



the Echo

Alumnae and Friends Newsletter



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY



3	Head of School Address
4	Congratulations Class of 2023
6	A Blessing from Sister Mo
7	Student Reflections
8	Career Pathways
12	Campus Ministry
14	Performing Arts
15	Onward Scholars Program
16	Busy Belles
20	Junior Ring Ceremony
21	Go Belles!- Sports
22	Farewell Coach Liz
22	Homecoming 2023
23	Letter to Alumnae
24	Thank you – Renovation
25	Golden Grads Luncheon
25	Reunion Updates / Notices
28	Donor List

St. Mary's Academy 2023-24 Board of Directors

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Head of School Address



"Girls' school students are more likely than their female peers at coeducational schools to experience an environment that welcomes an open and safe exchange of ideas."

"Ninety-nine percent of students at girls' schools expect to earn a four-year degree. More than 2/3 expect to earn a graduate or professional degree."

"The overwhelming majority of girls' school students strongly agree that they feel supported at their schools: 95% feel supported by their teachers (compared to 84% of girls at coeducational public schools), 90% report feeling supported by other students (compared to 73%), and 83% feel supported by their school administrators (compared 63%)."

Dr. Richard A. Holmgren, Allegheny College, Steeped in Learning: The Student Experience at All-Girls Schools

It is possible that in 1889 the CSJ Sisters were clear that a school made by women, for women would be life changing for the students and for the world. But No one could believe that 134 years later young women would still be dealing with limited access to spaces because of their gender, race, or socioeconomic status. This is why a school like St. Mary's Academy is so important. At SMA young women are only limited by their own imagination (and we are readily working to expand that as well!!!). SMA is blessed to have a community of partners who ensure our students are able to grow, learn, and succeed academically, emotionally, and spiritually. The SMA community encourages young women to push their limits.

Through the help of our parents, alumnae, and community partners, SMA Belles push their limits in the areas of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Through the commitment of our experienced faculty and staff, SMA belles push their limits in the areas of their academic and career preparedness.

And through the power of the CSJ charism, SMA belles push their limits in the areas of justice, service, and empowerment.

In this next chapter of SMA, we are committed to pushing the limits- more students, more partnerships, more impact, and more unity with our dear neighbor.

Ringin Loudly,

Dr. OL

Congratulations!



St. Mary's Academy Class of 2023 ~ Red Ties

Graduates of the class of 2023 were accepted to the following Universities and Colleges

Boston College
California State University- Pomona
California State University- Long Beach
California State University- Fresno
California State University- San Diego
California State University- Fullerton
California State University- San Francisco
California State University- Sacramento
California Lutheran University
Chapman University
Charles R. Drew University of
Medicine and Science
Cleveland State
DePaul University
Duquesne University
Fisk University
Fordham University
George Washington University
Grand Canyon University
Hampton University
Hawaii Pacific University
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University of Chicago
Manhattan College

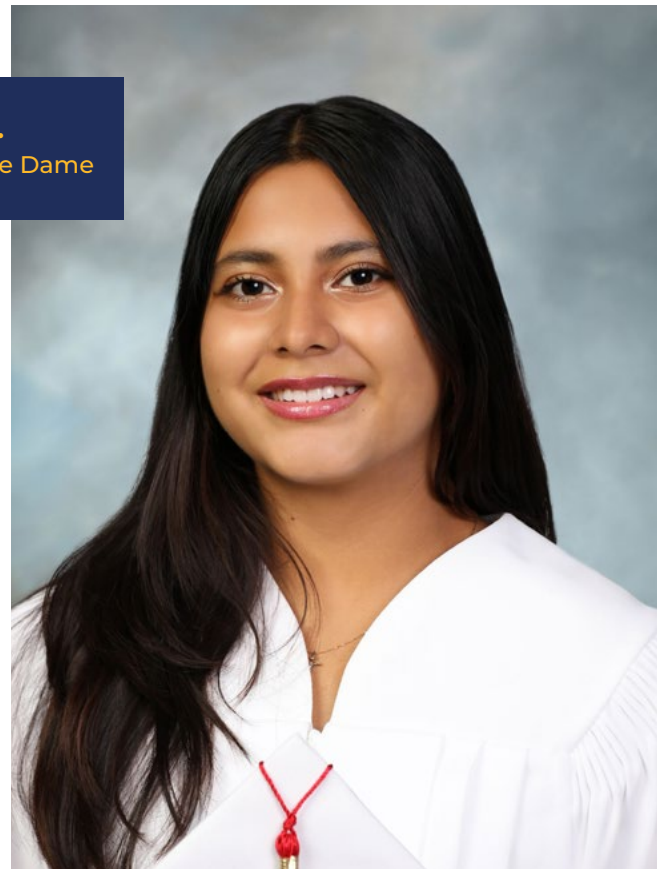
Merrimack College
Morgan State University
Mount St. Mary's University
Neumont College of Computer Science
Northern Arizona University
Otis College of Art and Design
Pepperdine State University
Penn State University
St. John's University
Seattle University
Texas Southern
University of California- Davis
University of California- Irvine
University of California- Merced
University of California- San Diego
University of California- Santa Barbara
University of Illinois, Chicago
University of Kansas
University of La Verne
University of Nevada at Las Vegas
University of Washington
Virginia Commonwealth University
Xavier University of Louisiana

Class of 2023 Valedictorian and Salutatorian



Milka Z.
Attending Loyola
Marymount University

Milka Zekarias has earned a weighted GPA of 4.57. She has demonstrated high academic achievement and competitiveness by taking ten honors and six AP Courses. She was an active member of the Onward Scholars Program. She also participated in Ambassadors, National Honors Society, California Scholarship Federation, Crochet Club and founded Ping Pong Club. Milka will be attending Loyola Marymount University, majoring in Computer Science.



Yaritza P.
University of Notre Dame

Yaritza Padilla has earned a weighted GPA of 4.55. She has demonstrated high academic achievement and competitiveness by taking ten honors and seven AP Courses. She was an active member of the Engineering Pathway. She also participated in Ambassadors, National Honors Society, California Scholarship Federation, Crochet Club, Activism Club and served as the President of Anime Club. Yaritza was awarded the Gates Scholarship and will be attending the University of Notre Dame, majoring in Computer Science.



A Blessing from Sister Mo

to the Red Tie Class of 2023

My beloved Class of 2023,

Congratulations on this wonderful occasion!

Your red tie color, so rich in symbolism, is most often represented by the heart. Today, I offer these reflections and the gift you have already received as a constant reminder of the power of “you”! Life began when God breathed you into existence. And of course, the first sign of life in you was your heart beat.

Today you begin a new adventure. No doubt, like all adventures there will be a mix of excitement, boredom, regret, success and failure. Ultimately you will come to that point of which the poet, Maya Angelou wrote, “Won’t take nothing for my journey now!”

The time will come when you will look back and see that even your errors have turned to gold. Why? Because your God is right there with you. The Illuminatio Dei will light your path in even the darkest moments. This powerful moment, especially for young women, has you stand on the open platform of life, filled with wonder and anticipation. Your baby steps have developed into strides and the distant horizon beckons you to put aside your fears and embrace all that will come your way. It is a time of immense growth!

Families and friends, I invite you now to join me in our prayer for these graduates.

**God of our beginnings,
We thank you for the gifts of these graduates;
their excitement, their awesome wonder and curiosity,
their perseverance and determination when things got rough.
As they step forward into the world that awaits,
Comfort their fears with the full knowledge of your divine presence.
Strengthen their resolve to walk in the footsteps of Jesus
as modern-day disciples in a world that needs their spirit.
Guide their feet as they move through life.
Protecting them from the pitfalls of darkness
while they help to lead future generations
into the warmth and promise of your light.
We ask this blessing upon each of them
in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, AMEN!**

Student Reflections

Gabriella Mendoza, Gold Tie '26

My SMA education has taught me more about my relationship with God through Catholicism. Here at SMA it has made me happier than being at a school where we don't have this level of connection with our peers. At SMA all of us are like siblings; we respect and love each other. This has given me the confidence and support I need to succeed in my studies.

Being at SMA, I've had the privilege of being in the best and most positive school environment. Everyone has good vibes, the teachers are super helpful and available, the school is clean, the sports are organized, the food is good, and the curriculum is rigorous! I'm blessed to be at a school where I can enjoy the hours I'm here.

Zariah Allen, Blue Tie '24

Kedie Lucas-Delgadillo, Blue Tie '24

SMA has allowed me to receive an education where I make long lasting friendships and prepare to strive for the future. SMA motivates students to push beyond their limits through the many opportunities offered outside of school and through our coursework. With the fundamental principles of the CSJs, SMA prepares us students to become young women of distinction and service to others who will show the world what we are capable of. I am extremely grateful for the education I receive at SMA and for the life-long lessons I am taught along the way.

Receiving a CSJ Education at SMA has impacted my life because it has taught me that if no one is doing the work, then you should be the one taking action to do work no one wants to. An example of this is how the Sisters have responded to the needs of those in poverty, without thinking of themselves, the cost, or what others thought of their service. Despite it all, they still worked toward bettering the lives of the people who needed it most, all to show their undying faith in God, and His will to treat everyone equally.

Andrea Rodriguez, Blue Tie '24

CAREER PATHWAYS

St. Mary's Academy Pathway Programs

St. Mary's Academy Pathway Programs (SMAPP) are five (5) unique programs designed to help students who are preparing for careers in medicine and health, law, service, the arts, and engineering. The programs are paired with rigorous, engaging electives designed to give students a strong academic background and knowledge in their respective fields.

SMAPP continues to impact students' futures. The addition of an internship experience for 12th grade students will complement the coursework currently offered while also increasing students' confidence and self-esteem academically and personally. Students will also be exposed to a wide range of career options and educational paths through the relationships fostered by this experience. As businesses seek to identify ways to support their local community and invest in diverse talent, we are confident that a partnership with St. Mary's Academy compliments those efforts. Young women from St. Mary's Academy are provided an education where they can learn without limits. The tradition continues.

For more information about how you can support SMAPP please contact Ms. Ivette Delon, idelon@smabelles.org

71%

OF CLASS OF 2023 ARTS PATHWAY STUDENTS
HAVE COMMITTED TO AN ARTS-RELATED MAJOR
AT THEIR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

85%

OF CLASS OF 2023 HEALTH CAREERS PATHWAYS
STUDENTS HAVE COMMITTED TO A SCIENCE
(HEALTH OR BEHAVIORAL) RELATED FIELD IN
MAJOR AT THEIR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

80%

OF CLASS OF 2023 ENGINEERING PATHWAYS
STUDENTS HAVE COMMITTED TO AN
ENGINEERING/COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR AT
THEIR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

**COMING
SOON**
2024-2025

LAW PATHWAY

VOCATIONS PATHWAY

Arts Pathway

Media Arts is the largest growing sector of the arts, thus Media Arts at SMA similarly expanded this 2022-23 school year. The Multimedia class is a project-based course driven by student interests in storytelling, video production, and animation. Students produce creative projects both collaboratively and individually throughout the year. As part of the course, students learned Toon Boom Animation Storyboard Pro software to help plan and storyboard their ideas. Several of our students took the Toon Boom Animation certification exam in May and passed and are now certified in this industry-standard software!

In January, the Multimedia class received its most exciting commission yet – learning scriptwriting by taking part in a six-week residency with the Skirball Cultural Center. Each year, the Skirball facilitates an in-school residency program that encourages students to engage with issues that

are important to their lives. By using art as a tool for action, residency students ignite their self-confidence, imagination, and sense of agency. The class worked with the Skirball educator, Anna Lund, who is trained as both an actor and scriptwriter, to create work centering on conversations held around a table. Students worked in groups to learn scriptwriting, how to properly format a script, to give and receive constructive feedback, and to rehearse reading their scripts aloud. Students produced seven original scripts for 10-minute plays, which were then presented to a live audience at the Skirball in their culminating presentation. It was such an honor to be selected for this residency and we hope SMA will be able to collaborate with the Skirball again in the future!



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Engineering Career Pathway

The St. Mary's Academy Engineering Career Pathway (ECP) ensures students are prepared for success in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through rigorous college preparation, project based learning and mentorship with professionals in engineering and STEM related fields. Our partnership with Architecture Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program helps support the ECP goals. Professionals in the architecture, construction, and engineering fields come to campus to mentor SMA students.

Each year as part of the program ACE hosts a Build Day. On Build Day the students get to experience a microcosm of building a real structure. Students are responsible for reading plans, planning the construction, building, painting, and fixing any mistakes. This year, the SMA team designed and built a playhouse with a color scheme based on the

SMA tie colors. The unique SMA approach to the design and construction caught the attention of Los Angeles NBC affiliate program *"California Live."* The design, the SMA lead mentor (Frank Ortiz), and a SMA student (Gold Tie Crystal Arrendondo) were featured on a live broadcast segment. The SMA team decided to donate the playhouse to Safe Place for Youth (SPY). This house is going to be put at The Nest---a transitional housing program designed for young people who are pregnant or parenting. We are proud of St. Mary's Academy ECP students for showing their love for "the dear neighbor without distinction."



This year, the SMA team designed and built a playhouse with a color scheme based on the SMA tie colors.

Health Career Pathway

Health Career Pathway (HCP) Gold and Green Ties have been shadowing Dr. Marcia Glenn at the Dermatology and Laser Center in Inglewood on a monthly basis this year. During their visits to her office, students have been able to interact with patients and learn from health care providers who serve our community. On their visits, students are able to observe the physician-patient dynamic, examinations for signs and symptoms of pathologies, and recommendations for treatments and procedures. They also observe how clinical trials are conducted and are able to learn about the various aspects of running a clinic. Mrs. Stephanie Gordon, Director of the SMA Health Careers Pathway states, "Dr. Glenn's passion for educating young women has been empowering and inspiring for the students of HCP. Her desire to address disparities in dermatological care has provided an example

for the type of advocacy the HCP aims to instill and develop in our future health professionals." Dr. Glenn and her team are passionate about providing the highest quality medical care to the Black and Brown patients. They are advocates for diversity in the field of dermatology and our HCP students have benefited tremendously from these experiences.



Health Career Pathway (HCP) Gold and Green Ties have been shadowing Dr. Marcia Glenn at the Dermatology and Laser Center in Inglewood on a monthly basis this year.

CSJ Maxims

Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph, composed 100 short sayings to help the Sisters stay rooted in God's grace. The maxims are both practical and inspirational. In a school setting the charism of the CSJs should be seen, heard, touched, felt, and experienced by the entire community- students, parents, faculty/staff, board, and alumnae. In the fall, the SMA community identified 4 maxims that would be our focus for the 2023-2024 school year. We look forward to amplifying these values in our service to our dear neighbor.

Avoid anything that interferes with becoming the one God dreamed you to be. —Maxim 44

Let your life be a continuous act of love. —Maxim 4

Do the ordinary good with extraordinary care. —Maxim 89

Serve others unselfishly with no thought of reward. —Maxim 55

The CSJ Education at SMA has been instrumental in shaping my worldview and helping me develop into a well-rounded individual. The emphasis on social justice and community service has instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility towards the less privileged members of our society and motivated me to pursue a career in public service. In addition, the rigorous academic curriculum and supportive environment at SMA have prepared me for higher education while equipping me with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in my chosen field. Furthermore, the education I receive at SMA has provided me with a strong foundation in critical thinking and effective communication skills which have been invaluable in both my personal and professional life.

Katherine Lean-Orellana , Green Tie '25

I am very blessed to be receiving a CSJ education at SMA, as being a part of this community means to be with a group of individuals who strive to foster the common good through advocacy, social justice, education, healthcare, social service, and spirituality. As a student at SMA, I am being pushed to reach my fullest potential. As a woman of color that is something I feel is very necessary to succeed in our society. Going on retreats with my gold tie class and Onward Scholars helped me connect with my peers and create lasting memories with them. At SMA, through the CSJs, we work through and with God's aid to have the best high school career we can and an even better future. This all has helped impact the person I am today.

Remiah Tekle, Gold Tie '26

My CSJ Education at St. Mary's Academy has motivated me to continue to work hard and not settle, whether I am playing sports or in the classroom, CSJ impacts how I am, not only in school, but also outside of it. I am glad that I have the opportunity to be ahead in life and not settle for anything less,

Imoree McGregory, Blue Tie '24

CSJ education has impacted me because I now implement the idea of "serving the dear neighbor" in my life and encourage my peers to do the same. The CSJ mission has inspired me as the president of a club to host various service opportunities where I can be of service to the dear neighbor. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to receive a CSJ education because I have learned their idea of love and service for all people.

Laila Anderson, Red Tie '23





Le Puy CSJ Pilgrimage

In *Hamilton: An American Musical*, the final verse sung by the ensemble is a series of questions posed to the audience: “Who lives? Who dies? Who tells your story?” We are the storytellers of the CSJ history. We are the embodiment of our founders, channels of their sacred charism. I fell in love with *Hamilton* over the pandemic and played the soundtrack on the majority of my flight to France. Naturally, several verses came to mind when I embarked on this pilgrimage that took me to explore Annecy, Le-Puy-en-Velay, Bas-en-Basset, and Lyon, sites significant to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. It’s a pilgrimage I had my heart set on since I was 18! When I was a student at Mount Saint Mary’s University, I had CSJ sisters as my professors, mentors, and even as my neighbors on campus. After I graduated from the Mount, I lived in the Medaille House of Discernment with Sisters Darlene Kawulok and Carol Brong. For nearly half of my life, the CSJs have supported me in forming my faith, nourishing my ministry, and reminding me of God’s unending grace.

Many cities and stops spoke to my soul, but none more than Le-Puy-en-Velay. For years I had seen pictures of “the kitchen” in presentations. I even have a print of the kitchen right behind my desk. Nothing prepared me for physically standing in the space that was both sacred and practical. I associate kitchens with preparation, innovation (in cooking!), and family conversations. It is the space of my mom’s pozole and the place where she lets my niece and nephew “help” her with a new recipe while simultaneously wreaking havoc. It is chaos and creation! For the first six sisters, it was a space to break bread, rest, pray, and process the day’s ministry through Sharing of the State of the Heart. As I stood in the middle of the kitchen, it was as if time stood still. I was filled with gratitude and in absolute awe of the legacy that is still alive nearly 400 years later.

“Look around, look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now.”

I walked away from that experience realizing how important it is to remember who we are. When we are in constant movement we run the risk of forgetting who and what brought us to this particular point in time. But if we take a moment to bask in gratitude and acknowledge the history, it makes everything more worthwhile. I urge us to continue working towards unifying love while holding close to our hearts the women who have made it possible for us to imagine, work, and minister.

“Legacy, what is a legacy? It’s planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.”

We are the seeds that have been planted, nourished by the dedication of our CSJ sisters, associates, and ministries. We are sustained by the saints rejoicing at their harvest from above.



PERFORMING ARTS



Performing Arts at SMA is *alive and well!*

We look forward to continued growth in our Performing Arts program!



ONWARD SCHOLARS

Onward Scholars Supports Belles in *Dreaming Big!*

St. Mary's Academy is fortunate to be one of only six distinguished Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles who partners with the Onward Scholars Program, united through the mission of providing scholarship, mentorship, and college access. Onward Scholars offers a unique pathway to success for exceptional incoming 9th graders who demonstrate academic excellence, impactful leadership, and motivation to Dream Big! in their college search. Michele Rice, our Program Director, has been at SMA since the program's inception on our campus in 2017.

Each year, SMA selects 12 students from a competitive applicant pool via a very comprehensive process. Scholars must have-and maintain-a 3.5 GPA and impactful leadership on campus and through community service. Through the tremendous generosity of the Smet Foundation, Scholars receive a 75% tuition scholarship over their four years, a \$2,000 stipend used to explore their academic and career interests, and join a network of high achievers who have continued to succeed in our nation's best universities. This year, 100% of graduates of the Onward Scholars program will attend a four-year university, with 63% of those institutions ranked in the top 100 in the country, including USC, University of Washington, UCLA, Santa Clara University, and UC Berkeley.

Here is a list of the colleges and majors SMA's first two cohorts of Onward Scholars have selected:

Cal Poly Pomona (Business Administration with a focus on Real Estate)
Cal State Dominguez Hills (Business Administration)
Cal State Fullerton (Psychology, Theatre)
Hobart & William Smith Colleges (Studio Art & Art History)
Loyola Marymount University (Civil Engineering, Computer Science)
Marquette University (Psychology)
Michigan State University (Kinesiology)
Mount St. Mary's University (Nursing, Criminology)
Santa Clara University
(Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering)
St. Louis University (Journalism)
UC Berkeley (English)
UCLA (Neuroscience)
UC Riverside (Global Studies)
UC Santa Barbara (Biopsychology)
University of Minnesota (Kinesiology)
University of Washington (Sociology, Pre-Chemical Engineering)
Yale (Global Affairs)



Stay tuned for an update on the success of this upcoming year's seniors-the Cohort III Blue Ties- and the cohorts that follow! Interested in learning more about Onward Scholars at SMA? Please contact Mrs. Rice at onwardscholars@smabelles.org or visit www.onwardscholars.org/st-marys-academy

The Arts Career Program students met SMA Alumna, Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson '83, at the Arts Orange County 13th Creative Edge Lecture at Irvine Barclay Theatre. Dr. Jackson shared her vision on the necessity of arts for all. She has focused on understanding and elevating arts, culture, and design as essential components of a healthy community. She became the 13th chair of the National Endowment of the Arts in January 2022 and has become the agency's first chair of African American and Mexican American heritage.



Career Day 2023 was a success! Over 65 professionals (46 who were alumnae) facilitated workshops on everything from entrepreneurship to medicine. #WomenLead #sisterhood #mentorship



The Health Careers Program at SMA is excited to be partnering with Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital to provide a paid internship and mentorship program during the summer of 2023. This is the first year that the MLK Community Healthcare Career Fellows Program will be reserving two spots specifically for SMA HCP students. This program will provide HCP students with the opportunity to learn about a variety of healthcare-related careers while performing research under the mentorship of a healthcare provider.



On April 1, 2022 THE MUSES hosted SMA Belles at the 2022 Woman of the Year award ceremony at the Jonathan Club in downtown Los Angeles. The honoree was Eileen Drake and she shared her wisdom and experience with the Belles. The Belles witnessed how her leadership made an important impact on the aerospace industry and how she set a high standard for the Los Angeles community. The Belles also got to meet Dr. Wanda Austin, a former Woman of the Year award winner and the former CEO of the Aerospace Corporation. These inspirational opportunities were supported by the Smet Foundation. The Smet Foundation partners with the Department of Catholic Schools in Los Angeles in a variety of programs that benefit students, teachers, principals, and staff in the Los Angeles area.



BUSY BELLES



Students in the Health Careers Pathways participated in a field trip to Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in November 2022. HCP students interacted with current CDU students, faculty, and staff to learn about CDU's history and mission, how the university cultivates diverse health professions leaders who are dedicated to social justice and healthy equity, and how students can apply to and get support from the university. Students spoke with professors, toured the campus facilities, and learned about the various undergraduate and graduate programs CDU offers. Students interacted with an Anatomage table, which allows them to visualize human anatomy exactly as they would on a fresh cadaver. They also toured the simulation labs, research labs, and student resource centers.

Our AP 2-D Art & Design class participated in the 2023 Scholastic Art and Writing competition that was designed to identify students with exceptional artistic and literary talent. This gives our students an opportunity to receive recognition, exhibition, publication, and Scholarships. We are excited to congratulate our Red Ties Julia Acquino, Alexia Castro, Alexa Gomez, and Alison Paz Valdez as they have won 9 awards all together including 3 silver Keys. Alexa and DanYa Williams have also received Honorable mentions for the work they submitted to the California Art Education Association for the Youth Art Month Competition. Youth Art Month encourages support for quality school art programs and promotes art material and safety.

9-12 Los Angeles 2D Winners 2023



DanYa Williams - HM



Gabriela Nino Herrera - HM



Makenna Morrissey - HM



Andrea Saldana - HM



Nicole Paja - HM



The FIRST Robotics Competition challenges students to create a multifunctional robot that combines the excitement of sports with the rigors of science and technology based on an originally created game. Each year, judges create a new game with a new twist. Teams work towards creating a robot that completes the game objective, but also uses The FIRST Core Values to emphasize friendly sportsmanship and Gracious Professionalism: discovery, innovation, impact, inclusion, teamwork, and fun. FIRST Robotics has created a community of young, like-minded individuals who all strive for excellence and exploration of the STEM field. Congratulations to the SMA Robotics Team, the SMArt Bots. SMArt Bots, was founded in 2011 and has participated in 12 seasons and 14 events.

JUNIOR RING CEREMONY

The Junior Unity Mass is a special day where our students, faculty, and staff gather with the Blue Tie Juniors' and their families to mark the important milestone of becoming upperclasswomen. At this mass juniors have their class ring blessed. Each student was recognized as she received her blessed jewelry, a blue rose, a charm of their class saint (Mary Magdalene), and a special prayer card to commemorate the day. This liturgy was a sacred time to gather together in God's holy presence in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving for all that has been and all that will be in our Blue Ties' journey to become young women of intelligence, heart, service, and courage.



Go Belles!

SPORTS

We had a great year in sports this year. Basketball and Soccer clinched league titles. Our track team came in 2nd place in Del Rey League with 7 girls advancing to CIF-SS Finals. We look forward to another competitive year in all of our sports teams.



Thank You Coach Liz

Coach Liz began her journey at St. Mary's Academy as JV Basketball Coach in November of 2001. She joined the St. Mary's Academy staff as the Athletic Director during the 2002-2003 school year. Coach Liz held many positions during her tenure including Rotary Club moderator, Dean of Students and Athletics Director. We are thankful for the 21 years of service Coach Liz has dedicated to St. Mary's Academy. She loved God and St. Mary's Academy.



Save the Date!



H O M E C O M I N G
F A L L 2 0 2 3

Letter to Alumnae



Greetings Alumnae and Friends of St. Mary's Academy,

I hope this letter finds you safe, healthy, and well. I'm Lauren Hopkins, the new Director of Mission Advancement at St. Mary's Academy. My time at SMA started just a few weeks ago, and I'm in the process of introducing myself to each of SMA's constituent groups. And SMA's alumnae and friends are top on the list!

Professionally, my experience is in education administration. This experience began as a Special Education Teacher's Aide at Aspire Public Schools, where I learned how to instruct students with disabilities. From there, I served as an advocate at Southwestern Law School's Children's Rights Clinic, where I honed the skill of interacting with the families of students with disabilities, and added to it the application of education law. Then, I served as the Development Coordinator at Frederick K. C. Price III Christian Schools, where I learned to execute admissions, fundraising, and alumni engagement initiatives for the sustainability of the school. After several years in that work, I moved to La Salle College Preparatory, where I served as Director of Admissions and returned the school to its pre-pandemic enrollment levels. Now, I'm here and excited to bring these skills and experiences to the advancement of St. Mary's Academy.

Personally, I've been familiar with SMA for a long time as a graduate of Frederick K. C. Price III Christian Schools. After graduating from Price, I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Stanford University. I, then, went on to earn my Juris Doctorate from Southwestern Law School. I have a 9-year old daughter who, I'm sure, will consider becoming a Belle in a couple of years. And I'm an avid runner, reader, and reality TV watcher.

In my role as Director of Mission Advancement, I'm looking to increase the efficiency of SMA's admissions, fundraising, and alumnae engagement initiatives. Though I'm only in my first month, I've already collaborated with Dr. Brandi Odom Lucas about our goals for alumnae and friends engagement for the 2023-2024 school year. We're looking forward to hosting Homecoming festivities, acknowledging your contributions to SMA, and connecting with you via multiple channels.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions relating to mission advancement. I'm happy to chat!

Take care and talk soon,

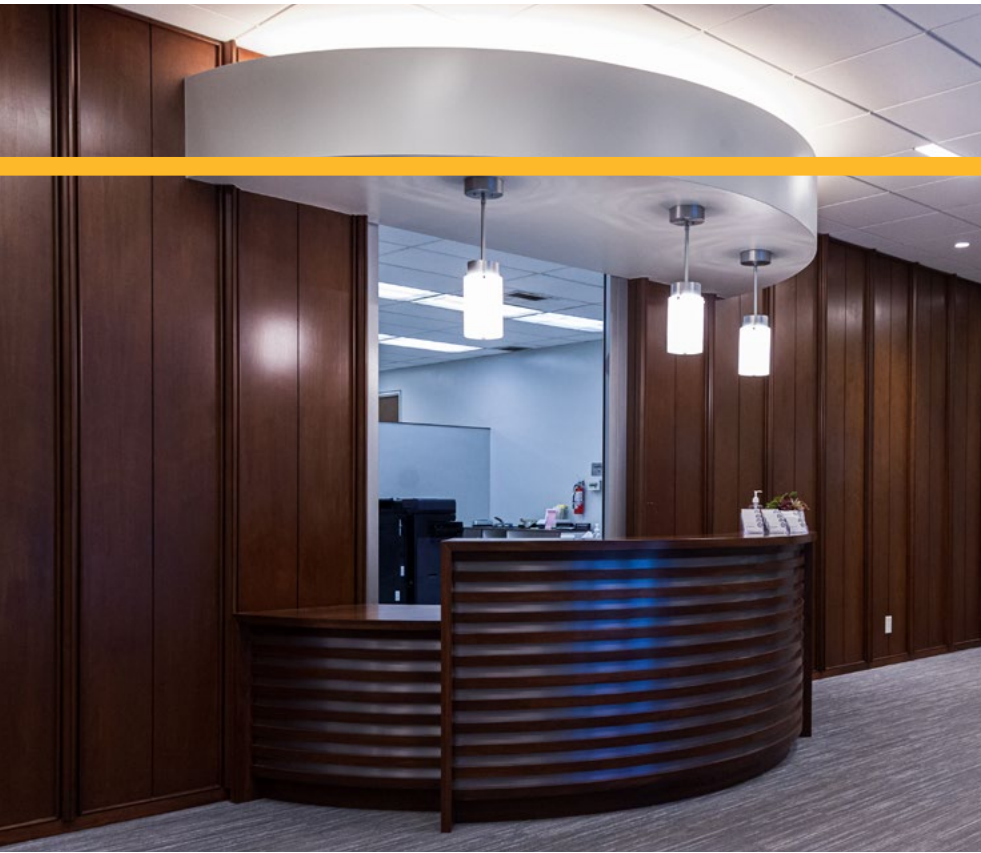
Lauren Hopkins

LHopkins@smabelles.org

(310) 674-8470, Ext. 209

New Spaces. New Beginnings.

We are grateful to our benefactors for their donations supporting our new library, classrooms, and lobby.



Celebrating our Golden Graduates

St. Mary's Academy welcomed the Green Tie Class of 1973 to celebrate their Golden anniversary on Saturday June 3rd, 2023. The luncheon was held in the Hannon Dining Hall following the Class of 2023 Red Tie graduation. SMA Faculty, Staff, and Board Members gathered as a community to celebrate this special reunion.



**IS YOUR CLASS INTERESTED IN
HAVING A REUNION?**

CONTACT OUR MISSION ADVANCEMENT OFFICE AT
ADVANCEMENT@SMABELLES.ORG

REUNIONS

There's no better Sisterhood!



**Sinderella Okwaraibekwe (Red Tie '23)
and Liliana Sosa (Red Tie '23) enjoying
SMA's annual Trunk or Treat Festival.**

**Camila Vicente Santiago (Blue Tie '24),
Alani Soto (Blue Tie '24), and Diana
Salas (Blue Tie '24) participating in
Winter Wonderland!**





Members of the Crochet Club, Bethlehem Adugna (Red Tie '23) and Helen Carretero (Gold Tie '26), making blankets for the NICU babies.



Isabella Valdivia (Green Tie '25) and Ajaa Deigan (Green Tie '25) celebrating mass at Verbum Dei High School for Catholic Schools week.

Thank You

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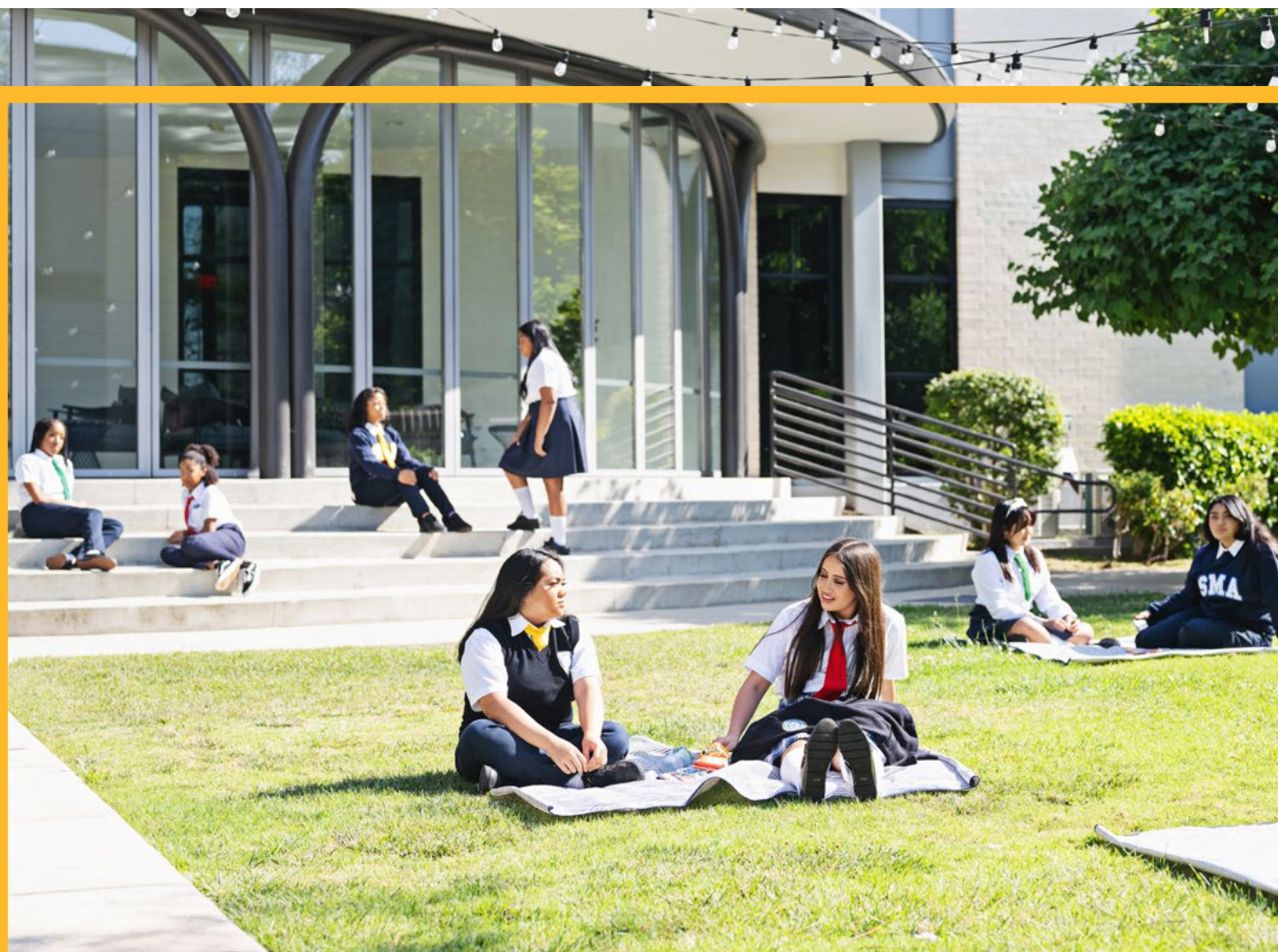
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