Leading with Love

Raising a teenager can be tough, but so can being a teenager. In 2021, teens are contending with unprecedented pressure during a critical stage in their personal development. The incessant comparison to others via social media and the pressure to impress has blurred the importance of healthy habits, emotional growth and self-discovery. As the world becomes more digitally connected, many teens feel more isolated and anxious than ever.

In a recent Parent Speaker Series, in collaboration with Notre Dame High School and in celebration of our joint 75th Anniversary, Father Robert Lerner, Chaplain at St. Thomas Moore, spoke about the important role that Catholic schools play in the lives of our students in today’s anxious driven culture. His inspirational words were a testament to our school’s mission and values.

As an independent, Catholic college-preparatory school we are known for an exceptional academic program. But we also have a sacred mission that is even more profound to educate and nurture the whole person. This mission transcends academics with a tremendous impact on the lives of the young women that we guide during these formative years. As we prepare our students to navigate life with confidence and compassion, we lead with love and nurture the intrinsic values of cultivating meaningful relationships, knowledge of and faith in God.

Along with parents, we are privileged to support our girls on their journey as they become Excelsior Women, ready to take on the world. For this opportunity we are truly blessed.
On a beautiful September weekend, Sacred Heart Academy held Reunion 2021, inviting members of all classes ending in 0s, 5s, 1s, and 6s who graduated between 1950 and 2016 to gather and reminisce about their shared alma mater.

Several students volunteered to take alumnae around the school and show them how much SHA has changed through the years. Bryahna Bailey ’23 was moved by “all of the stories that the alumnae remembered from their time at SHA,” and was especially surprised when members from the class of 1980 shared SHA’s mascot was not always a shark. They used to be the Pacers, symbolized by a heart with legs! Another student volunteer, Brianni Cabrera ’22 said “I enjoyed hearing about all the things our alumnae accomplished after graduating from SHA.”

Along with leading tours, students performed on Saturday with the Madrigal Choir. The choristers were overjoyed to see the alums singing along and smiling at them. Mrs. Mehinovic, SHA’s choir director, told the audience she hopes that the singing could help awaken their memories of SHA... Their performance did just that. This was especially evident during the singing of the Alma Mater. The alumnae rose from their seats, held their heads high, and sang together proudly. Despite coming from many different generations, this SHA song clearly bonded them.

“It was inspiring to see all the alumnae from various years come together and enjoy each other’s company” said Chiamaka Alino ’22, “You could tell they were happy to be there, which made me excited to perform for their reunion.”

Reunion Weekend was a beautiful event for students and alumnae to have been a part of. As each class joined together to celebrate their reunion, it was evident that the strong bonds formed at SHA truly can never be broken.

SHA Musical's Return to the Shubert

As we celebrate our 75th anniversary this academic year, we acknowledge that as long as there has been a SHA, there has been a musical. Following a year where our annual Fall musical was pushed to the Spring and unable to take place at the Shubert Theatre, we are thrilled things are beginning to feel normal once again, starting with this longstanding tradition.
This year’s *Holiday Inn*, directed by MaryLee Delaney and produced by Kim Curbow ‘81 will be taking place at the beautiful Shubert, December 3rd and 4th with three shows. Coupled with the excitement surrounding our return to this stage and it being a milestone year for our community, this is a performance you are not going to want to miss.

Brooke Sobolisky ‘22, Juliana Colonis ‘22, Imani Okech ‘23 and Emily Hortillo ‘23 are our leads this year among many other talented SHA girls singing and dancing. We cannot wait to watch all their hard work and dedication pay off on stage just in time for the SHAlidays.

Purchase Your Holiday Inn Tickets Here!

### Continuing our Excellence in Sports: Introducing Two New Coaches

Under the guidance of Athletic Director, Ray Degnan, we are always looking to expand and improve our sports programs. This year, we are delighted to welcome two varsity coaches - Everson Maciel who will lead our soccer team and Maegan Rodriguez ’12, coming back to her alma mater as the softball coach.

#### Meet Everson Maciel:

Originally from Brazil, Everson played soccer at Quinnipiac University, as a student. Upon earning a BA in marketing and MBA in business, he continued to play professionally. Eventually he returned to New England and started the Everson Soccer Academy, training boys and girls in the greater New Haven area since 2005, specializing in both outdoor and futsal (indoor soccer).

Earlier this year, Everson had the opportunity of a lifetime to play at the 2021 CONCACAF Futsal Championship in Guatemala with the United States national team. The one catch? He had just accepted the head coaching spot for Sacred Heart Academy’s varsity soccer team. Fortunately, Assistant Coach Jessica Hauser, a former Everson Academy player herself, filled in and helped lead the team to their first six wins of the season.

Everson credits the players for their understanding and assuming leadership during his tournament. The varsity program, already strong in recent years, excelled to new levels this season. Coach Everson and the team made SHA history, finishing the regular season undefeated, having had their first loss in the SCC semi-final championship game against Mercy.

We are delighted to welcome Coach Maciel to SHA!

#### Maegan Rodriguez’s Return to SHA:

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Maegan Rodriguez ’12 continued her journey as a student-athlete playing softball at Western Connecticut State University which earning her a B.A. in psychology. At Duquesne University, Maegan completed an M.S. in Speech Pathology. Maegan works at the Hospital of Central Connecticut as a Speech pathologist.

Maegan will return to her alma mater, as a softball coach this spring 2022! Maegan credits SHA for teaching her time management, accountability, and to learn from her successes and failures. Her hope is to instill the same essential life lessons she learned here to the students she coaches.

“Beyond her unquestionable knowledge of the game, both as a player and coach, Maegan possesses many abstract and intangible skills necessary to successfully coach the youth of today. Maegan is a great leader, she communicates well, she connects with her players on multiple levels, she is both compassionate and passionate. The best compliment I can give is my confidence that we have the best person in place to ensure Sacred Heart Academy softball is a force and an immense source of pride for the coming season and many, many more after that.”

- Ray Degnan, Athletic Director

#GivingTuesday
November 30, 2021

Philanthropy Spotlight: Giving Tuesday

Every Tuesday following Thanksgiving, communities globally partake in a day of giving back. We ask you to think about how Sacred Heart Academy has impacted you and your families and to consider choosing us as one of the organizations you support this #GivingTuesday on November 30.

This year is a very special year for the Academy as we celebrate 75 years of providing an Excelsior education to young women. Help us reach our goal this #GivingTuesday by securing 750 Annual Fund donors in honor of our 75th year!

Make Your Giving Tuesday Gift Today!
Young Alum Spotlight

Abby Kelly ’17, graduated from Brown University in May of this year and is starting a career in the field of child development with plans to pursue a graduate degree.

What has your path been like since graduation?

After graduating from SHA in 2017, I began my studies at Brown University, splitting my time between English and other humanities courses and the physical, psychological, and life sciences. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in May 2021, I wrote my Honors Thesis on the salvific power of littleness and the parent-child bond as seen in Graham Greene’s “Catholic Trilogy” through the lens of Bowlby and Ainsworth’s attachment theory. Currently, I work in the field of child development; I teach social, emotional, and language skills to children with autism and developmental disorders. I plan to pursue a graduate degree in the mental health field with hopes to integrate the Catholic faith and mental health practice.

How did SHA prepare you for college and beyond?

SHA fostered a love of learning and a joyful commitment to truth. Rigorous math classes taught me that struggle and sacrifice are vital and beautiful parts of growth. I cherish the treasure of grace received in theology classes like Mr. Bradley’s junior year course on Catholic social teaching, ethics, and natural law. Foreign language and history teachers emphasized the wonders of memory, communication, and tradition—all of which are essential for answering life’s questions. English and science teachers alike demonstrated the importance of examining our lives from all angles. SHA teachers, faculty, and mentors sparked a joy for the intellectual and spiritual life that was strengthened by the relationships with my peers. I believe the tremendous zeal for teaching and learning that radiated through SHA could only be animated by the Apostles’ devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—for all of this, I am grateful.

What advice would you give a SHA student today?

Keep growing, seek answers to your questions, assume the best in others, and strive for a life of virtue and excellence.

Why do you give back to SHA?

It’s hard not to treasure and support the school that gave me a love of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a commitment to excellence, and a desire to serve others moment to moment. My time on the Benham Street hill was one of many joys and indispensable growth; by striving to live by SHA’s Catholic values, I hope I can share the gifts I’ve received with others.
Sacred Heart Academy

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021 AT 7PM

To Register,

CLICK HERE

Sacred Heart Academy

265 Benham Street, Hamden, CT 06514-2833