FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF ARCHBISHOP RIORDAN HIGH SCHOOL

SUMMER 2025

Celebrating the Past While Crafting the

FUTURE

magazine



TIM REARDON & DANNY CURTIN

DYNAMIC DUO LEADING THE CHARGE

ALSO INSIDE

SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS, SCHOOL NEWS, ALUMNI NEWS, & GRADUATION

Archbishop Riordan High School
175 Frida Kahlo Way, San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 586-8200 • www.riordanhs.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Timothy A. Reardon,
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Dear Crusader Family,

The Bay Area has long been known for its legendary sports duos. From the Bash Brothers launching baseballs into the Oakland night sky to the Splash Brothers dazzling Warriors fans with their prolific three-pointers, these partnerships have captured our imagination and reminded us of the power of teamwork.

At Riordan, we believe that dynamic duos—and the remarkable impact of collaboration—are essential to success. In classrooms and offices across campus, our faculty and staff work side-by-side, not just as colleagues but as trusted partners.

Whether it's a math teacher and counselor designing a plan to support a struggling student, or a coach and a parent helping a student-athlete grow on and off the field, Riordan is built on the Marianist ideal of educating in the family spirit. When educators work together with a shared mission, students have a better chance of reaching their potential.

In this issue of Future Magazine, you'll meet some of the dynamic duos that help define our school's spirit: teachers, administrators, alumni, and students, who show what's possible when commitment and partnership come together. As Coach John Wooden once said, "A player who makes a team great is more valuable than a great player." That spirit of selfless teamwork is what we strive for every day at Riordan.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable community.

With gratitude,

Tim Reardon
PRESIDENT
Archbishop Riordan High School

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Mission Statement

Founded in 1949, Archbishop Riordan High School—an Archdiocesan Catholic High School in the Ingleside Neighborhood of San Francisco, California—prepares young men and women for leadership and lifelong success by providing education imbued with Catholic Marianist values of faith, community, inclusivity, service and justice through its rigorous college preparatory curriculum, house system and co-curricular activities.

DYNAMIC DUOS

Interview With Tim Reardon & Danny Curtin '08

We asked Riordan President Tim Reardon and Vice President of Enrollment & Strategy Danny Curtin how they work together and their future plans for Riordan.



Vice President of Enrollment and Strategy, Danny Curtin (L) and President Tim Reardon (R) work collaboratively on numerous key Riordan initiatives.

What have been the key factors to helping Riordan grow and expand in recent years?

TR: Riordan's growth has been driven by a clear vision informed through collaboration with diverse stakeholders, strategic leadership anchored by an impressive Board of Trustees, and a commitment to evolving while staying true to our Marianist values. The transition to a coeducational model was a pivotal moment, broadening our reach and appeal. Additionally, investments in academics, athletics, and student life—including our boarding program—have positioned Riordan as a premier choice for families seeking a well-rounded, faith-based education.

DC: We have been so open and flexible to market shifts. I think we have always demonstrated that it is okay from a marketing aspect to be an early adopter rather than too late. Tim's points are the very tangible aspects, but we also have demonstrated a lot of courage in the intangible aspects of marketing and enrollment.

Are there plans to expand enrollment further?

TR: We're always evaluating the right size for Riordan to ensure that we maintain our strong community while meeting demand. While we've seen tremendous growth, our focus is on sustainability—ensuring that our students receive the best possible academic, spiritual, and extracurricular experiences while keeping class sizes manageable.

What about the boarding program—any possible expansion plans there?

TR: The boarding program has been a game-changer for Riordan, allowing us to attract exceptional students from across the country and the world. We are exploring ways to enhance the program, whether that means expanding capacity or refining the student experience to ensure it remains a competitive and enriching opportunity. The fact that we have a boarding program has opened up myriad international opportunities, such as our recent Taiwan immersion program and our upcoming international summer program.

DC: What an amazing program. I think from my perspective the key is continuing to recruit students who enhance so many different programs here and providing all the different cultural perspectives.

How do you two work together?

TR: Danny and I have a great working relationship built on trust, shared vision, and complementary strengths. He brings a strategic, innovative, and data-driven approach to enrollment and institutional growth, while I focus on leadership, mission alignment, and academic excellence in partnership with Nate Simon and our incredible Academic Team. Our partnership is about ensuring that Riordan continues to thrive—not just in numbers, but in the quality of education and experience we provide. This past year, our acceptance rate for the UC schools was on par with the top Catholic schools in the region.

DC: Tim is the man. He is able to manage in a way that you feel the freedom and confidence to try new things, while always feeling like you can get honest, good feedback. We align in our vision for the school and are constantly pushing each other to make Riordan the best school possible.

How is the school updating curricula and learning to address emerging technology trends, such as AI?

TR: We recognize that AI and other emerging technologies are reshaping education and the workforce. Riordan is integrating AI literacy into our curriculum, ensuring that students not only understand these technologies but also develop ethical and responsible approaches to using them. Whether through new course offerings, professional development for faculty, or partnerships with tech leaders, we are committed to preparing our students for a rapidly changing world.



Danny Curtin (L) and Tim Reardon (R)

How do you ensure that Riordan continues to evolve as an organization while maintaining its Marianist roots?

TR: The Marianist tradition is at the heart of everything we do. Evolution is not about changing our values—it's about applying them in new ways. Our commitment to community, inclusivity, formation, and service guides our decisions, whether we're adapting to new educational models, expanding programs, or engaging with our alumni. It's a balance between honoring our history and embracing the future.

DC: The Marianist roots of Riordan are still present and our kids retain all of the qualities that the Marianists instilled in us.

How do you assure alumni that the school can be innovative and adaptive while still adhering to the values that make Riordan great?

TR: Riordan has always been a school that evolves with the times. Our alumni saw it when we transitioned to coeducation, when we introduced new athletic programs, and now as we integrate new academic opportunities like our biomedical and business programs. The foundation—our values, our commitment to student success, and our Marianist identity—remains unchanged. We continue to engage alumni through events, networking opportunities, and mentorship programs, reinforcing that the essence of Riordan is as strong as ever.

DC: For me I take tremendous pride in retaining what made Riordan special during my experience here. I always make it a point to keep alumni in the loop and retain their interest in the school. I want people to be proud of their school. I take huge responsibility in knowing that my role has a direct impact on our alumni, enrolling legacy kids, and still be forward thinking enough to develop new traditions.

What do you see as the future vision for Riordan? What are some of the school's main priorities? What about challenges to address?

TR: Our vision is to continue growing as a top-tier Catholic school that offers a transformative experience for students from all backgrounds. Priorities include academic innovation, strengthening our boarding program, expanding leadership opportunities, and maintaining our diverse and inclusive community. The biggest challenges include balancing growth with sustainability, navigating shifts in education, and ensuring that every student who wants a Riordan education can afford one.

DC: The core of our vision is to be the best Catholic High School in San Francisco, one where our kids love coming to school. We need to make sure that we continue to push forward and take risks. The best part about working at this school is that I could not tell you what the future holds, I just know that we will work hard, adapt to our circumstances and have a whole lot of fun doing it. We know the challenges of navigating San Francisco and this competitive market, however, no school does a better job of adapting and changing, which is my favorite Marianist Charism.

Academic Deans Work Together To Improve Student, Faculty Experience

In the summer of 2022, when most teachers and faculty were enjoying a well-deserved break, Diana Assereto and Christopher Fern were gearing up for work.

The two longtime Riordan teachers had recently been named as Academic Deans for the school. The new position created exciting opportunities and moments to recast the role, particularly with the school still adjusting to life post-pandemic.

"We probably met about six or seven times that first summer, just working all day to put our vision together for the upcoming school year," said Fern, who first joined the Riordan staff in 2008. "We really focused on getting back to basics and how we could work to empower our teachers with their professional development. To do that, we knew we had to be engaged and to hear their feedback and we really tried to structure the classrooms in a way that reflected that interaction. That first year was about establishing the model, and we've been able to continually refine it since then."

As teachers—Assereto in English, Fern in Social Sciences—the duo both bring a keen understanding of classroom dynamics into their roles as Academic Deans. Traditionally a non-teaching administrative role, Academic Deans oversee academic programs, faculty management, and student engagement.

Because both Fern and Assereto have retained their teaching roles, they offer a sense of kinship and connectivity with students and teachers, collaborating with faculty to meet student needs.

"I think it's important that teachers realized we weren't asking them to do anything we weren't willing to do ourselves," said Assereto, who has been teaching with Riordan for more than 20 years. "We felt it would actually be easier in this role if we continued to teach, because that would inform our own plans while helping to keep that strong relationship with faculty."

Although Assereto and Fern's duties blend and interchange, the two have settled on a formula that highlights each of their particular strengths. Assereto typically takes the lead with supporting new teachers, while Fern handles more administrative tasks, such as overseeing the school's Honor Code policies.

> "I think we've always had a really good working relationship, pretty much since day one. We might approach things differently, but our philosophies are the same. That's what's been really great—I don't think we would have been so successful out of the gate, if we didn't already have a working relationship."
>
> **Diana Assereto, English Teacher**

Assereto and Fern's role as dual Academic Deans has been successful in large part to the deep and abiding respect they have for each other's work. The two check-in daily to exchange ideas, provide progress updates, and relay important feedback and input.

"I have always admired and respected how well Chris engaged his students in learning," said Assereto. "I think we've always had a really good working relationship, pretty much since day one. We might approach things differently, but our philosophies are the same. That's what's been really great—I don't think we would have been so successful out of the gate, if we didn't already have a working relationship "

With three years now under their belts as Academic Deans, Assereto and Fern are turning their focus to the future, and its myriad challenges and opportunities, particularly as technological advances change the role of student learning.

"We've really focused on how a student can succeed in life after Riordan, which is why we are de-emphasizing the more traditional educational approaches like rote memorization,"



Academic Deans Diana Assereto and Christopher Fern bring a unique approach to their positions.

said Fern. "We are also in charge of the AI policy at the school. That development has been incredibly challenging, but it isn't going away. We need to find ways for students to ethically use AI in a way that empowers their learning and elevates the things they're doing."

Through their lengthy tenures, both Assereto and Fern have witnessed Riordan grow and evolve in countless ways. Throughout those evolutions, however, the fundamentals of the school have remained the same.

"There has always been this throughline of the Marianist charism that emphasizes the family spirit," said Fern. "That helps define the school's mission and also the relationships of the people who work here. Part of why I love being here is the people I get to work with on a daily basis. Whether it's our students or my other colleagues or Diana, there are amazing relationships everywhere. The school is in the best place it's ever been—I think we are both really excited to see what's next."



Both natives of Ireland, teachers Paula O'Donnell (L) and Karen McDermott (R) have been embraced by the Riordan community in San Francisco.

After Bonding Over Irish Football, Teachers Find Community in Riordan

There are a myriad of ways in which students and faculty find their way into the Riordan community.

Family history with the school. An eagerness to explore an innovative and ever-expanding academic curriculum. Opportunities to meet and make lasting relationships with individuals from around the globe.

Irish football, however, is unlikely to be at the top of the list. But that ancient Gaelic sport is what introduced Karen McDermott to Paula O'Donnell, and through that connection, the two Ireland natives wound up teaching together at Riordan.

"Before I moved out here, I got in contact with Paula, because I really wanted to play on an Irish football team," said McDermott, who is originally from Westmeath, Ireland. "We started talking and I found out she was a teacher. From there, we became fast friends."

O'Donnell was the first of the two to move to San Francisco, initially coming to San Francisco for a summer in 2016 after graduating from college, then returning on a J-1 Graduate Visa in 2018. She originally planned to stay for one year but she and her husband enjoyed the city so much, they ended up staying through 2020, at which time she returned back to Ireland due to the pandemic. She missed San Francisco



McDermott (L) and O'Donnell (R) bonded over a shared love of Irish football.

"The morals and values of Riordan are the same as the ones we grew up with. It was nice to just ease in here, because there were so many similarities. It felt like having that same kind of comfort from home."

Paula O'Donnell

though and returned again in 2021 and taught in a local Catholic middle school until 2024.

McDermott reached out to the Gaelic Football team O'Donnell was a member of in 2023 as she was considering a move stateside. As O'Donnell was already teaching in San Francisco she put her in contact with Marie Fitzpatrick who is heavily involved in the Catholic Schools here in San Francisco. McDermott eventually joined the Riordan staff in 2023. McDermott encouraged O'Donnell to apply to Riordan the following year and the rest is history.

"I feel like Karen made everything so easy for me," said O'Donnell, who is from Donegal, Ireland and joined the Riordan staff in 2024. "When I came here, all the doors were already open for me, because so many people knew and respected Karen. Everyone was just so incredibly friendly and helpful."

Although they are a continent and ocean away from their homeland, O'Donnell and McDermott said the transition to working at Riordan has been seamless. They both worked at and attended Catholic schools in Ireland, so the teaching environment at Riordan felt very familiar.

"The morals and values of Riordan are the same as the ones we grew up with," said O'Donnell. "It was nice to just ease in here, because there were so many similarities. It felt like having that same kind of comfort from home."

The two find much of those comforts on the playing field, where they excel for the Clan na Gael Irish football team. A mixture between football, rugby, soccer and various other sports, Irish football has a strong tradition in the Bay Area, and due to the contributions of O'Donnell and McDermott, Clan na Gael captured the National Intermediate Championship in 2024.

"I try to explain to people how you play, but it's pretty difficult," said McDermott. "It's best to just watch a video."

After originally connecting due to their Gaelic football interests, McDermott and O'Donnell quickly bonded over their experiences playing together. It was during one of their games that McDermott mentioned to O'Donnell that Riordan had an opening for a Science teacher position.

"She was still teaching at the middle school at the time, and I told her about the Riordan position opening up," said McDermott, who teaches biology. "It was a science position, and I told her how Riordan was a wonderful place to work. I think that made the decision pretty easy for her—we were friends, before we were colleagues."

Since joining the staff, O'Donnell and McDermott said they've embraced being part of the Riordan community—both on and off campus.

"It's fun to be part of this," said McDermott. "There are so many events outside of school hours with alumni coming back or sporting events. There really seems to be a whole family spirit here. It's infectious."

Buoyed by their experiences at the school, the two Irish teachers see Riordan as a place where they can spend their teaching careers.

Boarding School Expansion Led By Strong Leadership Team

Joe Kopp recalls his first days on the Riordan campus with a heavy dose of fondness and just a sprinkling of surrealism.

It was early 2020, and Kopp had recently joined Riordan as an Admissions Associate with the school's Residential Life program. He was living on campus, overseeing the wellbeing of the boarding students enrolled in Riordan at the time, who were all dealing with the challenges of the pandemic.

"There were 13 kids on campus who were just stuck here," said Kopp. "So, that first year was a lot of fun in many ways, but also very strange. I mean, we made the most of it. For me, it was all about creating relationships with the kids, to try and help them get through everything."

Thanks to the efforts of Kopp and Riordan's Director of Boarding, David Lin '99, the school's boarding program has come a long way from those deserted days of the pandemic. Riordan now hosts nearly 90 students on campus, representing some 19 different countries, making it one of the largest urban boarding programs in the country.

The growth of the program has been remarkable, particularly since the introduction of co-ed schooling to Riordan in the 2020-21 school year. Female boarding students started the next year and now make up roughly half of the 89 students on campus. In the past five years, the number of boarders at the school has exploded by 535 percent, growing from 14 to 89 enrollees, and now some of the most talented and promising students from around the globe apply to take part in the program.



Riordan's Admissions Associate Joe Kopp (L) and Director of Boarding David Lin (R) have helped oversee a dramatic growth in the school's boarding program.

The partnership of Lin and Kopp lies at the core of those expansion efforts. Lin, who graduated from Riordan in 1999 and has been working with the school since 2009, credits the success of the program to the unique working relationship he has with Kopp.

"As the director, I feel like I'm an ideas guy, and Joe is so good at organization and figuring out how to put my ideas into practice," said Lin, who took over as the school's Boarding Director in 2018. "I think that just happened naturally. I never really delegate anything to him—we built this genuine friendship and relationship, to the point where we read each other so well, things just happen."



Lin (far left) recently officiated for Kopp's wedding (far right).

> "As the director, I feel like I'm an ideas guy, and Joe is so good at organization and figuring out how to put my ideas into practice. I think that just happened naturally. I never really delegate anything to him—we built this genuine friendship and relationship, to the point where we read each other so well, things just happen."
>
> **David Lin, Director of Boarding**

Working with Danny Curtin, the school's Vice President of Enrollment and Strategy, Lin and Kopp review applications, embark on trips to meet with prospective students and explore new ways to elevate awareness of the school. They also work to ensure that students on campus are supported with the resources they need to succeed.

They both cite the growth of the boarding program as a transformatively positive outcome for the school, due in large part to the quality of students enrolled.

"I think some people might see this program and think, 'well these boarding students are here just to go to school,' but it's so much more than that," said Kopp. "They play sports, they're in the band, the lead campus ministry, they're members of the National Honor Society. It's incredible what they bring to our community. It makes going to Riordan such an appealing draw for everyone."

Just as importantly, those students are helping to share the values, mission and life teachings of Riordan after they leave the school.

"I recently ran into a former student who was from Vietnam and is now working in cybersecurity," said Lin. "He told me that one of his favorite memories from being at Riordan was the Kairos retreat. That's a campus ministry program that is fairly unique to our school. That felt good, to know that this kind of education resonates with our students, even those who might not have a traditional Catholic background."

In many ways, the boarding program not only reflects the culture of Riordan, but specifically the team managing the initiative. A program built on relationships is powered by Lin and Kopp's friendship. In fact, Lin officiated Kopp's wedding in April.

"A lot of that goes back, again, to the pandemic," said Lin. "We were working during a really strange time. It was difficult for all of us—you know, I had a family with three young kids. And Joe was like my guy—someone I could confide in at times. It is unique for a director and associate to be able to communicate that way, and I think we both really appreciate that bond."

SPORTS



Led by stars like Junior Andrew Hillman (pictured) Riordan's boys basketball team enjoyed an historic campaign last season.

Riordan Boys Basketball Breaks Numerous Records En Route to NorCal Title

The Riordan boys basketball program boasts a storied, proud tradition with plenty of memorable teams and moments, but it's safe to say that this year's Crusaders edition was a squad unlike any other.

The 2024-25 Crusaders finished the season with a 29-2 record while capturing their second straight West Catholic Athletic League title in dominant fashion. Riordan finished 14-0 in league play—their second straight undefeated campaign—while en route to winning the Northern California Open Division Championship.

The team grabbed the title with a classic 52-40 victory over De La Salle-Concord in front of a packed home crowd, adding to their season hardware, which also included a Central Coast Section (CCS) Open Championship.

Along the way to their NorCal championship, the team notched up numerous records—setting league marks for most points scored in a season and fewest points allowed. The Crusaders were the first team to go undefeated in back-to-back seasons (14-0) in WCAL history and won their league games by an astounding 38 points per contest.









From L - R: Senior John Tofi drives in for an easy layup; Junior DJ Armstrong spots up from three; Senior Nes Emeneke takes the tip in the state championship game; the team celebrates during a NorCal playoff game against Salesian.

Numerous media outlets heaped praise on the Crusaders, with the Santa Cruz Sentinel touting the team as the best in CCS history and the San Francisco Standard titling one headline, "SF's best basketball team isn't the Warriors. It's the Crusaders."

The Crusaders were led by 6-foot-6 senior wing Jasir Rencher, the San Francisco Chronicle's Metro Player of the Year and the WCAL Player of the Year. Rencher, who is committed to play basketball at the University of Washington, led the team in scoring with 14.7 points per game. Other standout players included junior guard Andrew Hilman, a first-team Chronicle Metro team pick and senior Nes Emeneke, a second-team Chronicle pick who will play at UC-Irvine next year.

2024-25 CRUSADER STATS

- Northern California Open Division Champion
- Central Coast Section Open Division Champion
- West Catholic Athletic League Title
- 29-2 Season Record
- 14-0 League Record

While the team's year finished with a loss to Roosevelt High School in the California Open Division Championship, the Crusaders' season will still go down as the most dominant one in program history.

"This team was a joy to coach day in and day out," said Riordan coach Joey Curtin '01. Their ability to stay focused on the task at hand throughout the entire season was remarkable. They played for each other and for the ultimate goal of winning. They truly were a coach's dream."

And although numerous members from the team are poised to play Division 1 college basketball next year, a handful of stars, led by Hillman, will return to campus for another run at an Open Division title.

Cameroonian Countryman Bond Over Riordan Experience



Junior Andrew Hillman (L) and Senior Nes Emeneke (R) first met as schoolboys in their hometown of Yaoundé, Cameroon

Andrew Hillman likes to call it their "cheat mode."

Whenever he and teammate Nes Emeneke are on the basketball court together and are in a crucial need of a big play, they'll communicate in French, the lingua franca of their native country of Cameroon.

"I remember this one time, we were both at the free throw line, and I just said to him in French, 'I'm going to screen your guy'," said Hillman. "The next thing I know, we had an easy basket. If he asks me a question in English, everyone's going to know what's happening. If we talk in French, it's just for the two of us."

With the Crusaders boys basketball team winning most games by lopsided margins during their historic season–which included 29 wins and NorCal Open Division Championship–the duo didn't have to rely on that tactic too often, but that extra-sensory connection is a testament to the deep bond of the duo.

Both Emeneke and Hillman grew up in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, a country in Central Africa with 31 million people (and home to NBA superstar Joel Embiid.) While Hillman attended a French-speaking school and Emeneke an English-speaking one, they were familiar with one another growing up due to their love of basketball.

As two of the best young basketball stars in the city, they quickly caught the eye of Yannick Atanga, a Cameroonian native who played hoops at Santa Clara University. Atanga runs a basketball camp in Yaoundé, and with his local connections, he helped introduce Emeneke and Hillman to the Bay Area. Emeneke, who recently graduated, originally attended Woodside Priory on the Peninsula, but after Hillman enrolled in Riordan as a freshman, he transferred to go to school with his fellow countryman.

"I made some deep connections with my host families at Woodside, but Riordan was really just the better fit for me," said Emeneke. "I found that here, everyone really valued me. Not just for being a good athlete or a good student, but for being a good person. That was really important to me."



Emeneke (L) and Hillman (R) with Cameroonian mentor, Yannick Atanga (C)



A feared shot-blocker, Emeneke will play college basketball at UC Irvine next year.

When Hillman first arrived on campus, he spoke limited English and was initially uncomfortable hanging out with others. But, with the encouragement of his teachers, fellow boarders and administrative figures, he was able to adapt.

"Coach [Joe] Kopp and Mr. [Dave] Lin would invite me to play video games with some of the other students," said Hillman, who will be a senior next year at Riordan. "That really actually helped me with my English—just being around other people. It felt great to be able to speak to people without a translator."

Emeneke and Hillman credit the multicultural environs of the Riordan boarding program, which hosts nearly 90 students hailing from more than 20 different countries.

"I think it's so important to learn about other people's cultures," said Hillman. "To live with people who don't look like you, or maybe don't like the exact same things as you. It helps you to understand them and it better prepares you for life."

> "I think we both feel so fortunate to be part of this school."
>
> **Nes Emeneke '25**

Since arriving at Riordan, the two have thrived–both on and off the basketball court. Both boast a 4.0 GPA and have been stellar presences on the Riordan campus.

"My favorite thing about Nes and Andrew is that they are entirely different," said Riordan's Vice President of Enrollment and Strategy, Danny Curtin '08. "Nes is loud and gregarious. Andrew is a calm, quiet, confident type. However, they both share some commonalities in their love for their school, family, and friends. One thing most do not know about them because of their humility is how relentlessly hard-working they are. They take nothing for granted. They are always so gracious to everyone."

While the two were both quickly embraced by the Riordan community, having a familiar face on campus has been an invaluable experience for the duo, who are more than 8,000 miles away from their homeland.

"He's like a brother to me," said Hillman. "And with Yannick here, he's like an older brother to us both."

Both praise Atanga for providing vital life lessons, while saluting his support for the Cameroonian community.

"He's a philanthropist," said Emeneke. "He supports orphanages back home and his basketball camp helps so many people. He's able to connect kids with scholarships, not only so they can play basketball, but also so they can be good students and better their situation back home."

With the guidance of people like Atanga and Curtin, Emeneke is now set to enroll at University of California-Irvine, where he's received a basketball scholarship. Hillman has received numerous Division 1 offers, including one from Stanford University.

"It's been great to experience everything here," said Emeneke. "We all have our differences, but I think that makes us more prone to accept each other. That stuff just brings us together. I think we both feel so fortunate to be part of this school."



Under the leadership of coach Meghan Williams, Riordan's fledgling dance team has embraced a bigger role for the program.

Riordan's Dance Team Takes on Bigger Role

In the spring of 2024, the Riordan dance team was at a crossroads.

The squad's coach had just departed, leaving a team of some 40 girls without a formal leader as it grappled with the decision to move from a part-time endeavor into a more formalized school activity.

Enter Meghan Williams.

Although an English teacher by trade, Williams also had a long background as a dancer, so when the opportunity to coach the team presented itself, she leapt at the opportunity.

"I really fell into this by accident," said Williams, who recently finished her second year teaching at Riordan. "It was my first year at the school and I was eager to volunteer and help where I could. And it just so happened that I had all this dance experience."

While Williams provided a steady hand as the coach, she delegated the lion's share of the team's duties to its student participants. Trusting in their instincts, she allowed the girls to determine the school's choreography and dance moves, essentially turning over the practices to the team's older students as a sign of faith in their decision-making.

"I basically handled the 'dance mom' duties for the team—stuff like scheduling, uniforms, and the overall management," said Williams, who majored in English and dance while in college. "But they were in charge of everything else. And because the program was so new, no one really knew what to expect. But I was completely blown out of the water by their talent and commitment."







The team has expanded its activities to include pep rallies, sporting events, school functions and many other activities.

Under Williams' steady yet collaborative leadership style, the Riordan dance team enjoyed its busiest and most successful campaign yet this past school year, engaging in pep rallies, sporting events, school functions and a host of other activities. The culmination of the season occurred in March, when the squad performed at the Golden 1 Center in Sacramento as part of the boys basketball state championship game.

"It's really been eye-opening," said Williams. "A few of these girls had some background in dance, but for the most part this was a new experience for the team. I think everyone is excited for what's next."

> "...Because the program was so new, no one really knew what to expect. But I was completely blown out of the water by their talent and commitment."
>
> **-Meghan Williams, Riordan Dance Team Coach**



In its first season, Riordan's flag football team captured the West Bay Athletic League's (WBAL) Skyline Division championship

Riordan Flag Football Team Makes History In First Season

A season that began with an inauspicious start ended with a historic triumph for the Riordan girls' flag football team, which took home a league title in its inaugural year playing the sport.

After losing their opening match 43-23 to Hillsdale, the Crusaders went on an unprecedented roll, winning 22 of their next 23 games en route to capturing the West Bay Athletic League's (WBAL) Skyline Division title, courtesy of a championship game victory against Saint Francis in the season finale.

Coach Jay'Sen Morris '07, who is also the Riordan Athletic Director, credited a simplified playbook and a renewed commitment from his team with the stunning turnaround.

"I was a little worried after that first game—I thought we might be in for a long season," said Morris. "But we came back after that loss and got an overtime win against Sequoia at home, and in that game, we showed a ton of improvement. Once the girls got the confidence from that win, there really was no looking back."

Despite it being the first year at Riordan, more than 60 girls tried out for flag football, with 24 making the final roster. Only a few had experience playing organized football, but that didn't prevent the team from embarking on their historic campaign. The Crusaders went undefeated in their league and outscored their opponents by an average of 18 points a game.

Flag football is played with seven players, with everyone eligible receivers on offense. There are a few "no-run" zones on the field and the games are played with two 20-minute halves.

Although some local schools had informal programs previously, The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) officially added girls' flag football as a sanctioned sport for the 2023-2024 school year.

Morris said he's already looking forward to next year, when the Crusaders will move up to the WBAL's Foothill Division. The 2025 season will also be the first to include Central Coast Section playoffs for the sport.

"I couldn't be prouder of our team last season," said Morris. "The girls really put in the hard work and commitment, and the results paid off. And we will have a really strong group of returning players next year. It should be another great season."







Motivated by an early loss, the flag football team closed its season by winning 22 of its last 23 games.

> "I couldn't be prouder of our team last season. The girls really put in the hard work and commitment, and the results paid off."
>
> **Jay'Sen Morris, Riordan Athletic Director & Girls' Flag Football Coach**

SCHOOL NEWS

Riordan's Close Up Washington D.C. 2025 Experience a Historic First for School

Although Riordan has been participating since the 1970s in Close Up—an annual initiative that brings youngsters from across the country to Washington, D.C. for a civics education experience—this year marked the first time in school history that students visited the nation's capital during an inauguration year.

"Because of the logistics and expenses, it's usually too difficult to visit during the Presidential Inauguration," said Grace Ingersoll, a social science instructor who helped oversee the visit. "But because of the heightened interest we noticed from the students, we decided to go during the swearing-in. It made for a different experience, but I think the students really appreciated it."



For this year's Close Up Washington program, Riordan students were on hand for the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

In a typical year, some 10 - 15 students take part in the Close Up, but this year, the maximum 30 enrolled in the experience, which took place over a week in January.

During typical visits, Close Up students tour Congress, visit landmarks and meet with representatives and aides from the local delegation, according to Jeff Isola '98, a Riordan social studies teacher who has taken part in about 10 Close Up Washington trips. Due to enhanced security for the inauguration, many of those regular features were unavailable to students, although they were still able to explore monuments and memorials across Washington, D.C., while attending various seminars. They watched the inauguration of President Donald Trump at a special remote screening.

While the itinerary was a little different than usual, Ingersoll said the students still all took away important life lessons from the visit.

"One of the reasons this trip has always been so important is because our students get to meet other kids from across the country," said Ingersoll. "They talked with people from Utah, Georgia, Kentucky—all over the place. And, many of those students had different political beliefs and different lived experiences. Our students were able to get outside their bubble and become close friends with people who might have different political views than them."



Riordan's Student Parliament helps oversee the various competitions between the school's Houses, pictured here.

Riordan's Student Parliament Allows School's House System to Flourish

With a variety of sports teams, clubs and activities, there is a unique experience in store for everyone at Riordan.

But the one endeavor that unites every student in every class is the House System. Adopted in 2017, the system randomly assigns every student—starting at their freshman year—into one of four houses: Cana, Bolts, Pilar and Russi.

The different houses compete in a series of academic and extracurricular events throughout the school year, bonding students together while strengthening their commitment to the Marianist values of service and leadership.

With a seemingly endless schedule of activities—including complex, multi-day events like the Frosh Olympics and the Crusader Games—management of the House System would seem like a daunting task, but Riordan's Student Parliament ably handles those expansive duties. Made up of two bodies—an Executive Board composed of seniors and juniors and a House Council of sophomores and freshmen—the Student Parliament helps determine scheduling, oversight, rules and regulations for the House's various competitions.

At the end of the year, the winning team is awarded the Chaminade Cup—a cherished piece of hardware that will endow its owners bragging rights for the following school term.

Benny Willers '08, Riordan's Student Activities Director who works with the Student Parliament, said the leadership team of the body largely acts on their own. He rarely has to intercede in their decision-making.

"The Student Parliament President really sets the tone," said Willers, who is also the Riordan cross country coach. "I'll touch base with them on certain things—ask them what their vision is, what they want to see happen—but I'm really here to facilitate more than anything. I think that's what makes them better—them taking pride in their leadership."

That pride was on display this academic year. After an unprecedented three-year reign, House of Cana finally ceded their Chaminade Cup title to House of Pilar.

That upset marked the culmination of a season-long effort by House of Pilar, but they can't rest on their laurels: the next round of competition starts in the fall.

St. Francis Scholars Embrace Acts of Service

Always a prestigious honor, Riordan's St. Francis Scholarship Award has taken on even greater significance for its student participants in recent times.

More than 100 Riordan students are recipients of the scholarship, which provides financial assistance to select students based on their exceptional academic achievement, performance on the High School Placement Test (HSPT), and demonstration of good character and citizenship.

Students must maintain a 3.5 grade point average to keep the scholarship and enrollees learn about different philosophers as part of a related program called Lyceum, which encourages them in different ways philosophically, analytically, and critically.

During this academic year, many scholars have expanded upon their academic duties with additional responsibilities, due in large part to the leadership of David Lin '99. Also the Director of Boarding at Riordan, Lin took over management of the St. Francis Scholars at the start of the school year, with a mission in mind to emphasize the acts of service component of the award.

"The first meeting I had with the students really focused on how they could give back to the community," said Lin. "I wanted to see how we could make this program more engaging. I viewed it as an opportunity for them to really hone their leadership skills and live up to the standards of being a St. Francis Scholar."



Riordan students such as Katelyn Tzang are embracing acts of service as part of the St. Francis Scholars program.

Under Lin's tutelage, St. Francis Scholars have volunteered at Glide Memorial Church, the San Francisco Food Bank and at various Ocean Beach cleanup efforts. Lin said a solid core of students have consistently taken part in those endeavors, inspiring their fellow students to join in as well.

"Serving food to homeless people in the Tenderloin provides some very important perspective for these kids," said Lin. "I think they all gain a little bit of gratitude for their situations. It sets them up for a future where they're committed to serving others."



St. Francis Scholars Benjamin Estrada (L) and Liam Falcon (R).

Riordan's Community Service Program Updated for Modern Times

SERVIAM, the service commitment required of Riordan students, will return this fall after a years long absence, with the new initiative modernized to better serve the students and the communities they serve.

For decades, Riordan students were mandated to complete 100 hours of community service over their four-year tenure at the school. However, in recent times, that program was being re-evaluated to emphasize quality over quantity, said Alex Datoc '87, Riordan's Director of Campus Ministry.

"We felt that, for many students, they were just counting hours—there wasn't a real commitment to the tasks at hand," said Datoc. "We wanted to find something more meaningful for them."

The school was originally set to reform SERVIAM to sync up more closely with the Riordan House system, but those efforts were waylaid by the pandemic.

Upon returning to in-person classes, Datoc, Campus Ministry, and other Riordan administrators began exploring their options and soon arrived at MobileServe, an app that identifies and tracks community service opportunities around the globe.

Starting in the fall, Riordan students will be required to complete two MobileServe tasks a year—one focused on internal duties within the school, and the other related to outside, community service acts.

"MobileServe is a pretty amazing app that provides an assortment of community service opportunities," said Datoc. "And it has geotagging, so students could theoretically participate when they're traveling or on vacation."

> "People are excited about this—there is definitely a little buzz. We're excited to bring back service to religion and have our students out in the community again."
>
> **Alex Datoc, Director of Campus Ministry**

Latin for "I Will Serve," SERVIAM is connected with Marianist tradition and derived from the "Wedding feast at Cana" where Mary says to the servants, "Do Whatever He Tells You," is aimed at cultivating student-leaders. The SERVIAM requirements will be part of the curriculum for Riordan's religion class, which is mandatory for all students.

"People are excited about this—there is definitely a little buzz," said Datoc. "We're excited to bring back service to religion and have our students out in the community again."

WHAT IS SERVIAM?

SERVIAM is a Latin word for ***"I will serve."*** Following the Marianist tradition and inspired by the example of Mary, the community service program aims to form students to be servant-leaders through various experiential learning opportunities on and off campus, thus, cultivating a culture of service among the students.

SERVIAM is categorized into two areas: the ***"Cry of the Poor"*** and the ***"Cry of the Earth,"*** and is structured following the ***Characteristics of Marianist Education*** (CME's) namely: Faith Formation, Integral Quality Education, Family Spirit, Service, Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation, and Adaptation & Change

SERVIAM encourages students to find their interests within these categories, do reflections, and share their learning experiences with their classmates and peers.



Renderings show a new student plaza set to undergo construction this summer.

New Improvement Projects Set to Take Place This Summer

When students return to Riordan this fall, the campus will look decidedly different, courtesy of several beautification and improvement projects.

The most noticeable change will take place in the southwest corner of the school, where an underutilized and neglected courtyard will be transformed into a vibrant gathering spot for students.

Over the summer, landscaping work will take place, with greenery, foliage and plants added to the plaza, taking advantage of the ample natural sunlight present at the space. Crews will remove a storage shed and old wooden tables and replace them with patio decking and new, modernized furniture.

Once completed, the new plaza will be used as a collaborative study space for students to congregate and connect during the school day. It will also act as another hosting space for Riordan community and fundraising events.

"As the school has grown over the past 5 years, and we have implemented open periods in our schedule, the need for spaces that both our students and teachers can use to work, relax, and connect has grown," said Nate Simon '99, Riordan's Vice Principal of Academics. "The new student park will do all of this while also beautifying a central part of our campus."

The new student park continues a recent series of improvement projects at Riordan, designed to meet the growing enrollment of the school.

This work started with the remodeling of the library two summers ago, and included the renovation of the Mary Courtyard to include furniture and terraces. Additionally, the school plans to replace its flooring with a modernized surface, providing a safer environment for students and faculty.



Top photos: An old Riordan tradition, the "Cow Plop" returned this year as a fundraising event for the school. Bottom Photos: This year's Crab Feed was the most successful such fundraiser in school history.

Revived "Cow Plop" Part of Successful Riordan Fundraising Efforts

A revived tradition involving a cow and its "plops" was part of a banner year for Riordan's fundraising efforts.

In lieu of the school's annual gala, the Riordan fundraising team opted to dust off its annual "Cow Plop" event this year. A fundraising hallmark of the 1990s for the school's athletic program, the event involves a cow being trotted onto the athletic field, where it promptly relieves itself on a makeshift bingo board. Whoever has the winning number–as determined by the cow's "plop"—takes home the raffle winnings. As the event hadn't been hosted in more than 15 years, tracking down an available cow was a little challenging this year, but Riordan Director of Special Events Jill Micheli was able to make some magic work, courtesy of a connection with the nearby Angelo Farms. The owner of that establishment, Alex Polvoff '01 , happens to be a Riordan alumnus and he happily provided a bovine companion to serve as the resident cow plopper for the fundraiser, which took place on April 12.

Even though the cow didn't quite perform–no official "plop" was recorded–the fundraiser was a huge success, with 89 squares sold for $1000 each, according to Micheli. The winner of the contest–Riordan alum Tony Panteoloni '70–was determined after a number was pulled out of the bingo cage.

"It really was a full circle event," said Micheli. "Tony is a board member at the Cow Palace, which is where we got the cows from for the original Cow Plop."

All proceeds from the Cow Plop went toward the school's new Student Park and to Tuition Assistance programs.

The success of that event followed an equally stellar Crab Feed fundraiser held on January 18. That event, which sold out in just 17 minutes, featured more than 500 pounds of crab served to some 500 attendees.

It was staffed by 27 student servers and 40 adult volunteers, with the final result netting the school $32,000–the most money ever raised by a Riordan Crab Feed, according to Micheli.

ALUMNI

Bobby and Dimitri Vardakastanis Bring Riordan Experiences to Gus's Community Markets

Spend more than 10 minutes with Bobby '01 and Dimitri Vardakastanis '00 at one of their local Gus's Community Markets and it will seem like you've been transported to a family reunion.

The two brothers, who both graduated from Riordan, seemingly know every customer at their locally owned chain of grocery stores. Bobby and Dimitri cannot go a minute without being recognized and thanked by a loyal shopper, and the feeling is very much reciprocated—the two spend most of their time asking customers about their health, families, work updates, and other topics reflective of their lifelong connections to San Francisco.

"We grew up helping out at our stores, so a lot of these customers have known us since we were kids," said Bobby Vardakastanis, who graduated from Riordan in 2001. "It really does make it feel like a family."

The first Vardakastanis family market opened in 1981 on Haight-Ashbury and four years later a second produce store was opened in the Sunset District. Over the years, three more stores were opened throughout San Francisco, all eventually being named Gus's Community Market. The stores were named in honor of Bobby and Dimitri's father, Gus, the founder of the stores, who was tragically killed in a hit-and-run accident in 2017.

Gus instilled the importance of family for the Vardakastanis sons, and both Bobby and Dimitri recognized that same kind of emphasis on kinship while attending Riordan, which was just a short walk away from the family home in Sunnyside.

"Our family was close knit—we grew up with our grandparents and we would always have Sunday dinners together," said Dimitri, who graduated from Riordan in 2000. "And we saw that same sense of togetherness while attending Riordan. There was a flood of unity within the school, whether it was the administration or the student body or the

> "We grew up helping out at our stores, so a lot of these customers have known us since we were kids. It really does make it feel like a family."
>
> **Bobby Vardakastanis '01**

teachers. It really felt like an extension of our family, which we really respected. We tried to bring that same sense of connection to our stores."

Both Vardakastanis brothers played football at Riordan, so they witnessed that camaraderie firsthand through their experiences with sports. They also credited teacher and longtime Riordan mainstay Ron Isola with keeping them engaged during their studies at school.

"Mr. Isola was my history teacher," said Bobby. "He was a really funny, interesting guy. I still kind of chuckle to myself when I think about taking those classes."

After graduating, the brothers immediately entered into the family business, a decision that was daunting at first. With their father's blessing, they set about expanding their footprint, bringing new stores to neighborhoods like Mission Bay and Diamond Heights.

"Our dad always taught us that if you work hard, you can make a living," said Dimitri. "But at the same time, we all knew it was time to make change. It's hard to survive as a small bodega when you're competing against Whole Foods. We decided to think about the long term—to put a model



Gus's Community Markets' owners and Riordan alumni Dimitri (L) and Bobby (R) Vardakastanis credit the school for instilling the importance of a sense of community to their work.

out there that could not only survive into the next generation, but thrive."

"We were a little nervous," said Bobby. "But they always say, if any entrepreneur isn't scared, there's something wrong with them. The one thing that has always been universal for us are the numbers—if it doesn't work out on paper, we don't do it."

Fortunately for the Vardakastanis brothers, the numbers have been working out great. All five Gus's Community Markets are thriving, with customers coming in for an experience that feels unique and wholly San Francisco.

While their network of grocery stores has been growing, the Vardakastanis brothers have also been keeping close tabs on the ongoing development at their alma mater. Bobby's daughter, Giordia, recently wrapped up her freshman year and Dimitri's two younger children are eyeing the school as a possibility. The brothers have been impressed with the growth of Riordan since their departures.

"Everything we've seen with the boarding program and the school being co-ed has been really exciting," said Bobby. "I mean, when we were in school, we didn't have to worry about how we looked, or how we smelled. We just kind of rolled out of bed and showed up. It's a good thing that times have changed now."

The brothers said they've kept in touch with their fellow Riordan classmates, many of whom are frequent visitors to their stores. It's a reminder of the lasting takeaways they forged from attending the school.

"When we decided to expand, we made it a point to update our name to be Gus's Community Market," said Dimitri. "That was so important to us—to show that we are part of a community. And I think a lot of that feeling was shaped by going to Riordan."

Riordan Alumnae Are Now School's First Female College Grads

Being a high school student in the year 2020 required a Herculean commitment.

The pandemic completely upended the daily lives of millions of teenagers. Sports seasons were canceled. Carefully detailed plans for college were scrubbed or drastically changed. In-person learning shifted to online classes, presenting new challenges.

And on top of all that, Gianna DiGiulio '21 was dealing with the impending closure of her high school.

Mercy High School, a longtime sister school to Riordan, announced that it was closing its doors in January 2020, and DiGiulio needed to find a new school to finish out her senior year.

Already familiar with Riordan due to the Mercy connections and because her father is an alumnus, DiGiulio felt comfortable with the potential school change. Those sentiments were only enhanced by DiGiulio's initial conversations with Riordan teachers, faculty and administrative leaders.

"I met with so many people and they all left such a good impression on me," said DiGiulio. "Everyone was so supportive—they were all asking me what I wanted to do my senior year at Riordan. I mentioned student government, and they said, 'we'll make sure you can do that.' And then I mentioned wanting a dance class, and they said, 'we'll make that happen too. It was all about making me feel comfortable and capable of growing as a student, just like I would have at Mercy."

Although Coral Shafer '20 did not attend Mercy, she had a similar initial encounter with Riordan officials. Coming off her junior year at Oceana High School in Pacifica, Shafer was looking for a change. She had a host of potential schools on her list, but she quickly decided on Riordan, due in large part to the warm reception she received.



Alumna Gianna DiGiulio, part of Riordan's first female class of students, recently graduated from USC.

"It felt like the perfect opportunity at the perfect time for me," said Shafer. "At the end of my junior year, I knew I needed to go somewhere else, but I really didn't know where I would fit in. And then Riordan started accepting females and it was just like the gates opened up for me. I wanted to build something myself and be a part of a new community. And Riordan was the perfect fit for that."

Despite the many obstacles presented by the pandemic and a completely new learning dynamic, Shafer and DiGiulio not only survived their senior years—they thrived. In addition to her numerous extracurricular activities, DiGiulio was named Co-Student Body President. Shafer was her class Salutatorian and delivered a stirring speech at the Riordan 2021 graduation—the first to feature female students in school history.

The two students recently completed their studies at their respective universities. With that accomplishment, they



Alumna Coral Shafer said going to Riordan was the "perfect opportunity" for her.

"I'm first-generation, so I didn't have anyone in my family to really share that kind of college advice. But I think stepping out of my comfort zone in making the decision to go to Riordan was incredibly helpful in getting me ready for college."

Gianna DiGiulio, '20

added another noteworthy feat to their trailblazing legacies—being among the first collection of Riordan alumnae to graduate college.

DiGiulio graduated from the University of Southern California, majoring in public relations. Shafer wrapped up her career at Seattle University with a degree in nursing.

Both cited their experience with Riordan as essential preparation for their tenure in college.

"I'm first-generation, so I didn't have anyone in my family to really share that kind of college advice," said DiGiulio, who was born and raised in San Francisco. "But I think stepping out of my comfort zone in making the decision to go to Riordan was incredibly helpful in getting me ready for college. It made going away to school where I didn't really know anybody a lot more possible."

"For most people, that transition from high school to college—from not knowing anyone or the area at all—can be very scary," said Shafer. "But for me, I feel like I already had that experience."

With both students focusing on their next phase of life—Shafer and DiGiulio expressed a desire to pursue their professional careers in Seattle and Los Angeles, respectively—they've been able to take a moment to reflect on their place in Riordan history.

"At the time, everything was so hectic," said DiGiulio. "I didn't really process anything. But toward the end of my senior year at Riordan I was able to appreciate that more—to understand that we are making this easier for the next generation of females. And now, to be the first ones graduating college, it's a reminder of how we were part of this special group."

Tony Sanchez-Corea ’80 Recognized with Chaminade Award, Riordan’s Top Honor



Riordan President Tim Reardon (L) presents Tony Sanchez-Corea with the school’s Chaminade Award.

Tony Sanchez-Corea ’80 was honored in January with the Blessed William Joseph Chaminade Award in recognition of a life and career that exemplifies and upholds the values of Archbishop Riordan High School.

The Chaminade Award recognizes those within the Riordan family who embody the spirit of service and loyalty while contributing significantly to the school’s mission. This award—the highest honor at Riordan—has been delivered annually to alumni, faculty, staff and benefactors since 1975.

Mr. Sanchez-Corea was a standout student and athletic performer while at Riordan, earning a reputation as one of the toughest and most physical players to ever don a Crusaders football jersey while also garnering praise for his leadership skills and humility off the field.

After graduating high school, Mr. Sanchez-Corea continued to embrace the Marianist spirit he learned at Riordan. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from San Jose State University, where he started on a nationally ranked Spartans football team. He later joined his father at ARS & Associates, Inc, where he learned every aspect of the construction consulting business.

Upon joining ARS in 1984, Mr. Sanchez-Corea evinced the same kind of transformative leadership that he honed and developed while at Riordan. Under his guidance as President, ARS has built a reputation for honesty, expertise, and a deep respect for clients and industry professionals.



Sanchez-Corea speaks at the Chaminade Award Ceremony

With more than 30 years of experience, Mr Sanchez-Correa has led ARS to consult on hundreds of historic renovations and new construction projects throughout the Bay Area, including almost all of Riordan’s major projects. His dedication to his profession has earned him significant esteem, while his commitment to the community and to Riordan High School has been unwavering.

“San Francisco, known for its notoriously challenging bureaucracy and complex regulations—where even a small single-family home remodel can take years to approve—presented no match for Tony’s expertise and determination,” said Brian Spiers, President of the Board of Trustees and last year’s Chaminade honoree. “Thanks to his deep knowledge of building codes and the city’s permitting process, he successfully secured permits for Riordan’s recent large-scale projects, including the athletic field, the library, the dorm expansion, and the counseling center.”



Sanchez-Corea joins a prestigious list of awardees for Riordan’s top honor.

In addition to Mr. Sanchez-Correa’s work schedule, he actively serves on many boards and committees, including the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Order of Malta. He has also played a critical role as a member of Riordan’s Board of Trustees, where his leadership continues to inspire and guide our school.

“Tony shares not only his knowledge and talent about construction projects with Riordan—he and his wife Karen also give generously to the school,” said Simon Chiu, Riordan’s Vice President of Advancement. “In fact, Tony's generosity to his alma mater extends out to his entire family. His mother, Lucille, has been a committed supporter of Riordan's tuition assistance program for decades.”

As a student, athlete, professional, and servant leader, Mr. Sanchez-Corea exemplifies the values Riordan celebrates with the Chaminade Award. His life’s work reflects faith, service, and excellence, and his positive influence on Archbishop Riordan High School cannot be understated.

Riordan Class Notes

Rick Saber ’56



Many of the values given to Rick at Riordan have been instrumental in guiding his life. As a Navy Vietnam Vet, he’s been the Commander of VFW Post 7816 for the past three years. Many positive changes have brought his Post exceptional community involvement and positive reviews in the media. As a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, he also understands the needs and concerns of both his Post as well as the many charities and organizations one becomes involved in. Rick says, “God Bless Riordan, God Bless our Flag and Country.”

John Malone ’61

John is still on the green side of the grass. He’s been married to the same lady from Lincoln High School for 57 years. He’s many years retired, but still riding his bicycle about 100 miles a week. He plays the ukulele with a couple of senior groups. He says, “With 80 in the rear view mirror, life is good. Proud to be a Crusader.”

Class of 1964

The Riordan Class of 1964 completed its 150th hike on October 8, 2024. The group started in 2009 and have hiked all over the Bay Area and beyond. Pictured below is the group after its Golden Gate Bridge trek to celebrate our accomplishment at the Beach Chalet in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. From Riordan alum, **Bob O’Donnell ’64**: “While our Classmates are the core of the group, we have happily included other friends along the way. Now we have set our sights on Number 200!”

Dan O’Neill ’68

Dan’s fifth book has just come out. It’s called “The Impertinent Question: The Words & Adventures of a Liberal Columnist at a Conservative Newspaper in the Red State of Alaska.” It collects Dan’s political commentary, as well as sketches of inimitable Alaska characters and slices of Alaskan life--dog mushing, hunting, trapping, fishing, log cabin building (all of which I’ve done in my 50 years in the state). Dan dedicated the book to a handful of my teachers, and three are former Riordan faculty. To quote from the dedication: “To my teachers, especially ... J. Brian Finegan, literature teacher with the highest standards and a disinclination to compromise; Bro. J. Patrick Dunn, tough-as-they-come history and civics teacher, who also opened up the gym for us after hours and joined us in basketball games; Fr. Peter Choo, provoker of philosophical thought who wisely allowed us to grapple with moral issues however we might.” In several places in the book, he credits the instruction he received in how to engage the moral philosophical issues of the day, an exercise more necessary today than ever.

Class of 1970

In January the Riordan Class of 1970 had dinner at the Fior d Italia, part of a tradition where the group meets every three months for dinner. The January dinner had the best attendance ever, with 19 members of the class.



Members of the Riordan Class of 1964 on their 150th hike.



Riordan Class of 1970 at dinner in January.

Jeffrey Milla ‘73

Jeff was born and raised in San Francisco and attended public schools from kindergarten through 8th grade. He transferred to Riordan in 1969 as an incoming freshman and graduated in 1973. After graduation, he attended City College for two years. In 1979 he married Maryann Ciappara, a Presentation High graduate. In September of 1979, he went to work for Beronio Lumber Company where he sold lumber and plywood for the next 45 years. Jeff and Maryann raised three children in San Francisco who all attended Catholic schools. They now have six grandchildren who live in San Francisco, Daly City, and Rockwell, Texas. On August 2nd, 2024 Jeff retired after working at the same company for 45 years. He and his wife have attended basketball and football games at Riordan for the last 35 years. They are both active at many Riordan functions. Jeff is the new Alumni Association President and he hopes to grow attendance in a way that represents all the young men and women who have graduated from Archbishop Riordan. Jeff says, “We can really help support Riordan with so many new young graduates that can continue the Purple and Gold traditions that we all fostered on campus over the last 76 years!”

Class of 1976

The Class of 1976 quarterly lunch was held at the Basque Center in South San Francisco recently. The Class of 1976 was well represented by more than 30 Crusaders, with everyone having a great time (30+ Crusaders.) In true Crusader style, the group also crashed the St. John’s reunion in the Ballroom next door, having some great laughs with the ladies about old times, according to alum **Kevin Herman**. “It’s great to see what a positive impact Riordan has had on so many lives, and it continues every day,” said Herman. “I hope to see other classmates in the future–we have a good crowd and it’s always a lot of fun.”

John Feeley ’77



John is married to Laetitia and has two kids, Aidan and Caiti, who are both St. Francis grads working in data analysis. Since Graduating from USF, John has spent 45 years in broadcasting, including KNBR, KTVU and nearly 20 years with NBC. He also spent 10 years as VP of Sales at NBC Sports Bay Area and is the former Chairman of the Board of the Giants Community Fund (Junior Giants).

Pablo Oropeza ’93



Pablo lives in the town of Half Moon Bay with his wife and two kids. He managed the family restaurant Half Moon Bay Joe’s for the last 23 years. Pablo enjoys cooking and serving the public in HMB. He’s looking forward to returning to Riordan to see his nephew play sports in the fall of 2025. He enjoys attending his kid’s soccer games with the HMB Club team and traveling to Mexico with his family to enjoy the festivals. Pablo said Riordan will always have a special place in his life with great memories with the great brotherhood of Crusaders.

Riordan Class Notes



Eric Maldonado '93 (center)

Eric Maldonado '93

Eric is a servant leader, an expert in the financial industry and passionate small business advocate with a long track record of grassroots community building across the Bay Area. As Business Development Manager at Redwood Credit Union, he leads strategic initiatives in the North Bay and San Francisco markets to increase market share and inclusivity of financial products and services to businesses, with a strong focus on economic inclusion for BIPOC and underserved communities.

Joseph Tice '94

Joseph started Watchman Group, LLC in May 2024.

Frank Villanueva '01



Frank has built a successful real estate career over the past decade, culminating in the launch of his own real estate group with Compass, The Villa Group. He lives with his wife and their two young boys in the Outer Sunset and spends much of his time watching and coaching the many sports they're involved in. Frank remains closely connected to the Riordan community and is excited to have a niece starting as a freshman this fall.

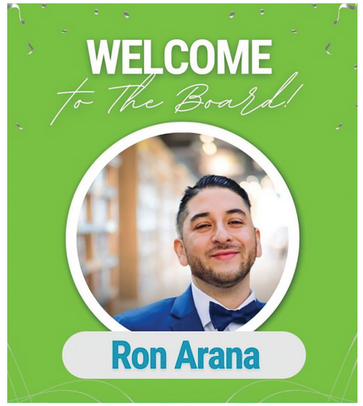
Roland Canales '01

After graduating in 2001, Ronald attempted the "traditional" college route, but found his way into the trades in early 2006. He was initiated into the United Association of Plumbers & Pipe-fitters Union for San Mateo County in 2010. After completing five years of apprenticeship, he commuted from the City to Santa Clara County to help build the Apple "Space Shuttle," installing the main water lines in the lower levels of the one-mile radius building. Over the next couple years, he was back working closer to home. In March of 2019, Ronald was promoted to the position of Foreman for Silicon Valley Mechanical, where he assists in leading the field crews for new construction and tenant improvement projects in commercial, bio-tech, and private properties today. His wife, Erica, met Ronald in January of 1999 and they have been together ever since. She's no stranger to the Riordan campus, attending ball games, dances, and getting to know Ronald's brothers he graduated with. Needless to say, those brothers have been with Ronald still throughout the years. Erica and Ronalad were married in 2009 and we have two daughters, Tyina and Neila. Tyina, class of 2027, now carries the Riordan legacy representing the Purple & Gold on the volleyball court. Neila, currently at St. Paul's, is already an aspiring Crusader for the class of 2034 with the encouragement of Tyina and her teammates, along with her Uncle Dave '02.

Justin Field '02

Justin and his wife recently welcomed their third son and he also just published a novel called "To Be Known," which is now available on Amazon.

Ron Arana '02



Ron is currently the Chief Operator of Arana Group, a San Francisco-based general contracting firm focused on building civic and community-centered projects. Ron was recently asked to join the Board of Directors at Rebuilding Together San Francisco in January of 2025 and also was honored to join the Alumni Board at Riordan, representing the Class of 2002!

Ryan Brown '04

Ryan is the current owner and director of Rebels Elite SF. They are a competitive cheerleading program focused on elite teams as well as classes for ages 3-19+. He has been an owner since 2021, when he took over the company (he was a former athlete). He is also the head coach of Mercy Burlingame cheering team, as of May 2024.

Greg Bianculli '05

Greg has been able to start and fund his own private personal business. He has been married for the last six years and has been together with his wife for 10 years now. He loves what he's been doing for the last 15 years and has been extremely successful doing so. Greg says, "Shoutout to the Class of 2005! Riordan Pride All Day!"

Tony Erlec '05

After earning a degree in Business Marketing from USF, Tony spent time working with several Bay Area tech companies—helping one through an IPO—before taking the plunge into the restaurant world and co-owning a local spot in San Francisco. These experiences eventually led him to a fulfilling career in real estate. For over 10 years, he has been helping clients buy, sell, and invest with a local's eye and a dedication to great service. Tony lives in Nob Hill, running the hills (sometimes literally) and soaking in the magic of the city he still calls home. In June 2022, he married his partner in Prague, Czech Republic, and they have continued their love of travel ever since—spending summers in Tahoe and recently enjoying a month-long adventure through Spain.

Chris Corgas '06



Chris currently works as the Deputy Director of the Community Economic Development Division at the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development and continues to serve as gubernatorial appointee on the 1-A District Agricultural Association (Cow Palace) Board of Directors alongside fellow alum, Anthony Pantaleoni. Chris got engaged to his fiancee, Xiomara, in April 2025.

Kobi Allen '16



A proud member of the Minnesota Twins' community outreach team, Kobi works closely with the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) Program—a global initiative that reaches underserved youth in over 200 cities worldwide. Through baseball clinics, skills camps, and mentorship programs, Kevin helps young athletes—many from under-resourced communities—develop not just as players, but as confident, resilient people. Now based in Minneapolis, Kobi's heart remains rooted in the lessons of Riordan High School and the Bayview District where he spent his childhood. He makes time to visit the two people he credits above all—his mom and dad—whose guidance has given him the life he leads now.

GRADUATION



Class of 2024 College Matriculation

University of Arizona
Barnard College
Boise State University
Butte College
University of British Columbia
University of California
- Berkeley
- Davis
- Irvine
- Los Angeles
- Merced
- Riverside
- San Diego
- Santa Cruz

California College of the Arts
California Lutheran University
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
San Luis Obispo
California State University, Chico
Fresno
Fullerton
Sacramento
San Diego
San Francisco
San Jose
Sonoma
California State University Maritime Academy
Chaminade University of Honolulu
Chapman University
City College of San Francisco
College of San Mateo
Colorado College
Colorado Mountain College
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University, Fort Collins
Creighton University
DeAnza College
DePaul University
DePauw University
Dominican University of California
Eastern Arizona College
Florida International University
Foothill College
Gonzaga University
Gustavus Adolphus College
Harvey Mudd College
Hope College
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Indiana University Bloomington
University of Iowa
Lawrence University
Lewis and Clark College
Louisiana State University
University of Louisville
Loyola Marymount University
Maastricht University
Marquette University
University of Miami
Montana State University
University of Nevada, Reno
New York University
Northeastern University
Northern Arizona University
The Ohio State University
University of Oregon
Oregon State University
University of the Pacific
Pepperdine University
University of Portland
University of Puget Sound
Saint Mary's College of California
St. Olaf College
San Bernardino Valley College
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
Santa Barbara Community College
Santa Clara University
Skyline College
University of Southern California
Stanford University
Stevens Institute of Technology
Syracuse University
University of Utah
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Xavier University

Members of the Class of 2025 are also joining the workforce, continuing their education in their home countries, and enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces—one in the Air Force National Guard and the other in the Coast Guard. Additionally, one student is taking a gap year to participate in the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) scholarship program in Bulgaria, funded by the Department of State.













All grad photos by Ryan Garcia

GRADUATION





















All grad photos by Ryan Garcia

















All grad photos by Ryan Garcia

Celebrating Senior Awards



Blessed Jakob Gapp Award
Exemplifying the Betterment of Society in the Marianist Family Spirit

Bobby Gutierrez & Hoorain Farooq



Jesse Cortez Award
Exemplifying Commitment and Loyalty to the Archbishop Riordan Community

Vincent Douglass & Katelyn Leong



Joe Dominguez School Spirit Award
Exemplifying the True Spirit of a Riordan Crusader

Hana Wadlow & Octavio Hoglund

Photos by Loghan Hwang ’27 and Riley Bautista ’26



Edward Fennelly Award
Exemplifying Athletic Excellence as a Riordan Crusader

Jasir Rencher & Josie Espinoza-Schleicher

Bill Blanchard Award
Exemplifying Marianist Family Spirit as Riordan Crusader through their Association with Athletics

Sean Reyes & Alexandra Niel





James Sabolboro Award
Exemplifying Excellence in the Arts

Siddharth Thomas & Fiona Mulderrig

Tyrone McGraw Award
Exemplifying the Archbishop Riordan Crusader, Spirit of Excellence, lived by Tyrone McGraw

John Tofi & Caroline O’Connell



Archbishop Riordan High School
175 Frida Kahlo Way
San Francisco, CA 94112

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UPCOMING FALL EVENTS

Annual Golf Tournament

Monday, October 27
Harding Park

Football Alumni Tailgate

Saturday, October 11, 11:00 AM
Football game v. SI