



# The Messenger

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## Guardian Catholic School Dedicates Carla Harris Inspirational Wall

On December 3, 2024, Guardian Catholic School proudly hosted the Blessing and Dedication of the Carla Harris Inspirational Wall. This special event honored the incredible legacy of Carla Harris, a distinguished alumna, Wall Street executive, author, and motivational speaker. Her achievements and words of wisdom have inspired countless individuals across the globe.

The dedication ceremony was led by Bishop Erik T. Pohlmeier of the Diocese of St. Augustine, whose heartfelt blessing set the tone for a memorable celebration. Ms. Harris' story of perseverance and excellence deeply resonated with the audience, especially the middle school students whom she encouraged to pursue their dreams with courage and confidence. She reminded them, "Fear has no place in your success equation."

Adding to the joyous occasion, the Guardian Catholic Drumline, under the direction of Winston Timmons,

delivered a spirited performance that energized the crowd. The event welcomed donors, corporate leaders, board members, and Ms. Harris' family and friends, all of whom witnessed the powerful impact of her legacy on the Guardian Catholic community.

In 2022, Ms. Harris helped raise nearly \$1 million to establish an endowed scholarship, opening doors for deserving children in Jacksonville to attend Guardian. This remarkable gift reflects her steadfast commitment to education and empowering future generations.

The Carla Harris Inspirational Wall now stands as a lasting tribute, featuring excerpts from Ms. Harris' book "Lead to Win", encouraging students to embrace their potential and strive for excellence. We are deeply grateful to all who attended and contributed to this meaningful celebration.



*Our mission is  
to help each  
student attain their  
potential through  
high quality  
Catholic education  
in a Christ-centered  
environment that  
inspires each of  
us to think, learn,  
achieve, pray  
and serve our  
communities.*





**July 2024-2025**

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## The Future is Bright at Guardian Catholic School



Walking through the halls of Guardian Catholic School, you can feel it – the energy, the determination, the unwavering belief that our students are on the path to something greater.

There is a palpable synergy that radiates through every classroom, every lesson, and every interaction. We are standing on the precipice of greatness, and it is because of our incredible students, dedicated educators, and the unwavering support of community partners like you.

This year, we are witnessing a transformation in our school community. Our students are not just learning; they are striving for excellence. They are being challenged daily to rise to their full potential – to be the light in their classrooms, their homes, and their communities.

Whether through academic programs, faith formation, or service projects, our students are embracing their call to make a difference. We have expanded our commitment to academic excellence and holistic student development. We are developing innovative programs to provide students with the skills they need to thrive, and our teachers are setting high expectations while offering unwavering support.

From our youngest learners in Pre-K to our 8th-grade leaders, there is a renewed sense of ambition – a drive to go further, to work harder, and to achieve more than ever before.

None of this would be possible without you – our valued supporters. Your generosity fuels our mission, making it possible for us to provide scholarships, enhance our facilities, enrich programming, and ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed. Because of you, our students are dreaming bigger and reaching higher.

As we continue this journey, we ask for your continued prayers, partnership, and support. Together, we are shaping the future – one bright student at a time.

With gratitude,

Melissa Ilski  
Principal, Guardian Catholic School



# Message from Board Chair



Dear School Families and Supporters,

Spring has sprung! We recently wrapped up a very successful inaugural Night B-For event to kick off our Annual Ron Townsend Golf Tournament, and a wonderful time was had by all!

As we move through the spring semester, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for the opportunities ahead. Spring is a season of renewal, bringing fresh opportunities for our students to grow academically, spiritually, and socially. I am so proud of their hard work and deeply appreciative of our dedicated teachers and staff for their unwavering commitment to shaping young hearts and minds.

This season also serves as a reminder of the incredible generosity that sustains our school. Your support – through prayers, volunteer efforts, or financial contributions, big or small – has a profound impact on our ability to provide a quality Catholic education to every child, regardless of financial circumstances. Thank you for being an essential part of our school community.

Spring also brings exciting updates to our campus. Our new Outdoor Learning Classroom is now open, providing students with a dynamic space to explore, play, and learn beyond traditional classroom walls. We're also thrilled to share that our playground is now complete and ready for students to enjoy. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors, and we are deeply grateful for your partnership in this mission.

As we continue through the semester, we ask for your continued prayers for our students and faculty. We also invite you to consider ways you can share your time, talent, and treasure to support our school's mission. May this season of growth and renewal bring abundant blessings to you and your families.

With gratitude and God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Aiello".

Kristi Aiello  
Board Chair







## Sharing God's Light

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) at Guardian Catholic School held its induction ceremony on January 30, 2025. 23 new students from 6th, 7th and 8th grade joined seven current NJHS 8th grade members. Each student is selected based on their outstanding scholarship and dedication to faithful stewardship within our school community. The five tenets of NJHS – leadership, character, citizenship, service, and scholarship – are exemplified by our members each day as they strive to reflect God's light and love.

In celebration of Catholic Schools Week, NJHS members organized a hospitality cart for teachers and staff, offering beverages and treats generously donated by parents and friends. It was well-received and reflected the admiration that our students have for the dedicated individuals who make learning fun, exciting, and high achieving.

Several NJHS members volunteered at the recent Night B-For event at Timuquana Country Club. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to meet our ambassador, Mr. Ronald Townsend, and the many generous benefactors who support our school.

One of this year's NJHS highlights was the successful Socks for Souls campaign, a service initiative led by President Aniya Henry. This initiative collected an impressive 1,425 new pairs of socks for the homeless in our community. With the generous support of Isaiah Oliver, President of the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, and our dedicated community members, the campaign exceeded all expectations.

This effort, made possible by your help and prayers, underscores the vital role of community partnerships. In addition, it reinforces the NJHS belief that such collaborations are essential not only for the growth of the organization but also for the continued success and development of our school.





# Donor Spotlight | Miller Electric Company

*Powering Brighter Futures Through Leadership, Innovation, and Community Impact*



At Guardian Catholic School, we know that strong partnerships drive transformational change. Among the many corporate leaders who champion our mission, Miller Electric Company stands out for its deep commitment to education, innovation, and opportunity. Under the visionary leadership of Henry Brown, CEO, and Ed Witt, Jr., President and COO, Miller Electric has become a beacon of corporate citizenship, investing in the future to uplift generations to come.

But their commitment to our mission goes far beyond philanthropy. As a cornerstone

sponsor of our STEM program, Miller Electric has equipped 5th- through 8th-grade students with leading-edge STEM kits and immersive learning experiences that spark curiosity, foster critical thinking, and lay the foundation for future careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. They are not just supporting students – they are shaping the next generation of leaders and innovators.

Their impact extends beyond the classroom. This past October, Miller Electric created unforgettable moments of joy for our 2nd graders with a magical Trick-or-Treat Experience. Watching the excitement on our students' faces as they met beloved characters and filled their bags with treats was a powerful reminder of how acts of kindness create lasting memories.

As Title Sponsor of our inaugural Night B-For event, held on the eve of the 21st Annual Ron Townsend Golf Classic, Miller

Electric's leadership played a pivotal role in raising critical funds for scholarships and school operations, directly transforming lives in our community.

Miller Electric doesn't just build infrastructure – they build futures. We are honored to partner with a company whose vision, generosity, and unwavering belief in our students are changing the trajectory of their lives.

Thank you, Miller Electric, for powering possibilities and believing in the limitless potential of Guardian Catholic students.



## Our Robotics Teams Make a Splash in Their First Season

If you peeked into the robotics room on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon this fall, you might have seen students flapping their arms or climbing imaginary ladders in an intense game of Reverse Charades. Or perhaps they were busy engineering robot attachments, modifying code to complete missions on the "Submerged" gameboard, or standing in a semi-circle, perfecting their presentations on reducing plastic pollution in the ocean.

That's all because, this fall, Guardian Catholic School launched two new middle school robotics teams – The Sea Guardians and The Aqua Eagles – to explore robotics, coding, and teamwork through *FIRST*® LEGO® League (FLL). With guidance from three dedicated high school mentors from The Bolles School, these 14 students embraced problem-solving, collaboration, public speaking, and STEM skills.

Their hard work paid off in December when both rookie teams competed in their first qualifying tournament. They brought home three awards, including the Coaches/Mentor Award, the Innovation Project Award for the Sea Guardians, and the Rising



All-Star Award for the Aqua Eagles. The Sea Guardians advanced to the regional tournament in January, where they earned the Breakthrough Award.

So next time you walk past the robotics room, take a peek inside – you just might catch a future engineer deep in code, a scientist perfecting an innovation idea, or a team celebrating their hard work with an exciting game of Charades.



## The Night B-Fore: A New Tradition of Impact

The 21st Annual Ron Townsend Golf Classic kicked off with an unforgettable celebration at the inaugural Night B-Fore Event, held on February 23 at Timuquana Country Club. This exclusive prelude to the tournament brought together supporters for an evening of connection, excitement, and inspiration – setting the stage for the remarkable success of the following day's golf classic.

Thanks to Miller Electric, our Title Sponsor, and all our incredible sponsors, the Night B-Fore Event was filled with energy and purpose. Emceed by sports radio host Dan Hicken, the evening featured lively entertainment from The Band Be Easy and a memorable atmosphere. Mission Moments, shared by Guardian Catholic staff, volunteers, and alumni highlighted the powerful impact of the school's programs and left guests truly inspired.

A standout moment of the evening was the spotlight on Guardian Catholic's Robotics Program – a vital initiative preparing students for success in STEM fields and helping them build a strong foundation for the future. The energy and excitement in the room were contagious as supporters united to celebrate the school's mission and accomplishments while forging deeper connections for continued support.

The inaugural Night B-Fore Event was a true testament to the commitment and passion of those who champion Guardian Catholic. It was the perfect way to kick off the next day's golf tournament, which, despite rainy weather, was marked by unwavering enthusiasm and dedication from all involved.



# 21st Golf Classic Celebrates Generosity and Growth

The success of the 21st Annual Ron Townsend Golf Classic, held on February 24 at Timuquana Country Club, was made possible through the exceptional leadership of Ron Townsend, Rick Cannington, Honorary Chair Josh Scobee, Will Tutwiler, and the Guardian Board. Their unwavering dedication played a crucial role in bringing this event to life, and we are deeply grateful for their continued commitment to our mission.

Thanks to the generous support of Applebee's, our Title Sponsor, along with all our sponsors, donors, and volunteers, we helped raise nearly \$250,000 to support Guardian Catholic School's mission of providing a Christ-centered, high-quality education to children from low-income families. This event continues to uphold

Ron Townsend's legacy – empowering students, strengthening families, and transforming lives.

For more than two decades, the Golf Classic has served as a beacon of hope and opportunity with lasting community impact. Your generosity fuels our mission of faith, excellence, and opportunity – making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this year's event possible and helped us exceed our fundraising goal. We look forward to the continued success of our mission—and the lasting impact we will create together.





# An Opportunity to Shine

On Tuesday, April 8, 2025, Guardian Catholic School proudly hosted its annual Spring Showcase and Reception – a heartfelt celebration honoring our generous donors and supporters. We were especially blessed to welcome Most Reverend Erik T. Pohlmeier, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, along with members of the Guardian Board and Guardian Giving Society donors. The event was a special opportunity to express our gratitude and celebrate the impact of their continued support.

Guests were welcomed by members of our National Junior Honor Society, who served as tour guides throughout the event. Each station of the tour highlighted exciting programs and accomplishments from across the school.

The showcase featured vibrant displays from our Art and Robotics programs, a presentation from the Home and School

Association (HSA), and a tour of our new Outdoor Learning Center. Guests also enjoyed performances by our Drumline and Cheer Team, a look at the collaborative UNF garden project, and a visit to our newly completed playground thanks to donors, Margie and Jorge Morales.

Our students were enthusiastic about sharing what they've been learning and creating, while our staff and faculty were honored to spotlight the growth and progress happening on campus.

The event not only served as a showcase of our academic and extracurricular programs, but also as a moving reminder of the incredible community that surrounds and uplifts Guardian Catholic School. The generous support of our donors continues to enrich the lives of our students and strengthen our mission. We look forward to building on this momentum as we move into the future with faith, purpose, and hope.







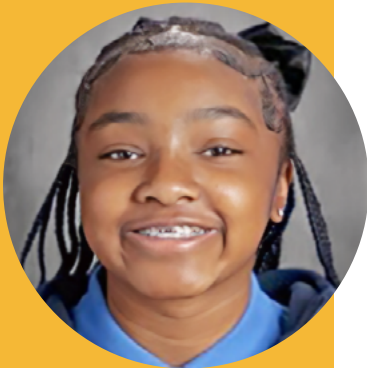
## Rising Stars & Sisters of Notre Dame Scholarship Awardees



**Joshua A.** exemplifies the values of the National Junior Honor Society and was honored as a Rising Star and recipient of the Sisters of Notre Dame Scholarship. Whether leading by example or offering support to his peers, Joshua's steady presence brings encouragement and purpose. He is truly one of a kind – admired not only for his achievements, but also for his warmth, humility, and integrity. He will be greatly missed.



**Rhianna C.** reflects scholarship, perseverance, and strong moral character in all she does. A quiet leader and role model, Rhianna faces challenges with grace and determination. Her humility and steady encouragement of others make her a quiet force of inspiration both in and out of the classroom. She will be deeply missed next year, but her legacy of kindness and excellence will continue to influence our community.



**Mayalin M.** embodies service, leadership, and academic excellence. She lives her faith through small, consistent actions – always putting God and others first. Whether helping in class, supporting friends, or assisting during school events, Mayalin leads with grace and a humble heart. Her positive influence has helped shape our school community, and her light will continue to shine long after she graduates.



## Enroll Your Child in a Future of Faith and Excellence

At Guardian Catholic School, we protect each child's potential by setting high expectations and guiding them to be their best selves — all within a nurturing, faith-filled environment from Pre-K4 to 8th grade.

Step Up For Students  
Scholarships Accepted



### Faith-Based Education

Integrating spiritual development with academic excellence.



### Comprehensive Curriculum

Serving students from Pre-K4 through Grade 8.



### Supportive Community

Partnering with families to foster growth and learning.



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Protecting potential.





Our special thanks to those who have given generously.  
Thank you for designating your giving to Guardian Catholic School.

## Lifetime Giving Society

\*Lifetime Giving Society giving levels represent cumulative gifts & pledges to Guardian as of 12/31/2024.

For more information about the Guardian Giving Society, visit [www.GuardianCatholic.com/support/givingsociety](http://www.GuardianCatholic.com/support/givingsociety).

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