

Inish

M A G A Z I N E

SOUND FOUNDATION

How Notre Dame Prep's band and music program develops musicians, scholars and leaders from Pre-K through graduation

ISSUE 37

|

SPRING / SUMMER 2026

IRISH

MAGAZINE

Dedicated to alumni, parents and friends of Notre Dame Preparatory School and our heritage schools, including Notre Dame High School, Pontiac Catholic High School, Oakland Catholic High School, St. Michael High School and St. Frederick High School.

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Andrew J. Guest ND'84, P'12, P'16, P'19

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Fr. Leon Olszowski, s.m. ND'65

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



Dear Alumni and Friends,

I am pleased to share that we had another successful year, achieving major milestones academically, athletically, financially, and spiritually, all while remaining faithful to our Catholic and Marist mission.

These accomplishments are possible because of the dedication of our teachers, coaches, administrators, and staff, as well as the continued support

of our alumni community, including graduates of our legacy schools: Harper Woods Notre Dame, Oakland Catholic, Pontiac Catholic, St. Michael, and St. Frederick. We would not be enjoying this success without your support. Thank you.

ACADEMICS

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

In May, we celebrated our 32nd Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation. Our 131 graduates were accepted to 137 colleges and universities across the country, including the University of Michigan (25), Michigan State University (70), Purdue University (6), Villanova University (4), the University of Notre Dame (3), the University of California, Berkeley, and Cornell University.

The Class of 2026 also included 20 International Baccalaureate Diploma candidates, five students who earned direct admission to medical school (four at Michigan State University and one at DePaul University), and one student who earned direct admission to the University of Michigan Ross School of Business.

ATHLETICS

Notre Dame Prep student-athletes once again demonstrated excellence both in competition and in the classroom.

This year, our Competitive Cheer team captured its second consecutive Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) State Championship, while senior Maren Studt won two individual MHSAA State Championships in skiing.

Our Football team advanced to the MHSAA State Championship game for the second consecutive year, finishing as State Runner-Up while proudly defending last year's state title.

I would also like to congratulate the 14 student-athletes who will continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level, demonstrating that Notre Dame Prep is a place where students can excel both academically and athletically:

- Sarah Collins, Soccer, Loyola University Chicago
- Henry Ewles, Baseball, Miami University (Ohio)
- Owen Fulsher, Baseball, Northwood University
- Cate Jesena, Soccer, University of Mary
- Jack Kilpatrick, Soccer, Denison University
- Drake Roa, Baseball, University of Michigan
- Brody Sink, Football, Miami University (Ohio)
- Nina Geric, Hockey, Syracuse University



1389 Giddings Road
Pontiac, MI 48340

-
- Daniel Lebanion, Soccer, Wittenberg University
 - Tomasino Offer, Baseball, Wheaton College
 - Ellie Whalen, Soccer, Wayne State University
 - Adrian Fernandez, Basketball, Dominican University
 - Kaylyn Sowers, Basketball, Franciscan University
 - Jack Williams, Football, John Carroll University

A special congratulations goes to Joey Decasas ('25), who has been accepted as a transfer student to the University of Pennsylvania following an outstanding freshman year at the University of Detroit Mercy. Joey previously distinguished himself at Notre Dame Prep as a three-sport First Team All-State athlete in football, basketball, and track and field.

FINANCES

Congratulations to our Advancement Office and Parents Club volunteers, who worked together to raise more than \$775,000 in unrestricted gifts to the Notre Dame Fund.

Among others, the Notre Dame Fund supports three critical priorities: faculty and staff compensation, financial aid and scholarships, and classroom enhancements and campus safety initiatives.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to provide teachers with a two-step salary increase and a year-end bonus, expand our Building Bridges Scholarship Program by welcoming eight additional students, and provide year-round armed security at all three divisions of the school.

As an independent Catholic school, Notre Dame Prep receives no government or Archdiocesan operating support. Every gift makes a meaningful difference in sustaining and advancing our Catholic and Marist mission.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Last August, our Campus Ministry Department launched an "Exploring Becoming Catholic" initiative. As a result, we received 15 inquiries from families interested in having their children join the Catholic Church or complete their Sacraments of Initiation, including Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Even more encouraging, several parents have been inspired by their children's faith journey to complete their own sacraments and become more active participants in the life of the Church.

A WELCOMING AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY

In March, Jewish high school students from across Metro Detroit visited our upper school religion classes to share firsthand insights into their faith, traditions, and lived experiences. The event reflected the spirit of *Nostra Aetate* ("In Our Time"), the Second Vatican Council's landmark document promoting respect, understanding, and dialogue among religions.

Notre Dame Prep students also participated in a TEEN TRUTH assembly focused on combating racism and fostering a more inclusive school community. Led by Brandon McCall, the program challenged students to reflect on their responsibility to build a culture of respect, dignity, and belonging for all.

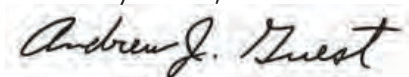
IN CLOSING

There are many exciting things happening at Notre Dame Prep, and we are grateful for the support of our alumni and friends. Whether through your prayers, encouragement, volunteerism, or financial contributions, you play an important role in our continued success.

We invite you to visit campus, attend Homecoming, reconnect with classmates, and remain engaged with the Notre Dame Prep community.

Thank you for helping us continue our mission of forming Christian persons, upright citizens and academic scholars.

In Mary's name,



Andrew J. Guest ND'84
Head of School

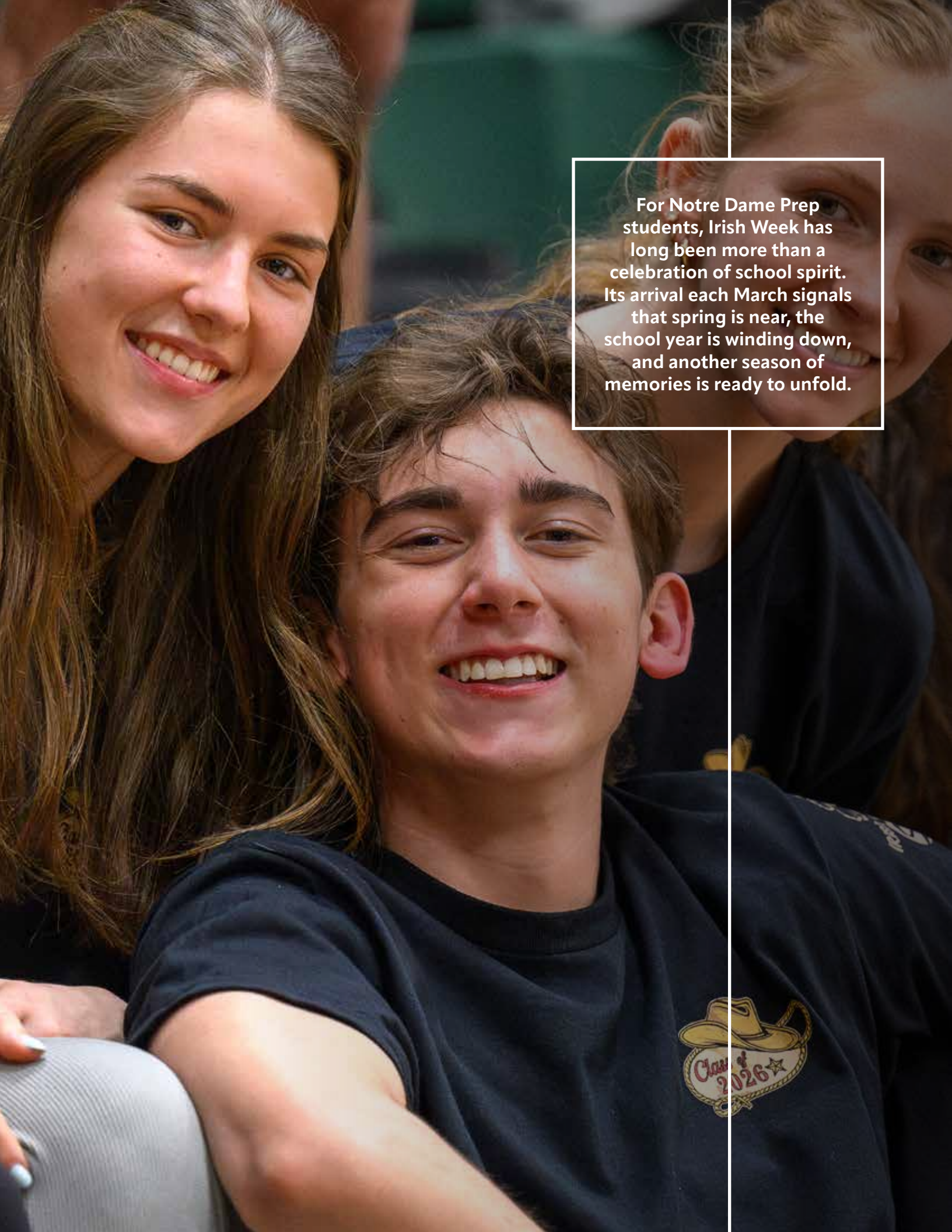
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ON THE COVER

Corrado DeGregorio NDP'26 performs at the Lafayette Grande Ballroom in Pontiac on May 16 as Notre Dame Prep student-musicians and returning alumni shared the stage for the school's annual Big Band Dinner Dance.



For Notre Dame Prep students, Irish Week has long been more than a celebration of school spirit. Its arrival each March signals that spring is near, the school year is winding down, and another season of memories is ready to unfold.



Leave Your Mark on the Future of Notre Dame Prep

Give A Gift That Costs Nothing Today,
But Transforms Tomorrow.

PLANNED GIFTS

- ✓ Prepare Us for a Better Future
- ✓ Extends Scholarships for Families Seeking a Catholic Education
- ✓ Have Tremendous Financial Impact on Buildings, Grounds, Classrooms, Teachers and Students, Athletics, Extracurriculars

TYPES OF PLANNED GIVING



Wills and
Estate
Bequests



Life
Insurance
Policies



Gifts of Assets -
401(k)/ 403(b) plans/
real estate

BENEFITS TO YOU



Easy to Set Up



No Cost Now



Avoid Estate Taxes



Leave an Eternal Impact

Let's talk
about your
legacy

We'll help you build a giving plan that matches your values. Notre Dame Prep recognizes individuals who choose to remember us with a planned gift or bequest as members of the Heritage Circle. Inspired by the example of Mary, who nurtured the young Jesus and supported him in his ministry and the early days of the Church, the Heritage Circle honors donors who leave their own legacy on the next generation of students at Notre Dame.



Notre Dame
Preparatory School
A Catholic and Marist Community

CONTACT

Gregory J. Mallek
Vice President for Advancement
gmallek@ndpma.org / 248-630-7718

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT



Dear Notre Dame Preparatory School Community,

I hope this message finds you well. I would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself as the Vice President for Advancement. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve an institution whose mission of forming *Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars* aligns so closely with my own values and passion for Catholic education.

Throughout my career, I have been blessed to serve in leadership roles focused on education, community engagement, fundraising, and relationship building. My professional journey has included positions in both K-12 and higher education, where I have led advancement initiatives, cultivated donor relationships, managed fundraising campaigns, and built partnerships that strengthen institutions and expand opportunities for students. Most recently, I joined Notre Dame Prep as Director of Development before assuming my current role.

As we continue to grow and strengthen our advancement efforts, I am excited to introduce the talented team that serves our school community:

- Dan Lai, Senior Director of Marketing and Strategic Communications
- Mike Kelly ND'73, Director of Marketing
- Jim Sesi, Webmaster
- Matt Rzepecki, Director of Notre Dame Fund and Advancement Services

We are also thrilled to welcome several outstanding professionals who have recently joined our team:

- Dan Fuoco ND'03, Major Gift Officer
- Jason Valenzuela, Notre Dame Fund Gift Officer
- Kate Fox NDP'22, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations

Together, our team is committed to advancing the mission of Notre Dame Prep by strengthening relationships with alumni, parents, grandparents, friends, foundations, and community partners. We believe that philanthropy is more than fundraising—it is about creating opportunities for our students, supporting our faculty, and ensuring that future generations can experience the transformative education that Notre Dame provides.

In the coming months, we look forward to connecting with many of you, learning your stories, and discussing how we can continue building a culture of engagement and generosity across our community. Whether through alumni involvement, annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, special events, or volunteer opportunities, we welcome your partnership in advancing the mission handed down by the Marist fathers and brothers.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our students and school community. I look forward to meeting many of you personally and working together to ensure a bright future for Notre Dame Prep.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Mallek', written over a light blue background.

Gregory J. Mallek

Vice President for Advancement

NOTRE DAME FUND



Honor Roll of Donors
2025-2026



Notre Dame Prep
A Catholic and Marist Community



The following individuals made one or more charitable contributions to the Notre Dame Fund during the 2025-2026 fiscal year (July 1-June 30). The Notre Dame Fund is a yearly, unrestricted fundraising campaign designed to bridge the gap between tuition revenue and the actual cost of operating the school. Because tuition alone rarely covers the full cost of education and the school does not receive funding from the archdiocese or federal and state government, Notre Dame Prep relies on contributions from parents, alumni, staff, and the broader community.

In reports of this nature, mistakes can sometimes be inevitable. If your name was omitted or improperly listed in this honor roll, please accept our apologies. If you have detected an error, please notify the Advancement Office so that we can correct our records, mrzepecki@ndpma.org. The full 2025-2026 Annual Report will be released this fall.

Thank you!

St. Marcellin Champagnat Circle \$25,000 +

Mary Beth Adderley GP'31, GP'32
Daron* and Linda Gifford P'02, P'11
Mike Hope ND'60 and Gayla Hope
Bill* and Melissa Kozyra P'03, P'05, P'06
Mike and Lora Mlinarcik P'96, P'99, GP'28, GP'29,
GP'29, GP'33
NDP Parents Club
Steve* and Laura Pangori P'13, P'15, P'17, P'18

Our Lady of Lourdes Circle \$10,000-\$24,999

Bill and Gail Borgiel P'12, GP'33, GP'33, GP'34, GP'34, GP'37
Mary Jo Byrd GP'16, GP'18, GP'26, GP'28, GP'30, GP'33
Kevin and Laura Carter P'26, P'29
Pat D'Agostini* P'98, P'99, P'01, P'03, GP'30, GP'32, GP'36
Mike and Jill Genord P'11, P'13, P'16, P'18
Lutz Roofing Co. Inc.
Pontiac Missionary Baptist Church
Kris Powell* ND'75, P'16
Frank and Maureen Roth P'22, P'23
Debra Seehaver P'02, P'04
Thomas and Elizabeth* Vanhecke P'25, P'27

St. Joseph Circle \$5,000-\$9,999

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Michael Bloomfield GP' 31
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Todd and Amy Francis P'28, P'31
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Stan Guest ND'80 and Lily Guest P'06, P'08, P'12, P'13
Razen and Anas Kathawa P'30, P'34, P'36
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Chris* and Liza Liparoto P'23, P'24, P'26, P'31
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Philip Phillips and Mattie Scott-Phillips* P'25, P'25

Mark and Jessica Reed P'29, P'32
Chris Remishofsky P'27, P'27
David and Ann* Stone P'14, P'21
Fr. Stan Ulman*
Betty Wroubel S'94

St. Anne Circle \$2,500-\$4,999

Anonymous
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Vinson and Laura Bahri P'26, P'30, P'35
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Pam Bourlier R'05 and Mike Bourlier
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Justin and Jaime Cherfoli P'25, P'28
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Walter and Carolyn Czechowski P'05, GP'37
Eric and Courtney Engman P'31
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Dennis and Cathy Goebel P'05, P'07
Derick and Diane Grembi P'21, P'26, P'29
Kurt and Shauna Haras P'28
Jim and Beth Harding P'32
Herman and Ruba Kado P'30, P'32, P'36, P'38
John Kennelly NDP'05 and Amelia Kennelly
Tom and Jennie Kenny P'17, P'19, P'24
Harve and Laura Light P'24
Danny and Kristine Ma P'29
David and Leigh Martin P'28
Mike and Debbie Newman P'17, P'19, P'22
Tom Pakula ND'74
Adam Paulson NDP'99 and Danielle (Berry) Paulson NDP'99,
P'25, P'27
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Raquel Rudder P'31
Aaron* and Deb Silver P'19, P'22, P'26, P'30
Kelly Simon F'18 and Jim Simon P'24, P'26, P'29
Joseph Sobota ND'95
George and Tiffany Stolzenfeld P'27, P'28
Phil and Tamara Warburton P'28

Fr. Jean-Claude Colin Circle \$1,000-\$2,499

Anonymous (5)
Kim Anderson S'97 and Vince Anderson P'20, P'23
Vasken and Sara Artinian P'28, P'28
Diana Atkins S'99 and Tim Atkins P'15, P'17
Dan and Jennifer Beaudoin P'19, P'21, P'26, P'27
Mike and Sherry Berry P'99, P'02, P'10, GP'25, GP'27
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Alex and Linda Boosalis P'35
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Tony and Mia* Burbank P'10, P'17
David and Johanna Byrd P'26, P'28, P'30
Julie Byrd P'33
Endri and Mira Caraj P'29, P'34
Michael McIntyre and Charlotte Carr-McIntyre P'97

Avis and Reanne Choulagh P'35
 Peg Convery P'04,'06,'09,'18, GP'31,'34,'35,'37,'37,'40
 Vera (Fram) Dabish NDP'05
 and Henry Dabish P'31, P'33, P'35, P'39
 Rob and Linda D'Orazio P'12
 Lani (Domagalski) Duffy NDP'09 and Joe Duffy P'39
 Fred and Nicole Esseily P'30, P'33, P'35
 Luc Feilla ND'81 and Karen Feilla
 Shadi Fram NDP'07 and Lara Fram
 Kirenza and Iman Francis P'30, P'30
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 Nazek Gappy P'27
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 Mark Gaynor ND'83 and Carrie Gaynor P'17, P'20, P'20
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 Justen and Alexia Grech P'29
 Joe and Meredith Hamo P'30, P'32
 Brett and Gayle Hinds P'23
 Robert and Laura Hogan P'11, P'14
 Andy and Lisa Hunter P'23, P'25, P'27, P'29
 Rob and Suzanne Huth P'12, P'14, P'17
 Kent Huyser
 John Jamnik PC'75 and Chris (Halpin) Jamnik PC'76, P'02, P'05,
 P'07, GP'32, GP'34
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 Erik Kafarski and Irena Zalewska P'25, P'27
 Jon and Cecilia Karr P'14, P'20
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 Gerry and Andrea Knesek P'99, P'01, GP'31, GP'34
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 GP'16, GP'17, GP'19, GP'20
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 Noel* and Emily Villajuan P'26

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 Jason and Ada Zilka P'30, P'30

ADDITIONAL ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Fleur de Lis Club \$500-\$999

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 Gehael and Lina Ghaith P'17, P'22, P'32
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 Raphael and Rita Putrus P'34, P'37, P'37, P'40
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Fighting Irish Club \$250-\$499

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 Dr. Laurette Alkidas R'04 and Dr. Alex Alkidas
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 Matthew and Kathryn Szalach P'23, P'24, P'28
 Trent Thiry NDP'00 and Kristen Thiry
 Katherine Thomas F'11 and Steven Thomas
 Craig Urban ND'64 and Diane Urban
 Jim Von Hatten ND'65
 Michael and Christine Walsh P'35, P'38
 Bob and Mary Watson P'12, P'15
 Bob Welliver ND'66
 Tim and Jen Wiater P'30, P'32, P'35, P'37
 Bob and Molly Williams P'23, P'26
 Chris and Elizabeth Wise P'27, P'30

Leprechaun Club \$100-\$249

Anonymous (12)
 Ernie Almeranti ND'77 and Alonna Almeranti

Paul Amman SM'57 and June Amman
 Kevin Andrews ND'70
 Mansour and Elizabeth Asmar P'26, P'27
 Fady and Sherry Atia P'30
 Joe and Meredith Baaki P'29
 Steve and Ann Bartoli P'06, P'08, P'12
 Vic Battani ND'58 and Linda Battani
 Kathy Bembas R'12
 Jennifer Bero F'21
 Scott and Brenda Bicknell GP'34, GP'36
 Jim Bieszki ND'71 and Michele Bieszki
 Alexis Bigelow NDP'29
 Lucas Bigelow NDP'26
 Brian and Janet Binkowski P'29
 Carlene (Linsenman) Bischoff SM'54
 Neil and Sandy Boggemes P'98, P'00
 Wilson and Ronda Boji GP'36, GP'38
 Sr. Barbara Ann Borkowski, OSF, R'17
 Mark Bowers NDP'07 and Kate Bowers
 Kristine Bozicevich P'01, P'03, P'06
 Dave Brazier ND'79 and Michele Brazier
 Chadwick and Danielle Brent P'29
 Tim and Deb Broderick P'13
 Michael and Amy Burek P'21
 Richard and Jennifer Burns P'07, P'10
 Anthony Butorac F'08 and Angela Butorac P'31, P'32,
 P'33, P'34
 Sandra Calamari P'00, P'02
 Dave Calandro ND'67 and Mary Beth Calandro
 Bradley and Roya Caloia P'32, P'35
 Ray Caloia ND'60 and Karen Caloia
 Izzat and Mais Carouba P'26, P'32
 Bob Carrico ND'61 and Patricia Carrico
 John and Barbara Castellana
 Edward Chenhalls PC'79
 Adam and Tina Chiappetta P'27, P'31
 John Ciaravino ND'98 and Kimberly Ciaravino
 Vincent Collura ND'86 and Luann Collura
 Paul and Mary Jane Croissant GP'36, GP'38
 Tim Cummins ND'75 and Atsuko Hatsuda-Cummins
 Ben Czerniawski ND'74 and Kathy Czerniawski
 Pat Dalton GP'15, GP'17, GP'27, GP'29
 David DePorre NDP'15 and Allison (Kot) DePorre NDP'16
 Shailendra Devali and Mamata Bhatkal P'32
 Emma DiNardo NDP'18, F'23
 Matthew and Taara Donley P'29, P'32
 Chuck and Diane Dorantes P'16
 Elizabeth Doyle P'10
 Justin and Lisa D'Souza S'24, P'29
 Andy Durkin NDP'16 and Liliana (Chirco) Durkin NDP'16
 Hakim El-Amin and Kenni Allen El-Amin P'29, P'32
 Dennis Embo ND'70 and Rosemary Embo
 Julio Aravena and Jacqueline Evola
 John Ewald ND'67 and Theresa Ewald
 Philip and Lilian Fikany P'36
 Anthony and Kristina Finocchio P'29
 John Formella ND'67
 Karim and Nedaa Fram P'03, P'05, P'07, GP'31, GP'33, GP'33,
 GP'35, GP'35, GP'37, GP'39
 Paul Frank F'03 and Jorja Rapelje
 Rachel Fruchey F'14 and Kevin Fruchay P'40
 Shaun and Stephanie Fulton P'37, P'39
 Michael and June Garland P'17

Breanna Gemelli NDP'15 and Brendan Salva
 General Motors
 Dennis Gmerek ND'72 and Debra Gmerek
 Sebastian Goss NDP'28
 Jim Grabowski ND'79
 Gregory Graves ND'65 and Judith Graves
 Eric Griesmer ND'74
 Henry Guthard GP'27
 Elaine Gutierrez GP'27
 Austin Hall NDP'31
 Logan Hall NDP'29
 Scott Hannah P'26
 Barb Havens GP'33, GP'35, GP'38
 Roger and Jean Heimbuch GP'19, GP'20, GP'25
 Tad and Monica Hershey P'14
 Elizabeth (Gojcaj) Heston NDP'01 and Rob Heston P'37, P'39
 Thomas and Claudia Heuer P'98, P'01, GP'31, GP'34
 Mark Hindelang ND'01
 Mike and Terra Hohf P'37
 Dan Hollenkamp ND'68 and Denise Hollenkamp P'01,
 P'03, P'05
 Jim Hurst ND'73 and Kathryn Hurst
 Charles Hynous ND'58
 Bruce Irwin PC'71
 Denise Jeffreys
 Kelsey Jones
 Dennis Joy ND'67 and Joanne Joy P'95, P'97, P'98
 Dick Karpen ND'59 and Marjorie Karpen
 Jonathan Karr NDP'20
 Jamal and Widad Kassab GP'22, GP'24, GP'24
 Ziad and Bianca Kassab P'30, P'32
 Gary and Laurie Keoleian P'21, P'23, P'26
 Oliver and Pauline Kersuzan P'31
 Jerry Klimek ND'61 and Gwen Klimek
 Tom Klimek ND'71 and Mary Klimek
 Jim Kondek ND'73
 Benjamin and Sarah Krater P'34, P'37
 Jim and Nancy Krease P'01, P'03
 Tom Krebs ND'76 and Linda Krebs
 David and Eileen Krick P'16, P'20
 Kim Kriesel F'04 and Jesse Kriesel P'30, P'33
 Mike Kurowski NDP'12 and Mary (Guest) Kurowski NDP'12
 Nick and Alyssa Kushuba P'29, P'32, P'34, P'38
 Dan Lai S'19 and Amy Lai P'35, P'38
 Robert and Barb Lantzy P'26, P'28
 Nick LaPoulas NDP'01 and Justina (D'Agostini) LaPoulas
 NDP'01, P'34, P'36
 Alan Leirstein GP'34, GP'37
 Michael and Krista LeVans P'35
 Mary Lewis PC'80
 Joanne Liu F'08 and Xiao-Dong Guo P'24
 Joe and Carolyn Love P'28
 Joe and Joanne Love GP'28
 Kurt Ludwig ND'90 and Kristen Ludwig P'22, P'24
 Joshua and Kristin Lynn P'29
 Theresa (Stuart) Machak NDP'02
 Gary and Vera Mackey GP'23, GP'25, GP'27
 Mike Mahoney ND'72
 Mary Ann (Meyer) Malinich SM'55
 Greg Mallek S'25
 Mark and Tania Mancinotti P'11, P'12, P'17
 Judy Manczuk P'95
 Dennis Maraone ND'70, P'98, P'00

Dave Marchetti ND'77 and Patti Marchetti
 Anthony Marrocco ND'66 and Linda Marrocco
 Jeff Marvin and Lisa Samerdyke P'23
 Judy McCormack
 Chad and Katy McDonald P'29
 Charles and Doneen McDowell P'22, P'27
 Mike McEvoy ND'60
 Greg and Katey McGowan P'30
 Paul McGrath ND'69 and Nancy McGrath
 Mark McGreevy R'25, ND'76 and Carol McGreevy S'23, P'06,
 P'08, P'12, P'15
 Denise and Brian Meulebrouck P'18, P'22, P'26, P'29, P'29
 Christine (Dunny) Miller SM '66
 John and Veronica Miloshevski P'29
 Jerry Mineweaser SM'61 and Gayle Mineweaser GP'23, GP'25
 Bob Mishige ND'64 and Faith Mishige
 Kathy Mitchell R'09 and Tom Mitchell P'02
 Jeffrey and Susan Mohr P'20, P'21
 Joe and Dawn Montano P'29
 Patrick and Andrea Moran P'19, P'20
 George and Kathy Morehouse P'02, P'05
 Autumn Murphy
 Rick Murphy ND'74 and Cathy Murphy
 Amy and Ray Mylenek P'16, P'19, P'24, P'24
 Kurt Nadolski ND'77 and Mary Nadolski P'06
 NDHS Class of 1967
 Geoffrey and Tara Nelson P'35, P'35
 Steph Nester S'11 and Rick Nester P'31
 Judith (Lamphere) Nestor SM'62
 Dean Nichols and Michelle King P'29
 Todd and Sandy Nida P'09, P'12, P'19
 Kevin and Beth Nunning P'25, P'28
 Benny and Alkida Offer P'26, P'28
 Robert Opie and Amy Isenberg P'32, P'34
 Virginia Ostroskie GP'14, GP'18, GP'18, GP'23
 Bob Ottoy ND'58 and Kathleen Ottoy P'84, P'85
 Leopoldo and Sonia Palad GP'23, GP'24, GP'26, GP'31
 Katrina Palushaj F'11, P'15, P'16
 Steve Parus ND'72 and Joanne Brodfuehrer
 Thomas and Jillian Pascoe P'37
 Richard Pasiak ND'70 and Toni Pasiak P'96
 Jack and Roberta Patterson GP'33, GP'35, GP'35
 Gabriel and Ioana Pencu P'29
 Bo and Sandra Pennell P'27, P'30
 Bruno and Mary Petrella P'08, P'17
 Gabrielle Phillips NDP'25
 Sam Phillips NDP'25
 Scott Picklo NDP'04 and Ashley Picklo P'33, P'36
 Dave Piech ND'63 and Nancy Piech
 Don Polsinelli ND'65, GP'24
 Pontiac Catholic Class of 1976
 Joe and Christine Powers P'27
 Jan and Ludmila Pyko P'05, P'09
 Gary Raczak ND'64 and Joyce Raczak
 Maureen Radulski S'13, P'26, P'26
 Richard and Nancy Rae GP'37, GP'39
 Mike Ricci ND'65 and Brenda Symonds
 Monica (Denis) Roca NDP'04 and Christopher Roca
 Brian Roehl ND'73
 Tom Roehl ND'72
 Todd and Lina Roeser P'30
 Tom Rolands ND'61 and Sandra Rolands
 Andrew and Kimberly Romanosky P'29, P'31, P'33

Paul Sales ND'59 and Carol Sales
 Jeff Schwartzberg ND'88 and Janet Schwartzberg
 Eric and Deanne Seifert P'26, P'28
 Rich Semenik ND'66 and Molly Semenik
 Jim Sesi S'14
 Ramsey and Beth Shehab
 Chuck and Connie Sidor P'99, P'01, P'09
 Nick Silveri ND'90 and Janet Silveri
 Paul Simpson ND'76 and Emily Simpson
 Theresa Sinacola-Meganck S'20 and Eric Meganck P'29
 Joseph Skoney P'13 and Luisa DiLorenzo
 Jim Snodgrass ND'60 and Doris Snodgrass
 Al Spinella ND'71 and Pamela Spinella
 John Staniszewski ND'71 and Paula Staniszewski
 Jim Stano ND'71 and Donna Green-Stano
 Chelsea (Picklo) Stemple NDP'04
 Tim and Karen Stetson GP'33, GP'35
 Matt and Belkys Stewart P'25, P'27, P'29
 Noah Stith and Judy Choe P'34
 Matt and Ronda Stoffer P'30, P'31
 Sean Stringer NDP'03 and Chelsea Stringer
 Ken and Karen Sucher P'01, P'03, P'06
 Paul Suchyta NDP'04
 Beth Surowiec P'28
 Chet Szerlag ND'66 and Judy Mouilleseaux
 Glend and Ionee Tarriman P'29
 Timothy and Maureen Thiry P'99, P'00
 Brandon and Janice Thomas P'30
 Phil Thomas NDP'99 and Julia (Flajole) Thomas NDP'99, P
 Scott and Theresa Thomas P'27
 John and Michelle Tiberia P'25, P'27
 John Trinkwalder ND'62
 Zig Urbanski P'98, P'01, GP'31, GP'34 and Anna Jantz
 Thomas and Sandra Utash GP'26, GP'28
 John and Jennifer Valentine P'25, P'28, P'28, P'28
 Skylar Vanhecke NDP'25
 Kenneth and Jen VanNorwick P'24, P'28
 Lee Vaughn ND'84
 Bernardo and Eleanor Villajuan GP'26
 Tom Vitale ND'75 and Jill Vitale
 Ryan Warburton NDP'28
 Bill Welliver R'04 and Marilee Welliver
 Sandy Wiebelhaus GP'19, GP'21, GP'25
 Wayne Witkop ND'85 and Myann Witkop
 Richard and Colleen Woodcox P'99, P'03, P'08
 Jesse and Danielle Yarbrough P'32
 Jocelynn Yaroach F'02 and Anthony Yaroach
 Andrew and Vicki Zielke P'24, P'27

Gold Club \$50-\$99

Anonymous (5)
 Franci Atcho F'18
 Joe Barker ND'85 and Susan Barker
 Henry Bender ND'75
 Susan Bigelow GP'26, GP'29
 James Bleau PC'76 and Mari Ann Pace- Bleau
 Maddie Blocki NDP'13
 Boston Consulting Group
 Layla Boy Rodrigues and Renato Vanni P'38
 Dave Cafmeyer ND'77 and April Cafmeyer
 Tanya Campbell S'25
 Larine and Sible Chacko P'34
 Jim Champine ND'77 and Kimberly Champine

Jim Chylinski ND'66 and Patricia Chylinski
 Gary Coakley ND'69 and Cindy Lou Coakley
 Annemarie Colombo NDP'06, P'34
 Patrick and Michele Connolly P'19
 Pete DeLuca ND'85
 Jackie (Tatham) Dix SM'48
 Kathy Downs R'09
 Nathan and Beth Dressman P'26, P'28
 Bernard Dupke ND'58
 Ella Easterwood NDP'21
 Ranen and Samar Esho P'29, P'29
 Carol Evola NDP'99 and Ryan Smith P'27
 Dennis Figurski ND'64 and Sue Figurski
 Jeffrey and Jessica Firman P'35, P'38
 Michael Flannery ND'72 and Roberta Flannery
 Gerard Franchina ND'72 and Livia Franchina
 Mike and Jan Funnell GP'34, GP'36
 Daniel Fuoco ND'03, S'26 and Natalie Fuoco P'28
 Jim Gallas ND'65 and Ann Gallas
 Chris Giannetti ND'77 and Yvonne Giannetti
 Ryan and Regan Goldberg P'28, P'32
 Colin and Arathi Goldsmith P'32
 Clifton and Kate Higdon P'29
 Fran Higgins GP'18
 Karen Holland P'00, P'04, P'08
 Tim Hopman ND'82 and Thea Hopman
 Chris and Kimberly Jones P'15, P'17
 Jeffrey and Laurie Jones P'27
 John Kachnowski ND'72 and Maureen Kachnowski
 Jennifer King and Alan Poynter P'27
 Brian Klott ND'82 and Alison Klott
 Mike Koch ND'75 and Ann Marie Koch
 Bob Kocis ND'75 and Jane Kocis
 Joan Kopytek R'22, P'00
 Ivan and Josephine Kozar GP'38
 Mike LaCharite ND'72 and Vicki LaCharite
 Charlie LaCombe ND'70 and Kathy LaCombe
 Tim and Victoria Leicht P'36, P'39
 Dave Leone ND'75 and Cindy Leone
 Bill Locricchio ND'74 and MaryAnn Locricchio
 Whitney Lorenz NDP'12
 Gary Louiso ND'75 Peter Lucido NDP'15
 David Ma NDP'29
 Richard and Catherine Mamola GP'28
 Tom Manney ND'82
 George Marchese ND'72 and Diane Marchese
 Kristine Marcuz GP'33, GP'35, GP'38
 Nicolas Marshah and Carole Zenieh P'21, P'26
 Karsten Martin NDP'28
 Wilfredo Martinez and Delia Perez P'31
 Chris Mattina ND'75 and Jennifer Mattina
 Michael Moreno PC'81
 Francine Moriguchi NDP'14
 Luke Moriguchi NDP'12
 Mike Morley ND'75 and Danice Morley
 Neil Murphy ND'68 and Colleen Murphy
 Royce and Sara Neubauer P'27
 Ed and Lucy Niemczycki P'00, P'03, P'07
 Catherine Noble GP'32, GP'34
 Bob Nowinski ND'61 and Frances Nowinski
 George Kale ND'75
 Dale Olinzock ND'75
 Russ Ortisi ND'80 and Dahlia Ortisi

Tony Palazzolo GP'23, GP'24, GP'28
 Laxmi and NarasingRao Pampati GP'32, GP'33
 Vinay and Shoba Pampati P'32, P'33
 John Parthum ND'63, R'09 and Marianne Parthum P'93, P'96
 Michael Perlin ND'69 and Christina Perlin
 Jim and Mary Lou Powers P'07, P'13
 Rick and Jane Radulski GP'26, GP'26
 Thelma Rebutal GP'29
 Matt Rzepecki S'23
 Katrina Sagert F'12 and Ellery Sagert ND'01
 C.V. and Lily Samuel GP'32, GP'33
 Michael Scharl ND'71 and Judy Scharl
 Bev Smith R'07
 Bill Smith ND'61 and Karen Smith
 John Snodgrass ND'67 and Barbara Snodgrass
 Mike Staniszewski ND'78 and Leslie Staniszewski
 Dave Stevens ND'75
 Deacon Tom Strasz ND'68 and Josie Strasz P'97
 Jim Strye ND'61 and Vicki Strye
 Jeff Tranchida ND'84
 Paul Tyler and Ann Holwey P'29, P'31
 Bryan Ureel ND'82 and Jamie Ureel
 Christine Van Dam R'10 and Craig Van Dam
 Margaret (Allard) Werth NDP'20
 Bob Wilhelm ND'64
 Evan and Sue Williams P'02, P'04
 Dennis and Sharon Zelek P'17

Green Club \$25-\$49

Anonymous
 Elizabeth Allard NDP'14
 Rebecca Bitonti P'28
 Autumn Butler P'28, P'28
 Katie Christ NDP'15
 Tony DelVillano ND'81 and Pauline DelVillano
 Caitlin Dodge NDP'99
 Kevin Duda ND'75 and Patricia Duda
 Richard and Nancy Elsey P'98, P'01
 Mark English PC'70 and Karen English
 Debra Furguson P'03, P'05
 Hailey (Atkins) Grady NDP'15
 Al Guest ND'81 and Amy Guest
 Dan and Alyson Honer P'32
 Emily (Giacona) Jackson NDP'01 and Nickolas Jackson
 Larry and Tracey Jacob P'27
 Jordan and Alex Jacobson P'39
 Jim Jelsone ND'73 and Roseann Jelsone
 Bob Karl ND'68 and Brenda Karl
 Gary Kilpatrick ND'65 and Christine
 Kilpatrick GP'26
 John and Margaret Kukawinski P'06, P'08
 Paul Kuntzler ND'60
 Tom and Chris LaVielle GP'30, GP'34
 Sr. Janet Lemon SF'51
 Bob Majkowski ND'77 and Susan Majkowski
 Rob and Allison Nalette P'39
 Dennis Parle SF'60
 Marvin and Nahla Pattah GP'35, GP'37, GP'39
 Larry Quirk ND'85
 Curt Ranger ND'70 and Diane Ranger
 Lilia Rapson F'13
 Kathy Robinson F'21
 Mike Slater ND'68

Kimberly (McCoy) Stetson NDP'02
 and Michael Stetson P'33, P'36
 Barbara Stone GP'14, GP'21
 Thomas and Jennifer Swieboda P'14
 Sean and Amal Tominna P'26
 Robert Trudell SM'60
 Christine (Praet) Walker NDP'01, S'23
 and Travis Walker P'27, P'29
 James Walker NDP'27
 Tessa Walker NDP'29
 Gary Wilson ND'60 and Catherine Wilson
 George Wojdacki ND'66 and Darlene Wojdacki
 Richard Zaslonka ND'58 and Carol Zaslonka

Below \$25

Anonymous (9)
 Kelly Bickes F'23 and Nick Bickes P'30, P'34
 Jeffrey Bidigare ND'59 and Arlene Bidigare
 Terry Buda ND'71 and Lisa Buda
 Damien and Quanita Bumpus P'29
 Kevin Carter NDP'26
 Steven Carter NDP'29
 Paul Frost NDP'23
 Peter and Abby Gumma P'25, P'27, P'30
 Larry Jack R'22
 Phil Kukawinski NDP'08 and Lauren Kukawinski
 Jim Machak ND'67 and Kathy Machak
 Jerry and Marie Manofsky
 Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
 Ed and Karen Parsons GP'35, GP'38
 Joy Quick-Burhans GP'10, GP'12, GP'18
 Ralph Roy ND'63
 Richard and Maria Salloum P'81
 Silmey Sevilla
 Douglas Wesley ND'67 and Paula Wesley
 Blake Whidden NDP'26
 Troy Whidden NDP'26
 Jennette Wrobel F'13 and Michael Wrobel

The below individuals also made gifts to the following funds this year:

The Amazing Shake

Anonymous (4)
 Ihsan Alkamano and Noor Yousif P'31
 Jeff and Karen Carroll P'30, P'32
 Vera (Fram) Dabish NDP'05 and Henry Dabish P'31, P'33,
 P'35, P'39
 Kyle Fabris NDP'02 and Jennifer Ackroyd-Fabris NDP'02,
 P'32, P'35
 Matthew and Kristen Fox P'27, P'29
 Shadi Fram NDP'07 and Lara Fram
 Talal Fram NDP'11
 Jeremy and Melissa Garrett P'26, P'30
 Daron and Linda Gifford P'02, P'11
 Ryan and Regan Goldberg P'28, P'32
 Herman and Ruba Kado P'30, P'32, P'36, P'38
 Jon and Cecilia Karr P'14, P'20
 Cam and Kristen Kennedy P'27, P'29
 Tim and Angela Knapman P'28, P'31
 Emily Kunath P'26, P'28
 Chris and Liza Liparoto P'23, P'24, P'26, P'31
 Joe and Carolyn Love P'28

Michael and Maria Lukosavich P'30, P'32, P'34, P'35, P'40
 Michael and Lisa McClain P'21
 Greg and Katey McGowan P'30
 Craig and Amy McLeod P'21, P'23
 Royce and Sara Neubauer P'27
 Mark Ostin NDP'00 and Michelle Ostin P'30, P'35
 Chris and Melissa Paradiso P'30, P'31
 Brian Penz
 Gregory and Tricia Punches P'31, P'31
 Steve and Laura Robert P'28
 Jaime (Aluia) Schomer NDP'00, S'25 and Bryan Schomer P'30
 Philip Phillips and Mattie Scott-Phillips P'25, P'25
 Aaron and Deb Silver P'19, P'22, P'26, P'30
 Matt and Ronda Stoffer P'30, P'31
 George and Tiffany Stolzenfeld P'27, P'28
 David and Ann Stone P'14, P'21
 Tim and Jen Wiater P'30, P'32, P'35, P'37
 Chris and Elizabeth Wise P'27, P'30
 Jesse and Danielle Yarbrough P'32
 Al and Linda Zara P'29, P'32, P'34, P'39
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 Buffalo Wild Wings
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 DePorre Veterinary Hospital, PC
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 Emagine Entertainment
 Fram & Fram CPAs
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 Michigan Orthopaedic Rehabilitation
 Movement Orthopedics
 Noor Pharmacy
 RealClean Aircraft Detailing
 Rugiero Promise Foundation
 SkinOvations, PLC
 Trion Solutions

Athletics

Anonymous (2)
 Vic Battani ND'58 and Linda Battani
 Jim and Heather Bordogna P'27, P'29, P'33
 David and Johanna Byrd P'26, P'28, P'30
 Dave Cafmeyer ND'77 and April Cafmeyer
 Roy and Kathy Casteel GP'30, GP'33, GP'35
 Justin and Jaime Cherfoli P'25, P'28
 Gary Coakley ND'69 and Cindy Lou Coakley
 Vincent Collura ND'86 and Luann Collura
 Brent and Crystal Consiglio P'35
 Tim Cummins ND'75 and Atsuko Hatsuda-Cummins
 Mike and Mary Durkin P'00, P'01, P'06, P'12, P'14, P'16, P'16
 Tom Durkin NDP'00 and Lauren Durkin
 Chad Elliott NDP'02
 Mark Gaynor ND'83 and Carrie Gaynor P'17, P'20, P'20
 Mark and Maria Glenn P'02, P'04, P'06, P'08, P'10
 Derick and Diane Grembi P'21, P'26, P'29
 Austin Hall NDP'31
 Logan Hall NDP'29
 Tad and Monica Hershey P'14
 Thomas and Claudia Heuer P'98, P'01, GP'31, GP'34
 Andy and Lisa Hunter P'23, P'25, P'27, P'29
 Bryan and Reba Johnson P'26
 Chris and Kimberly Jones P'15, P'17
 Tom and Nickalene Kalas P'10, P'11, P'16

Jim and Rosemary Kautz P'20, P'22
 Gary Kilpatrick ND'65 and Christine Kilpatrick GP'26
 Phil Kukawinski NDP'08 and Lauren Kukawinski
 Mary Lewis PC'80
 Ed and Christina Lis P'25, P'27
 James and Jessica Maher P'24, P'25, P'26
 Richard and Catherine Mamola GP'28
 David and Leigh Martin P'28
 Jerry Mineweaser SM'61 and Gayle Mineweaser GP'23, GP'25
 Joe and Dawn Montano P'29
 Neil Murphy ND'68 and Colleen Murphy
 Leopoldo and Sonia Palad GP'23, GP'24, GP'26, GP'31
 Adam Paulson NDP'99 and Danielle (Berry) Paulson NDP'99,
 P'25, P'27
 Steven and Holly Powell P'24, P'26, P'29
 Jeff Schwartzberg ND'88 and Janet Schwartzberg
 Mike Slater ND'68
 John Snodgrass ND'67 and Barbara Snodgrass
 Chelsea (Picklo) Stemple NDP'04
 Kimberly (McCoy) Stetson NDP'02
 and Michael Stetson P'33, P'36
 George and Tiffany Stolzenfeld P'27, P'28
 Dan and Linda Stuit P'31
 Scott and Theresa Thomas P'27
 Paul Tyler and Ann Holwey P'29, P'31
 Sandy Wiebelhaus GP'19, GP'21, GP'25
 Richard Zaslonas ND'58 and Carol Zaslonas
 Elliott Family Foundation
 Oral & Facial Surgeons of Michigan
 Others First

Band

Anonymous (3)
 Dave Calandro ND'67 and Mary Beth Calandro
 Tim Cummins ND'75 and Atsuko Hatsuda-Cummins
 David DePorre NDP'15 and Allison (Kot) DePorre NDP'16
 Rob and Linda D'Orazio P'12
 Elizabeth Doyle P'10
 Justin and Lisa D'Souza S'24, P'29
 Todd and Amy Francis P'28, P'31
 Mark and Maria Glenn P'02, P'04, P'06, P'08, P'10
 Dennis Gmerek ND'72 and Debra Gmerek
 Jim Grabowski ND'79
 Justen and Alexia Grech P'29
 Elaine Gutierrez GP'27
 Ira Holcomb GP'10, GP'13
 Andy and Lisa Hunter P'23, P'25, P'27, P'29
 Kenneth and Andrea Karasek P'25, P'27
 Bob Karl ND'68 and Brenda Karl
 Danny and Kristine Ma P'29
 Mark McGreevy R'25, ND'76
 and Carol McGreevy S'23, P'06, P'08, P'12, P'15
 Autumn Murphy
 John and Martha Olijnyk P'29
 John and Ann Marie Sickelsteel P'27
 Ken and Karen Sucher P'01, P'03, P'06
 Mike and Regina VanDieren P'17, P'19, P'22, P'28
 Kenneth and Jen VanNorwick P'24, P'28
 Jim Van Slambrook ND'66 and Holly Van Slambrook
 Sandy Wiebelhaus GP'19, GP'21, GP'25
 Kevin and Ginny Wisely P'25
 Turgay Bengisu and Helen Yuan P'26

Berch Family Endowed Scholarship

Deacon Jim Berch ND'59 and Carol Berch P'84, P'92
 Larry Berch ND'60 and Judy Berch

Counseling

Samsmile
 Joseph J. Laurencelle Memorial Foundation

Campus Ministry

Michigan High School Lacrosse Coaches Association

David A. Molnar NDP'17 Endowed Scholarship

Jim and Susan Russell and Family

Diversity and Inclusion

Anonymous (3)
 Kim Anderson S'97 and Vince Anderson P'20, P'23
 Steve and Ann Bartoli P'06, P'08, P'12
 Margie Bond S'02
 David Bonior ND'63 and Judy Bonior
 Sandra Calamari P'00, P'02
 Larine and Sible Chacko P'34
 Peg Convery P'04, P'06, P'09, P'18, GP'31, GP'34, GP'35,
 GP'37, GP'37, GP'40
 Shailendra Devali and Mamata Bhatkal P'32
 Ella Easterwood NDP'21
 Larry Jack R'22
 Della Lawrence S'12 and David Lawrence P'17, P'23
 Kristine Marcuz GP'33, GP'35, GP'38
 Geoffrey and Tara Nelson P'35, P'35
 Christine Pasko NDP'07
 Patti Salazar F'10
 Robert and Gennie Sierminski P'31
 Gregory Simon ND'89, S'95 and Lacey Story P'22
 Kelly Simon F'18 and Jim Simon P'24, P'26, P'29
 John Smith F'03 and Rebecca Smith P'20, P'24
 Barbara Stone GP'14, GP'21

Gateway Scholarships

Anonymous (3)
 Dr. Laurette Alkidas R'04 and Dr. Alex Alkidas
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SOUND FOUNDATIONS

How Notre Dame Prep's band and music program develops musicians, scholars and leaders from Pre-K through graduation.

The final notes of Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing" echoed through the Lafayette Grande Ballroom in Pontiac May 16 as Notre Dame Prep student-musicians and returning alumni shared the stage for the school's annual Big Band Dinner Dance. Multiple drum sets crowded the stage. Student performers traded solos with graduates. Families, alumni and supporters filled the ballroom.

For many schools, a concert is simply a performance.

At Notre Dame Prep, the Big Band Dinner Dance serves as a visible expression of something

much larger: a music program that begins in the lower school, expands through the middle school years, and culminates in a high school experience that combines marching band, symphonic band, jazz ensemble, leadership development and lifelong alumni engagement.

"The Big Band Dinner Dance is a cornerstone of our program and a tradition I've been privileged to be part of since I joined the jazz band as a freshman in 2006," said band director and alumna Claire Zavolta-Force NDP'10. "Seeing these jazz standards passed down from one year to the next shows the incredible ownership our students take in

these traditions, ensuring the music and the mentorship continue for the musicians to follow."

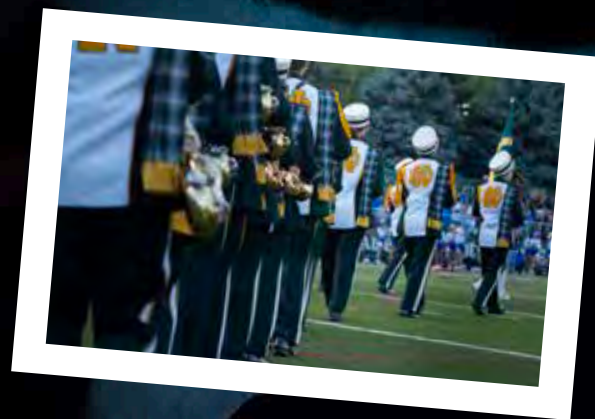
That continuity is one of the defining characteristics of Notre Dame Prep's music program. It is also one reason the program continues to attract students and families looking for an educational experience that values both academic excellence and artistic development.

A PROGRAM BUILT ACROSS THREE SCHOOLS

At many schools, music opportunities begin in middle school or are limited to a handful of elective courses.



*Photos of the 2026
Notre Dame Prep Big
Band Dinner Dance
and the marching
band by Brian
Dooley. Other photos
by Kevin Monk.*



"THE PROGRAM
CONSISTENTLY ATTRACTS
BRIGHT, AMBITIOUS
STUDENTS WHO DEVELOP
NOT ONLY AS MUSICIANS,
BUT ALSO AS CHRISTIAN
PEOPLE, UPRIGHT CITIZENS
AND ACADEMIC SCHOLARS."

Fabian Fregoli ND'89, alumnus, alum parent
and current parent

Notre Dame Prep's approach is different.

Music instruction begins in the lower school, where every student from Pre-K 3 through fifth grade participates in music classes. Students receive music instruction three times during the school's eight-day rotating schedule, while fourth- and fifth-grade students may also participate in band.

Lower school music teacher Lauren Munaco sees music as an extension of the school's International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program.

or we are learning about music from around the world," she said, students are developing skills that extend beyond the music classroom.

That foundation continues in the middle school through beginning band, intermediate band and advanced band courses.

Students learn notation literacy, rhythmic understanding, music theory, ensemble performance, chamber music, repertoire analysis and music history while developing discipline, teamwork and confidence.

semester, students transition into symphonic band, where emphasis shifts toward musical analysis, historical context and advanced ensemble performance.

The honors jazz ensemble provides an additional challenge.

Students audition for the group and study sight-reading, improvisation, music theory and performance practices while appearing at school events, community functions, fundraisers and professional engagements throughout metro Detroit.

For Zavolta-Force, the breadth of opportunities reflects a larger educational philosophy.

"Since taking over the band program, the most fulfilling part of my position has been the opportunity to work with and make music alongside my students every day," she said.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MUSIC

While families often appreciate music because of the joy it brings, a growing body of research suggests the benefits extend far beyond performance.

A 2024 study published in PLOS ONE found that music education positively affects students' psychological well-being, self-esteem, self-efficacy and academic performance. Researchers concluded that music learning helps students become "more confident and self-assured," both of which support mental health and academic achievement.

The study also found that music education contributes to students' ability to work effectively with others, recognize and manage emotions, take responsibility for their own learning and



"At the lower school, we strive to create musicians that are inquirers who think and reflect deeply on the music around them," Munaco said. "We focus on communicating with expression and joy when we create and perform music."

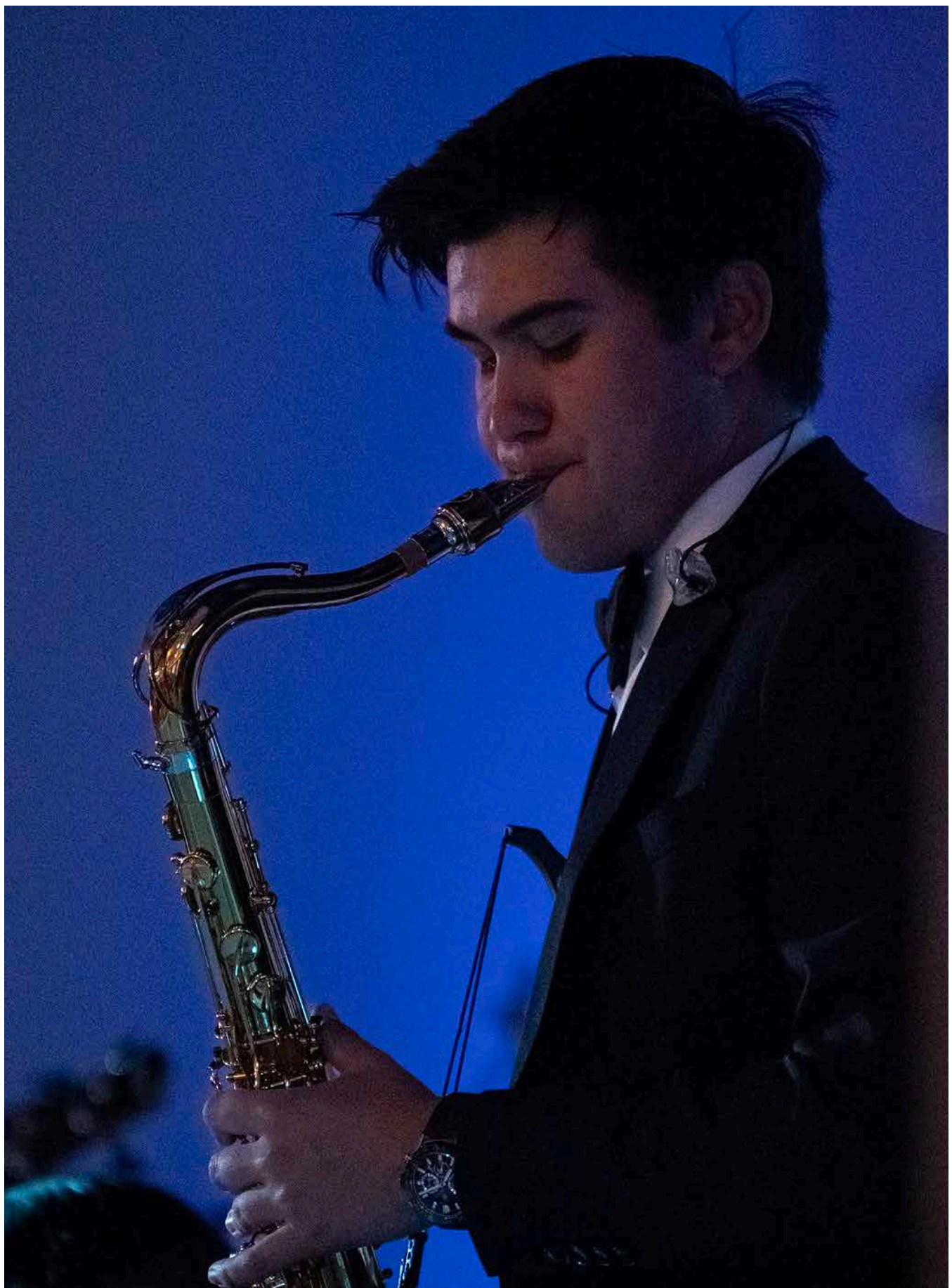
She added that students learn through the IB learner profile and transdisciplinary themes that connect music to broader learning.

"Whether we are learning an instrument like a recorder,

By the time students reach high school, they enter a program that offers multiple performance pathways and opportunities for growth.

Marching band, symphonic band and the honors jazz ensemble form the backbone of the upper school curriculum.

Marching band students learn drill chart literacy, marching techniques, leadership and performance skills while participating in football games, exhibitions and competitions. During the winter





persist through challenges.

The authors also observed that music education helps students develop resilience.

"Music provides a platform for students to express their emotions," the study notes. "Through playing instruments or singing, students can convey feelings that might be difficult to express verbally." Researchers further found that music participation can foster social connections, a sense of belonging and improved cognitive functioning.

Those findings align with broader national research.

The American Psychological Association reported that students highly engaged in music scored significantly better in English, mathematics and science than their nonmusical peers. Researchers at the University of Southern California have likewise found that music education contributes positively to youth well-being and development.

For educators at Notre Dame Prep, these findings confirm what they observe every day.

The discipline required to prepare for a performance, the confidence gained from mastering difficult repertoire and the teamwork necessary for successful ensemble playing become lessons that extend into every aspect of student life.

A CULTURE OF MENTORSHIP, A GENERATIONAL LEGACY

One of the most distinctive features of Notre Dame Prep's music program is its unusually strong alumni involvement.

Many graduates continue performing long after high school.

Others return to mentor current students, assist during band camp or perform at annual events.

Some, like Zavolta-Force herself, eventually return to lead the program.

"One of the hallmarks of our program has always been its strong alumni tradition — passing down knowledge, experiences and pride from one generation to the next," she said.

She points to traditions such as the annual "Sing, Sing, Sing" drum solo, which has been handed down through generations of student percussionists.

"The alumni of this program — myself included — take tremendous pride in the legacy and culture of our band family," Zavolta-Force said. "What makes this community so special is that it continues to grow stronger with every new student who joins."

Research suggests that these kinds of collaborative musical experiences contribute to student growth in ways that extend beyond performance. The PLOS ONE study found that music education strengthens resilience, confidence and academic success.

That culture has left a lasting impression on alumni and parents alike.

Dr. Fabian Fregoli ND'89, president and chief medical officer of Trinity Health Oakland, has experienced the program from multiple perspectives: student, parent, volunteer and alumnus.

He and his wife, Loreta, who currently assists Zavolta-Force with the band program, have watched all three of their sons participate in the program.

"The music program at NDP has left an indelible mark on each

of our children," Fregoli said. "And the band program creates a strong sense of community and shared purpose, bringing students together to grow both individually and collectively."

He believes the impact extends well beyond musicianship.

"The program consistently attracts bright, ambitious students who develop not only as musicians, but also as Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars," he said.

Fregoli himself graduated from the original Marist-sponsored Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods, where he performed under legendary director Larry Egan.

"Notre Dame High School had long been recognized for having one of the premier high school

music programs in the state," he said.

Today, he sees that tradition continuing.

"Mrs. Claire Zavolta-Force has continued that proud tradition by fostering a caring, supportive environment where students are encouraged to discover and develop their talents," Fregoli said. "She strikes an exceptional balance between encouragement and accountability, inspiring students to reach their full potential."

OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY STUDENT

Fregoli also believes one of the program's greatest strengths is its accessibility.

"Our program is uniquely positioned because it is the right size — large enough to perform

complex musical compositions and execute impressive marching band productions, yet small enough to provide individualized attention and meaningful opportunities for every student," he said.

At Notre Dame Prep, students do not need extensive prior experience to participate.

"There is truly a place for everyone," Fregoli said.

That philosophy aligns closely with findings from music education research.

The PLOS ONE study posits that music education should be given greater priority within school curricula because of its benefits to students' psychological well-being, confidence and academic development. Researchers wrote that music learning con-









tributes to "a more holistic educational experience that fosters students' overall well-being and success."

Students at NDP are encouraged to take risks, develop new skills and discover talents they may not have previously recognized.

"The music program, much like many other programs at Notre Dame Prep, serves as a foundation for helping students discover their talents, interests and potential," Fregoli said.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

The value of the music program is perhaps best measured by what students do after graduation.

Nick LewAllen NDP'08 chose NDP largely because of its performing arts opportunities.

"My reason for choosing NDP ultimately came down to the performing arts program," he said. "I was seeking not only a quality Catholic education, but also the ability to express my creative side in a nurturing environment that would keep me growing."

Today, LewAllen works in information technology at General Motors. Yet he continues returning annually for the Big Band

Dinner Dance.

Similarly, George Moussa NDP'24 has continued performing jazz while attending the University of Michigan, where he serves as president of the Blue Bop Jazz Orchestra.

"It was the band program at NDP that was largely responsible for my musical formation," Moussa said.

He credits both former director Joe Martin and Zavolta-Force with shaping his development as a musician.

More importantly, he says the experience helped him develop friendships, leadership skills and a deeper appreciation of faith.

Those outcomes reflect the broader goals of arts education.

Research published in PLOS ONE concluded that music education contributes to psychological well-being, confidence and academic success while helping students build skills that support long-term personal growth. The authors ultimately recommended that schools prioritize music education because of its positive impact on both educational outcomes and student well-being.

LOOKING AHEAD

Even as Notre Dame Prep's

program celebrates its traditions, it continues to evolve.

Zavolta-Force recently announced plans for the 2026 marching band showcase, "I Want My NDP," featuring music inspired by MTV's list of the top music videos of the 1980s.

The production will include a custom arrangement by alumnus Matt Croft, further extending the program's longstanding tradition of alumni involvement.

For prospective families, that blend of innovation and continuity may be one of the strongest indicators of the program's health.

Music at Notre Dame Prep is not confined to a single classroom, ensemble or performance season.

It begins in the lower school. It develops through the middle school years. It expands through marching band, symphonic band and jazz ensemble in high school. And, as the annual Big Band Dinner Dance demonstrates, it often continues long after graduation.

For many students, the lessons learned through music become part of who they are.

And for Notre Dame Prep, that may be the program's most enduring achievement. +



red cliffs, global perspectives

Notre Dame Prep educator selected for international artists symposium in Germany; experience reflects commitment to global learning and faculty development.

Val Perlleshi, opposite, the head of visual arts and makerspace for Notre Dame Prep's middle school, is painting en plein air during a recent international artist symposium held in Germany.



When Val Perlleshi traveled to Helgoland, a small German archipelago in the North Sea known for its dramatic red sandstone cliffs and rich artistic tradition, she was not simply attending an international artists symposium.

She also was gathering experiences and creative insight she plans to bring directly into the classroom.

Perlleshi, head of visual arts and makerspace for Notre Dame Prep's middle school, recently was selected to participate in the internationally recognized Painters' Symposium hosted by the Helgoland Museum in Germany. The symposium brings together artists from around the world to paint the island landscape while engaging in collaborative critique, workshops and cultural exchange.

The opportunity reflects Notre Dame Prep's commitment to encouraging faculty members to pursue meaningful professional and creative

development experiences that ultimately enhance student learning within the school's International Baccalaureate framework.

"The students here are incredible and inspire me every day with their creativity and ambition," Perlleshi said. "I am very grateful to be here and feel that my talents and ideas are not only accepted but encouraged."

Located about 40 miles off Germany's northern coast, Helgoland is known for its striking landscape, maritime history and vibrant arts culture. Perlleshi said the symposium's emphasis on landscape, memory and shared artistic practice aligned naturally with themes that have influenced her own work for years.

Artists from several countries participated in the symposium, often spending long days painting together and exchanging feedback.

"All of us artists would paint together and give each other feed-

back,” she said. “Being able to see them work and also have them see me work was an experience I haven’t had before. In my own practice, it helped me to freely work with a new perspective.”

The experience also deepened her interest in the relationship between land, history and artistic interpretation, a focus that dates back to her undergraduate studies in art history and research travels to archaeological sites in Albania.

“It was really about connecting with the land and what the island means not only to the people of Helgoland, but to the history of Europe,” she said.

Perlleshi joined Notre Dame Prep for the 2025-26 school year and is helping shape an evolving middle school arts and makerspace program. Working with middle school principal Brandon Jezdimir, she is helping expand makerspace offer-

ings beyond traditional art instruction by integrating architecture, engineering and science concepts into creative problem-solving experiences.

The vision aligns closely with the goals of an IB World School education, where inquiry, creativity, global awareness and interdisciplinary learning are central to student growth.

“Art, as fun and relaxing as it can be, is important for the soul,” Perlleshi said. “It creates a connection with our creative side, boosts confidence, and allows for exploration.”

Through experiences like the Helgoland symposium, Perlleshi hopes to inspire students to think more broadly about their own futures, creative potential and place in an increasingly interconnected world. +



Pre- pared to lead

From elite college admissions and International Baccalaureate distinction to athletics, arts and leadership, the graduates in Notre Dame Prep's Class of 2026 leave high school prepared for lives of purpose and accomplishment.



On a warm Sunday afternoon in Pontiac, the newest graduates crossed the stage at Notre Dame Preparatory School, carrying with them one of the strongest academic and extracurricular records in school history.

During the school's 32nd commencement ceremony May 17, Head of School Andrew Guest described the Class of 2026 as "one of our most accomplished," citing a class profile marked by academic distinction, leadership, artistic achievement and service.

The class earned an average GPA of 3.944 and an average SAT score of 1520, placing the group in the top 2 percent nationally. The average ACT score was 26, five points above the national average, and 26 students scored 30 or higher. The graduating class also included 10 valedictorians and 20 International Baccalaureate Diploma Program candidates.

As a class, the graduates were accepted to 137 colleges and universities and will attend 46 different institutions this fall. Guest noted that 17 Michigan colleges and universities will enroll members of the Class of 2026.

Among the universities welcoming Notre Dame Prep graduates are Cornell University, University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Southern Methodist University and Syracuse University.

The class also posted notable college admissions results.

Notre Dame Prep seniors earned a 50 percent acceptance rate to the University of Michigan this year, compared with a national average near 13 percent. Four students earned direct admission to medical programs at Michigan State University, one student earned direct admission to medical school at DePaul University and another secured direct admission to the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. Collectively, the class earned more than \$5.8 million in scholarships, or an average of more than \$44,000 each.

A CULTURE OF ACADEMIC DEPTH

The breadth of achievement throughout the Class of 2026 reflected the rigor of Notre Dame Prep's upper school curriculum, including its Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate offerings.

The commencement ceremony featured dozens of AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honor and AP Scholars with Distinction, along with recipients of the President's Award for Educational Excellence, departmental honors and major merit scholarships.

Notre Dame Prep offers 16 AP courses across multiple disciplines, providing students with access to college-level coursework before graduation.

Twenty students completed the demanding IB Diploma Program candidacy process, a distinction requiring advanced coursework across six academic disciplines, independent research and sustained community engagement.

Among the graduates receiving top academic and leadership recognition were Jack Leuchtmann, Matthew St. Andre, Julia Pakkala, Edith Byrd, Dino Acciavatti, Samantha Broutin and Maren Studt, all of whom earned multiple academic awards, leadership honors or scholar-athlete distinctions.

Special awards highlighted the diversity of student accomplishment across the curriculum. Daniel D. Archey received the Catherine M. Bembas Award for Outstanding Achievement in English, Jack Leuchtmann earned the Mark P. McCaskey Award for Outstanding Achievement in Mathematics, Julia Pakkala received awards for Mandarin Chinese and Science, and Alice Larocca earned the Kirby R. Smith Award for Outstanding Achievement in Art.

EXCELLENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Commencement speakers also emphasized that the strength of the Class of 2026 extended well beyond academics.

Guest reflected on the opportunity to watch students compete in athletics, robotics and debate while also excelling in theater, music and visual arts.

Students earned a range of honors in computer science, engineering, mathematics, visual art, theater, music, modern languages and business.

The Spirit of the Fighting Irish Award honored students recognized as positive ambassadors for Notre Dame Prep through leadership, involvement and school spirit.

Outstanding Service Awards celebrated students who “take leadership roles in school clubs, mentor other students, or are always willing to help without

fanfare no matter what the need at school or in the wider community.”

Meanwhile, the “Dirty Dozen” Award recognized student-athletes who completed 12 consecutive athletic seasons in good standing







“As a Catholic and Marist school, we are rooted in a tradition of compassion, humility and a deep, enduring faith in God”

across varsity, junior varsity or freshman competition.

FORMATION FOR LIFE BEYOND GRADUATION

Upper school Principal Kimberly Anderson told graduates that commencement represented more than the completion of high school.

“As a Catholic, Marist school, we believe this moment is not an ending — it is a sending forth,” An-

derson said.

Anderson challenged graduates to define success not by status or recognition, but by integrity and compassion.

“Be known not just for what you achieve, but for how you treat others,” she told the grads. “Be people of character. Be people of kindness. Be people who stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult.”

The graduating class included student leaders in Student Council, National Honor Society, athletics, campus ministry, fine arts and academic competition.

Student Council President Sarah Collins led the Notre Dame Victory March during the ceremony, while valedictorian Matthew St. Andre delivered the class address.

LOOKING AHEAD

As graduates prepared to leave campus for colleges and universities across the country, Anderson reminded them that the values formed during their years at Notre Dame Prep would remain central to their future.

“The world does not just need more successful people — it needs ‘good’ people,” Anderson said. “People who are honest. People who are courageous. People who bring light

into dark places.”

And after Sunday's commencement ceremony, the world gained many more young men and women formed in that tradition — graduates prepared not only to succeed in college and careers, but to lead with integrity, compassion and purpose.

For this Class of 2026, the Notre Dame Prep experience was measured not simply by academic achievement, but “by the kind of people they have become,” noted Guest. +



derson said in her commencement remarks. “Each of you leaves here with more than a diploma. You carry with you the mission of this school: to live as Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars.”

Throughout the ceremony, students and school leaders emphasized the role Notre Dame Prep plays in shaping not only academic success, but character and faith.

“As a Catholic and Marist school, we are rooted in a tradition that values not only academic excellence,

tradition that values not only academic excellence, but
od.” *Andrew J. Guest, Head of School, in his address to the Class of 2026, May 17, 2026*



Senior

Notre Dame Prep student connects faith, scholarship and community engagement through philanthropic work.

Founded by entertainer and philanthropist Danny Thomas in 1962, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was established to advance research and treatment for children facing life-threatening diseases, particularly pediatric cancer. The organization is known for combining clinical care with research while ensuring families receive treatment regardless of their ability to pay.

For Notre Dame Prep rising junior Ellianna Stolzenfeld, the mission of St. Jude has become a personal expression of service, leadership and responsibility.

"She's doing wonderful things for the St. Jude Research Hospital organization and has demonstrated impressive leadership skills," longtime school counselor Vlado Salic said.

Though one of the younger students in the upper school, Stolzenfeld has already demonstrated a commitment to serving others that reflects Notre Dame Prep's mission.

SUPPORTING THE ST. JUDE MISSION

Stolzenfeld's work supports the St. Jude affiliate program, including its Oakland County presence.

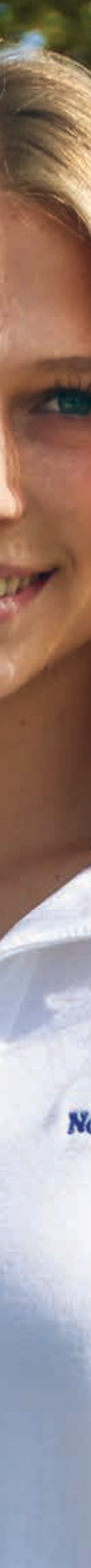
"The funds we raise go to support the overall affiliate program," she said. "This includes the Royal Oak location."

Her involvement began through her family, who were already supporters of St. Jude.

"I got involved in this program through my parents, who already are big supporters," she said.







That involvement grew into a deeper commitment shaped by faith and the Christian mission she experiences at NDP.

"I got more passionately involved with the program through my growing faith and the Christian mission we are called to serve at NDP, which is to demonstrate God's love by helping those in need," Stolzenfeld said.

She also draws inspiration from St. Jude founder Danny Thomas and his commitment to helping children and families.

"I am thoroughly inspired by how Danny Thomas began St. Jude," she said. "I think that's one of the things guiding me to carry out this Christian mission and help those in need."

LIVING THE NOTRE DAME PREP MISSION

Stolzenfeld said her service has helped her better understand the three dimensions of Notre Dame Prep's mission.

"I think the mission of NDP ties into my work with St. Jude because I am learning more to be a Christian person, an upright citizen and an academic scholar," she said.

Through the program, she has also connected with other students who share a commitment to service.

"My cohort is made up of high school students like me who all joined this program for the same purpose: to help and to serve those in need," she said.

At Notre Dame Prep, service is not separate from academics or student life. It is a way students apply their learning and values beyond the classroom.

BALANCING ACADEMICS, ATHLETICS AND LEADERSHIP

Stolzenfeld's philanthropic work has developed alongside a full schedule of academics, athletics and activities.

"As an academic scholar, I am learning new information about the hospital while involved in this program, but also balancing school work and sports with my fundraising work," she said.

"A lot of time was dedicated to my fundraising, but over the years I kept it very balanced with everything else going on in my life, while keeping up with my grades."

After attending Notre Dame Prep's middle school for two years and Cedar Crest Academy before that, Stolzenfeld has become active throughout campus. She competes in varsity golf and lacrosse and participates in SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), Michigan Youth in Government and the Peer Mentor program.

"I truly love Notre Dame Prep and its mission especially," she said. "This school also has a very good environment for growth."

Her involvement reflects the school's emphasis on pursuing excellence while remaining grounded in service and character.

LOOKING AHEAD

Although early in her high school career, Stolzenfeld already sees service as part of her future.

"I would love to study international relations in college and continue my philanthropic work," she said.

She remains open to where that path may lead, possibly toward a career connected to international relations or government.

For now, her work with St. Jude represents what Notre Dame Prep hopes students carry forward: intellectual growth connected with moral purpose and a willingness to use personal gifts in service to others. +

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For many students, the Amazing Shake begins as a competition. For Notre Dame Prep, it becomes something much bigger. Now in its fifth year, the Amazing Shake has become one of the school's signature middle school experiences designed to strengthen communication, professionalism, confidence, and leadership through real-world challenges. Inspired by the nationally recognized Ron Clark Academy program, the Amazing Shake places students in high-pressure scenarios that test everything from public speaking and networking to critical thinking, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

Students navigate a series of rounds that include interviews, debates, networking events, presentations, and the fast-paced "Gauntlet" challenge, where they must think on their feet while responding to unpredictable scenarios. Top students from Notre Dame Prep then advance to regionals and finally to a global competition hosted by the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta.

This year, eighth graders Annalise Urek, Pranya Beri, and Natalie Esseily each experienced the competition in different ways — from school champion to regional winner to global finalist. Yet despite their different journeys, all three students walked away with a similar understanding: success in the Amazing Shake is not just about speaking well. It is about building confidence and authenticity.

LEARNING TO STAND OUT

For Annalise Urek, this year's Amazing Shake represented both opportunity and finality.

"As an eighth grader, it was my last year participating in the Shake, so I was just trying to do my best," she said.



"Confidence is not the absence of nerves. It is the ability to show up and realize that the difference that you could make is far more important than the risks."

Natalie Esseily

NDP AMAZING SHAKE V

AMA



WINNERS REFLECT ON 2026 COMPETITION

AZZING

After participating in previous years, Urek entered this year's competition with a new level of excitement, particularly surrounding the Disney-themed Gauntlet round.

"I was definitely excited for the gauntlets this year," she said. "I knew the Disney theme would be so fun with a lot of possibilities."

To prepare, she researched the topics students were told to expect, including designing new Disneyland locations and creating new EPCOT worlds. She even drew from memories of family Disney trips to help shape her ideas and creativity.

But preparation could only go so far.

One of the defining aspects of the Amazing Shake is unpredictability, and students never

sional manner while still letting your personality come through."

When Urek was ultimately announced as Notre Dame Prep's Amazing Shake winner, she was stunned.

"Honestly, I was shocked," she admitted. "The other students were very impressive."

What stood out to her most afterward was the overwhelming support from the NDP community.

"I received congratulatory messages from teachers, administrators, coaches, my peers, and even lower school students I hadn't met before," she said. "It is an honor to be the winner this year since I know the school community puts a lot of effort into the Amazing Shake."

Her success advanced her to both the regional and global Amazing Shake competitions, where she represented Notre Dame Prep among students from across the country.

"Globals are a whole new level," she said. "The energy at globals is always extremely high."

Beyond the competition itself, some of her favorite memories came from the relationships she formed.

"A highlight of the global competition was meeting so many new people and making friends," she said. "I have friends in California and North Carolina that I am still in touch with."

For Urek, another unforgettable moment was finally visiting the Ron Clark Academy in person.

"It was really cool to see the Ron Clark Academy," she said. "As a house president, we model their house system."

RETURN TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

For Pranya Beri, NDP's 2025 winner, this year's Amazing Shake journey became a story of resilience, humility, and growth under pressure.

Returning to the Global Amazing Shake after previously reaching the Top 30, she entered this year with both confidence and perspective.

"Having been there before, I came in with a deeper understanding of the competition — but



fully know what they will encounter once they enter a room.

Urek, this year's school winner, said her strategy centered on one key idea: being memorable.

"The judges see hundreds of students, so you want your interaction to be memorable," she said. "I thought about different ways to make myself stand out."

That approach helped carry her farther than she had ever advanced before.

One of her biggest challenges came during the networking-focused "Work the Room" round.

"I like getting to know people, so it was challenging to leave conversations so quickly," she said.

At the same time, the experience taught her one of the competition's most valuable lessons.

"I learned the balance of speaking in a profes-

(Above left) Ellie Mermell, left, Annalise Urek and Savannah Sulaka at the Midwest Regional Amazing Shake competition. (Opposite) The top 10 from Notre Dame Prep's middle school pose for a photo outside the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta ahead of the Amazing Shake Global Competition.

also a greater sense of purpose,” she said.

Her previous experience taught her that success in the Amazing Shake is never guaranteed.

That lesson became especially clear during Notre Dame Prep's school competition, when she was unexpectedly eliminated during the “Work the Room” round, an event she once viewed as one of her strengths.

“That moment was very humbling,” she said. “It reminded me that in a competition like this, you can't rely on past success. You have to stay focused and intentional in every interaction.”

Still, she earned the opportunity to compete at globals again, an opportunity she credits in part to the belief others showed in her.

“I am incredibly grateful to Mr. Jezdimir for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to compete at globals despite that setback of not moving forward in the school competition,” she said.

Returning to the Ron Clark Academy after-

ward felt deeply meaningful.

“It felt like a full-circle moment,” she reflected. “I approached each round with a renewed mindset, more focused, more adaptable, and more appreciative of every opportunity.”

One of the defining moments of her competition came during the debate round at globals.

After advancing into the Top 8, Beri found herself grouped alongside several Ron Clark Academy students and a previous Top 5 finalist.

“At that moment, I realized I was stepping into one of the most challenging situations of the competition,” she said. “For the first time in the competition, I felt truly tested.”

Rather than shrinking from the pressure, she embraced it.

“When I looked into the audience and saw my principal, my friends, and my support system cheering me on, that gave me the focus and confidence I needed.”

Her ability to think creatively became one of



her greatest strengths.

During one debate question about whether cereal should be considered soup, Beri offered an unexpected response.

"I reframed the idea, suggesting that if we think about it differently, even the ocean could be considered a 'soup,' with its mix of water, salt, and living elements," she explained.

The originality of the answer energized the audience and helped propel her to the top ranking in the debate round before she ultimately finished second overall globally.

But beyond the placement itself, Beri says the most important lessons came from the environment around her.

"What stood out was that, regardless of outcomes, students consistently encouraged one another by celebrating successes and lifting each other up through challenges," she said.

She also gained a deeper appreciation for the power of authentic relationships.

"What truly left a lasting impression on me was returning to the Ron Clark Academy and having people, including Mr. Ron Clark and members of the

community, remember me by name," she said. "That recognition showed me how meaningful even brief interactions can be."

Performing in front of more than 1,200 people was another unforgettable moment.

"The applause, the congratulations, and the shared excitement made the experience far more than just a competition," she said. "It became a moment of connection."

CONFIDENCE THROUGH CONNECTION

For Natalie Esseily, the Amazing Shake became a lesson in overcoming anxiety and exuding self confidence.

Having previously been named a finalist at Notre Dame Prep last year, Esseily entered this year's competition with a stronger understanding of both the opportunities and challenges the Amazing Shake presents.

"Having prior experience, I was able to approach this year's competition with a better understanding of what the judges were looking for," she said.

Still, she quickly realized no two Amazing Shake experiences are ever the same. Even familiar rounds



evolved in unexpected ways.

“As an eighth grader who competed in this competition for three years, I can reflect on how I was surprised by the rapidly evolving Gauntlet round,” she said.

This year's scenarios emphasized collaboration and adaptability in new ways, challenging students to work together while responding to changing situations in real time.

Throughout those moments, Esseily relied on a simple mindset.

“First, I recentered myself, took a deep breath, and then walked into the situation, remembering that confidence is key.”

Her growth mindset eventually carried her beyond the school competition and all the way to a first-place finish at the Midwest Regional Amazing Shake.

“Placing first in the regional competition was both humbling and rewarding,” she said.

Yet Esseily says her perspective shifted throughout the experience.

“This year, winning wasn't my primary focus,” she explained. “I was focused on the journey these competitions present and continuing to grow as an individual.”

That mindset transformed the way she viewed the competition itself.

“I realized how far passion and a growth mindset can elevate you,” she said.

At regionals, Esseily was especially impacted by the relationships she formed with students from other schools.

“There is a personal value that I strive to leave with every person that I engage with,” she said. “This personal value is emotional connection and empathy.”

Inspired by Maya Angelou's words, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel,” Esseily focused on making every interaction meaningful.

That approach left a lasting impact.

“It was rewarding to hear in the final interviews that two students from different schools recognized the impact my support and coaching had on them,” she said.

Looking back, Esseily said the Amazing Shake completely reshaped her understanding of confidence.

“I learned the most important thing that sets you

apart from others is your confidence in yourself,” she said.

But perhaps her most meaningful realization came in understanding what confidence truly is.

“Confidence is not the absence of nerves,” she said. “It is the ability to show up and realize that the difference that you could make is far more important than the risks.”

Even some of her favorite memories reflected the deeper relationships formed through the competition.

“I have so many memorable moments,” she said, “but one that I would deem as most fun would have to be the party after the Global Amazing Shake — not for the music or activities, but for the chance to enjoy the people that you met.”

For Esseily, that moment captured the true spirit of the Amazing Shake.

“Many times, when going into the Amazing Shake, we see it as a chance to win first place in a competition, but that is not all that it is,” she said. “It is an opportunity to learn, grow, and, most importantly, meet new people who could have a very real impact on your life.”

MORE THAN A COMPETITION

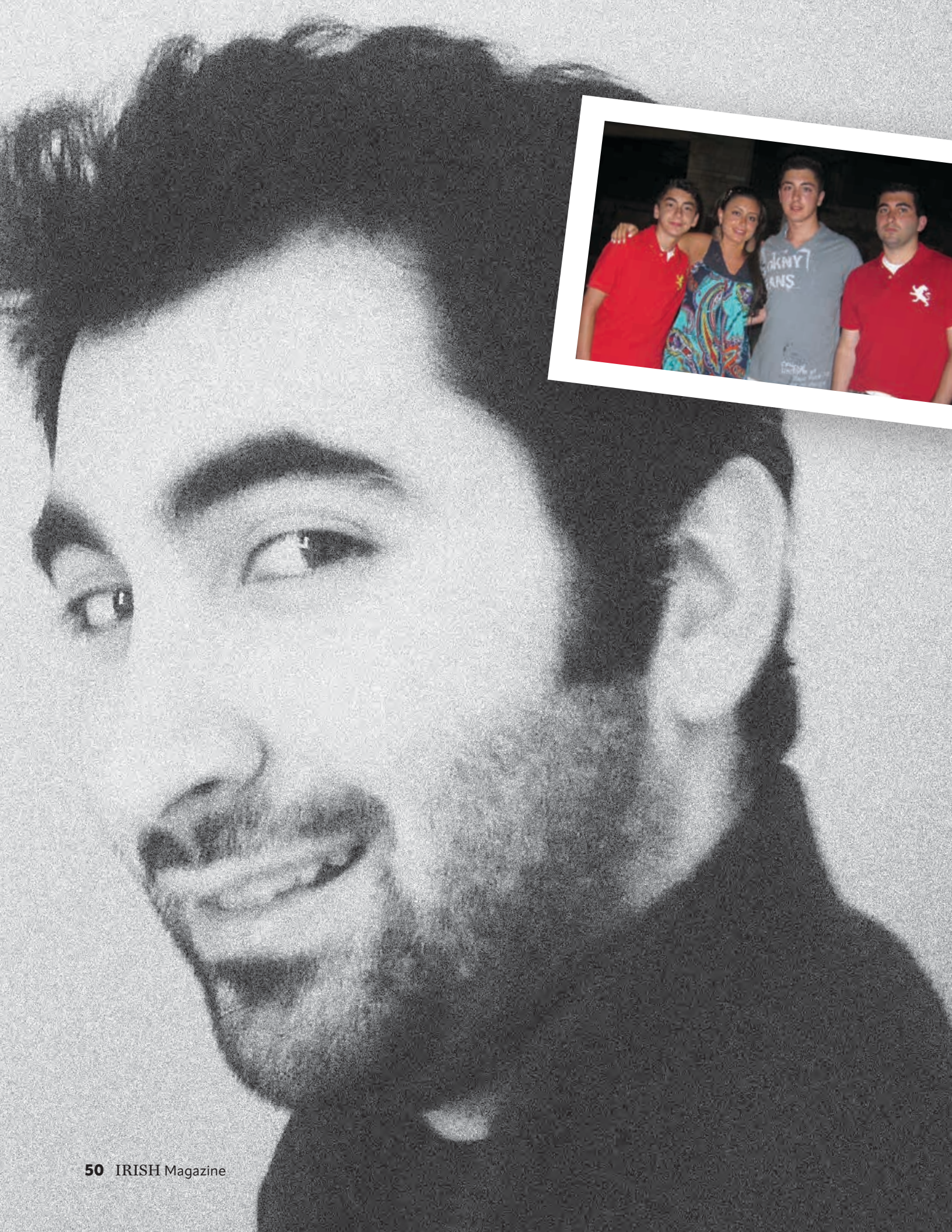
At Notre Dame Prep, the Amazing Shake is ultimately about preparing students for life beyond the classroom.

Yes, there are interviews, debates, networking, rankings, and trophies. But there are also lessons in resilience, empathy, leadership, professionalism, adaptability, and authentic communication. These lessons students will carry into high school, college, careers, and relationships for years to come.

For Annalise, Pranya, and Natalie, the Amazing Shake became far more than a competition. It became a chance to discover who they are becoming.

And perhaps that is what makes Notre Dame Prep's Amazing Shake experience so impactful after five years: students leave the middle school not only as stronger communicators, but as more confident, compassionate, and authentic leaders. +

(Opposite) Ron Clark, center, talks with 10 of the Top 20 finishers at the 2026 Global Amazing Shake in Atlanta during the group interview round.





Remembering Issa Fram

Through the words of his sister, Sarah, we remember an alumnus whose intelligence, kindness and quiet strength left a lasting impression on his family, friends and the Notre Dame Prep community.

By Sarah Fram Boueiri NDP'05

It is with deep sadness and profound gratitude that we take a moment to remember my brother, Issa Fram, a cherished alumnus of Notre Dame Preparatory School's Class of 2005. Issa passed away suddenly on Jan. 17, 2026, at the age of 37, leaving behind a family and a community that loved him deeply. This tribute is a small reflection of the impact he made — on the people around him, and on this school that helped shape him.

Issa grew up in the halls of NDP. Along with me, his sister Sarah, our brothers Shadi and Talal, and our cousins Moses, Vera and Georgi — Issa was part of what many here simply called “the Frams” — the smart Fram family. There were seven of us, and NDP was as much our home as any place we ever knew. We walked these corridors, sat in these classrooms, and grew into ourselves within these walls. For Issa, this school wasn't just a place of education — it was a place that helped shape the person he became.

Issa was, without question, one of the most naturally gifted minds anyone who knew him had ever encountered. He skipped two grades. School came to him the way breathing comes to the rest of us — effortlessly and without strain. I remember sitting with him in our basement in high school, preparing for the ACT. I had the

book open, going over every page, nervous and determined. I glanced over at Issa. He picked up the book, flipped through it casually, closed it, set it back down, and that was it. I laughed and asked him if he was seriously not going to study. He looked at me calmly and said, “No. I already know all of this.” And he did. He scored exceptionally well — then went on to take the SAT just because he could, and excelled there too. That was Issa. Brilliance that felt completely natural to him, worn lightly and without arrogance.

After graduating from Notre Dame Prep, Issa went on to earn his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Oakland University (graduated in 2009) — a path that felt destined from the start. From the time he was a little boy, he was fascinated by technology and computers, and that passion only deepened as he grew. He excelled at Oakland University just as he had here and went on to build a remarkable career rooted in the field he loved, ultimately achieving the title of senior software engineer.

But intelligence was only one small part of who he was. Issa had a quiet depth to him that you came to appreciate the more time you spent with him. He was introverted by nature — he didn't open up easily, and he kept much of himself private. Yet when he did let you in, what you found there was warmth, sincerity, and a genuinely loving heart. He was sarcastic in

“To the students reading this: please carry this place with you. Not just the education, but the values — the kindness, the faith, the sense of responsibility to one another.”

the best possible way, the kind of person who could make you laugh without ever raising his voice. He and I also shared a love of Eminem growing up — a small but meaningful bond, and one that makes those songs impossible to hear now without thinking of him. He was also an avid video game lover, with a special place in his heart for the “Legend of Zelda” series, and a devoted University of Michigan football fan — the kind who never missed a game. These were the things that lit him up, the details that made him uniquely and wonderfully himself. He made people feel comfortable and welcome simply by being present.

The motto of this school, “With God we form Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars,” is one that has never left me since the day I graduated. I find myself returning to it from time to time, and when I lost Issa, it came back to me again with new meaning. When I hold those words up against who my brother was, I see him in every part of it. He was a person with goodness in his heart. He was a person of integrity who treated others with genuine kindness. And academically, he was extraordinary. He didn't just meet that standard — he embodied it, quietly and consistently, long after he walked out of these doors.

Growing up, the seven of us were inseparable. We spent our weekends together, shared our childhoods together, and built memories that none of us will ever forget. Issa and I even had birthdays that felt like they were designed to match — mine on Dec. 12, his on Nov. 11. A small detail, but one I always loved sharing, because it felt like one more quiet thread tying us together. We were more than siblings and cousins. We were one another's constants.

Losing him so suddenly has been devastating in a way that is difficult to put into words. The shock of it doesn't leave. But what also doesn't leave is the love — and the memory of who he was. The way he moved through the world with calm confidence. The way he loved deeply when he let himself. The way he carried everything this school taught him and made it his own.

On April 28, I came back to the halls of NDP to

speak in my brother's honor at the all-school Mass. Walking back through these doors brought everything rushing back — the friendships, the memories, the feeling of belonging to something larger than yourself. This school gave all of us that. It gave Issa that. And I am grateful beyond words that this community welcomed us and chose to honor him.

To the students reading this: please carry this place with you. Not just the education, but the values — the kindness, the faith, the sense of responsibility to one

another. These years pass quickly, and you don't always realize how much they mean until you're looking back on them.

Issa knew what this place meant to him. He carried it with him every day.

Issa is deeply loved and deeply missed by his loving family: his parents Akram and Majd, his sister Sarah, his brothers Shadi and Talal, and his extended family who will forever cherish his memory.

Please remember his name. Please speak it. And please pray for his soul.

Issa Fram, beloved son, brother, grandson, nephew, cousin, brother-in-law, uncle, colleague, friend and student. Forever in our hearts. +

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Derby-themed gala delivers big results for teaching excellence

More than 220 members of the Notre Dame Prep community gathered at the Palazzo Grande in Shelby Township on April 18 for the school's second annual gala, an evening inspired by the excitement and tradition of the Kentucky Derby. Parents, staff, and friends of NDP came together to celebrate the school's mission while supporting an important investment in its future: exceptional teaching.

The festive evening featured Derby-inspired décor, dining, entertainment, and spirited bidding during both the silent and live auctions. The generosity of attendees was on full display throughout the night, helping the gala raise an impressive \$90,934 for the Notre Dame Fund.

Of that total, \$69,370 was generated through the auctions, highlighting the enthusiasm and commitment of the NDP community. Big ticket winners included a private in-home dinner prepared by chef Angelo Lori, exclusive parking spots at the lower and upper schools, a private ski lodge vacation, and Detroit sports team packages, among other items. Proceeds from the event will support teacher professional development, classroom resources, and the recruitment and retention of outstanding educators who inspire students every day.

"The support for this year's gala was truly inspiring," said gala co-chair Dr. Nicole Rocco. "Seeing our Notre Dame Prep community come together to celebrate our teachers and invest in their continued excellence was incredibly rewarding. The success of the evening reflects the shared commitment our families have to ensuring that NDP remains a place where students can thrive."

The evening was spearheaded by the NDP Parents Club Gala Committee, led by co-chairs Rocco, Luain Hajjar, and Alkida Offer. Their leadership, creativity, and countless volunteer hours helped create a memorable experience for all who attended.

NDP parent volunteer Angela Butorac brought this year's theme to life with stunning Kentucky Derby-themed decorations that captured the spirit of the event. Attendees also enjoyed music provided by alumna Monica Notaro NDP'07, whose performance of pop and classic rock tunes added a special touch to the evening and highlighted the enduring connection between NDP and its alumni community.

Sponsors for the gala included: Powerhouse Gym (Henry and Vera Dabish), Silvia Schaeffer Commercial, Residential and Interior Design, Veronica Sesi, Kitch Attorneys (Mark Sesi), The Heston Group (Elizabeth Heston), Bloomfield Open Hunt (Dr. Todd and Amy Francis), Top Agent Realty (Charles and Yvonne Tamou), Flipping Michigan, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick Inc. (Steve Pangori), Motor City Orthopedics (David Knesek), Legacy Dermatology Group (Dr. Michelle Knesek), and Kids Choice Apparel (Anne Michel).

From the first bid to the final paddle raise, the evening demonstrated what is possible when the school community comes together in support of a common purpose.

While the gala will return during the 2027-28 school year, the Parents Club is already preparing for its next signature event. On Sept. 19, the community is invited to Greystone Pickleball in Auburn Hills for the inaugural "Paddles and Poker" fundraiser, a new opportunity for families, alumni, and

friends to connect while supporting Notre Dame Prep.

Sponsorships for the event are available by emailing ndpgalacommittee@gmail.com. Paddles and Poker runs from 6 to 10 p.m. and features open pickleball courts, Vegas-style casino tables, auction items, and heavy appetizers. Tickets available at ndprep.org/paddles. +



MORE THAN ACCREDITATION. A COMMITMENT.

***Notre Dame Prep
begins ISACS
reaccreditation
process, reinforcing
commitment
to continuous
improvement***



Every seven years, Notre Dame Prep takes a comprehensive look at every aspect of school life to ensure it continues providing the exceptional Catholic, Marist education families have come to expect. This year, the school is entering an important phase of that journey as it continues its reaccreditation through the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS).

While accreditation is often viewed as a formal review, its greatest value lies in helping schools continuously improve. Through a rigorous self-study and peer review process, Notre Dame Prep examines every facet of the school—from academics and student life to board governance, operations and mission—to ensure it is delivering on its promise to students and families.

"Our commitment has always been to provide the very best

educational experience for our students," said Head of School Andrew Guest. "The ISACS accreditation process gives us the opportunity to thoughtfully reflect on who we are, celebrate what we're doing well and identify ways we can continue to grow while remaining true to our Catholic and Marist mission."

NDP has been an accredited member of ISACS since the school's founding in 1994. Found-

THE VOICES OF OUR COMMUNITY ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THAT JOURNEY.

ed in 1908, ISACS is one of the nation's oldest and most respected accrediting organizations for independent schools, serving approximately 240 member schools throughout the Midwest, including Cranbrook Schools, Detroit Country Day School, Academy of the Sacred Heart and Greenhills School in Southeast Michigan.

ISACS accreditation verifies that schools meet more than 50 standards of excellence in areas including governance, teaching and learning, financial stewardship, admissions, school operations and mission effectiveness. It also requires schools to engage in a comprehensive school improvement process every seven years that includes broad participation from school leadership, faculty, trustees and key constituent groups.

"Schools must be who they purport to be. For example, you can't say you are at the cutting edge of technology integration in the classroom but show no evidence of technological fluency," Guest said.

Notre Dame Prep is currently in the second year of its seven-year accreditation cycle. During this phase, the school is conducting a comprehensive self-study to evaluate its programs, policies and practices while identifying opportunities to strengthen the student experience.

One of the most important

milestones this year will take place in late September, when all parents, alumni, students in grades 6-12, faculty and staff will be invited to complete a confidential constituent survey. The survey will gather feedback on all aspects of school life and will become an important part of the school's self-study.

"We know that some of our best ideas come from listening to our community," Guest said. "This is a chance to engage in the self-improvement process of the school as we head into our next five-year strategic planning process."

The accreditation process has already had a meaningful impact on the student experience, Guest said. Combined with the school's strategic planning efforts, previous ISACS reviews have helped inform initiatives that families experience every day, including Simplified Tuition, Gateway Scholarships, Continuous Enrollment, the *MyNotreDame* Parent Hub, improvements to the admissions process, and the evolution and expansion of the counseling department at all three schools.

The self-study will continue throughout the next school year before culminating in a campus visit during the 2027-28 school year. A team of experienced educators and administrators from fellow ISACS schools across the Midwest will spend three days at

Notre Dame Prep observing classrooms, meeting with students, parents, faculty, trustees and school leaders, and experiencing daily life on campus.

Following the visit, the peer review team will provide commendations recognizing the school's strengths along with recommendations designed to help guide future growth and innovation. NDP administrators then accept the recommendations and develop an action plan to implement them in subsequent years before the accreditation cycle starts over again.

In addition to its ISACS accreditation, Notre Dame Prep is also accredited by Cognia and is currently working with the Marists to develop a Marist accreditation process to ensure the school continues to uphold the educational philosophy and values of the Society of Mary.

As the reaccreditation process continues, Guest encourages members of the Notre Dame Prep community to participate in the September constituent survey.

"Accreditation isn't simply about earning a seal of approval," he said. "It's about asking how we can become an even better school for the students and families we serve. The voices of our community are an essential part of that journey." +

presence in practice

How NDP alum Dr. Carly Joseph's commitment to underserved patients reflects a mission of service that began long before medical school.

At the commencement ceremony for the Covenant Healthcare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University on May 8, 2026, Dr. Carly Joseph returned not simply as a physician, but as an example of what it means to carry a school's mission forward.

A 2013 graduate of Notre Dame Preparatory School, Joseph addressed the graduating medical students with a message about the difference between achievement and presence. Medical training, she said, often teaches students to measure themselves by grades, exams, research and the constant pressure to prove competence.

But after years of caring for patients in primary care clinics, emergency departments and intensive care units, she has learned that what matters most is often something quieter.

"One of the first things I learned

from my mentors in geriatrics," she said, "is to ask your patients what matters most to them."

That question has become central to the way she practices medicine.

A PATH TOWARD UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Joseph graduated from CMU's College of Medicine in 2023 and completed an additional year to earn a Master of Public Health degree at the University of Michigan, where she studied the effects of pandemic-related isolation on older adults.

She is now completing her third year of residency in internal medicine



NDP alumna Dr. Carly Joseph NDP'13, left, speaks during commencement at Central Michigan University on May 8, 2026.





and geriatricians at Maine Medical Center. Later this year, she will begin work as an attending rural primary care physician in Delta, Colo.

Her career path reflects the very communities she described in her address — patients in rural areas waiting months to see a primary care physician, people delaying cancer screening after losing insurance and refugees navigating healthcare systems that were never designed with them in mind.

“I wish I could tell you these are exceptions,” she told the graduates.

Her commitment to underserved communities is not a new direction.

It is a continuation of the values that shaped her at NDP.

FOUNDATIONS FORMED AT NDP

As featured in IRISH magazine in 2015, Joseph's years after high school already reflected a deep curiosity about people, service and the wider world.

At Michigan Technological University, she studied biomedical engineering and international Spanish. Her academic work took her to Valparaiso, where she immersed herself in language study, community and cultural exchange.

In that profile, she described how mountain sports taught humility, perseverance, risk assessment and adaptability — qualities that now clearly shape her work as a physician. She also credited Notre Dame Prep with helping her become well-rounded, developing leadership skills and forming the habits of service and community that have remained with her.

WHEN PRESENCE BECOMES CARE

That connection between formation and vocation was especially visible in one of the most memorable moments of her commencement address.

Joseph described caring for a woman in her late 90s. At the end of a routine visit, Joseph apologized that she had not been able to do more. The patient's daughter stopped her.

“What are you talking about? You have helped my mom feel so much more at ease with her situation,” she said.

Joseph said she had not cured anything or fixed every problem. But she learned that sometimes presence itself is enough.

CARRYING THE MISSION FORWARD

That insight speaks directly to the mission NDP hopes to cultivate in its graduates: to see the dignity of every person, to accompany others in moments of uncertainty and to use one's gifts in service of the common good.

Her closing words to the new physicians also speak beyond medicine.

“The audition is over,” she said. “You are exactly who your patients need.”

For Notre Dame Prep, Carly Joseph is another example of an alum living the school's mission long after graduation — carrying compassion, presence and service into communities that need it most. †

DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND PARENT RELATIONS NAMED



Just four years after graduating from Notre Dame Prep, Kate Fox NDP'22 is returning to her alma mater in a new role dedicated to strengthening connections among alumni and the school she calls "a second home."

Fox was recently hired as the school's latest director of alumni and parent relations. A recent graduate of Grand Valley State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Fox brings a passion for storytelling, relationship-building, and community engagement to the Advancement Office.

For Fox, the opportunity is more than a career milestone, it is a chance to give back to a school that helped shape her life.

"I'm excited to come back and help strengthen the connections that make this community so special while creating opportunities for alumni to stay engaged with the school for years to come," she said.

A lifelong member of the Notre Dame family, Fox grew up immersed in the school community as the daughter of longtime head coach Pat Fox, who retired following the 2025-26 school year after 12 seasons leading the Fighting Irish football program.

ADVANCEMENT GETS TWO KEY PERSONNEL

Notre Dame Prep's advancement office announced this spring the appointments of Jason Valenzuela as Notre Dame Fund gift officer and Dan Fuoco, a 2003 Notre Dame High School graduate, as major gift officer.

In his role, Valenzuela will work closely with parents, alumni, grandparents, staff and friends of Notre Dame Prep to strengthen support for the school's annual fund and grow leadership-level gifts through the St. Peter Chanel Society.

Through meaningful conversations and personal connections, he will help advance philanthropic support that directly benefits students, faculty, programs and the overall mission of the school.

In his new role, Fuoco is bringing with him a lifelong connection to the school community and a passion for strengthening the mission that helped shape his own journey.

Fuoco will work closely with parents, alumni, grandparents, faculty/



Jason Valenzuela, left, and Dan Fuoco ND'03 have been named to key positions in NDP's advancement office.

staff, and community supporters to advance philanthropic initiatives that enrich student life and support Notre Dame Prep's continued growth. His efforts will help sustain the school's commitment to academic excellence, faith formation, athletics, the arts, and campus development.

For Fuoco, whose children also attend NDP, joining the Office of Advancement is "a full circle moment."

"I've been given an incredible opportunity to build upon the legacy, values, and sense of purpose that helped shape who I am today," he said.

NOTRE DAME PREP WORDSMITHS EARN HIGHEST HONORS

Two teams representing Notre Dame Prep's middle school achieved Highest Honors in the recent



WordMasters Challenge™ — a national vocabulary competition involving nearly 125,000 students annually. The seventh-grade team scored an impressive 161 points out of a possible 200 in the last of three meets this year, placing eighth in the nation. In addition, the eighth-grade team scored 164 points, also finishing eighth nationwide.

In addition, the seventh graders placed eighth nationally in the overall competition with a cumulative score of 491 points out of a possible 600, and the eighth-grade team captured ninth place overall with 483 points.

Competing in the difficult Blue Division of the WordMasters Challenge, all of the Notre Dame Prep students were coached in preparation for the competition by Kelly Simon, who teaches sixth-grade reading and writing and eighth-grade English; Christine Boan, who teaches seventh-grade writing and eighth-grade reading; and Deirdre Schiefer, who teaches sixth-grade writing and seventh-grade reading.

Students from NDP's middle school who achieved outstanding results in the meet included eighth grader Olin Platt.

NDP STUDENTS EARN NATIONAL SERVICE HONORS

Notre Dame Prep continues its tradition of forming students who lead with compassion and a commitment to service, as 15 students were recognized through the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) and InnerView Community Service Impact Awards program. The honors place NDP among schools nationwide whose students are actively shaping meaningful change in



their communities and beyond.

In addition to individual recognitions, Notre Dame Prep earned the Sapphire School Impact Award after students collectively contributed more than 2,212 hours of service during the 2025-26 school year. The distinction is awarded to schools whose students surpass 2,000 hours of service, reflecting sustained engagement and measurable community impact.

UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS EARN NATIONAL RECOGNITION ON SPANISH EXAM

Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, with hundreds of millions of native speakers across Spain, Latin America and the United States. Notre Dame Prep's modern language program continues to help students develop strong proficiency and cultural understanding through rigorous coursework and immersive instruction.

In May, upper school students achieved outstanding results on the 2026 National Spanish Examinations, earning numerous awards, including gold, silver and bronze medals as well as several honorable mention distinctions.

Medal winners: Gold medal: Paula Ceular. Silver medal winners: Sofia Arinez and Daniela Alonso. Bronze medal winners: Daniel Kim and Mateo Vargas.

Honor award winners: Antonella Kaminskis, Nicole Betancourt, Brandon Bieszki, Demiana Ibrahim, Grace Shina, Gabrielle Tarriman, Max Mermell, Olivia Serra, Flora Ramos,

Rodrigo Encinas and Marc Abboud.

BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW TRUSTEE

Notre Dame Prep announced in early May the appointment of Rev. James Strasz, s.m. ND'70, to its Board of Trustees as a Marist representative.

The appointment was made by Rev. Joseph Hindelang, s.m. ND'68, provincial of the United States Province of the Society of Mary. A Detroit native, Strasz professed vows as a Marist in 1975 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1980.

Strasz has devoted the majority of his ministry to education, serving in a



variety of roles at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods and Notre Dame Preparatory School in Pontiac. His work has included positions as teacher, campus minister, assistant principal, head of the religion department and superior of the local Marist community. He currently serves as director of the Marist Way and superior of the Marist community in Pontiac.

A graduate of Assumption College and Weston School of Theology, Strasz also has held leadership roles within the Society of Mary, including vocation director, provincial secretary and vicar provincial.

FAITH IN ACTION

Eight students from Notre Dame Prep joined peers from Catholic high schools across Southeast Michigan this past spring for the sixth annual Strangers No Longer Youth Conference, an immersive day of prayer, education and action focused on immigration and the Church's call



to accompany migrants and refugees.

Lily Buero, Jayden Tillery, Adam Habbo, Hayden Sesi, Emma Shorter, Ava Barko, Meredith Wilson and Katie Fortino represented NDP at the gathering, which is grounded in Catholic social teaching and inspired by the pastoral message, "Strangers No Longer," a joint statement by U.S. and Mexican bishops addressing migration.

Hosted by the Archdiocese of Detroit, the conference brought together students to deepen their understanding of immigration through personal stories, expert insights and hands-on experiences. Participants heard a keynote address from Detroit's archbishop and engaged in a lively panel discussion.

NDP CELEBRATES 2026 IB DIPLOMA CANDIDATES

In late April, Notre Dame Prep recognized its 2026 International Baccalaureate Diploma Program candidates, honoring a group of 20 seniors whose academic work reflects both depth of study and intellectual independence.

The annual celebration highlighted the completion of the school's most rigorous academic track, a two-year course of study that challenges students across disciplines while emphasizing research, writing and critical thinking.

"This has been a great group to



work with," said IB Diploma Program Coordinator Katrina Sagert. "These 20 multi-talented students have excelled in their academics as well as student leadership, athletics and in service. They are models of Christian people, upright citizens and academic scholars."

NDP NAMES JASON WHALEN HEAD FOOTBALL COACH AND HONORS PAT FOX'S LASTING LEGACY

Notre Dame Prep announced April 15 that longtime assistant coach and school counselor Jason Whalen has been named head varsity football coach, succeeding Pat Fox, whose 12-year tenure helped define one of the most successful eras in program history.

The transition marks both a celebration of Fox's accomplishments and a continuation of a culture grounded in faith, character and competitive excellence.

"Success at Notre Dame Prep has always been measured by more than the scoreboard; it's measured by the character of the young student-



athletes who graduate from our locker room," NDP Athletic Director Betty Wroubel said. "Coach Fox didn't just deliver a state championship; he gave us 12 years of tireless, selfless devotion to our mission."

In naming Jason Whalen as the school's next head coach, "we are choosing a leader who lives and breathes the Notre Dame Prep mission every single day," Wroubel added. "Jason isn't just taking over a program; he has been a primary architect of the culture we've built over the last 11 years."

NDP RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Notre Dame Prep received recognition in March from AEA Neuro-Fitness Academy for its athletic program.

The Athletic Department of the Year Innovation Award reflects the school's approach to athletics, including training methods, student development and program organization, according to AEA.

Notre Dame Prep's athletic program spans lower school through varsity levels, with offerings across multiple sports. The structure is designed to support skill development over time while maintaining academic expectations.

The recognition from AEA Neuro-Fitness Academy highlights programs that incorporate training approaches related to performance and cognitive development.

At the time of the award, an AEA executive noted the program's consistency and structure in announcing the award, citing its alignment with the organization's standards for athlete development.

NDP ROBOTICS TEAMS RULE THE "THRONE" AT STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Notre Dame Prep's VEX Robotics teams had an outstanding showing at the Michigan VIQRC Elementary State Championship held March 6-7 at Monroe County Community College in Monroe. Competing among 49 teams from across Michigan—including those from Ludington, Caseville, Caledonia and Hancock in the Upper Peninsula—four NDP teams represented the school with skill, creativity and teamwork in the 12-and-



under division.

Team 3333E, "Dino Nuggets" (sixth graders Nolan Qarana, Nolan Rod and Yash Sharma), advanced to the finals and briefly held the competition's "throne," the seat reserved for the team holding the top score during the finals.

Team 3333G, "Hoodie Bros" (William Janka, Holden Lewandowski and Henrik Janka), finished fifth overall in Skills, fifth in Driver Skills and sixth in the Teamwork Finals, while also spending time on the throne during the finals.

Team 3333R, "Team Wolfy" (Isabella Giannetti, Stella Haverland and Grace Reed), earned the event's Build Award, recognizing excellence in robot construction and design.

Team 3333Y, "Bob's Builders" (Charles Harding, Mazen Sheqwara, Zachary Zara, Jack Yarbrough and Ishaan Goldsmith), placed fifth overall in the Teamwork Finals and held the throne for four matches.

DAY CELEBRATING SPEECH, DEBATE HIGHLIGHTS STATE AND NATION'S LEADING PROGRAM



As schools across the country observed National Speech and Debate Education Day on the first Friday of March, Notre Dame Prep was celebrating a program that has grown into one of the most extensive in Michigan.

The annual observance, organized by the National Speech & Debate Association, honors the impact of scholastic speech and debate on students' academic development, civic



engagement and leadership.

At Notre Dame Prep, the activity has become a defining part of student life.

The school remains the largest speech and debate program in Michigan, and its middle division continues to hold the distinction as the largest middle school speech and debate program in the country.

NDP STUDENTS TAKE THEIR CASE TO LANSING

More than 300 students, teachers and administrators from International Baccalaureate schools across Michigan gathered at the state Capitol in Lansing in March to advocate for more consistent recognition of IB coursework by Michigan colleges and universities.

Among them were 14 juniors and seniors from Notre Dame Prep, who traveled with faculty and upper school Principal Kim Anderson to participate in the rally and meet with legislative offices.

The students joined representatives from IB Schools of Michigan to support a legislative resolution encouraging colleges and universities in the state to adopt clearer and more consistent policies for awarding college credit to students who complete IB coursework and exams.

The issue has gained growing attention across the state as IB educators and students argue that the rigor of the internationally recognized program deserves the same clarity in credit recognition that Advanced Placement courses typically receive.

FRESHMEN INVITED TO COMPETE FOR \$9,000 KOTZAN CREATIVE WRITING SCHOLARSHIP

Freshmen at Notre Dame Prep got

another opportunity to turn their passion for storytelling into a multi-year scholarship.

The Michael J. Kotzan Creative Writing Scholarship Award, which entered its fifth year, invited members of the Class of 2029 to submit original historical fiction for a chance to earn up to \$9,000 over three years. The award recognizes creativity, character development and a commitment to the craft of writing—values that reflect both the mission of Notre Dame Prep and the life of the alumnus for whom the scholarship is named.

Kotzan, a 2005 graduate of Notre Dame Prep, pursued his love of writing long after high school. After studying at Michigan State University's James Madison College and earning his law degree from the University of Miami, he practiced law in Chicago. In 2018, he moved to Los Angeles to follow a new goal: becoming a Hollywood screenwriter.

Kotzan died unexpectedly in 2021, but his family and the NDP community established the scholarship to ensure his creative spirit continues to inspire students. The award encourages young writers to take their ideas seriously and



develop their voices with confidence.

This year's prompt challenged freshmen to explore the past through fiction.

Students were asked to choose a real historical event that occurred before 1975—from ancient civilizations to the Civil War, World War II or the social movements of the 1960s—and write a historical fiction narrative from the perspective of a fictional or lesser-known individual who experienced the event firsthand.

BIG BUSINESS IN FOURTH GRADE

Colorful signs, catchy slogans and creative products filled the fourth-grade classrooms at Notre Dame Prep's lower school in March as students opened for business during the annual "Fourth Grade Store Sale."

The pop-up marketplace is the culminating experience of the fourth grade's economics unit, where students learn firsthand what it takes to bring a product to market. Throughout the week, students planned, produced, advertised and sold their goods to classmates, teachers



and even parents.

"The fourth-grade stores activity is our summative assessment for our International Baccalaureate unit of inquiry, How We Organize Ourselves," said fourth-grade teacher Caitlin LaPratt. "Students explored how a market economy works in the United States by asking questions about supply, demand and consumer needs—and then applying that learning in a very real way."

Working in small teams, students brainstormed ideas for products and services, conducted market surveys to gauge interest and calculated costs before settling on their final offerings. They then designed posters and advertisements featuring logos, slogans and pricing strategies to attract customers.

Along the way, students also tracked expenses, monitored inventory and evaluated profits, learning that running a business requires more than just a great idea.

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1976 50th Reunion

Save the Date: Sept. 11-12, 2026

A full weekend of events is planned, beginning with a Friday evening welcome reception, followed by a Saturday golf scramble, and culminating in a festive reunion dinner with classmates and guests. **To register, visit ndprep.org/nd76reunion.**

Class of 1971 55th Reunion

Save the Date: Nov. 1, 2026

The event will take place at the Club Venetian, 29310 John R. Road, Madison Heights, Mich. **For more information, contact Mike Scharl at notredame71@att.net.**

PADDLES AND POKER

Save the Date: Sept. 19, 2026

Come out for a fun evening of camaraderie benefiting Notre Dame Prep students. Hosted by the NDP Parents Club, "Paddles and Poker" will take place at Greystone Pickleball, 900 N. Opdyke Road in Auburn Hills, from 6 to 10 p.m. Open courts, casino tables and prizes, and drinks with heavy appetizers. **Registration at ndprep.org/paddles.**

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Save the Date: Oct. 16-17, 2026

Join us on Friday, Oct. 16, as the Fighting Irish take on Lincoln High School at William Kozyra Alumni Field. Prior to the big game, enjoy a family-friendly tailgate at 5 p.m. at the Fr. Colin House, 1389 Giddings Road. On Saturday, join us for the Irish Dash 5K. **More information and registration coming soon.**

Prayers

Notre Dame Prep mourns the loss of our dear brothers and sisters and invites our community to join with us in prayer.

1950-1959

Mary Ann Malinich SM'55 | April 23, 2025

Karen Rose Mandalari (Farrell) SM'57 | Dec. 10, 2025

1960-1975

William Joy ND'62

Patrick Kopytek ND'70 | March 1, 2026. **He is the father of Cat A. Proccissi NDP'00.**

Gary Nadlicki ND'66 | May 30, 2026

Paul R. Pomaski ND'75 | March 20, 2026

Michael Joseph Sugameli ND'67 | Dec. 29, 2025

Douglas Paul Tarchalski ND'72 | Jan. 23, 2026

1976-1990

Samuel Christopher Francis Cali ND'90 | May 21, 2025

Paul Gigliotti ND'83 | May 26

Kevin Michael Howard ND'87 | Oct. 29, 2025

1991-2010

Issa Fram NDP'05 | Jan. 17, 2026

Family and Friends

Emily Barker | June 27, 2026. **She is the daughter of Dave Barker ND'76**

Lori Alane Barker | Jan. 3, 2026. **She is the mother of Steven Barker NDP'12 and Alexis (Lexi) Barker NDP'18.**

Mary Beth Cirocco | Dec. 7, 2025. **She is the wife of Terry Cirocco ND'72**

Richard A. Downs | Jan. 26, 2026. **He is the husband of former NDP math teacher Kathy Downs.**

Stephen Richard Gerbe | Dec. 26, 2025. **He is the father-in-law of Chris Konal ND'79.**

Anne "Vickerman" Hautamaki | Dec. 15, 2025. **She is the mother of Kristin (Hautamaki) Scaife NDP'01.**

Carol A. Hynous | Jan. 14, 2026. **She is the wife of Charles Hynous ND'58.**

Michael McInerney | Jan. 1, 2026. **He is the father of Kayley (McInerney) Haines NDP'07 and Marin (McInerney) Krolczyk NDP'13.**

Gjek Paloka Palushaj | Feb. 13, 2026. **He is the husband of Katrina Palushaj, NDP teacher, and the father of alumni Andre NDP'15 and Angelina NDP'16.**

Rose Marie Sobota | April 8, 2025. **She is the mother of Joseph M. Sobota ND'95.**

Donald Frank Stephanic | Dec. 12, 2025. **He is the father of alumni Alison (Stephanic) Robinette NDP'06 and Megan (Stephanic) Merhi NDP'10.**

Michael J. Walter | March 27, 2026. **He is the father of Scott Walter ND'00 and Keith Walter ND'03.**

*Correction: In the spring/summer 2025 issue of IRISH magazine, it was incorrectly reported that **Jeff Patrus ND'89** passed away. Jeff's father **Reginald Patrus** passed away on Feb. 2, 2025.*

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

If you would like our community to remember a loved one in prayer, please email prayers@ndprep.org.

Class Notes

Notre Dame Prep: (NDP); Notre Dame High School: (ND); Pontiac Catholic: (PC); Oakland Catholic: (OC); St. Frederick: (SF); St. Michael: (SM)

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

Tom Alef ND'66 writes, "My wife, Elizabeth, and I attended my ND 60th class reunion. Special thanks to Bill Schroeder and team for arranging. I'm retired, living in Shalimar, Fla., and served on the Supervisory Committee and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of Eglin Federal Credit Union, a \$3.1-billion Florida credit union."

Joseph Badalamenti ND'77 writes, "I frequently dream about my pleasant experience at Notre Dame. I thought (during those years) that we were all a bunch of losers. Now I see that we are the most productive members of society. Thanks for putting up with me — to all my beloved Notre Dame teachers and faculty. With love!"

Kenneth Balazovich ND'73 works as a technical director and a lighting designer for live theater events in Ann Arbor and the Detroit area after retiring from the University of Michigan in 2020. He writes, "I can thank Fr. Bryson and Notre Dame in Harper Woods once again for the kickstart in the industry. We now

live in the Lansing area on a lake and feel privileged for the lifestyle. One daughter is a magistrate for the 55th District Court (with a promotion possibly in the works to judge) and the other is a loan officer at Michigan State University. My wife continues to make world-class costumes for many theater companies (mostly ballet now) and we just celebrated 47 years of marriage. What a ride it's been!"



Thomas Blomquist ND'62 writes, "Greetings and best wishes to the Class of 1962. We live in the fast-growing city of Charlotte, NC. Traveling this year to Alaska, Ireland and St. John USVI. Our granddaughter is studying archaeology at University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill."

Stanley Guest ND'80 writes, "I have been happily married for 41 years to Liliana (DeFelicis), Regina Class of 1982. Our three daughters

and one son have left the nest but we enjoy frequent visits from them and our three granddaughters. I am still working as a physical therapist at Clegg and Guest Physical Therapy in Sterling Heights. I am looking forward to the 2026 NDP cross country season. My brother Andy Guest ND'84 is the head coach and I am his sidekick. We love when former Notre Dame cross country runners return to say hi and sometimes join us for a run. My running career is winding down as my body wears out."

John Hart ND'74 writes, "Enjoying almost three years of retirement. My wife and I are about to celebrate 41 years of marriage. My daughter is a successful nurse midwife at Henry Ford Hospital. My son just received a promotion to principal at Plante Moran. Also, looking forward to my son's wedding in December. A lot to be thankful for. All the best to the Class of '74. Go Irish!"

Thomas Klimek ND'71 sold his optometric practice in Big Rapids, Mich., in 2016 and fully retired in 2018. He writes, "Enjoying retirement to the fullest with my high school spouse of 52 years. What a life! Three successful children and five wonderful grandchildren. Enjoyment could not be better."

Robert Koleski ND'81 is living in Paisley, Fla., and working at the YMCA. He hopes to retire in two years.

Steve Kosmalski ND'69 and his wife, Laura (Regina High School Class of '69), celebrated their 75th birthdays in Spain this past April. He lives in Cincinnati and is blessed with five children and eight grandchildren.



Kurt Ladensack ND'73 is enjoying his 14th year of retirement in Austin, Texas, living near his daughter's family and her 15-month-old daughter, Georgina. Prior to moving to Texas in 2025, he lived in Nevada for 12 years and California for 22 years. His professional life, primarily in California water management, ended with retirement in 2013. Ladensack enjoys cooking, golf and is active in the Knights of Columbus.

Gerald Lane ND'68 just completed the 33rd Annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition at Oakland University for university engineering and computer science majors specializing

in autonomous vehicles for automotive and defense.



Peter Lassing ND'65 recently retired as a physician (radiologist), still living in Marquette, Mich. Lassing writes, "Linda and I are enjoying our grandchildren, wish we had more coming!"

Brian McClure ND'81 and his wife Theresa welcomed four new grandchildren in the past year! Scarlett on June 25, 2025, Isabella on Dec. 3, 2025, and Charles and Cecilia on April 29, 2026! It's great being a grandfather!

Jeff Mielnicki ND'77 won Coach of the Year and his Cherry Creek varsity hockey team (one of four that he coaches) won the CHSAA State Championship in 5A in Colorado.



Pier Marco Silvestri ND'89 completed his first book, "Poetry in Detroit." It is available on Amazon.com for \$8.

Mike Slubowski ND'72 writes, "Hello to all Class of 1972 classmates! I have been back in Michigan for nine years and still serving as CEO of Trinity Health. My high school sweetheart, Barb (who was a Regina High School girl), and I have been happily married for almost 47 years and we are blessed with twin daughters, wonderful son-in-laws and four grandchildren. Still playing and collecting guitars, and I'm still playing with a classic rock band. Great memories of Notre Dame on Kelly Road! Best wishes to all!"



David Treadwell ND'84 writes, "After 31 years at Inovision, we have sold the company to Encore Automation. I am now semi-retired and looking forward to spending more time walleye fishing in the spring, attending Tigers and Red Wings games, as well as heading down to our condo in Fort Myers during



the winter months. While I am enjoying this new chapter, I am still interested in taking on some part-time work or consulting opportunities. I always love to catch up with past classmates too!"

Eleven members of the Class of 1963 have been meeting for lunch every month for several years and are still gathering 63 years after graduation. The group meets at various rotating locations in the area and includes: Dan Colter, Tony D'Agostini, Don Herman, Ken Hugelier, Conrad Koski, Tom Kozyra, Dave Piech, Lynn VonHatten, Paul Waleke, Tom Warning and Frank Zielinski. Any other members of the class who are interested in joining the group are invited to contact danieljcolter@yahoo.com or dpiech3@comcast.net.



NOTRE DAME PREP



Sarah Bonema NDP'17 started her own small business, Lovely Light Co., selling hand-painted/handwritten illuminated medieval manuscript style pages of Catholic prayers and Bible verses. She writes, "Thank you to Mama Lew and Mr. Devine for giving me the foundation I needed to start this new venture!"

David Greenwell NDP'20 and **Valerie (Nowosielski) Greenwell NDP'21** were married on June 13, 2026.



Sydney Newby NDP'19 graduated with her juris doctorate degree from Penn State Law School. She

also received the Graduating Student Community Engagement Award.



Annalisa Simmer NDP'03 gave birth June 14, 2025, to a son. Kyle Diego joins big sister, Lilian. The family continues to live in Guatemala.

Anthony Williamson NDP'94 received a degree in business management from Southern University. He attended Oakland Community College and Wayne County Community College. He was accepted to the Ross Business School at the University of Michigan. Williamson works in the automotive industry traveling around the country as third-party quality control.





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