



St. Benedict's

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



FORGING COMMON GROUND

The Hive and
Rae Kushner Yeshiva
High School
Build Bridges of
Understanding



THEMOMENT

Back in the Game

Gray Bee basketball had a delayed start to its season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but varsity players got back in the game on February 4, beating St. Joseph of Metuchen, 75-68 in Dalton Gymnasium. Several contests followed including a 68-58 decision against Olympus High School captured in The Moment.

Home games are closed to the public, but fans can live stream games for a small fee at nfhnetwork.com. All players, coaches and referees must test negative before each game. The COVID-19 testing program for Athletics was made possible by the generous donors who have designated "Athletics COVID Testing" when making their gift to the Annual Fund at sbp.org/give.

For more news on winter sports, see the Athletics section on page 11 of this issue.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Magazine for Alumni, Parents and Friends of St. Benedict's Prep

2. The BUZZ: News from The Hive

The latest news, progress and happenings from 520 MLK Boulevard.

4. Cover Story: Forging Common Ground

For the better part of a year, students from St. Benedict's and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS) have been engaged in hard conversations about racism, anti-Semitism and becoming the change they want to see in the world.

8. After Class

Brian Kirschbaum '00 came to St. Benedict's Prep in 1994 to play sports. He talks about his six years at The Hive and what being a Gray Bee taught him about life and his own Jewish identity.

10. The Arts and Athletics

Classical pianist Vincent Scalera '71 plays on in the pandemic. And a look at winter sports.

12. Advancement

Student/Partner Alliance mentorships have a lasting impact on Gray Bees, plus a \$2.6 million bequest that started with "60 Minutes" and plans are underway for the return to The Trail.

16. Brothers Forever: Class Notes and Events

20. The Benedict's Man Who Didn't Go to Benedict's: Remembering William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91.





St. Benedict's
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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On the cover: Stephane Benoit '22 and RKYHS junior A.J. Kaiser participate in the interfaith seminar between St. Benedict's Prep and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS).

Follow us on



GREETINGS



Better Days

We've known for a long time our community is a sign of possibility and example in which people can live in love and communion despite their differences. The world seems to be catching on to this since an interfaith seminar that brings kids

from St. Benedict's Prep and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS) together is gaining a lot of attention in the media.

I'm grateful Rabbi Eliezer Rubin reached out and asked us to participate in this seminar, and to Brian Kirschbaum '00 and his family for helping to facilitate the match. There is a lot of talk these days about unifying our country, but we can't come together in any meaningful or lasting way unless we understand the reality and suffering of others. The seminar has been eye-opening for both groups of kids. Little by little they've forged connection and understanding even though they may not agree on every issue. That's a lesson and example the world desperately needs right now.

The COVID-19 pandemic dictated much of our lives this year, but our resilient Gray Bee community has shown us how to "Stay Up." Vincent Scalera '71, Garry Dial '72 and Cameron Bernard Jones '06 all found ways to keep learning as performing artists and winter sports teams improvised their seasons. I'm happy to report that we began bringing more students on the Property in March, and two classes of Gray Bees, freshmen and UD1s, are planning to be back on The Trail in May.

When Summer Phase begins in July, our plan is to be 100% in-person. We need to be physically present to accompany the kids we serve.

Even as we keep moving "Forward, Always Forward," the painful losses we've suffered as a community are ever present. We lost two good friends recently, William H. Connolly Jr. H'91 and Katharine Thornton. They were true gifts to this community and remind us that we need to love and take care of one another.

Courage,

Edwin D. Leahy

Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63
Headmaster



NJIT TO AWARD DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS TO HEADMASTER

NJIT will award an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, to Headmaster Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63 at its Commencement on May 18. The university awards honorary degrees to individuals whose accomplishments are of such excellence that they provide inspiration to NJIT graduates.

NJIT is the fourth institution of higher education to award an honorary degree to Fr. Edwin. The Headmaster holds a Doctor of Humane Letters from Rutgers University and from Saint Peter's University, and a Doctor of Laws from St. John University, in Collegeville, Minn.



Since its founding in 2006, San Miguel Academy in Newburgh, N.Y., has sent approximately 25 graduates to St. Benedict's Prep. Pictured in the Class of 2014 is Saeed Adams '18 (front row, second from the right), who is now studying at Kean University.

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

St. Benedict's Prep and San Miguel Academy in Newburgh, N.Y. may be 70 miles apart, but the two institutions share a similar mission: helping kids from marginalized communities get a fair shot at a better life. In the past decade, San Miguel, a private, faith-based school serving boys in grades 5-8, has sent nearly 25 of its graduates to St. Benedict's Prep thanks to an enduring partnership established between the two schools.

Founded in 2006, San Miguel set out to break the cycle of poverty by providing educational opportunity to boys from underserved families in the City of Newburgh. With an enrollment of 60 students, the school prepares middle schoolers to leave a city where opportunities are few and the crime rate is high.

Most graduates attend college preparatory schools like St. Benedict's Prep. Fr. Mark Connell, founder and executive director, likes to partner with secondary schools that can provide a boarding option. "It's important to get our students out of this environment," he explained. "Our graduates who move on to a boarding setting are on a far better trajectory."

Angel Cruz '14 and Jesus Cruz '14 were the first San Miguel graduates to arrive at The Hive in 2010. Currently, six San Miguel alumni attend St. Benedict's and Fr. Mark is pleased to report the first acceptance for the Class of 2025. San Miguel graduates live at Leahy House, though all are learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dean of Administration Michael Scanlan H'97 describes the relationship as mutually beneficial. "Mission-wise we are very much aligned," he said. "Fr. Mark knows the families well. When there is an issue we have to resolve or a student is struggling, he stays involved with kids through college."

The partnership extends to the financing of a St. Benedict's education as well. San Miguel makes a contribution toward each graduate's tuition and fees, and the students are also supported through the St. Benedict's financial aid program. "From the moment St. Benedict's heard our story, they opened their hearts to us," said Fr. Mark. "What is being done for our boys is extraordinary."

BENEDICT'S BOARD WELCOMES STACY ALLEN



The St. Benedict's Board of Trustees pulled out a chair to welcome its first female Trustee in more than a decade last September. Stacy Allen, partner and chief risk officer at Lord Abbett & Co., LLC, is an accomplished executive with more than 30 years' experience in the field of financial services. While she excels as a professional, it's her commitment to mentorship and lifting others to reach their full potential that captured the unanimous approval of the Board.

The St. Benedict's Board of Trustees pulled out a chair to welcome its first female Trustee in more than a decade last September. Stacy Allen, partner and chief risk officer at Lord Abbett & Co., LLC, is an accomplished

Ms. Allen's connection to St. Benedict's began in the 1990s. In her first post-college job with Prudential Financial, she mentored a Newark grammar school student who later attended The Hive. She's been devoted to the student and School ever since. "She will be a spectacular Trustee," said Nominating Committee Chair Peter Wilderotter '72. "Stacy struck us immediately with her relationship with the school, mentoring of a student and willingness to roll up her sleeves and help us raise money."

Ms. Allen follows in only a few female footsteps, two of which belonged to Jean Leahy, mother of Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63, and a long-serving, impactful member of the Board.

THE HIVE PLANS FOR 100% IN-PERSON LEARNING

Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 referenced archaic TV test patterns of the 1950s and 60s in a Virtual Town Hall on February 25. The Headmaster's point? Illustrating that a year of virtual class options would conclude at the end of the 2020-21 academic year.

Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 made one thing abundantly clear at a Virtual Town Hall held on February 25. When the academic year ends on June 4, "We will have concluded our broadcasting year," Fr. Edwin told the families of St. Benedict's students. The Headmaster went on to inform attendees that if they expect students to log on to online classes when Summer Phase starts up in July, all that will appear is a metaphoric test pattern used by broadcasting companies in the early years of television. In other words, St. Benedict's does not plan to offer any virtual options when the 2021-22 academic year begins for the Middle and Prep Divisions.

"We build community. We tend to guys' and girls' hearts, develop leaders and do academics," said Fr. Edwin. "To do all of that we need a presence, and we need to be with one another. We will be back on the Property."

The plan to resume 100% in-person learning is based on the extensive coronavirus testing St. Benedict's has conducted on the Property since December. Nearly 3,000 tests were administered to students, faculty and family members and the positivity rates were less than 3% as of late February. In early March, the School began bringing more students back on to the Property. This included Middle Division students, freshmen in the Boy's Prep Division and members of multiple

sports teams who have been practicing and competing in a limited number of games, meets and matches. A Leadership Expedition was also organized for student-leaders in the Class of 2022 and the Backpacking Project is moving ahead for two classes, freshmen and UD1s (see "High Point Here We Come" on page 15).

"The more isolated the kids are, the more dangerous it is for them," emphasized Associate Headmaster for Student Life Ivan Lamourt, Psy.D. '82 in the Town Hall. "Kids need to be in community and connected to one another. You can trust us to do everything we can to make this work."

On the admissions front, K-12 enrollment is projected to be at capacity next year. With 50 freshmen registered, more than double the number of this year's freshman class, the Girl's Prep Division has a waiting list. Inquiries and applications for the Boy's Prep Division, Middle Division and Elementary Division are keeping pace with or are ahead of last year. "We anticipate we will have more than 900 kids entrusted to our care next year," Fr. Edwin stated, reminding families that they need to be on board with the School's plan for 100% in-person learning. "There has been no drop off in applications or enrollment. The spots will go to people who want to be here."



VIRTUAL CONVO WILL CONTINUE TO BROADCAST

St. Benedict's Prep students may no longer have the option of online classes when Summer Phase resumes, however alumni and friends will be able to stream Convocation and participate in the live chat. "We plan to continue streaming Convocation when we get back in-person," said Director of Technology Dexter Lopina '98 at the Virtual Town Hall on February 25. Mr. Lopina reported that 150 or more alumni and friends have attended Virtual Convo consistently since the first broadcast aired on March 16, 2020. "It's brought us closer together than we were before."

Further details on Convocation broadcasts will be forthcoming in July, before the start of Summer Phase.



FORGING COMMON

How can the country become more united and less divided? While adults have plenty of opinions on bringing the nation together, students from St. Benedict's Prep and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS) in Livingston, N.J. are doing the actual work of bridging divisions. Since last fall, 27 students from the two schools have met online bi-weekly, for a voluntary interfaith seminar that connects students of different faiths, races and backgrounds, by examining past and present issues surrounding racism and anti-Semitism.

"You have to get comfortable being uncomfortable. That's exactly what this seminar is about," said Cristine Alvarez '22. That's an apt description of the course, which is team-taught by Stephen Adubato, religion teacher and director of Gray Bee Ministry, and Deborah Orens, an attorney-turned-educator who teaches English and Law and Literature at RKYHS. Participants have read and researched a wide range of social issues covering voter suppression, housing inequality, hate crimes, policing, and criminal justice reform.

They have delved into philosophical and moral questions presented in works by Elie Wiesel, Hannah Arendt and James Baldwin, watched documentaries, and conducted a virtual question and answer session with U.S. Senator Cory Booker.

They've studied historic incidents fueled by hate: the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre that destroyed a thriving Black community and killed many African Americans, and *Kristallnacht*, a violent attack on Jewish businesses and synagogues sanctioned by the Nazi government in 1938. Students also discovered how the Third Reich looked to America's Jim Crow laws to enact the Nuremberg Laws that laid the groundwork for the Holocaust and murder of six million Jews.

"You have to get comfortable being uncomfortable. That's exactly what this seminar is about."

SHARING DIFFERENT REALITIES

But it's really in the conversations about present day issues and the sharing of students' personal experiences that connection and understanding has been forged. Newark and Livingston are just 13 miles apart, but it's evident to everyone involved that the day-to-day realities of the two groups of students are quite different.

"I do feel like the life I live is somewhat sheltered," explained RKYHS junior Rebecca Arian on her reasons for joining the seminar. "No matter how much I read the news, or watch documentaries,

Through interfaith dialogue around issues of racism and anti-Semitism, 27 kids from St. Benedict's Prep and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School are setting an example the country can follow.

GROUND

or try to get involved in the community, I'll really never know what it's like to experience racism firsthand. I do feel like it's opened my eyes to the stories of people with different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. It's a way to bridge the gap between our two communities, not to compare our struggles of anti-Semitism and racism, but to understand the two of them in relation to each other."

Cristine, who has lived in Newark her entire life and attended Catholic schools since the age of two, describes a different bubble. "I knew nothing about Semitism let alone anti-Semitism," she stated. "I was curious and also felt guilty that I wasn't meeting my responsibility as a teenager and as a young Latina woman. I did some self-evaluating and asked, 'What am I doing to bring about change?' The answer was nothing. I needed to get enrolled in the seminar and I'm very happy I joined."

CONNECTING TWO COMMUNITIES

The relationship between St. Benedict's and RKYHS pre-dates the academic seminar. In 2019, RKYHS Head of School Rabbi Eliezer Rubin wanted to expand his school's outreach efforts and contacted Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63. Both institutions belong to the New

Jersey Association of Independent Schools (NJAIS). Soon after, Rabbi Rubin accepted an invitation to speak to St. Benedict's students, Fr. Edwin spoke at RKYHS, and groups of kids from both schools met up on a few occasions prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's a way to bridge the gap between our two communities, not to compare our struggles of anti-Semitism and racism, but to understand the two of them in relation to one another."

When RKYHS parent Ariel Nelson approached Rabbi Rubin about establishing an interfaith collaboration to honor his late mother, the idea for the seminar was born. Eva Nelson was a Holocaust survivor and dedicated public school teacher who influenced generations of students with her encouragement and by educating them on the horrors of genocide. In polarizing times, the seminar was a way to foster stronger ties between the two communities and set an example for others to follow.





Seminar participants from St. Benedict's and RKYHS have discussed a range of social issues on Zoom since September. When COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, they hope to meet in person to further their connection.

Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63 and Rabbi Eliezer Rubin began a friendship in 2019 that helped jump-start the interfaith seminar.

BENEDICTINE HOSPITALITY

St. Benedict's religion teacher Mr. Aduato was eager to be involved. Interfaith dialogue, he says, is a manifestation of Benedictine tradition and values. "The whole history of the monastery is marked by Benedictine hospitality. I remind our kids often, 'It's about more than being tolerant and open to others.' We welcome whoever is in the area, because we can find God in our neighbor even if they are from a different city or religion."

The Benedictine principle of welcoming people of other faiths is practiced through other partnerships that include the Noor-Ul-Iman School, an Islamic school in Monmouth Junction, and the Amal School in Israel.

Stephane Benoit '22 looks forward to the

bi-weekly seminars, which take place on Thursday evenings. "Having uncomfortable or honest conversations after the end of a long day was difficult at first, but I got used to it. I like learning about the experiences of other students and gaining a better understanding of people who are different than me."

As students shared their lived experiences on Zoom, abstract issues became more concrete. Stephane recounted the topic of defunding the police last fall. One St. Benedict's classmate described police response times of 20-30 minutes when a crime was committed in a park across the street from a precinct. RKYHS students, in contrast, shared that police were generally very responsive to threats made against synagogues. "The discussion was about why a predominately

"Taking this class, I get to hear how other people experienced racism and it makes me feel like I'm not alone."

white neighborhood and a predominately Black neighborhood have these different responses," Stephane recalled. "It was very eye opening."

Having experienced a racist incident as an eighth grader at a predominately white private school, Stephane says he has also learned from his fellow Gray Bees. "Taking this class, I get to hear how other people experienced racism and it makes me feel like I'm not alone."

STANDING UP TO INJUSTICE

RKYHS juniors Rebecca Arian and Matthew Mendelsohn observed that both groups have a shared sense of urgency about standing up to





injustice. During a discussion about the trial of Adolf Eichmann, the architect of Jewish mass murder during the Holocaust, “We talked a lot about the dangers of passivity,” said Rebecca. “These horrendous war crimes were justified as, ‘I was just following orders.’ While that might seem like it leans toward the issue of anti-Semitism, I really felt like the two issues met in the middle. I thought about all the ways that passivity affects both of us and how dangerous it can be.”

Discussions about the bystander effect, says Matthew, “Really brought up the historic connections between the Black and Jewish communities, specifically in the Civil Rights era. We’ve faded away from that and were discussing the reasoning behind that, and how we get back to those historic connections that united us and made us powerful by being able to stand up and not being bystanders.”

“It takes time and effort to find these similarities and connect with people who are different than you to enact change in an area in which you agree.”

Cristine Alvarez, president of Gray Bee Ministry, took a step in that direction recently. On a rare outing to the American Dream mall, she noticed people staring at Orthodox Jews and told them to stop. When a friend questioned why the men wore skullcaps, Cristine explained the significance of the *kippah* and that covering one’s head is a way to show reverence for God. Reflecting on the encounter, she added, “I want to put myself in a position when I hear or see things that offend different groups of people, I step up even if I


get backlash. In doing so, you hope people get an understanding so they don’t do it again, or pass it along to inform others.”

BEING THE CHANGE THEY WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD

With social distancing protocols still in place, seminar participants looked forward to forging stronger connections through small group research projects that they’ll present this spring. All believe the time they’ve spent together is valuable and worth emulating. It all starts with listening to each other.

“Our group is seeing what similarities we share and what we can learn from each other,” said RKYHS junior Maya Weisberg. “It doesn’t mean we are going to agree on everything, but the fact that we are there every [other] week — trying to listen to each other and not trying to argue with each other — it would be a great thing to see more people practice that.”

“It takes time and effort to find these similarities and connect with people who are different than you to enact change in an area in which you agree,” said Matthew. “But if you’re willing to put in that time and spend the hours we have getting to know people, hearing their stories, listening to their beliefs before responding and then formulating your opinion — and trying to work with them rather than against them — you can get a lot more done.”

“I think what other schools can learn from this seminar is to sit down and talk about uncomfortable and difficult topics,” said Stephane. “Our country is divided by that. Schools should institute this, because topics can be shared easily without hatred towards one another, simply because they don’t share the same beliefs. We can be the change.” 

THE MEDIA TAKES NOTICE

The partnership between St. Benedict’s Prep and Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS) has garnered local, regional and national attention from a number of media outlets.



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How did you come to St. Benedict's Prep?

Unfortunately, the story of how I came to St. Benedict's lacks much excitement. I grew up in Livingston, N.J., attending public school. I was on a well-worn path of playing sports, working hard, getting good grades and going on to college. However, whether it was by luck or fate, I wandered through the doors of 520 Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard on a whim and a recommendation from a friend with whom I played soccer. Paraphrasing an exchange between Alice and the Cheshire Cat in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." Prior to attending St. Benedict's, I was on a very straight path to SOMEWHERE, but what really brought me to The Hive was the desire to do things differently. It wasn't the most obvious choice, but I found a very welcoming community in Newark, N.J.

You weren't accepted to The Hive right away. What happened?

The first people I met when I applied were Fr. Ed and Mrs. Faulkner, who ran what was known as the Lower Division at the time. As a twelve-year-old Jewish kid, who had never spent time with a priest before, you can imagine how daunting it would have been to speak with Fr. Ed. However, the nerves were short lived because, as experienced by anyone who has ever met Fr. Ed, he has a way of putting you at ease quickly. He was so engaging and you could immediately tell he cared deeply about the students. And it turns out, Fr. Ed and I have something in common, neither of us got into St. Benedict's on our first pass. For me, I think the School was testing my belief system, "Does he really want to be here?"

What St. Benedict's Taught Me About My Jewish Identity

Brian Kirschbaum '00 spent six years at St. Benedict's Prep, commuting from Livingston, N.J., to Newark every day. He shares his journey to The Hive, what it was like to be one of a few Jewish students at a Benedictine, Catholic school, and how the experience informed the person he is today.

As a kid who grew up not failing too much, it was disheartening. But it forced me to think, "Do I want to go to St. Benedict's?" I learned quickly that, "Benedict's Hates a Quitter." I went back to meet with the two of them to understand what was going on. The answer ultimately came from Fr. Ed, who said, "Let him come to Summer Phase and experience what it means to be part of the Benedict's community. If he makes it through and comes back, great, he's here to stay." So, I barely survived Summer Phase and now over 25 years later, I look at that moment as a lesson in resilience.

Once you were actually enrolled, what were your first impressions of the School?

My transition to St. Benedict's was not easy. I was thrown into a place that was so different from where I came. Not just how people looked, but also how different students' backgrounds were from mine, how much responsibility students were given and how honest conversations were. Such stark differences can be scary. My initial reaction was to be quiet, listen, develop relationships and prove myself. The hospitality of the Benedict's community of faculty, student-leaders and those in the Abbey made this transition much easier.

How did being at St. Benedict's impact your understanding of Benedictine values and your own faith?

I get this question a lot when high school comes up in conversation. People say, "Wait a minute. Aren't you Jewish? How did that all play out?" I grew up attending a Reform* Jewish synagogue.

**The Reform domination of Judaism emphasizes ethical tradition over the obligations of Jewish law. Conservative Judaism views Jewish law as obligatory, though, in practice, the observance of ritual and practice can vary widely.*

My family was Jewish mostly by way of tradition, less so by faith. We celebrated holidays, went to services, and I attended Hebrew School. I became a Bar Mitzvah actually while I was at St. Benedict's, which was fun since it was the first time my entire class had been to a Bar Mitzvah. Fr. Ed was there, too, driving a bus full of Benedict's kids to Livingston.

Still, faith wasn't a core part of who I was. I've always been very reliant on reason and rational conclusions and it's not easy to accept something with little evidence. St. Benedict's forced me to consider the importance of faith in one's life.

How so?

My first religion class in seventh grade was taught by Sister Geraldine. She looked to me as the lone Jewish person in the class to be the foremost scholar on the Old Testament. I took six years of religion and most of it entailed studying the Old Testament. For me, religion class forced me to understand differences and understand how people think. Being at a Benedictine, Catholic school never felt uncomfortable, which is what people always assume. St. Benedict's forced me to think critically about the importance religion has on your life. And it forced me to think about religion as being part of the Benedict's community. Fast forward to today, my wife, my family and I attend Conservative* synagogue in Bethesda. We are part of a Jewish community and Judaism is part of our identity.

You have a family connection with Ariel Nelson, the Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School (RKYHS) parent who made the interfaith seminar with St. Benedict's possible. It's also our cover story for this issue. What do you think the two schools can learn from one another?

As a country, we remain divided, in many ways, and unfortunately, we have a tough time finding ways to have honest discussions. The seminar gives the structure and framework to have that conversation. It helps to provide the historical basis for racial and religious differences through readings, while also offering a safe space for conversation about such differences. These kids are setting an example for the world to follow. They are showing that strangers from very different backgrounds can in fact break down the divides that exist between them and have honest conversations.

When Ariel Nelson asked for my perspective prior to the start of the seminar, I said, "If the goal is to create a common understanding of racism and anti-Semitism, foster open dialogue, and engage in honest discussions with people who are different, there is no better community with whom to do that than St. Benedict's. Because that's exactly what St. Benedict's is trying to do every day."

You did get to play soccer and also wrestle at St. Benedict's. Were there other experiences you remember as pivotal?


So much of my high school life and success at St. Benedict's went beyond academics. It was more about maturing as an individual. I learned respect, resilience and what it means to be a part of a community. In regard to respect, I learned a lot about listening and getting to know people before making judgments. Doing so first starts with respecting yourself. Resilience is something you learn pretty quickly at St. Benedict's. There was a painting of a tree near the cafeteria that said, "Cut me down and I'll grow back." I remember seeing that painting every day. Every day was about learning what you are achieving in that moment and how you can do better. And then obviously community is one of the most important things St. Benedict's creates for its students. As a student and member of the community, you learn quickly that your community is impacted by every individual and not just one individual. You are taught that it's your obligation, not choice, to help the members of your community succeed.

What was it like going from St. Benedict's to Princeton?

I was well prepared academically and I had built the maturity and confidence to thrive as a student-athlete at Princeton. Most importantly, my perspectives were forever influenced by my experiences of being a member of the Benedict's community.

You serve on the Finance Committee. Why is it important to you to stay involved with St. Benedict's at this level?

For me it was a pretty easy decision. No matter how many constraints in life I have, if someone from St. Benedict's calls, I'm going to respond. The School influenced so much of my perspective on life. My hope is that St. Benedict's can be a model for the rest of society.

I think it's also important to have young alumni involved at the leadership level of the School. These perspectives are essential in supporting the future success of St. Benedict's, and keeping the community actively thinking about the best way to grow and evolve. 

Brian Kirschbaum '00 is a partner at Astra Capital Management. A 2004 graduate of Princeton University, he holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School. Mr. Kirschbaum lives with his wife, Dalia Bach Kirschbaum, and three children in the Washington D.C. area.

VINCENT SCALERA '71 PLAYS ON

Persisting as an artist during a global pandemic



Vincent Scalera '71 with Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli.

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought life to a halt last year, world-renowned pianist **Vincent Scalera '71** did the things a lot of people did to stay busy. He cooked. Cleaned. And purged a lot of clutter from his home in Milan. "Then, I decided I should take advantage of this time, because I never have enough time to practice, or discover new music, or work on my piano," said Mr. Scalera, who tours often and teaches at the academy of Teatro alla Scala.

Since La Scala was closed, and his schedule of concerts and recitals delayed or canceled Mr. Scalera began to work on technique. "When people hear the word technique, they think razzle dazzle, but that wasn't the case for me," he explained. "I was trying to understand why I would get to a certain level when I played certain things but could never get beyond it and perfect it more."

He listened to the 32 Beethoven Sonatas to refresh his memory and watched a lot of YouTube videos by accomplished pianists who gave lessons online. Mr. Scalera, who is known professionally as Vincenzo Scalera, also wanted to work on amplifying his sound. "Watching these great pianist videos, I got some new ideas on how to use my body to create a better sound."

The work paid off. In January, Mr. Scalera appeared in an improvised Met Stars Live concert that was live streamed from Wuppertal, Germany. One review of the streamed Metropolitan Opera concert noted, "On piano Vincenzo Scalera offers an elegant and precise accompaniment that almost manages to forget the absence of the orchestra, which is no small compliment."

AN EXAMPLE TO OUR KIDS

Director of the Drama Guild **Patricia Flynn H'95** spoke with Mr. Scalera shortly before the Met Stars Live concert. When the Gray Bee shared how he was using the newfound downtime to improve his playing, she was duly impressed. "Vincent is such an example to our kids," said Ms. Flynn. "He is a world class pianist and yet he's taking classes and working on his technique. It's so important for students to see accomplished St. Benedict's alumni in any field use their passion and drive to keep studying, to keep seeking out teachers and to always strive to be better."

"I think it's important to persist," said Mr. Scalera. The classical pianist came to St. Benedict's Prep because he loved the theater and started

THERE'S ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN



"It's been a great time to learn," said **Garry Dial '72**, pianist, composer, producer and faculty member at NJCU. With musical venues shut because

of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Dial decided to study Brazilian piano and learn the software

recording program Logic.

He's also been busy teaching (Zoom classes in composition at NJCU and a guest teaching stint in Brazil) and recording. Mr. Dial was in Denmark where he finished recording a new CD for Steeplechase Records, "Living in a Dream We're Not In."

With theaters closed, London-based actor and performer **Cameron Bernard Jones '06**



has used the past year to explore new things, both artistic and non-artistic. "As a lot of the world was standing up to and speaking out

against the racial and social injustices that had happened, I wanted to use my voice to add to

Drama Guild as an eighth grader in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. "Benedict's was important to me," he said. Fr. Eugene Schwarz, O.S.B. and Fr. John Brown, O.S.B. were big influences. "Fr. Eugene Schwarz really opened my eyes to a lot of things about music. Fr. John Brown, who had a wild temper, but was a wonderful musician, was associate pastor at our church in Maplewood, and taught me how to play the organ."


FIRST BIG BREAK

Mr. Scalera was the accompanist for many Drama Guild productions in his years at The Hive. "I didn't apply myself to my studies as well as I could have," he recounted. The Gray Bee was busy. His aim was to attend conservatory after St. Benedict's, and he devoted himself to piano study and attending operas. A big break came just a few years after graduating from the Manhattan School of Music.

Mr. Scalera was working as an assistant conductor for the New Jersey State Opera (NJSO) and teaching in New York when a voice teacher suggested he go to Europe. At the Viotti International Music Competition in Italy, Mr. Scalera was the accompanist for his wife, Paula Keller Scalera, in the voice competition. That led to an invitation to audition for La Scala, and in 1980, Mr. Scalera joined the musical staff of the famed opera house as coach and pianist, assisting conductors Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Gianandrea Gavazzeni and Carlos Kleiber, among others.

During an international career that has spanned more than four decades, Mr. Scalera has appeared in every important music festival from Edinburgh to Istanbul, and accompanied celebrated singers including Carlo Bergonzi, Andrea Bocelli, Montserrat Caballé, José Carreras, Juan Diego Flórez and many others.

With pandemic restrictions easing somewhat, he was in rehearsals for a concert at La Scala in February and preparing to accompany mezzo soprano Anita Rachvelishvili at the ABAO Bilbao Ópera in Spain. Mr. Scalera recorded a CD with the Georgian opera singer for Sony Classical that will be released later this year.

His advice to Gray Bees is to keep working on their talent and passions because you never know when a life changing opportunity will present itself. "If you have a dream you have to go for it," he said. "It's possible. A lot of times you have to be in the right place at the right time. I was lucky. I went to Milan and played in a voice competition. A maestro from La Scala happened to be there, and said, 'You are coming to La Scala to audition.' I was ready because I was prepared." 

the conversation," he said. He participated in virtual concerts and artistic initiatives on social justice causes and continues to write poetry. "It really was about giving my emotions a voice and releasing it all into the atmosphere, even if I didn't have the traditional theater audience. Doing all of this kept my creativity fresh."

Mr. Jones' advice to Drama Guild students is to keep developing as actors, writers and technical crew. "Stay ready so you don't have to get ready. Even when things are slow or seemingly non-existent, keep on top of what you have to offer. Learn something new. Use the time you have now to add to your arsenal and build upon your existing skill set."

GOGRAYBEES

ATHLETICS



WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

FENCING

A little bit of normalcy can do a lot to boost the morale of an athletic team. Gray Bee fencers experienced this firsthand when the team defeated Gill St. Bernard, 16-11, in their first and only match of the season on February 19.

In a typical year, fencing pre-season starts in Summer Phase and by mid-November the team is practicing six days a week to prepare for eight weeks of intense competition. Head Fencing Coach Rich Molina '06 found a way to improvise this year's season in spite of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

"We knew we couldn't have a regular season, so we used the playbook of a lot of fencing clubs," he stated. "We scaled it down to keep everything safe for students and coaches." In January, fencers came on the Property in groups of four and five to work with a coach. "It gave students the opportunity to get out of the house, warm up, practice, and also receive lessons and individualized attention since we were working in small groups," Mr. Molina added.

The team was excited to face off against Gill St. Bernard; an earlier match against another team was called on account of bad weather. "The kids really wanted it," said Mr. Molina. "The team was really happy to compete with other kids and to have that sense of normalcy felt really good."

WRESTLING

The Gray Bee wrestling team is currently working out four days a week, despite a lack of a match being scheduled due to the pandemic. Coach Frank DiPiano, however, is optimistic that a few schools will come calling to get some reps in before the public/parochial postseason commences.

TRACK

The Gray Bees spring track season will open up on April 17, according to the guidelines set by the state. The team has been practicing and is looking forward to competing against their county rivals and seeing how they match up with other state teams when permitted.

Consistency Counts

A look at how Student/Partner Alliance became an enduring presence in the lives of Gray Bees



Anthony Augustin '20, the 74th Presidential Award Winner at St. Benedict's Prep, came to appreciate the mentorship provided by Student/Partner Alliance.

Anthony Augustin '20 is not going to lie. When he was first partnered with his adult mentor, Emmett J. Daly, as part of the Student/Partner Alliance (S/PA) freshman year, "It was awkward for me. Mr. Daly didn't look anything like me. It was weird in the beginning."

Chris Beltran '07 had a similar feeling when he was a freshman at St. Benedict's Prep and participating in S/PA, a non-profit that provides scholarships and mentorships to underserved students in northern New Jersey. "I was very resistant in the beginning," said Mr. Beltran, now a talent acquisition specialist at Mountainside Medical Center. His mentor was also Mr. Daly, an investment banker who has mentored dozens of students through S/PA and serves as president of the non-profit's Board of Trustees.

Gradually, the awkwardness and resistance dissipated for both Gray Bees. For Anthony, who is now a freshman at the University of Delaware studying criminal justice, it was dinners out with Mr. Daly that he described as stress relieving. "I was really busy freshman year with wrestling and crew team. The dinners were a really good outlet to just relax and talk, and not be going at 100% full speed all the time."

Mr. Daly's presence at wrestling matches also made an impression. "I remember the first time he showed up for one of my matches, I was like, 'Whoa, what is he doing here?'" Anthony recalled. "My family members couldn't make it to matches because of work. Seeing someone I had a relationship with show up made me feel happy. I appreciated that."

While a student at St. Benedict's, Mr. Beltran suffered the devastating loss of his grandmother, one of the most important people in his life. "When she passed, Emmett was the first person at my house," he recalled. "He attended my grandmother's funeral. He didn't give up on me and our relationship really strengthened from there." Today, Mr. Beltran still considers Mr. Daly an advisor and friend. He even became an S/PA mentor while a junior at Montclair State University and has served on the organization's Board of Trustees since 2018.

IT TAKES TIME

The structure of S/PA has a lot to do with its long track record of helping motivated students in urban areas achieve lasting success at Catholic high schools and college. "There are a lot of mentoring organizations and a lot of scholarship organizations," explained Executive Director Margaret Momber. "S/PA is distinctive because it combines the two. Our view is that scholarships at schools like St. Benedict's Prep provide a strong academic education. Additionally, the support of a mentor helps to enable a student to go on to college and meet the demands of a rigorous college education."

Since 1993, the year the non-profit officially incorporated, S/PA has provided 2,200 scholarships for low-income families. At St. Benedict's, the organization currently supports 40 students in the Girls and Boys Prep Divisions. S/PA and its mentors make a four-year commitment to every student accepted into the program. That allows time and space for mentor and mentee to get to know one another and for relationships to develop.

That's something Neale Trangucci, an S/PA partner and member of the Advancement Committee at St. Benedict's, has come to appreciate during his 15 years with the organization. "It can be hard to get kids to talk or return phone calls and texts," he stated. "It takes time. You can't expect a lot at the front end. Kids need to know you are going to be there for them. So, you have to be patient and don't take it personally."

Emmett Daly, too, advises new mentors to be patient. In more than 25 years of mentoring he has seen how the intimidated freshman becomes a brash sophomore and then a mature junior. "It won't

happen overnight," he said. "You have to allow time for the relationship to develop. Sometimes it takes an event for a kid to gain trust in you and then it clicks."

SEEKING ADVICE ON LIFE

Beyond classes and grades, Gray Bees have sought out the advice of their mentors on a number of life matters. "Emmett was a great sounding board when I was making decisions about college and a future career," recalled Mr. Beltran. "He didn't steer me. He listened and was very open to my dreams." Anthony Augustin said it was helpful to have a confidante outside the School who also understood how St.

Benedict's operates. "It can be hard to talk to other people about what's going on at school because they don't know St. Benedict's," he explained. "Mr. Daly was very open to listening to my story and trying to understand. When I got a leadership position at the School, he knew what that meant."




Chris Beltran '07, a former mentee with S/PA, is now a mentor and member of the Board of Trustees.

"Kids need to know you are going to be there for them. So, you have to be patient and don't take it personally."

"As a mentor you are there to help kids sort through things, not tell them what to do," said Mr. Daly. While Anthony, who was lauded as the 74th Presidential Award Winner in 2020, questioned if he would have done as well at St. Benedict's without a mentor, Mr. Daly disagrees. "Anthony is a superstar and a leader. I knew that from day one. It was just a question of how his talent would manifest."

ARE YOU AN S/PA ALUM? CONSIDER MENTORING!

Hundreds of Gray Bees have benefited from S/PA over the years, and the organization is always on the lookout for new mentors, especially the graduates of its partner schools. Mr. Beltran believes mentoring can be as pivotal in a young person's life as the alumni fireside chats he experienced as a first year on the Freshman Overnight. "Alumni came back to speak to us to get us to buy into the vision," he stated. "I think it's important for a young Black man to see someone from Newark who looks like them in this role of mentor. I feel very strongly about that."

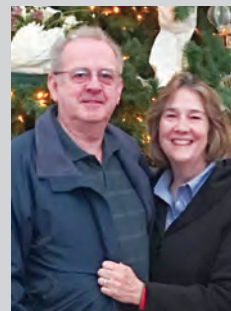
Anthony is also open to the possibility of mentoring once he graduates college and is settled in a career. "I want to give back as soon as possible," he noted. To become a mentor, candidates undergo an application process, background check and receive mentor training. Margaret Momber estimates 10 St. Benedict's alumni have now become mentors themselves. "St. Benedict's graduates make the absolute best mentors for St. Benedict's freshmen," she said "Four years is a big ask. But it doesn't take that much time, and it makes such a difference. Nobody can do it better." 

Interested in mentoring with S/PA? Mentors range in age from college-aged (candidates should be in their junior year) to retirees and everything in between.

Visit studentpartneralliance.org to learn more or contact akent@studentpartneralliance.org with any questions.

Sister Honors Brother as He Celebrates 50th Class Reunion

by Paul Thornton '63



Frank Crowley '71 with his sister, Eileen Fritsch.

Frank Crowley '71 is a generous man. And as the 50th anniversary of his graduation approached, his sister, Eileen Fritsch, wanted to honor her brother's approach to life with a gift to the School that helped shape him.

The family has a long history with St. Benedict's. Her uncle and godfather, Edward Johnson '46, was a devoted alumnus who always spoke highly of the School. And St. Benedict's was such an important experience for her brother, who is known as Frank to classmates and "Jay" to family.

Making a gift to the School is also in keeping with Frank's approach to life, as Eileen says, "Always doing for others, not seeking more of anything for himself." She recalls how Frank and his wife, Mary Cathrin, took two teenage nephews into their family, to raise along with their two daughters, when the boys' parents were unable to care for them. When their aging dad suffered a stroke, Frank and Mary Cathrin arranged for him to stay with them until he could move back to his own home. Even then, Frank made certain to make daily (or middle of the night) visits an essential part of his routine.

Gray Bee classmates know Frank as an involved member of the student community – serving as a class representative to the then newly-formed Student Council. He was also instrumental in a fairly new, but quickly popular ski club, serving as president in his senior year. Skiing remains a lifelong passion. Frank managed to develop a base of clients for his software business located near some of the better ski and golf areas of the country.

The Crowley family has a tradition of pulling fun-loving pranks and practical jokes. In fact, Frank is learning about the \$100,000 scholarship in his honor through the publication of this story. In addition to providing permanent support for students with financial need, this gift will be a significant boost to the Class of 1971 50th Reunion Gift.

Extraordinary Friendship

Donor leaves \$2.6 million bequest to St. Benedict's Prep



Mr. Sneider (seated right of Fr. Ed) attended a St. Benedict's gathering in Vero Beach, Fla.


Five years ago, Vincent James Sneider watched the "60 Minutes" segment on St. Benedict's Prep and an extraordinary friendship was born. A retired salesman and entrepreneur living in Vero Beach, Fla., Mr. Sneider grew up in Paramus, N.J. and worked in Newark for many years, so he was aware of The Hive.

"Vince was one of the first people to reach out to us after '60 Minutes,'" said Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63. "He liked our approach to accompanying kids and just wanted to help. He really believed in what we were doing." Over the next three years, Mr. Sneider, a self-described, "tough guy with a big heart," became a great friend of The Hive.

He gave to the Annual Fund and then joined the Monte Cassino Society — the core group of alumni and friends who donate \$1,000 or more annually to the School. Mr. Sneider, who had seen *The Rule*, the documentary about the monks of Newark Abbey, was very interested in the progress of the School. He attended alumni receptions in Vero Beach and met up with Fr. Edwin and Chief Advancement Officer Mike Fazio, whom he considered friends. The Gray Bee donor's support didn't stop there.

When Mr. Sneider passed away in 2019, he left a \$2.6 million bequest, the bulk of his estate, to St. Benedict's. "We are beyond humbled and deeply grateful to Vince," said Fr. Edwin. "He left everything he had to the School to keep this mission going. It's a tremendous blessing." The Headmaster said the bequest will make some essential enhancements possible. This includes growing the endowment, boosting scholarships and initiating capital improvements on the Property. The School plans to honor Mr. Sneider, who was known as Jimmy to family members, in a more permanent way in the coming months.

"I know Jimmy would love that," said Aaron Turner-Johns, a cousin of Mr. Sneider who lives in England. "He thought highly of St. Benedict's and the work of the School was very important to him." Though separated by an ocean, Mr. Turner-Johns was close to his late cousin, who he described as sharp worded but also compassionate and generous. "Jimmy always said he felt like he was my brother, not my cousin, which I loved hearing," he recalled. "He was just great company and really caring about the people he loved. I was so very sad when Jimmy passed away, but even on his passing, he has shown to be a very benevolent person."

"Vince was extraordinarily generous to St. Benedict's and it was such a privilege to know him," said Mr. Fazio. Asked if it is unusual for educational institutions to receive this kind of bequest, the Chief Advancement Officer responded, "It's highly unusual for someone to leave the bulk of their estate to a school they didn't attend. I hadn't experienced it in my career until St. Benedict's, where I've now experienced it multiple times. That really speaks to the power of this mission and the promise of our kids." 

There are many ways to make a Planned Gift to St. Benedict's Prep that supports the School, while providing benefits to yourself and loved ones. To learn more visit www.sbp.org/plannedgiving or contact Leadership Gifts Officer Judith Mayo at jmayo@sbp.org.

BUCKLEY FOUNDATION AWARDS \$200,000 TO GIRLS PREP DIVISION

Impressed with the initiative shown by the young women of the Girls Prep Division, The Buckley Foundation awarded \$200,000 to support the new division at St. Benedict's Prep. "These high school girls have demonstrated serious leadership, initiative and ingenuity," said the Foundation in a statement announcing the award in December. "Their story is a powerful

one about fighting adversity to achieve a desired goal. Success here is bigger than any girl's immediate educational needs – it's about their creation of an institution that has the potential to impact students for years to come."

The Buckley Foundation is dedicated to advancing educational initiatives in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. The award

is one in a series of gifts from donors to support the Girls Prep Division. The Gold Dome Foundation, a charitable organization founded by Benedictine Academy alumna Mary Ellen Harris and her late husband, Robert H. Harris, Ph.D. '64, made a \$500,000 gift to St. Benedict's in July that was inspired by the new Girls Prep Division.



High Point Here We Come!

Two classes prepare for the 47th and 48th Annual Backpacking Project

UD1s have been asking the question all year, “When do we get to do the Backpacking Project?” One year ago, the UD1s were freshmen, getting themselves ready for the five-day, 55-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail, the character-defining rite of passage required of all first-year students at St. Benedict’s Prep. COVID-19 forced the delay of the epic trek. Now, plans are coming together to send two groups of hikers — the UD1s and freshman class — back on The Trail for the 47th and 48th Annual Backpacking Project in May. Members of the Girls Prep Division are also preparing for their inaugural hike on The Trail.


The logistics involved are immense. In order to do the Backpacking Project safely in a pandemic, two separate hikes involving 240 Gray Bees, plus student commanders and adults, are being organized for different weeks in May. The plan also extends Spring Phase from five to six weeks, creating a three-week period for freshmen and UD1s to prepare, train, hike from High Point to the Delaware Water Gap, and complete post-Trail reflection activities.

“Essentially, the training period for each group will be compressed,” said Associate Headmaster for Leadership and Community Glenn Cassidy, Ed.D. ’90, adding that the most crucial skills first-year students need on The Trail will be prioritized. Team building activities may be modified so they can be performed at a social distance, and all participants will be tested for coronavirus two weeks before the hike, and rapid tested again shortly before departure. Arrangements are also underway to bring midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy back on the Property to help train the Class of 2024 for the expedition.

Though portions of the The Trail will be organized differently, its essential elements remain the same. “For both groups, it will be their Trail,” said Dr. Cassidy. “I expect they will have just as much of an experience. They will be up against the same obstacles, the weather, terrain and learning to work together.” As is tradition, freshmen and UD1s will set up camp for one night at Munsee, the property owned by Newark Abbey that shares a border with Stokes State Forest. “It’s important that the kids spend the night at Munsee,” Dr. Cassidy added. “We want to make sure they know it exists and that they see the grandeur of it.”

A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING

This is the first time St. Benedict’s has endeavored to send two entire classes on The Trail. In addition to the planning and logistics, a considerable increase in funds is needed to pull it off. This is partly due to size — two groups, and members of the Girls Prep Division, in the same year — plus additional tents, tarps, camping equipment, individualized meals and rapid testing, which add to the cost of the Backpacking Project but are all required to practice social distancing.

Alumni and friends have started the fundraising effort #StayTogether to support this year’s Gray Bees. To make a gift, visit sbp.org/StayTogether. 

To learn more about how you can help our kids #StayTogether, contact Senior Director of Advancement John Huss ’81 at jhuss@sbp.org.



SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS!

St. Benedict's welcomes any and all news about your career, education, family life and reconnecting with other alumni. Submit news via email to graybee@sbp.org.

1953

Alwin Ambrose and his wife, Mary, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

1959

Mike Falivena plays piano in the Venice Community Orchestra in Venice, Fla. He played in the New Jersey All-State Orchestra when he was at The Hive.

1962

Ed McGlynn writes he is, "Blessed to have close proximity and frequent contact with my daughter-in-law, her husband and my grandkids, Theo and Desmond (ages 8 and 6)."

1963

John J. Meade, Jr. has been married 51 years and has eight grandkids. He is

owner of St. James Gate and St. Stephen Green Irish Pubs in Maplewood and Spring Lake, N.J.

1965

The members of the board of directors of the Young Marines, a national youth organization, announced **Zach Johnson** has been named a new member of its Advisory Council. He is a retired Marine officer who served in recon units, various training and education assignments, and oversight of Marine Security Guard units. Following his retirement, Zach was a senior consultant, primarily with Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH), in support of Security Cooperation where he managed numerous large contracts. He also served as one of BAH's ethics advisors.

"Zach Johnson is a superb addition to the Young Marines Advisory Council," said William Smith, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Young Marines. "His Marine background includes assignments requiring not only incredible leadership skills, but also a deep understanding of training and education, the operational centerpiece of any youth development program. He also brings corporate experience in ethics and risk management. The Young Marines program will greatly benefit from Zach's leadership and experience."

1968

Tom Blewitt welcomed his 11th grandchild, Owen.



1. **Jim Scanlon, Greg Duffy and George Young.**
2. **Jim Scanlon, Rich Lee and George Young.**

1969

Tom Caruso, along with his daughter, Danielle, celebrated his mother Mary's 100th birthday last year. She recently turned 101.



Events

GRAY BEE GOLF OUTING



More than 100 alumni and friends, including two alumnae from Benedictine Academy, came together for this annual event on September 21, 2020. Twenty foursomes played the Spring Lake Country Club golf course and enjoyed the cocktail hour and dinner outside. This year, a special

online Silent Auction was also part of the event.

Check out photos from the event, taken by our Dean of Administration **Mike Scanlan H'97**, by visiting sbp.org/GolfOuting2020.

NEW ENGLAND AREA VIRTUAL RECEPTION



group of 22 enjoyed catching up with one another and hearing from Headmaster **Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63** as he gave an update on everything happening at The Hive.

Gray Bees of all ages living in New England came together on January 7 for our first ever Virtual Alumni & Friends Reception. The

Guy Greco retired in July 2020 after 43 years as a trial lawyer in Newport, Ore.

1970

Kevin Sheridan is still practicing medicine and does not plan to retire, yet. He is a regular presence at virtual Convocation.

1971

Classmates from '71 (opposite page) participated in their Third Annual Gray Bee Hike at Merrill Creek Reservoir in Washington, N.J.

Bill Holloran, who with his wife, Eve, owns Holloran Vineyard Wines in Dundee, Ore., hosted a Virtual Wine Tasting to benefit St. Benedict's on March 11. Bill began his winemaking venture in 1999.

1973

Ray Venero wrote, "I am pleased to report that I have retired from CBRE as a General Manager on December 31, 2020 and am preparing to become an expat in Spain."

1977

Christopher Froelich is the product of five generations of medical professionals. To honor his family's commitment to providing unsurpassed and compassionate care by supporting the education of future nurses, Chris has made a generous seven-figure gift to Assumption University's School of Nursing, which is named The Froelich School of Nursing.

1988

John Ryan announced that **Tom Faulkner '86** finally paid up on a bet from 1985, putting to rest a 35-year-old dispute. Tom owed John KFC nuggets and potato wedges, which he had delivered by Uber Eats during the recent Boston area reception. "Tom claims to be the one owed, but his actions show he really knows the truth," John said. Tom wrote that he actually remembers winning that bet, but had the nuggets delivered in order to clear his good name.

John is glad Tom's name is cleared, although not sure it really counts since his kids ate the food.

1996

Abdul Haiyy Moore and Didier Jean-Baptiste '86, were featured in a story by New Jersey business publication, ROI-NJ, entitled, "School ties: St. Benedict's alumni continue to shape Newark, both within famed prep school's walls and without." Abdul helps lead Prudential's digital marketing team and Didier is Dean of Seniors and College Placement.

Damien Richburg, CFA, has been tapped to lead a new specialty at recruitAbility focused on finance and accounting direct hires and contract services. Formerly the Director of Financial Services, Damien brings nearly a decade of experience in the recruiting and financial services sector. "We're thrilled to add someone of Damien's caliber to our organization," recruitAbility CEO Nad

Elias said. "His technical experience and track record of working for billion-dollar, multinational corporations like Citigroup and Freescale Semiconductor give him a unique perspective that will benefit our partners in their search for elite talent."



2001

Jobani Dumeng was just promoted to Lieutenant in the Newark Police Department.

David LuSane shared an update. "Among several other U.S. diplomats and Moroccan foreign service nationals, I received the Superior Honor Award from U.S. Mission Morocco for extraordinary teamwork and dedication in protecting American citizens by organizing a smooth evacuation of



Jonathan Capehart '85 Lands His Dream Job

When the "The Sunday Show with Jonathan Capehart" premiered on December 13 on MSNBC, the news anchor took a few moments at the end of the show to explain, "How a big head kid from New Jersey with a dream but no road map, made it to this moment." Mr. Capehart, a 1985 graduate of St. Benedict's Prep, has known he wanted to become a journalist since the age of 10.

At St. Benedict's, he reported the news for "High Street Views" a student-produced broadcast and later talked his way into a "Today Show" internship with the help of an uncle. The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist thanked his mother, husband and family members, "Who listened patiently as I dreamed aloud."

"The Sunday Show with Jonathan Capehart" airs on Sundays, 10 a.m. to noon on MSNBC. Mr. Capehart can also be seen on "PBS NewsHour;" he was named a regular contributor to the newscast in January.

WHISKEY TASTING AND MASTER CLASS

There was a nice turnout of alumni, parents and friends for our first-ever guided Whiskey Tasting and Master Class with world-renowned whiskey expert Tom Fischer. Held on January 28, the virtual event drew attendees from Illinois, Florida, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, North Carolina and New Jersey.



D.C. AREA VIRTUAL RECEPTION

St. Benedict's hosted a virtual reception for approximately 20 alumni and friends who live in and around the nation's capital on January 21. Folks from Virginia, Maryland and D.C. had a Q&A with Headmaster Fr. Edwin Leahy, O.S.B. '63. Among those attending were friends of St. Benedict's and Gray Bee basketball, Dave and Lorraine Hendricks.

VIRTUAL WINE TASTING WITH HOLLORAN VINEYARD WINES

Bill Holloran '71, owner of Holloran Vineyard Wines, hosted a Virtual Wine Tasting on March 11. Bill was joined by the vineyard's winemaker and in-house chef. Participants received two 750ml bottles of wine selected by the winemaker and delivered directly to them. The registration of \$75 included a \$50 donation to the Annual Fund.



2,700 Americans stranded in Morocco in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. My wife and I served there for two years. We are currently serving at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. I'm working in development of outreach communications for the U.S. Agency for International Development."

2005

Marlin Payne serves as the Project Manager, Finance at Planned Parenthood Federation of America helping to ensure that the organization can deliver vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information to millions of people worldwide. Additionally, he also enjoys helping to build capacity for a small portfolio of the nation's most progressive nonprofit organizations.

Previously, Marlin served as Associate Director of Gift and Constituent Data at the Georgetown University Law Center where he managed the data integrity and quality control functions of the development department.

Marlin currently resides in Anne Arundel County, Md.

2006

Kehinde Togun is the Senior Director for Government Relations at Humanity United (HU) as of November 2020. The foundation funds peacebuilding and conflict transformation programs globally. HU is part of The Omidyar Group. Kehinde leads the team responsible for engaging governments, multilateral institutions and civil society in pursuit of policy change and regulatory action that cultivate the conditions for enduring peace and freedom.

2010

Philip V. McHarris, a joint Ph.D. candidate in sociology and African American studies at Yale University, has been selected as Princeton University Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow. In the fall, he will be joining the Department of African American and Ida B. Wells Just Data Institute directed by Ruha Benjamin at Princeton. Philip earned a B.A. in sociology at Boston College.

2012

Adebayo Eisape, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering, has been named one of 10 2021 Microsoft Research Ph.D. Fellows. The competitive fellowship, for which more than 1,000 people applied, will not only underwrite the next two years of Adebayo's tuition and fees, but also comes with a \$42,000 yearly stipend. His adviser, ECE Professor James West said, "I nominated Bayo because of his hard work and contributions to sensor research...Bayo joined my lab during his second year as an undergraduate and has always brought fresh ideas to any problem we are presented with. I can always depend on him to get the job done."



Frantz Soiro will receive his Master's in Public Health with High Honors from Morehouse College School of Medicine on May 15.



2014

Brandon Cruz is a newly minted Newark Fireman.

2019

Precious Achiuwa was the 20th pick drafted into the NBA to play for the Miami Heat.



ENGAGEMENTS

Ian Frankoski '00 is engaged to Ashley Burgess.



MARRIAGES

Christopher Lowe '09 and Amanda Quinitchette were married in December

2020 with **Tyler Gabriel '09** serving as their best man. **Elliott Hyppolite '09** was the photographer/videographer and wedding guests included **Michael Oladipo '09**.



Kristopher McKoy '14 married Shane Lennon in December 2020.



BIRTHS

Zachary Ciliotta-Young '00 welcomed another baby boy, Marco Emilio, a redhead, on July 7, 2020.

We have received word that these members of the St. Benedict's community or members of their families have died.

ALUMNI

Raymond J. Brady '43
Thomas P. Flanagan '46
Edwin G. Marshman '46
Patrick J. Treacy '46
John T. Fitzgibbon '47
Arthur J. Flynn '48
Anthony J. Sylvester '48
Thomas J. Allen III '49
Donald A. Newbery '49
Harold N. Smith '49
Rev. Jeremiah J. Cullinane '50
Robert P. Piccirillo '50

Urban A. LeJeune '51
Thomas J. Geiger '52
John M. Drennan '54
August B. Herrmann '54
Raymond F. Hoover '54
James C. Geoghegan '56
Thomas McEnery '56
Walter T. Marshall '58
Brian F. O'Connor '58
Joseph F. Carroll '59
Angelo R. Frannicola '60
Thomas A. Carton '59
Joseph A. Flanagan, M.D. '59

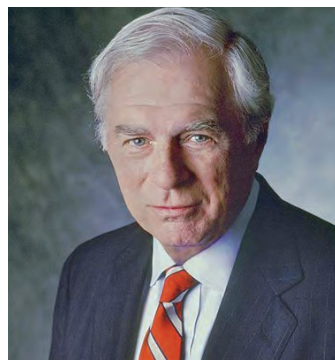
John A. Matthews III '59
Peter W. Kenny '63
William E. San Filippo, Jr. '63
Charles T. Schaedel, Jr. '63
Alan G. Fischer '64
Peter C. Taylor '64
Raymond E. Wojciak '64
Lawrence P. Maher '66
Gregory T. Johnson '67
Albert F. Lowas, Jr. '67
Robert J. Wujciak '67
John O. Bauerle '69
John "Jack" Stacy '71

Joshua Fennell '87
Jerry-Wayne Works '88
Dean Brzuskiwicz '01
Keean M. Williams '01
Kingsley N. Bruce '15

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Billy R. Brown
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Helen Caruso
Mother of Michael '63

'A Gracious and Generous Friend to Us All'



Raymond J. Brady '43 was a widely respected and widely known financial journalist, who never forgot St. Benedict's Prep. During his long career at CBS, Mr. Brady, who passed away on January 12, often attributed his academic training in journalism to St. Benedict's Prep. **Noreen Connolly H'11**, Managing Editor, Advancement Publications, recalled how Mr. Brady invited *The Benedict*

News staff to 524 West 57th Street studios on numerous occasions.

"The esteem everyone had there for Ray was so clear to me," said Ms. Connolly. "He was a brilliant reporter, a patient teacher and a lovely, gracious and generous friend to us all."

"It was such a pleasure to reconnect Ray with the School when he came to speak with our student journalists," said **Paul Thornton '63**. "And later to learn from Guy Campanile, the senior producer of the '60 Minutes' story on the School, that he and others loved Ray's television reporting tip: 'tell them one thing.'"

After graduating from St. Benedict's in 1943, Mr. Brady served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and graduated from Fordham University in 1948. His first reporting job was for the *Long Branch Daily Record* and he went on to *Forbes*, *Barron's* and *Dun's Review*.

The financial journalist landed at CBS Radio in 1972, and within five years was hired as a national correspondent for "CBS Evening News." Throughout the 1980s and 90s, Mr. Brady reported on every major business and economic story for the network and as host of the "Money Crunch" segment. He did it with a unique combination of knowledge, integrity and passion for the subjects he covered. Said then-CBS News president Andrew Heyward on Mr. Brady's retirement in 2000, "He was a pioneer who brought Wall Street home to Main Street with grace, humor and wisdom. The men and women who cover the markets today stand on his shoulders."

Mr. Brady was pre-deceased by his wife, Mary Clark Wilson. He is survived by a stepson, David, a stepdaughter, Nicki, three granddaughters and two great-granddaughters. His family requested donations be made in his memory to St. Benedict's Prep.




So Beloved

St. Benedict's Prep mourns the passing of **Katharine Thornton**, a champion for children with special needs and devoted supporter of The Hive. Mrs. Thornton passed away on February 25 from complications of Alzheimer's disease. She was the beloved wife and partner of **Paul Thornton '63**, the backbone of Advancement at St. Benedict's for

decades, and a cherished member of the Gray Bee community.

"It's been an unsurpassable privilege to have shared this extraordinary woman's life," said Mr. Thornton. "Everyone knows that for me it was as the phrase goes - 'love at first sight.'" Headmaster **Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63** described the couple as inseparable. "They were a great example of two becoming one, as it is impossible to speak about Paul without mentioning Kathy. You always hear folks make reference to Paul and Kathy, as if it were one name."

Mrs. Thornton spent the bulk of her professional career in Mount Carmel Guild schools, now Catholic Charities. She founded and led the organization's first preschool for children with special needs, where she served until her retirement in 2013. A charter member of the Passaic River Rowing Association, Mrs. Thornton is considered the godmother of the crew program at St. Benedict's. In the program's early days, she helped Gray Bee rowers find a home at the rowing club.

Mrs. Thornton is survived by her husband, Paul, children Kate and **Matthew '92**, three grandchildren and 10 siblings. A celebration of her life will take place at a future date. 

William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91
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Robert '64

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Sanda Schramm
Wife of Robert '63
Maria Silva
Mother of Michael '86
Katharine L. Thornton
Wife of Paul '63, mother of
Matthew '92
Michele Wandling
Mother of James '92
Dorothy C. Zawistowski
Wife of Robert

A sympathy card has been sent to each bereaved family in the name of the St. Benedict's family — alumni, students, faculty, staff and monks — promising our prayers and a special remembrance at the monks' daily conventual Mass.

The Benedict's Man Who Didn't Go to Benedict's



Perhaps it was his quiet determination. Or extraordinary warmth, generosity and encouragement he shared so easily with others. Whether it was business or service to others, Bill Connolly had a gift for bringing people together to make the world a better place. The honorary alumnus, former Chairman of the Board of Trustees and longest-serving Trustee in the history of St. Benedict's Prep passed away on February 26, after a valiant battle against cancer.

A lifelong resident of Montclair, N.J., **William H. Connolly, Jr. H'91** was born on January 8, 1947. He attended Saint Peter's Prep in Jersey City, graduated from Fairfield University in 1969 and served in the Army National Guard from 1967-1973. After graduating college, Mr. Connolly joined the insurance and risk management company started by his father, **William Sr. '34**, and rose through the ranks to become President and CEO of William H. Connolly & Co., LLC in 1983. William Sr. served on the St. Benedict's Board of Trustees from 1977 until his death in 1986, a commitment that Bill Jr. took seriously.

"Bill continued the legacy of his family at Benedict's, which dates back to 1931, even though he was not an alumnus. He responded immediately to our need for help, joining the Board in 1986 when

his father died, and staying with us right to the end," recalled Headmaster **Fr. Edwin D. Leahy, O.S.B. '63**. "Bill was a great friend and a trusted confidante of mine. He was the consummate Benedict's man through and through." Mr. Connolly became Board Chairman in 2007, the only non-alumnus to hold the distinction, and served in that role until 2020. A *NJBIZ* reporter once asked the Board Chairman about his dedication to St. Benedict's. Mr. Connolly offered a simple response: he was asked to help. "I didn't go [to St. Benedict's] like half the board members, but my dad did and grew up in Newark," he stated. "So, I knew of the School and had been taken in by the wonderful mission that it is and the people who are here."

The Hive thrived during Mr. Connolly's 13-year tenure as Board Chairman. Enrollment grew, and academics, athletics, and key programs like College Placement and the Steven M. Grossman Counseling Center were enhanced to better meet the needs of kids. Financial operations strengthened and the School launched *Forever Benedict's*, a \$100 million comprehensive fundraising campaign that is nearing its goal.

"Bill was not just a great leader of the Board of Trustees, but also a great friend to all of us," said **Robert J. DiQuollo '65**, who succeeded Mr. Connolly as Chairman last July. "He never asked more than he was willing to do himself. I cannot think of any volunteer who put more time into St. Benedict's than Bill. We will certainly miss his presence."

Dean of Administration **Michael Scanlan H'97** worked closely with Mr. Connolly on business operations and was struck by how he "got" St. Benedict's. "He had the ability to bring his business experience to our operation, but at the same time, not treat St. Benedict's like a business. So often in our conversations where a decision needed to be made, the first question Bill would ask was, 'How will it affect the faculty and students?' He was always thinking about them."

Through his company and personally, Mr. Connolly was actively engaged with many community organizations. He was chairman of the United Healthcare Foundation, served on the development committee of Caldwell University and was a trustee of Fairfield University. A talented rugby player, he co-founded the Essex Rugby Football Club in 1970, and went on to coach and support clubs in the metropolitan area and at Fairfield University.

Mr. Connolly is survived by his wife of 43 years, Melinda Connolly; their three children, Kristen Connolly, James Connolly and Will Connolly; and two grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters, **Noreen Connolly H'11** and Mary Connolly, and many nieces and nephews. **B**

SUSTAIN

TRADITION

Make a Recurring Gift to the Annual Fund



Year in, year out, traditions like The Trail prove something important to first-year students: they have all that it takes to be successful in school and in life. Become a St. Benedict's Sustainer to help ensure these traditions endure. By making a recurring gift to the Annual Fund on a monthly or quarterly basis, Sustainers provide a dependable source of support and receive added recognition and benefits from St. Benedict's. Become a Sustainer today at sbp.org/Sustainers.



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BEST OF BENEDICT'S

Celebrating Students, Faculty & Alumni

MAY 11

GIVING DAY

Celebrate SBP students by making a gift of any size to the fund of your choice. The Annual Scholarship Fund, COVID-19 Relief Fund, Athletics teams, and The Trail are just some of the areas you can support. Stand up and be counted during these special 24 hours.

MAY 12

ONLINE AUCTION

Celebrate the backbone of SBP – our faculty – by bidding on some special items to support faculty development initiatives. Golf foursomes, autographed sports memorabilia, unique wine and dining experiences, even a trip to the Super Bowl, among many others, will be available.

MAY 13

VIRTUAL REUNION

Celebrate your fellow Gray Bees by joining alumni of all ages for a Zoom reunion. Zoom Rooms will be available based on sports, activities, and class years. Fr. Ed will be present to welcome everyone and give an update on what's buzzing at The Hive.

Go to sbp.org/bestof for more information or contact Mary Hauck at (973) 792-5776 or mhauck@sbp.org.



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