

WINGS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SANTA MARGARITA EAGLE FOUNDATION | FALL 2023



Celebrating 35 Years of Excellence: Honoring our Legacy and Looking to the Future

Assistant Principal Tom Smith Recognized for 35 Years of Servant Leadership

INSIDE: IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023



Fostering Faith and Inspiring Excellence:
A Founding Family's Commitment to Catholic Education Continues
Randy and Claudia Redwitz



Embracing Tradition:
Our next generation celebrates legacy.
Chris '98, Monica (vanden Dries '98)
and Charlotte Caulfield '27

THROUGH THE YEARS

1985

BISHOP JOHNSON & FOUNDERS

Santa Margarita Catholic High School began as a dream of the late Bishop of Orange William R. Johnson. In 1985, Bishop Johnson's enthusiasm caught the attention of religious and business leaders and soon plans were under way to fund and build an extraordinary school. With dedicated community and church leaders and the generosity of donors, Santa Margarita Catholic High School established its roots. The land was generously donated by Tony and Melinda Moiso. ▶



1986

GROUND IS BROKEN

April 18, 1986 ground is broken for Santa Margarita Catholic High School.



1993

FIRST CIF CHAMPIONSHIPS

The boys cross country and soccer teams capture the school's first CIF championships. The girls cross country team captured the school's first CIF state championship.

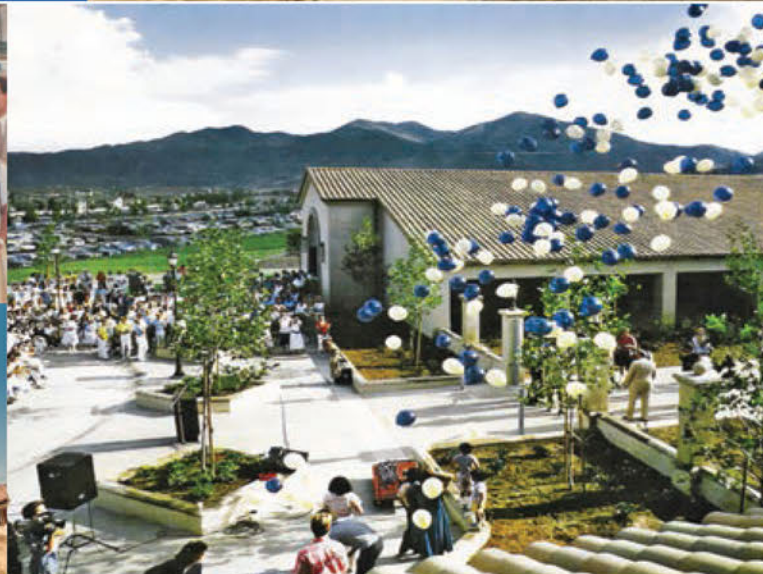


PHOTO: KAIROS #131

1996

KAIROS RETREAT ▲

The first Kairos retreat was held, providing an opportunity for seniors to deepen their relationship with God, family, and friends.



1995

AUXILIARY STUDIES PROGRAM (ASP) is launched.

STRADER GROTTO

The Strader Family gifts SMCHS with the beautiful Strader Grotto. ▶



1997

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) WORLD SCHOOL

SMCHS becomes the first Catholic high school in the Western United States to become an International Baccalaureate WorldSchool offering both IB courses and the rigorous diploma programme.



1987

SCHOOL OPENS ▲

September 2, 1987 Santa Margarita Catholic High School opens to 216 charter class freshmen.



1989

FIRST PERFORMANCE

SM's Talon Theatre performs its first production "The Sound of Music." Since then, the Talon Theatre has won numerous esteemed awards, including the coveted MACY Award for Best Musical. ▶

PHOTO: 1989 TALON THEATRE STUDENTS



1998

EAGLE TELEVISION

Eagle Television made an historic broadcast debut on Monday, November 30, 1998, presenting the daily announcements over the school's television system.

PHOTO: ETV 2.0, 2020



1991

CHARTER CLASS GRADUATION

216 charter class students become the first graduates at SMCHS.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS (MUN) LAUNCHES. ▼

PHOTO: 2016 MUN AT STONEHEDGE



1998

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

The United States Department of Education awards SMCHS its highest honor, the Blue Ribbon. SMCHS also received recognition for "Distinction in the Arts" from the National Endowment for the Arts.



2007

New school and athletics logos are rolled out.



2007

EAGLE AQUATICS CENTER ▲

The Eagle Aquatics Center opens with an Olympic-sized pool, team rooms, state-of-the-art timing systems and stadium seating.

EXCELLENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION SINCE 1987



2008

CHAPEL RENOVATION

The Sacred Heart Chapel is renovated through the generosity of the Birtcher family. The marble altar and sacred statues were custom built in Spain. ▼



2011

ACADEMIC SERVICES CENTER

The Academic Services Center opens which includes the school's 3,700 square-foot Digital Media Studio (home of ETV 2.0), academic offices, classrooms, academic and college counseling department and the Auxiliary Studies Program. ▼



WINGS

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Dear Eagle Families and Friends,

As we reflect on the 2022-2023 year, we are truly grateful to all our incredible benefactors, whose support has been instrumental in a successful year. On behalf of the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation board and staff, thank you for your generosity and dedication to the students of Santa Margarita Catholic High School. It is because of you our students continue to flourish.

Your gifts support the exceptional learning and faith-filled environment at Santa Margarita. Through the generosity of our community, our treasured Moiso Family Pavilion, the heart and hub of our campus, was renovated. The founders of Santa Margarita ensured this gathering place for our community would serve us well for 30-plus years, and now it will continue to serve our Eagle family well for another 30 years to come.

Additionally, we supported our students through scholarships, tuition assistance, and funding many dynamic programs and teams on campus. In this publication, you will see the many successes of the year made possible by your generosity.

As we continue to strive for excellence, we kindly ask that you keep the students and community in your prayers, just as we hold you in ours. Together, with faith and determination and your continued generosity, we can achieve incredible things for the betterment of our students and the community we proudly serve.

In heartfelt gratitude,

Annette Walker
Board Chair

J. Andrew Sulick
President

Laurie Beach
Executive Director

WINGS is published by the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation. The foundation supports SMCHS in providing excellence in Catholic education, developing graduates who are people of faith, skilled life-long learners, healthy individuals and involved citizens of the world. For story ideas, email advancement@smeaglefoundation.org or call us at 949-766-6080. You can also read more about the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation at smeaglefoundation.org

SMCHS President
J. Andrew Sulick '91

SMCHS Principal
Cheri L. Wood

STAY CONNECTED



SMCHS: [facebook.com/smcheagles](https://www.facebook.com/smcheagles)
Alumni: [facebook.com/smchs](https://www.facebook.com/smchs)



@SMCHSEagles



@santamargaritaeagles



[linkedin.com/school/smchseagles](https://www.linkedin.com/school/smchseagles)

2000

SENIOR PILGRIMAGE ▲

The first senior pilgrimage takes place. This senior tradition is rooted in faith with students walking 14 miles to the Mission Basilica San Juan Capistrano on Holy Thursday, reflecting on their faith.

ST. MARGARET MARY GARDEN

A statue of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque is added to a garden outside the chapel, recognizing the school's patroness for which the school is named. ▼



2010

EAGLE ATHLETIC CENTER

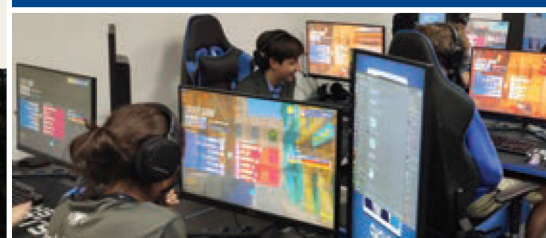
The Eagle Athletic Center opens, an all-encompassing athletic facility and training center, on par with premier universities. The building becomes the first LEED-certified building in Rancho Santa Margarita and the Diocese of Orange, a globally-recognized designation for sustainability.



2015

ONE-TO-ONE TABLET PC PROGRAM

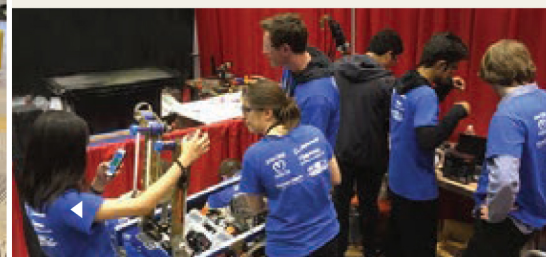
The one-to-one tablet PC program is launched, providing an immersive, student-centered educational experience integrating tablet PC and cloud technology. SMCHS has been recognized as a Microsoft Showcase School as a global leader in educational technology.



2021

ROBOTICS AND ESPORTS LABS ▲

Robotics and esports labs are added to the Borchard Library Media Center. The programs have achieved accolades at the national and global level. ▼

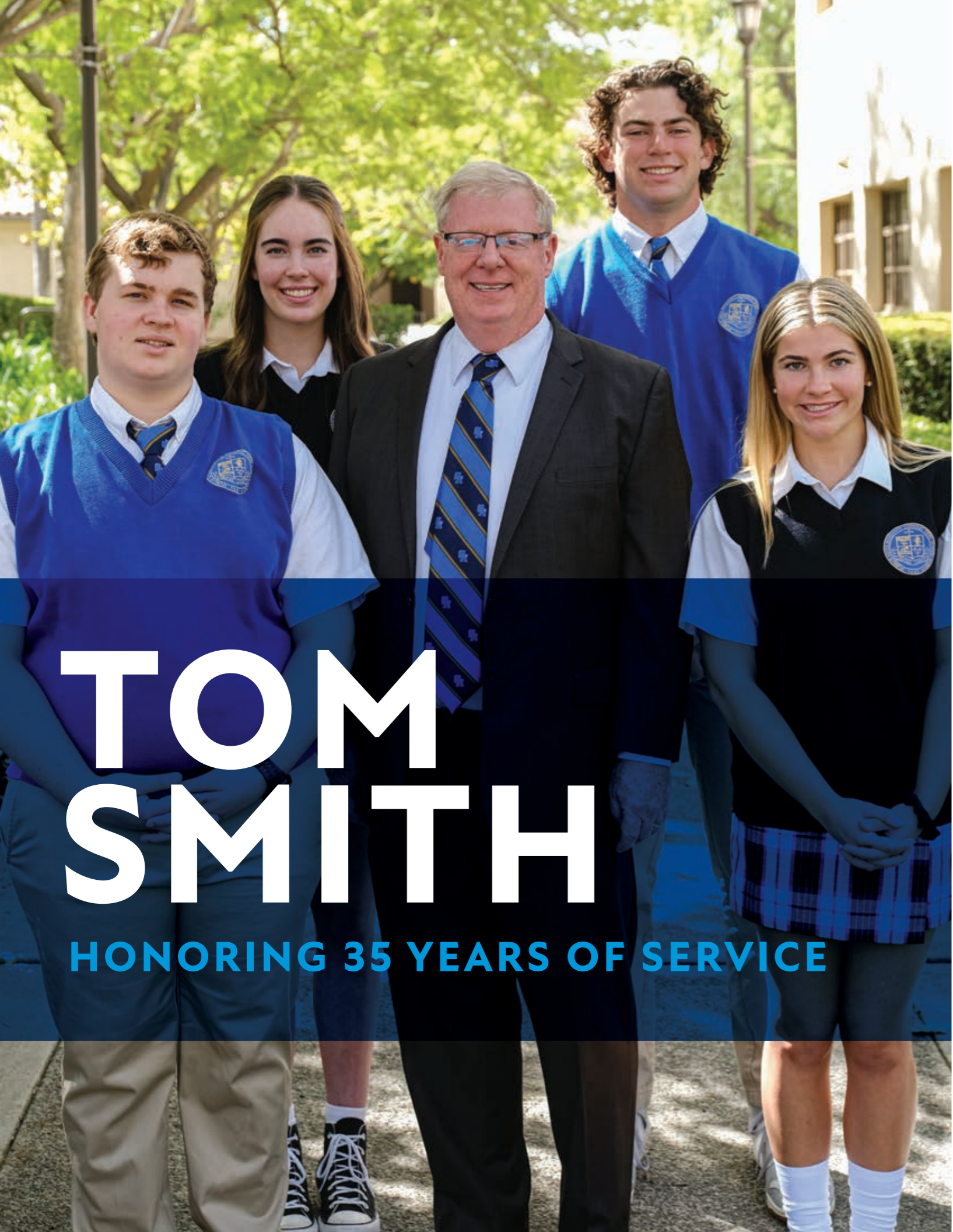


2022

CARITAS CHRISTI CENTER

The reimagined space features a powerful trifecta that integrates three vital aspects of wellness in one student-centered space. The area, shared by wellness, campus ministry and campus life, offers a welcoming place where students can connect, seek multi-disciplinary support and relax. ►





TOM SMITH

HONORING 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

Throughout his 35 years of service to Santa Margarita Catholic High School, Tom Smith has been a positive pillar of consistency while remaining humble and spreading laughter and joy through his humor and clever wit. Smith is known on campus for his rare ability to fix any problem.

From students to computer issues, he's got it covered. Smith is the first and only employee to celebrate a historic milestone of 35 years of service at SMCHS. And for more than three decades, there is not much he has not experienced. He has filled many roles, including band director, biology teacher, performing arts department chair and teacher, activities director and for the past 21 years, he's served as assistant principal of student services.

Smith was recently honored for his countless contributions with the establishment of the Tom Smith Can Do Scholarship, awarded annually to a student in the amount of \$5,000 toward tuition.



"You are one of a kind, and your can-do spirit is contagious and noticed by all," said SMCHS President Andy Sulick '91 at the end-of-year faculty and staff luncheon, where he surprised Smith with the announcement of the scholarship. *"You are the definition of a servant leader."*

» What role have you most enjoyed?

I think most people become educators because they like working with students. I share this sentiment. Being a classroom teacher was a great experience. Students are funny, energetic and genuine young people. You get to spend your day teaching something that you are passionate about. No two days are the same, and there is nothing better than seeing a student's face light up when they learn something they didn't know before.

» What is your fondest memory as an SM employee?

I don't think I could point out one memory that is my fondest. I will say this: I am constantly impressed with how great our SM students, parents, faculty and staff are. Some folks may be going through a challenging period, but they are polite, respectful, caring people as a group. I'm thankful I get to be a part of this community.



» Advice to SM employees past, present and future?

Give yourself some grace and celebrate successes.

» How do you maintain your infectious positive attitude?

There are times when our jobs can be challenging. I try to remind myself that 98% of the students, staff and parents we work with are wonderful people. The others are just having a bad day.

» How do you feel about having a scholarship in your name?

I'm incredibly humbled and honored, but I have to admit that it feels a little odd. It isn't the type of thing I would ever imagine happening to me. I've been giving the scholarship some thought. I'd like it to help students and their families alleviate some financial stress that may impact their participation in our community. Since the school was so kind to attach my family name to this scholarship, I'd also like it to reflect the ideals that are important to me.

The scholarship criteria will include:

A demonstration of financial need

Embracing our faith and living out our charism: Caritas Christi

Valuing education and maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.0

Active participation in the performing arts program



Supporting Student Well-Being:

Finding Solutions to Complex Challenges

With adolescent mental health issues on the rise, schools nationwide are seeking solutions that align with their unique campus culture. Centered in the school's charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ, and a whole student approach, Santa Margarita's student supports are an all-campus wrap-around effort embedding wellness into the school's climate and culture, nurturing not only the developing mind but also the body and spirit for overall wellness.

The school's student-centered approach includes everything from focusing on fit within the college admissions process rather than selectivity, prioritizing time away at a campus ministry retreat, infusing mental health education within the school's athletic program to fostering connection and belonging across campus through programs such as Link Crew with upperclassmen serving as mentors to new students.

"We want to be sure that across our entire campus, students know that their whole being is a priority - that we care about the whole child meeting students where they are with the resources to support them," said SMCHS Director of Wellness Joy Cleary.

Our priority is for every student to feel supported and valued at SM, so they may live with a sense of purpose, belonging and resilience, said SMCHS President Andy Sulick '91.

"Our students need you," President Sulick told faculty and staff at orientation. "They need trusted adults to listen, care for and guide them."

Here's a look at some of the facets of Santa Margarita's comprehensive approach to wellness:

Caritas Christi Center: Shared by Santa Margarita's campus ministry, campus life, and the wellness program, the Caritas Christi Center (CCC), which opened in the spring of 2022, offers the space and staff to support students in their growth academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally. The CCC welcomes all students to connect with one another and the school's multi-disciplinary team to help every Eagle soar.

Individual and Group Counseling: Wellness counselors support students with individual and group counseling, monthly lunchtime events and crisis assessment and referrals, collaborating with the counseling department, school nurses, campus ministry and campus life, athletics and faculty. Students can drop by the wellness lounge to decompress, connect with peers, or get support from wellness staff.

Student Workshops: Monthly lunchtime workshops on topics such as resilience, growth mindset, self-confidence, healthy coping skills, nutrition and healthy peer relationships are offered in the Wellness Lounge.

Wellness Commissioners: From the creation of the wellness program to the design of the CCC, student input has always been a priority. Two student wellness commissioners provide ideas and suggestions for wellness programming and services. The commissioners were selected by their peers and are supported by SMCHS wellness and campus life staff.

“As the wellness commissioner, I hope to create convenient, beneficial, and fun opportunities for students to relax and de-stress. Through working with the wellness counselors, many activities are being planned to improve students' physical and mental health.”
- *Chloe Gruenberg '25, ASB Wellness Commissioner*

“I hope to raise awareness and help students feel supported and reassured throughout their journey. I am also excited to introduce our wellness center to all the students and hopefully encourage them to visit our amazing counselors!”
- *Sophia Angelos '25, ASB Wellness Commissioner*

Cell Phone Caddies: Students place their cell phones in a phone caddy before the beginning of every class to help students be more present with their learning.

Academic Period: An academic period has been built into the school day to give students designated time to meet with teachers, make up exams, unwind, attend daily Mass, connect with friends, grab a snack before after-school activities or seek support.

Resource Specialist: SM has partnered with CHOC Children's Hospital to offer a resource specialist line to support parents seeking qualified and reputable mental health resources for their children.

Faculty, Staff and Parent Education: Santa Margarita provides parents, faculty and staff with tools and resources to support student mental health. As part of this effort, SMCHS hosts leading wellness experts on campus.

Project Speak UP!: Written by Santa Margarita students, the award-winning play "Speak UP!" is now licensed to be performed at over 100 schools nationwide. As part of the school's continued efforts to give students tools to be compassionate and resilient as they encounter stressors, sophomores see the play and participate in the subsequent class discussions as part of the curriculum. Speak UP! ambassadors are trained by mental health professionals as peer helpers to provide social-emotional support to classmates, and can offer resources, help in talking to an adult and guidance with problem-solving.

Challenge Success: At SMCHS, we embrace "smart rigor." Santa Margarita has partnered with Stanford University Graduate School of Education's Challenge Success program, grounded in 19 years of research and experience with more than 720 schools, to help implement research-based strategies that improve student well-being, engagement, and belonging.

Text-a-Tip and WeTip 2.0: The school's Text-A-Tip program (949-682-8847) allows students to report important safety issues and concerns. WeTip 2.0 is a community-wide incident reporting program.



For more information and resources, visit smhs.org/wellness.

FAVORITE PRAYER

Prayer of St. Francis, it brings me peace

HOBBIES

Reading Manga – Japanese comics, watching anime and chatting with friends

FAVORITE MOVIES

Star Wars and Harry Potter

HIDDEN TALENT

Karaoke, I always reach for the 100 percent score.



Santa Margarita Welcomes Rev. Florante Moren as New Full-Time Campus Chaplain

Santa Margarita Catholic High School is pleased to welcome the Rev. Florante Moren as the new full-time campus chaplain. Father Floi, as he's often called, comes to Santa Margarita from Cal State Fullerton, where he was a chaplain at the Catholic Newman Center for two years. He has been a priest for nearly ten years and enjoys getting to know SMCHS students.

Father Moren grew up in the Philippines, where he attended the seminary and befriended former SMCHS chaplain, Rev. Randy Sampinto, before moving to the United States to pursue the priesthood. Father Sampinto played a critical role in Father Moren's decision to move to the United States and become Santa Margarita's chaplain.

Father Moren is the oldest of six children. Although he was expected to financially support his family as the eldest child, he felt an undeniable calling to the priesthood. At first, his parents, who were separated then, did not support his decision. Father Moren says his family was poor and needed his help.

His passion for Catholicism and self-proclaimed "hard-headedness" pushed him to follow his dream. Shortly after he was ordained, his parents repaired their once broken marriage.

His family started attending Sunday Mass and are now entirely devoted to the Church and one another, he says. Father says his parents got back together after a decade apart, which, "sealed the deal that I had made the right choice."

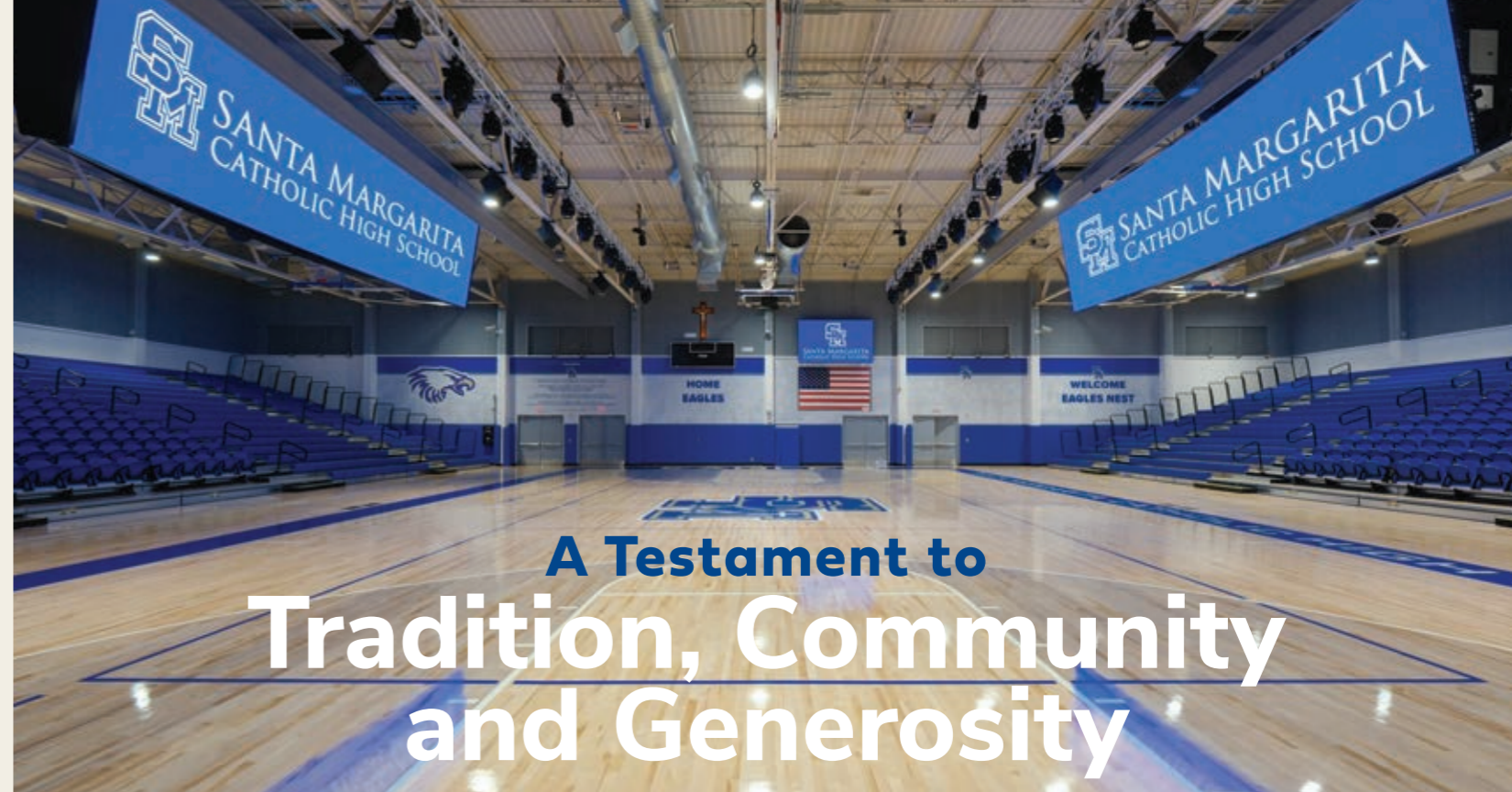
"For me, the priesthood is a noble cause. Instead of serving just one family, my own – I can serve young people, which serves many families," said Father Moren. "I want to teach the SM students that our Lord is there. Don't forget that God is always with you."

When he isn't on campus serving SMCHS youth, Father Moren might be reading Manga – Japanese comics, or watching anime – animation from Japan. He says his favorite character is the classic Naruto, a story of a young Japanese ninja who dreams of becoming the leader of his

village. He is also studying law and has one more year before graduating. His main goal is "introducing Christ to students and helping them to engage and grow in a relationship with God."

Father can be found Tuesday - Friday in the Caritas Christi Center. As long as students are on campus, he plans to be there. He warmly encourages students to visit the cheerful office he shares with Campus Minister Kieran Hickey '17, hang out on a bean bag, grab a snack or seek support. Students can make an appointment to see him or drop by. Confession and adoration will continue to be held on Wednesdays at lunch, and daily Mass is celebrated in the Sacred Heart Chapel after school. Father Moren can often be found standing just outside the chapel after the final bell waving and saying hello to students, faculty and staff, encouraging them to join him for daily Mass.

He wants students to know he is readily available to them, "I am here for them. Always here for them."



A Testament to Tradition, Community and Generosity

Some of the most treasured memories of alumni, students and families have taken place in the Moiso Family Pavilion, the heart and hub of Santa Margarita Catholic High School. From Masses, dances, games, pep rallies, retreats, assemblies, and new parent dinners to the Blue and Gold gala, the pavilion has served as a place to come together to celebrate, compete, learn, pray and be in community.

Over 35 years ago, the founders of Santa Margarita made sure the gym would stand the test of time to last at least 30 years. This past summer, through the generosity of the Eagle Fund and other donors, the gym was updated to ensure it serves the students, faculty and staff well for the next 30 years of Eagles, with all the needs we have come to count on it for.

Highlights of the remodel included a much-needed gym floor, roof, comfortable bleachers including some seating with backs, lighting, videoboards, curtains, a renovated team room, and construction of an audio-visual room.

"Our founders made sure we had the Nordstrom of floors 30-plus years ago, and now we have done the same," said SMCHS President Andy Sulick '91. Sulick stated that the roof was also redone during the renovation to prepare for the upcoming solar project.

"The gymnasium's stunning makeover serves as a tangible embodiment of hard work, tradition, and dedication, embodying the values our student-athletes and alumni hold dear," said SMCHS Athletic Director Annie Garrett '04.

From the beginning, all-school Masses were held in the pavilion. These important times when we all come together as an educational faith community

will also see changes to make this sacred time even more special. "We are incredibly excited for the "new" gym!" said Assistant Principal of Mission Integration Patrick Visconti '06. "The new bleachers offer a new level of comfort to faculty, staff and students, and the new videoboards increase our ability to create a sacred atmosphere and encourage engagement and participation."

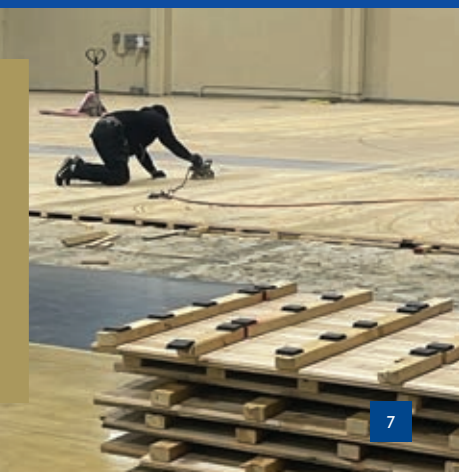
Another area of campus excited about the renovation is the Performing Arts Department.

"At the heart of the school's events, the gym is not just a place for physical activity but also the home of the beloved annual Christmas Production," said SMCHS Executive Director of Performing Arts Francisco Calvo. "The prospect of unveiling a newly renovated gym for this cherished event has everyone thrilled beyond measure."

Thank you to the many families, alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents and friends who made this project possible. Through the generosity of the Eagle family, SMCHS continues to provide an outstanding educational experience.

"The new bleachers offer a new level of comfort to faculty, staff and students, and the new videoboards increase our ability to create a sacred atmosphere and encourage engagement and participation."

Patrick Visconti '06
Assistant Principal of Mission Integration






h.raney: Congratulations! So well deserved. Such a talented teacher...one of SM's great treasures! 🍌🍌

Cultivating Good Vibes and Enthusiastic English Students

Dan Trotter is a legend among Santa Margarita students, past and present. Long before being named SMCHS Teacher of the Year finalist by OC Catholic Schools, he made an impact on countless English Honors students. This year marks Trotter's twenty-third year of teaching at Santa Margarita.

Known for his unique ability to connect with students, Trotter said, "I always tell my students that we are cultivating positive vibrations in B220. I think kids gravitate toward positivity and enthusiasm. I truly am so blessed here, and I love it. Our class mascot is a pig called Captain Goodvibes, so that might help, too."

Trotter encourages students to celebrate their uniqueness.

"I stress the magic of individuality," said Trotter. "Like Oscar Wilde said, 'Be yourself. Everybody else is taken.'"


Madison Weil: So well deserved!! Truly one of the most memorable/valuable/fun classes I've ever taken 😊

CRACKING CRIME

IN NEW FORENSICS COURSES

Santa Margarita students have the unique opportunity to learn about the justice system and how to analyze evidence and solve crimes in premier elective classes. Intro to Forensic Psychology and Forensic Science are designed to be taken concurrently and are offered to juniors and seniors.

Ms. Shannon Gavin and Mr. William Rutherford teach the two-part course, which features a scientific and psychological approach to forensic studies. Gavin and Rutherford split the year, each teaching their parts of the curriculum. Gavin focuses on the psychology behind the course, and Rutherford on the science.

"One of the big things we teach is that forensic scientists don't argue cases; they're there to supply facts," Rutherford said.

The class offers hands-on experience.

"I'm super excited about the blood splatter and fingerprint analysis lab," Rutherford said.

Sensitivity is crucial when studying various cases. One of the most infamous cold cases the class looks at is the murder of JonBenét Ramsey, an example of how a crime scene was not handled delicately, causing the case to go "cold."

"A lot of the class is understanding how to either interpret data or come up with data and then what data is presentable in court," Rutherford said.

Gavin's approach to the class fixates on the psychoanalytic side. She teaches criminal profiling and the motivations of criminals. The semester's largest project includes creating a 5-7 minute "true crime documentary."

Both teachers agree this course is a beneficial stepping stone for students interested in pursuing a career in any aspect of the criminal justice system.

Imogen Cunningham '24, Arts and Entertainment Editor of The Eagle Eye contributed to this report.



Renamed in Her Honor: Meredith Milligan Moody Art Show Pays Tribute to a Lasting Impact

The SMCHS administration and faculty recently honored retired longtime visual arts teacher and department chair Meredith Moody by officially naming the school's annual art show the "Meredith Milligan Moody Art Show" for her immense dedication to Santa Margarita students. Moody started the yearly visual arts show to share the talents of Santa Margarita students with the community and bring visibility to the program. She is still involved at Santa Margarita with the Grandparents Club and in the community, giving her time and talents to City of Hope, Orange County.

"Meredith was an integral part in growing the SMCHS Visual Arts Department to what it is today," said Visual Arts Department Chair Corey Lindabury '93. "She successfully shined a light on the impressive artwork created by our students by starting the annual student art show 13 years ago. She provided unquestioned leadership and support for the Visual Arts Department, and she was always there to provide insight and wisdom to her students, co-workers and friends. Now, the newly named Meredith Milligan Moody Art Show will always be there to recognize her wonderful accomplishments."



Retired Visual Arts Teacher and Department Chair Meredith Moody pictured with SMCHS President Andy Sulick '91. Moody was recognized at the annual Appreciation Dinner.

Alumna Kennedy Kemmerer '19 Returns Home as Talon Theatre Artistic Director

Santa Margarita welcomes Kennedy Kemmerer '19, who returns home to Talon Theatre as the new artistic director. Kemmerer graduated from Chapman University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

"Her dual expertise in theatre and business management makes her a dynamic leader, capable of navigating Talon Theatre's artistic and organizational aspects with finesse," said Performing Arts Executive Director Francisco Calvo.

Kemmerer's expertise in theatre education, acting technique, and directing has earned her accolades and admiration from colleagues and students. She is driven by a passion for using the performing arts as a platform for student growth and empowerment rooted in faith.



"I am beyond excited and humbled to return to SMCHS and Talon Theatre," Kemmerer said. "This place has played a pivotal role in shaping who I am as an artist and person. I am eager to give back and create an environment where students can explore their artistic passions and develop essential life skills through theatre. I look forward to honoring the Talon Theatre traditions and building on the incredible legacy of Mrs. Barth."

Amy Luskey-Barth recently retired from SMCHS as artistic director after fifteen years of tireless dedication to SMCHS students and a lasting legacy of artistic excellence.

Scan this QR code to hear from Kennedy Kemmerer.



"I am eager to give back and create an environment where students can explore their artistic passions and develop essential life skills through theatre."

Inspiring Artistic Excellence: SMCHS Launches After-School Conservatory

The Talon Academy of Performing Arts: Unleashing Talent, Discovering Artistry, Finding Purpose

An exceptional program is quietly revolutionizing the Performing Arts Department. The Talon Academy of Performing Arts (TAPA) is more than just an after-school conservatory, it's a sanctuary where aspiring young artists find their voices, hone their skills and embrace their passions. Established as a school within a school, TAPA is a beacon of artistic opportunity for students in grades 9 through 12, open to both Santa Margarita students and the greater community. An Intro to TAPA program is offered for grades sixth through eighth, providing enrichment in acting, singing and dancing.

Cultivating Excellence Through Experiential Learning

"The Talon Academy of Performing Arts at Santa Margarita Catholic High School provides one of the foremost pre-professional training programs in the country for aspiring performing artists in dance, instrumental music, vocal, and theatre arts offered at the best value within the region," states Executive Director of Performing Arts Francisco Javier Calvo. Rooted in the charisma of Caritas Christi, TAPA places artistic development within a nurturing, disciplined environment. Led by exceptional faculty passionate about teaching and fostering individual growth, TAPA students embark on a journey to artistic excellence through experiential learning.

"Through our commitment to developing each student's God-given gifts, TAPA students are empowered to employ their artistic talents to make a better world," Calvo said.

Distinctive Benefits Beyond the Stage

One of the unique features of TAPA is its integration into students' academic records. TAPA classes are not just confined to the realm of extracurricular activities; they also appear on transcripts, reflecting the dedication and rigor that students invest in their artistic pursuits. After two years of enrollment, students earn fine arts credits, further acknowledging their commitment to their craft.

Perhaps the pinnacle of recognition comes at commencement for those who complete a three-year journey with TAPA. These students receive a special designation on their diploma, an embodiment of their dedication and the program's recognition of their exceptional accomplishments.

A Curriculum Beyond the Ordinary

While traditional high schools may lack classes tailored to specialized performing arts training, TAPA offers diverse courses that address these gaps. From "Vocal Techniques" to "Stage Movement for the Actor" and "Song as Monologue," these unique classes are designed to provide students with invaluable training not typically found in a traditional high school setting. TAPA also includes a mentorship program with individual coaching from esteemed faculty members, including veteran retired Talon Theatre Artistic Director Amy Luskey-Barth, who has worked with numerous students interested in

continuing their artistic educational journey at some of the most prestigious collegiate programs.

With a keen understanding of the scheduling challenges students may face, TAPA was founded with the intention of catering to non-traditional school schedules and is open to students from homeschooling, public schooling, and private schooling backgrounds.

"Some of our students are already working professionally in television and film, and have regular production schedules that prevent them from enrolling in a traditional performing arts class," Calvo said. "We wanted to offer these students, as well as those seeking unique and specialized training, a platform to flourish."



For more information, visit www.smhs.org/tapa



Esports Phenomenon Explodes onto Campus

Santa Margarita is blazing a trail into the rapidly growing world of esports. What was once a niche subculture is becoming a credible sport.

Esports, short for electronic sports, is a form of sports competition using video games. The booming professional industry, with over 318 million esports enthusiast spectators worldwide expected by 2025, has made its way into high schools while colleges and universities offer scholarship opportunities. Players compete in tournaments that are streamed or televised. The sport develops skills such as problem-solving, communication, streaming,

programming and management while providing a platform for students to connect with peers.

SMCHS competes in a few leagues and plays Rocket League, Valorant, Overwatch, League of Legends, Minecraft, and will likely add several new games this season. The esports seasons are in the fall and spring, with most games played during both semesters. New players are trained each season. In 2021, SMCHS added an esports gaming lab to the library. After school, students can be found practicing, watching footage, and strategizing just like any other team on campus.

“Being in esports helps form strong connections. Teams are very intimate with usually only 4-6 people playing in a round at once, friendships just naturally blossom from that,” said Ivanka Hankus-Zhou ’25, who joined the program as a freshman.

Championships are highly anticipated among players known for their challenging and stressful gaming but a rewarding payout for many. Zachary Hundley ’20 was Santa Margarita’s first esports champion. He won the North America Scholastic esports NHL 20 Tournament. He finished first in the CHEL Invitational, earning scholarship money and his spot as the inaugural Santa Margarita Catholic High School esports champion.

Esports won national titles in 2022 and 2023. SMCHS proudly boasts three national titles. Varsity won the national title in Rocket League, and junior varsity won in Overwatch and League of Legends.

Esports General Manager Coach Chase LeBlanc advises students interested in esports: “Remember that we’re playing as a team; the better we play as a team, the better we will do throughout the year. Learn to play with others and build them up to be as good as you, and you will do fine.”



Visit smhs.org/esports for more information.



SMCHS ADDS Girls Flag Football TO CIF LINEUP

Brad Finneran '94 has returned to campus as the girls flag football head coach. He is also an SMCHS parent. Finneran played basketball and football at SMCHS and continued his football career at Villanova University.

“I just love seeing the girls improve and enjoy the game,” Finneran said. “We remind the girls we are here for a reason, it’s not just to be flag football players - it’s to become better people.”

Finneran emphasized that football can teach discipline and competitiveness while building camaraderie. He reminds the girls to give their best on every play.

“Take advantage of every opportunity,” he said. “It isn’t over until it’s over.”

Girls flag football was approved as a CIF sport beginning this school year. High school girls in California can compete in the no-contact sport against other high schools and earn CIF championship titles.

“The addition of girls flag football to CIF is an exciting opportunity for our school and high school girls athletics. Brad has a tremendous football background, and we’re thrilled to have him return to his alma mater. His knowledge

of the game is highly valuable for athletes who are new to the sport of flag football. He also understands the culture and values of our campus community,” said Athletic Director Annie Garrett '04.

As a collegiate athlete, Finneran was a wide receiver for the No. 1 ranked Villanova Wildcats and was second on the team in receiving. Finneran and his twin brother, who also played football at Villanova, together rated as Villanova’s top two receivers. Finneran said his favorite memory of attending SM was winning the 1994 CIF basketball championship against Servite.

“We remind the girls we are here for a reason, it’s not just to be flag football players - it’s to become better people.”



Santa Margarita Named Cal-Hi Sports and MaxPreps 2022-23 State School of the Year for **Athletic Excellence**



Cal-Hi Sports recently recognized Santa Margarita as the State School of the Year for its exceptional athletic achievements during the 2022-23 school year. The Eagles also secured the MaxPreps Cup, ranking as the No. 1 athletic school in the state and placing Santa Margarita among the top 2 percent of high schools nationwide for athletics. During the 2022-2023 school year, Santa Margarita secured ten Trinity League titles, four CIF-SS titles, and was the only school in the state to win three CIF state titles. Additionally, the school claimed three CIF SoCal Regional championships, showcasing versatility in various sports.

GIRLS GOLF

The first CIF state title of the year came in the fall with girls golf under the direction of Jill Hegna, SMCHS director of girls golf. After prevailing in CIF Southern Section Regional play and taking home the Trinity League title, the Eagles won their first girls golf state title. Angela Liu '24 shot a 5-under par of 67 for individual honors. The Orange County Register honored Liu as Girls Golf Player of the Year. The team also featured Leigh Chien '24, the 2021 CIF state champion and 2022 Southern California Golf Association SoCal Regional champion. Ryan Bullock '23 was named Trinity League Female Athlete of the Year. Their exceptional season set the tone for Santa Margarita's athletic dominance.

GIRLS SOCCER

The nationally ranked girls soccer team capped a 22-2-2 season in the winter with a narrow 1-0 victory over Los Alamitos in the CIF Southern California Regional final. Goalkeeper Peyton Trayer '26 came up big in the net, and USC-commit Faith George '24 scored the decisive goal. Santa Margarita also triumphed in the CIF-SS Division I final. Head Coach Craig Bull was named CIF-Southern Section

Division 1 Coach of the Year, Trayer CIF-SS Girls Soccer Player of the Year, and George was recognized as the Trinity League Most Valuable Player and Orange County Register Girls Soccer Player of the Year. The team achieved a ranking of No. 2 in the nation by MaxPreps.

GIRLS WATER POLO

The girls water polo team also was victorious in the winter, taking home the CIF-SS championship with Kamryn Barone '23, now playing for Stanford, earning CIF-SS Player of the Year. Barone scored eight goals, including the game-winning penalty shot to secure the Eagles fourth CIF-SS girls water polo title under Head Coach Brian Weathersby, and fifth girls water polo title in school history.

BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING

Santa Margarita made history in May by securing the boys and girls CIF Division 1 state titles, a first in state history. The girls dominated the competition, winning their fourth straight CIF state team title and their ninth consecutive CIF-SS Division 1 championship. Sophomore Teagan O'Dell '25 set a national high school record in the 200-yard individual medley to lead the way. O'Dell also set a state record in the 100-yard backstroke event and swam a leg for the first-place 200-yard freestyle relay squad. Senior Asia Kozan '23 (200-yard freestyle) and sophomore Gracyn Aquino '25 (50-yard freestyle) also won individual events for the Eagles.

O'Dell's national record-setting performance at state was her second national record that season as she and teammates Teia Salvino '24, Asia Kozan '23 (now swimming for UC San Diego) and Gracyn Aquino '25 broke a national record in the 200-freestyle relay in March. The girls program was named the NISCA National Prep Champions.

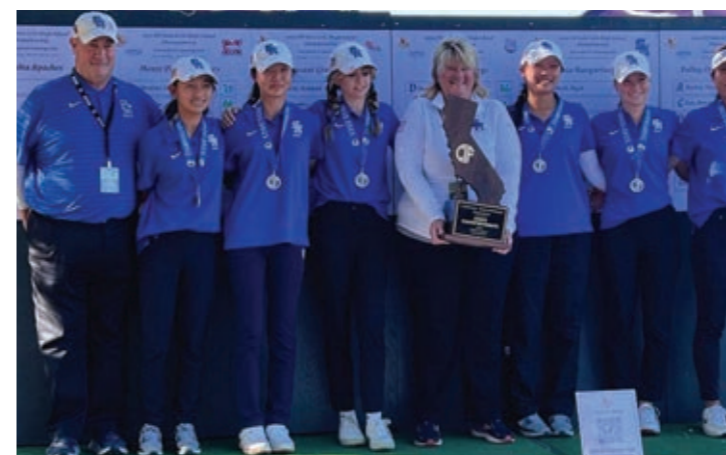
The boys victory marked their first-ever CIF state title, with Humberto Najera '23 (now swimming for UC Berkeley) earning recognition as Orange County Register Boys Swimmer of the Year. The boys claimed their third straight CIF-SS title earlier in the season.

At the helm of the aquatics program for 25-plus years, Co-head Swimming and Diving Coach Rich Blanc was named National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) National Swimming and Diving Coach of the Year in late 2022. He and his brother Ron Blanc have molded a national dynasty in the pool.

Both programs dominated the Trinity League finals with the boys and girls programs sweeping the league on all six levels for the second year in a row – a feat no other school in the Trinity League has accomplished. The shower of titles this spring included two national records, three state meet records, four Orange County records, three CIF-SS records and three league records for the girls. The boys program set one CIF-SS record, one state meet record, four county records and recorded six league records.

BASEBALL

The Eagles baseball team secured the CIF-Southern California Division 1 Regional championship, triumphing over La Costa Canyon, 3-2. The team also won the prestigious Trinity League title. Alumnus and Head Coach Chris Malec '01 led the team to 29 wins – a school record. The Orange County Register selected Malec as baseball Coach of the Year and Collin Clarke '23 (now playing for University of Oregon) as Pitcher of the Year. The diamond victory vaulted Santa Margarita to the top of overall state athletic superiority.



CHAMPIONS MADE HERE.

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR TITLES

8 CIF State Individual Championships

1 CIF SoCal Individual Championship

11 CIF-SS Individual/Relay Championships

10 Trinity League Titles

(girls golf, girls and boys swimming and diving, girls soccer, baseball, girls lacrosse, boys lacrosse, boys track and field, boys golf, boys cross country)

3 CIF State Championships
(girls golf and boys and girls swimming and diving)

3 CIF SoCal Regional Championships
(girls golf, girls soccer and baseball)

4 CIF-SS Championships
(boys and girls swimming and diving, girls soccer, girls water polo)





Teagan O'Dell '25

Makes a Splash in High School Swimming History

Photo by Mark Rightmire, Orange County Register/SCNG.

Santa Margarita Catholic High School junior Teagan O'Dell '25 jumped in the pool at age 5, began competition at age 7, and hasn't exited the water since.

When not competing for the Eagles, the UC Berkeley commit trains with the prestigious Mission Viejo Nadadores, known for producing aquatic champions in NCAA, World and Olympic championship events. In September, O'Dell took home the backstroke championship at the 2023 World Junior Swimming Championships in Israel. She also earned gold in the 4x100-mixed medley and silver in the 4x100 women's freestyle.

The 2023 high school season saw O'Dell etch herself in the history books. She shattered the national high school record in the 200-yard individual medley at the CIF state championships. She had already contributed to setting a new national record earlier in the season as part of Santa Margarita's 200-yard freestyle relay team during a meet in March. Her scorecard also showed she set four Orange County records, three state marks, and took home both CIF state and CIF-Southern Section individual championships in the 100 backstroke and 200 individual medley. She also competed on the CIF-SS and CIF state championship 200-freestyle relay teams, which garnered individual CIF-SS and state titles, and the CIF-SS individual championship 200 medley relay team.

O'Dell's exceptional performance contributed to her team's domination during the 2023 season. Santa Margarita's girls

swimming and diving team secured their ninth-consecutive CIF-Southern Section Division 1 championship, fourth-straight CIF state title and twenty-third straight Trinity League title.

Her achievements did not go unnoticed. She received multiple accolades, including Girls National Swimmer of the Year by USA Today, Female High School Swimmer of the Year by Swimming World Magazine, girls overall Athlete of the Year by the Orange County Register, and SBLive named O'Dell the CIF-Southern Section Athlete of the Year.

For O'Dell, focusing on fun leads to success in the water.

"When the team energy is there, everyone just improves," O'Dell, donning orange nail polish and pink colored eye black, told The Orange County Register. "There's a phrase, 'When you're having fun, (kids) swim fast.'"

Her favorite part about swimming at SM is the friendships she's built with teammates.

"Being able to engage in conversations with my [swimming] friends about non-swimming related topics has better allowed me to develop a life away from the pool, ultimately strengthening my love for the sport," she said.

Eagles Soccer Teammates Reunited

Michelle (Hull) Hyncik '04 and Amy Rodriguez '05 Join as Leaders of Utah Royals

Utah Royals FC is one of the most recent expansion teams added to the National Women's Soccer League. Led by President **Michelle (Hull) Hyncik '04** and Head Coach **Amy Rodriguez '05**, the Royals will begin play in 2024.

Hyncik earned her bachelor's from Harvard University, where she played soccer. She then earned a J.D. from Columbia University Law School and went on to her role as senior legal counsel for Major League Soccer. Hyncik was announced as the president of Royals FC in March of 2023. In April 2023, World Cup champion, Olympic gold medalist, two-time NWSL Champion, and USWNT forward Rodriguez was named as head coach. Rodriguez spent the past two seasons as an assistant coach at her alma mater, USC.

"It was wonderful news to read that two former Eagle soccer captains will be working together again toward a common goal," said retired SMCHS Head Girls Soccer Coach Chuck Morales, who added, "Michelle and Amy can achieve so much, and I look forward to great success on and off the field."



From left to right: Michelle (Hull) Hyncik '04 and Amy Rodriguez '05.

Bonner Paddock Rinn '93 Conquers Mountains and Inspires a Life Without Limits

Bonner Paddock Rinn '93 recently climbed Mount Kilimanjaro for the second time, the first person with cerebral palsy to summit the world's tallest freestanding mountain. His autobiography, the New York Times bestseller "One More Step," highlights his lifelong challenge with CP and is a detailed account of struggle and triumph. All proceeds from the revised edition go to Project Possible, which he founded to raise funds to provide services and build early learning centers for children with disabilities in the United States, Africa and Central America. Paddock Rinn travels and speaks to businesses, schools, teams, and various organizations about his journey.

After a 27-plus-year hiatus from the sport, in March, Paddock Rinn had the opportunity to play soccer with Cerebral Palsy Soccer, winning the 2023 CP Challenge Trophy in London. This led to more opportunities for competitive soccer. After not seeing him for over 20 years, Paddock Rinn recently

reconnected with former high school teammate and MLS great, U.S National team player and goalkeeper coach Matt Reis '93, who helped support him on his quest to earn a spot on the roster for the Pan Am Para Games in Chili.

"He not only agreed to help with advice and long-distance support but train me in person," said Paddock Rinn. It's been so amazing to not only be trained by one of the best but also to spend time with and reconnect with someone from a time when we were both so different and become much closer. Grateful beyond measure for him taking time to train me and reignite the passion I have for soccer."

Paddock Rinn, who was 15 years older than any of the other players, made the provisional roster but didn't make the final roster.

"I have learned that goals we achieve are just cherries on the sundae of the



From left to right: Matt Reis '93 and Bonner Paddock Rinn '93.

journey towards those goals we set way," Paddock Rinn said. "Keep setting them! Many of my greatest learnings are from goals not achieved but the lessons and experiences I have learned along the way."

CLASS OF 2023

Congratulations to the Class of 2023

Class of 2023
by the numbers

2,198
college acceptances

137
colleges graduates will attend

99%
of graduates to attend college

421 | students

98
graduates were accepted at every college they applied

100%
acceptance rate at **186** schools

388
graduates were accepted to **70%** of the schools on their list



Valedictorian | Cathryn Surdilla
University of California, Los Angeles

Advice for Underclassmen:

Embrace struggle. Avoid comparing yourself to others. As contradictory as it sounds, it's important to know that you aren't the only one struggling as a high schooler. The struggle is essential to growth and will teach you how to overcome hardship.



Salutatorian | Nicholas Dorgan
University of Southern California

How do you think your experiences at SM will help you in the future?

The people and lessons I learned here at SM have influenced me significantly for the better. The solid academic foundation, soft skills (leadership, communication, etc.), and the four core principles of Caritas Christi (compassion, humility, justice and goodness) will be crucial in my future growth in college and beyond.



Salutatorian | Camilia Hall
University of California, Irvine

How do you think your experiences at SM will help you in the future?

SM has enabled me to grow academically, socially, and spiritually. My experiences here have helped me to cherish the values of kindness, respect, resilience and curiosity.



Salutatorian | Darius Mahjoob
University of Southern California

Advice for Underclassmen:

Take risks. Try everything you can because there are many opportunities for success here at SM.



Salutatorian | Tyler Ringhofer
University of Pennsylvania

How do you think your experiences at SM will help you in the future?

My experiences at Santa Margarita have given me a deep appreciation for embracing people of all different backgrounds and walks of life, providing me with many perspectives. SM has allowed me to cherish lifelong relationships that I have built with friends, teachers and faculty.



OVERCOMING ODDS AND EMBRACING GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL

Charlie Jennison '23 has overcome every prediction in his life. His story is one of faith, resilience and community.

After a misdiagnosis of cerebral palsy at age 3 and more than a decade of doctor visits and therapies, Charlie was diagnosed at age 11 with a rare genetic disorder called N-Glycanase Deficiency, known as NGLY1 Deficiency. Through genetic sequencing and the connections made with the nonprofit organization Global Genes, founded by Nicole Boice, SMCHS alumni parent of Max '15 and Chloe '18, Charlie and his sister Jane, siblings of Jack '15 and Maggie '17, were discovered in 2014 to be the 10th and 11th children in the world to have the rare disease. They are considered outliers based on their upward progress and abilities to fully walk and talk without assistance.

“Knowledge is power,” said their father, Jeff Jennison, who recalls the gut instinct that prompted him and his wife Ann Marie to continue to seek answers. After ten years of dedicated work, the Grace Science Foundation recently received FDA approval for gene therapy treatment. The Jennison family is encouraged and hopeful.

“While we love and adore Charlie and Jane the way they are, we want the most for their lives,” Charlie’s mother Ann Marie Jennison told the Orange County Register in 2015, shortly after receiving the accurate diagnosis. “We want them to have every chance to live to their God-given potential.”



SMCHS President Andy Sulick '91 presents Charlie Jennison with the Caritas Christi Award at the commencement ceremony.

At SMCHS, Charlie, a friend to all and an Eagle to his core, did just that, taking advantage of every opportunity.

“The people and the experiences at SMCHS have given him a field to play on that allowed him to show up and prove what God can do when the right doors are open,” Ann Marie said.

Santa Margarita’s Auxiliary Studies Program (ASP), which helps students with learning differences, helped equip Jennison for the next step in his journey: Texas Christian University.

When Ann Marie told the ASP department, “Having a rare disorder does not define him,” the ASP department and entire SM faculty embraced Charlie by meeting him where he was at and “that made all the difference,” she continued.

While at SMCHS, Charlie was sports commissioner for two years, served as senior class ASB vice president, a eucharistic minister and peer minister, helping to plan school Masses and campus ministry events. During his senior year, Charlie was crowned senior prom king and was awarded the Caritas Christi Award, given to a student who best exemplifies the school’s charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ.

“Charlie Jennison embodies Caritas Christi in every ounce of his being,” said SMCHS science teacher Regina Bork. “Charlie’s love for the Lord, his family, his friends, and all of God’s creations are apparent in everything he does. Charlie sees the positive side of every situation because he truly believes there is good to be found in everything.”

Charlie said yes to many activities out of his comfort zone.

When he was in middle school, friend Jordan Tollner '18 hatched the idea to ask then Boys Basketball Head Coach Jeff Reinert if Charlie could serve as manager for the SMCHS basketball team overseeing equipment, operating the scoreboard for practices, setting up the court, and assisting the coaching staff among other duties.

“I thought it would be a positive, fun learning experience for him,” Jordan said. “It turned out to be a positive, fun learning experience for our team.”

“He was always right in the action at the most intense moments of big games, and he loved it - which in turn made me love it more,” Reinert said.

Charlie remained a team manager for eight years through his senior year. Basketball connected Charlie to the SM community. On senior night, Boys Basketball Head Coach Justin Bell and teammate and close friend Dut Lual '23 surprised him by asking him to suit up and play briefly as part of the starting lineup.

“Charlie has been such a blessing to our program,” Bell said. “Nobody loves SMCHS more than Charlie. He is dedicated, focused and always brings high energy to his job responsibilities. He always had a positive attitude and was a great teammate. Charlie will always be an Eagle.”

In a postgame interview with ETV following the special surprise, Charlie shared, “This is such a great memory that I will remember for the rest of my life.”

WHAT IS NGLY1 DEFICIENCY?

N-Glycanase 1 (NGLY1) Deficiency is an extremely rare genetic disorder that can affect many body systems and may cause seizures, delayed development, movement abnormalities, liver dysfunction, eye abnormalities and a reduction or absence of tears. 124 people in the world have been identified as having the genetic anomaly caused by both parents carrying the same mutation in the N-Glycanase 1 gene. Family members searching for a diagnosis to identify symptoms can have their blood tested through Exome Sequencing. A cure is on the horizon thanks to the efforts of the Grace Science Foundation.

Source: Global Genes and Grace Science Foundation



Greetings from the Nest!

We are thrilled to unveil the long-awaited return of a cherished tradition – WINGS Magazine! Our beloved institution continues to thrive, thanks in no small part to the dedication and contributions of alumni like you. In this edition of WINGS, we're excited to present a snapshot of what's been happening on campus and in our community.

Santa Margarita continues to take pride in fostering academic excellence, spiritual growth, and a strong sense of community. The dedicated faculty members of SM continue to inspire and guide students towards achieving their potential, and our curriculum includes innovative programs and courses catering to a diverse range of interests, such as forensic science, architecture and social media marketing.

Extracurricular offerings have been expanded to provide students with opportunities for personal growth beyond the classroom to ensure our students receive hands-on experience to complement their theoretical training and a well-rounded educational experience. The Eagles Edge Wealth Management program has gained significant traction. Students meet throughout the year to discuss, collaborate and determine which financial investments to use based on the class's agreed-upon goals. The popular seminars are led throughout the year by attorney and CPA Francis Pisano, father of two alumni, and feature special guest speakers.

Caritas Christi remains at the heart of Santa Margarita's charism, and the students continue to embrace this by participating in various community service initiatives. A perfect example is the Comfort Cross Club, founded by twins Brooke and Emma Murdock '24. Last year, the Comfort Cross Club delivered more than 200 handmade crosses to St. Joseph's Hospital cancer patients.

A sincere THANK YOU to those alumni who contributed to last year's Eagle Fund. We are excited to share that the Moiso Pavilion renovation is complete! Read more about it on page 7. The Eagle Fund also supported our tuition assistance fund, assisting students and their families in need.

While we want our Eagles to go far and wide in life, we also want our alumni to return home to the nest from time to time. We invite you to get involved and stay connected with SM through our website and social media channels. Last year, the Rev. Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries spoke to students reiterating, "Santa Margarita isn't just the school you go TO. It's the place you come FROM." Being an SM alum means not only cherishing your memories but also becoming a part of our ongoing story. Your insights, experiences, and support can play an instrumental role in shaping the future of Santa Margarita and its students. We encourage you to consider our mentorship program, in which you can share your expertise and advice with current students. Your guidance can make a significant impact on their academic and professional journeys.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our loyal alumni, whose unwavering support and eagerness for the magazine's return have inspired us to relaunch WINGS. Your stories, achievements, and connections make Santa Margarita an extraordinary place.

Once an Eagle, Always an Eagle,

Brandi Lopez '98
Alumni Coordinator

Patrick Keane '91
Alumni Relations



Passing the Torch – Legacy Families

From our first legacy graduate, Grant Brakke '17, son of Sarah (Simmons) Brakke '91 and Rich Brakke, to the 36 incoming freshmen legacy students, SM alumni parents understand that by enrolling their children at Santa Margarita, they are passing down a torch, a legacy that carries not only their family's name but also their values, aspirations, and experiences. For the past few years we have recognized these legacy families at Baccalaureate Mass, with our legacy family numbers growing

year by year. Legacy graduates receive a white stole at the Mass to be worn at the commencement ceremony. This September, the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation hosted a Legacy Breakfast for the nearly 100 legacy students currently enrolled. The importance of legacy is not confined to a mere passing down of tradition, it's about the continuation of values, the preservation of memories, and the cultivation of our charism, Caritas Christi, that spans generations.





Founded in 2014 by the CEOs of Intertwined Inc., Eagle alumna Meghan (Schinderle) Clem '01 and Rosary Academy alumna Katie Webb Brundige '03, RAD Camp is a 501c3 that supports those with developmental disabilities. Brundige and Clem were driven by a passion and vision to establish a place where individuals with disabilities would find acceptance, caregivers would discover the support they desperately need, and members of the community would encounter a volunteer opportunity that would forever change their lives. Clem and Brundige met in high school while volunteering for a local camp serving those with special needs. After attending the University of Southern California and San Diego State University respectively, they remained close and began a full-service event planning company and social media agency. In 2014, their passion project was launched as they founded RAD Camp to provide a local overnight camp for adults and children with special needs.

"We've always said that Intertwined pays the bills and RAD Camp pays our hearts," Clem said. "... It's an amazing opportunity for our campers to have independence, growth, friendship and just fun," she told ABC World News Tonight in a segment that aired nationally.

Now in its ninth year, RAD Camp has blossomed into an awe-inspiring nonprofit organization almost entirely run by dedicated volunteers as the largest overnight camp serving those with special needs in California. RAD Camp offers all the fun of a summer camp away but with the safety, routine, and medical support so that caregivers can have a break knowing their campers' needs will be met. No camper is ever turned away for their inability to pay, Clem said.

At RAD Camp, everyone is encouraged to "Rise Above!" and shatter barriers associated with disabilities, diagnoses or descriptions. The Eagles had the largest volunteer presence at the 2023 summer camps, with 52 current students and alumni donating their time to rising above the barriers associated with disabilities.

In July, Santa Margarita hosted a carnival day on campus, packed full of games, food, and some fun in the sun at the pool.

Campers engaged in activities that focus on honing fine motor skills, providing educational and behavioral tools, and most importantly, ensuring fun experiences for participants of all ages.

"We founded RAD because of our roots, because of my roots, that started here, because I sat in a class that told me, your worth is not what you do, your worth is not what you drive, your worth is in being a servant leader, your worth is in what did you do for the person next to you," Clem said as she spoke to faculty and staff in August to kick off the school year.

The skills she learned as a student-athlete at Santa Margarita, including time management, project management, resilience and the ability to do hard things paved the way for her future success and the foundation to give back to others, she said.

"The skills you are teaching go so far beyond the actual subject you are teaching," she said.

She encouraged faculty and staff to continue the work in redefining success while giving students a safe space with the freedom to fail.

"When you encourage that yes from your students to get outside of their comfort zone, that is where the radness lies," Clem told faculty and staff while expressing her gratitude for her Catholic education.

At RAD Camp, everyone is encouraged to "Rise Above!" and shatter barriers associated with disabilities, diagnoses or descriptions.



Class Reunions

Eagles from the classes of 1993 and 2003 came together over the summer for their respective reunions, creating memories that will undoubtedly last a lifetime. The Class of 1993 celebrated in the Strader Grotto at SMCHS, while the Class of 2003 gathered at Craft House in Dana Point, owned by alum Blake Mellgren '07. The Class of 2013 reunion was held on Friday, Oct. 13, for their "Twilight Zone" themed 10-year reunion at The Helmsman Ale House in Newport Beach. SMCHS reunions provide a perfect opportunity for old friends to reconnect and relive cherished moments from their years at SM. We look forward to hosting the 1994, 2004, and 2014 classes next.

Make sure your contact information is current so you don't miss out on your upcoming reunion! Visit www.smhs.org/alumni.



Jeremy Webb '93 recently opened Webb's Grainworks in Aliso Viejo, a distillery, brewery, bottle shop and restaurant with a global comfort-inspired menu. Webb spent some time in Kentucky studying the craft of bourbon production and has traveled the world exploring cuisine. Webb's offers more than a dozen house-made beers on tap, craft spirits, and a unique menu in an inviting atmosphere. The venue, which includes a suspended Ford Model T and red railway traincar, is also available for private events. Webb's Chief Operating Officer **Ryan Hatch '93** and Chief Marketing Officer **Marc Levine '98** are also SM Eagle alumni. Be sure to stop in to 7 Journey when you get a chance to dine and say hello.

CLASS NOTES

1991



Chris Bodell '91 recently released his award-winning 2021 SMALLHOLDINGS wine. With a focus on authenticity, craft, and the farm-to-table philosophy, Artisans and Curators partners with New York's best-in-class winemakers, farmers, and farm-good producers to create unique offerings under its SMALLHOLDINGS label. These wines received gold and silver at this year's New York International Wine competition. SMALLHOLDINGS wine is made exclusively of grapes hand-harvested from Lot 10 Vineyard, a small (7.5 acre) vineyard located on Skaneateles Lake in New York. Available at www.aplusc.com.



When he's not hosting your class reunion, career day, or a Homecoming tailgate, **Patrick Keane '91** can be found on stage doing what he does best, making people laugh. Patrick regularly has shows at the Irvine Improv, Brea Improv, and on various cruise ships worldwide. Patrick's full-length comedy special "Long Live the Keane" can be seen at www.drybarcomedy.com

1993

Chenal Family Therapy, an innovative system of mental health clinics with 275+ staff, founded and led by **Ken Clark '93**, has been named to the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing companies in the U.S. for its sixth consecutive year. Ken lives in Bentonville, Ark. but cherishes every non-humid day he gets to spend in the SoCal visiting friends and family.

1998

Kyndell Gaglio '98 and **Nate DeNicola '98** are newlyweds and owe their happiness to SMCHS! After initially meeting as freshmen and having classes together (even surviving Honors Physics with Mr. Cunningham) they went their separate ways – and to rival schools, Nate to Notre Dame, Kyndell to USC. Flash forward a couple of decades, they reconnected at an Eagle alumni event and sparks flew. Last April, Kyndell and Nate were married at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans and celebrated with fellow Class of '98 alumni **Danielle (Deblieux) McConnell, Tiffany (Pizzi) Bromm, Lisa (Kahle) Kahlman, Vik Patel,**



Mike Moradshahi and **Conor Friedersdorf.** Be sure to follow SMCHS alumni and attend those events!

2005



Katie Lopez '05 married James Stidham on Oct. 1, 2022 at San Francisco Solano Catholic Church. The couple was surrounded by family and friends, including Eagles in the bridal party **Caitlin Martinez '05, Kori (Lu) Haug '05, Allison (Bond) Corcorran '05, Gina Fountain '08, Jessica (Villegas) Cabrera '05, Brandi (Morales) Lopez '98, Olivia Lopez '26, Jim Lopez '98, Matt Lopez '98, and JT Lopez '24.** Katie is a paralegal for the law firm Lopez McHugh, and the couple recently moved back from Denver to Mission Viejo.

2012



Dan Smith '12 and his wife Amanda Katzer-Smith welcomed their first baby boy, Samuel, on May 2, 2023. The family lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

2013



Bryne Fuller '13 recently founded Tower Events, a full-service planning, rental, and design company serving Southern California, including Orange, Los Angeles, and San Diego counties. Tower Events strives to provide great hospitality, good company, beautiful designs, and fun! Bryne believes in creating a high-touch experience for Tower Event clients, one that they will cherish for decades to come. Visit www.tower-events.com.

Please submit information to be featured in class notes at www.smeaglefoundation.org/eagle-alumni.

2014



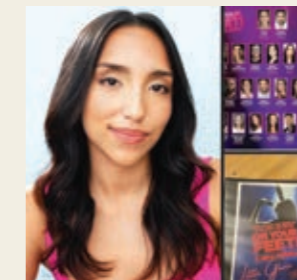
Ryan Kilander '14 married Emily (Doucette) Kilander on March 18 2023. Ryan's brothers **Alex '18** and **Matthew '19** were groomsmen and the couple celebrated with family and friends including alumni **Alex Ury '14, Joseph McGill '14** and retired California Hall of Fame Eagles Head Football Coach Harry Welch.

2016



Julianne Pellizzon '16 and **Cooper Edwards '16** married on July 1, 2023 at The Ranch Laguna Beach.

2017



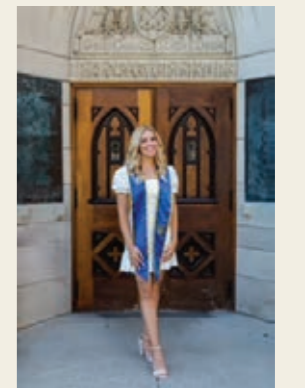
Sophia Yacap '17 is making her national Broadway tour debut for the musical "On Your Feet" playing Gloria Estefan. The tour started in Los Angeles and will travel 40 cities across 10 states and Canada. She was a captain for the nationally ranked SMCHS dance team and graduated from UCSB with both dance and political science degrees. She moved to New York City in December to pursue her dream of performing on Broadway.

2018



Daniel Katzman '18 is delighted to share that he earned his bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business Finance with a minor in Business Administration from Louisiana State University in May 2022. Having returned to his roots in Orange County, he's been thriving as a financial services professional in Newport Beach for the past 18 months. During this time, he has attained notable certifications including his Series 7, Series 63, Series 6, SIE, and life insurance license. His commitment to professional development aligns with his role as a board member with Mission Viejo Chamber of Commerce. There, he's leading an innovative internship program, fostering industry exposure for aspiring students.

2019



Catherine Nilsen '19 graduated from the University of Notre Dame where she studied English and Digital Marketing, served two years as the president of the Marketing Club, and was a committed member of the ND Dance Company. Following her graduation, she signed as an investment associate at Starcom, which recently won the title of Adweek's Media Agency of the Year.

In Loving Memory

“He will raise you up
on Eagle’s wings.”

Santa Margarita would like to extend its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the following members of the Eagle community. We will always hold you close to our hearts.

Fallen Eagles listed below are those who have passed from 2019 to present.

Alison Wilson Barwig '91	Lindsay Tilton '02
Angela Califano '91	Eric Hallan '03
Brian McGibbon '92	Gavin Escobar '09
Jennifer Aguilar Rios '92	Grant Kelley '12
Ted Doke '93	Brendan Linzmeier '12
Mirka Wloch Wisniewski '95	Max Tuerk '12
Nicole DuBois '96	Alexandra DeJong '16
Jessica Pierog '97	Christian Taylor '17
Lindsay Hawes '98	Kyle Osborne '18
Catherine Nolan '98	David M. Pearson '19
Jennifer Padayachee '98	William Crafts '22
Jeffrey Holgate '99	Andrew Hirschman '22
John Lester '02	Joshua Hayek '23
Kevin Quandt '02	Dr. Christine Veilleux, SMCHS French teacher



2023-2024 Special Events...

Get Involved!

WINTER

December	8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass
January	26	Alumni Career Day
Jan-Feb	29-2	Catholic Schools Week
January	31	Catholic Schools Week Mass

SPRING

February	14	Ash Wednesday Mass
February	27	Nick Kraus Memorial Scholarship Concert
March	18	Eagle Classic Golf Tournament
March	28	Senior Pilgrimage
April	18-21	Spring Musical
May	8	Marian Mass
May	30	Baccalaureate Mass
May	31	Class of 2024 Commencement Ceremony