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## Ceremonies Leading up to Senior Graduation

BY EMILY BELLINGER

As we count down to the big day, seniors begin to embrace a range of traditions. Not only is there a Graduation day, but there is Graduation week. At Academy of the Holy Names, there is a senior event each day leading up to graduation. On Sunday evening at Mater Christi Church there is a senior Baccalaureate Mass. The Senior Baccalaureate Mass is a special religious ceremony held for graduating seniors, especially in Catholic or Christian schools. During the Senior Baccalaureate Mass, seniors are often recognized for their academic accomplishments, but the focus is also on spiritual growth, gratitude, and prayer.

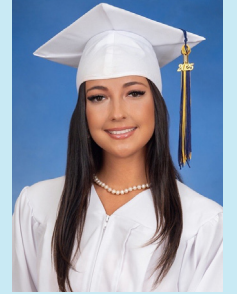


See **CEREMONIES LEADING UP TO SENIOR GRADUATION**, page 9

## PROGRESSION

BY CHIARA SEMENTILLI

As a senior, I tend to reflect on my journey throughout my four years of high school. The person I have grown into today is immensely different from the nervous and clueless freshman who stepped into the doors of high school four years ago. Over these years, I have learned countless lessons, created endless memories, faced numerous challenges, and more importantly experienced personal growth that has



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## Senior Retreat Memories

BY PATRICIA WHALEN

Attending Holy Names for the past seven years has provided me with a community That uniquely encourages growth, both academically and personally. The retreats are a prime example of this, allowing us to take a break from busy schedules and focus inward. The overnight senior retreat gave us the opportunity to have fun, form connections with peers, reflect, and future months.

Arriving at Camp Pinnacle in the afternoon, we found ourselves surrounded by nature. The silence of the forest put me at ease and my worries of the upcoming months and college decisions left my mind. The activities mainly focused on finishing our senior year strong, with discussions of our collective "senioritis" and improvements that could be made for future generations at our school.

As the day concluded, we headed to our rooms, where we

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## My Journey

BY RILEY SCHMITZ

I plan to major in Biology in college, and the science courses at HolyNames have inspired me to research and have laid the foundation for future classes. Before ninth grade, I planned to become an author. However, in Mrs. Baxter's introductory Biology class I learned to see science as intricate, beautiful, and God's creation rather than more material to memorize.

In tenth grade, I joined our school's three-year Science



See **MY JOURNEY**, page 8

# Leaving Holy Names

BY ABIGAIL EDWARDS

Suddenly, graduation is almost here, and I am realizing how quickly these four years have passed for the seniors. When I look back at my freshman self, and I see how much I have changed, that felt like forever ago. Also, it does not feel like three whole years have passed. I remember that I was nervous to begin at Holy Names. Still, I met my best friends here. I am preparing myself to say goodbye to the place and the community that felt like home for four years. All the laughter, memories, and the best friends that I made here are so difficult to leave behind, and I will remember these aspects forever.

I look back at all the memories and how much has happened in the past four years, and I reflect on the great photo and video memories. So many good times such as pep rallies, Holly Ball, prom, chatting with my best friends at lunch, sports games, and more occurred at school. These items have shaped who I have become over these four years. During the first day at Holy Names, I believed that I had so much time ahead of me, and suddenly I am shopping for graduation dresses. After graduation everything will change and a new as well as exciting chapter will begin. I am excited for the future, yet it is



unknown. I am so surprised how quickly time has passed. Four years have been full of challenges, yet much progress, laughter, and so many great memories. The lessons, memories, and my best friends that I made here will always be with me. I would not be where I am without Holy Names and the people that I met here. This school and experiences will always be a part of who I am in my life. ✿

## A Vision

BY GIOVANNA BERMUDEZ



Senioritis is a real phenomenon, but a senior student can overcome it with perseverance. The final months that lead to graduation are

a challenge. Between balancing college acceptances, personal conflicts and improving your grades. I am very focused on my future. Furthermore, I am so excited to begin this next chapter my life related to college, forming new relationships and studying a career that I am passionate about in all aspects. I am excited to state that I have been accepted into my dream school, University of Connecticut. I cannot wait to study Sports medicine, and I am very passionate about it. Still, it is

See A VISION, page 7

## Roaming Around Florence

BY AVA DeNISCO

As I was on a plane crossing the Atlantic Ocean, there were so many thoughts about what Florence would be like. It was late November and my mother and I were going to visit my sister while she was studying abroad for a semester. When we arrived in Florence, it was like nothing I had ever seen because the city was so unique. I am used to a modern city, yet Florence is an old-fashioned city. The architecture in the city was amazing, and we visited places such as the David, the Duomo, the Uffizi Galleries, and the Ponte Vecchio.

I was interested to see everything that I had learned about and seen on social media in real life. The tour of the David and the Uffizi was incredible. I never thought that I would be able to see all this incredible art and history at such a young age. Each day



I walked through Ponte Vecchio looking at the fine jewelry and listening to the beautiful music played by the musicians. This was my favorite way to end the day while I was there because it was so calming, and I felt like I was in a movie.

My favorite part of this trip was exploring the city with my sister and mother because my sister had found many great shops and restaurants while studying abroad. She knew the local shops with beautiful souvenirs and delicious desserts such as cannolis and croissants. We visited one restaurant where the servers only spoke Italian, and they made the dinner unique. It was such a great experience, and being able to learn Italian with my family was a cool experience. Overall, visiting my sister while she was abroad was truly a special experience. ✿



## Life in Newport Rhode Island

BY MEARA SWEET

Rhode Island is my second home. There are so many fun things to do when visiting there. All the beaches are beautiful, the weather is so nice, and it is a great place to vacation with your friends and family. I visit Newport Rhode Island several times a year.

One of my best friends lives in Rhode Island and it is so fun to spend time with her. I spend so much time downtown shopping, eating, and going to the beach. Some of my favorite places to go are Second or Third Beach. My favorite time of the year is visiting Rhode Island during the summer. There are so many people and things to do. Spending every day with my best friend, shopping, and going to the beach are the best days. The state of Rhode Island is small and every spot is just a short drive away. One can drive to beautiful outdoor malls, visit colleges, and go to many famous and historic places.

Some things to do in Rhode Island and places to go are the Mansions. It is a good activity for a cloudy or cold day. The Cliff Walk is a beautiful place to visit when it is nice outside. The Castle Hill Inn



is a great restaurant and place to sit and overlook the water. A few of my other favorite restaurants are Barcino, Clarke Cooke House, and Lobster Bar. These restaurants are all on the sea and a great place to eat with your family. After dining, there are many ice cream, dessert shops, arcades, and other stores to walk around. I cannot wait for summer! ❀

## An Unforgettable Trip to Ireland

BY RYLEE APICELLI

Over spring break during my freshman year, I had the incredible opportunity to visit Ireland. I went with my dad and his band, a group of their fans, and my sister and mom. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience filled with breathtaking sights, amazing food, and of course, great music.

We traveled to some of Ireland's most beautiful places, including Killarney, Galway, and Dublin. The landscapes were stunning, especially at the Cliffs of Moher, where the ocean stretches infinitely beyond the rigid, towering cliffs. Each city had its own charm: Killarney felt like I was walking around in a postcard, Galway was lively and full of music, and Dublin was

packed with history. The food was another highlight of the trip. My favorite meals I had

and restaurant we visited felt so warm and welcoming, and the live music made every

dad play music in Ireland. Seeing him perform in traditional Irish pubs surrounded by people who love the music as much as he does was so fun. The energy of the crowd, the passion of the musicians, and the way everyone sang along made each performance super special. Watching him perform in a foreign country and looking so happy made me feel very proud of him.

My trip to Ireland was more than just sightseeing, as it was an unforgettable experience that connected me to Ireland's culture. I will always remember this vacation and how amazing it was to see my dad play in the country that inspired his music. ❀



were fish and chips, Irish stews, potato and leek soup, and brown bread. Every pub

meal even better.

One of the coolest parts of the trip was watching my

# A Spring Break Irish Itinerary



BY AISLINN LEWIS

This spring, my mom, dad, sister, and I traveled to Ireland for an unforgettable adventure filled with history, culture, and natural beauty. We kicked off our trip in Dublin, the bustling capital, where we began with a visit to St. Stephen's Green to relax and stretch our legs after the flight. We explored the iconic Trinity College and its famous Book of Kells, before heading to the Guinness Storehouse for a tour. We finished the day viewing stunning panoramic views of Dublin.

The next day, we explored the city's rich history by visiting Dublin Castle and Kilmainham Gaol, and learned about the country's past struggles for independence. In the afternoon, we wandered through the lively Temple Bar district, soaking in the vibrant atmosphere before a traditional Irish dinner at a local pub. Later in the week,

we traveled south to Kilkenny, where we toured Kilkenny Castle and strolled through the town's charming streets. Then, we drove to the Rock of Cashel and explored its ancient ruins and enjoyed the scenic views. The following day, we visited Galway, wandering its colorful streets before heading to the Cliffs of Moher for stunning coastal views.

Lastly, we drove through the Ring of Kerry, and viewed picturesque villages and visited Killarney National Park. We ended our trip with a peaceful walk around Muckross Lake or a traditional horse-drawn carriage ride. Our last evening in Killarney we ate a delicious meal and reflected on the unforgettable memories we have created together. Ireland's charm made this spring break truly special. ❀



BY MARGARET MCKENNA

## The New York City SENIOR TRIP

Our school trip to New York City was unforgettable. All 48 AHN seniors visited during the Christmas season. We watched the Rockettes perform at Radio City Music Hall, choreography and festive spirit filling the stage with holiday magic. After the show, we wandered through the city's iconic holiday displays, with twinkling lights and the famous Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. We shopped along Fifth Avenue, surrounded by the cheerful hustle and bustle of the season. The entire experience was like stepping into a Christmas wonderland!

The night before the trip, a few friends and I had a sleepover, so we could all get ready together in the morning. We had to wake up early at 6 AM to catch the bus at 7 AM. The excitement kept us going even through the few hours of sleep we had. The bus ride was about three hours and the time

flew by with all the chatter and viewing movies. We left the city around 7PM, and even though we were exhausted, we could not stop talking about our amazing day.

When we arrived there the weather was a bit rainy, but by the time we saw the Christmas Spectacular/Rockettes show, the clouds cleared up, and made Time Square very enjoyable with all the lights. After the show, we grabbed a late lunch at Raising Cane's, which was the perfect comfort food to refuel before we headed out to shop further. The tree at Rockefeller Center was lovely in its holiday glory, and it felt like we were right in the heart of a Christmas movie. We left the city around 7PM, and even though we were exhausted, we could not stop talking about how great the day had been, full of many photos, shopping, and new memories. ❀





## Senior Class 2025



*"You'll be on your way up! You'll be seeing great sights!  
You'll join the high fliers who soar to high heights." — Dr. Seuss, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"*

# Congratulations to Academy of the Holy Names Class of 2025!

## The Academy Courier Patrons

The Academy Courier would like to thank the following Academy Courier Spring 2025 issue Patrons for their interest and generous support:

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\*The Academy of the Holy Names Spring 2025 issue's goal is to create an excellent paper for the students and by the students.

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### The Academy Courier Co-Editors and Staff for the Spring Issue 2025

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Kelly Leonard

*\*The Courier Co-Editors and Staff work diligently and with enthusiasm to create an innovative, creative, and dynamic school newspaper here at Academy of the Holy Names.*





# Finding Friendship

BY EMMA FOGARTY

At the start of my senior year, my twin sister, Addison, was by my side, just as she had been throughout high school. She was my built-in best friend, the one constant in a world that seemed to shift rapidly as graduation grew closer. I was always friendly with my classmates, but Gianna became such an important part of our lives. What began as casual conversation gradually became a strong and meaningful friendship.

As the year progressed, the three of us became inseparable, supporting one another through the pressures of college applications, final exams, and the uncertainty of the future. We balanced each other out, offering encouragement and laughter in moments of stress. Some of our favorite memories have been made together, from dancing at Holly Ball to exploring New York City on our senior trip.

Beyond school events, our bond is strengthened by our shared dedication to athletics, Addison and I committed to soccer, and Gianna devoted to basketball. We are each other's biggest supporters at games and plan to continue our sports careers in college.

Though our friendship was unexpected, it has been one of the greatest gifts of senior year, proving that sometimes the best things in life come when you least expect them. No matter where life takes us after graduation, we know this friendship will remain a constant. ✿



# Soccer Senior Night 2024

BY ADDISON FOGARTY

On October 15, 2024, I played in my final home at the Academy of the Holy Names. The game began at 4:30 PM against Catholic Central School, which also happens to be where I attended seventh grade as a starter on varsity. It was a very full circle moment, one that felt surreal as I stepped onto the field for the last time in front of the school. I have called home for the past five years. Being celebrated in front of the school, in front of my loved ones, and the team that I will forever hold near and dear to my heart is as an incredible feeling.

Banners and posters lined the field, and our names were announced one by one before kickoff. I was able to celebrate alongside my younger teammates as well as my fellow four seniors, which was a privilege. We won this game 5-0 with goals from fellow senior Chiara Sementilli, senior goalkeeper Emma Fogarty, and I finished with a shutout as well.



This game was more than just another game, it was a celebration of everything my teammates and I had worked for over the years, and a day I had thought about since I was a young girl. We had spent countless hours together on this field, through pre-season grinds, intense matches, heartbreaking losses, and triumphant victories. This

night was not just about one game; it was about the years of memories and hard work that had led us to this moment. It was an emotional and yet unforgettable experience to stand beside my friends and family, knowing that I was leaving behind a trail of hard work, dedication, and love for the game. The bond we shared was evident in every play, every cheer, and every embrace after a goal. As the final whistle blew, a flood of emotions hit me; relief, joy, nostalgia, and sadness.

I knew this chapter was coming to a close, but I could not have asked for a better ending. Walking off the field for the last time, I was not leaving behind a place where I played soccer; I was leaving behind a second home, a sisterhood, and years of memories that I will cherish forever. Holy Names soccer was not just an unforgettable experience, but a family that I will never forget. #25 out. ✿

# Finding a Roommate

BY MYA WAITERS



Finding a college roommate may be both fun and stressful. A good roommate can greatly enhance your college experience, whereas a bad one might make it difficult to focus and feel at ease in your new surroundings. To find the best roommate, think about the type of person you would get along with the most.

The first step is to consider your habits and way of life. Which would you prefer: mornings or evenings? Do you prefer studying quietly or with some background noise? Thinking about these things can help you better understand what kind of environment you need to be productive and comfortable. Make sure the person you select for your roommate

shares your habits. For instance, you might not get along well with a roommate who likes loud music if you prefer quiet times to study.

The next step is to talk. If you want to learn as much as possible from a screen, one must communicate with your future housemates. The challenging part is making sure they aren't completely different on social media than they are in real life. It's essential to discuss things like visitors, studying schedules, sharing personal space, and housekeeping responsibilities. Try to be direct about what you need to feel comfortable with, even if you are anxious or scared. If you are unsure about a room-

mate, follow your intuition and live in your own best interests.

In conclusion, finding a college roommate is all about compatibility, communication, and compromise. Finding a roommate who enhances your college experience can be achieved by considering your own needs, communicating expectations, and remaining flexible about other personalities. ✿

## My Journey

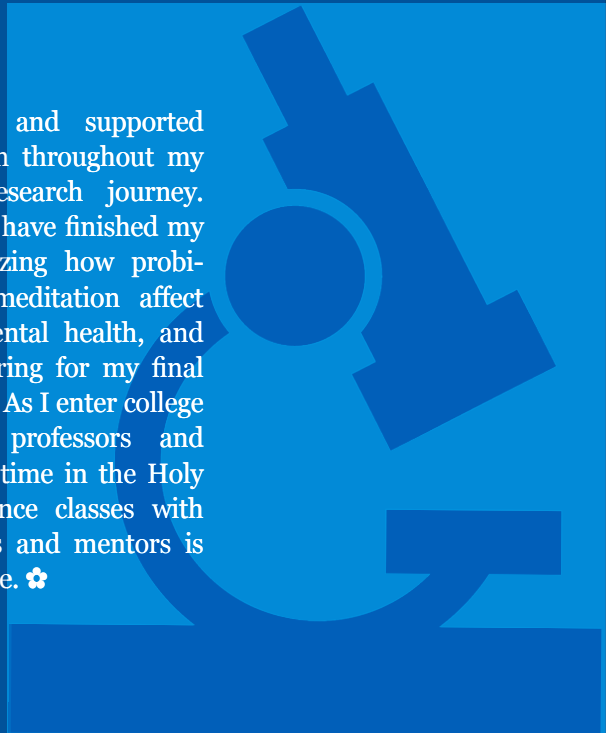
From Page 1

Research course. I also had Chemistry and homeroom in the Chem lab, meaning most of my time that year was spent there. There, I read my first scientific paper, learned how to analyze scientific writing, and how to construct an experiment. Through reading research articles, I was interested in the gut microbiome, which is the bacteria that constitute the human large intestine, and how they relate to mental health. Second semester, I joined the class with some of my senior friends. I spent some of my last

moments with them at AHN before they graduated in the Chem lab, and we celebrated their last class with pizza and cake.

One of my challenges during this class was finding a mentor, which is required to acquire college credits for the course. After many unsuccessful emails, Stephanie Dibacco, nutritionist at Albany Medical Center, became my mentor. Also, I shadowed with a gastroenterology PA named Kris Sardella at the Saratoga Schenectady Gastroenterology Center. These women have

encouraged and supported me so much throughout my inspiring research journey. Currently, I have finished my study analyzing how probiotics and meditation affect gut and mental health, and I am preparing for my final symposium. As I enter college with new professors and classes, my time in the Holy Names science classes with my teachers and mentors is unforgettable. ✿





## Ceremonies Leading up to Senior Graduation

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Following the Baccalaureate Mass, on Monday morning there is a senior prayer service during the homeroom period at school. This is another chance to honor the seniors by the underclassmen and middle schoolers. Another event that follows the senior mass is the Alumnae Induction Ceremony on Wednesday. This is a lovely ceremony and seniors choose an alumnae that graduated from Holy Names and the alumnae gives the graduating senior a bell signifying the alumnae induction of Academy of the Holy Names. The next event following the Induction Ceremony is the senior night dinner. During this dinner, speeches and recognitions are often given to highlight the seniors' contributions, hard work, and milestones. This is a formal night for the class and is an opportunity for everyone to spend time together before the excitement of graduation. The last event that is held before graduation is the Award Convocation. It is a ceremony held to honor seniors for their academic, athletic, and extracurricular achievements.



## Senior Retreat Memories

From Page 1

spent time playing cards and chatted until it was time for bed. In the morning, my classmates and I ate breakfast. I sat at a large table, filled with people I had not interacted with before. It was refreshing to connect with others outside of my usual social circle. The open and relaxed environment made it easier to form bonds with others in an authentic and meaningful way. As the day continued, we participated in activities centered around the transition to college and independence. One activity was particularly inspiring to me, in which we were told to fill a jar with sand and rocks. The rocks sym-

bolized our core values- whether it was family, friends, education, or health while the sand was our schedule. To fit both in the jar we had to place the rocks in before the sand. We learned that to stay true to ourselves, we have to organize our schedules around our values, which will be needed during college.

My experience at Holy Names has been defined by unique moments such as the retreats. These activities, shared meals, and friendships formed have created lasting memories. I know that my senior retreat will be one of my most treasured memories of high school.



## PROGRESSION

From Page 1

truly shaped me into the person I am today.

When I first entered high school as a freshman, I was full of uncertainty. Everything was different and new to me. I remember the feeling I first had, and I was overwhelmed by the weight academics now had upon me. With this, it was a difficult transition and at times I struggled to find my place. As a freshman, my grades were not where I expected them to be, and I often found myself second guessing my abilities. By sophomore year, I had begun to settle into high school life. I began to take my studies more seriously and was able to explore my interests beyond the classroom. I joined many more clubs and sports teams and became more engaged in school life. I found that being involved in extracurricular activities not only helped me develop leadership skills, and allowed me to build more friendships with different people.

Junior year brought me a whole other level of intensity in terms of the pressure to perform well academically. I began to see my senior friends apply to college. It was a long year filled with sleepless nights, tests, homework, quizzes, practices, countless hours spent on assignments, and studying. Still, it was also a year where I was able to define who I was and who I wanted to be in the future.

As a senior, I can proudly look back and see how far I have come. Senior year has been a culmination of everything I have learned and has allowed me to acquire a strong sense of direction. I feel more prepared for the challenges that lie ahead, all due to my prior experience and lessons. The lessons, friendships, and memories have all influenced me so well.



## A Vision

From Page 2

sad to think about leaving my family and friends behind, but the future keeps me motivated and excited for this journey of life.

As we end high school, the seniors will complete their studies and are excited for graduation to receive our diplomas after four challenging years. The senior class put forth the motivation, time and dedication to their grades with excellence. The teachers made a huge impact on our lives, as well as our friends and our family. I am proud of the education that I have received throughout the years and to be a part of the sisterhood of Academy of the Holy Names.

