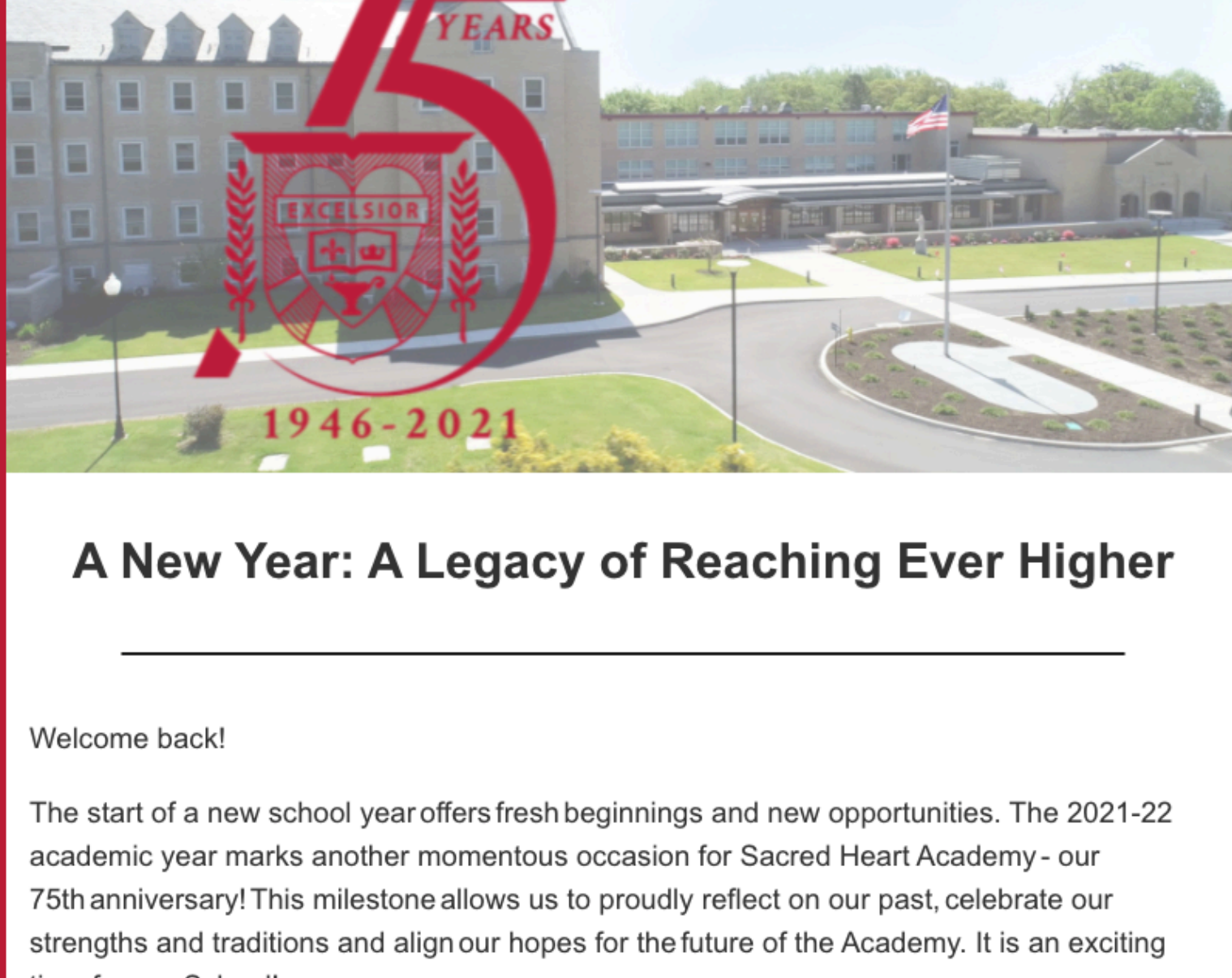


# EXCELSIOR NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Office of the President

August 2021



## A New Year: A Legacy of Reaching Ever Higher

Welcome back!

The start of a new school year offers fresh beginnings and new opportunities. The 2021-22 academic year marks another momentous occasion for Sacred Heart Academy - our 75th anniversary! This milestone allows us to proudly reflect on our past, celebrate our strengths and traditions and align our hopes for the future of the Academy. It is an exciting time for our School!

Helping our students to mature intellectually while nourishing their whole person and growing spiritually is at the heart of what we do at Sacred Heart Academy. SHA girls learn to take chances and be bold while practicing compassion and promoting social responsibility. They challenge themselves to dig deeper in all subjects including arts and sciences, mathematics, engineering, and technology.

One area we are always trying to expand are the distinctive programs offered at SHA. In addition to our celebrated Shubert Theater program, and the DNA Sequencing program, I am particularly excited to introduce two new programs that will further enhance the experience of the girls - the Excelsior Enrichment Program and the Bloomberg Finance Program. These "Only at SHA" programs represent our continued effort to reach Ever Higher.

We look fondly at our first 75 years and use this milestone as an opportunity to strengthen our mission and purpose moving forward. All of us who have been fortunate to be impacted by Sacred Heart Academy from 1946, are forever bound by Strong Bonds, that will continue to grow for the next 75 years and more.

*Excelsior,*

Sr. Sheila, ASCJ, Ph.D. '71  
President

### Introducing: The Excelsior Enrichment Program

To be an *Excelsior* woman, one must above all else, have a strong moral compass. She must have character, integrity, and compassion. Our work as teachers and administrators does not stop outside the classroom. Instead, we take great pride in leading our girls to be considerate and caring members of their communities. This fall, to further this important mission of Sacred Heart Academy, we will be launching a new program called "Excelsior Enrichment." At SHA, we engage in our academic pursuits in the spirit of Faith, Truth, and Love and our **First Friday Mass** - a beloved SHA tradition- will kick off our monthly Friday programs as students celebrate Mass in our magnificent Chapel. In the following Fridays, we will gather as a community and participate in an all-school assembly to welcome a guest speaker, facilitate a group discussion, or participate in a hands-on activity, exploring important topics including spirituality, social justice, leadership and physical and emotional wellness.

### Introducing: The Bloomberg Finance Program

As we continue to reach *Ever Higher*, we are committed to preparing our girls to be creative and participating leaders in a digital and global world. Michael Marcello, Business Department Chair, is leading this effort and will be introducing the Bloomberg Terminal at SHA this fall. This powerful software platform will allow the students to have a college-level, interdisciplinary experience, not typically offered during high school years. This addition to our curriculum will bring the real world of business and finance to the classroom and allow for collaborative work between faculty and students and connect all to the leading business and financial information network. The skills that SHA girls will acquire from this experience will provide them with the confidence and advantage they need to compete in today's world, be prepared for internships, and intelligently explore majors and career options in college.



## Student Spotlight: The King Sisters, Excelsior Student-Athletes

Meet Ava and Kyla King!

The twins are both members of the Class of '22 and fierce goalies committed to D1 university soccer programs. Since their freshman year, they have defended the net for the SHA Varsity soccer team and the Connecticut Football Club United ECNL team.

The Kings' soccer journey began by playing on the Hamden Recreational team coached by their father, Mark King, when they were five years old. No one was interested in playing the goal-tender position, so their coach dad asked a favor of his daughters, and the story begins.

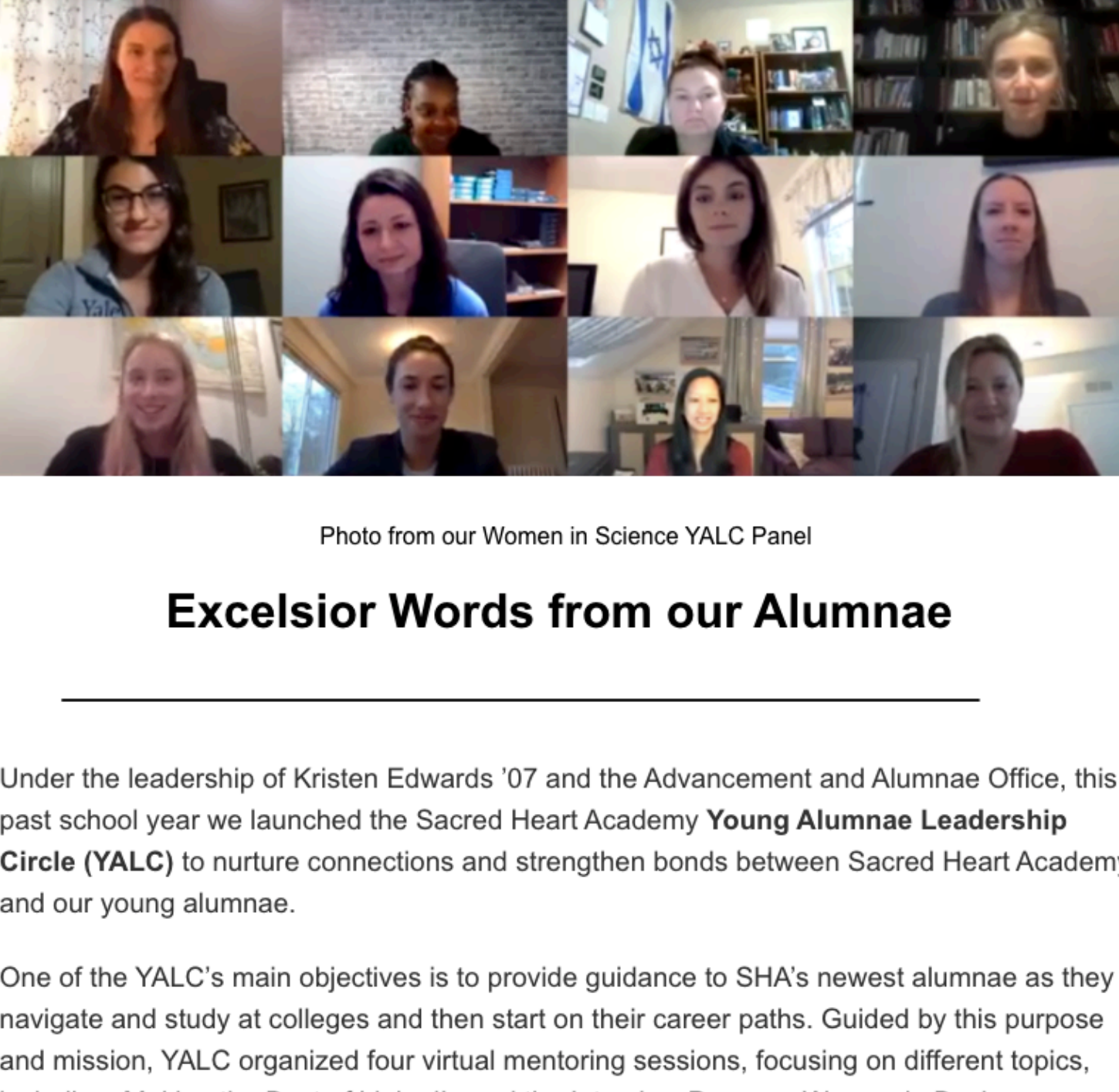
During their freshman year on the SHA Varsity team, they helped the Academy make it into the State Championship for the first time in several years and they continued that legacy into their sophomore and junior seasons. Last year, the team made it to the second round of the SCC tournament for the first time in SHA history! As seniors, Ava and Kyla will serve as co-captains of the team this fall, and are committed to finishing their soccer careers at SHA on a strong note.

Their many fans at SHA will be eagerly following their adventures as Ava and Kyla make a difference on the D1 collegiate level. In early 2021, Kyla committed to Fordham University and shortly after, Ava committed to Stony Brook University. According to the New England Journal, they were the first goalies in New England to verbally commit to their respective programs.

In addition to the guidance of their coach, Paul DelloStritto, both sisters credit their Sacred Heart Academy community for inspiring their successful careers as student athletes. Together, they said, "We are extremely lucky to be surrounded by people who cultivate a culture of hard work and determination. Our teachers and peers help create an environment of high standards for our academics and athletics and cultivate the strong sense of drive and determination that we have today. The determination that we learned to have in the classroom also translates to on the field."

We look forward to watching Ava and Kyle contribute to another successful season of soccer at SHA and wish them the best as they enter their new and exciting chapters in the fall of 2022.

## A Record 2020-21 Year for the SHarks



2020-21 Ice Hockey SCC Champions

### Basketball

The Sacred Heart Academy Basketball team capped a 15-1 season, which included an SCC Divisional Title and a spot on ESPN Sportscenter's Top 10, with a dominant 55-39 victory over West Haven High School to secure the SCC Conference Championship. The team, coached by Jason Kirk, in his second season at SHA, was led by captains Charina Ciampi, Sydney Rossacci and Rosa Rizzitelli, the SCC Tournament Most Outstanding player. They finished their season ranking #5 in Connecticut.

### Lacrosse

The Sacred Heart Academy Lacrosse team wrapped up their regular season schedule with an incredible 13-1 record before they advanced to the SCC Championship and emerged victorious following a thrilling "golden goal" in double overtime earning a 9-8 win over Amity Regional High School. In addition to leading the team to the SCC Title, Coach Samantha Clyne, guided the Sharks to the CIAC State Quarterfinals with captains Mia Celentano and Jianna Cohrs as well as Clare McCurley, the SCC Tournament Most Outstanding Player.

### Ice Hockey

The West Haven/SHA co-op Ice Hockey team concluded a 9-0 undefeated season, which included an SCC Divisional Title, with a 5-2 win over rival Guilford High School to earn the SCC Conference Championship. The Westie Sharks are coached by Erin Blake and were led by captains Jianna Cohrs, Jenna Hunt and the SCC Tournament Most Outstanding Player, Mia Celentano. In addition to both championships, the team was voted the 2020-21 "Best of the SCC."

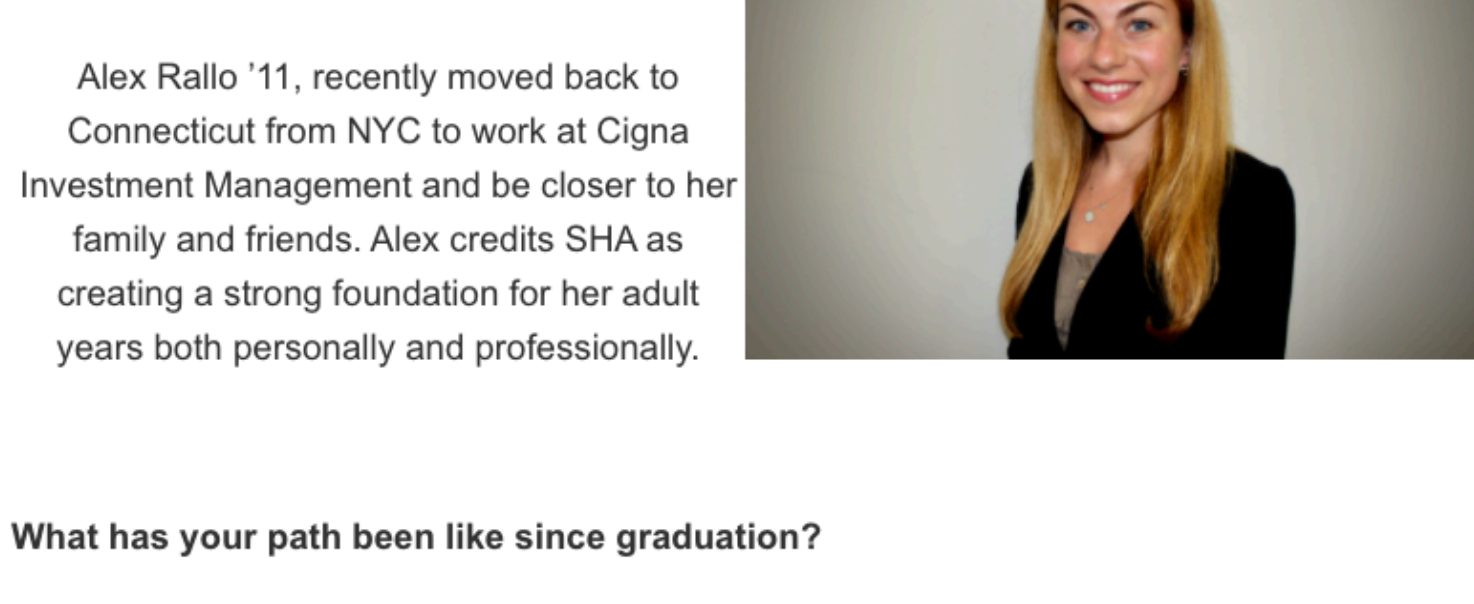


Photo from our Women in Science YALC Panel

## Excelsior Words from our Alumnae

Under the leadership of Kristen Edwards '07 and the Advancement and Alumnae Office, this past school year we launched the Sacred Heart Academy **Young Alumnae Leadership Circle (YALC)** to nurture connections and strengthen bonds between Sacred Heart Academy and our young alumnae.

One of the YALC's main objectives is to provide guidance to SHA's newest alumnae as they navigate and study at colleges and then start on their career paths. Guided by this purpose and mission, YALC provided four virtual mentoring sessions, focusing on different topics, including, Making the Best of LinkedIn and the Interview Process, Women in Business, Women in Science, and DEI Efforts at SHA. Our alumnae panelists brought valuable experience and wisdom in all areas, and we are delighted to share some of the take-aways with all our SHA community.

**Use your voice.** At SHA you learned to have confidence in yourself and use your voice. Seek to continually understand, reflect, and grow. Speak up when you are called upon to lead the way, break barriers and promote social justice.

**Explore.** Career growth is not always linear and there are no right answers. The country and the world are big places. Look for opportunities outside of New England, if possible, to have new adventures that will help you grow and understand your strengths and interests. You will always be able to come back home!

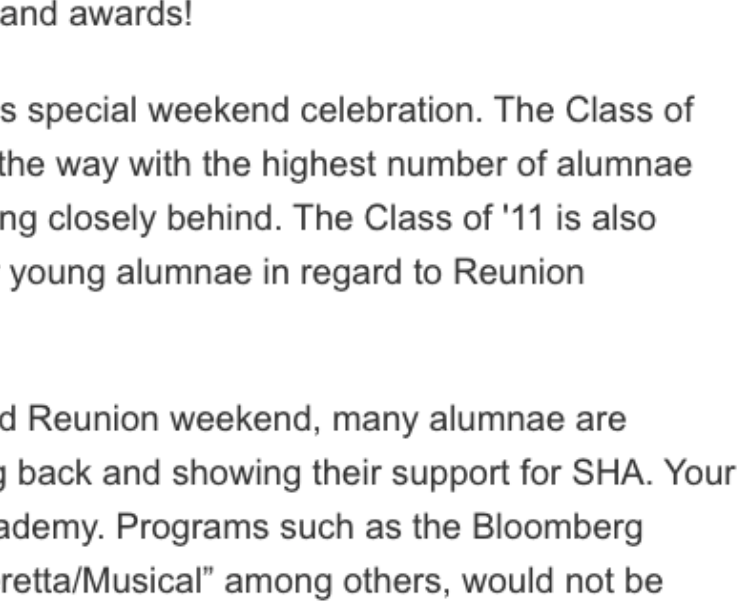
**Be curious.** No matter what field or career path you might be intrigued by, learn all you can about it and get first-hand experience with it. Practice active listening and ask questions. If a particular choice or career path ends up not being for you, keep trying new things until you find your path.

**Connect and grow your network.** SHA not only provides you with a strong four-year education, but it also continues to support you through an equally strong network of SHA women. Your network will become one of your greatest assets and open doors throughout your career. Your fellow SHA alumnae are on LinkedIn... connect and support one-another.

**Keep an open mind.** At the Academy and beyond, you will meet people with different experiences and approaches to life. Try and be receptive to one's differences and open to how it can positively impact you.

**Do all things with joy and purpose.** Enthusiasm and a strong sense of purpose will point you in the right way and ensure you always do the right thing. Follow the moral compass you were taught at SHA. It will always serve you well.

### Young Alum Spotlight



Alex Rallo '11, recently moved back to Connecticut from NYC to work at Cigna Investment Management and be closer to her family and friends. Alex credits SHA as creating a strong foundation for her adult years both personally and professionally.

#### What has your path been like since graduation?

After graduating from SHA in 2011, I went to Georgetown University and majored in Economics with a minor in Science, Technology, and International Affairs. After graduation, I moved to NYC and began my career working for Deutsche Bank's Wealth Management division, lending to ultra-high-net-worth individuals and their businesses. After nearly 5 years in NYC and 3 years in a long-distance relationship (with a Notre Dame alum!), I moved back to Connecticut to be closer to friends and family and joined Cigna Investment Management, and focused on originating debt and equity real estate investments.

#### How did SHA prepare you for college and beyond?

Even though I work in finance and spend much of my day with numbers, I also spend a significant portion of my day writing briefs and pitching deals, and I credit SHA with teaching me how to communicate succinctly. Somewhere between in-class discussions in courses like AP Government, writing classes like Honors Composition, and extracurriculars like Peer Connection, SHA taught me how to articulate my ideas and beliefs through writing, spoken word, and even body language. The power of communication is immeasurable, and SHA truly created a strong foundation for my adult years both personally and professionally.

#### What advice would you give a SHA student today?

It is perfectly okay to change your path along the way. I spent my first two years in college pursuing a Chemistry major, but after a few job opportunities I had, I realized that my heart was in business, and I pivoted. You may not know all the answers when you make a switch, but do your research, ask questions, and proceed down your new path with conviction.

#### Why do you stay connected and support SHA?

Sacred Heart played a critical role in shaping who I am today and introducing me to my closest friends. The strong bonds formed at SHA are one of the greatest blessings in my life.



**CLASSES 1980-2016**  
Saturday, September 18, 2021  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**CLASSES 1950-1976**  
Sunday, September 19, 2021  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM



*We look forward to seeing you on campus.*

## Philanthropy Spotlight: Reunion 2021

We look forward to kicking-off our 75th Anniversary celebrations with our first ever two-day Reunion celebrating our alumnae and the SHA legacy you represent. This is a special occasion in Sacred Heart Academy Reunion history!

On September 18-19, 2021, we will be welcoming all classes ending in 0s, 5s, 1s, and 6s - including the first two graduating classes of '50 and '51. With more than 150 alumnae already registered, we will be gathering under a tent on the front lawn with catered meals, campus tours, Mass on Sunday and Reunion remarks and awards!

There is still time to [register](#) and be part of this special weekend celebration. The Class of '71, celebrating their 50th Reunion, is leading the way with the highest number of alumnae registered to date, with the Class of '70 following closely behind. The Class of '11 is also showing a strong competitive spirit among our young alumnae in regard to Reunion registration to date.

In addition to registering and planning to attend Reunion weekend, many alumnae are celebrating by continuing the tradition of giving back and showing their support for SHA. Your gift sustains us and builds the future of the Academy. Programs such as the Bloomberg Finance program or the Shubert Theater "Opera/Musical" among others, would not be possible without the philanthropic support of our alumnae community. Your gift directly funds a SHA girl helping her become an Excelsior woman.

We can't wait to see everyone soon!

### Sacred Heart Academy



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