
SANTA MARGARITA
EAGLE FOUNDATION
A FOUNDATION FOR SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Impact
Report
2025–2026



SANTA MARGARITA EAGLE FOUNDATION

Impact Report

2025–2026

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SANTA MARGARITA
EAGLE FOUNDATION
A FOUNDATION FOR SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Santa Margarita Families, Alumni, Grandparents and Friends,

As we reflect on the 2025-2026 school year, we do so with deep gratitude and a renewed appreciation for the remarkable community that surrounds and sustains our school. The school year's theme, *a year of Humility,* invited us to pause, listen, learn, and recognize that our greatest accomplishments are never achieved alone. Rather, they are made possible through the collective generosity, dedication, and support of people who believe in our mission and invest in the future of our students.

Throughout the year, we witnessed countless examples of this spirit in action. Parents volunteered their time, alumni remained engaged and connected, faculty and staff poured their hearts into their work, and donors generously supported opportunities that enriched the educational experience for every student. Your commitment reminded us that humility is not about stepping back; it is about recognizing the strength that comes from serving something greater than ourselves.

Because of your generosity, students were able to explore new opportunities, grow as leaders, develop their talents, and pursue excellence both inside and outside the classroom. Your support helped create an environment where young people could learn with confidence, face challenges with resilience, and discover the values that will guide them throughout their lives.

As a Foundation, we are continually inspired by the trust you place in us, our school and our mission. Our gifts, advocacy, and partnership have a lasting impact that extends far beyond a single academic year. Together, we are building a legacy that will benefit generations of students to come.

On behalf of the Foundation board, staff and our entire school community, thank you for your belief in our students and your unwavering support. The past year once again reminded us that generosity flourishes when people come together in service of a common purpose. We are honored to be part of this extraordinary Eagle family and excited for all that lies ahead.

In Eagle Spirit,

Jeff Cova
BOARD CHAIR

Laurie Beach
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025-2026 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Cova, *Chair*
Jodie (Julian '94) Cerruti
Sean Crafts '92
Nick Maroutsos '95
Jim Svinth
Shannon (Edwards '97) Wernemar
Kevin Winters

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Lisa (Paulsen '94) Hartung
Nick Maroutsos '95
Frank Pisano
Jim Svinth

OFFICERS

J. Andrew Sulick '91, *President*
Sergio Muniz '91, *Secretary*
Michelle Balash Lencioni, *Treasurer*
Laurie Beach, *Executive Director, Ex-Officio*
Randy Redwitz, *Ex-Officio*

FOUNDATION STAFF

Cori Armstrong
Foundation Assistant

Michelle Balash Lencioni,
Accounting Manager

Nicole Nemerofsky '21,
Publications & Alumni Coordinator

Lauren Rice, *Special Events and Annual Fund Manager*

Shannon Smith, *Operations Manager*

SMCHS ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

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President

Fr. Matthew Maxwell
Rector

Cheri L. Wood
Principal

Michelle Cho
Assistant Principal, Academic Innovation

Sammer Darwazeh
Assistant Principal, Campus Life

Monique (Gerlach '00) Harrison
Assistant Principal, Academics

John Hayek
Assistant Principal

Sergio Muniz '91
Vice President

Tom Smith
Assistant Principal, Student Services

Patrick Visconti '06
Assistant Principal, Mission & Formation





THE EAGLE FUND

GIVING EVERY EAGLE, EVERY DAY WINGS TO SOAR!

CAMPUS SAFETY

Maintain and enhance campus safety and security measures for students, faculty and staff.



CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

Expand the athletic training room to better serve our 1,500 student-athletes through injury prevention, evaluation, rehabilitation, and enhanced opportunities for student athletic trainers.



TUITION ASSISTANCE

Provide financial support for students and families in need.



INNOVATION

Ongoing faculty training and classroom integration of generative AI tools to prepare students for the future.



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY!

READ MORE WWW.SMEAGLEFOUNDATION.ORG/EF

YOUR IMPACT



EAGLE FUND

$1,269,473

total raised

Faculty & Staff
contributed
$28,221
that went to the "Eagles Giving to Eagles" scholarship

PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

$318,140

raised

EAGLE CLASSIC

$355,228

raised

BLUE AND GOLD

Net Raised:

$284,625

In Honor of **Mr. Trotter**: "Thank you Mr. Trotter! You are the best!!!"
The Dygean Family

In honor of **Mr. Cou**, "Muchas Gracias"
The Allen Family

"Thank you so much, **Mrs. Olivor**, for all that you do, especially for the dedication and support to help your students make the right college decisions for themselves!"
Marielle Baje

In Honor of **Coach Sinan Tanik**
"Thanks for all your hard work and support."
Seena

In Honor of **Ms. Archuleta** - "Thank you for being an inspirational teacher and making Sports Med one of my favorite classes."
Anonymous

In honor of **Sammer Darwazeh**, **Christa Crafts**, **Laurie Beach** & **Lauren Rice**, "Thank you for all of you help with the arrangements you made for our family at the graduation ceremony!"
Bill & Jeannette Asher

DEDICATIONS

EAGLE FUND GIFTS DEDICATED TO FACULTY AND STAFF

In Honor of **Martial Yapo** - "Thank you for always believing in me and being supportive!"
Riley Partridge '26

In Honor of Nurse **Rebecca Wood** - "Thank you for all that you do to make our school a safe and special place to be."
Anonymous

"Thank you **Susie Hernandez** for all the work that you do to make our school a special place to be!"
Anonymous

In Honor of **Mrs. Feeman** - "You were patient and taught me well...thank you."
The Huey-Nazareno Family

In Honor of - **Mr. Huerta**, "Thank you Mr. Huerta!"
The Dygean Family

Mr. Hirschman - "I didn't like the tests, but you taught me skiills that I will use the rest of my life."
The Huey-Nazareno Family

In Honor of **Dr. Maria Johnson**- "Thank you for all you have done for the wonderful IB program, and your love of students and their success."
Dr. Mike & Susan Katsaros

EAGLE FUND

In Honor of **Lori Evers** - "Thank you for being and amazing Parent Liaison."
Stephen & Jacqueline Kelley

In Honor of **Jim Hartigan** - "Prepared me for life mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Forever in your debt."
Jolene & Shane Mielke '91

In Honor of **Carley Gordon** - "Fantastic teacher who truly cares about her students".
Semira Bayati MD, FACS

In Honor of **Mr. Vanderwilt**, **Ms. Archuleta**, **Ms. Gieser**, **Ms. Thomas**, **Mr. Dolensky**, **Mr. Remmel** and **Mr. Gomez**
Ryan Nouri '26 & Family

In Honor- **Miss Archuleta**- "Thank you so much for being a great teacher! Will miss you next year!"
Kali Boice '26

In Honor of **Alicia Sayles**
Art & Karen Sayles

In Honor of Coach **Kelly Petite**, "SM girls lacrosse rocks!"
Anonymous

"Thank you for guiding our children!"
Ani Freeman

DEDICATIONS

EAGLE FUND GIFTS DEDICATED TO FACULTY AND STAFF

In Honor of **Faculty/Staff** "Courtney enjoys the variety of opportunities SMCHS offers."
The Tran Family

"Thanks **Laurie** & **Andy** for another great year."
Marco '96 & Jolene (Shurlock '96) Vartanian

In Honor of **Coach Buich**, "Thank you Coach Buich for guidance, support and tireless efforts for our team!
The Wu Family

In Honor of **Ms. Tammy Thilken** - "Exceptional educator and great role model."
Semira Bayati MD, FACS

In Honor of the **Class of 2026** & **SM Faculty** & **Staff**: "Best wishes to the class of 2026 and much appreciation and thanks to faculty and staff!"
The Dygean Family

In Honor of **Coach Sinan Tanik** "Thanks for all your hard work and support."
Anonymous

In Recognition of **John Remmell**
Anonymous




JUSTICE
GOODNESS
WELCOME





BLUE AND GOLD 2025

Thank you to everyone who supported **Blue and Gold — A Gilded Soiree: Roaring Into Celebration!** With 365 guests in attendance, Blue and Gold 2025 raised a net total of $284,625, including $156,350 from the Fund A Student paddle raise. Your support makes a profound impact on every student at Santa Margarita Catholic High School.




THIS TABLE IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED
THE KEIL FAMILY

EAGLE CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thank you to everyone who joined us in supporting the 2026 Eagle Classic Golf Tournament. Be sure to save the date of March 8, 2027 for this year's tournament.









280 GOLFERS

34 ATHLETIC TEAMS & PROGRAMS

$355,228 RAISED

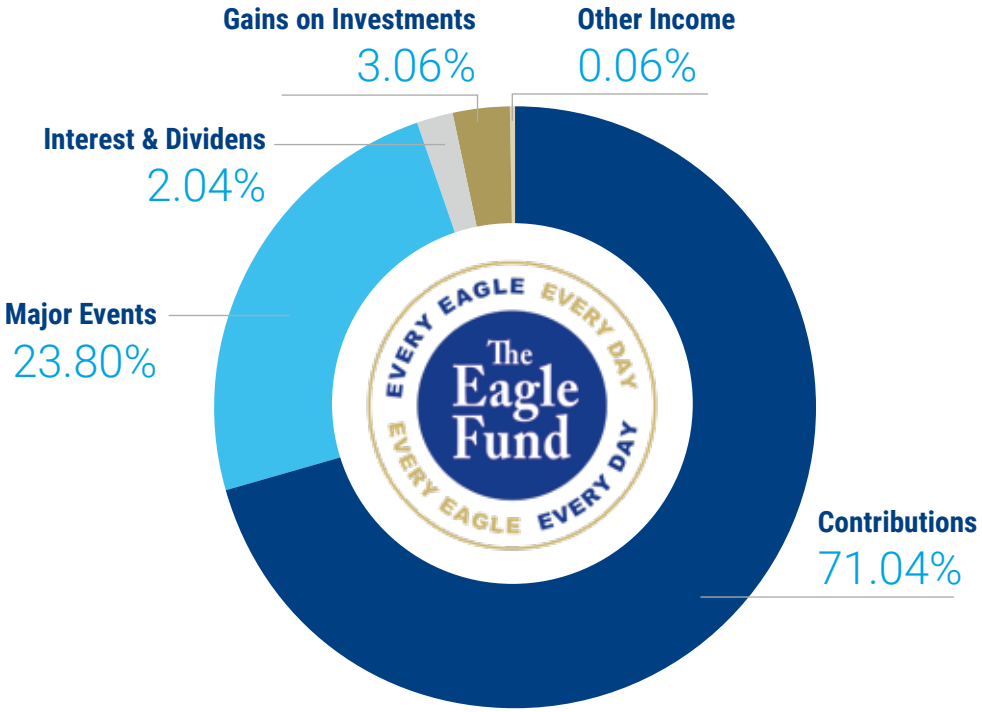
$307,301 DIRECTLY BENEFITING





Financials Eagle Foundation 2025 -2026

The Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation is responsible for the preparation, integrity and fair presentation of the financial statements in this annual report. The Foundation maintains a system of internal controls over financial reporting designed to provide assurance to our Foundation Board of Directors and donors that assets are protected and transactions are recorded properly in the financial statements.

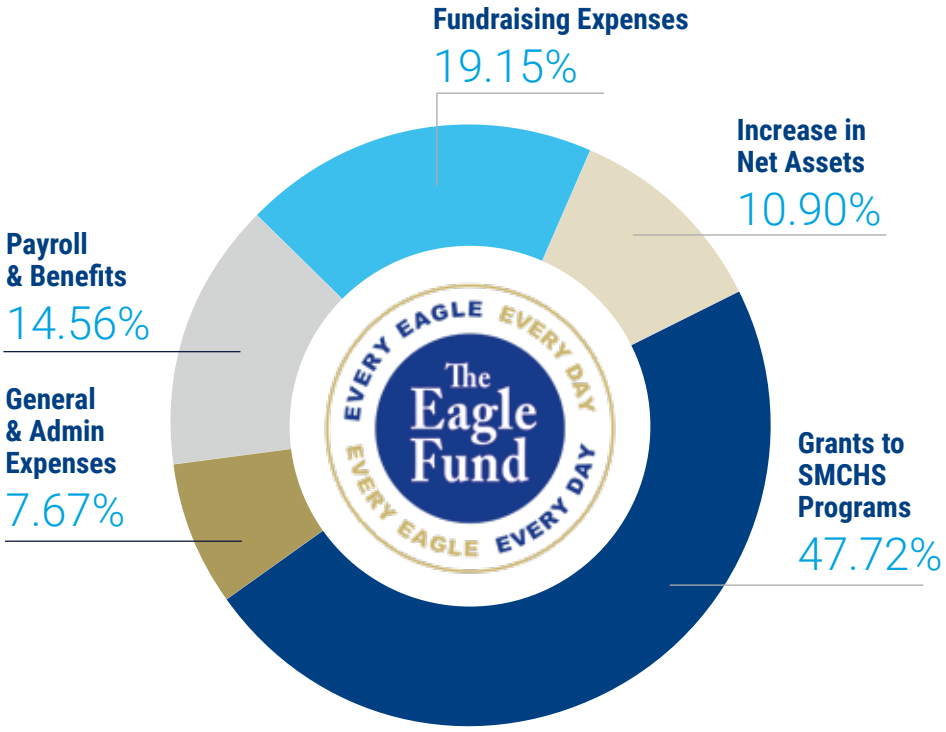


ACTUAL UN-AUDITED NUMBERS

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2026

Contributions	$ 2,616,597
Major Events	876,743
Interest & Dividents	75,315
Gain on Investments	112,552
Other Income	2,129
Total Revenue, Support and Gains	**$ 3,683,336**





ACTUAL NUMBERS

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2026

Grants to SMCHS Programs	$ 1,757,577
General & Admin Expenses	282,572
Payroll and Benefits	536,401
Fundraising Expenses	705,250
Increase in Net Assets	401,536
Total Use of Funds	**$ 3,683,336**

SOARING WITH PURPOSE · STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2031

A FIVE-YEAR PLAN, BUILT BY OUR COMMUNITY

This year Santa Margarita Catholic High School completed **Soaring with Purpose**, a five-year strategic plan built by the community it serves. More than sixty parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members served on steering committees examining eight domains of school life. Their work moved through leadership interviews, stakeholder surveys, domain roundtables, and a two-day planning workshop in April 2026, and produced eight vision statements and twenty-eight objectives to guide the school through 2031.

The plan is sequenced, not simply declared. Year One concentrates on foundations: establishing a consultative school board, further integrating artificial intelligence into teaching in a manner consistent with Catholic values, reinforcing our mission as the center of school life, and beginning the two long-lead initiatives on which later phases depend — a rolling ten-year financial model and a financially integrated Capital Master Plan.

Anchored in faith and focused on the future, Soaring with Purpose commits this school to forming students of faith, intellect, and integrity for the Eagles still to come.



"Soaring with Purpose is more than a standard strategic plan. It's our promise to stay anchored in faith as we build toward the future. Every objective reflects the voice of our community and our shared commitment to Caritas Christi. I'm grateful for this process, and excited for what our Eagle family will accomplish together."

– Sergio Muniz '91, Vice President

ANCHORED IN FAITH · FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE



THE EIGHT DOMAINS

01 CATHOLIC IDENTITY

02 GOVERNANCE

03 STUDENT LIFE

04 ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY

05 ADVANCEMENT

06 FINANCE

07 ENROLLMENT

08 FACILITIES

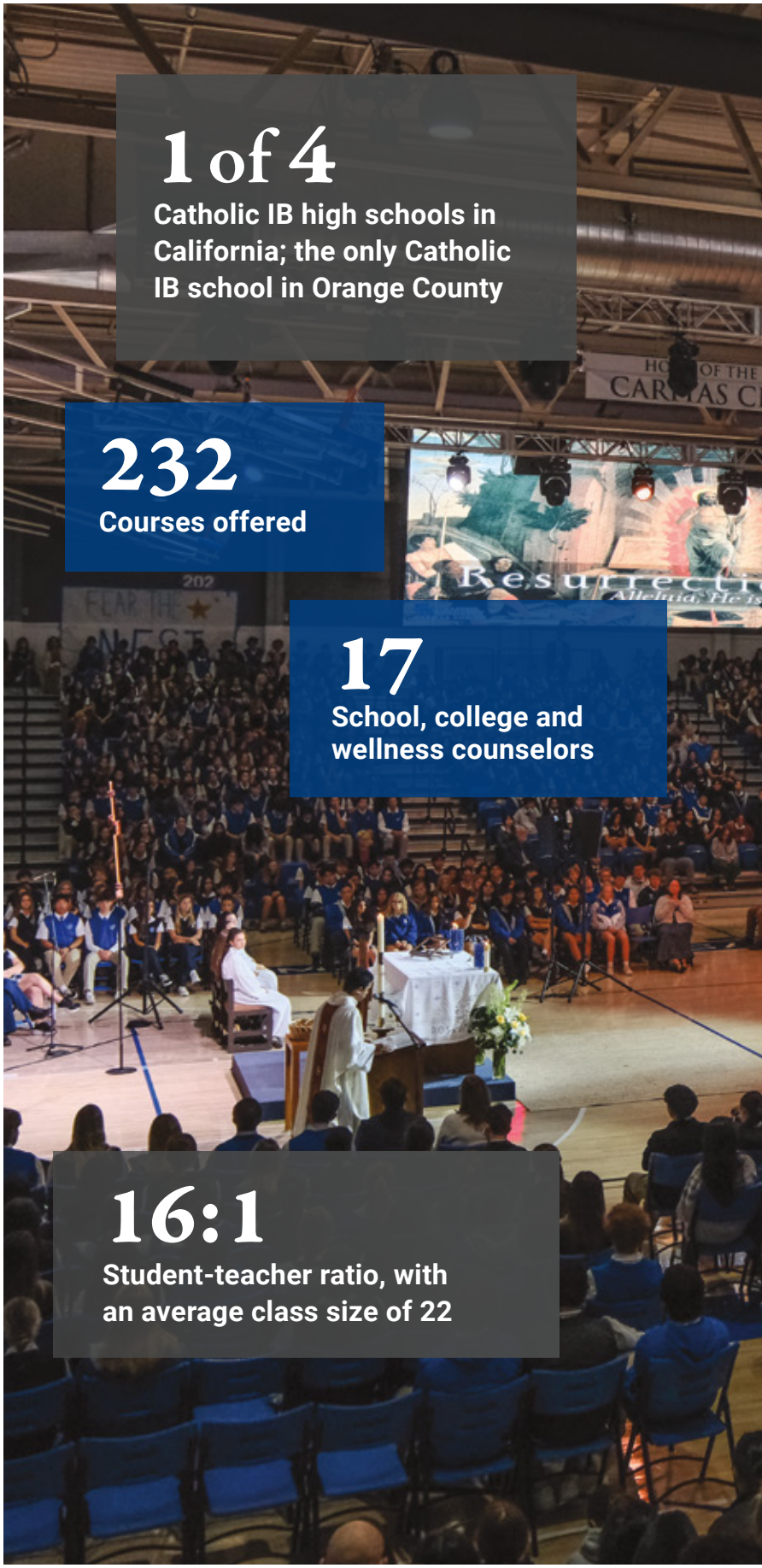




EXCELLENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In partnership with families, Santa Margarita Catholic High School develops students as people of faith, skilled lifelong learners, healthy individuals and involved citizens of the world.

SMCHS offers a well-rounded educational experience known for the breadth and quality of its academic programs, innovative use of technology, student-centered classrooms, commitment to service and social justice, nationally recognized athletic programs, award-winning arts programs and vibrant student life.



1 of 4
Catholic IB high schools in California; the only Catholic IB school in Orange County

232
Courses offered

17
School, college and wellness counselors

16:1
Student-teacher ratio, with an average class size of 22



157
Colleges and universities attended by the Class of 2026

28
Average ACT score higher than 90% of test takers nationwide

13-Time Recipient
Microsoft Showcase School, recognized for innovative use of technology in learning

343
AP Scholars

3,015
College acceptances earned by the Class of 2026

91%
AP exam pass rate; named to the AP School Honor Roll

271
Colleges and universities accepted every SM student who applied

112
Students admitted to every college to which they applied

81
Recruited college student-athletes, representing 17% of the Class of 2026



SM GRANTS

Through the generosity of many, the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation grants funds to the various programs, teams and areas at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. When a donor designates a gift to a specific area, the school department heads or administration can request those funds at any time for their specific designated purpose or to fund items in their budget. While the funds reside in their foundation accounts, they are earning interest for the specific area.

During their 2025-2026 fiscal year, the following grants were awarded to the school's various programs:

SM FOUNDATION GRANTS

SMCHS Academic Innovation
SMCHS Baseball
SMCHS Beach Volleyball
SMCHS Boys Basketball
SMCHS Boys Golf
SMCHS Boys Lacrosse
SMCHS Boys Tennis
SMCHS Boys Volleyball
SMCHS Boys Water Polo
SMCHS Football
SMCHS Girls Basketball
SMCHS Girls Golf
SMCHS Girls Lacrosse
SMCHS Girls Soccer
SMCHS Girls Volleyball
SMCHS Ice Hockey
SMCHS Talon Theatre
SMCHS Performing Arts
SMCHS Robotics
SMCHS Softball
SMCHS Swimming and Diving
SMCHS Wellness
SMCHS Wrestling

Additionally, the Foundation awards grants to various colleges and universities through our scholarship programs. During the 2025-2026 fiscal year the following scholarships were granted to:

COLLEGE GRANTS

UC San Diego
University of Southern California
University of Notre Dame
Indiana University
University of San Diego
University of Los Angeles
Dartmouth
New York University
Lehigh University
Seton Hall University
Pepperdine University
Columbia
Wake Forest University
Cal Poly
Duke University





"SM has truly helped shape me into the leader I am today. The mentors and teachers who have supported me have encouraged me to step outside my comfort zone and use my voice to make positive changes for the school through ASB!"

– CHARLIE TARAZI '27, ASB PRESIDENT



BUILDING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY "GO AND DO LIKEWISE."

– LUKE 10:37

Santa Margarita Catholic High School is proud to introduce its Honor Code, developed by a committee of students, faculty, staff, and administrators over the course of last school year. The Honor Code is a shared promise to practice honor, respect, and integrity in all aspects of student life — spiritual, academic, athletic and social, bringing the school's mission and values to life.

Rooted in the school's charism of Caritas Christi, the Honor Code is a commitment to make the love of Christ visible both on campus and within the broader community. This commitment reflects Santa Margarita's broader mission of forming the whole person, helping students grow not only academically but in character, virtue and their relationships with God and one another. At its core, the Honor Code is a shared commitment to integrity in a time where rapidly evolving technologies, including AI, present both new challenges and opportunities.

"It's an invitation to integrity, to live a life of virtue, and to ultimately become more and more like Christ," said the school's Rector, Father Matthew Maxwell.

Last spring, members of the school's Honor Code Committee visited theology classes to introduce the Honor Code and invite students to a shared call to "put on the mind of Christ" and "go and do likewise."

An academic pledge was also introduced, with students affirming that each assignment and exam represents their own work and acknowledging any assistance, whether from others or tools. More than a requirement, this practice is intended to build confidence in students' own voices while reinforcing the habit of attributing credit where it's due. Students are encouraged to seek clarity when needed, while teachers aim to provide clear guidelines and expectations.

"As AI becomes more prevalent, we seek to instill habits that promote ethical decision-making and responsible use," said Assistant Principal of Academic Innovation Michelle Cho. "Our focus is not simply policy compliance but deep formation and lasting cultural growth. It's about forming character, which will be of utmost importance in today's world."

Beyond the classroom, the Honor Code calls students to make God's love visible on the field, on stage and throughout student life, helping to form the habits and virtues that shape a young person's character and reflecting the school's core principles of compassion, humility, justice and goodness.

To learn more about Santa Margarita's Honor Code, visit
www.smhs.org/honorcode

PLEDGE

This _____ is the result of my own work and thinking.

I acknowledge the assistance of _____ in the preparation of my work.

HONOR CODE

AS A MEMBER
of the Santa Margarita Catholic High School
COMMUNITY,

I AM
called to be of the same mind as Christ so that I may
GO AND DO LIKEWISE.

I AM
called to a life in accordance with the truth,
to be a person of **CARITAS CHRISTI.**

I WILL
practice **TRUTHFULNESS** and reflect the love
of Christ in all my activities: spiritual, academic,
athletic and social.

I WILL
treat everyone with
COMPASSION, HUMILITY, JUSTICE AND GOODNESS.

As a person of Caritas Christi,
I expect that all will do the same.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HONOR CODE







BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Partner with Santa Margarita Catholic High School through a year-round advertising opportunity that puts your business in front of the Eagle community while helping fund the programs and experiences that enrich our students' education.



AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Signage displayed at various on-campus athletic fields, along with digital signage featured during sporting events and special events held in the Moiso Family Pavilion.
- Brand visibility through program advertisements and public address announcements at select SMCHS events.



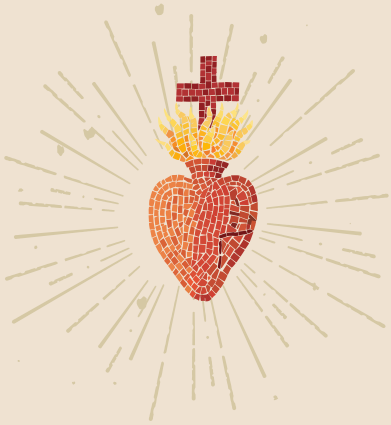
For more information about sponsorship opportunities or the Business Alliance Program, please contact Laurie Beach at the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation at Laurie.Beach@smeaglefoundation.org or 949-766-6078.

SANTA MARGARITA EAGLE FOUNDATION
A FOUNDATION FOR SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
P.O. Box 80100 • Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

READ MORE ABOUT THE BUSINESS ALLIANCE

THE INVITATION IS SIMPLE:
PUT LIFE INTO HIS HANDS, SHOW UP AND TRUST HIM WITH THE TRANSFORMATION. LET HIM TRANSFORM YOU.

– FATHER MATTHEW MAXWELL, SMCHS RECTOR



FATHER MATTHEW

Brings a Message to SM from the Hometown of St. Margaret Mary

SMCHS Rector Father Matthew Maxwell traveled to Europe over the summer, expecting a memorable trip through France. Instead, his journey brought him face-to-face with a saint, a cloistered nun and a message that would shape the beginning of a new school year.



After visiting Paris, Father Matthew headed south toward Lourdes. Along the way, he stopped in the small town of Paray-le-Monial, about four hours southeast of Paris. At first glance, it seemed almost insignificant — a quiet, clean town surrounded by farmland, with a few churches, hostels, shops and restaurants along its short main road.

It was in that town that St. Margaret Mary Alacoque lived much of her life and experienced the visions of Jesus that became central to devotion to the Sacred Heart.

For Father Matthew and Santa Margarita Catholic High School, the visit was especially meaningful.St. Margaret Mary is the school's patroness, a saint whose example the students are encouraged to follow and whose intercession they seek.

Father Matthew visited the convent where St. Margaret Mary had lived. Before his trip, he had written to the sisters asking whether he might celebrate Mass in the chapel where Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary. The nun who helped him was extraordinarily kind. She offered him something he had never expected: the opportunity to celebrate Mass at the altar where St. Margaret Mary's tomb rests.

There, Father Matthew prayed intensely for Santa Margarita — for every student, family and member of the school, and for the year ahead. He entrusted each person to the Lord through the intercession of St. Margaret Mary.

Since the convent is home to cloistered nuns, visitors do not normally see or speak with them. Having traveled nearly 5,830 miles, however, Father Matthew had asked in advance if he could meet one of the sisters. After Mass, he was led through several doors into a meeting room where he met a French nun named Sister Margaret Mary. She had spent much of her life studying St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and had even written a book about her. Despite Father Matthew's broken French and Sister Margaret Mary's difficulty hearing, the two spoke about Santa Margarita. She carefully wrote down details about SM — how many students attended, whether they were boys or girls, and whether they lived lives of faith — so she could share them with the other sisters and ask them to pray for the school.

Before leaving, Father Matthew asked if she had one piece of advice to give the students. She paused, thought for a moment and smiled. "Tell your students that Jesus' love wants to transform them."

"Love," she explained, "changes those who receive it. When people truly love someone, they begin to resemble that person. Jesus' love works the same way. He loves His people so deeply that, if they allow Him, He transforms them into something increasingly like Himself. But He will not force the transformation."

For Father Matthew, those words became the heart of the journey and the challenge he would bring back to SM students. Each student faces a choice: to make the year about what he or she wants, or to remain open to what God wants.

The invitation is simple: put life into His hands, show up and trust Him with the transformation. Let Him transform you.

"WHEN PEOPLE TRULY LOVE SOMEONE, THEY BEGIN TO RESEMBLE THAT PERSON. JESUS' LOVE WORKS THE SAME WAY."

– SISTER MARGARET MARY


JE TE CON
N CŒUR
CONFIANCE
TOUT
POUR LE PLUS
GRAND SERVICE
DE SON
PLUS GRAND
SI TV CROIS
TV VERRAS LA
PVISSANCE DE
MON CŒVR

A STORY WORTH TELLING:

Talon Theatre's Award-Winning **"Hadestown: Teen Edition"**





Talon Theatre's fall 2025 musical, "Hadestown: Teen Edition", was one of the most awarded productions in Santa Margarita history. Led by Artistic Director of Talon Theatre, Kennedy Kemmerer '19, the show earned recognition for both technical and performance-based excellence, including Best Musical at both the Cappies and MACY Awards. Months before audiences were immersed in this purposefully crafted story, the process of building the production was different than anything Talon Theatre had set out to do before.

Hadestown retells Greek myths about love and ultimately the prospect of pursuing that love without the guarantee that it will work. Taking inspiration from 1940s New York City, Kemmerer set the story within a speakeasy, framing the show in a way that allowed students to explore what it means to be an artist.

"Rather than suggesting you must choose between stability and passion, we wanted to create a world that allowed our students, and hopefully our audience, to believe there can be room for both," Kemmerer said.

The production had a cast of 16, meaning that it was essential for every student to be actively engaged in storytelling. A palpable sense of trust was visible on stage, but getting to that point required a distinct sense of artistic dedication from students.

Over the summer, the cast learned all their lines, music and harmonies independently with the expectation that on the first day of rehearsals, they'd be fully memorized. On that first day, there was an immediate sense of connection and commitment that typically takes weeks to develop.

"This show was one of the most amazing experiences of my 20+ year career," said Francisco Calvo, Executive Director of Performing Arts and the show's Music Director. "It was truly indescribable. No words can capture what it was like to work on this production."

Across seven eight-hour rehearsal days, "Hadestown: Teen Edition" came to life. Along with Kemmerer, Broadway performer Jack Bianchi traveled from New York City to choreograph the production. With Bianchi keeping the pace of a professional rehearsal environment, Talon Theatre students pushed themselves to excel, discovering along the way that they were capable of more than they ever thought. This experience was formative for students, but also for Bianchi.

"Being able to make a musical and choreograph on people and also at the same time be able to talk about Jesus is something that is so core to me now," Bianchi said. "That's what Heaven will be like. We'll all just be making musicals and art and all praising the Lord at the same time. That's the mentality I'll take with me everywhere I go."



"Hadestown: Teen Edition" was also a fully student-designed musical, a first for Talon Theatre. Students created the entire visual, technical and emotional landscape of the production, which also meant they learned to defend their artistic choices, take feedback, and ultimately make decisions in service of one unified story. This raised the level of ownership across the board, demonstrating what can happen when young artists are entrusted with responsibility while surrounded by support.

"I do this to see people smile. Maybe there's someone in the audience who really needs to see something like this or experience this story," said the show's Sound Designer, Talon Clark '26. "Seeing people smile after the show and talking about it makes me feel really good that I had a part in that."

As a director and educator, Kemmerer's philosophy is simple: theatre is an act of service. Performing is not about what is received, but what can be given. Talon Theatre studentsknow that any recognition garnered is merely a bonus. With "Hadestown: Teen Edition", they certainly received recognition. Performance, ensemble work, design, technical theatre, and stage management were all honored at the season's end, which Kemmerer says is representative of what Talon Theatre aims to teach: there is no hierarchy in storytelling.

The success of Talon Theatre's "Hadestown: Teen Edition" is evident in the accolades and the continued discussion of the production. But the true success lies in the cast and crew who prepared, rehearsed, and executed with intention at the center of their process. Kemmerer notes: "The impact is not in the awards we won; it is in the hearts of witnesses to this extraordinary artistic endeavor. Every ounce of passion, every production element, and each dedicated person was unified by the same sentiment: we use our gifts to serve each other, the audience, and the story."



This past summer, Talon Clark ’26 created a documentary about the process of creating “Hadestown: Teen Edition”. It features interviews with the cast, crew, and production staff.

Watch the documentary by scanning the QR code or **click here**.

CAPPIES AWARDS

- **Best Musical**
- **Best Song**
  “Wait for Me”
- **Best Male Vocalist**
  Joseph Calvo ’28
- **Best Ensemble in a Musical**
  The Fates:
  Madeleine Orozco ’26,
  Jillian Mooney ’26,
  Leksi Akerlind ’27
- **Best Featured Actress in a Musical**
  Jillian Mooney ’26
  as Fate 2
- **Best Sound in a Musical**
  Talon Clark ’26
- **Best Costumes in a Musical**
  Julia Plush ’26
- **Best Stage Management in a Musical**
  Abby Eagle ’26 &
  Will Broomfield ’28

SPIRIT OF THE MACY AWARDS

- **The MACY Award**
  Best Show
- **Best Male Vocalist**
  Joseph Calvo ’28
  as Orpheus
- **Bright Spot Award**
  Levi Anderson ’28 as Worker,
  Elizabeth Boyer ’26 as Worker,
  Olivia Curran ’28 as Worker
- **Highest Achievement**
  Leksi Akerlind ’27 as Fate 3, Joseph Calvo ’28 as Orpheus, Jillian Mooney ’26 as Fate 2, Ryan Nouri ’26 as Hades, Madeleine Orozco ’26 as Fate 1, Jasmine Ortiz ’26 as Eurydice, Lilia Palda ’27 as Hermes, Emory Ratzlaff ’27 as Persephone

ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE:
EAGLES RECOGNIZED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL



Santa Margarita Catholic High School was recognized among the top high school athletic programs in 2025-26, earning overall program honors from Cal-Hi Sports, MaxPreps and the CIF Southern Section.

For the third time in four years, Santa Margarita received the Cal-Hi Sports State School of the Year honor, recognizing the Eagles for overall excellence across multiple sports. SMCHS previously earned the honor in 1997-98, 2022-23 and 2024-25. For the second consecutive year, the Eagles also finished atop the MaxPreps Cup standings for California, which recognizes all-around excellence across high school sports.

At the CIF Southern Section level, Santa Margarita's girls athletic program captured its second-consecutive Commissioner's Cup, its 10th overall and seventh since 2013-14. The honor recognizes the top overall girls athletic program in the Southern Section based on postseason success across fall, winter and spring sports.

Together, the three honors capped a remarkable year across Santa Margarita's athletic program, highlighted by a national title and CIF SoCal Regional championship in girls golf and three CIF state championships, six CIF Southern Section Championships and 11 Trinity League titles. More than 80 collegiate student-athletes also continued their athletic careers at the next level.

Beyond the wins and championships, Santa Margarita's athletic program seeks to develop the whole person, helping student-athletes grow spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially while building lifelong skills.

READ MORE

SMCHS NAMED STATE SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

2025-2026 ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS

1 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Girls Golf

3 CIF STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Football
Girls Golf
Boys Swimming & Diving

1 CIF REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Girls Golf

6 CIF SOUTHERN SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS
Football
Girls Golf
Girls Soccer
Boys Swimming & Diving
Girls Swimming & Diving
Girls Volleyball

11 TRINITY LEAGUE TITLES
Boys Basketball
Football
Boys Golf
Girls Golf
Boys Lacrosse
Girls Lacrosse
Girls Soccer
Boys Swimming & Diving
Girls Swimming & Diving
Boys Volleyball
Boys Water Polo

4 CIF-SOUTHERN SECTION INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS
Girls Cross Country
Boys Swimming (2)
Girls Swimming


SANTA MARGARITA
27
24
40
92


Eagles
24793
24795
24791
24792


16
13
2





A LEGACY DEFINED BY FAMILY

With three siblings leading the swim and dive program, family is at the heart of the SMCHS pool. That spirit extends beyond the coaching staff, from teammates celebrating one another's successes to gathering in prayer before races.

Ron and Rich Blanc serve as the varsity swim and dive head coaches, joined by their sister, Renee Blanc-Supernaw, who leads the girls junior varsity team. In July, Ron and Rich were named the 2026 California High School Swimming and Diving Coaches of the Year by the California Coaches Association.

For the Blanc siblings, the recognition reflects more than championships — it reflects the culture they have built.

"If we can create an environment where the students feel like this is a family, then it all means more because they're doing this for each other," Ron said.

CHAMPIONSHIP TRADITION

7 Girls National Championships

13 Girls CIF Championships

6 Boys CIF Championships

7 Girls State Championships

3 Boys State Championships

26 Girls Trinity League Championships

18 Boys Trinity League Championships

2 Olympic Swimmers

Katie McLaughlin '15
USA, 2020 Tokyo Olympic silver medalist

Anicka Delgado '20
Ecuador, 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympian



The success of the swimming and diving team is unparalleled in Trinity League and Southern California high school swimming. The program has amassed numerous CIF, state and Trinity League championships, with the girls team being named sev-en-time national champions, and has produced two Olympic swimmers. This spring, the girls and boys teams captured Trinity League and CIF titles, with the boys team also crowned state champions. The coaches believe that success is a byproduct of their team-first approach.

"We're going to do this as a team … you win as a team, you lose as a team, but you're going to support each other no matter what," Renee said.

That culture continues beyond the pool. The coaches check in with every athlete, emphasizing their well-being both in and out of the water. In turn, athletes show up for one another, cheering from the pool deck even when they are not competing.

"They are more excited for their teammates' accomplishments than their own, and I am proud of that," Renee said.

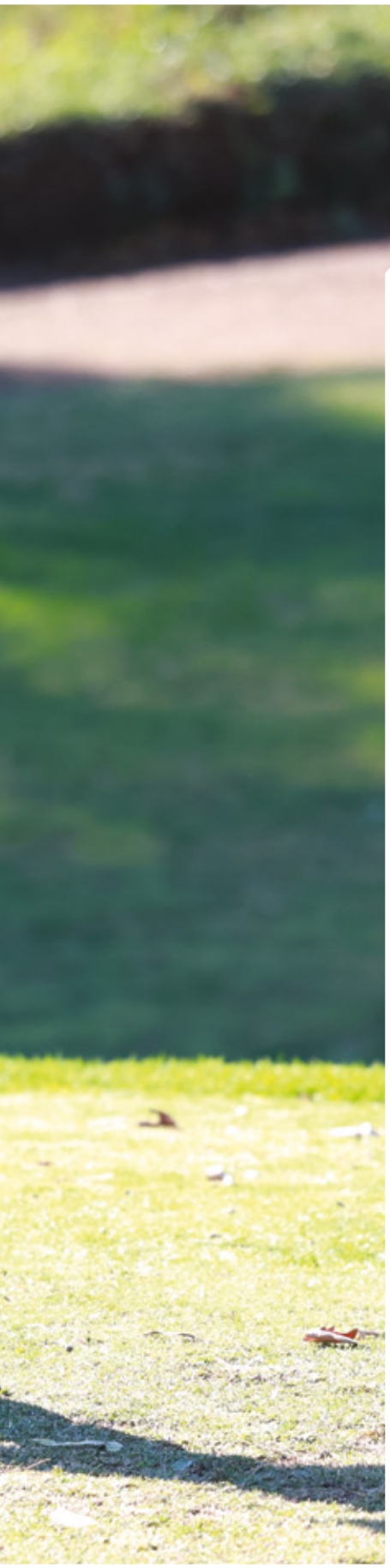
After nearly four decades on deck, the Blanc siblings measure their legacy by more than medals and titles.

"If we win a state championship or CIF championship, but every one of our opponents thinks our kids aren't good and kind people, then this isn't worth it," Ron said.

For the Blanc family, the greatest victory is the community they have built — and the student-athletes who carry that legacy forward.



BUILDING A CULTURE OF CHAMPIONS



The silence that filled the 18th hole before the scores were announced at the Girls Golf CIF State Tournament eventually turned into celebration. For Emily Song ’27 and Donina Zhou ’27, however, the moment represented more than a championship and a trip to nationals. It was proof that the culture passed down through generations of Eagle golfers continues to produce champions both on and off the course.

“That’s when it became real, we were going to Nationals,” said Song, now a senior and team captain.



The 2025 season added another chapter to an already dominant era for Santa Margarita Girls Golf. The Lady Eagles claimed CIF State, CIF SCGA Regional Team, CIF Southern Section and Trinity League championships, securing their seventh consecutive league title and fourth straight CIF SCGA Regional Team Championship. This summer, the Eagles took that championship culture to Pinehurst Resort and Country Club in North Carolina, where they captured the 2026 PGA Girls High School Golf National Invitational team title, the second in program history. Santa Margarita finished 20-under par, 26 strokes ahead of the next closest team, with all four Eagles finishing among the top 11 individually.

But for Song and Zhou, the championships are only part of what makes the program special.

"It's our team chemistry. It sets us apart," said Zhou.

PASSING THE TORCH

Song and Zhou are team captains this season, continuing a tradition of leadership passed down through the program. At the time, Leigh Chien '24, now a collegiate golfer at Stanford University, taught the girls by example how to be great leaders.



"Her support motivated me to improve my game, because now I'm not just playing for myself, I'm playing for my team," Zhou said.

In her 21st year with Girls Golf and 15th season as varsity head coach, Hegna has helped build a program where veteran players mentor younger teammates.

"They have really stepped up," said Head Coach Jill Hegna. "They have done their homework on how to best support their teammates."

"Golf is a very individualistic, competitive sport, but I feel like playing on this team has really fostered a supportive environment," said Zhou. "We truly do want the best for each other."

BUILDING A CULTURE

Hegna emphasizes team bonding off the course.

"As their coach, my role is to also help them navigate the high school experience," she said. "It comes down to four things: faith, academics, socials and then golf."

She makes it clear that school comes first and encourages the girls to participate in school dances, football games and team bonding events alongside their busy practice schedules.

"It is all a part of building the culture as well. I want them to always stay positive," Hegna said.

That emphasis on connection and positivity carries onto the course.

READ MORE
LATEST ATHLETIC UPDATES

"Coach Hegna has full confidence in us. She always reminds us to be in the moment with each other," said Zhou. "When one girl isn't having their best day on the course, we all feel it and then build each other up."

FAITH AT THE CENTER

The team also draws on their faith and Santa Margarita's charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ, as a constant guide.

"We always want to make sure our composure on the course is representative of what we stand for at SM," said Song.

Before each round, the Eagles gather for prayer.

"Our time for prayer before every round has become essential in grounding us," said Zhou. "It reminds us that we are playing for each other and something larger than ourselves."

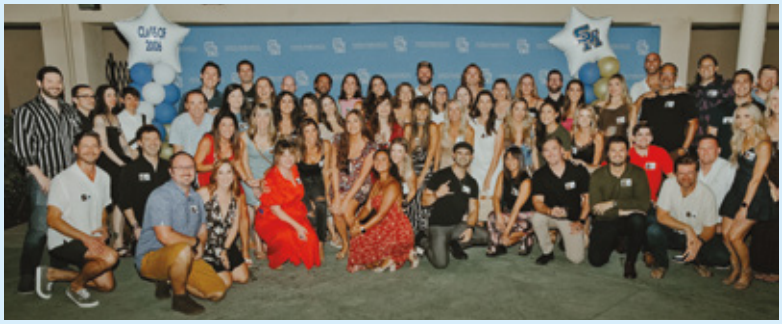
CLASS OF 1996 30-YEAR REUNION

Thank you to everyone who returned to the Nest to celebrate 30 years of friendship, memories, and Eagle pride! It was wonderful to welcome our alumni back to SMCHS and see classmates reconnect and reminisce after three decades. A special thank you to our reunion committee, Brian Meihaus, Chris Abbamonto, Christy Scanlon Meyer, Christina Copes, and Jolene Vartanian, for helping make this special celebration possible!









CLASS OF 2006 20-YEAR REUNION

The Class of 2006 reunited at the Nest on October 2–3, 2026, for a memorable weekend filled with Eagle spirit and cherished memories. The celebration began at the SMCHS football game against Mater Dei, followed by a special reunion celebration back on campus. A thank you to our reunion committee, Michael King, Rachel King, Kristen Heimstra, Lisa Allsberry, Devonie Pitre, and Elizabeth Lyman, for helping make this special weekend possible!



CLASS OF 2015 10-YEAR REUNION

Ten years later, the Class of 2015 is coming back together on October 23, 2026! Join us before the SMCHS home football game against JSerra. Thank you to our reunion committee, Brenten Kelly and Tori Cutcher, for helping make this celebration happen!

There are so many ways to stay involved and connected with Santa Margarita Catholic High School! Whether you'd like to volunteer, attend an alumni event, or simply stop by campus for a visit, we'd love to hear from you. Interested in getting involved or learning more? Contact **alumni@smeaglefoundation.org**.

READ MORE SMCHS ALUMNI

CLASS OF 2016 10-YEAR REUNION

Class of 2016, let's celebrate! Join us on Saturday, December 19, from 6:00–10:00 P.M. back on campus at SMCHS for a night filled with great company, good food, and Eagle pride! Whether it feels like yesterday or a lifetime ago, there's no better time to come back together and celebrate the Class of 2016. A special thank-you to Drake Roby and Jeff Preston for helping plan the reunion!





Career Day

Career Day is returning to campus on Friday, January 29, 2027! Each year, we welcome alumni from a variety of professions and industries back to the Nest to share their experiences with our junior class. Alumni speakers have the opportunity to talk about their careers, the paths that led them there, and offer insight and advice to the next generation of Eagles.

CAREER DAY

FRIDAY JANUARY 29, 2027

Interested in participating? We'd love to have you join us! Please contact **alumni@smeaglefoundation.org** for more information.

Alumni Spotlights



Anne Luke ’96



Anne Luke ’96 is a teen and parent coach, speaker, author, and expert in adolescent development, with more than 25,000 hours spent in meaningful conversations with teens and their parents. She is the author of “Translating Your Teen: 10 Strategies for Understanding and Empowering Your Kid,” which she co-wrote with fellow Santa Margarita Catholic High School alumna Claire Crafts ’20. Together, they offer practical strategies and insights to help parents better understand their teenagers, strengthen communication, and build more meaningful relationships.

Drawing on her background in education, counseling, and more than two decades of leadership, Anne is passionate about helping teens and families navigate the challenges of adolescence with greater confidence, purpose, and connection. Through her coaching, speaking, and writing, she equips parents with tools to better support their children while empowering teens to develop the skills and confidence they need to thrive.



Dr. Michael Moodian ’94

Dr. Michael A. “Mike” Moodian ’94 has built an accomplished career as an educator, community leader, author, and public servant. A professor at Chapman University since 2007, Mike has received five gubernatorial appointments, including three appointments by Governors Jerry Brown and Gavin Newsom to the California Commission on Judicial Performance, where he served as vice chair and, from 2023–2025, as chair—the first person of Native Hawaiian ancestry to hold the position in the commission’s 66-year history. Following his 10-year term, Gov. Newsom appointed Mike to the California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, with the California State Senate unanimously confirming both his 2025 appointment and 2026 reappointment; he also serves on the Providence Mission Hospital board and continues to make an impact through his work in education, sustainability, and media.



SMCHS MOURNS THE LOSS OF A FOUNDER

ARTHUR B. BIRTCHER

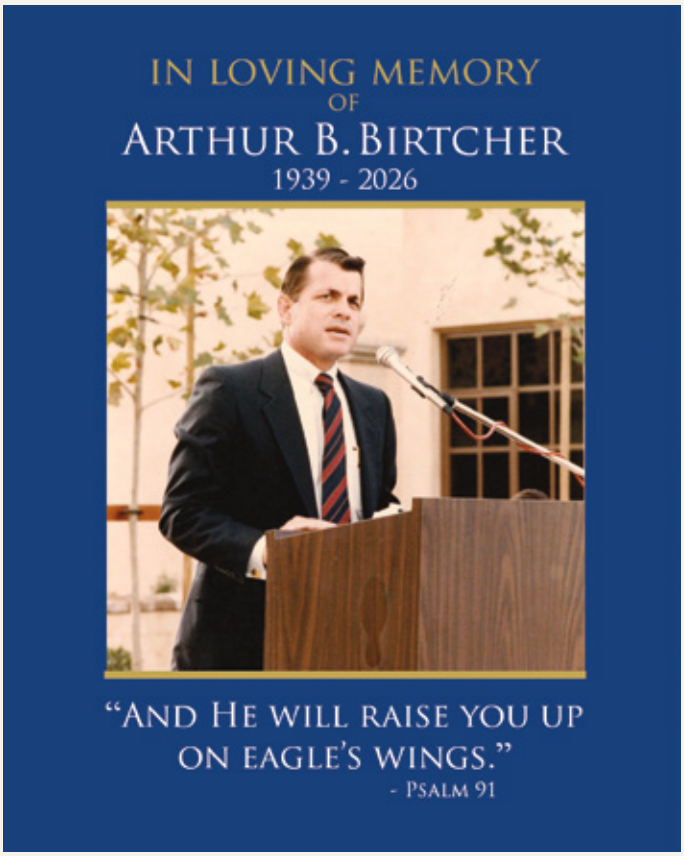
Santa Margarita Catholic High School mourns the loss of Arthur B. Birtcher, one of the school's founders, whose vision, generosity and commitment to Catholic education helped bring Santa Margarita Catholic High School to life in 1987.

Mr. Birtcher served as co-chairman of the fundraising campaign that made the dream of a Catholic high school in South Orange County a reality, and he remained dedicated and generous to SMCHS throughout the years. His dedication to the Catholic faith and to Catholic education has left an enduring legacy in the lives of countless students who have walked through Santa Margarita's gates.

Mr. Birtcher passed away on Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026. He was 87. The SMCHS community joins in prayer for the repose of his soul and extends our deepest condolences to his wife Gaye, and the entire Birtcher family, including alumni parents Bob and Wendy Anderson and their children, Art and Gaye's grandchildren, who are graduates of Santa Margarita Catholic High School.

Art and Gaye Birtcher's shared commitment to the Catholic faith, education and philanthropy has also had a lasting impact on the spiritual life of Santa Margarita. They were original donors of the school's Sacred Heart Chapel, which continues to serve as the spiritual center of campus. In 2008, they funded an extensive renovation of the chapel, working with a renowned liturgical arts company in Spain, to create its sacred art and marble altar. The renovated chapel features a rose-colored marble altar, gold-plated tabernacle, hand-carved statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Madonna and Child and St. Joseph, and a gold-accented crucifix.

The Birtchers also gifted the school a bronze-like statue of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the patroness of Santa Margarita Catholic High School. Created in Spain, the statue now graces the St. Margaret Mary Garden near the Sacred Heart Chapel, offering a peaceful place for reflection and serving as a lasting reminder of the school's namesake and Catholic identity.



In 2024, the SMCHS community was blessed to honor Art and Gaye with the Caritas Christi Award for Servant Leadership at the school's Blue and Gold gala.

"I wanted to thank my grandparents, Art and Gaye Birtcher, for their part in founding Santa Margarita Catholic High School," their grandchild Alex Anderson '10 said in a video honoring the founders that evening. "Thank you for helping to create such a special place for me, my sisters and surely every other student who has passed through the gates of Santa Margarita."

Art Birtcher's legacy will live on in the students who have benefited from a Santa Margarita Catholic education and carry forward the values of service, generosity and the love of Christ that he embodied. Santa Margarita Catholic High School is deeply grateful for Mr. Birtcher's commitment to helping establish SMCHS. May his example of faith and service continue to inspire our community for generations to come.

IN LOVING MEMORY

"He will raise you up on Eagle's wings."

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the following alumni, faculty and staff of our Eagle community whose passings came to our attention during the 2025 – 2026 school year.

We will always hold you close to our hearts.

Brody J. Matteson '27
Brennan T. Miller-Jones '25
Carter E. Bradford '26
Talia Serra '96
Timothy S. Mullen '92
Jennifer A. Jackson '03
Julia Pederson '03
Jim (James) Reames
Basketball Coach
Bonnie Wilkinson
Guidance Counselor

If you have a loved one who was an SMCHS alumni, faculty, or staff member and has recently passed, please notify alumni@smeaglefoundation.org so we can keep you in our prayers.



Gifts in Memory

IN MEMORY OF CINDY BOBRUK
Jonathan Bobruk

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM J. CRAFTS '22
Nikki Foster

IN MEMORY OF BRADLEY J. DILLAHUNTY '02
Anonymous

IN MEMORY OF GRANDMOTHER ANITA DODSON
Robert P. Dodson

IN MEMORY OF ANTHONY DRAGONETTI
Mari Dragonetti

IN MEMORY OF NICOLE DUBOIS '96
Stephanie Soltis '97

IN MEMORY OF MARIE C. DUGAN
Thomas F. Dugan

IN MEMORY OF BERNICE BORCHARD HEFFERNAN
Wilma & Alex Burnett

IN MEMORY OF DEANNA JULIN
Chip Julin

IN MEMORY OF GRANDPA BYUNG LOON LEE (1936-2026)
Simon, Teresa, & Audrey Lee '25

IN MEMORY OF GRANDFATHER MAHESH
The Patel Family

IN MEMORY OF SUS & ANA MAYEMURA
The Mayemura Family

IN MEMORY OF KEVIN MULHERE
The Mulhere Family

IN MEMORY OF OMI, SEENA'S GRANDMOTHER
Anonymous

IN MEMORY OF DANNA PALMER
Bill Palmer

IN MEMORY OF JESSE REYES
Virginia S. Aquino

IN MEMORY OF KEVIN RICE '92 & RYAN ZALTA '92
David & Kathleen (Fallon '91) Boyle

IN MEMORY OF DICK SANDERS
Sara Savells

IN MEMORY OF RJ SOCCI '01
Robert & Holly Socci

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARY VANDEN DRIES & CRYSTAL WALLACE
John & Maryann vanden Dries

SANTA MARGARITA
EAGLE FOUNDATION
A FOUNDATION FOR SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

PO Box 80100
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688



2026-2027 SPECIAL EVENTS

Get Involved!

FALL

November	**2**	All Saints Day/ Remembrance Mass
November	**7**	Blue and Gold
November	**15**	Mothers Club Christmas Boutique
November	**19-21**	Talon Theatre presents "Our Town"

WINTER

December	**4**	Mothers Club Christmas Tea
December	**8**	Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass
December	**11**	Nick Kraus Memorial Concert
December	**19**	Class of 2016 Reunion
January	**26**	Catholic Schools Week Mass
January	**29**	Alumni Career Day
February	**27**	Ash Wednesday Mass

SPRING

March	**3**	Meredith Milligan Moody Visual Arts Show
March	**8**	Eagle Classic Golf Tournament
March	**24**	All School Mass
March	**25**	Senior Pilgrimage
April 15-17		Spring Musical "Les Misérables School Edition"
April 20		Senior Scholarship Breakfast
April 22-24		Spring Musical "Les Misérables School Edition"
April 27		Resurrection Mass
May	**12**	Marian Mass
May	**26**	Baccalaureate Mass
May	**27**	Class of 2026 Commencement Ceremony
June	**3**	Appreciation Dinner

Watch for more information or contact the Advancement Office at **advancement@smeaglefoundation.org** or visit **www.smhs.org**.

2026-2027 FULL EVENT CALENDAR