



Academy Alumni Newsletter

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



Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future: A Message from Your New President

I am humbled and honored to serve as the next Alumni Association President. Thank you to Rosalie Bellanca Posselius for her time as our president over the last several years. Rosalie's dedication and remarkable leadership is an inspiration, and we are beyond grateful for the lasting impression that she has left on our school community.

As I embark on my journey as your new president, I reflect on my time as a student at The Grosse Pointe Academy. My twelve years at GPA taught me the fundamentals of life and sculpted me into the person I am today. I will forever cherish the time I had with my teachers and peers.

The class of 1999 ended our yearbook with a quote from Flavia Weedn, "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same." This statement truly captures the essence of The Grosse Pointe Academy.

Our Alumni Association is an especially unique ensemble, composed of alumnae from both The Academy of the Sacred Heart and The Grosse Pointe Academy.

These two separate but intrinsically related groups have a rich history and similar mission to create a legacy that sets us apart from any other school in our community. This group truly understands the value of the Academy Advantage and is committed to ensuring our school's success and survival into the future.

May we continue to passionately volunteer, endorse, donate and encourage future generations to send their families to GPA.

I look forward to serving as your president with partnership from the board. Together we can accomplish many great things for many years to come.



Erica Frost Panagopoulos '99
Alumni Association President

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The Academy Alumni Association awards two scholarships each year.



The Helen Healy Scholarship

The Helen Healy Scholarship is a partial tuition scholarship that was established in the early 1970s by the Academy Alumni Association to honor Reverend Mother Helen Healy, RSCJ, the former Headmistress of the school when it was the Academy of the Sacred Heart. Funds are raised through the Bridge Marathon and donations.

This award is given to a current legacy student in grades 1-8 of a graduate of the Academy of the Sacred Heart or The Grosse Pointe Academy.



The Alumni Advantage Award

This award, in the amount of \$1,000, is given annually to a GPA alum, graduating from high school.

All interested alums from the GPA class of 2022 must submit an essay entitled, "The Value of the Academy Experience and How It Changed My Life". The essay, along with a completed application, must be submitted by April 15, 2026.

For more information, please contact Muffy Milligan at muffymilligan@gmail.com.





A Message from Head of School

Dear Alumni,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. As the proud Head of School of The Grosse Pointe Academy for the last nine years, I am delighted to reach out to our esteemed alumni, the heartbeat of our vibrant community. Your achievements have been a source of immense pride, and it is with great joy that I share some important updates that support our mission to nurture, challenge, and inspire young learners.

The Grosse Pointe Academy has partnered with [The Big Questions Institute](#) to lead the process of updating our strategic plan, ensuring a courageous and innovative vision for the future. Through focus groups with students, parents, faculty, and alumni, BQI will gather valuable insights to help shape the best possible educational experience for our students.

We are proud to publish the [school and college matriculation list of our GPA graduates](#) on our website. It is a testament to the quality of education we provide. From prestigious universities to highly regarded independent, public, and parochial schools, our students are recognized for their academic excellence and personal qualities.

In its second year, [The Amazing Shake](#) at GPA continued to be a tremendous success, helping students build confidence, poise, and essential communication skills. Sixty middle school students tackled the Gauntlet round, navigating rapid-fire real-life challenges designed to test their ability to think on their feet.

In Round 5: The Corporate Presentation, the five remaining finalists will step into the role of culinary innovators, pitching new smoothie concepts to the leadership team at Beyond Juicery + Eatery, including co-founder Pam Vivio. They will craft a unique smoothie name, select ingredients for taste and nutrition, and develop a marketing and pricing strategy.

The two winning smoothies were featured at Beyond Juicery + Eatery's Grosse Pointe locations for a month, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting GPA—turning their creativity into real-world impact!

As alumni of the Sacred Heart and the Academy, your journey has played a significant role in shaping the legacy of our school. We invite you to reconnect with us, share your experiences, and continue to be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

Wishing you continued success and fulfillment on your life's journey.



Tommy Adams
Head of school



Alumni Spotlight: Desiree Harrison '96 – A Passion for Math, Education, and Empowerment

Desiree Harrison, Grosse Pointe Academy Class of 1996, has built a vibrant career dedicated to math education and mentoring the next generation of educators. As the host of the popular Kids Math Talk podcast, a PhD candidate in Educational Studies with a STEM concentration at Wayne State University, and a part-time professor and faculty advisor, Desiree is truly shaping the future of teaching and learning.

Her commitment to educational excellence was inspired early on by her parents—both retired educators—and nurtured at GPA through meaningful leadership opportunities, including mentoring younger students as an 8th grader. “I loved helping my mom grade papers and tagging along to her professional learning sessions,” Desiree reflects. “And GPA gave me those first real experiences with mentorship and leadership.”

Today, Desiree coaches elementary teachers in Farmington Public Schools and has authored several classroom math publications. Her service to the math education community earned her the prestigious Christine Kincaid-Dewey Educator of the Year award in 2020 from the Detroit Area Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She also served on the Board of Directors for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics—just one of many roles that highlight her dedication and impact.

Desiree believes that while technology has opened new doors for creativity and collaboration, it also demands that educators remain intentional and adaptive. “Technology allows us to design authentic learning tasks and meet diverse student needs,” she says. “But the real challenge lies in aligning coaching with school priorities in an ever-changing landscape.”

For Desiree, the greatest reward lies in the growth of both students and colleagues. “I love learning with and from the future teachers in my mathematics foundations course,” she shares. “Watching student confidence grow is one of the best parts of what I do.” Her advice to future educators? “Reflect on why you want to teach. Try working in summer camps or schools to discover your interests, and remember: lifelong learning and balance are key.”

GPA played a formative role in her journey. “GPA instilled resilience, creativity, and a love for learning,” Desiree says. “I still keep my leaf collection from the 6th grade—and even created a version of that assignment for my own students.”





THE GROSSE POINTE ACADEMY



- Ages 2.5 Yrs to Grade 8
- Montessori Early School
- Lower School
- Middle School



8:1

STUDENT
TO
TEACHER
RATIO

140
YEAR HISTORY



20

ACRE HISTORIC CAMPUS ON
LAKE ST. CLAIR WITH
CENTURY-OLD ARCHITECTURE

8 ACADEMY CORNERSTONES

EMPATHY	LEADERSHIP
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	INDEPENDENCE
INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY	EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
ACTIVE LISTENING	CRITICAL THINKING



Now Enrolling

Apply today!

gpacademy.org/prospective/apply



2025-2026
ACADEMIC YEAR



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.

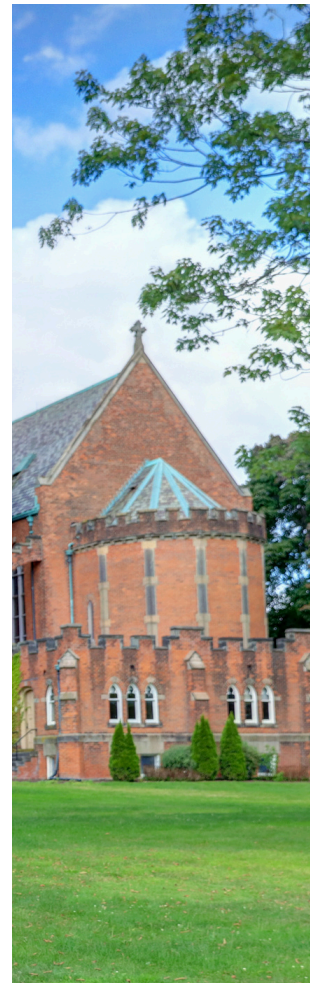
To be considered for the scholarship, the applicants must write a 500-word essay on the following topic: **"The Value of the Academy Experience and How it Changed my Life."** Your anonymous essays will be reviewed by members of the alumni board to select the one which best reflects the theme. The deadline is Wednesday, April 15, 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 **April 15, 2026**.

The Grosse Pointe Academy | Attn: M. Milligan | 171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236 | via email to muffymilligan@gmail.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 muffymilligan@gmail.com | Mail to 171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

2024 Scholarship Winner – Sally Chen



Sally is a 2024 Graduate of Grosse Pointe South High School and is currently a Freshman at Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa.

It was a time of new beginnings for me when I first transferred to Grosse Pointe Academy during my first year in the United States. Everything was unfamiliar - the surroundings, the people, and the education system. Little did I know that my eighth-grade year would become the most memorable year of my life, significantly shaping my desire to pursue further education in the US.

I can still vividly recall the excitement that coursed through my veins on the first day of school. Clad in a navy blue uniform and clutching my binder, I stepped into the school, ready to embark on a new journey. Throughout the day, I moved from class to class, receiving a laptop that I had never been allowed to use in my previous school, learning a new language (French), and meeting new people, including classmates and teachers. The acquisition of a third language, French, not only broadened my cultural understanding but also sharpened my cognitive abilities, fostering a greater capacity for critical thinking and analysis. This foundation would prove instrumental as I tackled the rigorous coursework of high school, where foreign language proficiency is highly regarded and often a prerequisite for college admissions. Other memorable moments such as the development of my essay writing skills in English class, which laid a solid foundation for my future education in high school, where the demands of academic writing intensified. Moreover, my passion for Chemistry grew stronger. The opportunity to engage in hands-on experimentation, meticulously working in labs and exploring the intricate properties of various chemicals, ignited a flame within my scientific curiosity. This passion for Chemistry would continue to fuel my academic pursuits in college and beyond, driving me to explore the frontiers of scientific knowledge and seek solutions to real-world challenges.

The Academy encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and try things I had never done before, particularly public speaking. Despite being naturally extroverted, I was always somewhat hesitant when it came to making speeches. However, I distinctly remember the first time I willingly gave a speech, introducing Chinese New Year in the chapel. The support and applause I received after that speech planted a seed of confidence in my heart. As the years unfolded, that seed blossomed. Now, as I reflect on my journey, I find myself making announcements almost every Monday morning and having already delivered my senior speech, which was live-streamed on local TV. I am immensely grateful for the nurturing and heartwarming community that Grosse Pointe Academy provided me.

As I prepare to graduate from high school and prepare to step on my college journey, I will always cherish the memories of the naive girl who eagerly anticipated her first day at the Academy. I will carry the curiosity and confidence that Grosse Pointe Academy instilled in me into college and beyond. The transformative experiences I had at GPA, from academic growth to embracing new challenges and cultivating my public speaking skills, shaped me into the person I am today. With excitement to further continue my education, I will always be armed with the invaluable lessons and cherished memories that Grosse Pointe Academy has gifted me.





2025 Action Auction

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the **57th Grosse Pointe Academy Action Auction: Taking Flight...A Journey to Success** such an incredible success. Whether you attended in person, bid from afar, volunteered your time, or donated in any way - thank you. Your support and enthusiasm created an evening filled with energy, generosity, and celebration of all that makes GPA so special.

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of this community, we are proud to share that we raised over **\$620,000** to support the Academy's mission and programs. Your contributions directly impact every GPA student and help ensure our school continues to provide an extraordinary foundation for lifelong success.

We are deeply grateful to our **2025 Auction Chairs, Celia and Steve Wade, Katie and William O'Keefe, and our Honorary Chairs, Jim and Patti Anderson**, for their inspiring support and to every volunteer who helped bring this event to life. The collective efforts of this amazing community remind us just how special GPA is for our children.



Condolences

Cheryl Brennan *(Past parent)*

Raymond Cracchiolo *(Father and grandfather of alums)*

Charles Exley, Jr. *(Husband of alum)*

Richard Fruehauf *(Grandfather of alums)*

Carol Gagnon *(Alum)*

Daniel Goodnow *(Past trustee and past parent)*

John Jagger *(Past parent)*

Emil Jakab *(Grandfather of alum)*

Danny Kerstetter *(Husband of alum and father of current students)*

Judy Knudsen *(Alum and past parent)*

Ann Kolito *(Alum)*

Catherine Lewis *(Past parent)*

Anna Nichols *(Alum and past parent)*

Homer Philips *(Grandfather of alums)*

Celeste Silvers *(Alum)*

Edward Stroble *(Past parent)*

Luis Toledo *(Past parent)*

John Tompkins *(Past parent)*

Sr. Madeleine Weber *(Alum)*



Congratulations Class of 2025



Rebecca Corbett



Gianna Decker



Jonah Gahm



Riley Haas



Emerson Hawkins



Lawrence Henderson



Jenna Hess



Lucy Martin



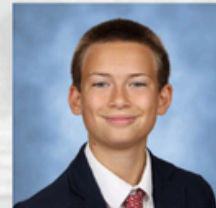
Miles Quinn



Taylor Rivers



Demi Sanya



Ryan Shalla



Fynn Stooke-Bugbee



Anaiya Torrence

We are proud to share that The Grosse Pointe Academy Class of 2025 will be attending the following high schools: Austin Catholic High School, Brother Rice High School, De La Salle Collegiate High School, Grosse Pointe South High School, International Academy of Macomb, Marian High School, University Liggett School, University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy.

Recent Happenings at The Grosse Pointe Academy



Amazing Shake Competition



Leaders of the Month



GPA Moms' Pure Barre Class



Wellness Wednesdays



Peter Pan Jr.
Middle School Musical



Boogie with the Bulldogs
All Family Event



St. Patrick's Day
Early School Celebrations



Capuchin Soup Kitchen
Volunteer Work



100th Day of School



My Personal Michigan Hero
Essay Contest Winners



Early School Parent Visit Day



Chinese New Year Celebration



Grosse Pointe History Day



Michigan Court of Appeals
Mock Trial



Sealife Aquarium Field Trip



Charles Wright Museum
Field Trip



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
 Carole Jatcoe Peabody
 Roselie Bellanca Posselius
 Morgan Westwood
 Debby Wolney



Board of Trustees

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Treasurer: Paul Lindow
Secretary: RJ Wolney
Head of School: Tommy Adams
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Member at Large: Devin Ezop
Trustees: Powell Peabody Corbett,
 Adam Z. Hollerbach, Joseph P. Kaiser V,
 Francis (Frank) Kuplicki, Ellsworth Miller,
 Bob Moesta, Erica Panagopoulos,
 Carole J. Peabody, Roselie Bellanca Posselius

The Value of GPA

The true power of a small, independent school lies in our ability to know each child—not just as students but as individuals. Here, **every child is seen, heard, and valued.**

We celebrate their successes with pride and stand beside them when they struggle, guiding them with care and encouragement. This is the heart of a GPA education—a **place where students are empowered to grow with confidence, curiosity, and a strong sense of self.**

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey and for your unwavering belief in the transformative power of the Academy.





171 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

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