

Academy Courier

Spring 2026



Academy of the Holy Names

Bishop O'Connell Visits Holy Names

By Ashley Albritton and Kathryn Lewis



On March 30, 2026, Mark O'Connell, the Bishop of Albany, made an exciting visit to Academy of the Holy Names. When he was here, he spent time with our students, teachers, and staff throughout the school day. His visit began with a big, warm welcome from the school community before he met with a panel of students who prepared questions for him. He toured several classrooms, observing different lessons across all subjects. He stopped in to see students actively learning in the classroom, from discussions in AP Government and Politics with the seniors, to hands-on activities in chemistry classes, taking time to speak with students and encourage their participation in class. He has made it a point to visit all schools in the Albany Diocese, trying to see all the students in the diocese he is the head of.

Throughout the visit, the Bishop had meaningful conversations with both the students and faculty. Students were eager to ask questions about the Bishop's responsibilities, his path to leadership in the Church, and how he stays connected to young people in the diocese. He responded with thoughtful answers and words of encouragement, emphasizing the importance of education, kindness, and living out one's faith in daily life.



He also spoke about the value of community service and reminded students that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference in the world around them. His message focused on using their talents to help others and staying committed to their personal and spiritual growth. By the end of the visit, the atmosphere in the school was uplifting and inspiring, leaving students and staff with a renewed sense of connection to their faith and to learn more about the community of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

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Club Highlights: Mock Trial Wanjiku Waweru

The Holy Names Mock Trial team reemerged last year as a club here at Holy Names, and is growing in membership. Social Studies teacher, Mr. Franzini has been the club moderator this year and the team competed in two competitions this past season. But, what exactly is Mock Trial? During an interview with Mr. Franzini and student Vicky Gomez, Journalism class member, Wanjiku Waweru dives deeper into what the Holy Names Mock Trial team really does.

According to Mr. Franzini, Mock Trial mimics what real court is like, but at the high school level. "The NYS Bar Association creates a court case based off of a case that has happened in the past and makes it for high school students to compete as attorneys and witnesses." The team prepares for competitions by going over the cases the NYS Bar Association gives them to prepare the witnesses and lawyers throughout the school year.



Students pictured R-L: Grace Zelig, Meara Sweet, Ally Ifudu, Rachel Gerber, Audrey Owens, Ziona Polaski-Harris, Isabella Lodise, Devika Arkalgud, Avery Sweet, Vicky Gomez, Maggie McAllister

Each student is assigned either the role of an attorney, also known as a lawyer, or a witness. Student lawyers prepare their arguments, and also prepare the witnesses for the questions they will ask on the stand at trial, which is the competition. Student witnesses work to memorize their affidavit, or testimony, in addition to preparing their responses for the questions the lawyers plan on asking them. According to Mr. Franzini, "Attorneys try to tell a story and use the witness info to move that story forward".

The Mock Trial team also receives preparation help from parents of Holy Names students who work as judges in their profession. These judges are experienced with procedure and detail, and work to help student lawyers and witnesses prepare statements and understand the information.

Vicky Gomez was a witness during the '25-'26 Mock Trial Season. When asked about her experience as a witness this season she stated, "I had a good experience because my attorneys were really dedicated. It was fun to learn something new even if you're not going into law after college. Whenever you're there you're always learning something new".

The Mock Trial season came to a close in March after their two competitions against Albany High School and Voorheesville. As Mr. Franzini begins making plans for next year's season, he hopes to start sooner and give students more time to learn the basics before jumping into work with the case. As the Mock Trial team starts its next season, Mr. Franzini has a few last words to say to any interested student. "Mock Trial is a lot of fun and there are a lot of skills that come from Mock Trial that will be helpful in whatever future you work towards. It helps you learn how to think on your feet and also speak publicly. There is a lot of work to it, but in the long term it is such a good experience."

Holy Names Student and Faculty reactions to Yondr Pouch Policy

By Victoria Gomez

As of the 2024-2025 school year, Academy of the Holy Names has implemented a school-wide phone policy. This policy includes the use of Yondr pouches that lock students' phones from the beginning until the end of the school day. The phone policy here at Holy Names was implemented before the statewide phone ban policy was implemented this school year.

Here at Holy Names opinions differ on whether our phone policy is beneficial. Kathy Witherspoon, Holy Names' Dean of Student Life, believes the phone policy has positively impacted our school's social and academic environment, saying she has seen more interaction between students. "At the beginning of the year as soon as you're coming in I think not having phones really increases that building of community and talking to people. So now in the lunch room I see students talking and laughing together."

Ms. Witherspoon also commented on how she believes the policy allows for less drama in our school environment. "We've seen a decrease in behavioral issues during the school day because a lot of those seem to be kind of fueled by the phone. Like someone would say something to someone or give someone a look and then they would immediately be texting their friends like 'can you believe she did that?' and then it causes huge drama. But by the time you unlock your phone at 3:00 you kind of forgot about it and it's not that big a deal."



Sophia Schenk, a sophomore at Holy Names also shared her opinions on the Yondr pouch policy.

She believes while it does have some in-school benefits, there are some cons to it as well. When asked about whether it has impacted students' academic life, Sophia said she believes not having access to her phone during school has made it harder for her to focus on school work at home. "I think that it makes focusing at school easier, but when I get home I think it actually makes studying harder because since I haven't had it all day, when I get home all I want to do is look at my phone."

However Holy Names isn't the only school in New York that requires students to have a Yondr pouch anymore. New York State passed a law requiring all schools to adopt cellphone restriction policies as of the 2025-2026 school year.

Many Schools have implemented Yondr pouches to keep students cellphones secured during school hours.

Violations of these policies include confiscation of the device after multiple infractions.

The goal of this mandate is to increase classroom engagement, strengthen social environments, and reduce anxiety.

The logo of the Academy of the Holy Names is a circular seal. It features a central shield with a cross, a book, and other symbols. The text "ACADEMY OF THE HOLY NAMES" is written around the top inner edge of the circle, and "1884" is at the bottom. A banner across the shield contains the motto "ESSE QUAM VIDERI".

Au Revoir To French Class

Isabella Lodise

At Academy of the Holy Names, a class that has been provided since AHN was founded, French class, is stopping. Blessed Mother Marie Rose, who founded the Sisters of the Holy Names, was a French Canadian Nun.

Mrs. Gibbons teaches not only Spanish, but also French class at Holy Names. When Mrs. Gibbons started teaching at the Academy of the Holy Names, French class was already fading out due to the amount of enrollment in the course and the fact that most schools have chosen Spanish as their primary language option for students. As time went on, the numbers in French class began to drop not only here, but also at other schools too. Even though it is ending, Mrs. Gibbons is hopeful that one day it will come back, as it is a very important language and a very fun class!

Audrey Owens, a French class student in the 10th grade, shared her experience in the class. Audrey first started taking French in seventh grade at her previous school. When she transferred to Academy of the Holy Names, she continued her French journey and was placed in French 3-4. Audrey says the course is “fun and challenging” and has many cool parts in it. They are able to do presentations, practice speaking, look at French news, and see interesting elements of French culture that they didn’t know before. The class currently is very tiny, only having four people in it. It has a very close knit community with lots of support and fun. Audrey, who states she is “extremely glad and thankful” she took French, hopes that interest starts up again and that French will someday return.

Opinion: The Benefits Of Taking a Language

By Isabella Lodise



Knowing more than one language is beneficial due to the changes it makes to the brain and cognitive abilities. Learning new vocabulary and grammar strengthens neural pathways and increases concentration on subjects. Research has showed that language learners perform better in subjects than people who are not taking a language course. The study also shows that those who are bilingual have more problem solving skills and stronger communication skills. It is actually proven through research that “empathy is a key trait for success in learning a second language”. Research also shows people who study another language perform better on memory tests

Source: Carley Spence, “How learning a new language changes your brain.” *Cambridge UP*, <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2022/04/29/learning-language-changes-your-brain/>, 29 April 2022

Languages are the foundation of how we interact and communicate with each other. They strengthen the brain and let you talk to more people. Being bilingual is proven to help with careers and cognitive skills.

At Academy of the Holy Names, students are able to take Spanish 1 through 5, which gives students the ability to learn the language thoroughly and become proficient. Spanish 4 and 5 are optional after Spanish 3 but very much recommended due to getting a college credit while taking the course. The reason why Spanish is taught at Holy Names is due to the fact that besides Mandarin and Hindi, Spanish is one of the most spoken languages in the world. Being proficient, especially in Spanish, is a great skill set to have and benefits people in the future.

AHN Offers New Strength Training Classes

JENIYAH WOOD



Holy Names is now offering two new strength training classes, Strength for Performance and Strength for Wellness taught by Teagan Waddingham. These two new classes will be electives for only rising juniors and seniors. The new classes will use the weight room often but also be taught in class rooms. Ms.

Waddingham is a former Athletic Director at Holy Names and is very dedicated to helping the Holy Names Community. "I am so excited because I think I am on this earth to help kids and help people become the best versions of themselves."



Overall, the introduction of Strength for Performance and Strength for Wellness marks an important step toward prioritizing student health at Holy Names. By combining physical training with education on nutrition, recovery, and overall well-being, these classes offer students valuable tools they can use long after graduation. With Ms. Waddingham's passion and experience guiding the program, the new electives are expected to make a lasting impact, helping students grow stronger not only as athletes, but as healthier and more informed individuals.



The goal of the class is to educate students on their nutritional needs and how to work sleep, hydration, and stress management into their daily lives while maintaining great health. Strength for Wellness is a class more for everyday students who want to know how to become healthier while maybe playing a sport. Strength for Performance is a class for student athletes who want to take their skill to a higher level with knowledge of lifting, correct fueling of their body, and overall physical health. Ms. Waddingham has a goal for the class and students so they can become more in tune with their health. "As an adviser for four years, so many questions and conversations that I have received from students were on how to be healthier and how to take their performance to the next level and I realized that this impacts our entire student body and I would love to offer a course to impact more students than I could have when I was advising."

AHN Renovates 24-Year-Old Gym

Maggie Volmer

*Much needed
update!*

A long-awaited update is finally here for the AHN gym after 24 years! The renovation marks a fresh start and an exciting update for students and the school community.

Mrs. Pentak has been the Physical Education teacher at Academy of the Holy Names for 42 years. She says, “the gym has never been completely renovated. It was built in 2002 and it hasn’t been touched since then, 24 years ago”. The community has raised \$75,000 to help renovate the gym. She is “very excited to have the gym updated. I remember when it was built in 2002 and how everybody was excited to have this brand new gym,” she says.

The renovations started on April 2nd by having the walls painted. We are getting brand new banners, navy blue padding, and the gym floor will be done by July of 2026. Mrs. Pentak adds “this is a really great update for the school, It was really great back in 2002 and we can’t wait to have this new gym 24 years later.”



Panthers To Japan

Holy Names Spring Break Trip '26

Wanjiku Waweru and Cheryl Sabir



Members of Academy of the Holy Names traveled to Japan for its Easter break trip. The objective of this trip was to provide students with an opportunity to experience different cultures and religions outside of the United States.

Students were supervised by Mrs. Travers and Mr. Licari on this fun adventure. During the trip students visited some of Japan's most beautiful and popular cities, where they discovered and enjoyed local Japanese traditions, lifestyle and tried authentic Japanese cuisine.

Students and teachers described their experience as different and life changing. "Personally, it gave me a view of how different people live in the United States and Japan. Academically, I learned about different religions of the world," said Lily '28. Lily explained that traveling to Japan helped her understand different perspectives. Students created memories that will stick with them for a lifetime. "Forever changed," Mrs. Travers said, emphasizing how the Japanese culture and hospitality left a deep effect.

The trip was more than just a travel experience, but a chance for students to learn more outside of the classroom. Students explored historical and cultural sites. "Mount Fuji was amazing", said Mr. Licari expressing the breathtaking view of Mount Fuji. The journey has a meaningful and long lasting impact on everyone who experienced it, leaving teachers and students with countless and loving memories of Japan.

Yuriko, the tour guide from Japan shared a special perspective. Yuriko, who worked with the students throughout the trip and has guided many tourists over the years, describes the students of Holy Names as remarkable. She explained that students were enthusiastic and curious. "I have been working as a guide for about eight years and have had the opportunity to work with many high school students, However this group was truly one of the most wonderful I have ever had the privilege of guiding." She appreciated the students and added that the students should be proud of themselves. She hoped that she would have the opportunity to meet the students again. The Japan trip was not just about where students went but how it changed them and gave them different perspectives and memories.

Spring 2026

By Kathryn Lewis
and Ashley Albritton

Junior/Senior Prom



On April 25, 2026, Academy of the Holy Names held its annual Junior-Senior Prom at the Albany Country Club in Voorheesville. Students were dressed to the nines with floor-length formal gowns and intricate updos. Students danced, sang, and enjoyed food from the burger and taco bar, as well as the make-your-own ice cream sundae bar!

Prom night is one of the most anticipated events of the high school experience. This formal dance brings our upperclass students together to celebrate the end of the school year and create lasting memories with friends. From creative themes, like this year's "The Summer I Turned Pretty", and decorations to music, photos, and the beautiful dresses, the night is about dancing and celebrating with your friends and classmates.



MOMENTS WITH MOM: THE ANNUAL MOTHER DAUGHTER BRUNCH

Sophia Schenk

This spring, Holy Names' annual Mother-Daughter Brunch was held at Duo at the Dunes. This event celebrates the wonderful bond between mothers and daughters in the Holy Names community. The booster club worked extremely hard to make this event so special. The tables were decorated beautifully and the food was amazing. The event also featured raffle baskets created and donated by various people such as The Friends of the Arts. A highlight of the event was when the seniors all presented a video to their mothers, speaking on how much their mothers impacted them throughout their time at Holy Names. Mothers are a steady presence in most of our lives, and the Mother-Daughter brunch is an amazing way to highlight our gratitude towards them and celebrate the bond we share. As the seniors move on to their next chapter, this brunch is an important reminder of how far they've come, and the woman who has supported them through it all. Thank you, Moms.



Creative Costume Showcase at 2026 HS Spring Pep Rally

By Victoria Gomez

This year the 2026 spring High School pep rally took place May 1. The theme this year was TV, and each grade dressed up as cartoons from their grades TV/cartoon channel. Seniors were Netflix, Juniors were Disney, Sophomores were Nickelodeon, and Freshmen dressed as Cartoon Network. Many students in all grades participated in the fun themes to show off their school spirit for pep rally.

Seniors this year had amazing costumes throughout the entire class. One of the most memorable was Cece Zyskowski in her inflatable dinosaur suit. Throughout the pep rally Cece kept the energy up by dancing and jumping throughout the event. Some of the other seniors also participated in a Smurf group costume, with Georgia Boggs as Papa Smurf.

Juniors this year participated by dressing in Disney themed costumes. Some dressed as Mickey and Minnie Mouse with mickey ears and red tutus. Others dressed as Disney princesses.

Ella LaBoissiere dressed as Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* and Maggie Volmer dressed up as *Moana*. There was also a smaller group costume with Maeve O'Brien as Peter Pan, Rachel Banta as Captain Hook, Maddie Reuss as Wendy, and Lola Henderson as Tinkerbell.

The sophomore class this year had great participation as well. Sophomores theme for pep rally was Nickelodeon. There were multiple group costumes including Spongebob, Fairly Odd Parents, Alvin and the Chipmunks, Winx Club, Paw Patrol and more.

The Freshman class was also very creative in their costumes this year. The Freshman class's theme was Cartoon Network. Some of the group costumes were Adventure Time, the Amazing World of Gumball, Looney Tunes and Scooby Doo.



Teacher Feature: Mrs. Junco

Mrs. Junco is a new math teacher at Holy Names this year. She started at the beginning of second semester with the departure of Mr. Thieffrey, and has begun getting to know all of her students and fellow teachers at Holy Names. She teaches Algebra and Pre-Calc. This Q&A will help students at Holy Names get to know Mrs. Junco a little better!

WANJIKU WAWERU

Why did you choose to teach at Holy Names over other schools?

I researched private schools in the area and came across the math position opening. I applied for the job that day! The small community aspect of Holy Names was important to me because I've always taught at private schools.

When did you decide you wanted to become a math teacher?

I officially decided in 3rd and 4th grade. In 4th grade I won a contest to be teacher of the day and follow my teacher Mrs. Rice. That's when I realized that's what I wanted to do (a very long time ago).

Was math your favorite subject in High School?

Yes. My calculus teacher inspired me to continue on to become a math teacher. I was a math major and took math classes in college.

Do you have any favorite Holy Names traditions?

So far I have only attended basketball games and *Anastasia*. I enjoy attending sporting events and the arts.

What's a fun fact about you that most students wouldn't know?

I am a huge fan of the sitcom *Love Lucy*. I have tattoos and she is decorated all around my house.

What is your favorite thing about teaching Algebra?

My favorite thing about teaching Algebra is that it has a logical process that always ends up at a final answer and you always have the ability to check your work.

What's your favorite thing to do in your free time?

Hang out with my daughter Madeline, my husband and all of our farm animals. We have sheep, goats, chickens.

What's the most rewarding thing about being a teacher?

Watching students who once believed they couldn't do math thrive and come to enjoy the subject. It really comes down to that "aha moment".

What makes a "good day" in your classroom?

When students are fully engaged and show they have mastery of the concept.

What are some words of advice you would give to your students to succeed in your class?

Be engaged with the material, ask clarifying questions, and set aside time to review without waiting until the last minute. Math should not be stressful if you take one concept at a time and let each build on top of the previous one.



Senior Feature



by Abby O'Toole

May 12 marked the last day of classes for Holy Names' seniors, and graduation was held on May 22. As they perfect graduation parties, dresses, and summer plans, all things that make graduation truly theirs, they also prepare for a new time of their lives in college.

Allie Santilli has been attending Academy of the Holy Names since the 9th grade. Now, she is picking out her graduation dress and starting her college packing list. She'll be heading to Union College in the fall, a pick that was perfect for her when "reflecting on what characteristics of a school environment made me thrive," says Allie. But graduation season is not complete without a reflection on how you've grown.

The stakes were high at the 2022 fall pep rally. Everyone had gotten out of the chicken game, and Allie was against 10th grader Logan Schlegel. Both the 9th graders and 10th graders were on

the edge of their seats, wondering which grade would be the one to take the win. When Allie arose as the winner, she remembers, "everyone being shocked on how competitive I was, like Mrs. Baxter."

Allie thinks about who most impacted her during her time and who she'll miss the most when she leaves for college. "Mrs. LeBuis had the biggest impact on me during my time at AHN. I also want to shout out to my coach, Ashley, who had a big impact on me throughout my cheerleading career at AHN," she says. Allie has been a part of *Profile* since her junior year, and became editor-in-chief senior year. She has also been a part of both fall and winter cheer, and says of the experience, "I will miss my cheer team and performing with them." She says she will also miss her friends and teachers whom she has grown close to.

"I am looking forward to meeting new people and discovering what I want to do as a career," Allie says on her anticipated start of college. As she is on her way to start her freshmen year of college, she gives advice to upcoming high school freshmen. "Never say never, you never know until you try, and follow your path, not others."



Kayla Butler has helped capture the small events, such as pep rallies, at Holy Names since junior year. Now, she prepares to star in the photograph of her own event- her high school graduation. In the fall, she'll be headed to University at Buffalo, but during the remaining month of senior year, she rewinds to the small, everyday moments of her high school career.

Being a part of yearbook has not only allowed Kayla to capture events at Holy Names, but also allowed her to create new memories after school. Alongside yearbook being a fun memory for her, she also remembers the AP US History class during her junior year. "Being a part of yearbook last year was fun, and the memories that I made with them. As well as my AP US class last year, I enjoy what we learn in that class, and the conversations we had," she says.

"I'll probably miss all the different school events, such as pep rally, service day, open house. In a way I do like the small environment, the close relationships with the students and teacher that formed

me into the person I am today,” she reflects, before thanking her family and Mr. Baxter for their impact and support during her time at Holy Names.

“My family are always very supportive of me and my accomplishments, and guidance for me with any questions I have. Mr. Baxter as my advisor, who was always there to support me academically and personally.”

She’s hopeful for college as a way for “meeting new people, making new friends, living in a dorm and having a roommate that hopefully I’ll form a bond with, joining new clubs, and taking up different opportunities that align with my career interest.”

As a last statement, she gives advice to incoming high school freshmen: “Try to go out of your comfort zone more, and meet new people. Don’t be afraid to spark a conversation with someone and form a new friendship. Focus in your classes, even if it’s a class you struggle in, use your resources to get more help.”



Cece Zyskowski has been a girl of many talents during her time at Holy Names. Not only has she been a part of science research both junior and senior year, she has also been in major roles in theater during both freshman and sophomore year, even co-founding the school’s drama club. She has won an honorable mention in Holy Names’ art competition sophomore year. Now, she will be expanding her knowledge at Davidson College.



“I originally knew absolutely nothing about Davidson when I applied, but when I toured it felt very warm and everyone was super nice and said hi. It just had a really good feel to it, along with their good reputation for pre-med, and I ended up liking it even more than my ED school,” Cece said on her commitment.

When asked whom she would miss the most once she left Holy Names, she says, “I think I’ll miss the teachers and my friends, because everyone is supportive. I’ll just miss everyone and all the conversations.” She also thanks Mr. Baxter for his unwavering support, making him the biggest impact on her during high school.

“I’m looking forward to meeting new people and like narrowing down on my major, rather than doing gen-ed. I’m going to be a bio major so I’m excited for that,” she says on her fall start at Davidson College.

She advises upcoming freshmen, “Just branch out, don’t just stick to one friend group, branch out. I feel like a lot of people find their friends in freshman year and just stick in those groups. There are so many people who weren’t in my group freshman year that I’m close with now.”

Ella Schoenborn

Senior class president Ella Schoenborn is preparing for one last speech. Since her presidency in tenth through twelfth grade, along with countless other school activities, including ambassadors club, member and treasurer of NHS, she has made many speeches throughout the years. As she puts together her last speech, she looks back on her years in high school, and the future that is waiting for her at Boston University.

“I chose Boston University because of its business school; I am going to school for finance and I thought that being in Boston would be a perfect fit. Additionally, when I was visiting the school originally, my dad and I went to a hockey game (BU vs. BC) and I loved the school spirit,” she says.

Ella has been apart of Holy Name’s lacrosse team since 7th grade and captain since 10th, leading the sport to be one of which has lots of memories and something she will miss when she heads to college. “One memory I have is junior year, when I hid behind the concession stand during practice and sprayed my coach with a water gun by surprise,” she recalls.

Alongside playing lacrosse, Ella has also taken many advanced placement classes, starting with European History in 10th grade. From this class, she was introduced to Mrs. Ladouceur, one of the biggest impacts on her time at school. Ella tells, “Mrs. Ladouceur had the biggest impact on me at AHN because of taking her AP European History class and setting me up for harder classes. Additionally, she is one of the kindest teachers that I have had.”

“I am most looking forward to meeting a lot of new people and getting involved in many clubs,” Ella says. She adds a last word of advice for incoming high school freshmen: “If they are truly passionate about something, even in the moments where they don't want to do it anymore or convince themselves that you're not good enough to do it anymore, keep going and remember to have fun in the moment.”



Rachael Gerber

From track to soccer and multiple leadership roles in different clubs, Rachael Gerber has sealed her legacy in Holy Names history. As she wraps up her sport seasons, and votes on the next student to take her place in club responsibilities, she prepares to move onto the next part of her life-taking place at Providence College.

She has met many people over the course of high school, each impacting her in a different way. “I’ll miss my friends, getting to hang out with them and having class with them; and teachers who have really helped out through my high school career. I wouldn’t be the same person I am today without them,” she says.

Reflecting on her best memory from Holy Names, she says, “It's not a specific memory, but I'll always remember my four years on the varsity soccer team at Holy Names. Every year, the team would be different, but we would all get so close by the end of the season. I'll always cherish the conversations I've had with my teammates and coaches, the new friendships I've made, and every practice and game.”

Just like all memories, there is a distant wondering if you could have done something different. Rachael says, “I wish I didn't take the time I had in high school for granted. Some days I would wish the day would go by faster, and in hind sight I'll miss highschool and Holy Names a lot, so I wish I didn't take it for granted.” But college is a new start, one to “start on my own and be independent, make new friends, explore new places, and have new experiences in colleges,” according to Rachael.

She leaves the high school freshman with advice to make the best of their high school start: “Be open to new things because Holy Names will be different than middle school- new friends, teachers, ways of learning. Just because something is new doesn't mean it’s bad.”



Celebrating the Seniors at the Awards Convocation

A last celebration of the seniors before they graduate, the Awards Convocation is an event where seniors receive awards from their time at high school, taking place on May 21st in the gymnasium. The convocation is a way to recognize seniors for their hard work that they have put in throughout their high school career. The entire school gathers in the gymnasium, where it has been transformed into a place for graduation- completed with floral decor, a walkway, and a large stage.

For a few juniors, the awards convocation also includes awards for them. These awards, called Book Awards, are determined by their GPA and the student services department. Similarly, there are a few awards presented to eighth graders.

Following the presentation of awards, the student body partakes in a moving up ceremony. According to Mrs. Witherspoon, the moving up ceremony is symbolic, as the juniors take the seniors spot, and so on.

KAYLA BUTLER
ABBY O'TOOLE



Before the seniors exit, the members of *Profile* gather in front of the podium on the stage to present the yearbook and dedication. Each year, a staff member is selected for the yearbook to be dedicated to. The options on who the yearbook could be potentially dedicated to is decided on by the yearbook staff. They nominate 3 teachers that have either worked at the school for at least 5 years or have never had the yearbook dedicated to them. The three teachers have a short biography typed up about them by the yearbook staff and then the options are presented to the senior class to vote on. The senior class nor the rest of the school will not know which teacher has the yearbook dedicated to them until the awards convocation, only the yearbook staff will know. This year, Mr. Baxter was selected to have the yearbook dedicated to him. The reason the awards convocation is done before graduation is because the seniors will be able to get their yearbook.





Caps To Campuses

The class of 2026 has graduated!

Georgia Boggs and Allie Santilli

The Class of 2026 is going to a variety of colleges and gaining diverse educations. Some are staying close, while others are traveling across the Atlantic to Ireland. We are so proud of our seniors for finding the perfect fit for them!

Molly Edwards has committed to the Trinity College of Dublin and is confident in her decision to travel as far as Ireland for her education, mainly due to how safe of a country it is. Applying to international schools compared to schools in the United States must have differences. Is the application process to Trinity different or a more difficult process for applying as an international student? Molly expresses, "It was really easy, I feel like it was more simple than the ones here." Moving to the country can change an individual and she was asked if she thinks she would get an Irish accent. Molly answered "No, I do not and I hope I will not. It's not that I don't like it, I just don't want to be that person." To expand on the fact she is going to a different country, the question that arises is if she just threw a dart on the map to decide to go there. She responded "Um, yes." Moving to a new country can be so exciting and she is most excited about "meeting a bunch of new people." We wish Molly the best of luck on this adventure that she is about to endure! Good luck Molly!

Chloe Friedman has committed to Reinhardt University to continue her athletic career by playing NAIA Lacrosse in the AAC conference. Chloe signed to play for the university in November of 2025. She knew she wanted to play lacrosse in college since her middle school years. She has been playing lacrosse for twelve years now, and she is "playing with a new team with new people." Chloe is excited to have built in friends when she starts at Reinhardt. Reinhardt University is located in Waleska, Georgia and she expressed that she has always wanted to go south for college. Good Luck Chloe in your college lacrosse career!

Ashley Albritton has committed to Paul Mitchell school for cosmetology and she is beyond excited. What led Ashley to cosmetology school was that she likes doing her own hair, makeup, and nails. She knew that Paul Mitchell school was the right fit for her because she is getting an iPad in her kit and when she toured, it seemed like the right vibe for her. Ashley is looking forward to getting the iPad and learning how to do other people's hair and dyeing hair.

The Director of College Counseling is the one and only Mrs. Annemarie McGarry. She is an alumna of ('86) and a friendly face in the Holy Names community. Students start talking to Mrs. McGarry spring semester of sophomore year, then Junior spring semester, and lastly fall semester senior year. Throughout the three semesters, Mrs. McGarry is very supportive throughout the college process. She helps students discover what college is the right fit for them.

How much stress does Mrs. McGarry feel for the seniors when it comes to getting decisions back/making the final decision? In her own words, "I don't get stressed for you but I get worried or concerned that you get too stressed. Because in my opinion it is important but not worth losing sleep over. Doesn't have to be a straight line".

Mrs. McGarry has been doing college counseling at Holy Names for eleven years and has observed college decisions from the college itself and the student.

"Has there been major differences in decisions over the past few years"? Mrs. McGarry expresses "Absolutely. No doubt. Without SAT more people are applying to schools that they wouldn't have in the past. Schools are having trouble enrolling in our class so they are accepting more. Big name schools are waitlisting people instead of denying people for their own statistics, they do it to make themselves look better". Even though this is her opinion, seniors this year can relate to her statement. Mrs. McGarry forms strong bonds with the students which makes the college experience more memorable. "How do you feel about your favorite class leaving lol?" Mrs. McGarry: "Sad. I will miss you greatly. You're like my kids."





Caps To Campuses, Continued

Senior year is mixed with numerous emotions when deciding where to apply and more importantly where to commit. Excitement, nerves, relief and so many more feelings fill the college counseling room as the decisions narrow down. By spring of senior year, the commitments for college are rolling in quickly. Whether you made an early decision or applied regular decision, there is still a rollercoaster of emotions. The Class of 2026 is going to a variety of colleges and gaining diverse educations. Some are staying close, while others are traveling across the Atlantic to Ireland. We are so proud of our seniors for finding the perfect fit for them!

The college commitments for the Class of 2026 are:

Ashley Albritton- Paul Mitchell
Aba Amissah- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science
Rylee Apicelli- University at Buffalo
Cassandra Bellinger- Marist University
Georgia Boggs- Coastal Carolina University
Addison Bukowski- Siena University
Mary Burke- Culinary Institute of America
Kayla Butler- University at Buffalo
Ava Denisco- Northeastern University
Riley Dubay- SUNY Plattsburgh
Molly Edwards- Trinity College of Dublin
Ella Faucher- Tulane University
Chloe Friedman- Reinhardt University
Shaya Gerber- Hamilton College
Rachael Gerber- Providence College

Mia Guiry- University of Alabama,
Kaleeyah Harden- LeMoyne College
Erin Hockford- St. Joseph's University
Ally Ifudu- St. John's University
Kathryn Lewis- LeMoyne College,
Samantha Malorgio- Siena University
Kate Margelot- Siena University
Sabrina Masilotti- Providence College
Ella Mastriano- Nova Southeastern University
Paulina Pantoja- Marist University,
Cheryl Sabir- Maria College
Allie Santilli- Union College
Sophia Scaccia- University at Buffalo
Ella Schoenborn- Boston University
Makayla Smith- University of Rochester
Meara Sweet- Marist University
Cece Zyskowski- Davidson College.

Big Hits & Bigger Moments: AHN Softball Season Recap

Jeniyah Wood

The softball team delivered several standout performances this season, highlighted by strong offensive play and key individual contributions. In one of their most notable games, the team competed well against Schalmont High School and Mohonasen High School, demonstrating resilience and teamwork throughout the matchup.



Offensively, the team impressed with a total of 12 hits in a single game, showcasing their ability to consistently make contact and generate scoring opportunities. This offensive momentum has been a key factor in their development over the course of the season.

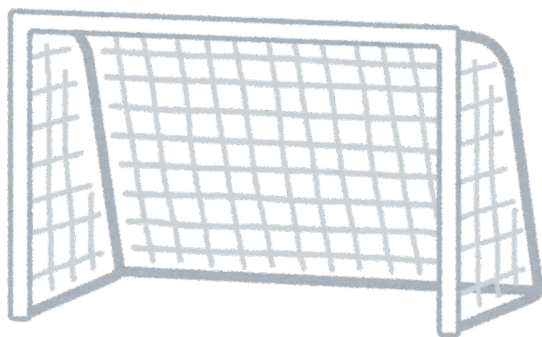
Senior leadership has also played an important role, with Sophia Scaccia helping guide the team both on and off the field. Adding to the team's success, a player earned a promotion to the varsity level, reflecting the program's growth and depth.



Fast Breaks and Fierce Defense: AHN Lacrosse Closes Out the Season

Payton Good

The girls lacrosse team faced a challenging schedule this season, ending with a 3-7 record while continuing to show determination and growth. Despite the record, the team secured important victories against Greenwich High School and Emma Willard, highlighting their ability to compete against tough opponents.



A strong senior class has been central to the team's efforts this year. Seniors Ella Schoenborn, Kathryn Lewis, Riley Dubay, Ella Mastriano, Cassie Bellinger, Meara Sweet, and Chloe Friedman have provided leadership and experience throughout the season.

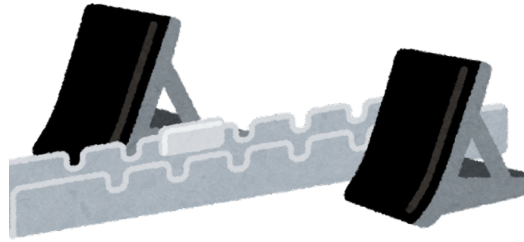
Individually, several players delivered notable performances. Ella Schoenborn scored six goals in a game against Ichabod Crane, while Allie Rafalko added five goals in a matchup against Greenwich. Contributions like these have helped keep the team competitive in closely contested games.



Breaking Records and Crossing Finish Lines: AHN Track Season Recap

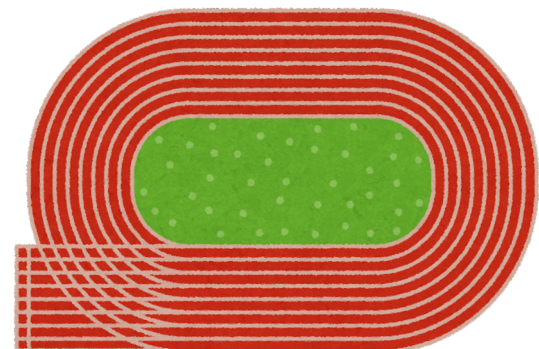
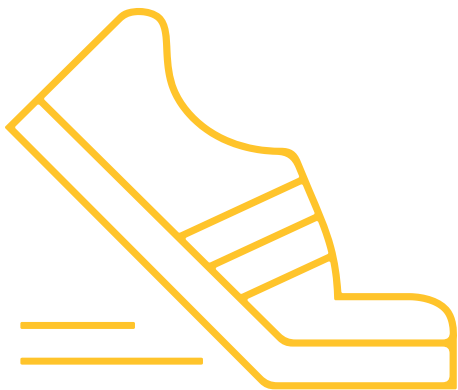
Maggie Volmer

The track team has enjoyed a successful season filled with impressive performances, first-place finishes, and record-breaking achievements. Throughout the spring, athletes consistently performed well at league meets and invitationals, earning numerous first-place finishes against strong competition



One of the season's biggest highlights came from Maeve Joyce, who broke the school record in the 1500-meter race by two seconds. The accomplishment marked a major milestone for both the athlete and the program, showcasing the team's continued growth and dedication

Senior athletes Georgia Boggs, Rachael Gerber, and Shaya Gerber have helped lead the team this season through their experience, leadership, and dedication. As postseason competition approaches, the team looks to continue its success and finish the year on a strong note



STAFF BIOS

SPRING 2026 EDITION

Ashley Albritton is a senior at Academy of the Holy Names, which she has been attending since the seventh grade. She is a captain of the cheerleading team, is president of the UNICEF Club, and is treasurer of the student council. This is her first year in journalism, where she is an active participant, and where she hopes to express her interest in the journalistic style of writing.

Aba Amissah is a senior at Holy Names, making this her second year attending the school. She is an active member of the school's L.O.V.E. Club and is interested in pursuing pharmacy after high school. In her free time she enjoys her newfound interest in crocheting and knitting as well as baking. This is her first year in Journalism.

Georgia Boggs is a senior at Academy of the Holy Names where she has attended since seventh grade. Georgia has been a varsity track and field athlete since eighth grade and began playing volleyball her freshman year as well. She intends to pursue a career in forensic science where the ideal end goal is a job in a three letter agency, either as a detective or a forensic science technician.

Kayla Butler is a senior at Holy Names and has been attending since freshman year. She enjoys listening to music, cooking, and spending time with family/friends. She is also an active member of Ambassadors and a part of the yearbook committee as the photographer. the class.

Kathryn Lewis is a senior at Academy of the Holy Names, and has been there since freshman year. She has been a member of the lacrosse team all four years and an active member of student council. She plans on studying nursing in the fall. She has always loved reading and writing, and enjoys the creative writing space Journalism class creates.

Cheryl Sabir is a senior at Academy of the Holy Names. She became a part of Holy Names in her junior year of high school. She is a member of L.O.V.E. Club. She is going to college for nursing where she wants to make a difference by caring for people and sharing love. She enjoys reading and writing. This is her first year in Journalism and she is working hard to make the newspaper better with her writing skills.

Allie Santilli is a senior at Holy names and has been here since freshman year. She has been on varsity cheer for four years and is currently one of the cheer captains. For the past two years, she has been on the *Profile* and is now Editor in Chief. This is her first year in Journalism and has an interest in creative writing.

STAFF BIOS

SPRING 2026 EDITION

Payton Good is a Junior at Academy of the Holy Names where she has been for four years. Payton has played basketball since she was in first grade but stopped playing her freshman year to focus on volleyball, which she started playing her eighth grade year. Payton is a part of the Ambassadors Club, Pep Club, and SADD. This is her first year in Journalism and she strives to make the newspaper better each year.

Abby O'Toole is a junior at Holy Names, and this is her second year attending. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Profile, working to create the school's yearbook. This year, she started Holy Names' Fiber Arts Club. In her free time, she enjoys crocheting, baking, and watching movies. This is her first year in Journalism, and she is excited to be a part of creating the newspaper.

Sophia Schenk is a current Sophomore at the Academy of the Holy Names where she has been attending since seventh grade. She plays varsity soccer, softball, and indoor track and field. She is an Ambassador for the Academy of the Holy Names and is a part of the Junior Ladies of Charity. This is Sophia's first year in journalism and she plans on continuing to help make the newspaper better every year.

Maggie Volmer is a current junior at Academy of the Holy Names and has attended for three years. She is a captain and has been playing on the varsity basketball team there since her freshman year and started varsity volleyball this year as a junior. Volmer is a part of the clubs; Ambassadors, SADD, Journalism, Pep club. This is her first year in Journalism and continues to look forward to participating again in her senior year.

Victoria Gomez is a sophomore at Holy Names. She is a part of the varsity tennis and J.V. softball teams, and is a member of Holy Names Mock Trial team. She is also the co-founder and co-chair of PanTHER Voices Podcast Club at Holy Names. In her free time, she enjoys drawing and reading.

Isabella Lodise is a sophomore at Academy of the Holy Names. This is her first time in Journalism, and she is excited to be able to do something new. She is a student ambassador and a homeroom representative for the Student Council. Isabella enjoys theater and was in last year's play and musical and this year's play. Currently, she is in Mock Trial with Mr. Franzini as a prosecution attorney.

STAFF BIOS

SPRING 2026 EDITION

Wanjiku Waweru is a sophomore at the Academy of the Holy Names. She has been going to Holy Names for five years, and this is her first year in Journalism. She is a two year member of the varsity tennis team, and enjoys playing in her free time. Some of her other hobbies include travelling, public speaking, and listening to music. She is also the co-founder and co-chair of PanTHER Voices podcast club.

Jeniyah Wood is a sophomore and has attended Academy of the Holy Names for three years. She's a captain on the varsity basketball team and has been playing on the varsity team since 8th grade. Jeniyah is a part of the following clubs: SADD, Ambassadors, High School Pep, and Junior Ladies of Charity. This is her first year of Journalism and is very active in the class.