the tours themselves, walking the halls and sharing cherished memories of the school before its many renovations.

"I couldn't believe how much the campus has changed and yet, how much still felt like home," shared John Corraro '11. "It was so rewarding to meet students who remind me of myself at their age."

The day concluded with new connections, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Faculty played a key role in supporting the event, both by supervising students and encouraging participation. Though it was the first event of this format at St. Joes, the success was undeniable.

"As with any first-time initiative, we expected a few hiccups," said Mr. Houlihan, "but the response from students and alumni alike was incredibly positive. We're already looking forward to next year."

Plans are underway to continue offering alumni the chance to return, reconnect, and inspire. The Alumni Career Fair proved to be more than an event; it was a testament to the enduring strength of the St. Joseph High School community.

If you are an alum interested in sharing your career journey with future Cadets, we would love to welcome you at next year's Alumni Career Fair! To learn more or express your interest, please reach out to the program's co-director, Mrs. Maria Martinez, Director of Marketing and Communications, at mmartinez@sjcadets.org. Your story could be the inspiration that sparks a student's future!



Christine Rowland '88, Physician Assistant, shares her experiences working in the medical field.





Building More Than Homes: Cadets Spend a Summer of Service in Guatemala

Giovanni '26 and Maritza '28 Serrano Share Their Time and Talent to Support Families in San Andrés Itzapa

Senior Cadet, Giovanni Serrano, and his sister, Maritza, truly embody what it means to be Cadets who lead with service. Both are Student Ambassadors, active members of the Track & Field teams, and Giovanni is involved in Jeopardy, Ping Pong, and Italian Clubs. Beyond their many commitments on campus, they also devote their time and energy to making a difference in their community—and even go beyond our borders.

Recently, Giovanni and Maritza were invited by the pastor of the United Congregational Church in Bridgeport to join a service trip to Guatemala. Though not parishioners of the church, the siblings have known Reverend Sara Smith their entire lives and trusted her when she said the experience would be life-changing. Remarkably, this was the church's very first overseas service trip—and for Maritza, it was also her first time traveling outside of the country.

The service trip took them from the bustling, tourist-friendly streets of Antigua (where the group stayed) to the rural town of San Andrés Itzapa (30 minutes away), where families live in modest, rural conditions, often without access to clean water. This was where assistance was needed the most. "It was really eye-opening," said Giovanni. "A trip like this allows you to see how some people live, and it makes you appreciate what you have."

During the trip, the Church group of fifteen were split into two groups (Giovanni in one, Maritza in the other) and were tasked with assisting communities with a variety of projects. Because their group was primarily comprised of English-speaking parishioners, Giovanni and Maritza's fluency in Spanish made them invaluable as translators, allowing them to connect with local families in an incredibly meaningful way. Together with their group, the pair helped to pack and distribute supplies like water filters, toothpaste, books, toys, and sanitary items to children in the area. The supplies were all donated by the Parish as well as enough money to construct two aluminum homes—one for an elderly couple and another for a family with six children—over





foundations that had been prepared in advance. Each house included bunk beds and basic provisions, giving the families a safe and dignified place to live.

"The best part was seeing the excitement in the kids' eyes and the gratitude of their parents," Maritza recalled. "It really made all of our hard work feel worthwhile."

The siblings also participated in daily reflections and prayers, an experience that reinforced the importance of service and compassion. By the end of the week, Giovanni and Maritza returned home with not only their cherished memories but a deeper understanding of the world beyond their own community.

Giovanni, who had spent just the week prior in Appalachia on an SJ Service Trip, reflects on his summer travels. "I would absolutely do something like this again," he said. "It opens your eyes and changes your perspective." Through this journey, Giovanni and Maritza showed the power of service, empathy, and connection - reminding all of us that even small acts of kindness can leave a lasting impact.

A heartwarming experience in Guatemala: building homes and creating connections.



Living With Purpose:

Mari B. Andrzejewski, Class of 2020, Shares Her Journey on a Path Toward Healing and Hope for Others



When Mari Andrzejewski walked across the stage as a graduate of the Class of 2020, she carried away more than a diploma. She carried with her a sense of purpose, a quiet confidence, and a deep appreciation for the connections and community she found at St. Joes, a school that has been part of her family for generations. Her father, Richard '85, along with her siblings, Jude '18 and Isabel '17, walked these same halls, shaping a legacy of faith, learning, and service.

Fast forward just a few years later, and Mari is living out that legacy in profound ways. After spending a year as a pediatric mental health nurse in Denver, CO, Mari has returned to Philadelphia to continue her studies in the PhD program at Penn Nursing. Her mission? To improve the mental healthcare experience for youth through hands-on care and research.

"It's incredibly rewarding to help patients realize they have some control over their mental health," Mari shares. "We move through life so fast that we don't always recognize how our emotions impact us. As a nurse, I run therapeutic groups that help patients slow down, identify their feelings, and develop healthier ways to respond."

That work, rooted in empathy and understanding, is a natural extension of what Mari experienced during her time at St. Joes.

"One of the things that made SJ so special for me was how many opportunities we had to be vulnerable," she reflects. "Whether it was retreats or class trips, we were encouraged to be honest with ourselves and with each other. I was surrounded by staff who respected us and modeled openness and that helped me grow in ways I didn't fully realize at the time."

Mari's academic path has not always been straightforward, but it has been intentional. "In high school, I was unsure of what I wanted to do. I just knew that I wanted a fulfilling, social career that allowed me to learn about others deeply." That instinct led her to earn a Bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania, where she found both opportunity and challenge.

"The environment at Penn was intense. During my senior year, I knew I needed a break. I accepted a job in Denver, moved across the country alone, and started a new chapter. I'm so proud of that decision. I learned to trust myself, made new friends, and found motivation to return to school and help youth in new ways."

That spirit of resilience and curiosity has been a defining theme since her high school years. "When I was younger, I was so focused on getting into college that I didn't always give myself space to be curious," Mari says. "Since then, I've discovered how much I love learning—about science, the world, and myself."



Celebrating years of hard work, growth, and the start of an exciting journey in Denver!

One of the people who helped foster that curiosity was Dr. Daniel Walsh, recently retired SJ faculty member, whom Mari remembers fondly. "His love for the natural world was infectious. He inspired me to work hard and deepened my love of the sciences."

As she continues her academic journey, Mari carries with her not only the tools of her education but also the values that were formed in the classrooms and hallways of St. Joseph High School.

"There are endless ways to do the rest of your life right," she offers as advice to current students. "Be brave enough to act with honesty and authenticity. Don't be afraid to ask for help. And make time to be curious, about yourself, the world, and the people around you."

For Mari, the journey is just beginning, but it is already marked by compassion, faith, and a commitment to making a difference.



"I am grateful for a role that challenges me, inspires me, and lets us dress up for wacky Wednesday!"



From Court to Career: How the Lessons of SJ Basketball Echoes Across Generations.

Patricia (Luczaj) Zito '89 and her Daughters Alyssa '17, Kathryn '19, and Nicole '21 Share the Impact St. Joes has had on Their Lives

At St. Joseph High School, basketball has always been more than a game. It has been a proving ground for leadership, resilience, and lifelong friendships. Few families embody that truth more than the Zitos.

Spanning two generations, Patricia Luczaj Zito, class of 1989, and her daughters, Alyssa, class of 2017, Kathryn, class of 2019, and Nicole, class of 2021, each found their voices and their footing as Cadets on the basketball court. What began as one mother's high school experience grew into a shared family legacy, shaping not only their time at St. Joes but the way they now live, work, and lead.

For Patricia, stepping onto the hardwood court as a teenager meant more than running drills and chasing wins. It was about discipline, accountability, and teamwork - the values she credits with carrying her through college, career, and motherhood.

After graduating from the University of Connecticut, Patricia spent a decade in human resources before returning to her passion for education. She went on to earn multiple advanced degrees, founded BluJay Learning, LLC, and today serves as Lead Teacher at Westport Day School. But her proudest accomplishment has always been her daughters. "St. Joes gave me the time management and grit to juggle work, school, and family," she reflects. "Watching my girls grow into confident, compassionate women has been the greatest gift."

Each of Patricia's daughters discovered their own rhythm at St. Joes, but all three carried the game forward, both as players and now as coaches. Alyssa remembers the thrill of winning a state championship and the responsibility of leading as a senior captain. Those lessons of leadership, balance, and persistence followed her to the University of Rhode Island, where she graduated summa cum laude, and into her career as a financial planner and youth basketball coach.

Kathryn still recalls the energy of Pink Games and the unforgettable double-overtime win against Danbury High School when she hit two critical three-pointers. The confidence she managed to build on the court carried her into a master's degree in occupational therapy at Quinnipiac University and now into her work in subacute rehab.

Kathryn continues to play and coach, determined to pass on the encouragement she once received.

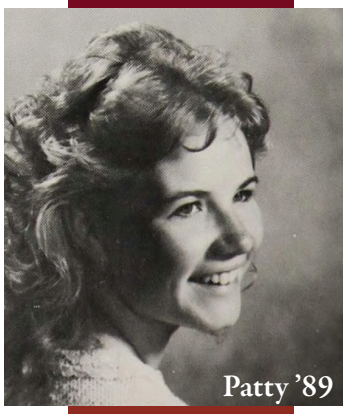
Nicole, the youngest, also embraced her role as team captain with determination and tenacity. “Leading the team was an honor, especially when we proved the doubters wrong,” she recalls. Those lessons in perseverance and communication guided her through Iona University, where she graduated cum laude in marketing, and now into her role at the Boston Beer Company - all while staying close to the game through coaching and league play.

Though their individual paths differ, the Zito women are united by a single truth: the transformative power of sport and the community that nurtured it. For them, basketball was the classroom where discipline met joy, where coaches became mentors, and where victories weren’t just tallied on a scoreboard but in lessons that lasted far beyond high school.

The Zito family’s story is not just one of tradition. It is proof of how the St. Joes experience multiplies across generations. The values of faith, service, and perseverance that Patricia first encountered as a Cadet now echo in her daughters’ careers, coaching, and characters. Together, they are a family that proves that a St. Joes education does not end with a diploma - it grows into a legacy of leadership, resilience, and impact that carries forward into every arena of life.

2015 Championship Team




Patty ’89


Alyssa ’17


Kathryn ’19


Nicole ’21

Do You Have a St. Joes Family Legacy?

Every legacy tells a story, and at St. Joseph High School, those stories are the heart of our community. From siblings who walk the same hallways to generations who carry on traditions, legacies remind us that St. Joes is more than a school - it’s a family. We love celebrating the families whose story spans generations. If your family has a legacy, whether through siblings, parents, grandparents, or beyond, we want to hear from you! Your story helps us honor the past while inspiring the future. Share your legacy with us by contacting Maria Stickney at mstickney@sjcadets.org.

The Golden Butterfly: A Sister's Legacy of Faith



The Marsan Family's Journey Reminds us That Faith Endures and Love Never Ends

At St. Joes, faith is more than a lesson, it is a light that guides students through every joy and trial, long after they leave the classroom. For the Marsan family, that faith has been a steady presence across generations.

The five Marsan siblings—Patty '79, Tom '81, Jim '83, Maureen '84, and Kathy '88—each walked the halls of St. Joes and carried with them lessons of hope, resilience, and trust in God. That trust shone most brightly in the life of the eldest, Patty (Marsan) Hane, who passed away on May 14, 2024 after a courageous battle with metastatic breast cancer.

Even in the face of a terminal prognosis, Patty met each day with grace. She pursued experimental treatments not only for herself, but in the hope of helping others, and became an inspiration to everyone around her. Separated by distance during COVID-19, Patty and her sisters began exchanging letters, reflecting on life, purpose, and God's love. Those letters revealed the depth of a faith first nurtured at home and strengthened at St. Joes. Patty's words of hope and acceptance became both a comfort and a guide, proof that faith can transform even the most difficult moments.

Before Patty's passing, her sister Kathy asked if she would send a sign from heaven and Patty agreed. Months later, Kathy uncovered a golden decorative butterfly beneath the soil near a flower planted in Patty's honor. The butterfly was in one whole piece and was shimmering, as if waiting to be found. That same week, a single pink rose bloomed from a dormant bush in the snow. To Kathy, these were symbols of resurrection, reminders of Christ's promise of eternal life, and the assurance that love endures beyond death.

The story of Patty's life and faith is more than a family tribute; it is a testament to the enduring spirit of St. Joseph alumni. It reflects the way a Catholic education can plant seeds of resilience and hope that continue to blossom, even in loss. For the Marsans, and for all Cadets, faith remains the golden thread that ties together family, community, and the promise of something greater.

Kathy and Patty walking over the bridge to Manhattan in 2019.



LtR: Maureen (Marsan) Gastonguay '84, Kathy (Marsan) Ambrose '88, Alice Marsan, Patty Hane '79, Tom Marsan '81, Jim Marsan '83



A single pink rose blooms from a dormant bush.



A Legacy of Love and Learning

Honoring Joan Trefz GP ’13, ’15, ’16, ’16, ’29

At St. Joseph High School, we believe education is one of the greatest gifts that can be passed on from one generation to the next. Few understood that truth more deeply than the late Joan Trefz, whose life reflected a steadfast belief in the power of education to shape futures and strengthen communities.

Joan’s connection to St. Joes ran deep. Four of her grandchildren graduated from the school (Theresa ’13, Alexander ’15, Christian ’16, Kevin ‘16) and this fall, her first great-grandchild, Leila, entered as a member of the Class of 2029. For Joan, knowing that her family’s story would continue at St. Joes was a source of peace and joy in her final months. Her granddaughter, Gretchen, recalls the reaction from Joan when Gretchen’s daughter Leila received her SJ acceptance letter. “She had the biggest smile on her face; she was so proud.”

According to Gretchen, Joan enjoyed learning and seeing her grandchildren experience an education built around strong Catholic values. It’s no surprise that education had always been central to Joan’s values, and she dedicated her life to ensuring that her family, and countless other students through her generosity, had the opportunities they needed to thrive. Gretchen describes Joan as the heart of their family: a joyful, spirited presence who brought humor, wisdom, and love into every moment. Their bond was so close that they often referred to themselves as “Ethel and Lucy,” a pair inseparable in laughter and loyalty. Gretchen recalls how her grandmother’s belief in education was not abstract; it was lived out every day in the way she encouraged, supported, and celebrated her family. “My Grandmother always led with what was right, let your conscience be your guide. She embodied the spirit of SJHS, staying focused, leading with what is right and allowing yourself to reach your full potential.”

For Gretchen, having her daughter Leila become a Cadet has been amazing. She witnessed the transformation of her cousins when they attended and the life they lead because of it. Now Leila will follow in their footsteps and to uphold the Trefz family name, paving the way for her sisters and future generations to come. She is hopeful that future generations of the Trefz family will carry on their family’s legacy at SJ.

Beyond her devotion to those she loved, Joan built a remarkable life of her own. She forged a career in stocks and bonds before marrying her husband, Ernest, with whom she raised three children: Chris, Paul, and Linda. Together, they built a foundation of strength and generosity that extended to eight grandchildren and now nine great-grandchildren. Through it all, Joan’s spirit of giving remained rooted in her faith and her belief in the transformative power of learning.

Though her passing on April 24, 2025 left a deep absence, Joan’s legacy continues to be felt at St. Joseph High School. Her support, along with that of the Trefz family, has made it possible for students to access an SJ Cadet education regardless of financial circumstance. Her impact is visible not just in her own family, but in every student who benefits from the doors she has helped to open.

Joan’s story is a reminder that when we invest in others, the impact endures far beyond a single lifetime. It lives on in classrooms, in families, and in the generations of Cadets who carry forward the legacy of our community.



Joan, Trish, and The Trefz foundation honored at the 2022 Maroon & Gold Gala.



Gretchen, Paul, and the Trefz Foundation honored at the Swim Across the Sound Golf Tournament.



LtR: Paul, Chris, Chris Sr., Joan, and Eva Trefz at a McDonald’s Grand Opening.



Trefz Family Annual Picnic.



Joan Trefz dancing with Paul Trefz.











Two Teachers, Two Journeys: A Sun

SJ Faculty, Allison Provenzano and Donna Loehfelm Reflect on Cultural to St. Joes From China.

This summer, two St. Joseph High School teachers stepped far, *far* outside their comfort zones and into classrooms on the other side of the world. Allison Provenzano and Donna Loehfelm both traveled to China to spend two weeks teaching, eager to experience the classroom in a new cultural setting. Though their journeys unfolded in different ways, each returned with stories of challenge, connection, and the unexpected lessons that come from daring to adventure.

Initially, the pair had planned to teach side by side, but a last-minute staffing emergency need sent them in different directions - more than five hours apart by bullet train! Suddenly, each was left to navigate the experience on their own.

> *"The students were so grateful. They'd write me notes, give me little gifts, or even try to teach me Chinese words. I loved those moments of connection."*
> *~ Allison*

For Allison, the decision to teach abroad was born out of curiosity. She had never been to Asia and was intrigued by the opportunity to see how learning happens in another country. She was assigned to teach math and science to students who were eager but sometimes hesitant to bridge the language gap. "Most of my classes were taught in three-hour blocks," she explained. "That was exhausting at times, especially with younger students, but their energy and excitement kept me going."

Because she does not speak Mandarin, she relied heavily on patience, gestures, and a willingness to laugh with her students. What surprised her most was how much her students wanted to connect on a personal level. "They would write me little notes," she said. "They'd give me little gifts or even try to teach me Chinese words. I loved those moments of connection."

Donna's decision to travel was fueled by a lifelong dream. Now that her own children are grown, she had the opportunity to immerse herself in another culture while doing what she loves most. She, too, encountered striking differences in the classroom, though it varied dramatically depending on the city. For one week in one location, Donna found students who were focused, disciplined, and hungry to learn. "They were engaged in everything I did, especially the narrative writing lessons," she said. "They wanted to participate and try." But her second week in a different city found that classrooms were more chaotic, the age groups mixed, and discipline harder to establish. But despite cultural and language barriers, Donna discovered moments of triumph. One of her students, Richard, began the week struggling to write in English; but in the end, he proudly produced a five-page story. "Watching him grow in confidence was one of the best parts of my trip," Donna recalled.

Both teachers were struck by the cultural differences in Chinese

nmer of Teaching in China

l Exchange, Classroom Surprises, and the Lessons They'll Carry Back

schools – the long blocks of teaching and strictly regimented schedules. "They even had a midday break where students would eat lunch and then take a nap," said Allison. "It was such a different structure than what we're used to here."

Outside of the classroom, both teachers embraced opportunities to explore China itself, but Donna had a guide who truly allowed her to see more of the city around her. She wandered the bustling city streets, sampled local cuisine, and visited historic sites that offered glimpses into China's long and complex history. "Immersing myself in the culture - not just as a tourist but as someone living and working there - gave me such a richer perspective," Donna said.

Both Allison and Donna will admit that the challenges were real – everything from jet lag to language barriers to the sheer intensity of teaching in unfamiliar classrooms – is enough to give any teacher pause. But they both agreed that those challenges were also what made the trip so transformative. "It gave me greater awareness of what it feels like to be an international student," Allison reflected. "Now I understand a little better the courage it takes to walk into a classroom where nothing is familiar." Donna echoed the sentiment. "It's so important to step outside your comfort zone. I came back with more empathy, more perspective, and more excitement to keep growing as a teacher."

Though their paths in China diverged, Allison and Donna returned united by a deeper sense of purpose. Both saw firsthand that teaching is never confined to four walls and that the lessons that matter most often come from connection and a willingness to learn from others. Their experiences will now ripple back into the St. Joes community, enriching not only their own teaching but the students who benefit from their broadened perspectives.

What both teachers ultimately discovered is that, despite the miles, the cultures, and the languages that separate us, the heart of learning is universal. Students everywhere share the same spark, the desire to understand, to be challenged, and to be seen. In every classroom, whether in Connecticut or China, the joy of a breakthrough moment, the curiosity behind a raised hand, and the pride in newly learned skills are the same. Their journeys were a reminder that education is not only a cultural exchange but also a human one, connecting people across borders through a shared thirst for knowledge and growth.

> *"It's so important to step outside your comfort zone. I came back with more empathy, more perspective, and more excitement to keep growing as a teacher."*
> *~ Donna*

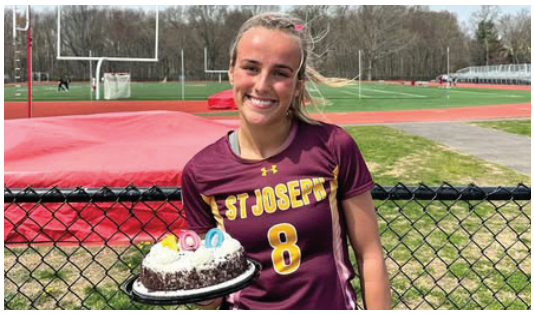
"We would both do it again in a heartbeat," Donna said. For both teachers, the trip was more than just a professional opportunity; it was a reminder of why they entered the classroom in the first place. Teaching is not only about sharing knowledge but also about building bridges across cultures, languages, and life experiences.



CELEBRATING CHAMPIONS: ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE



NCAA Bound. In May, St. Joes hosted a second NCAA Commitment Celebration for 5 of our student-athletes. In addition to the students inducted in Fall 2024, we were proud to have 24 Seniors commit at the Division 1, 2, or 3 collegiate level.

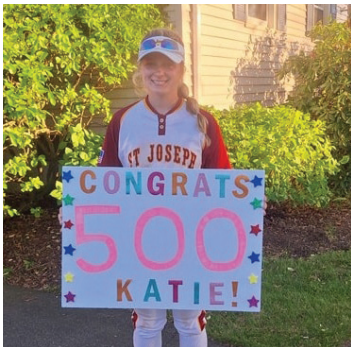


Camryn Tomey '25 scored her **100th Lacrosse Career Goal** in April during a game against Fairfield Warde.



In May, Brandon Rovinelli '25 and Helena Kaczmarczyk '25 were selected to attend the annual **FCIAC Scholar-Leaders Dinner.** FCIAC Scholar Leaders demonstrate leadership qualities, impressive academic records, and are respected by their peers and the school's faculty. Brandon now attends Columbia University while Helena attends West Point.

Katie Dzialo '26 reached her **500th Strikeout** in May.





Head Coach Jeff Babineau earned his **300th Softball Career Win** in April 2025.

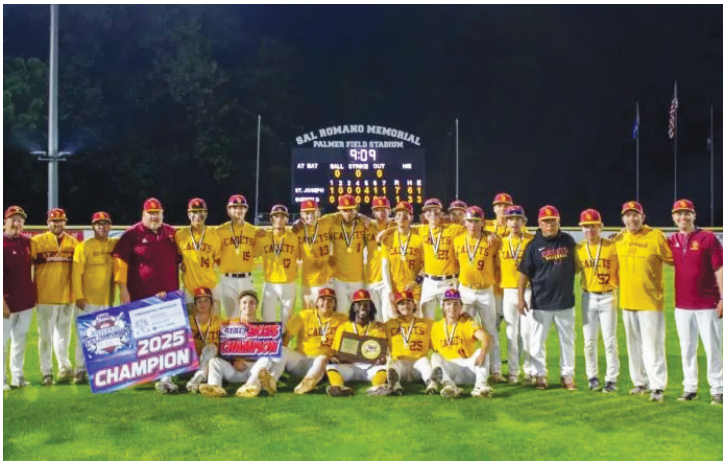




Sean Archibald '25 scored his **100th Lacrosse Career Goal**. Sean netted five goals total during that record-setting game, moving the total to 105 goals—an incredible achievement.



In May, Sara Parker '25 and Lucas Kellogg '25 were recognized in front of 1,700 attendees at the CIAC Scholar-Athlete Dinner for their incredible accomplishments as senior student-athletes. The **CIAC Scholar-Athlete Awards** honor one male and one female who exemplify excellence in both academics and athletics.



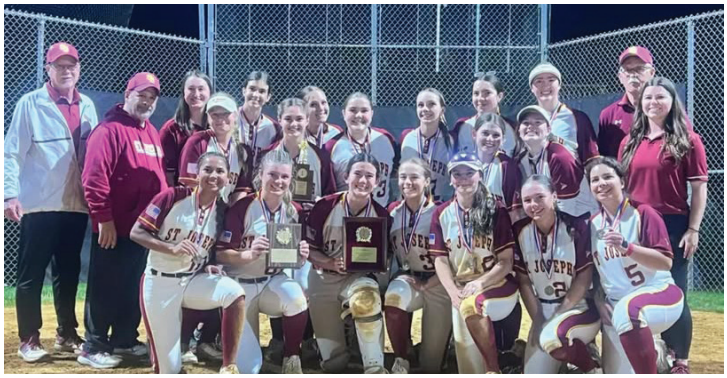
STATE Champs. SJ Baseball clinched the CIAC Class M State Championship with an incredible 7-1 victory over Suffield High School on June 14. Connor Fahey '25 delivered a complete-game three-hitter, leading our Cadets to a memorable win over the top-seeded school. The team's performance is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all of our Cadets. Very well deserved!



STATE Champs. Two years of close calls lit a fire under 17 seniors on the Lacrosse Team and this time, they finished the job. On June 14, the No. 2 Cadets defeated No. 1 Fairfield Ludlowe, 10-5, in the CIAC Class L final at Rafferty Stadium. With the win, St. Joes also pulled off a rare double: state champs in both boys lacrosse and baseball, a feat they last accomplished in 2019. This wasn't luck; it was pure skill and teamwork. Congratulations, Cadets!

FCIAC Champs. In May, the incomparable Softball Team persevered during an unforgettable 14-inning battle to take down Darien High School and bring home the FCIAC Championship title.

In June, the team gave it their all in the State Semifinals, falling just short in a hard-fought 2-1 battle against Masuk High School. While the season ended there, we couldn't be more proud of this incredible team and all they've accomplished. Congratulations on an unforgettable season.





Continuing to Set Records. In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade announced Alexa Pino '25 as the 2024-25 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Soccer Player of the Year.

The award distinguished Pino as Connecticut's best high school girls soccer player, and she joined an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches, and star athletes.

The 5-foot-5 senior forward led the Cadets to a 21-2 record and the Class LL state final in 2024. Pino scored 25 season goals and passed for 22 assists, netting a goal in the 80th minute to push the state title game to overtime. She also scored or assisted in every game she played this past season. Pino graduated as the career leading scorer in the FCIAC and has the most career goals and points in school history. A two-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, three-time state champion, and a member of the U17 Philippines Women's Youth National Team, Pino is a three-time United Soccer Coaches All-American selection. Her soccer career continues at the University of South Carolina.

FROM THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

WHO WE ARE

St. Joseph High School's Office of Advancement & Alumni Engagement builds meaningful relationships with alumni, donors, and community partners to support our students, programs, and vision.

At the heart of our mission is connection—connecting people, passion, and purpose to advance the future of our institution.

Through fundraising, alumni engagement, and strategic communications, we help ensure the long-term success and impact of our school.

Together, we're shaping what's next.

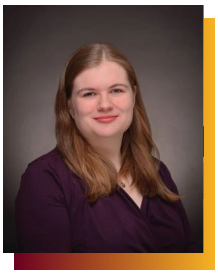
MEET OUR TEAM



Renee Farmer
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Event and Alumni Engagement
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Moe Casey
Manager of Database Services
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WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED

At St. Joseph High School, community is at the heart of everything we do. Whether you're a parent, alumni, or friend, there are countless ways to share your time, talent, and energy in support of our Cadets. Every act of involvement helps to strengthen the mission and spirit of our school.

Join A Board or Committee

Serving on our Board of Directors or on one of our four Committees is a meaningful way to shape the future of St. Joes.

Become a Mentor

Invest in our students' growth by sharing your time, experience, and guidance. You can help Cadets build confidence, explore career paths, and feel supported as they navigate high school and beyond.

Volunteer Your Time

Every hour of your time is a gift that helps our students thrive, strengthens our community, and directly enriches the student experience.

Join Us At SJ Events

Events like our Maroon & Gold Gala, Golf Tournament, or Ladies Luncheon are fun and impactful ways to create memories while supporting our students.

Connect with Fellow Alumni

The Cadet Connect Program is more than network; it is a lifelong relationship between your peers and your alma mater. The program celebrates alumni achievements, fosters service opportunities, and builds a culture of philanthropy that strengthens the school for future generations to come.

WAYS TO GIVE



FINE ARTS

Your gift to the Fine Arts: music, theatre, and visual design, helps SJ Cadets find their voice, creativity, and confidence.

By investing in SJ's Fine Arts Programming, you're not just enriching student creativity, you're fueling the cultural heartbeat of our school and laying the foundation for a more vibrant, connected and purpose-driven St. Joes.



ATHLETICS

Filling our gymnasium with Championship Banners takes more than just physical skill.

Your investment in Athletics fuels teamwork, leadership and school spirit on and off the field. Here, student-athletes learn resilience, discipline, and how to lead with integrity. These experiences shape stronger individuals prepared to face life's challenges with confidence and heart.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Want to make a lasting impact on future generations?

Endowed Scholarships create a legacy on future generations of Cadets, providing students with life-changing access to a St. Joes education.

Your gift to an Endowed Scholarship can change a student's life today.



TUITION ASSISTANCE

Nearly two-thirds of SJ Cadets receive financial assistance. Your gift to direct tuition assistance provides immediate, life changing support to families that need it most - ensuring that deserving students can access an SJ education without delay. Any gifts to tuition assistance makes our community stronger, more diverse, and ensures our continued legacy.



ST. JOSEPH FUND

The St. Joseph Fund is the most powerful way to support every student, every day. The St. Joseph Fund fuels the heart of the school, covering essential immediate needs across our campus. The Fund bridges the gap, ensuring our school remains vibrant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our community.

New Jumbotron Scoreboard Enhances Game Day Experience



This summer, St. Joseph High School proudly unveiled a brand-new jumbotron video display scoreboard on the upper turf field - made possible through the generous support of two families: The Rudinis and The Fortins. The full-color, true pixel LED video display board features digital timekeeping, live video capabilities, full game-day graphics, and streaming options that elevate the athletic experience for all. With this exciting enhancement, athletes, coaches, and fans can enjoy a dynamic and interactive game-day atmosphere. The scoreboard also opens new opportunities for local and regional sponsors to showcase ads and videos during events, further connecting St. Joes with our community.

The Rudini and Fortin families have long supported the school's athletic programs and its faith-based mission. Their continued generosity reflects a deep commitment to the growth and future of our school. David and Barbara Rudini have three daughters, Katie '22, Alex '20, and Samantha '16, as well as a son, Michael, in his junior year. Wayne and Dilcia Fortin have three children, Mathew '26, Luke '23, as well as a child in middle school. We are incredibly grateful for their partnership and proud to see our facilities evolve alongside the excellence of our teams.

"It's exciting to support the progress of the St. Joes facilities for student-athletes along with the Fortin Family," said David Rudini. "Specific to football, the work and success of Coach Dellavecchia and his staff, has created a great platform for our school and community. We hope the new scoreboard only adds to the gameday experience for players, coaches, families and fans."

SJ Golf Tournament: A Winning Day for a Great Cause



The sun was shining and spirits were high as alumni, parents, and supporters of St. Joseph High School gathered at the beautiful Brownson Country Club for our annual SJHS Golf Tournament in June, and we're thrilled to share its resounding success!

With twenty-two foursomes taking to the course, this year's tournament brought together a fantastic community of golfers and friends, all united by a common cause: supporting tuition assistance for our students. Thanks to the generosity of our participants, sponsors, and donors, we raised more than $20,000 - funds that will directly impact the lives of families seeking access to the exceptional Catholic education offered at St. Joseph High School.

The day was filled with great golf, friendly competition, and a strong sense of camaraderie that defines our SJ family. From the first tee to the final hole, it was clear that this event is about more than just golf—it's about giving back, paying it forward, and making a difference. Save the Date! Next year's golf tournament will be held on June 15, 2026.

The Golden Cadet Reunion: Fifty Years, One Family

This October, 70 members of the Class of 1975 returned to St. Joseph High School, walking through the very halls where their story began - this time not as students, but as Golden Cadets celebrating fifty years of friendship, loyalty, and the enduring spirit of St. Joes.

Known for being tight-knit, the Class of '75 rarely missed a day of school, always eager to be part of the action. They cheered loudly at basketball and football games, danced the night away at school events, and lingered at local favorites like The Greeks and Huntington Inn. They were a class full of energy and pride, one that claimed the honor of being the first in St. Joes history to win a state championship!

Their connection to SJ has never wavered. When the school faced challenges years ago, it was the Class of '75 that rallied—fundraising, advocating, and giving back to protect the community they cherished. Their loyalty helped ensure that future Cadets would experience the same opportunities and traditions that shaped their own lives. Now, five decades later, they return to a school that has grown beyond what they could have imagined: from five athletic teams to fifty-one, from modest beginnings in the arts to thriving programs in music and theater; all while remaining rooted in the Catholic values that continue to guide our students today.

Behind this year's Golden Cadet Reunion was a dedicated committee led by Lynn (Dalton) Mallon '75. Through weekly calls, outreach efforts, and heartfelt conversations, Lynn and her team have been rekindling old connections and bringing classmates back together. The excitement has been contagious, with peers reminiscing, laughing, and eagerly anticipating the celebration.

When asked what makes this milestone so meaningful, Lynn shared, "There's a common bond among alumni. Whether or not we were close in high school, everyone can come home to Joe. Reunions are about reconnecting, and that's what makes this community so extraordinary. Also, there were 146 of us in the graduating class, 23 of whom have passed. So the 50th is a very special time to celebrate with those who are still here."

Lynn also offered words of wisdom for younger Cadets: "Stay in touch with the Alumni Office. There are so many ways to return - career fairs, events, volunteering. Take advantage."





LtR: Jim Luchansky, Michelle Renaud Armstrong, Mike Pond, John Fitzgerald, Joe Harry

Golden Memories from Lynn's Class of 1975

"Turn your head to look behind you before changing lanes."
~ Norm DeTullio
(a lesson that saved lives!)

"Write down everything."
(Thank you, Mr. Montelli)

Painting the bleachers with SJ friends.

The last song of every dance: Colour My World, Chicago.

"No quitters."
~ Brother Tim

"Attitude makes the difference."
~ Coach Willis

Playing the Lion in SJ's production of The Wizard of Oz

"Don't fall off the sled!"
~ Mr. Joseph Foran

Photos of the 50th Reunion can be viewed at sjcadets.smugmug.com

CLASS NOTES

1960s



Elaine (Boudreau) Cozzi '66 was among several members of the Class of 1966 who recently gathered for lunch, where talk turned to their upcoming 60th reunion in 2026!

After retiring from the Trumbull Public Schools as a second-grade teacher in 2016, **Darleen Williams Ferrence '68** and her husband moved to Jackson, NH, a small town known for its beautiful covered bridge. While there, Darleen stayed active as a member of the school board, an officer of Kiwanis, a lector at her church, and a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Although these roles kept her busy, she missed her family and friends in Connecticut. In May, Darleen and her husband returned and are now happily settled in Oronoque Village in Stratford. She shares that it is wonderful to be "home."

1970s



Rosemarie Skawinski Chaves '74 and husband Angelo celebrated 40 years of marriage in October 2025.

After retiring from Sikorsky Aircraft in 2025, **Daniel Craw '76** embarked on a new chapter as an author. His first work, a children's book titled *Amelia & Olivia Go to the Zoo*, was soon followed by *Made in the USA: A Diary of an American Worker*, a humorous fictional autobiography written in the style of a factory worker's diary.



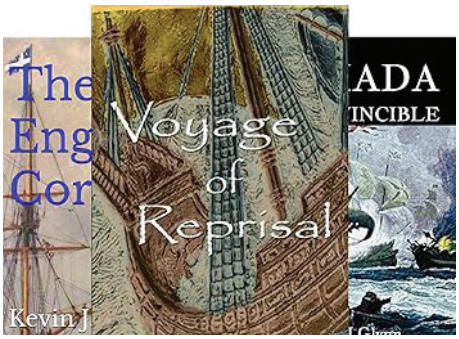
Danne Brown '78 and **Tammy Carlin '78** prove that St. Joes friendships last a lifetime—still enjoying time together after all these years!



In a lasting tribute to decades of friendship and dedication, Brownson Country Club has renamed its annual Three-Day Member Guest Golf Tournament the Robert J. Dunford Invitational. **Robert Dunford '74**, a longtime club member, and his partner **John Delaney '74** competed together in the event for an extraordinary 45 years. The two first met as freshmen and entered the tournament for the first time at age 23. Their enduring partnership has long embodied the spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie the tournament represents.

The new name was unveiled during the 2025 opening night festivities to enthusiastic cheers from fellow golfers and friends. Included were 13 SJ alumni, and fittingly, Dunford and Delaney marked the occasion with a remarkable victory - winning their flight for just the second time in their 45-year history together. Their legacy and their friendship are now permanently etched into the tradition of the tournament.

1980s



Kevin Glynn '81 is proud to share that he has published a three-book series of nautical fiction novels set during the Elizabethan era.They are titled *Voyage of Reprisal*, *The English Corsair*, and *Armada: The Invincible*. All three are for sale on Amazon.

Cathy Cunningham Davidson '82, proud mother of two and grandmother of two, is thrilled to share that she will be marrying her high school sweetheart on July 11, 2026!





N. Joseph DeTullio '86 has received a record two 2025 Emmy nominations this year for 'Outstanding Production Design' on NBC Universal's *Saturday Night Live!*

DeTullio has earned a total of 17 nominations and six wins in his 30 years of dedication to the program.



Robert Caponi '86 currently serves as a Police IT Professional at the Darien Police Department. He is also happily engaged to Michelle McCarty of Newport, RI.

1990s



After being named Mrs. American 2023–2024, **Liza Ginoni Gambino '92** found her life shifting in a positive new direction. With both of her daughters now attending Sacred Heart University, Liza wanted to remain active in her community and joined the Derby/Shelton Rotary Club, where she currently serves as President-Elect.

This fall, Liza is realizing a longtime dream by opening her own brick-and-mortar studio—Core Pilates LLC—in Shelton's Huntington Plaza. Core Pilates will be a full-service Pilates and fitness studio dedicated to strength, movement, and wellness, guided by her motto: "Pilates for strength, movement for life." Learn more at corepilatesct.com.



Ken Martin '95, co-owner of Colony Grill, is proud to announce that the restaurant group is opening its newest location in Shelton, not far from the St. Joes campus, in winter 2025.



Brian Christopher Haywood, son of **Michelle Pagliaro Haywood '90** and Brett Haywood, and godson of **Jennifer Cerritelli Bshara '90**, graduated summa cum laude from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point over Memorial Day weekend. Now commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Brian will attend flight school in Alabama as he pursues his goal of becoming a medevac pilot for the U.S. Army. The family asks that we continue to keep all members of the military in our prayers.

2000s



Roberto Cotto '00 recently produced the acclaimed documentary *Stevie Van Zandt: Disciple*, which had its world premiere at the Tribeca Festival on June 8, 2024 and aired shortly after on HBO. The film was also nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Music Film and is currently streaming on HBOMax.



Ann Murcko Murphy '00 has built a meaningful career in education and is proud to be shaping young minds as the Middle School English Language Arts teacher at St. Rose of Lima School in Newtown, CT. In her role, Ann helps students develop a love for literature, strengthen their writing skills, and grow in confidence as lifelong learners.

Kate Worrell '00 founder of Westport Auction shares that her business is expanding. In July 2025, the Worrells acquired the 32,000-square-foot former Pepperidge Farms innovation center in Norwalk, set to become their new gallery and headquarters in the upcoming year. As Westport Auction prepares to transition to its new Norwalk headquarters, the future looks bright. For more details or to join their next auction, visit Westport Auction at their Norwalk gallery or online at westportauction.com.

Maggie Kollar '05 and husband, John, are proud to share that their son, John Stephen Kollar, was born on August 29, 2025. **Pam Moore '77**, Maggie's mother, is thrilled to have a new grandson.

SEND US YOUR CLASS NOTES!

Perhaps you've begun a new job, or recently retired; maybe you've added a new addition to your family or have been recently wed; we want to hear it all! Send us your Classnote now for our Spring 2026 Communique and share your news with your classmates.

Visit sjcadets.org/stayconnected to let us know what's new in your life!

2010s

Matt Icozza '10 was the Associate Scenic Designer for Broadway's hit musical *Maybe Happy Ending,* 2025 winner of six Tony's including Best Musical, Best Scenic Design, Best Lead Actor, Best Direction, Best Score and Best Book!

Brendan Donegan '11 (son of **Patrick '83 and Mary Ellen Donegan '83**) married **Vanessa Pappagallo '11** on October 10, 2025. Congratulations to the happy couple!



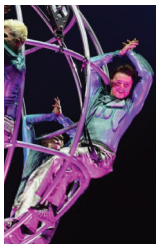


Both **John Imbimbo '12 (L)** and **Salvatore Orosz '20 (R)** recently met Pope Leo XIV in Rome!



Krysta Caltabiano '16 has followed her passion for helping others by building a career in law enforcement. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Curry College, and a Master's in Criminal Investigations from the University of New Haven. Krysta is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Forensic Science at Oklahoma State University.

Krysta's journey has brought her to Tennessee, where she proudly serves as a Police Officer. She is part of the Crime Scene Team, teaches women's self-defense, and inspires others as a fitness instructor. In 2023, her courage and quick actions during an apartment fire - caused by a lightning strike - saved lives and earned her the Medal of Merit.



After two years of being a part of Katy Perry's Las Vegas Residency, *PLAY*, **Evan DeBenedetto '16** was given the opportunity to tour the world with Katy on The Lifetimes Tour in 2025 with stops in Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America. Evan shares that he is currently living out his dream performing all over the world.



Veronica O'Rourke '18 received her Master's Degree in Communicative Sciences and Disorders from New York University in May 2025 and is working as a Speech-Language Pathologist at More to Say Pediatric Development and Therapy in Oxford, CT. Veronica shares that "she is passionate about being an advocate for all children and working closely with families to provide the most holistic and comprehensive care while making a lasting positive impact on the children that she works with."

2020s



Kyla DeBenedetto '21 graduated from the University of Hartford in May of 2025. She has since passed her licensing exam to become a certified MRI Technologist, currently working full time at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT.

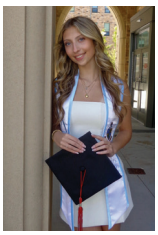
Jon Jazwinski '21 graduated from Yale University in 2025 with a degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. He will attend UConn's School of Dental Medicine in the fall.



Katie Spangenberg '21 recently began work as a Veterinary Technician at Community Veterinary Clinic in Fairfield after graduating from the University of Maryland this past spring.



Maddie Leifer '22 was recently recognized at the Hamilton Athletics Scholar Athletes luncheon. This annual tradition is a part of NCAA Division III Week, and recognizes all of the hard work, sacrifice, and commitment that goes into performing in the classroom and on the field.



Grace DeDonato '22, a member of the Thomas More Honors Program, graduated Cum Laude from Sacred Heart University in May 2025 with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science and a minor in Psychology. She is now continuing her studies at Sacred Heart, pursuing a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

On July 13, 2025, **Thomas Lucas '23** competed his first half Ironman! He completed in second half ironman in Weymouth, UK on September 14th.

IN MEMORIAM

The following alumni passed away between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. We ask that you keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."
(2 Maccabees 12:46)

Edith DelVecchio '66

Leonard Edwards '66

George Marino '66

James Misencik '66

Francis Boyle '68

Nancy Provenzano Yaremich '69

Carol Marshall Dargon '73

Stephanie Demovick Dunn '73

William Meade '79

Marie Guglielmo '84

Dianna Douglas '85

Michael Plucker '10

We welcome you to attend our Alumni Mass of Remembrance, where the SJ community gathers to honor and pray for our departed alumni and loved ones. Visit sjcadets.org/remember for more information.



ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL
2320 Huntington Turnpike
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

2025-2026 Upcoming Events

November 27
Thanksgiving Football Game vs. Trumbull

December 4-6
Fall Play
A Christmas Carol
sjcadets.org/drama

December 10
Winter Open House
sjcadets.org/openhouse

December 18
Fine Arts Night

March 19
Saint Joseph Feast Day

April 8
Alumni Career Fair

April 8
Spring Open House

April 9
Grandparents Mass

April 26
Ladies Luncheon

April 30 - May 2
Spring Musical

May 30
Class of 2026 Commencement

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www.sjcadets.org

