



Academy Alumni Newsletter

For Alumni of The Grosse Pointe Academy and the Academy of the Sacred Heart



Generations of Excellence: Rooted in Legacy, Inspired by the Future

With the start of another school year, I am filled with gratitude for all that The Grosse Pointe Academy has meant to me. I often find myself reflecting on the generations of students, parents, and alumni who have shaped the culture and spirit of this remarkable school. It is this enduring legacy that makes the Academy such a special place.

I have seen firsthand the incredible impact our alumni have on this institution. Many of you have gone on to achieve great things in your professional and personal lives while remaining connected to your roots at GPA. Your support and engagement inspire current and future generations to reach higher, think boldly, and strive for excellence.

As a current GPA parent, I am reminded daily of the circle of life that continues here on campus. My daughters, Sofia (Grade 6) and Anna (Grade 4), are growing and learning in the same classrooms and chapel that helped shape my own journey. Watching them experience the same traditions, guided by the mission to nurture, challenge, and inspire, has been deeply meaningful.

Our mission extends far beyond the walls of the school. Whether mentoring students, volunteering, or supporting initiatives like the Academy Fund and Action Auction, our alumni continue to strengthen the Academy's future. Each act of generosity, large or small, reinforces the values that bind us together and ensures that the next generation inherits not only a strong education but also a deep sense of belonging.

As we look ahead, I am filled with great optimism. With your involvement and unwavering support, The Grosse Pointe Academy will remain a place where every child is known, valued, and inspired for generations to come.



Erica Frost Panagopoulos '99
Alumni Association President

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The GPA of Tomorrow: Where Tradition and Innovation Meet

Each fall, as our students return to campus, I am reminded of what makes The Grosse Pointe Academy truly extraordinary – a community that honors its past while courageously shaping the future. This spirit of innovation, grounded in tradition, defines our work to build the **GPA of Tomorrow** – one that reimagines what education can and should be for the next generation of learners.

Across the nation, schools are navigating a pivotal moment in education. The old models of standardization and memorization no longer serve the needs of today's world, one defined by creativity, collaboration, and rapid change. At GPA, we see this moment as an opportunity to lead. We are embracing new learning structures, deeper partnerships, and bold teaching practices that nurture, challenge, and inspire our students to become designers and builders of the future.

This year marks an important step forward with the introduction of mixed-age classrooms in Grades 1–4. Rooted in our Montessori foundation, this approach strengthens collaboration, mentorship, and independence while allowing teachers to meet each student where they are. It reflects our enduring commitment to curiosity, adaptability, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our GPA of Tomorrow framework reaches beyond academics. It is about cultivating a culture of belonging where every student is known, valued, and encouraged to take ownership of their growth. Through interdisciplinary learning, reflective practice, and authentic connections, students are developing not only knowledge but also the

confidence, empathy, and resilience to navigate an ever-changing world.

Equally essential to this evolution is our investment in the educators who bring it to life each day. Our faculty continue to grow as innovative educators, collaborating across disciplines and embracing new approaches that connect learning to purpose. Together, we are modeling the curiosity, courage, and creativity that we seek to inspire in our students.

The future of education belongs to schools that evolve with intention – balancing progress with the timeless values that make childhood meaningful. At GPA, that balance defines who we are and who we aspire to be.

Stay connected to The Grosse Pointe Academy as we continue this journey together. Visit our campus, share your stories, and see how the GPA of Tomorrow is taking shape – one inspired learner at a time.



Tommy Adams
Head of School

Alumni Spotlight: Ashley Thibodeau '04 – From Global Curiosity to Pediatric Care

For Ashley Thibodeau '04, The Grosse Pointe Academy was more than just the start of her academic journey; it was the place that sparked her curiosity about the world and laid the foundation for a career devoted to caring for children and families. From class projects focused on global communities to outdoor experiences that built resilience and teamwork, Ashley reflects on GPA as the first place she felt both nurtured and challenged in ways that inspired her future path.

Today, Ashley is a pediatric nurse practitioner in the neurology clinic at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, where she cares for children with complex diagnoses such as epilepsy, autism, and behavioral challenges. She also teaches nursing students at the University of Michigan, helping prepare the next generation of healthcare providers. For Ashley, the values instilled at GPA – community, curiosity, and compassion – continue to guide her work and life.

Q&A with Ashley Thibodeau '04

Q: Do you have a standout memory from your time at The Grosse Pointe Academy?

A: I remember choosing to study the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria during a class project. It was one of the first times I truly thought about life in other parts of the world and how people's daily challenges, like access to clean water, influenced their communities. That project planted a seed for my later interest in global health and service.

Q: How did GPA help shape your academic and career journey?

A: GPA taught me how to be curious, resilient, and willing to try new experiences. Whether it was a fourth-grade trip to Washington, D.C., or camping on the New River, I learned how to be independent and confident away from home. Those early experiences gave me the courage to study abroad in South Africa, during college, where I volunteered in mobile health clinics. That semester confirmed my desire to serve children and families through medicine.

Q: What is most meaningful about your current role?

A: In pediatric neurology, I get to walk alongside families through both difficult diagnoses and everyday challenges. I believe every child has potential, and my role is to help families find the right tools and resources so their child can thrive. It is incredibly rewarding to see progress over time and to share in families' resilience.

Q: You also teach nursing students, how does that connect to your GPA foundation?

A: GPA was a place where teachers encouraged me to stretch myself. Now, I try to bring that same encouragement to my nursing students. Teaching is about more than content; it is about inspiring growth, building confidence, and modeling compassion. That mindset absolutely began at GPA.

Q: How do you stay connected to GPA today?

A: My family has a long history with the Academy, and I still feel connected to the chapel, the community, and the friendships I formed. Moving back to Grosse Pointe has made it even easier to reconnect. Serving on the Alumni Board is another way I can give back to the place that gave me such a strong start.

Ashley's journey, from Academy student with a global curiosity to nurse practitioner and educator, embodies GPA's mission to nurture, challenge, and inspire. She continues to live out those values daily, whether she is helping a child navigate a new diagnosis, guiding nursing students through complex case studies, or reconnecting with fellow Bulldogs in the community.

THEN



AND NOW



EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science
in Nursing**
Boston College

**Doctor of Nursing
Practice (DNP)**
University of Michigan

PROFESSION

**Pediatric Nurse
Practitioner**
Children's Hospital of
Michigan

Lecturer
University of Michigan
School of Nursing

GPA MEMORIES

"Those early GPA experiences, from class projects to camping trips, gave me the courage to explore the world and shaped the curiosity I carry into my work today."

– Ashley Thibodeau '04



Montessori Mornings

for prospective families

WEDNESDAYS, 8:45 – 9:45 am

2025: NOV 5, DEC 10 | 2026: JAN 14, FEB 4, MAR 11

- Tour the Early School (2.5 – 5 yrs old)
- Learn about our Montessori program
- Q&A with Early School Division Head

Register today!



gpacademy.org/montessori-mornings

Where Wonder Begins

Michigan's longest-running Montessori program, where every child is nurtured, challenged, and inspired, right here at The Grosse Pointe Academy.

Refer a friend to GPA's Montessori Mornings and be entered to win a \$100 Dog Pound Store gift card. To qualify, email your guest's name to info@gpacademy.org before they register.

Honoring Carole Jatkoe Peabody

A Founding Visionary of The Grosse Pointe Academy

When the Religious of the Sacred Heart announced in early 1969 that they would close the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Grosse Pointe, the news sent waves of sadness through the community. For many, it marked the end of a beloved institution that had shaped generations of children. For Carole Jatkoe Peabody, however, it was a call to action.

A graduate of the Convent and later Barat College of the Sacred Heart, Carole carried a lifelong appreciation for the education, values, and sense of purpose the Sacred Heart tradition instilled in her. As a young mother, she wanted the same for her children and for future generations. When the Nuns departure became inevitable, Carole joined forces with her close friend and classmate, Toni Robinson, along with a small group of passionate parents and community members, to find a way forward.

Together, this founding group negotiated tirelessly with the New York Province of the Society of the Sacred Heart to secure the school's future. Their determination led to an agreement to purchase the property for \$700,000 – a sum representing only the land's value, as the Nuns effectively donated the buildings, furnishings, and resources needed to continue the school's operation. It was a remarkable act of faith on both sides, made possible by the perseverance of Carole and her fellow founders.

On July 1, 1969, the newly established lay Board of Trustees took ownership, and The Grosse Pointe Academy was born. Carole became one of its founding Trustees, helping to guide the school through its critical first years. She and her peers worked tirelessly to rebuild enrollment, stabilize finances, and set a new vision for the Academy as a co-educational day school. Within the first year, enrollment climbed to 325 students, nearly half of them boys and a quarter from non-Catholic families – a sign of the new Academy's inclusive and forward-looking spirit.

Carole's leadership was defined by compassion, conviction, and collaboration. She was known for her ability to bring people together – parents, faculty, and benefactors – to work toward a common goal. She believed deeply in education that nurtured the whole child: intellect, creativity, faith, and moral strength. Those guiding principles continue to shape The Grosse Pointe Academy's mission today.

Her legacy also endures through her family, who have remained deeply connected to the Academy for more than five decades. From her own children to her grandchildren and extended family, the Peabody family has continued to walk the same halls and learn in the



"Carole's vision and determination turned a moment of uncertainty into a legacy of hope. The Grosse Pointe Academy stands today because she believed it could."

same classrooms that Carole helped preserve. Many have graduated from GPA in recent years, carrying forward the values of curiosity, service, and community that defined her life's work. Their presence on campus stands as a living tribute to her vision and the enduring strength of the school she helped save.

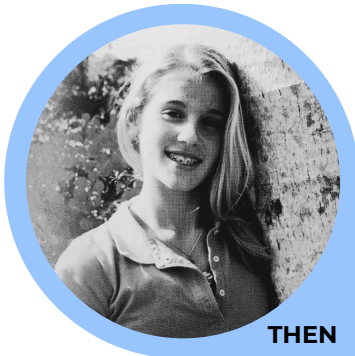
Her influence extended beyond policy and governance. Carole's heart remained closely tied to the life of the school. She cherished its traditions, celebrated its milestones, and took joy in watching it thrive. Her presence reminded all who knew her that the Academy's success was built not only on financial commitment but on love – love for learning, for community, and for the enduring spirit of service.

Carole Jatkoe Peabody passed away peacefully on June 20, 2025, shortly after celebrating her 92nd birthday. Yet her legacy lives on in the hallways she helped preserve, in the Chapel she fought to protect, and in the generations of students who continue to grow under the values she helped secure.

The Grosse Pointe Academy remains forever grateful for her vision, her courage, and her unwavering belief in what this community could become.

Where Are They Now?

From GPA Graduate to Lifetime Milestones — A Journey of Growth and Achievement



Emma Brush '05

High School: Grosse Pointe South High School '09

College: Dartmouth College, BA '13, University of Chicago, Master's English '15, Stanford University, PhD English '25

Profession: Assistant Professor of Law, Amherst College

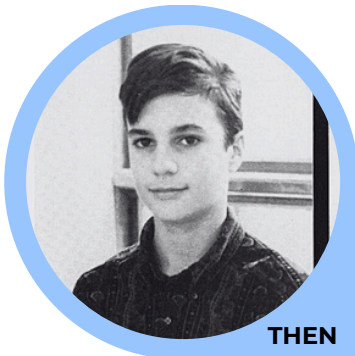


Kristin Stepanek '99

High School: Grosse Pointe South High School '03

College: University of Michigan, Cultural Anthropology, College for Creative Studies, Advertising & Copywriting

Profession: Talent Acquisition Specialist, AAA Auto Club Group

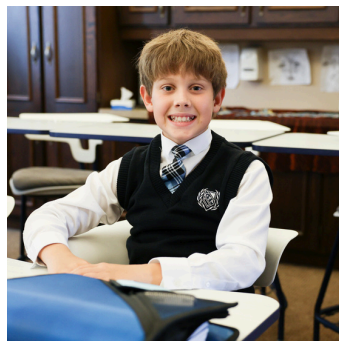


Christopher Pozios '93

High School: University Liggett School '97

College: University of Miami, BBA '01, Law '04, Wayne State University, JD

Profession: Founder and Managing Partner, Nationwide Disability Law



Academy Alumni Association Scholarship

Dear GPA Class of 2022,

As alumni of The Grosse Pointe Academy, you are uniquely qualified to recognize the quality of the education you received at GPA. You have your own voices and unique stories to tell about your days here as students. Because of this, The Grosse Pointe Academy Alumni Association invites you to participate in the Academy Advantage Alumni Scholarship Award! This opportunity is offered to all current high school seniors who graduated from the Academy in 2022. Your participation could result in an award of **\$1,000** payable to the college of your choice.

As you finish high school, I am sure that you have had some time to reflect upon your time at GPA.

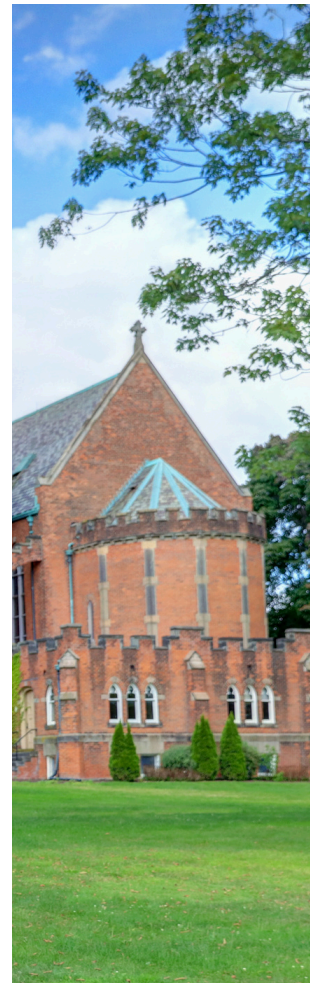
To be considered for the scholarship, the applicants must write a 500-word essay on the following topic: **"The Value of the Academy Experience and How it Changed my Life."** Your anonymous essays will be reviewed by members of the alumni board to select the one which best reflects the theme. The deadline is Friday, January 30, 2026 and the award will be presented to the recipient at The Grosse Pointe Academy's 8th grade graduation in June.

Please fill out the application and return it either electronically to muffymilligan@gmail.com or mail it to the Academy with your essay by **January 30, 2026**.

The Grosse Pointe Academy | Attn: Mary Alice Mecke | 171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236 | via email to maohart@msn.com

We look forward to your participation.

Erica Frost Panagopoulos '99
Alumni Association President



The Grosse Pointe Academy Alumni Association Application for Academy Alumni Scholarship (Eligible Candidates: GPA Class of 2022)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I am applying for The Grosse Pointe Academy Alumni Association Scholarship.

Signature _____

Email to maohart@msn.com | Mail to 171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

Strengthening Sacred Heart Connections: AASH and AMASC Updates



Roselie Bellanca Posselius '73
President of AMASC



The Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Charles, Missouri, provided an inspiring setting for this year's Annual AASH Board Meeting in June 2025. Steeped in the legacy of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, the gathering offered time for prayer, reflection, and planning for the years ahead. Over two days, delegates and board members set the direction for the new biennium and began preparations for the 2027 National Conference in Houston, Texas.

AASH proudly introduces its newly elected Board of Directors, a group of devoted leaders committed to advancing alumnae and alumni engagement. The Executive Committee includes **President Sarah DeGreene Turner (Duchesne Houston)**, **Vice President Laura Speck (Duchesne Houston)**, **Treasurer Marcia Tufarolo (Forest Ridge)**, **Corresponding Secretary Julia Sosnivka (Josephinum)**, and **Recording Secretary Kristen Andree (Bloomfield Hills)**. Together, they bring energy and shared purpose to strengthening the Sacred Heart network and sustaining the Society's enduring mission.

In September, AASH launched the *Strengthening Sacred Heart Connections* survey to guide future initiatives. Alumnae and alumni are encouraged to visit aash.org to share their ideas on mentorship, service, and community building. Responses will help shape programming that remains faithful to the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart—to discover and reveal God's love in the heart of the world.

Looking ahead, AASH will host its **Fall Webinar on November 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Central Time**, offering a virtual opportunity for members to connect and share updates. **The Fall edition of *Esprit de Cœur*** will also launch in November, featuring national news, reflections, and the Annual Appeal.

Globally, AMASC President **Roselie Bellanca Posselius** invites alumnae and alumni to the **2026 World Congress, "Moving Forward with Courage and Confidence,"** to be held **November 12–16, 2026, in Puerto Rico**. Hosted by the Ponce and San Juan alumnae/i associations, the Congress promises faith-filled connection and renewal by the Caribbean Sea, with registration opening in **January 2026** at amasc.org.

Through AASH and AMASC, the Sacred Heart family continues to grow—united by shared purpose, lifelong friendships, and a mission that endures across generations.



Recent Happenings at The Grosse Pointe Academy



First Day of School



Grade 7 River Raisin National Battlefield Park Field Trip



Grades 5 & 6 Camp Storer Outdoor Leadership Program



Back to School Picnic



Fall Spirit Night



Opening of School Chapel



Grade 7 Detroit History Field Trip



Neighbor Day with St. Paul Catholic School



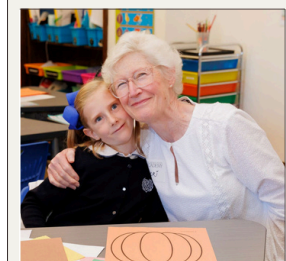
Grades 1 and 8 Buddies Trip to Westview Apple Orchards



Lower School Kick-Off Cookout at Head of School's Residence



Celebrating Head of School's Birthday & 10 Year Anniversary



Grandparents and Special Friends Day



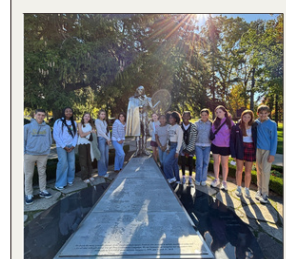
Inaugural Academy FUNd RUN



Annual Fall Decorations by Parent Council Committee



CATCH Night of Champions Middle School Emcees



Grade 8 Stratford Trip Shakespeare Performances

Join Us for Alumni History Day

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

The Grosse Pointe Academy's "Alumni History Day" is a cherished tradition that brings the school's rich legacy to life for current students. Through interactive storytelling and personal reflections, alumni help connect past and present in meaningful ways. If you'd like to share your GPA story, speak at a Monday Chapel Talk, or join our Guest Speaker Series, please email info@gpacademy.org to get involved.



From the Archives



Then...

Lake Shore Road

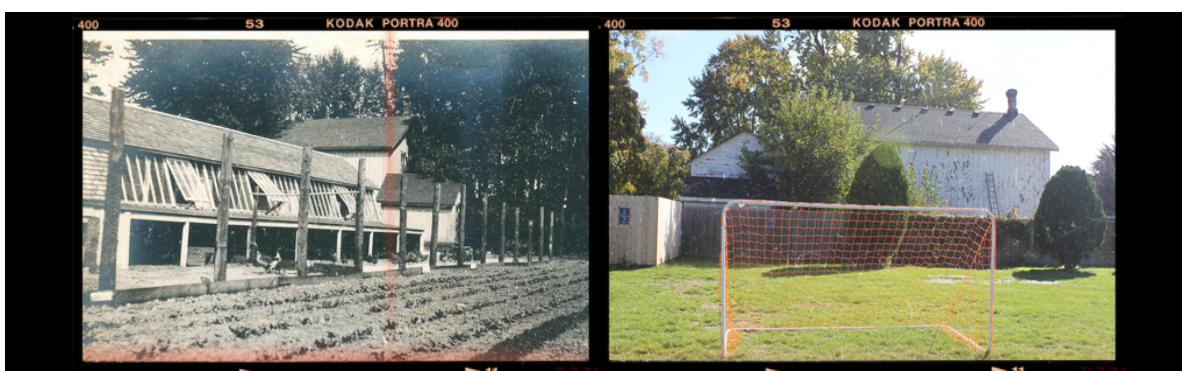
...And Now



Then...

Barn

...And Now



Then...

Chicken Coop

...And Now



Alumni Board

Mary Jo Johnson
 Patricia Eldredge Kolojeski
 Elizabeth Frost LaRiviere
 Molly Oldani McDermott
 Mary Alice O'Brien Mecke
 Muffy Boomer Milligan
 Erica Frost Panagopoulos
 Roselie Bellanca Posselius
 Ashley Thibodeau
 Morgan Westwood
 Debby Wolney



Board of Trustees

President: Paul Lindow
Vice-President: Edward (Ted) McDermott, Jr.
Treasurer: Adam Hollerbach
Secretary: RJ Wolney
Head of School: Tommy Adams
Member at Large: Devin Ezop
Trustees: Mason Colman, Powell Corbett,
 Heather Edwards, Rian English, Stacey Haas,
 Joseph Kaiser V, Frank Kuplicki, T. Hart
 Mecke III, Ellsworth Miller, Bob Moesta, Erica
 Panagopoulos, Roselie Posselius, Andrea
 Provenzano

Upcoming Alumni Events

Christmas Eve Alumni Mass
 Wednesday, December 24, 2025 4:00 PM

Alumni History Day
 Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Action Auction
 Saturday, May 9, 2026 5:00 PM

Blessing of the Little Ones
 Wednesday, May 27, 2026 11:30 AM

The Grosse Pointe Academy Graduation
 Friday, June 5, 2026 11:00 AM

ASH Reunion
 Sunday, June 7, 2026 11:00 AM Mass
 followed by a luncheon





171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

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