

WINGS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SANTA MARGARITA EAGLE FOUNDATION



LIVING **OUR** CHARISM

SPRING 2024



GO EAGLES ROCK!

WINGS

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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@sm eaglefoundation.org or call us at 949-766-6080. You can also read more about the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation at sm eaglefoundation.org

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« Current students eagerly welcome the class of 2028 at the Eagle Drive-Thru Welcome Celebration!



SANTA MARGARITA EAGLE FOUNDATION

A FOUNDATION FOR SANTA MARGARITA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Welcome to the latest edition of WINGS Magazine!

As you flip through the pages of this publication, we hope you are inspired by the myriad of experiences that make up the legacy of this incredible school. As President Andy Sulick '91 often says, "Santa Margarita is a force for good." Every article, photograph, and feature demonstrates the spirit of Caritas Christi that defines this community.

Within these pages, you'll find stories that celebrate the achievements of our current students and showcase the enduring impact of our dedicated faculty and staff. From our new architecture course to CIF championship victories, a visionary theatre season to ties with CHOC and City of Hope, this magazine reflects the diverse talents and passions that flourish within the Eagle community.

You are an integral part of our ongoing narrative. Your contributions, both past and present, have helped shape our school's identity and left a mark on generations to come. Whether you are a student, current parent, alumni, grandparent, or friend of the school, your connection to Santa Margarita remains a source of pride and inspiration.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication. Together, we will continue to uphold the values of faith, academic excellence, and compassionate service that lie at the heart of our school.

In Eagle Spirit,

Brandi Lopez '98
Alumni Coordinator
Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation

Santa Margarita Offers Flexible Pathway to Graduation

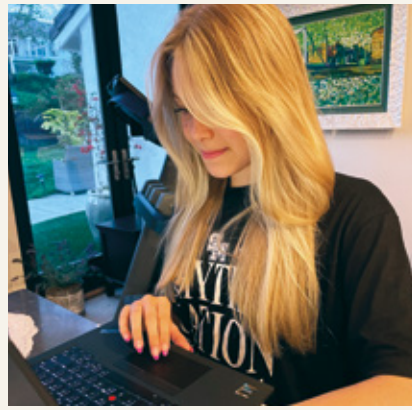
Beginning this past school year, Santa Margarita Catholic High School now offers a fully online learning program. Eagle Online Academy provides a premier online education for students seeking a flexible learning environment.

The academy currently offers 30 courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes, covering subjects ranging from Mandarin Chinese and Physics to AP Psychology and Guitar, with additional course offerings planned. All extracurricular opportunities and support services available to on-campus students are accessible to Eagle Online Academy students. The program maintains Santa Margarita’s academic rigor and faith-based core values.

Asynchronous classes allow students to log in and complete classwork at the time of day that best fits their schedule. Online learners also have access to weekly video calls with their teachers. For the 2024-2025 school year, Eagle Online Academy is available to students in grades 9-11.

“I love that I can do my ballet classes and private lessons in the morning during school hours and still be a part of the song and dance team at SM!” said Aspen Taylor ’27. “This online academy allows me to train at my studio and still be involved at an amazing school. I also love that on the days I am not so busy, I can come to lunch and be on campus just as an in-person student would be!”

Highly qualified SMCHS faculty develop all courses and class content, delivered through Microsoft Teams and OneNote class notebooks with the same rigorous focus as Santa Margarita’s successful college-prep curriculum. For a decade, Microsoft has recognized SMCHS as a



Aspen Taylor '27 enjoys the flexibility of taking online classes while remaining involved in campus life, including the award-winning Eagle Dance Force song and dance teams.

Showcase School for excellence in leveraging technology to transform and enhance student-learning outcomes. Santa Margarita is Orange County’s sole recipient of this designation and one of just 37 schools nationwide. Microsoft Teams facilitates teacher-student interactions through live meetings as needed, discussion boards and more, while delivering course materials through recorded online presentations, videos and modules. OneNote serves as a digital three-ring binder where students can organize class materials and assignments, allowing teachers to provide real-time feedback.

At the core of Santa Margarita’s Eagle Online Academy is the school’s charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ. Online students can attend on-campus Masses, retreats, faith and fellowship gatherings and participate in the school’s Christian service program, where they learn the significance of giving back to their community and their role as global citizens.

“Eagle Online Academy offers students a unique opportunity to blend rigorous academics with the flexibility they need to pursue other passions and commitments, all within the nurturing environment of Santa Margarita’s faith-based community,” said Ron Blanc, director of the program.

What is Eagle Online Academy?

- 100% authentic SMCHS education
- 100% online, asynchronous classes
- 100% of content created and taught by SMCHS faculty
- 100% access to campus ministry retreats, fellowship and Christian service programs, athletics and other extracurricular opportunities
- 100% built for students who need flexibility in their high school education experience
- 100% access to in-person academic periods (teacher office hours)

- 100% access to SMCHS support services, including school, college and wellness counselors

For more information about Eagle Online Academy, visit www.smhs.org/online



Song Team Celebrates Successful Championship Season

The varsity song team had a winning season that culminated in multiple championship titles. At USA Nationals in Anaheim, the JV and varsity teams took first across the board for all four routines they performed. Earlier in the season, the team placed in the top ten for their pom and jazz routines amidst fierce competition in the large varsity divisions at the National Dance Team Championship in Orlando, Florida. While there, the team also competed in the World Championships and earned first place in the varsity jazz division, securing the highest U.S. team score in the entire competition against routines of all styles.

Seniors Win Congressional App Challenge for Mental Health Support App

Santa Margarita seniors Jevon Mao '24 and Liam Dowd '24, along with their two other teammates, clinched the victory for the 2023 Congressional App Challenge for California's 49th Congressional District. The students developed Ember, an app aimed at enhancing adolescents' mental well-being through the help of close friends and family.

Their success earned them an invitation to the House of Code event held at the U.S. Capitol, where they demonstrated their apps to members of Congress, engaged with fellow award-winning student developers from across the nation, heard from lawmakers, explored the future of computer science and interacted with sponsors and partners including representatives from tech giants at a STEM Expo.

"It was a great opportunity to network with so many industry professionals at such a young age," Mao said. "It was a chance to take what you learn in school and see how to apply it to the real world."

Dowd said the event broadened his awareness of various technology career paths while providing the opportunity to connect with industry leaders.

This marks the second time Mao and Dowd participated in the challenge, having previously developed Project Democracy, an app designed to facilitate unbiased access to voter information in hundreds of languages. Mao will attend Stanford University, where he is interested in studying science, technology and society, and Dowd



plans to major in computer science and business administration at Northeastern University.

Launched in 2015, the Congressional App Challenge promotes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and encourages students to learn coding and computer science skills.



Esports Wins Three National Titles

The esports team, led by Esports General Manager Chase LeBlanc, secured three national titles this year. Teams playing Fortnite D2, Rocket League D1 and Valorant D1 all won their division, bringing the total to seven different esports wins. SMCHS esports now has a new streaming program. Follow the team on www.twitch.tv/smchseagles.



Eagle Regiment Wins State Championship

The Eagle Regiment locked in first place in the state championships, making them California State Band Championships (CSBC) Division 1A champions. Awards in music, visual, general effect and percussion were secured with a total score of 78.2.

"I am so proud of these student performers," said Instrumental Music Director Ruben Puebla. "Any large-scale productions will have hiccups, but these performers tackled adversity head-on and put together an incredible show. Their achievement will help to continue a tradition of excellence, passion, and success."

Exceptional Educator: Coleen Barry Named Finalist for Teacher of the Year

Coleen Barry arrives on campus each day at 5:30 a.m. without fail. Each morning, before the sun rises, she's grading papers and preparing for her classes, eager to take on a new day with her students. Barry was recently honored as a finalist for the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Teacher of the Year award, a recognition of the highest honors within the Diocese of Orange. She and other esteemed Catholic educators in Orange County were recognized in February at the Diocese of Orange Celebrating Catholic Education Dinner for their commitment and hard work in making Catholic schools a place of service, faith and academic achievement.

An alumni parent, Barry's career at Santa Margarita Catholic High School began as a substitute teacher. Eighteen years, countless students, and innumerable analyses of "Hamlet" later, Barry says her career at Santa Margarita was "meant to be."

Barry makes sure her classroom is a relaxed environment, and a typical day in room B219 begins with a check-in to ensure students are

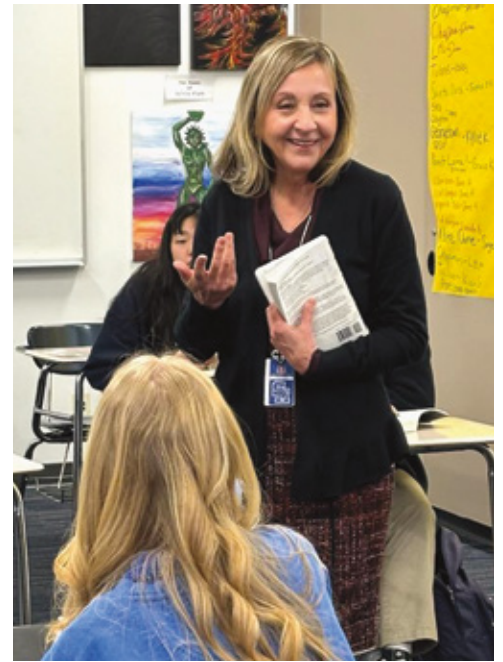
settled, comfortable, and ready to learn. She hopes students leave her class liking the subject matter more than expected and in a calmer state of mind.

"At a school like Santa Margarita, it's not just the curriculum; it's the whole person," Barry says.

Faculty members who nominated Barry describe her as dedicated, caring and dynamic. Her impact extends far beyond the classroom, shaping students' lives and enriching the educational experience at Santa Margarita.

"She has a wonderful rapport with her students, makes learning fun, and cares about the whole child. She consistently infuses the English curriculum with the heart of Catholicism."

Barry credits her success and this honor to feeling part of a family.



"My colleagues, not only in the English department but all around Santa Margarita, are inspiring to me. The collegiality, the friendliness, and the feeling that you're part of a family—that's what keeps me going."

Drumming Up Good Vibes and Accolades

Santa Margarita Catholic High School Director of Percussion Amanda Duncan is passionate about percussion, bringing her energy and enthusiasm to the classroom and stage as a professional musician. Duncan was recently named by Parenting OC magazine as a School Hero Finalist.

"Ms. Duncan has been a model of quality and consistency in the classroom," said John Hayek, Santa Margarita's vice president of people development. "She takes students from zero experience in steel drums to proficiency and beyond."

Duncan was initially focused on a full-time performance career until her percussion professor and mentor at Cal State Long Beach suggested pursuing a career in education.

"Looking back, I can see that he knew there was an educator inside me way before I ever did," said Duncan, whose teaching career now spans 20 years. "Now, I can't imagine my life without being a teacher."

At Santa Margarita, Duncan teaches steel drums courses, AP Music Theory and various afterschool vocal and instrumental courses



through the school's TAPA conservatory program. She also coaches percussion for the school's Eagle Regiment Marching Band.

Santa Margarita's steel drums program is unique as it's fully integrated into the curriculum rather than an extracurricular activity, Duncan said. Students receive a comprehensive education on the instrument, covering the struggles of its early pioneers in Trinidad and showcasing its musical versatility, ranging from island style to rock to jazz to classical.

"I am fortunate to get the chance to help my students reach their full potential as people and as musicians, challenging them

to step outside their comfort zone while introducing them to a whole world of music that they might have never heard of," she said. Beyond teaching, Duncan is an accomplished percussionist and drummer, performing with diverse ensembles, including bands, symphony orchestras, opera companies and musical theatre companies.

"I'm equal parts performer and teacher," she said. "I can bring my practical experience 'on the gig' to my classroom and share what I learn with my students. Additionally, being a teacher makes me a better performer – practicing fundamental music skills is a lifelong pursuit, and I often remind myself of the same things I tell my students to do!"

BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS in New Elective Course

Santa Margarita's newest class offers students an introduction to architecture, including design thinking, problem-solving and creativity. Taught by Martial Yapo, the visual arts architecture course serves as a valuable foundation, providing students with insight into the architecture world through drawing, sketching, building models, architectural plan reading and other hands-on design projects. Students also gain an understanding of space, form and function while learning about the historical context and various styles of architectural design.

"I was so excited when I found out about this class!" said Charlotte Williams '24. "It's been amazing making my design ideas come to life. Mr. Yapo has done a great job teaching us each step of architecture, from design to building!"

Even for students who may not pursue architecture as a career, the course explores diverse career paths within the design and construction industries. An advanced architecture course is planned for the upcoming school year, diving deeper into architecture while integrating traditional and digital techniques, including architectural drawing, CAD tools and 3D rendering.



VISUAL ARTS TEACHER MARTIAL YAPO SHARES MORE ABOUT THE COURSE:

What is the best part of this course?

The most rewarding aspect of this course is the opportunity to ignite a passion for architecture within my students and introduce them to a discipline that could profoundly impact their lives. Whether they embrace architecture or not, they will inevitably navigate a world deeply influenced by it. By exposing them to the intricacies and wonders of architecture, I hope to cultivate a new perspective that enriches their understanding of the built environment.

What is the focus of this course?

This course's primary goal is to broaden students' horizons by immersing them in the world of architecture. I encourage them to step out of their comfort zones and approach problems with fresh perspectives. I seek to empower them to discover their creative potential within architecture through critical thinking and innovative approaches.

What do you want students to get out of this course?

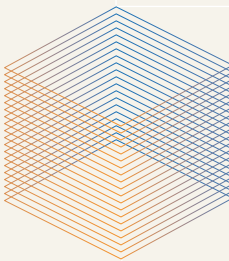
I aspire for my students to recognize their capacity for creativity and harness their critical thinking and analytical skills to conceptualize architectural projects. By merging these two facets, I aim to instill in them the ability to synthesize ideas and translate them into tangible designs that blend artistry with functionality.

What will the main differences be between the beginning and advanced courses?

The advanced architecture course will delve deeper into various aspects of the discipline. We will explore the rich tapestry of architectural history, spanning different movements and examining the evolving principles of sustainability. Additionally, we will scrutinize the intricate details of architectural drawing, honing in on the nuanced layers that contribute to a comprehensive design.

Will students learn Computer-Aided Design (CAD)?

While CAD and rendering will be part of the curriculum, they will not be the sole focus. Instead, students will receive an introduction to these programs, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the tools of the trade. However, emphasis will also be placed on nurturing their creativity through hands-on construction, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of architectural practice.



SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT: A Vibrant Year for Performing Arts at Santa Margarita



TALON THEATRE

Under the visionary leadership of Kennedy Kemmerer '19, Talon Theatre performers experienced a season of innovation and boundless talent. The theatre program entered a new era with the new artistic director's fresh, creative approach to storytelling and set design.

The 2023-24 theatre season began with a modern twist on a familiar classic, "Alice in Wonderland." Through an abstract exploration of this tale, theatrical design and movement theatre were used to construct a new version of "Alice in Wonderland."

"The student designers were encouraged to push the limits of what they thought the design could be," Kemmerer said. "We were able to articulate, sculpt, and build our own Wonderland in the Talon Dome. With integrated speaker setups, a removed proscenium, and an eccentric color palette, the students got to lead the design and environmental development for our actors to play in."

The spring musical proved to be an even more adventurous endeavor aboard a 16th-century pirate ship. Schönberg and Boubil's "The Pirate Queen" is based on the real-life story of Grace O'Malley, an Irish chieftan and notorious female pirate in a male-dominated world.

"As we delved into rehearsals, the word 'honesty' became our guiding light," Kemmerer said. "Our goal was not to perform for self-recognition, but to authentically embody the characters and their narratives, inviting the audience into the world of the musical."

The cast was joined on stage by a 10-piece orchestra conducted by Executive Director of Performing Arts Francisco Calvo. Daniel Gallegos '25 was handed the baton as assistant conductor for the "Pirate Queen" orchestra. A highlight for Gallegos was conducting the orchestra for "The Waking of the Queen" during the Saturday performance.

"To this day, I cannot express how grateful I am to Ms. Kemmerer and Mr. Calvo for giving me this life-changing opportunity to be a part of Talon Theatre's production of The Pirate Queen," Gallegos said.



TALON THEATRE WINS BIG DURING AWARD SEASON

The MACY Awards

The MACY Awards is dedicated to encouraging, recognizing and rewarding achievement and excellence in high school musical theatre in Orange County.

SMCHS Talon Theatre's production of "The Pirate Queen" won 22 MACY Awards including:

- **The Spirit of the MACY Award**
- **Best Large Ensemble**
- **Top 10 Musical**
- **Best Actor:** Robbie Troyan '24 as Tiernan in "The Pirate Queen"

This prestigious accolade is the highest individual recognition for a student in this competition. Troyan will represent our region at the national Jimmy Awards in New York City at the end of June. He is the first SMCHS student to achieve this honor.

- **Best Dramatic Actress:** Jasmine Ortiz '26 as Grace O'Malley in "The Pirate Queen"

Cappies Awards

The Critics and Awards Program strives to recognize Orange County student writers, performers and technical crews. High school theatre students trained as critics attend shows at other schools, write reviews, and vote to recognize their peers in high school theater.

- **Marketing and Publicity:** Raelyn Spooner '24 and Sarah Atia '24 "The Pirate Queen"
- **Supporting Actress:** Charlie Goubran '25 in "The Pirate Queen"
- **Costume Design in a Play:** Sarah Atia '24 and Reaghan Genest '25, "Alice in Wonderland"





DANCE

The spring dance concert brought the joy of dance to campus with beginning, intermediate, Advanced Dance Honors and IB dance performing. The Eagle Dance Force song and dance teams and several junior and senior soloists were also featured. Many styles of dance were performed, from contemporary to hip-hop, with several of the routines choreographed by Santa Margarita dance students.

“Our spring dance concert this year showcased some of the incredible talent in our program,” said Director of Dance Danielle Darwazeh. “We are so proud of our student choreographers, our dancers of all levels and especially our ten graduating seniors in the dance program.”



VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL

The stage at the Segerstrom Concert Hall was set aglow in February with the promise of harmony and generosity at the Nick Kraus Memorial Scholarship Concert. From the rhythmic pulse of the steel drums to the soul-stirring crescendos of the orchestra and choirs, the evening served as a testament to the transformative power of music. Alumna Alexandra Rupp '13 was featured as a guest vocalist and performed “Danny Boy” with our Chamber Singers and “A Hymn to Happiness” with all ensembles. “A Hymn to Happiness” was commissioned by Executive Director of Performing Arts Francisco Calvo, specially for this performance showcasing the versatility of the choirs.

The year culminated with the pops concert series featuring the steel drums, Eagle Rock Band, and vocal and instrumental music programs performing a dynamic range of uplifting classics, timeless hits and chart toppers. A surprise guest appearance by an ensemble of SMCHS dads, who had been secretly practicing a tribute for their sons, was an unforgettable audience favorite.



For more information about Santa Margarita’s performing arts programs and TAPA Conservatory, visit www.smhs.org/performingarts.



Patrick Larkin
Senior
Swiss Mountain
Photography
Project

Wade Warren
Senior
Aqua III
Photography
Project

Tony Lagumbay
Senior
More Beverage
Photography
Project

Luke Carter
Senior
A Road Cane
Photography
Project

Tony Lagumbay
Senior
Big
Photography
Project

Wade Warren
Senior
Aqua III
Photography
Project

Mason McHenry
Senior
Walk in One
Photography
Project

Tony Lagumbay
Senior
Puppy Purr
Photography
Project

Isabella Weaver
Senior
Mount St. Cath
Photography
Project

Nico Babinay
Senior
Donald Joseph Rodriguez Jr.
Photography
Project

Ashlyn Basha
Senior
Eagle
Photography
Project

Mason McHenry
Senior
Sun Kissed
Photography
Project

Parker Coombs
Senior
Water Bottle Shaker
Photography
Project

Wade Warren
Senior
Purr
Photography
Project

Honoring Her Legacy:

MEREDITH MILLIGAN MOODY VISUAL ART SHOW

“As visual artists, we tend to find ourselves in the background, but our work yells,”

said Meredith Milligan Moody, the namesake of Santa Margarita’s visual art show.

Santa Margarita’s 14th annual visual art show — in its inaugural year of being renamed the Meredith Milligan Moody Visual Art Show — brought together the school’s visual artists and their families for a special evening celebrating their work.

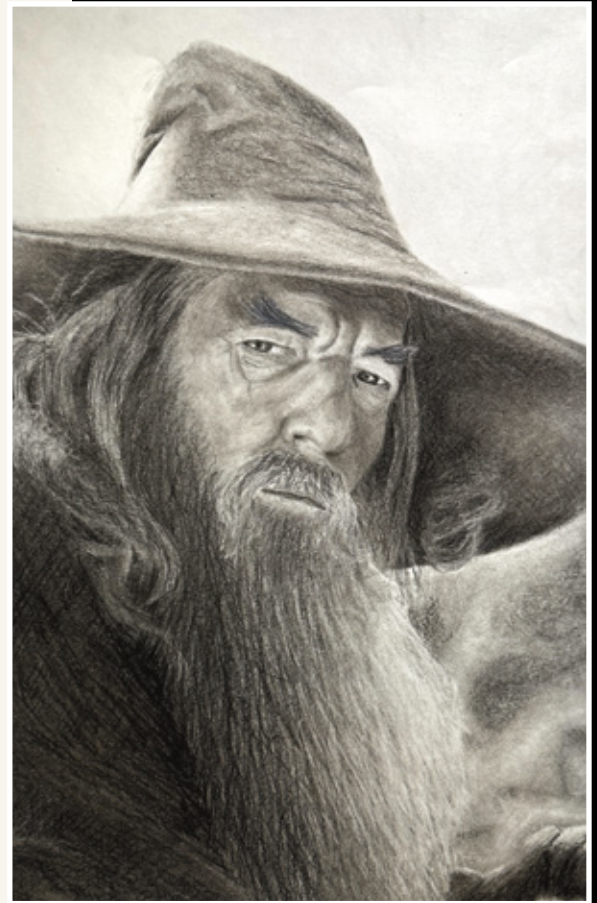
Moody, an artist and retired Santa Margarita visual arts department chair and teacher of 26 years, remains closely tied to the SMCHS community.

“Having the SM Visual Art Show named after me was a total surprise and an honor that means more than words can express,” said Moody, who began the school’s art show. “I hope this show will let students know how important they are to SM as they live the charism of Caritas Christi.”

Visual arts teacher and department chair Corey Lindabury ’93, who was taught by Moody when he was a student at SMCHS, said Moody’s impact on students has made all the difference in their lives.

“It brings a smile to my face seeing our students show their art to friends and family, as this is what art allows the world to do,” Lindabury said. “Art allows us to come together and experience the stories that it tells.”

In a preshow awards reception, Moody recognized student artists Emma Murdock ’24 and Sydney Sindoni ’24 as Artists of Excellence for their artistic excellence and embodying the school’s charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ, and the four core principles of compassion, humility, justice and goodness. Additionally, student artists featured in art shows across Orange County were acknowledged, and Preston Kwon’s ’27 piece “Gandalf the Grey” was formally entered into the permanent gallery, a prestigious and highly selective collection featuring Santa Margarita’s most talented student artists.



**PRESTON KWON'S '27 PIECE
"GANDALF THE GREY"**

Watch a special interview
with Meredith Moody





Visual Arts Students Spark Joy for Cancer Patients

Santa Margarita's visual arts students are bringing joy to cancer patients across Orange County.

Dozens of visual artists created custom coloring books for cancer patients at Children's Hospital of Orange County. Once the initial pencil sketches were done by drawing students, graphic design students digitally went over lines to re-draw the pictures. From there, students put the pages together to create each coloring book for their CHOC patient.

"We are so glad to be doing something for our community and to bring a little love to these children," said Santa Margarita graphic design teacher Rudy Gardea.

Additionally, select Santa Margarita visual artists were included in the City of Hope Orange County "Hope is a Masterpiece" exhibit at the Lennar Foundation Cancer Center in Irvine. Students were invited to a reception at City of Hope, where they were recognized and celebrated for their contributions. City of Hope Orange County President Annette Walker expressed her gratitude to the artists and their families,

mentioning that they "contributed to a unique patient experience" that makes a daily difference in the lives of patients.

"You are the creators of hope," Walker told the artists gathered for the unveiling ceremony. "It is your work that our patients see when they enter — art that calls to mind home, inspiration, and hope. I hope that as you move through the building, you feel the impact and power of your contributions on our patients, families, and staff."

The exhibit includes 21 pieces by Santa Margarita students.

"This has been a wonderful opportunity for our students to have their artwork displayed for the next six months in this gallery that creates a healing environment for cancer patients," SMCHS Visual Arts Community Outreach Coordinator Nancy Harrell said.

"This helps our students realize their art goes beyond just putting paint to canvas."



ABOVE: GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDENT TRENT ISAKSON '27 DESIGNS A COLORING BOOK PAGE FOR CHOC.



“We make these crosses and prayer cards in honor of our grandmother and hope they bring strength and comfort to anyone who receives them.”

-Emma Murdock '24

Comfort Crosses Carry On

After losing their beloved grandmother to cancer, Santa Margarita twins Brooke and Emma Murdock '24 felt inspired to honor her legacy while uplifting their community.

The sisters started the school's Comfort Cross Club their freshman year, which has grown to include 170 members. Repurposed wood from their father's company that has been blessed is used to make small wooden crosses, each etched with the SM logo and accompanied by a prayer card that includes the biblical verse:

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.” -2 Thessalonians: 3:16

Their grandmother, who remained courageous and strong throughout her illness, had tiny pendants, crosses, pillows and prayer cards that helped comfort her and those around her. Club members regularly distribute Comfort Crosses throughout campus and have also delivered hundreds of handmade crosses to St. Joseph's Hospital cancer patients.

“We make these crosses and prayer cards in honor of our grandmother and hope they bring strength and comfort to anyone who receives them,” said Emma Murdock '24. “Our goal is to help comfort people who are struggling physically or emotionally, so they know they are never alone.”

Their younger brother, Bryan Murdock '26, plans to lead the club after his sisters graduate with the assistance of Layla Amer '25.



Brooke and Emma Murdock '24 meet with then Manager of Spiritual Care Brother Felipe Martinez of St. Joseph's Hospital to provide comfort crosses for patients.



LIVING OUR CHARISM

“Caritas Christi” is sewn into the fabric of Santa Margarita Catholic High School, the stitching that begins to form when students arrive and the seams that bind them together as they leave the gates for the final time as students. Compassion, humility, justice and goodness are the core principles that define Santa Margarita’s charism of Caritas Christi, which means “the love of Christ.”

CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

Santa Margarita's charism is the guiding light, bringing students back to what matters. The school's chaplaincy program is one of the ways we live that charism daily. In its second full year, the chaplaincy program places faith at the center of athletics and reinforces consistent, intentional faith formation for teams.

"The chaplaincy program was started from an organic desire to connect the faith life of the school and a student's spiritual journey with their sport," says baseball chaplain and Assistant Principal of Mission and Integration Patrick Visconti '06. "The chaplain's role is to serve as an additional adult an athlete can go to for support and guidance."

While it is ultimately up to each coach as to where chaplains fit into practice and game schedules, the idea is that a team's chaplain will meet with their designated team weekly. These sessions allow teams to carve out time to ask big questions, to put their athletic performance into perspective, and allow for faith and spirituality to have a central role in the life of athletics on campus.

Seven Santa Margarita teams currently have chaplains as part of their coaching staff. By design, these chaplains are figures on campus that students see daily; Assistant Director of Campus Ministry Donnie Green, Vice President of People Development John Hayek, and Principal Cheri Wood are all chaplains for various teams. Teams that do not yet have chaplains still have designated faith formation sessions during their season. Many coaches opt to have multiple faith formations per season to help ground, relax and refocus their athletes. Visconti's vision for the chaplaincy program is for every athletic program on campus to have a chaplain.

Head Baseball Coach Chris Malec '01 says that the chaplaincy program helped transform how his players see faith fitting into the daily things they go through as a team.



Principal Cheri Wood, chaplain for the girls soccer program, encourages the team in a pregame chapel talk.

"The chaplaincy program helps us dedicate time weekly to build well-rounded individuals, but it also teaches our athletes that you can be competitive on the field and a good, faith-driven person," Malec says. "The program helps us build trust through vulnerability with our student-athletes, as it creates opportunities for our athletes to share their lives with each other."

Varsity soccer player Ruby Casey '24 says her faith has been shaped by her sport and her coach at Santa Margarita. When the team began their run for the championship during her junior year, Casey says it was one of the most exciting yet intense experiences she'd ever endured. She realized she had to rely on God to get her through the games, something she'd learned through her athletic experiences at Santa Margarita. Her prayer was this: "Help me do my best, win or lose."

"SM has shaped me into an athlete who exemplifies my faith on the field, and Coach Craig (Bull) has taught us to be players with character," Casey says. "As I go on to play in college, I know God will go with me, and my prayer will be the same as it has through high school: help me do my best, win or lose."

Spending time in reflection within the stillness of the Sacred Heart Chapel before a home playoff game, girls soccer chaplain Principal Wood read aloud players' pregame intentions: let go of stress, support and encourage the frontline, open up to my teammates, stop comparing myself, remain positive, and keep focused even amid frustration.

"What you are is a phenomenal team - you are all in this together," Wood reminded the student-athletes.

Members of the robotics team pray the Stations of the Cross on campus prior to a competition.



SMCHS baseball hosts a Little League Challenger game on campus, teaming up with players with physical and intellectual challenges for a day of fun and baseball.



"The chaplaincy program helps us dedicate time weekly to build well-rounded individuals, but it also teaches our athletes that you can be competitive on the field and a good, faith-driven person."

Chris Malec '01, Head Baseball Coach



CARING FOR THE WHOLE PERSON

Faith is infused into all extracurricular programs at Santa Margarita. Beyond the classroom, the school's extracurricular programs strive to enfold, ground, and care for the whole person, mind, body and soul. Through service projects, communal prayer, and dedicated program retreats, students have opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection.

Before competing at the FIRST Robotics Competition this spring, team members were led through the Stations of the Cross on campus with Santa Margarita Chaplain Rev. Florante Moren.

"Our robotics team enjoys participating in the Stations of the Cross every Lenten season just before Easter," said Robotics Coordinator Chase LeBlanc. "It allows us to refocus on what's important."

The Eagles football program recently took a day away from the field for their "Men of God" retreat. The focus was being rooted in God's love and "H.O.W." to become closer to Him.

"By being Honest, Open and Willing, the Eagle brotherhood continues to grow stronger in their relationship with God and one another," said SMCHS Head Football Coach Anthony Rouzier, who says his role as a coach is to serve and impact. "... Being at a Catholic school we get to share God's word - that's a focal point of our



Football players unite in prayer during the 'Men of God' retreat.

conversations as coaches and with the kids. Our purpose is to build champions - and that's champions in life."

Talon Theatre connects and shares Christ's love with one another before their performances. On opening night, they head into the Sacred Heart Chapel and share what they admire in each other before the curtain rises. Talon Theatre student Elaina Martinez '24 says it makes all the difference in performances.

"Talon Theatre's traditions are meant to allow students to be vulnerable without judgment, which is what makes them so special," Martinez says. "Our unique practices make our program feel like home, and our bonds as a community are built on traits like trust, gratitude and love."

Talon Theatre Artistic Director Kennedy Kemmerer '19 encourages her students to approach the challenges they face on stage with empathy and thoughtful problem-solving, considering the experiences and emotions their peers may also be navigating. Rehearsals often begin with meditation, a devotional reading, and a one-word check-in.

"This has become imperative for setting us up for success as a team so we can interact with Caritas Christi at the forefront of our work," says Kemmerer. "... Theatre uses our gifts and talents to provide storytelling to audiences who may need to hear its message. We recognize that these gifts come to us directly from Christ, as He leads us to where our purpose and passion meet."



"Theatre uses our gifts and talents to provide storytelling to audiences who may need to hear its message. We recognize that these gifts come to us directly from Christ, as He leads us to where our purpose and passion meet."

Kennedy Kemmerer '19
Talon Theatre Artistic Director



Empowering Student-Athletes for Recruiting Success



By Mike Hiserman

Mike Hiserman is Associate Director of College Relations at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. He can be reached on TEAMS, by email at hisermanm@smhs.org, or by phone at 949-766-6000, ext. 4252.

It's not often a person enjoys a second opportunity at a "dream job," yet here I am, after a 40-year sports journalism career that culminated in a post as sports editor of the Los Angeles Times, having more fun and feeling more fulfilled than ever.

When I came to Santa Margarita Catholic High School in January 2021, I was a volunteer baseball coach. After about only six weeks of retirement, I figured coaching was a way to stave off restlessness while giving back to a game I enjoyed.

Little did I know that after the baseball season, President Andy Sulick '91 would schedule a meeting and ask me how SM might best benefit from my "skill set" on campus. From that conversation, Santa Margarita's student-athlete recruiting support program was born. In my role, I collaborate with student-athletes, coaches, college counselors and families as a college-fit advisor, helping to facilitate opportunities for student-athletes interested in competing in college. Through parent presentations, one-on-one meetings, and educating families on best practices, this added value program comes at no cost to families and provides the recruiting support a student-athlete needs to take control of their future.

With more than 75% of the student body participating in athletics during their time at Santa Margarita, our goal is to find a happy home – academically, athletically and socially – for any student-athlete who has a passion they wish to cultivate during the college years.

Last school year, in only the program's second year of operation, 73 SMCHS Class of 2023 student-athletes found scholarships and roster spots on four-year college teams. That was about 17% of the



entire graduating class – and believed to be a single-class record for Santa Margarita. Once again, 17% of the graduating Class of 2024 will continue their athletic careers at the college level.

Of course, the credit for that goes primarily to an extremely talented class of outstanding athletes who, largely, also were strong students. Some of them, no doubt, would have earned scholarships no matter what high school they attended. But as SM students, they had a best-in-the-business support system: tireless coaches, many whom have built trusting bonds with college programs; resourceful academic and college counselors; a supportive administration, faculty and staff; and a fabulous recruiting platform that allows student-athletes to build a full athletic/academic resume and, with just a few keystrokes, efficiently send it via a national database to the email inbox of just about any college coach in the country. The platform is SportsRecruits.com, and the pro version is available – at no charge – to all SM student-athletes, including those who exclusively compete for clubs. Student-athletes can efficiently research schools based on preferences, communicate with college coaches, generate exposure and uncover opportunities to ultimately help them play the sport they love at their best-fit college.

Yes, working with some of the industry's top sports journalists while covering the Olympics, NBA championships, World Series and college national championships was challenging and fun. But encouraging a young woman who was ready to give up on her favorite sport and top college choice, and seeing her later earn a scholarship in that sport to that college; or helping a young man who was seeking a volunteer football operations post instead land a paying job producing creative graphics for a school in one of the nation's top media markets? Now that's rewarding!

HISERMAN HINTS

- **Know your sport's NCAA recruiting calendar:** There are periods when some college coaches can contact you and recruit you, and periods when they can't.
- **Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center** if you hope to be recruited by an NCAA school. Unless a D1 or D2 school is already recruiting you, choose the free account. You can always upgrade later.
- **Compete in the classroom** as hard as you do on the field or court. The better your academic record, the more options you have.
- **Take advantage of SM resources:** Coaches, academic and college counselors, SportsRecruits, and a college relations advisor dedicated to working with student-athletes are all available to you.
- **Visit colleges and speak with people on campus.** Get a feel for what you like and don't like, then trust your instincts.
- **Research colleges online early in your high school career** and be prepared to deliver a full athletic/academic resume to programs that interest you before the start of your junior year.
- **Tune out the noise:** Friends and their parents can be the worst sources for recruiting and college "offers." Focus on becoming the best student and athlete you can be.
- **Bust the myths:** You'll hear that D3 is the lowest rung of four-year college competition and that those schools don't offer scholarships. Many D3 programs compete at a high level – and reward strong students with sizeable merit scholarships. Also: It's rarely "too late" to be recruited. There have been SM student-athletes who were offered athletic scholarships even weeks after they graduated.

CONGRATULATIONS

Class of 2024



SANTA MARGARITA
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

20 24



385

GRADUATES

99%

OF GRADUATES TO
ATTEND COLLEGE

100%

ACCEPTANCE RATE AT
187 SCHOOLS

2,295

COLLEGE
ACCEPTANCES

35

DIFFERENT STATES
GRADS WILL ATTEND
COLLEGE

144

DIFFERENT
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES
ATTENDING

65

COLLEGIATE STUDENT
ATHLETES

53

INTERNATIONAL
BACCALAUREATE FULL
DIPLOMA CANDIDATES



Santa Margarita's thirty-fourth graduating class crossed the stage on May 31 at Honda Center to receive their diplomas, joining an alumni network of over 12,000. The Most Rev. Thanh Thai Nguyen, D.D., auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Orange, presided over the ceremony, joined on stage by Diocese of Orange Superintendent of Catholic School Erin C.O. Barisano, Ed. D., members of the school's administration, Santa Margarita chaplain Rev. Florante Moren, A.M.

Also on stage were the Class of 2024 valedictorians, salutatorian Logan Kim '24, attending the University of California, Los Angeles, and Caritas Christi Award recipient Lauren Kirby '24, attending Texas Christian University. Nominated by faculty and staff, the recipient of the Caritas Christi Award embodies all that is good about Santa Margarita, living out the school's charism of Caritas Christi, the love of Christ.

"Graduates, as you stand on the threshold of a new chapter equipped with knowledge and guided by the light of your faith, remember to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and lean on the values that have been instilled in you. In this world that is yearning for hope, may you be beacons of light, demonstrating through your actions the transformative power of Caritas Christi."

Erin C.O. Barisano, Ed.D.
*Diocese of Orange Superintendent
of Catholic Schools*



"**Compassion** isn't just about holding the door or lending a pencil. It's in the moments when we listen to our friends, reach out to strangers, or simply offer our support to anyone in need. ... Regardless of our differences, we should recognize the face of Christ in everyone we meet. ... Remember the smallest acts of compassion can have the biggest impact."

Kylie Kwon '24
University of California, Los Angeles



"**Humility** is the ability to recognize our shortcomings, set aside our egos and seek the help that we need. SM has always been a place where the support system can be facilitated, so long as we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and seek it."

Kelly Lu '24
*University of California,
Los Angeles*

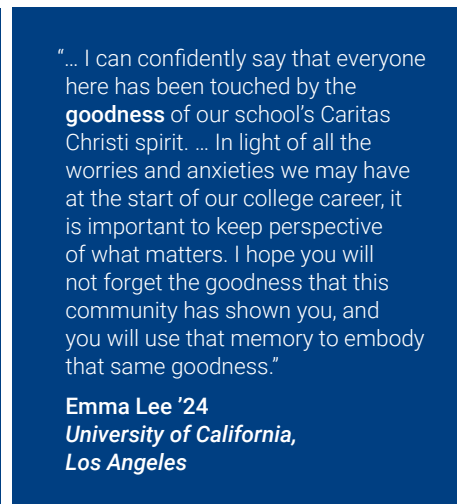
ADDRESSING THE CLASS

The Class of 2024 valedictorians reflected on the school's core principles of Compassion, Humility, Justice and Goodness during their valedictory addresses:



"**Justice** isn't a solution; it's a continuous mission that calls for each of us, as our school charism states, to respect and advocate for the dignity of all people and creation. We must stand up for those who lack the power to stand up for themselves and face the world with compassion, humility and goodness."

Maia Choe '24
Boston College



"... I can confidently say that everyone here has been touched by the **goodness** of our school's Caritas Christi spirit. ... In light of all the worries and anxieties we may have at the start of our college career, it is important to keep perspective of what matters. I hope you will not forget the goodness that this community has shown you, and you will use that memory to embody that same goodness."

Emma Lee '24
*University of California,
Los Angeles*



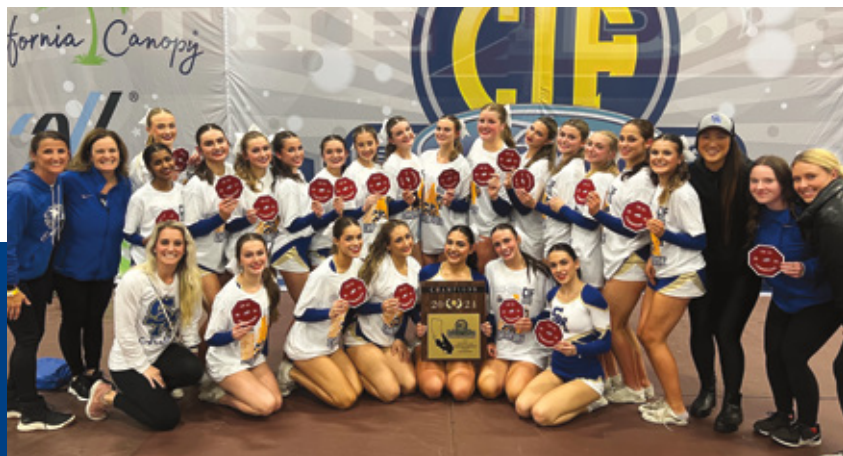
SANTA MARGARITA SOARS: A HISTORIC 2023-24 ATHLETIC SEASON

Santa Margarita Catholic High School etched itself further in the history books during the 2023-2024 school year, winning CIF state, regional, southern section and Trinity League titles as well as individual student-athlete and coach of the year honors. During its 37-year history, Santa Margarita has consistently ranked among the most competitive schools

in the nation for athletics. The school's athletic program seeks to provide students with the opportunity to strengthen their physical and mental abilities in a competitive, Christ-centered environment, developing the student-athlete in every aspect - spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially.

GIRLS GOLF

Santa Margarita's girls golf team continued their winning ways as back-to-back CIF state champions, becoming the first Trinity League school to win multiple state championships in girls golf. The team's successful sweep also included securing their fifth straight Trinity League championship title, the CIF-SS Division 1 title, and second straight CIF-SCGA SoCal Regional team championship following a fifth consecutive undefeated season. Coached by Jill Hegna, Santa Margarita's girls golf program is nationally recognized as a powerhouse program. Following the clean sweep season, the Orange County Register named Hegna Girls Golf Coach of the Year and Leigh Chien '24 Girls Golf Player of the Year.



CHEER

Varsity cheer had a standout season, with the girls taking home the school's first CIF-SS Division 1 AA title this past winter, making Santa Margarita history. Head Coach Dana Maas '92, who has been coaching at Santa Margarita for 27 seasons, was awarded CIF-SS Coach of the Year for Division 1 AA, and three of the program's student-athletes earned all-CIF honors.

"While we've had success on the national stage before, this victory is significant because it represents a breakthrough for our program within our local community," Maas said.

GIRLS SOCCER

Girls varsity soccer won the Trinity League title and CIF State Division 1 Regional championship this season, continuing their success from last year. In the CIF State Regional championship game, the girls played for a grueling 95 minutes, and the contest ended in their favor after penalty kicks. Fourteen SMCHS players received post-season accolades, including USC-commit Faith George '24, who was named OC Register Player of the Year for the second year. The program is under the leadership of Head Coach Craig Bull.





BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Boys varsity volleyball took home the CIF-SS Division 2 title this spring. The team had a victorious run in the regular season and went through the CIF-SS playoffs without losing a single set. Head Coach Sinan Tanik, awarded CIF Division 2 Coach of the Year, led the team through their winning season, bringing the Southern Section title back home for the first time since 2001. Five SMCHS players earned Trinity League and CIF honors, including UCSB-bound Ethan Saint '24, who was awarded CIF Division 2 Player of the Year.

BOYS AND GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING

Santa Margarita's swimming and diving teams make up the only high school program in CIF history to win both the girls and boys CIF state titles in the same year, and after this season, they have done so two years in a row. The teams swept the competition, taking home Trinity League titles, the CIF-SS Division 1 titles, and the CIF Division 1 state titles all this year. At the CIF State meet, the boys team scored a meet record of 248 points, outdoing the runner-up by 51.5 points. The girls

team earned their fifth consecutive state title by scoring 210 points. Teagan O'Dell '25 was named the Orange County Register Girls Swimmer of the Year for the third year, and Daniel Verdolaga '24, who will be swimming for West Point, was named the Orange County Register Boys Swimmer of the Year. Led by Rich and Ron Blanc, the brothers have built a nationally recognized high school swim dynasty at Santa Margarita.



CHAMPIONS ARE MADE HERE. 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR TITLES

3 CIF STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Girls Golf (second consecutive)
- Boys Swimming and Diving (second consecutive)
- Girls Swimming and Diving (fifth consecutive)

2 CIF SOCIAL REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Girls Soccer (second consecutive)
- Girls Golf (second consecutive)

5 CIF-SS TEAM CIF CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Cheer
- Girls Golf
- Boys Swimming and Diving (fourth consecutive)
- Girls Swimming and Diving (tenth consecutive)
- Boys Volleyball

5 TRINITY LEAGUE TITLES

- Girls Golf (fifth consecutive)
- Girls Soccer (second consecutive)
- Boys Swimming and Diving (sixth consecutive)
- Girls Swimming and Diving (twenty-fourth consecutive)
- Boys Track and Field (second consecutive)

INDIVIDUAL CIF-SS CHAMPIONS

Girls Golf:

Leigh Chien '24

Girls Swimming:

200 Medley Relay: Teagan O'Dell '25, Eileen Song '27, Chloe Stinson '25, Gracyn Aquino '25

200 Individual Medley: Teagan O'Dell '25

50 Freestyle: Gracyn Aquino '25

100 Butterfly: Teagan O'Dell '25

200 Freestyle Relay: Victoria Mori '25, Morgan Hoppe '25, Audrey Lee '25, Chloe Stinson '25

400 Freestyle Relay: Teagan O'Dell '25, Audrey Lee '25, Victoria Mori '25, Gracyn Aquino '25

Boys Swimming:

200 Medley Relay: Ramon Jiang '24, Nathan Wu '24, Daniel Verdolaga '24, Jerry Yan '24

200 Individual Medley: Daniel Verdolaga '24

100 Butterfly: Daniel Verdolaga '24

100 Freestyle: Hunter Cehelnik '24

Track and Field:

Pole Vault: Brady Furr '25

INDIVIDUAL CIF REGIONAL CHAMPION

Girls Golf:

Donina Zhou '27

INDIVIDUAL CIF STATE CHAMPIONS

Girls Swimming:

200 Freestyle Relay: Victoria Mori '25, Morgan Hoppe '25, Ariel Lin '25, Chloe Stinson '25

400 Freestyle Relay: Victoria Mori '25, Audrey Lee '25, Ariel Lin '25, Gracyn Aquino '25



BLUE AND GOLD 2023



CARNAVAL

Celebrating the Spirit of Carnaval and Giving at Blue and Gold

The Santa Margarita Catholic High School community celebrated with the sights, sounds, and spirit of Carnaval at this year's annual Blue and Gold gala. Brazil's most popular holiday, Carnaval is a five-day festival that concludes on Ash Wednesday. During this time, the country comes together to celebrate its heritage, knitting together past and present traditions. Embracing the vibrant spirit of Carnaval, the Santa Margarita community gathered at this year's gala to celebrate togetherness, raise funds for the school's students and programs, provide tuition assistance for those in need, and honor the people who have shaped SMCHS.

Thank you to our Generous Sponsors

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The Caulfield Family
The Charlesworth Family/
The Mravle Family
Patrick and Jill Ortiz
St. Anne School
Sterling Carpet and Flooring
Nsight Mental Health & Wellness

We Believe Sponsor

The Von der Ahe Family
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St. John's Episcopal School

Beverages:

Hanna's Bar and Restaurant
Harry and Melissa Beck
Delahunt Brewery
The Garrett Family
Marquis
Nick Massucco - Luc Belaire Wines
Tito's Vodka

Honoring Servant Leadership

The evening included a special recognition for alumni parents Randy and Claudia Redwitz, the gala honorees. As one of the school's founding families, Randy and Claudia have dedicated so much of themselves to developing Santa Margarita into the school it is today. They are the first recipients of the Caritas Christi Award for Servant Leadership, an award to be given annually to a person or couple who have made an exemplary impact on SMCHS and the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation.



Record-Breaking Year

Through the generosity of sponsors, underwriters, and donors, the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation is thrilled to announce a net profit of \$340,178 was raised, with \$177,050 designated for tuition assistance through the Fund-a-Student paddle raise. This was a record year for Blue and Gold. We are incredibly grateful for the support and generosity of our Eagle family! A special thank you goes to Blue and Gold Chair Cori Armstrong and the entire Blue and Gold Committee for their incredible energy and dedication to make this year's event successful.



Rain or Shine, We Tee Off Fine: Celebrating Success at the Eagle Classic Golf Tournament



This year's Eagle Classic Golf Tournament was held at the Coto de Caza Golf and Racquet Club on March 18, with 257 golfers teeing off in support of the teams and programs of Santa Margarita Catholic High School. An impressive \$295,978 was raised, with \$238,133 going directly toward the 34 athletic teams and school programs that were involved in fundraising for the tournament.

Despite some unexpected stormy weather in the afternoon, the golfers brought their own sunshine. Playing on the club's sprawling north and south courses, they were greeted by the smiling faces of Santa Margarita student and

parent volunteers at check-in. President Andy Sulick '91 led prayer before the foursomes took off for a day on the green following the shotgun start. Players also had the opportunity to participate in course contests such as Pro Launcher's Shorty ball launcher and Land Rover Riverside's sponsored Hole in One Contest.

The Eagle Classic Golf Tournament has become a tradition for many Santa Margarita families who play yearly, enjoying a day of fellowship and fun for a great cause. This year was especially memorable as foursomes included alumni parents and their Santa Margarita legacies.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Helicopter Ball Drop Winner: Kathleen Brahm

Of the 6,689 golf balls sold in the ball drop, Brahm's was the lucky one to fall into the course hole. Ball drop winners can choose to use their \$5,000 toward next school year's tuition, cash or donate the money to the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation.

Most Balls Sold: Hudson Magliocco '26

As last year's tournament ball drop sales winner, he beat his record by selling 410 golf balls, 231 more than the year before.



South Course Winning Foursome:

Phil deCarion, Mike Lutterloh, Chris Simons and Darren Xanthos



North Course Winning Foursome:

Tim Bell, Alan Eltringham, Dan Mandel and Andy Stocks

Eagle Classic 2024 Sponsors

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The Redfern Family

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EAGLE SPONSORS

BBT Athletics

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FlatRock Wealth Partners –
The Winters Family

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HOLE IN ONE SPONSOR

Land Rover Riverside

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

BodyArmor

Hanna's Restaurant and Bar





EMPOWER EAGLES TODAY

Your gift to the
Eagle Fund helps
Santa Margarita
students soar.

Each year, the Eagle Fund provides funding for immediate needs on campus, strengthening every aspect of a Santa Margarita Catholic High School education. From enriching the many programs and activities to providing vital tuition assistance and maintaining and upgrading our beautiful campus, your generosity allows SM to flourish, impacting Every Eagle, Every Day.

By making a gift, you are helping Santa Margarita remain faithful to its mission while fostering opportunities for our students to thrive in all aspects of their SM experience.

**Join us in shaping the future of our Eagles.
Give today!**

**Visit www.smeaglefoundation.org/ef
to make your contribution.**



A Legacy of Impact

Dedicating time, talent and treasure to Santa Margarita is a profound gift that has the power to benefit generations of students. Among the families who exemplify this ultimate generosity are Rand and Rosemary Sperry. Before their six children, Brian '00, Christie '02, Kathryn '04, Kevin '04, Michelle '08, and Keleigh '11, walked through the gates of Santa Margarita as students, Rand and Rosemary Sperry were involved and devoted to the school. Their enduring commitment continues to inspire.

Rand and Rosemary know firsthand just how impactful Catholic education can be, as they both benefitted from the gifts Catholic schools offer. Rosemary attended St. Boniface Parish School and Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim, and Rand was a student at St. Stephen Martyr School in Monterey Park and Cantwell-Sacred Heart of Mary High School in Montebello.

"We ourselves benefitted from our Catholic education and wanted that for our children as well," Rosemary said.

Their involvement at Santa Margarita began in 1997 with the Development Committee, which later led to serving on the Consultative School Board and the 25th Anniversary Committee. Whether organizing Grad Nights or attending

"A planned gift such as life insurance is not only easy to set up, but more importantly, it is a gift that will continue long after we are gone — the gift that keeps on giving," Rand said. "It's about being part of change and helping the school and the families who need the assistance or even filling the gap for those who can't give." Rand shared, "To whom much is given, much will be required' (Luke 12:48)."



countless meetings and functions, the couple embraced every opportunity to contribute, driven by a shared desire to enhance the school's excellence.

Despite their children now being grown, the Sperry family's generosity and legacy continues. Through their family scholarships, they have provided vital support to several students in need, making their Catholic education possible. Their generosity echoes their belief in the value of a Santa Margarita education. Along with the academic rigor, Rand and Rosemary said the faith-based values taught and reinforced at Santa Margarita were important to them.

"We see the impact of the education that our children received and how it compared to others, especially when they were in college," said Rand.

Recognizing the importance of leaving a lasting legacy, the Sperrys have also made a planned gift of life insurance to benefit future generations of Eagles.

Leave a Lasting Legacy Through a Planned Gift

Planned Gifts to the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation help ensure the long-term future of Santa Margarita Catholic High School while also leaving a legacy of support in perpetuity. Making a planned gift is a way to provide for Santa Margarita while realizing financial and estate planning goals. Many planned giving methods benefit the donor as and the school by reducing or eliminating income, gift, and estate taxes. In addition, there are methods in which the donor can earn income by remembering Santa Margarita in their will.

To explore the possibilities of making a legacy gift, please contact Laurie Beach, Executive Director of the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation, at (949) 766-6078 or beachl@smeaglefoundation.org.

Alumni Career Day Inspires the Next Generation of Eagles



Over 40 Eagle alumni returned to the nest for Alumni Career Day to share their success stories and career insights with the junior class for Alumni Career Day. The Jan. 26 event provided the Class of 2025 the opportunity to gain invaluable knowledge and guidance from alumni representing a wide range of fields, including medicine, entertainment, marketing, business, engineering, entrepreneurship, law and finance, to name a few.

The day kicked off with an engaging panel discussion featuring the alumni speakers. Students were encouraged to pursue their passions, give back to their community, and explore diverse career paths. They then participated in individual classroom sessions where alumni provided firsthand accounts of the challenges and rewards of their career paths, offering insights into their various industries.

One of the day's highlights was the meet and greet, where students had the opportunity to interact one-on-one with alumni, ask questions and seek advice. This personal interaction allowed students to network with professionals in their fields of interest.

Taleran Troy Galan '11 expressed gratitude for the opportunity to give back to the next generation.

"I directly attribute - in no small part - the success of my legal career to the professional development opportunities that I was exposed to during my time at SMCHS," he said. "So, it is hard to imagine a more rewarding experience than providing similar opportunities to motivated students eager to pursue their own careers."

For students, Career Day served as a source of inspiration and motivation to pursue their goals with confidence. Fallon Boyle '25, a student with a rich family history at SM, especially loved having her mom Kathleen Fallon Boyle '91, aunt Erin (Fallon) Finneran '94 and uncle Brian Finneran '94 in attendance as alumni speakers.

"It was such a meaningful experience to hear all the great advice that the SM alumni had to offer," she said. "Career Day provided me with a new perspective to pursue a field that I am truly excited and passionate about. For me, it was especially special to have my mom, aunt, and uncle there too!"

As an alumnus himself, reflecting on the success of this year's Career Day, President Andy Sulick '91 expressed his gratitude to all the alumni who generously volunteered their time and expertise to inspire the next generation of Eagles.

With the continued support of our alumni community, the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation looks forward to hosting many more successful Career Days in the years to come, inspiring and empowering future generations of Eagles.

Interested in joining next year's Career Day?

Email us at alumni@smeaglefoundation.org
or call 949-766-6000 ext. 1165



"Suit up and show up! Take advantage of the awesome opportunities available to each of you at Santa Margarita. You never know how that club, activity, sport, retreat or service experience may enrich your life today, tomorrow or in the future. Treasure your remaining time here at SM. This is an extraordinarily special place where you are truly loved and championed. Take a second to stop, savor and snap a mental picture of these high school moments which will become marvelous memories."

Kathleen (Fallon) Boyle '91 / business



"Quit worrying about what everyone else does. With social media people want to constantly compare themselves to others. Focus on doing your best. Don't get discouraged when things don't go as planned, and take full advantage of opportunities."

Dr. Allen Jahroumi '98 / medical



"Find something that makes you happy, and remember that it's okay to figure some things out as you go."

Chris Barry '06 / public service



"Think for yourself. This means trying new things, spending time with people outside of your friend group, and traveling to new places. We all grow up with a set of norms, and as you transition into your career, it's helpful to see things from multiple perspectives and connect with a variety of people."

Christine DiDonato '91 / business

ADVICE FOR SM STUDENTS



"Learn how to give yourself the grace to fail and learn from the experience."

Brooke Reid '13 / engineering



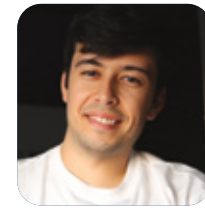
"Work hard, do the right thing and be kind, and everything will work out. What you put out into the world is eventually going to come back to you."

Stephanie Soltis '97 / pilot



"God made you exactly the way he wanted to make you, there's no need to be someone different than simply who you are."

Chris Ansevin '98 / entrepreneur



"Self-confidence and perseverance can take you anywhere."

Mitchel Johnson '17 / film

Thank you to our Alumni Speakers

Kathleen (Fallon) Boyle '91
Christine DiDonato '91
Shane Mielke '91
Dr. Clara Song '91
Tim Tubman '91
Joe Vetter '91
Kathryn (Gallagher) Emery '92
Josh Mooney '92
Erin (Fallon) Finneran '94
Brad Finneran '94
Brian Finneran '94

Lisa (Paulsen) Hartung '94
Chris Rochon '94
Brian Garrigan '95
Nick Maroutsos '95
Adam Carrillo '96
Brian Meihaus '96
Dr. Elizabeth (Barry) Burgamy '97
Stephanie Soltis '97
Chris Ansevin '98
Lauren (Supance) Dossey '98
Mayanne (Ayoub) Hadib '98

Ryan Herrera '98
Dr. Allen Jahroumi '98
Shaun Jackson '98
Rory Patterson '98
Matt Strickroth '98
Tiziana Zanetti '98
Rachel Mashburn '99
Ashleigh (Nickerson) Barlow '00
Kim (Jones) Karney '01
Matt McConnell '03
Kathleen Casamiquela '04

Amanda (Danihels) Parrish '05
Steve Shaffer '05
Chris Barry '06
Katie (Murphy) Barry '12
Taleran Troy Galan '11
Brooke Reid '13
Zach Volpo '13
Beck Svensson '16
Mitchel Johnson '17

Passport Required: Eagles Pursue Their College Degree Abroad

The end of the school year is filled with anticipation and excitement as the senior class prepares for the next chapter in their academic careers. Each year, a few graduates look beyond stateside education to follow their academic pursuits overseas.

"At University of British Columbia, the diversity of students from various countries and backgrounds enriches my education beyond textbooks. Every interaction is a lesson in a new culture, making the learning experience feel boundless and vibrant."

Eugenio Navarro Quiros '23,
University of British Columbia, Canada

"I'm extremely thrilled to study in another country because it's a brand-new environment with so many new opportunities. SM has taught me to take advantage of those opportunities, and I am so excited to see what this will bring me!"

Zoe Le '24,
University of Waterloo, Canada



"When I first discovered St. Andrews at the SM college fair, I was intrigued by the idea of spending my college years in a small beach town in Scotland. The more I researched the university, the more I was attracted by its unique degree programs, 500-year-old traditions, and the opportunity to be surrounded by people and perspectives from all over the world. The past three years have been so transformative and have allowed me to travel throughout Europe. St Andrews has exceeded all my expectations, and I know that when I leave, I will be a more well-rounded individual ready for the next phase of my life."

Giulia Henshaw '21 University of St. Andrews, Scotland



"Going to university abroad gave me amazing opportunities, which included not only a diverse educational experience allowing me to travel to a range of countries but also changed the course of my life. I'm now living in London and working at an incredible luxury public relations firm, something I never dreamed of before deciding to study in the UK."

Molly Finn '19, University of St. Andrews, Scotland



"This year has been life-changing. I have become a lot more independent and worldly. Throughout my time at SM, I learned about the world and different cultures. Now, living in Italy and traveling Europe, I have been able to explore and experience those cultures firsthand. I can't imagine my first year of college any differently."

Natalie Miller '23, John Cabot University, Rome

Reasons to Consider Earning a Degree Overseas

Attending an international school isn't as cost-prohibitive as people may think. If you have a parent who moved to the U.S. from another country, check to see what benefits your parents' home country has. Sometimes students can receive a tuition discount. If you are a dual-citizen, check out the tuition benefits in the country you share citizenship in.

Eva Hester, SMCHS Associate Director of College Counseling



In the UK, if you plan on being a veterinarian, dentist or physician, you can start as a freshman to achieve this terminal degree.

Rachel Kim, SMCHS Associate Director of College Counseling



As the world is becoming increasingly more global, students who have attended college abroad will be desirable for companies to employ in some professions. Some universities have a campus that shares their name but offers a 3-4-year experience abroad. Examples include NYU Abu Dhabi, NYU Shanghai, Northwestern in Qatar, Marist College in Florence, SUNY Korea and Temple University in Japan.

Melissa Fosdick, SMCHS Director of College Counseling



When we travel, we learn so much about others, the world and ourselves. Immersing oneself in a new country, culture, and perhaps a new language is an experience that rarely happens once one leaves college. This is the time to try something new!

Megan Olivor, SMCHS Associate Director of College Counseling



Students who want to study international business, international relations, or any other academic focus with a global or historical perspective can receive a very layered and deep understanding prior to entering the workforce or graduate programs by living and studying abroad.

Christa Crafts, SMCHS Director of College Relations



ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Santa Margarita Catholic High School is blessed with a strong network of alumni. Our alumni mentorship program helps students learn life skills, prepare for college and careers and get hands-on experience. Visit www.smeaglefoundation.org/alumni to complete the mentorship interest form if you'd like to get involved.

Special thanks to alumnae Garland Cooper '03 and Sophia Perricone '15, who returned to campus this spring to mentor our students.

Garland Cooper '03

SMCHS MVP and All-CIF softball and basketball standout Garland (Cooper '03) Tsarouchas returned to campus in May to speak to Santa Margarita's student Athletic Leadership Team about her experience as a softball collegiate athlete and beyond. Cooper's leadership took her team to two Women's College World Series appearances, earning her a spot in the Northwestern Hall of Fame and playing professional softball in Japan. She currently works in youth sports programming for RCX Sports overseeing operations for different aspects of youth sports on behalf of professional sports leagues, ensuring memorable experiences for young athletes worldwide.

"It has been a memorable journey going from a high school student-athlete, to a collegiate student-athlete, then professional athlete and now COO of a company – and knowing it all started at Santa Margarita," Cooper reflected. "I couldn't be more grateful that I started at a place with such a strong support system and dedication to success."



Garland Cooper '03 pictured with SMCHS Head Softball Coach John Fitzpatrick (left) and retired SMCHS Athletic Director Rich Schaaf (right)

Addressing the young athletes, Cooper emphasized resilience, preparation and finding the good in the setbacks.

"Despite being one of the best in the game, it was hard, and I experienced doubt and many obstacles along the way," she reflected. "... Be bold with your dreams; don't limit yourself," she told the student-athletes. "Choose to believe in yourself."



Sophia Perricone '15

Emmy award-winning journalist Sophia Perricone '15 recently visited campus to share her experience with Eagle TV students. Perricone discussed breaking stories, filming and editing your own content, networking within your industry, and adapting in an ever-changing job market. After a brief hiatus in the industry, Perricone is returning to journalism at WTOL, the CBS affiliate in Toledo, Ohio.

"I had so much fun talking to students and sharing my career journey - they are so lucky to have such a beautiful studio to work with," she shared. "I'm proud that my alma mater ensures students get hands-on, real-world experience."

Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation Hosts Alumni Event in Texas

Members of the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation team headed to Fort Worth, Texas in February to host an alumni event. More than 20 Santa Margarita alumni, spanning from the class of 1991 to the class of 2023, who attend nearby schools or live in the area had the opportunity to connect with fellow Eagles.

"From recent graduates to our alumni who are well into their careers and family life, it was rewarding to see so many SM alumni in various stages of life post-high school," said President Andy Sulick '91.

During their visit, Santa Margarita Eagle foundation staff were given a tour of Texas Christian University. After their tour, they were surprised by Chancellor Victor Boschini with a lunch on campus where 12 current TCU students who are SM alumni were waiting to have lunch with them.



"Our alumni in Texas welcomed us with open arms, and it felt like more than a trip," said Brandi Lopez '98, alumni coordinator for the Santa Margarita Eagle Foundation. "It was an affirmation of the bonds that tie us together as Eagles."

Class Notes



Melina Kalomas '95 graced the illustrious stage of The Belasco theater on Broadway in "How to Dance in Ohio." The show is a groundbreaking heart-filled musical based on the Peabody award-winning HBO documentary of the same name. Quincy Trigillo '97, Jennifer (Neale '94) Baldwin, and Kristopher Kelly '95, all Talon Theatre alumni, enjoyed a mini-reunion in New York City, celebrating Malina's performance and the fantastic show!

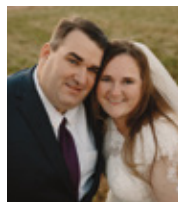


Alyssa (Wenda '96) Finkelstein and her husband Eric celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary this past December in Iceland. Alyssa has been working as a mental health counselor for several years, specializing in working with veterans and others suffering from trauma. They enjoy spending many of their weekends with their kids at either Disney World or Universal Studios.

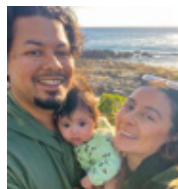


June (Abrams '97) McDonald and Sean McDonald '99 live in Laguna Niguel. June is an art teacher at Sage Oak Charter School. June is already thinking about organizing the class of 1997 30th reunion.

June shares, "Imagine the laughter, shared memories, and joy of reconnecting. Let's make it happen!"

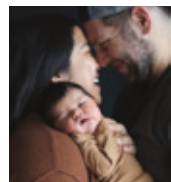


Sean Grizzle '02 married Amy Stradling in Mesa, Arizona on Nov. 4, 2023. Sean and Amy currently live in San Tan Valley, Ariz.



Asgie Hernandez '06 was offered an exciting job opportunity with O'Melveny & Myers in late 2021, which found her and her husband relocating from Southern California to Austin, Texas.

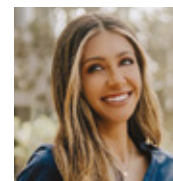
They welcomed their first child, a daughter named Noemi, in September of 2023.



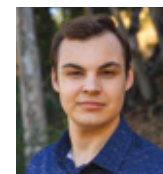
Frank and **Chloe (Manese '09) Motola** welcomed their little love on Valentine's Day, Sofia Rose (Manese) Motola born on Feb. 14, 2024.



Johnny Stanton '13 was a featured speaker at the 2024 TEDxBinghamton University annual conference. TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually through short, powerful talks (ted.com). Johnny's TED Talk will be available on YouTube this summer. Johnny also recently launched a Dungeons & Dragons publishing company called Crimson Herald with their first major project [SINK!] coming later this year.



Deena Fatehi '15 graduates from USC Dental School this year! She is thankful for Santa Margarita for setting the foundation and paving the way for her.



Alex Granito '15 was recently cast as Schaunard in Opera Colorado's main-stage production of Puccini's "La Bohème", his operatic debut. During his time at SMCHS, Alex sang in the Chamber Singers Honors class under Mr. Calvo, regularly performed the National Anthem at Santa Margarita sporting events, and played Cogsworth in the Talon Theatre production of Disney's Beauty and the Beast.

..... Save the Date
Class of 1994's
30th Reunion
October 26, 2024

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

Faculty and Staff Retirements

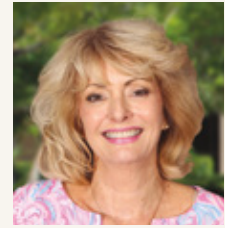
Thank you for your service and dedication to Santa Margarita Catholic High School. May God bless you in this next chapter.



Wende Borowski,
School Counselor
17 years of service
at SMCHS



Coleen Barry,
English Teacher,
English Department Chair
18 years of service
at SMCHS



Cindy Pizzurro,
Front Office Secretary,
Parent Volunteer Coordinator
9 years of service
at SMCHS

Alumni Recognized as OC Register's 125 Most Influential People

Eagle alumni **Mike Moodian '94** and **Meghan (Schinderle) Clem '01** were recognized on the Orange County Register's 2023 list of 125 Most Influential People.



Moodian was acknowledged for the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon, an event he co-created that is a design and build competition in which a dozen teams of students from around the world create sustainable, efficient homes. This is the third year in a row that Moodian has been added to the OC Register's list.



Clem was featured in the OC Register for her organization, RAD Camp, the largest overnight camp for those with developmental disabilities in California. Run by Clem and her friend and business partner Katie Webb Brundige, RAD Camp is driven by a passion and vision to establish a place where individuals with disabilities can find acceptance, caregivers can discover the support they desperately need, and members of the community can encounter a volunteer opportunity that will forever change their lives.



Pictured left to right: Natasha Kieckhafer '23, Carly McMurray '22 and Izzy Rosensitto '22.

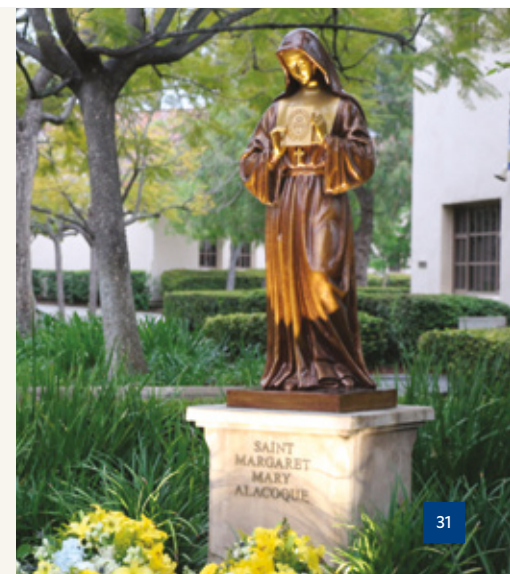
Congratulations to our SMCHS water polo alumnae who competed in the 2024 NCAA Women's Water Polo Championship game. UCLA won the NCAA title and completed an undefeated season.

In Loving Memory

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

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

- David Watson '96
- Matthew Willenborg '03
- Rishi Madhav '07



Parents of Alumni: If this issue is addressed to your son or daughter who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please direct them to update their information at www.smeaglefoundation.org/eagle-alumni



BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Year-round advertising initiative designed to provide your business with true marketing value while providing critical funding to help sustain Santa Margarita Catholic High School student programs.

For inquiries about sponsorship opportunities or to learn more about the **Business Alliance Program**, please contact **Brandi Lopez '98** for more information at LopezB@smeaglefoundation.org or (949) 766-6000 ext. 1165