MOMENTS

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

FALL 2026



4

WELCOMING OUR LARGEST INCOMING CLASS

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

STAFF & FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



ALICIA NORDSTROM, PH.D.

Professor - Psychology Department

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

Being part of a community where faculty and staff genuinely care about one another, and are deeply committed to helping students grow into the best versions of themselves. I especially value the meaningful relationships we build with our students in the "Psychology Family" and the way the Sisters of Mercy's values of mercy, service, justice, and hospitality are lived out every day — not just as words, but through the way we teach, support one another, and serve our community and beyond.

WHAT PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT MISERICORDIA?

The Voices Project: a class assignment that invites students to listen to and share the stories of people from stigmatized and often misunderstood groups through creative forms such as memoirs, poetry, plays, podcasts, and videos. What makes this project especially meaningful to me is its lasting impact—more than a thousand students have encountered these stories, research has shown reductions in racism and mental health stigma, and the project has reached audiences through performances, documentaries, and conferences, all rooted in the fundamental human need to be heard, understood, and valued.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS?

Find what they are passionate about and remember that there are no "wrong" career choices—every experience teaches you something and brings you closer to finding the right path. One of the greatest privileges of being a professor is helping students discover what they want to do, supporting them along the way, and then watching where their journey takes them after they leave Misericordia.



TARAS MIHALKO, P.E.

Director of Facilities

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING AT MISERICORDIA?

Making a meaningful difference. Before Misericordia, I spent the first 25 years of my career in corporate and industrial environments. Ultimately, the work was measured by how it contributed to the profitability of the business. Here, my efforts directly translate into our students' lives. No matter how difficult the workweek may be, knowing that what we do directly benefits our students makes it worthwhile.

WHAT PROJECTS HAVE YOU BEEN MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME AT MISERICORDIA?

The projects that stand out most are the Henry Science Center, the Dome, renovations to the SLP, Nursing and OPT buildings, and the LEAP Center. Those were the largest and most visible projects, but that does not make them more important than the infrastructure and building improvements that most people never notice.

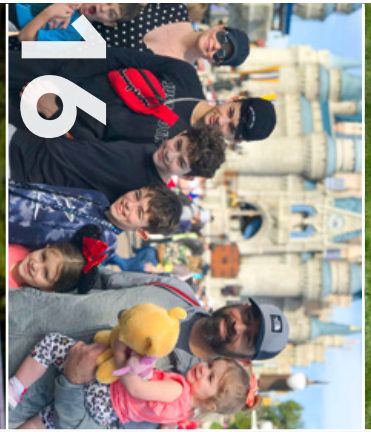
DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS AS THEY TRANSITION TO PROFESSIONAL CAREERS?

In school, assignments are usually clearly defined. In your career, you will often have to determine what needs to be done without having complete instructions. Once I became comfortable dealing with those unknowns, I found that part of the job much less frustrating.

CONTENTS

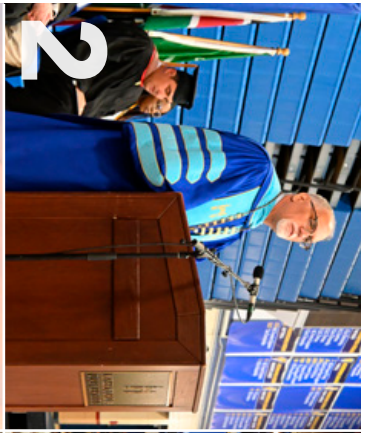
2 PRESIDENT'S STORY: THE POWER OF SHOWING UP 4 WELCOMING THE LARGEST FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE CLASS TO CAMPUS! 6 RECOGNIZING THE MOMENT: 60 YEARS OF INSTRESS 8 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISERICORDIA STUDENTS 9 A LEGACY OF THEIR OWN 10 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SERVICE TRIP 12 FROM CLASSROOM TO CADET 14 BUILT FOR MOVEMENT; MISERICORDIA'S NEW LEAP CENTER OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES 16 A FOUNDATION FOR WHAT CAME NEXT 18 LEARNING THROUGH MOVEMENT AND SERVICE 20 CARRYING MERCY FORWARD 21 STAY CONNECTED WITH MU 22 STUDENT-ATHLETES EXCEL IN THE CLASSROOM 24 SCIENCE TAKES CENTER STAGE AT MISERICORDIA 26 WELCOMING ONE OF OUR OWN HOME 28 NEW PROGRAMS 29 BREAKFAST WITH SANTA









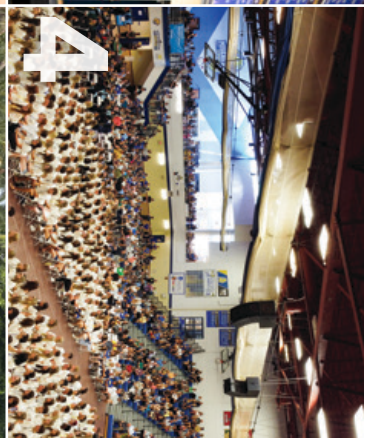












THE POWER OF SHOWING UP

When alumni return to Misericordia University, one of the things they often tell me is that they remember how welcomed they felt from the very beginning.

This year, as we greeted the largest entering class in Misericordia's history, that memory was on my mind throughout Welcome Week.

Opening Convocation is one of my favorite traditions. It serves as the official beginning of a student's journey, but it also points toward an important destination. Convocation is, in many ways, the mirror image of Commencement. One marks the start of a student's college experience; the other celebrates all they have accomplished along the way.

As I looked out at a packed arena filled with first-year students, their families, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, I saw more than a record-setting class. I saw thousands of individual stories that are now becoming part of Misericordia's story.

Our newest students arrive with excitement, ambition, questions, and understandably, a little uncertainty. They are entering an environment that will challenge them academically and personally. College should do that. Growth happens when students stretch beyond their comfort zones, discover new talents, and encounter new perspectives.

What makes Misericordia distinctive, however, is that students never face those challenges alone.

From the moment they arrive on campus, they are surrounded by faculty, staff, coaches, mentors, and fellow students who are invested in their success. That commitment was visible everywhere during Welcome Week. It could be found in the residence hall move-in process, in conversations at Convocation, during late-night student activities, and in the countless informal interactions that help transform a campus into a community.

The Welcome Week schedule was packed with opportunities for students to connect. There were traditions, games, social events, athletic contests, service opportunities, and programs designed simply to help students meet one



another and begin building friendships. The energy across campus was remarkable.

I had the opportunity to participate in many of those events and, as some of my social media followers know, I enjoyed sharing glimpses of those experiences along the way. Whether welcoming students at activities, attending campus events, or performing with my high school friends in the band Quest during the annual tailgate celebration, I was reminded again that community is built through presence.

SHOWING UP MATTERS.

That is true for students. It is true for professors. It is true for university leaders.

The relationships that define the Misericordia experience are often formed through simple moments: a conversation after class, an introduction at a campus event, a word of encouragement during a challenging week, or an unexpected opportunity to get involved.

THESE MOMENTS MAY SEEM SMALL AT THE TIME, BUT THEY HAVE A LASTING IMPACT.

As an institution founded by the Sisters of Mercy, we remain committed to educating the whole person. We expect our students to work hard, pursue excellence, and embrace new challenges. At the same time, we are deeply committed to supporting them every step of the way.

That balance of challenge and support has been part of Misericordia's identity for more than a century. It is one of the reasons our alumni remain so connected to this university long after graduation.

As the Class of 2030 begins its journey, I am grateful for the faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters who help make this community so special. Together, we continue to create a place where students can thrive, grow, and discover the confidence to become the people they are called to be.

Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D.

AND IT ALL BEGINS WITH A WELCOME.





WELCOMING THE LARGEST FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE CLASS







TO CAMPUS!









Recognizing the Moment: 60 Years of



First published in December 1966, *Instress: A Journal of the Arts* is one of Misericordia University's longest-running student publications. For 60 years, it has provided a forum for creative expression, capturing each generation's concerns, innovations, and artistic vision while reflecting the spirit of campus life.

The founding of *Instress* coincided with a period of profound social and cultural change in the United States. By the mid-1960s, college students across the nation were asserting a larger role in public life, inspired by movements for civil rights, peace, and gender equality. Students increasingly sought new forms of intellectual and creative expression. Misericordia students were no exception. They wanted not only to participate in campus life, but also to help define it.

In many ways, the founders of Instress were recognizing their own moment. As students confronted the social and cultural transformations of the 1960s, they chose a title inspired by English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), who used the term "instress" to describe the experience of perceiving a thing's (in Hopkins' case, a poem or a work of art) unique inner identity, or "inscape." The first issue of Instress offered an editorial statement and explanation of the choice:

"Thus the title: a magazine through which the reader can share the enjoyment of a creation with the author or originator of the creation. More important, the reader may be moved by the experience to create still another work through which others may share with him, and so on–ad infinitum." (Instress, December 1966, p.1)

and so on ad

The genres represented in Instress evolved with the students who created it. Early issues featured book reviews, literary commentary, and essays alongside poetry, fiction, and artwork. University employees and others also contributed work to *Instress* in various editions. Over time, the magazine shifted its focus toward original creative work and expanded beyond print into digital formats. Yet its defining characteristic has remained unchanged: Instress is a student-edited and student-designed publication. Guided by a faculty advisor, student editors have shaped each issue, creating a record of how they understood, interpreted, and responded to the world around them.

Current digital issues of Instress can be found at

misericordia.edu/english/instress

and the University Archives has digitized past issues in Misericordia Digital Commons.

digitalcommons.misericordia.edu/instress

"infinitum."



Creating Opportunities for Misericordia Students



Each of us has the opportunity to make a difference in a Misericordia University student's life. One of the most meaningful ways is to help students experience the world beyond the classroom—to learn from professionals, explore a career, and begin to see how their education can make a difference.

Internships, mentorships, and other forms of experiential learning give students the chance to put their knowledge into practice while building confidence, relationships, and the skills they will carry with them after graduation. Just as importantly, these experiences connect our students with people and organizations in the communities we serve.

We would like to create more of these opportunities for Misericordia students, and we know we cannot do it alone. Our alumni, parents, friends, and community partners have a wealth of experience, relationships, and ideas that could open doors for our students.

Perhaps you have an organization that could welcome a Misericordia University intern. Perhaps you would enjoy mentoring a student or sharing your experience. Or perhaps you know someone we should meet. Whatever form it takes, your connection could be the beginning of an important opportunity for a student.

HELP CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY

If you would like to help create an internship, mentorship, or other experiential learning opportunity for a Misericordia student, we would love to hear from you.

Whether you can offer an internship, serve as a mentor, introduce us to an organization, or simply have an idea or connection to share, there is a place for you in this effort.







INTERESTED IN HELPING CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR STUDENTS?

Please email **alumni@misericordia.edu** to share your information and let us know how you might be able to help. A member of the Misericordia community will follow up to learn more and explore how we might work together.

This is something we hope to build together—bringing the generosity and spirit of the Misericordia community to our students in a very tangible way.

The Sisters of Mercy have taught us for more than a century that Mercy, Service, Justice, and Hospitality are not simply ideals; they are lived through the ways we care for and support one another. Creating opportunities for our students is one more way to carry that spirit forward.

A LEGACY of Their Own

For more than 35 students, the start of their college experience at Misericordia University also continues a family tradition.

Following the University's convocation for first-year students, legacy students gathered with their MU alumni parents and grandparents for a special photo with **President Myers** and Alumni president **Christello Hoffman '13**. It was a chance to celebrate this important milestone and capture a moment shared by generations of Misericordia families.

For some students, choosing Misericordia is part of a tradition they have grown up knowing. They may be following in the footsteps of a parent or grandparent. Now they have the opportunity to create their own memories and experiences while becoming part of a community rooted in mission, service, hospitality, and justice.

Being a legacy student means coming to Misericordia with a family connection, but also having the chance to make the University experience your own. Students begin their college years by making new friends, trying new things, and creating memories to share. Along the way, they continue traditions and values that have been part of their families' Misericordia experiences for years.

Following the photo, students and families were invited to a reception in the Founders' Room in Mercy Hall to celebrate the beginning of this new chapter.

With more than 35 legacy students joining the University this year, the photo was a meaningful reminder of the lasting connections that make Misericordia special. For these families, Misericordia is more than a place to earn a degree. It is a community where mission and tradition are shared, where service and hospitality are lived, and where new memories are made. For one generation to the next, the Misericordia experience continues.





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SERVICE TRIP







Seven Misericordia University students and staff members traveled to the Dominican Republic for a service-learning experience with the DREAM Project, an organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for children and young people.

During the trip, the Misericordia group volunteered with the DREAM Project's literacy program, helping provide English as a Second Language (ESL) and physical education classes. Beyond the classroom, participants visited a female-owned cacao farm and spent time with local families in their homes, gaining a deeper appreciation for the history, hospitality, and culture of the Dominican people.

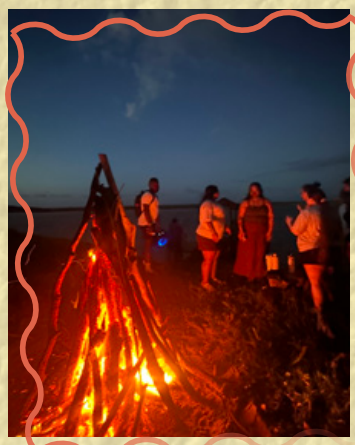
For student **Sammie DeSantis '27** working with local children was a highlight of the experience.

"I really enjoyed going to the school and being with the kids and felt like the service we did there left an impact on me," DeSantis said. "I also really enjoyed all of the history that we were taught throughout our trip and found it all very interesting."

Student **Brooke Albeck '29** said the experience offered a meaningful reminder about the importance of community, family, and finding joy in everyday life.







"When we were cooking and just being with the family, you could feel their love and joy," Albeck said.

"They don't have a lot, but they were so full of joy. It really helped me remember that you just have to

CHOOSE JOY

no matter the circumstances."

Through service, cultural immersion, and personal connections, the experience gave the Misericordia group an opportunity to learn alongside the communities they served and bring those lessons home with them.



FROM CLASSROOM TO CADET



The landing of a Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) helicopter on the lawn near MacDowell Hall offered more than an exciting moment for the Misericordia University community. It helped mark the beginning of a new partnership that will provide students with a direct pathway from the classroom to a career in law enforcement.





Students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered on campus to celebrate a new academic partnership with the Pennsylvania State Police Academy and learn more about the many specialized areas within the Pennsylvania State Police. The event included an up-close look at PSP aviation operations, a demonstration by the K-9 Unit, and a robotic device display highlighting some of the advanced technology used by modern law enforcement agencies.

The demonstrations gave students an opportunity to see the breadth of work performed by the Pennsylvania State Police while meeting members of the agency and learning more about careers in public service.

Through the new partnership, eligible Misericordia criminology majors who are accepted into the Pennsylvania State Police Academy may complete academy training during their final semester, while fulfilling their remaining academic requirements. Students may also earn academic credit for successfully completing the training.

John Scheimreif '27, a junior government, law and national security major at Misericordia, said he is considering a career with the Pennsylvania State Police and sees the program as a direct path toward that goal.

Misericordia University extends its thoughts to the Pennsylvania State Police personnel and all those affected by the August aviation accident at Carlisle Airport in South Middleton Township, Cumberland County. The Pennsylvania State Police helicopter involved in the accident was not the same aircraft that visited Misericordia University for the event featured in this story.

"I think it's very attractive for everyone who wants to come to school here and then go into the police," Scheimreif said.

"This partnership provides our criminology students with a clear, structured pathway from the classroom to a career in public service," said Misericordia University **President Daniel J. Myers, Ph.D.** "By integrating academy training into their academic experience, students gain hands-on, real-world preparation while working toward becoming state troopers."

The Pennsylvania State Police Academy is a rigorous and highly selective training program. Students must meet all PSP admission requirements and successfully complete the academy before becoming eligible for appointment as Pennsylvania state troopers.

As part of the agreement, the Pennsylvania State Police will verify students' acceptance into and completion of the academy, and may assist with recruitment outreach. Misericordia will guide participating students through the process, evaluate their training and award eligible academic credit through the criminology program.



The partnership reflects a shared commitment to preparing knowledgeable, highly trained law enforcement professionals. It also allows students to connect their criminology coursework with the practical skills and professional training required to serve communities throughout the commonwealth.

By bringing academic preparation and academy training together, Misericordia and the Pennsylvania State Police are helping students take the next step toward careers dedicated to leadership, service, and public safety.





BUILT FOR *Movement*

MISERICORDIA'S NEW LEAP CENTER OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Misericordia University students are stepping into a new space designed to put learning in motion. The university's new Learning, Exercise and Performance Center, known as the LEAP Center, brings together innovative technology, hands-on learning spaces, and opportunities for collaboration under one roof. The facility serves students across several health sciences disciplines while becoming the primary home of Misericordia's new exercise science program, which officially launched in fall 2026.

Designed to bridge classroom instruction with practical experience, the LEAP Center gives students opportunities to study human movement, performance, rehabilitation and wellness using many of the same types of spaces and technology they may encounter in their future careers.

"The LEAP Center gives our students something most undergraduates never get: hands-on access to the same tools used in clinical practice and research from day one," said Associate Professor and Chair of Exercise Science Tif Mulally, Ph.D. "When a student can run a metabolic cart, analyze movement on a force plate or work through a stress test protocol before a clinical rotation, they're not just learning exercise science — they're becoming practitioners. It's not theory anymore; it's practice. We're basically giving students permission to nerd out over VO2 max and muscle mechanics — and that's exactly the energy that makes a great practitioner."

One of the center's most prominent features is its biomechanics laboratory, which uses advanced 3D imaging technology to capture and analyze human movement. The system allows students and faculty to examine how a person moves and identify opportunities to improve movement patterns, performance and efficiency.



STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT IN THE BIOMECHANICS AND EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY LAB

The specialized system was installed by BTS Bioengineering, whose team traveled from Italy to Misericordia. The technology expands the university's resources for studying human movement and gives students experience with sophisticated tools while still completing their undergraduate education.

The technology also extends beyond one academic program. With students preparing for careers in



exercise science, athletic training, physical therapy, occupational therapy and other health-related fields, the LEAP Center encourages interdisciplinary learning and collaboration.

A SPACE TO LEARN BY DOING

Another major component of the LEAP Center is its strength and conditioning space, which supports hands-on learning while connecting exercise science education and athletic performance. For students, the space offers the chance to see strength, conditioning and human performance concepts outside the textbook. They can learn how exercise programs are designed, how performance is assessed, and how evidence-based practices are applied to real-world situations. The center also includes laboratories and clinical spaces that support students in pre-athletic training pathways, as well as Misericordia's physical therapy and occupational therapy programs. The shared spaces create opportunities for students from different disciplines to learn alongside one another.

A NEW HOME FOR EXERCISE SCIENCE

The program prepares students to explore the science behind physical activity, movement, and human performance through classroom learning and practical experiences. With the LEAP Center as its home, students have access to specialized spaces from the beginning of their academic experience. Under Mulally's leadership, the facility gives students opportunities to test ideas, observe movement, collect and interpret data, and apply what they learn.

The LEAP Center was also designed with the student experience beyond the classroom in mind. A dedicated lounge gives students a place to study, collaborate with classmates, or recharge between classes and laboratory sessions. For Misericordia, the LEAP Center represents an investment in the continued growth of health sciences education and a new approach to learning about the human body in motion. For the first students entering the exercise science program, it is something even more immediate: a place built for them to learn, experiment, and prepare for what comes next.



A FOUNDATION FOR WHAT CAME NEXT



Chad '00 and Stephanie Madden with their 6 children (now ages 8-23) at Disney World

For **Chad Madden '00**, his career in physical therapy has taken him much further than he could have imagined, when he first arrived at Misericordia.

He founded Madden Physical Therapy in 2003, and is known for his work with back pain and sciatica. He also helps physical therapy practice owners across the country and in Australia through Breakthrough PT Marketing.

But when he looks back, he sees a much simpler beginning.

Misericordia was, he says, "the right fit" for him.

A first-generation college student, Chad was wary of getting lost at a large university. He wanted a place where he could know his professors, ask questions, and have the support he needed to grow. Misericordia's small environment, combined with its physical therapy program and facilities, gave him that opportunity.

He arrived in 1996 and graduated in 2000 with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in physical therapy. He also played baseball for four years, eventually serving as team captain and later as a graduate assistant.

More importantly, he says, Misericordia gave him a foundation for lifelong learning.

Early in his career, Chad grew frustrated by the outcomes he saw among patients with back pain. That frustration led him to pursue additional education in manual therapy and evidence-based care, traveling to courses and learning from researchers and clinicians across the country.

"What I was doing wasn't working," he recalls. "I had to figure it out."

That willingness to keep learning became a defining part of his career.

Chad opened Madden Physical Therapy in Harrisburg. What began as a single 2,000-square-foot clinic grew into a successful practice and eventually opened the door to another chapter: helping other physical therapists build and run their own practices.

His work also found an unexpected audience online. Videos he created about back pain and sciatica have been viewed millions of times, connecting his expertise with people far beyond Pennsylvania.

Through it all, Chad's life has grown alongside his career. He and his wife, Stephanie, are raising six children—four boys and two girls—ranging in age from eight to nearly 23.

> "MISERICORDIA WAS THE RIGHT FIT"

Yet when Chad talks about the path that brought him here, he returns to the people who encouraged him along the way.

At Misericordia, professors and mentors challenged him, supported him and, perhaps most importantly, believed in what he could become.



Chad Madden '00 with Mike "Doc" Mould at Anderson Center dedication

One professor, **Mike Moran**, gave him feedback that pushed him to develop his professional skills. A recommendation from Mike and **Kelly Moran, Ed.D.** eventually led Chad to an internship at Cincinnati Sports Medicine, an experience that further expanded his perspective.

Looking back, Chad describes the environment he valued most as one that "stretched and challenged me and also allowed me to grow without breaking me."

That may be the clearest connection between the student who arrived at Misericordia more than 25 years ago and the professional he is today.

He came looking for the right environment to learn and grow. He found a foundation — and then kept building.

Learning Through **MOVEMENT** and **SERVICE**

For Misericordia University physical therapy students, some of the most meaningful lessons happen beyond the classroom.

Students enrolled in Aging Well: Exercise With The Older Adult, a one-credit elective in the Department of Physical Therapy, put their knowledge into practice through a five-week mobility clinic designed to promote healthy aging, while building meaningful connections with older adults in the community.





Led by **Laurie Brogan '01**, PT, DPT, associate professor of physical therapy, and adjunct professor **Cat Bruno**, PT, the course gave students an opportunity to work directly with volunteer residents of The Pines. Through education, exercise and individualized recommendations, students helped participants explore ways to maintain mobility, independence, and overall wellness.

Each week of the clinic focused on a different component of healthy aging. Students began by conducting baseline mobility assessments and providing general education before progressing through sessions on aerobic fitness, strength, balance, and coordination, and flexibility and posture. Along the way, participants learned exercises and strategies they could continue safely at home.

For the students, the experience offered something equally valuable: the opportunity to apply concepts learned in the classroom, while developing the communication, adaptability, and interpersonal skills that are essential to patient-centered care.

"This elective experience came together so well and was so beneficial to everyone involved," Brogan said. "It was a perfect example of collaboration among our department, our students, and the surrounding community, reflecting our dedication to learning through service."

The clinic was a collaborative effort involving the Department of Physical Therapy, Misericordia's Mission, Ministry, and Service Office, and residents of The Pines, a senior independent living facility adjacent to campus. Support from The Luzerne Foundation also provided additional equipment to enhance both the student learning experience and the clinic.

Beyond the exercises and assessments, the program created opportunities for students and participants to learn from one another.

"It reminded us that some of the most impactful learning happens when education, service, meaningful connections, laughter, and fun come together," Brogan said. "We hope to host a similar experience in 2027."

The Mobility Clinic reflects Misericordia's commitment to experiential learning and community engagement, giving future physical therapists the opportunity to strengthen their clinical skills while serving others. For students, it was a chance to see firsthand that promoting healthy aging is about more than movement. It is also about building confidence, independence, and connections across generations.





CARRYING *Mercy* FORWARD

The number of Sisters of Mercy has declined substantially in recent decades, particularly in the United States. Once nearly 22,000 strong worldwide, the community today includes approximately 6,000 Sisters serving across the globe. While new women continue to answer the call, demographic trends suggest the overall number will continue to decline.

But a declining number of Sisters does not mean a declining Mercy legacy.

Today, the Sisters of Mercy work alongside more than 3,100 Mercy Associates, lay people who seek to embody the values of: compassion, service, justice, and hospitality in their everyday lives. Approximately 120 Associates are part of the Dallas and Northeast Pennsylvania region, including nearly 40 members of the Misericordia University community.

The Mercy Associates program invites individuals throughout Dallas and Northeast Pennsylvania to join in a shared commitment to the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy.

Inspired by Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates integrate service, spiritual reflection, and a commitment to social justice into their lives and communities.

"You can live your life in the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy as a lay person," said Christine Somers, director of the Office for Mission, Ministry, and Service and local Mercy Associates facilitator. "It is an everyday spirituality."

When asked what makes the Mercy Associates community so special, Somers found it difficult to choose just one thing. She described a sense of energy and awe that fills the room when Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Associates come together, particularly as the Sisters share stories of lives devoted to service.

Those stories also serve as a reminder that the spirit of Mercy can be carried forward by anyone willing to live its values.

Rooted in Misericordia University's charism of Mercy, the Mercy Associates program is open to faculty, staff, local residents, and friends who wish to deepen their spiritual lives, build community, and extend the spirit of Mercy through the way they live and serve.

For more information, visit Misericordia University's Mercy Associates webpage:

or contact Christine Somers at csomers@misericordia.edu.

A SENSE OF ENERGY AND AWE THAT FILLS THE ROOM



SHARE YOUR WORDS OF WISDOM.



Mercy Mail made its debut at Homecoming.

Mercy Mail invites alumni and students to share handwritten notes of encouragement, wisdom, memories, and Misericordia pride.

Share your words of wisdom.

Your words can remind a student that they're part of something bigger—a community that believes in them.

Want to participate? Please email **alumni@misericordia.edu** to learn more and send a little encouragement to a member of the Misericordia community.

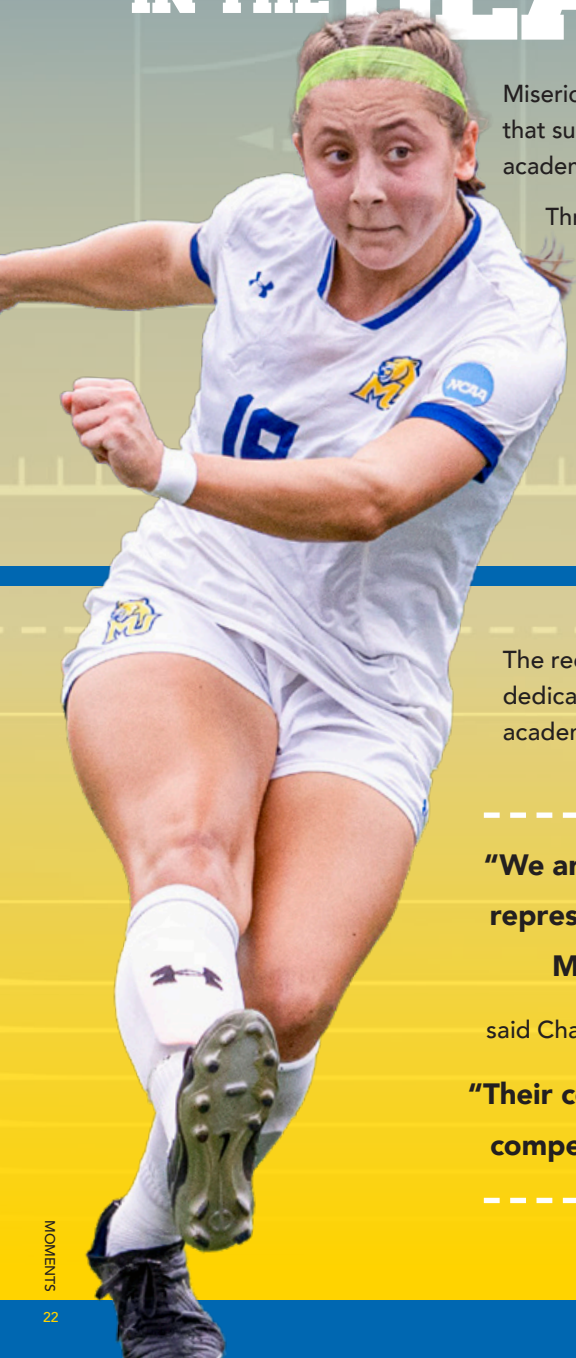
Stay Connected with MU

MAKE SURE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE SO YOU DON'T MISS:

- Alumni Newsletter
- Invitations to Homecoming and Class Reunions
- Networking Opportunities
- Invitations to Alumni Event
- Exclusive Misericordia Events

Update your information today and stay connected with the Misericordia community that helped shaped your journey.

STUDENT-ATHLETES EXCEL IN THE CLASSROOM



Misericordia University student-athletes continue to demonstrate that success extends well beyond competition, earning numerous academic honors at the conference, regional, and national levels.

Throughout the 2025-2026 academic year, student-athletes representing a variety of Misericordia teams were recognized for their commitment to academic excellence while balancing the demands of collegiate athletics.



The recognition across multiple programs highlights the dedication Misericordia student-athletes bring to their academic responsibilities, while competing at a high level.

"We are extremely proud of the women and men who represent themselves, their families, their teams, and Misericordia University at such a high level,"

said Charles Edkins, executive director of Athletics and Recreation.

"Their commitment to excellence in the classroom and in competition reflects the very best of our institution."

AMONG THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS:



- Sixteen Misericordia student-athletes were named to their respective Middle Atlantic Conference Academic All-MAC teams. Academic All-MAC is the conference's highest academic honor within each sport and recognizes student-athletes for excellence in both academics and athletics.



- Misericordia's women's and men's swimming teams earned academic recognition from the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America. Teams must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to receive the honor.



- Seven members of Misericordia's men's ACHA ice hockey team earned Academic All-America honors. To qualify, student-athletes must earn a minimum semester GPA of 3.75 and compete in at least 40% of their team's contests.



- Five members of the Misericordia STUNT team earned All-America honors.



- The Misericordia men's and women's soccer teams were recognized by United Soccer Coaches, after both programs achieved team GPAs of 3.0 or higher. Misericordia was one of just 175 institutions to have both its men's and women's teams honored, among approximately 400 NCAA Division III schools that sponsor both sports.



- Ninety-seven Misericordia student-athletes were recognized by the Eastern College Athletic Conference for their academic accomplishments. To qualify, student-athletes must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.4 and be at least a sophomore.

Science Takes Center Stage at Misericordia

Misericordia University became a gathering place for scientific discovery when it hosted the **101st Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Academy of Science**, bringing scientists, faculty, and student researchers from across the state to campus.

It marked the first time Misericordia hosted the statewide organization's annual conference. The event had 251 registered attendees, with additional last-minute and unregistered participants bringing total attendance to more than 300. The conference brought together representatives from 37 institutions, along with students from Wyoming Seminary Upper School in Kingston, PA.

Throughout the conference, attendees shared research through 149 presentations across a wide range of scientific disciplines. The program included 47 oral presentations and 102 poster presentations, providing students and professionals with opportunities to present their work and engage with fellow members of the scientific community.

"Hosting the Pennsylvania Academy of Science gave us an opportunity to welcome researchers from across the state to Misericordia and showcase the strong culture of undergraduate research we have built here," said **Angela Asirvatham, Ph.D.**, professor of biology and director of pre-medical health professions.

Misericordia students not only had the opportunity to share their research with the broader scientific community, but several also earned recognition for their work.

Christina Rasa '27 received a Pennsylvania Academy of Science Undergraduate Research Grant Award and earned first place in the Women in Science Poster Competition for her research, "Cell-free Expression of a Fluorescent ATP Sensor." Mentored by **Cosima Wiese, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Biology Department, and Asirvatham, Rasa explored a method of producing a fluorescent biosensor capable of measuring adenosine triphosphate, or ATP, which provides energy for cellular processes.

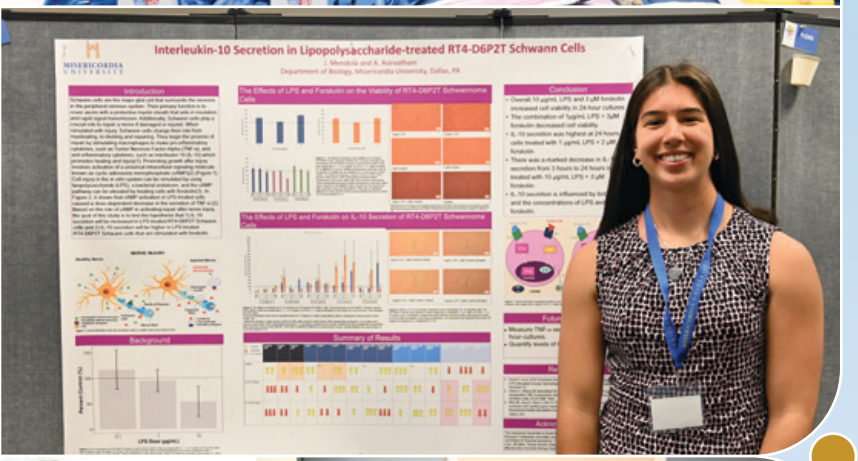
Cody Palubinsky '23 and '26 earned third place in the Spychala Poster Awards for research examining the combined effects of microplastics and parasite infection on northeastern Pennsylvania crayfish. Working with **Linda Auker, Ph.D.**, program director of environmental studies and associate professor of biology, Palubinsky studied microplastic contamination in water, sediment and crayfish tissues, as well as indicators of physiological stress.

"One of the most rewarding parts of mentoring undergraduate research is

watching students take ownership of their work," Auker said. "Presenting at a conference like this allows them to share what they've accomplished and recognize that their work contributes to the scientific community."









Misericordia students **Jillian Graham '27, Raine Kelly '26, Kaitlyn Marley'27, Hannah Werle '27, Owen McDermott '27,** and **Jyanna Mendola '27** also presented research during the conference, highlighting the breadth of undergraduate scholarship in the University's biology and chemistry / biochemistry programs.

"It was especially rewarding to see our students present their work alongside other young scientists from across Pennsylvania," Wiese said. "Experiences like this give them confidence in their research and help them see themselves as part of the larger scientific community."

Founded in 1924, the Pennsylvania Academy of Science promotes scientific research and education throughout the commonwealth. Its annual meeting provides students and professionals with opportunities to present original research, exchange ideas and connect with others in the scientific community.

Welcoming One of Our Own Home

When **Camryn Hartman '30** arrives on campus this fall as a member of Misericordia University's Class of 2030, she'll be joining her classmates as a first-year nursing student. But unlike anyone else in her class, Camryn is returning to a place she once called home.

Camryn is the first child of a graduate of the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children (WWC) Program to enroll at Misericordia, making her arrival a full-circle moment. Her mother, **Amy Hartman '11**, was a single parent with big dreams and one major obstacle standing in her way. She wanted to earn a college degree while raising her young daughter, but enrolled in college twice, withdrawing each time because the cost of pursuing that goal outweighed what she could afford.

Determined to create a better future for herself and for Camryn, Amy returned to Misericordia's Financial Aid Office in 2009, ready to give her dream one final chance.

There, she discovered an opportunity that would change the course of both of their lives. Amy learned about the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program, which empowers economically disadvantaged single mothers to earn a four-year college degree by providing housing, childcare, financial assistance, and academic support. As fate would have it, there was exactly one spot left.

One month later, Amy and 1-year-8-month-old Camryn moved into Rosary Hall.

Remember those big dreams Amy carried with her? She achieved every one of them. When asked whether she's living the life she once dreamed about, Amy smiled through happy tears and said, "I am. I am. I did it."

Amy earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Business Management from Misericordia before completing a master's degree in Social Work at Temple University. Today, she serves as Co-Founder and President of Reaching Beyond Limits, an organization that supports adults with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities.

Looking back, Amy remembers the first semester as the most difficult part of her journey. Today, her advice to other women entering the program is, "If you make it through the first semester, you can make it through anything." Through every class, every obstacle, every milestone, and every success, one little girl was always watching. Camryn.

Camryn spent her earliest years on Misericordia's campus, living there until she was four years old. Some of her earliest memories include eating oatmeal with syrup, the rocking chair in her bedroom, and playing outside with friends near Emerging, the campus sculpture in Rosenn Plaza that symbolizes the transformation students experience throughout their educational journey. Now, years later, Camryn will begin a transformation of her own.

For **Katherine Pohlidal**, former director of the Women with Children Program, Camryn's arrival is especially meaningful.

"This campus will give Camryn a hug on her first day and say, 'Welcome back."



"I am.
I am.
I did it."



As Camryn begins her own journey at Misericordia, her story serves as a beautiful reminder that education doesn't just fulfill dreams; it makes new ones possible for generations that follow.

On behalf of the entire Misericordia community, welcome home, Camryn.

MISERICORDIA
UNIVERSITY
RUTH MATTHEWS BOURGER
WOMEN WITH CHILDREN PROGRAM

Misericordia University is expanding its academic offerings for the 2026-27 academic year, creating new opportunities for students and working professionals in technology and health care.

CYBERSECURITY

This fall, Misericordia University welcomed students to its new Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program, designed to prepare graduates for careers protecting the systems, networks and data organizations rely on every day.

The 120-credit undergraduate program combines a liberal arts foundation with career-focused coursework in information technology and cybersecurity. Students explore security management, risk assessment, cryptology, access controls, forensics, cloud security, and the legal and ethical responsibilities surrounding technology.

The program emphasizes the skills needed to identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, implement security measures and respond to an ever-changing technology landscape. Misericordia also offers a cybersecurity minor, allowing students in other majors to add cybersecurity knowledge and skills to their studies.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM, SCAN HERE

misericordia.edu/cybersecurity

RADIATION THERAPY

Misericordia University is preparing to welcome the inaugural cohort of its new Radiation Therapy Certificate program in July 2027, expanding opportunities for health care professionals seeking to advance their careers in cancer care.

The full-time, 12-month program is designed for radiologic technologists certified and registered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists in radiography who want to transition into radiation therapy. Students complete synchronous online coursework, along with required in-person clinical education.

The 44-credit program includes coursework in radiation therapy principles, patient care, oncologic imaging, radiation biology and protection, treatment planning, quality management, clinical practice, and research.

Through a combination of specialized technical preparation and hands-on clinical experience, students will prepare to work alongside radiation oncologists, medical physicists, dosimetrists, and other health care professionals. The program also emphasizes compassionate, patient-centered care as students prepare to support patients throughout radiation treatment.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RADIATION THERAPY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM, SCAN HERE

misericordia.edu/radiation-therapy-certificate

Alumni, faculty, staff, and students with children please join us

Breakfast with Santa

December 12, 2026 | 9 a.m.



Scan to register!

Brought to you by the Misericordia Alumni Association

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