

TORCH LIGHT

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY
YEAR IN REVIEW
FALL 2024



Mary –
Patroness and
Protectress

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TORCH LIGHT

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MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PRESIDENT

With joy and reverence, I assume the role of Interim President of St. Mary's Academy. I am committed to upholding the mission, charism, and vision established by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) in delivering a Catholic education to our young women and fostering a strong sense of community and belonging. This year marks my twenty-seventh year with the Academy, where I have had the long-standing honour of nurturing young women's growth in learning, faith, and service. Throughout my tenure, I have served as a science teacher, Vice Principal, and Principal. Additionally, I am a proud mother of four, with two of my daughters being SMA alumnae from the classes of 2018 and 2020.

I am continually humbled by the richness and dedication of those around me. Our faculty and staff are incredible, working together with a shared mission to provide faith-based education and foster an uplifting community. I am grateful for the support of Megan Roberts, SMA Inc. Board Chair, and Michael Choiselat, Foundation Board Chair, along with the expertise of Richelle Friesen, Controller, and Kate Hodgert-Fennell, Director of Advancement and Development, as I embark on this role as Interim President.

As Interim President, I embrace developing and nurturing meaningful relationships within the SMA community. I look forward to meeting you, strengthening our connections, and welcoming you to events such as Homecoming, Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical, International Day, and the Marian Awards (see the inside back cover for a complete list of events).

Our community is blessed with talented and dedicated alumnae, parents, past parents, students, board members, and friends who generously volunteer their time, talents, and treasures. Your belief in and commitment to the Academy are invaluable, enabling us to provide a Catholic education to deserving students through our Bursary Fund, with one in six students benefiting directly from this support. Your contributions—whether through time, expertise, or financial support—are vital to our continued success and play a crucial role in shaping the future of St. Mary's Academy. On behalf of the school, I extend heartfelt thanks to all.

This October, SMA is honoured to host "Network of Schools," a collective of seven SNJM schools in North America: Holy Names Academy in Seattle, WA; St. Mary's Academy in Portland, OR; Holy Names High School in Oakland, CA; Ramona Convent Secondary School in Alhambra, CA; Academy of the Holy Names in Albany, NY; Academy of the Holy Names in Tampa, FL; and St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg. The goal of



the Network is to build strong, professional practices aligned with the SNJM charism and mission, focused on delivering education that nurtures the mind, body, and spirit. This year's theme for our gathering is "Truth and Reconciliation."

The Academy's 2024-2025 school year theme, inspired by catechesis, evangelization, and scripture, is "How do I share our story?" Our story is one of justice and service, rooted in faith and guided by the vision of the SNJM Foundress, Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher.

I invite you to enjoy the Torch Light, spread the Good Word, and Hold High the Torch. As we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, may Jesus and Mary be our guide and strength.

God Bless.
Michelle Klus
Interim President

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRS



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome to the 2024 issue of the Torch Light. As we embark on another year, the School Board acknowledges both the challenges of the past year as well as the opportunities they present. The SMA Board, strong in faith and dedication, is committed to embracing these opportunities for the benefit and advancement of the entire school community.

The preliminary steps in the search for a new President are underway, following the departure of Jennifer Tesoro earlier this year. The Board aims to find a leader who will advance SMA's mission of providing a Catholic education that nurtures the whole child—spirit, mind, and body—while honouring the legacy of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. We look forward to providing updates as this important search progresses.

For this academic year, we are very pleased that Michelle Klus has stepped into the role of Interim President. Michelle has been with St. Mary's Academy for more than two decades, serving as Senior School Principal for the past eight years, and is ideally positioned to bring stability and experienced stewardship to the school during this transitional period.



ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOUNDATION INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On behalf of the SMA Foundation Board of Directors, I welcome you to the 2024 Torch Light magazine, our annual publication reflecting on the past, present, and future of the Academy.

As you know, SMA's mission is to be a pre-eminent educator of young women by providing exceptional academic, extra-curricular, and athletic programs, in an

environment that integrates learning and spiritual formation into all aspects of school life. The mission of the Foundation is to support the school's mission by raising and stewarding financial resources, and ensuring the long-term financial health and sustainability of the school. This involves administering the property and assets entrusted to us and providing financial support to SMA for programs, facilities, educational opportunities, and tuition assistance.

It's tuition assistance that resonates with me the most. The Foundation awards over \$400,000 every year in bursary assistance, and that number increases each year. One out of every six students receives bursary assistance. This helping hand allows girls to attend SMA whose financial circumstances wouldn't otherwise allow it, and this changes the trajectory of their lives. What could be more meaningful?

Michelle is well-supported by Richelle Friesen, Controller, and Kate Hodgert-Fennell, Director of Advancement and Development. Thank you to these incredible women for their leadership and support.

I also extend gratitude to all SMA faculty and staff for their continued commitment. Their faith and dedicated service allows the school to foster an environment where students can deepen their faith, excel academically, discover their talents, and embrace roles as leaders and compassionate citizens.

At the end of the last school year, we bid farewell to two long-serving Board members: Deanne Magnus '01 and Rebecca Greenhalgh (Sisler '07). Deanne served for over a decade, including as Chair and Past Chair, providing key insights, guidance and leadership during a period of great change. Rebecca contributed significantly during her six years on the Board, including as Vice-Chair and Interim Chair, guiding the development of SMA's interim strategic plan. Thank you both for your dedication and contributions to SMA's growth and development.

Welcome to the directors who are new to our Board for the 2024-2025 year—I look forward to working together. My thanks to the entire Board for your faith, expertise, and dedicated service. Let us all continue to Hold High the Torch as we move forward together.

Megan Roberts '00 CHAIR, 2023-PRESENT

We can't continue to provide this assistance without the generous support of our SMA community, which entirely funds the bursary program. We hope you keep in mind the significance of the Bursary Program when considering your charitable donations for the year. Contributing whatever you can will make a meaningful difference in the lives of these girls.

As you know, it has been a time of transition at SMA. I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of both Richelle Friesen, our Controller, and Kate Hodgert-Fennell, our new Director of Advancement and Development. They have gone above and beyond this past school year to advance the mission of the Foundation and the School, and I can't wait to see what exciting new directions we head in as a result of their continued leadership and formidable energy!

It has been my honour to serve as Chair of the Foundation Board and I now embrace my role as Past Chair. I extend best wishes to our incoming Chair, Mike Boucher. Additionally, I welcome new Board Members and I look forward to working alongside both existing and new members. Thank you for your faith and service.

On behalf of the Foundation Board, sincere gratitude to all of you in our treasured SMA community. Your generous contributions, of all kinds, are deeply appreciated. We literally could not do this without you.

Michael Choiselat CHAIR, 2023-2024

AROUND THE ACADEMY

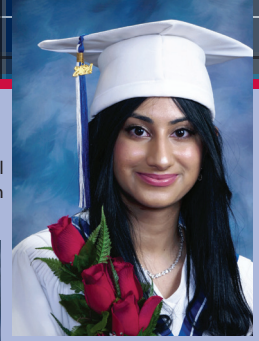
CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2024!

Our seniors experienced a grade 12 year filled with cherished traditions from the Grade 12 Retreat to the Graduate/Family Mass and Brunch, the Graduation Dinner and Dance, and Convocation. At the Graduate Brunch, Miss Lindsay Smart '24 was named Miss Congeniality, as chosen by her peers, and all graduates were inducted into the SMA Alumnae Association. At Convocation, Khushleen Dhaliwal '24 delivered the Salutatory Address, Chiara Wilson '24 gave the Valedictorian speech, and the Address to Graduates was delivered by Ms. Rosalinda Amato, Parents' Guild Executive Member.

Top Right: Khushleen Dhaliwal
Bottom Right: Chiara Wilson



Lindsay Smart



Class of 2024

At Convocation, Khushleen Dhaliwal '24, captured the essence of our community, stating, "It is the everlasting continuous support for one another that has allowed us to persevere through every obstacle thrown our way with strength, resilience, and optimism." Her words highlight the unbreakable bond of sisterhood that defines the SMA experience.

Our Valedictorian, Chiara Wilson '24, offered an inspiring reflection. She reminded us of the power of community and belonging, stating, "Brené Brown said, "True belonging is not something we negotiate or accomplish with others ... It's a personal commitment that we carry in our hearts."" She went on to say, "We belong to our families, friends, teachers, coaches, principals, and staff members that have equipped us with tools to succeed. We belong to the current and future students of St. Mary's Academy looking up to us as role models. So, when you go out into the world, remember this community. Be the light that Mother Marie-Rose envisioned; extend your hand to those in need of a place to belong. Take your torch and set the world on fire."

HOLD HIGH THE TORCH!



Graduation Brunch



AROUND THE ACADEMY



2023-2024 THEME

Each year, SMA selects a theme rooted in our Catholic faith. For 2023-2024, the theme was “Where do I Belong?” This question inspired reflection on our identity as People of God, our community, and our relationships. Our hope was for each community member to recognize their unique place in our school and to know that God loves everyone as they are. The Bible verse that accompanied our theme was Matthew 18:20: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WEEK

From September 25 to 29, SMA observed Truth and Reconciliation Week, honouring Indigenous Peoples’ histories, experiences, and contributions. Activities included presentations on Residential Schools, survivor accounts, and traditional knowledge. Grade 9 students visited the former Assiniboia Residential School. Grades 8, 10, and 12 engaged in a land-based science and art experience led by a local florist and forager. Religious studies classes explored Indigenous spirituality and the Seven Sacred Teachings. The entire school observed Orange Shirt Day. SMA continues to integrate Truth and Reconciliation education throughout the year.



SPRING CONCERT

On May 26, SMA came alive with the sound of music as students performed in the Spring Concert. Four SMA choirs showcased their talents: Con Spiritu, Con Fuoco, Grade 8 Choir, and Grade 7 Choir. The concert also celebrated the return of the SMA Glee Club after nearly 60 years. Each singer was presented with a rose in recognition of her talent and contribution. Special thanks to concert director Ms. Bénédicte LeMaitre, and to accompanists Fr. Geoffrey Angeles and Paolo Camus. We appreciate the support from the SMA community and all who contributed to the Rossbrook House Music Program.



FLEURS DE VILLES

Inspired by Assiniboine Park’s Fleurs de Villes installation, Grade 10 French students created their own exhibit, Les Fleurs de la Francophonie. After visiting The Leaf for inspiration, they chose French-speaking countries and designed artwork on mannequins to reflect their selected country’s culture.

AROUND THE ACADEMY

EUROPE TRIP

During Spring Break, 49 of our Grade 11 and 12 students and several teachers journeyed to Germany and Switzerland. This STEM-themed adventure took them through Berlin, Freiberg, and Lucerne. While immersed in local cultures, the group experienced leading-edge facilities like the Futurium Museum and the Freiberg Innovation Academy. They also explored the Freiberg Minster Cathedral and Lucerne Jesuit Church, as well as experiencing the Entlebuch Biosphere, Mount Titlis, an urban farm, and more. The trip was a lively blend of learning and exploration that sparked students' imaginations and broadened their perspectives.



SENIOR EXTENDED SERVICE EXPERIENCE TO PERU

From June 27 to July 7, 27 Grade 10 and 11 students and teachers travelled to Peru for our Senior Extended Service Experience. They connected with the local Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Lima and participated in a service project with Andean Alliance for Sustainable Development in the Sacred Valley. The group also trekked to Machu Picchu, met traditional artists, and learned about Peruvian customs. The experience broadened perspectives and left an indelible impression on all participants.



PARENTS' GUILD

Parents are the first educators of their children and are welcomed as partners in education at SMA. The first Home and School Association (HSA) was formed in 1951. In 1971 the HSA was replaced by the Mothers' Guild which, in turn, evolved into the Parents' Guild in 1992. The Parents' Guild provide hospitality, operate the Corner Store, host events, and raise funds to enhance programs for students. The Guild's major event, International Day, celebrates community diversity. The 50th anniversary of International Day will be held on April 27, 2025. Save the date! We thank the Guild for their dedicated efforts which foster a sense of community and contribute to the vibrancy of our community.



International Day 2024
Parents' Guild and Volunteers

AROUND THE ACADEMY

ATHLETICS



CURLING

Our Flames Varsity Curling Team clinched the West Winnipeg Athletic Conference Championship for the second year in a row with a 5-4 win over Vincent Massey. They also won the Manitoba High School Athletic Association Varsity Girls Provincial Curling Championships with a 7-4 victory over West Kildonan.

CROSS COUNTRY

Our Flames Varsity Cross Country team won the 2023 Manitoba High School Athletic Association Provincial Championship at Assessippi Ski Resort in October, marking SMA's 15th provincial title and eighth consecutive win. The Flames Junior team also secured the 2023 Athletics Manitoba Provincial Championship.



Flames High School Team with Hayley Wickenheiser

HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY

Our Flames High School hockey team began their season with a tournament in Fort Frances, Ontario. In October, the team attended a presentation by Hailey Wickenheiser at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, covering topics such as confidence, emotion regulation, team development, and high-level performance. The team finished first in their division in the Manitoba Women's High School Hockey League, achieving 18 wins and advancing to the semi-finals.



WATER POLO

SMA's debut in Water Polo for the 2023-2024 school year included one junior and two senior teams competing in the Manitoba Water Polo Association's fall school league. Despite the short season and many players being new to the sport, all teams made impressive progress, with the Junior Team finishing in second place.

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

Heartfelt appreciation is extended to all who dedicate themselves to SMA's mission of faith-based education.

YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

30 Years: Lorne Hess,
Vice-Principal

20 Years: Kendra L ,
English Language Arts and
Social Studies Teacher
Christine Rewniak,
Math Teacher

10 Years: Shawn Keselowsky,
Maintenance Technician



RETIREMENTS

Mme. Marie Desaulniers

In June, Marie retired after 38 years of dedicated service as a French and Religion Teacher. Marie inspired countless lives with her passion for the French language and her devotion to God. Her kindness and commitment to nurturing students' faith and linguistic skills has left a lasting legacy.



Mr. Allan Blahut

In March, Allan retired after 19 years of loyal service as a Maintenance Technician. Sadly, Allan passed away on April 13. He is remembered for his kindness and talents for repair and maintenance. Allan's dedication and positive spirit made a significant impact on our community. Allan is fondly remembered, may he Rest in Peace.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE ACADEMY'S FOOTPRINT ON WINNIPEG'S LANDSCAPE

AT 155 YEARS OF AGE, ST. MARY'S ACADEMY HAS GROWN UP WITH THE CITY OF WINNIPEG, LEAVING ITS FOOTPRINT ON THE LANDSCAPE. DID YOU KNOW...

NOTRE DAME AVENUE

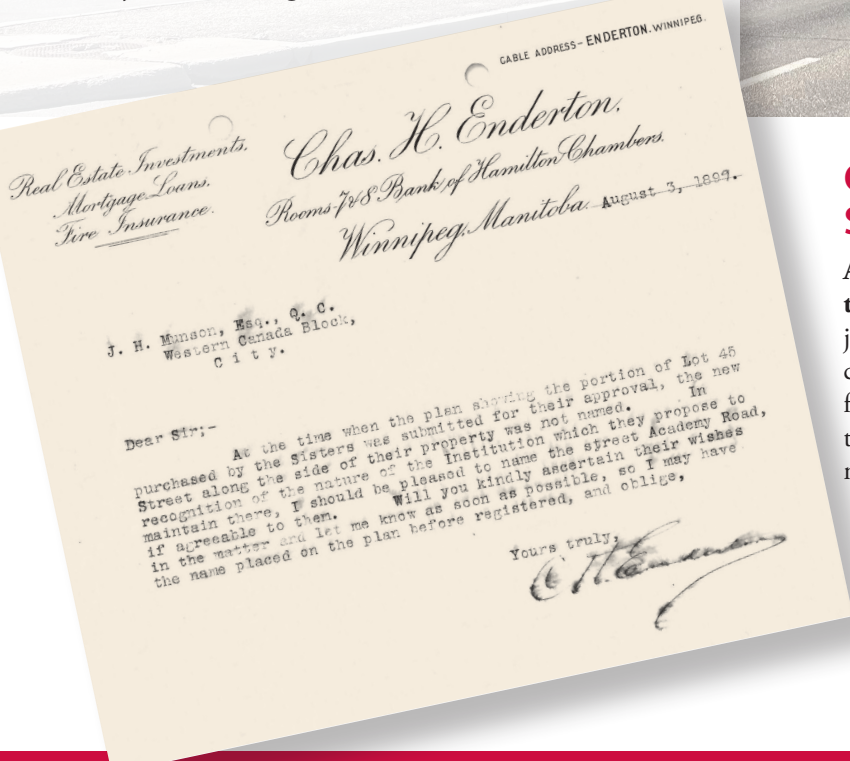
Named for St. Mary's Academy, which occupied a site on this street from 1869 to 1903. "Notre Dame" means "Our Lady" in French, referring to the Virgin Mary. In 1959, the eastern portion of Notre Dame was renamed Pioneer Ave.

ST. MARY AVENUE

In 1870, St. Mary's Church was established in the chapel of the first St. Mary's Academy. In 1873, a permanent structure was built further west near Hargrave. The street was named St. Mary Avenue, and remains the location of St. Mary's Cathedral.

ACADEMY ROAD

In 1903, St. Mary's Academy relocated to its current location in Crescentwood on a 15-acre site purchased from W. H. Cornish, on the advice of his agent C. H. Enderton. Enderton suggested naming the street along the north side of the property "Academy Road" (as shown in the letter). Clearly, the Sisters agreed!



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: SMA HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Are you passionate about preserving the rich history and timeless traditions of St. Mary's Academy? We invite you to join the newly-formed SMA Heritage Committee and help us celebrate the storied past of SMA while also shaping its bright future. From curating and cataloging our archival collections to organizing special events and oral history projects, there are numerous ways to get involved and make a meaningful impact.

To express interest or learn more, please contact Committee Co-Chairs:
Mary Anne Lovallo (Washchyshyn '93)
mlovallo@smamb.ca
Sandra Martin (Alwis '97)
smartin@smamb.ca



Sandra Martin (Alwis '97)
ALUMNAE ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR
ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOUNDATION

"I recognize that not every alumna feels the way I do, but I encourage you to explore what being an alumna of St. Mary's Academy means to you."

SHE'S ONE OF OURS:

MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNAE ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

I am a proud super sixer from the Class of 1997, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to work at the school in the capacity of Alumnae Engagement. Since walking the halls as a student, my appreciation for St. Mary's Academy has grown immensely. As a new alumna, I was always amazed that the staff and the Sisters remembered me. I felt a strong sense of belonging early on. When I began volunteering and participating at school events, I felt valued and appreciated. Now, as an employee, I am surrounded daily by kind and caring people who work hard and remain focused on the mission of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

My SMA friends are very special to me. We share a sisterhood and connection that only an alumna could understand. They are the people I can laugh with, and who have supported me through thick and thin. To say that I am grateful is an understatement.

I recognize that not every alumna feels the way I do, but I encourage you to explore what being an alumna of St. Mary's Academy means to you.

So far in my time here, I have been impressed by the vast variety of accomplishments of our alumnae! My favorite stories, however, are the simpler ones—about love, passion, friendship, and compassion formed within these walls and continuing into adulthood. These stories make me certain that the mission and vision of the Sisters are being accomplished.

I often hear the Sisters speak about an alumna and say, "She is one of ours." They are right. We find community and belonging here and share in a collective experience that began within these SMA walls. My hope is that you feel welcome and that the alumnae gatherings give you an opportunity to reminisce about your time here and connect with fellow alumnae. I certainly don't do the work alone, if you would like to join me on this journey, please reach out to me, smartin@smamb.ca or 204-560-6923. I look forward to hearing from you!

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: SMA ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Are you a St. Mary's Academy alumna passionate about building community and Holding High the Torch? We invite you to submit your interest in joining the SMA Alumnae Association Board of Directors and partnering with us to strengthen the enduring bonds we share with our Alma Mater and each other.

This year, our focus is on bringing back two signature events: a business networking gathering and a spring brunch to honour our Marian Award recipients. The award recognizes alumnae and friends who model excellence and service in their personal and professional lives. We invite the SMA community to consider recommending a worthy candidate; visit www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards for details.

Along with our other annual activities such as Homecoming and December Celebration and Tea, these special events provide invaluable opportunities to reconnect, network, and celebrate the achievements of our fellow alumnae. If you can spare the time for just four Board meetings a year and/or are willing to lend a hand on one of our event planning committees, we'd love to hear from you. Together, we can make these events even more impactful and build on the legacy of St. Mary's Academy, creating lasting connections that enrich us all.

To express your interest in volunteering or to learn more about the SMA Alumnae Association, please contact Sandra Martin at smartin@smamb.ca.

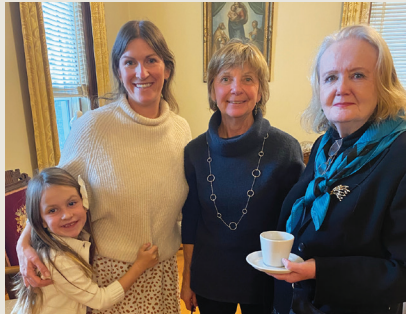
CELEBRATIONS

DECEMBER CELEBRATION AND TEA

DECEMBER 3, 2023

Our SMA community joyfully gathered together on the first Sunday of Advent to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Mass was led by Father Gerry Ward and enriched by the participation of alumnae, students, and staff. Following Mass, the group enjoyed conversation and created new memories over a light lunch. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for this traditional event and to those who generously contributed winter wear and donations to Rossbrook House.

Left to right:
Ellyana, Sylvia Falconer (Bator '01),
Doraine Wachniak (McGurran '75),
Margaret Egan '69



Left to right: Sister Josephine Chudzik '59,
Heather Skublics Lampman '87, Victoria Gretchen
(Mihychuk '55), Doreen Jaeger '55, Cathy Knight



Left to right: Sandra Martin (Alwis '97), Irene Mestito-Dao '89,
Sara Craven '08, Siri Alwis, Delani Alwis

DRINKS UNDER THE DOME

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2023 | DECEMBER 21, 2023

Our beloved 2023 graduates returned to SMA for an evening of reconnecting and reminiscing at the beginning of winter break. Our newest alumnae were treated to drinks and hors d'oeuvres in the Sister Susan Wikeem Boardroom where they were presented with their yearbooks. Alumnae also participated in a tour of the 4th floor and visited our picturesque dome.



Left to right: Gabrielle Denis '23, Ms. Adriane McElrea,
Angelina Cerqueti '23, Kennedy Green '23, Elle Wood '23,
Nikoletta Mattheos '23



Left to right: Paige Dixon '23, Sydney Ross '23,
Juliana Cerqueti '23, Keely Schimnowski '23



Left to right: Anna Santa-Bryga '23, Isabella Monchamp '23,
Alyssa Puchniak '23, Sinead Gordon '23

HOMECOMING

HOMECOMING | SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

We were delighted to welcome everyone home to the Academy for Homecoming 2023. Our celebration began with a Commemorative Years Brunch honouring the classes of 2013, 2003, 1998, 1993, 1988, 1983, 1978, 1973, 1968, 1963, as well as alumnae from 1963 and earlier. We were also honoured to welcome the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, along with former faculty and staff members. Sr. Marylyn Gibney, SNJM, acted as Master of Ceremonies and Wynn Loisel-Shire '24 showcased a captivating live art demonstration while guests enjoyed a lovely brunch catered by The Gates on Roblin.

Following the Alumnae Association Annual General Meeting, Father Colin Peterson presided over Mass. SMA community members served and ministered, such as Emily Meadows '13 and her mother Carolyn Eva Meadows '83, who were celebrating their 10- and 40-year reunions, respectively. Emily delivered the first reading, and Carolyn the Prayers of the Faithful.

The school was then open for touring and refreshments. Alumnae and friends of all ages enjoyed reminiscing and visiting their favourite sites in the school and on the grounds. A small service fair was held in the Sheila Chipman Auditorium. Special thanks to the SMA Parents' Guild for opening the Corner Store.

View Homecoming photos at smaphotos.ca/homecoming2023



Class of 1959: 64th Reunion



Left to right: Sister Lesley Sacouman '63, SNJM, Sister Susan Wikeem '63, SNJM, Barbara Sliwiany (Lacoski '63)



Class of 1978: 45th Reunion



Class of 1988: 35th Reunion



Class of 1983: 40th Reunion



Class of 1973: 50th Reunion

Caitlin Steinsvik (Holtmann '03)





Left to right: Wynn Loisselle-Shire '24 and Irene Loisselle (Devisscher '73)



Left to right: Lynn and Charlie Jaworski



Class of 1993: 30th Reunion



Former Faculty: left to right, Lily Mikijanec, Deb May



Left to right: Carolyn Eva Meadows '83, Emily Meadows '13



Class of 2003: 20th Reunion



Class of 2013: 10th Reunion



Sister Marylyn Gibney, SNJM

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP

St. Mary's Academy's Career and Mentorship Program connects the leaders of tomorrow with the leaders of today. The Program provides students with resources and guidance to assist them in career exploration and planning for post-secondary education. Drawing on our vast and diverse network, the Program engages alumnae and members of our community throughout the year to participate in a variety of events that facilitate mentorship and community-building. Events include Ask an Alum, Grade 9 and Grade 10 Career Speakers, and Panel Interviews.

ASK AN ALUM | GRADE 11 AND 12 | NOVEMBER 22, 2023

Recent SMA graduates speak to current students about their transition from high school to post-secondary studies, career paths, and navigating life as a young adult. SMA thanks the following alumnae for sharing their expertise, talent, and time with our students at Ask an Alum 2023.



Oreofe Okunnu '15

Oreofe is a first year medical student at the University of Manitoba. Previously, she completed her Doctor of Pharmacy & Bachelor of Science in Biology and Chemistry at the U of M. During her studies, Oreofe participated in research projects spanning the disciplines of microbiology, chemistry, and pharmacotherapy.



Madison Chambers '16

Madison is currently in her third year of Dentistry at the University of Manitoba. She is the U of M Dentistry Class Co-President and works as a Dental Assistant in Kenora, Ontario. Prior to enrolling at U of M, she completed her Bachelor of Science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, majoring in Chemical

Biology. While at UBC, she was a research Assistant and the Co-President of YNOTFORTOTS UBC, a charitable society that raises awareness for child poverty.



Megan Wolbaum '16

After graduating from SMA, Megan took a gap year and went travelling. Upon her return she worked for two years in retail and managed an ice cream shop. During the onset of the Covid-pandemic, she pivoted and opened her own business called MadebyMegs, a ghost bakery specializing in cakes, cookies, cake cups, and various treats.



Caitlin Madden '16

After graduating from SMA, Caitlin completed an Advanced Bachelor of Arts in linguistics at the University of Manitoba. She is presently completing her final year at U of M in the Faculty of Law. Caitlin served as the Visible Minorities Representative for the Manitoba Law Students Association and President of the Cultural Diversity in Law Group,

and acted as a member of Robson Hall's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. After graduation, Caitlin plans to practice corporate and commercial law.



Janelle Lawrence '16

Janelle graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Degree in Science, majoring in Psychology and minoring in Biological Science. She was accepted into the College of Nursing at the U of M in 2020 and graduated as an RN in February 2024. Janelle completed her practicum in Labour and Delivery at St. Boniface Hospital and

during her time at the school she worked as a health care aide at Concordia Hospital.



Isha Khandelwal '18

After graduation, Isha attended Queen's University where she majored in Biotechnology. She transferred to the University of Manitoba to study Computer Engineering and then changed gears, obtaining her B.A. in Philosophy and Sociology. She was accepted into the Faculty of Law in 2022 and is looking forward to pursuing an LLM (Master of Law) next.



Danielle Sneesby '18

Since graduating from SMA in 2018, Danielle acquired a degree in Environmental Design from the University of Manitoba, focusing on architecture and urbanism. In addition to studying design, she had the opportunity to travel globally, learning from and documenting different cultures and landscapes. Currently, she is a Junior Designer at AtLRG Architecture, with many other ongoing projects.



Danielle Borbajo '21

Danielle attended the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Science for her first two years after graduation. She is currently one of 15 first year students in the Bachelor of Respiratory Therapy program in the College of Rehabilitation Services and will graduate in 2026. She does extensive volunteer work as the Director of

Social and Cultural Affairs for Pinoys on Parliament, CanU SRT instructor, and as this year's Vice-President of External Affairs for the U of M Filipino Student's Association.



Gretta Styles '19

Following graduation, Gretta pursued her passion for marketing and enrolled at the Asper School of Business. Her academic journey took an exciting turn when she had the opportunity to study abroad in Bordeaux, France, specializing in luxury marketing. Today, she manages the social media accounts for several local companies and travels extensively.



Annika Falkenberg '21

Annika is enrolled in the University of Winnipeg's Integrated Education Program (Senior Years Stream). Her teachable major is Biology and her teachable minor is Math. Annika is also a part of the U of W's "Kin Games team" and has travelled to Croatia & Switzerland.



Ibukunoluwa (Ibukun) Okunnu '20

Upon graduation from SMA, Ibukun enrolled at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Sciences where she completed her Bachelor of General Science degree. Ibukun is currently a student in the Faculty of Pharmacy at U of M. She has served as a volunteer with the Nellie McClung Foundation and as Communications Director for St. John's College Student's Association.



Katelyn Mestito-Dao '21

Katelyn is in her third year in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba majoring in Theatre and Psychology. Since graduating, she has worked as a musical theatre and dance teacher at Encore Studios while also doing administrative work. Katelyn performed in the U of M's fall production "Rhinoceros" by Eugene Ionesco.



Alia Zagrodnik '20

In her pursuit of a career in the construction industry, Alia enrolled in the Civil Engineering Technology (CET) Program at Red River College Polytechnic specializing in Architectural Engineering. She then transferred to the Construction Management Degree Program (CMDP) and is expected to graduate in April 2025. Alia also works as a Project Coordinator for Bird Construction.



Katya Cisneros '22

Katya plays volleyball for the University of Winnipeg Wesmen and is enrolled in her second year of academic studies. She is a student in the Faculty of Arts, majoring in Criminology. Upon completion of her Arts degree, Katya hopes to pursue a career in Law.



Violet Doucet '23

Violet is pursuing a career in graphic design and is enrolled in the two-year Graphic Design program at Red River College Polytechnic.

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP

PANEL INTERVIEWS | GRADE 11 & 12 | APRIL 17, 2024

Panel Interviews promote career readiness and develop interview skills. Students present themselves and their work to a panel of SMA alumnae and friends and receive feedback, advice, and encouragement.



"Panel interviews are a great opportunity to pull together all of your achievements, experience, and activities. It's also efficient for the future, when I apply for something I can look back and think about my Panel Interview and feel more prepared."

– Jessica Slater '10

– Chinanuokum Onyiuke '25

"It was such a pleasure to be a panelist for this incredible event. I loved the opportunity to coach and encourage these amazing women through the interview process so that they are thriving and confident when applying for their dream jobs!"



Back row L-R: Ms. Adriane McElrea (staff), Jessica Slater '10, Brian Steeves SPHS '88, Monique Dumontet '91, Melanie Potter '00, Sara Myk '00. Middle row L-R: Susan Polz '94, Suzan Goritz Tetrault '99, Susie Erjavec Parker '92, Cynthia Campbell '90, Ainsley Balcewich '10, Angela Birdsell '79, Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99 (staff). Front row L-R: Sandra Martin '97 (staff), Brenna Mahoney '01, Olivia Klus '18, Kori Osmond '03, Melissa Cattini '03, Colin Hornby

PANELISTS

- Angela Birdsell '79
- Rehka Malaviya '83
- Cynthia Campbell '90
- Monique Dumontet '91
- Susie Erjavec Parker '92
- Susan Polz '94
- Suzan Goritz Tetrault '99
- Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99
- Sarah Myk '00
- Melanie Potter '00
- Brenna Mahoney '01
- Sara Rusak '01
- Melissa Cattini '03
- Kori Osmond '03
- Dayna Queau-Guzzi '06
- Ainsley Balcewich '10
- Jessica Slater '10
- Olivia Klus '18
- Leanne Shewchuk
- Brian Steeves (SPHS '88)
- Colin Hornby



Left to right: Alice Bird '25, Rittanpreet Brar '25, Tara Jackson '25, Ms. Adriane McElrea, Madeline Duval '25, Ashneet Brar '25, Iteoluwakiishi Nwosisi '25

CAREER SPEAKERS

SMA alumnae from diverse fields share their professional journeys with students, discussing career appeal, successes, obstacles, and lessons learned.



Left to right: Jessica Slater (Malach '10) with Otto, Jilian Stefanson '15, Ashley Pylypowich '05.



Left to right: Raphael Di Cosimo '97, Heather Wallace (Crocker '94), Jennifer Griffin (Athayde '99)

CAREER AND MENTORSHIP EVENTS FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

GRADE 9 CAREER SPEAKERS | October 17, 2024

ASK AN ALUM | November 21, 2024

GRADE 10 CAREER SPEAKERS | March 7, 2025

PANEL INTERVIEWS | April 24, 2025

GRADE 9 CAREER SPEAKERS | SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

Ashley Pylypowich '05

Ashley is a registered nurse and nurse practitioner with over a decade of experience. She works at the Health Sciences Center, Indigenous Services Canada, and the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba where she is working on a peer review of safe prescribing practices. Previously, she chaired the Nurse Practitioner Association of Manitoba.

Jessica Slater (Malach '10)

Jessica works in her family business, K9 Storm, manufacturing bulletproof vests for police and military working dogs in 37 countries. In her presentation, she reminded students that choosing a career is not always easy, and encouraged them to keep an open mind and consider all of the opportunities presented to them.

Jilian Stefanson '15

Jilian earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies with a minor in Philosophy from the University of Manitoba in 2018. She completed her law degree at Robson Hall, graduating in 2021. Jilian practices law at MLT Aikins LLP, specializing in corporate and commercial law, particularly in project development, real estate transactions, corporate governance, and regulatory compliance.

GRADE 10 CAREER SPEAKERS | MARCH 8, 2024 (INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY)

Raphael Di Cosimo '97

Raphael is a probation officer with the Government of Manitoba. She has served as a Community Corrections Officer in the Winnipeg Domestic Violence Unit, the Criminal Organization High Risk Offender Unit, and the Male Youth Unit.

Jennifer Griffin (Athayde '99)

Jennifer is a medical doctor specializing in pediatric gastrointestinal disorders. Her clinical and research focus is on pediatric intestinal failure, nutrition, eosinophilic gastrointestinal disorders, and medical education.

Heather Wallace (Crocker '94)

Heather has worked in the construction industry for over 20 years. She manages capital projects as a project engineer at Manitoba Hydro. She spent the first 15 years of her career working as a structural engineer and building scientist, focusing on the restoration of historical buildings. She also sits on the St. Mary's Academy Inc. Board of Directors.

Alumnae and friends who are interested in participating as a career speaker and/or as a mentor, please contact Sandra Martin (Alwis '97) at alumnae@smamb.ca.



1972 Christina Pyrz-Kowall was inducted into the newly established Manitoba Opera Hall of Fame during Manitoba Opera's 50th Anniversary Celebration on February 25, 2023. Christina has sung in more productions than any other woman in the 50-year history of Manitoba Opera, with her performance in "Carmen" in April 2024 marking her 70th production. Recently retired from her "day job" career, Christina and her husband Stephen are looking forward to enjoying many more years with their children and grandchildren, in addition to singing, dancing, playing piano, and learning to play musical instruments she has never had enough time to learn.



1973 Michelle Meade (Blanchard) dedicated her career to promoting active lifestyles and environmental conservation. She was instrumental in developing, launching, and managing chronic disease and wellness programs until her retirement in 2022. Michelle's passion for conservation led her to co-found Bishop Grandin Greenway, including the

"Bittersweet Way" project, creating a sustainable urban forest and pathway. She was the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022 for 22 years of volunteer service preserving and restoring the 5 km green space.

1975 Carol-Ann Borody-Siemens and her husband settled in Nanaimo, BC in 2022 after retirement. Since moving, they immersed themselves in the community through activities like golfing and volunteering. They celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on the island surrounded by loved ones: "We feel incredibly grateful to call this beautiful place our home."



1976 Michelle Harrison (Fortin) passed away from cancer on April 17, 2024. She founded The Dream Factory (formerly The Rainbow Society) in 1983 to support children with life-threatening illnesses. Facing terminal cancer, Michelle initiated a fundraising drive using her "last wish" to sustain the charity's mission as it marks its 40th anniversary. The campaign honours her legacy and supports ongoing wish-granting. Michelle is pictured with her daughter, Shaena.



1980 Catherine Carlson, a member of the Provincial Court of Manitoba, was recently appointed as President of the American Judges Association (AJA). The AJA offers educational conferences, access to judicial resources, and opportunities for training in specialized areas of interest.



1983 Heather Lewis, a Learning Support Teacher at École Beau Meadow School (EBMS), has been nominated for the Inspiring Success Award of Distinction and the Superintendent's Service Award for Excellence. Her nomination read: "With a background spanning from education assistant to classroom teacher to holding a Master's degree in Educational Research, Heather is dedicated to student mental health and instructional leadership. Known for her inclusive approach and collaborative spirit, Heather shapes EBMS's education program, reducing barriers and fostering an environment where all students thrive."

GRAPEVINE STORIES

Submit your story for the 2025 Grapevine to alumnae@smamb.ca. Deadline to submit is **April 15, 2025.**



1991 Class of 1991 Some members of the Class of 1991 traveled to Niagara-on-the-Lake in October 2023 to celebrate their 50th birthdays. They also held a memorable dinner party in January 2024, reminiscing about old times, and creating new memories.



1992 Susie Erjavec Parker was nominated for an Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award in the category of Community Builder of the Year for her work as co-founder of Fried Chicken Fest, an annual food festival that focuses on supporting local restaurants in a fun competition.

She was honoured in the Manitoba legislature, by MLA Adrian Sala, with a member statement that recognized her work building valuable connections between businesses and the local community, fostering growth and collaboration.



1997 and 2007 To celebrate International Flower Day on January 19, 2024, Winnipeg Richardson International Airport's Manager, Brand + Passenger Experience, **Lisa-Marie Buccini '97**, teamed up with Callia's Founder + CEO, **Catherine Metrycki '07**, to surprise and delight those

greeting travellers by giving their loved ones an extra special welcome. Lisa pictured on the left with Catherine.



1998 Robynne Kazina was appointed a Justice of the Manitoba Court of King's Bench (Family Division) in Winnipeg in January 2024. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Manitoba and pursued a combined degree program at the University of Toronto, earning both a Juris

Doctor (J.D) and a Master of Social Work. Admitted to the Manitoba Bar in 2006, she dedicated her legal career to family law, rising to partnership at Taylor McCaffrey LLP by 2013. Beyond her professional endeavours, she cherishes time at her family cottage and travelling with her husband Ryan and their two sons.



2002 Andrea Metner (Wiebe) recently celebrated 16 years of marriage to her husband Ryan Metner in Moosehorn, MB, alongside their beloved cats Felix and Felicity. In addition to working at Lakeshore Division, Andrea and Ryan have been active members of the St. Ignatius Parish Sunday school program for six years, despite the weekly 500 km round trip. She has

taught grades 6 and 7 and Confirmation students. During the pandemic, Andrea volunteered for the Catholic Hotline, supporting people facing mental health crises and drawing from her own experience with Bipolar 1. She is on her 3rd year as the Pillar of Service for the OLPH CWL.



2004 Janelle Nadeau Since graduating from SMA, Janelle Nadeau has toured extensively across Canada and around the world and is one of Canada's most renowned harpists. Her talent has landed her on stages with musical icons like Frank Sinatra Jr., Kanye West, Andrea Bocelli, The Who, Diana Krall, and more. Janelle has also performed more than 400 shows in hospitals, palliative care units, and care homes. Janelle acts as Principal Harpist with the Vancouver Opera and performs with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

SMA's choir, Con Fuoco, took the stage alongside Janelle as the featured vocal ensemble at "A Prairie Christmas" on December 4, 2023.



2009 Brittany Conway is a graduate of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) from the Canadian Institute of TCM in Calgary and received her certification in Oncology Acupuncture from the TCM Academy of Integrative Medicine. She recently celebrated one year as a part of the team at Action Physiotherapy.



2009 Andrea Jackson obtained a Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies degree at the University of Western Ontario. She is the Senior Manager of Partnerships at True North Sports and Entertainment, a member of the Canadian chapter of Women in Sport and Events, and a board

member at the Sara Riel Foundation. She is pursuing her MBA on a part-time basis at the University of Manitoba Asper School of Business. In February 2024, Andrea was the keynote speaker at the Flames' Prep hosted Female World Sport School Challenge Banquet.

2012 Erin Teschuk, based in Toronto, is a New Balance athlete who specializes in the 3,000-meter steeplechase, a challenging race featuring barriers and water pits. Despite its difficulty, Erin finds joy and motivation in competing in the event. She attributes her start in running to her participation in various sports at a young age, realizing her aptitude for running in Grade 9 when she joined the SMA track club.



2013 Emily Meadows is a dynamic Métis artist with a strong connection to Treaty One Territory. She holds a bachelor's degree in music Theatre Performance from Sheridan College, and honed her skills through training at Toronto's Second City Conservatory program.

Emily has appeared in theatre, film, and television and will be next seen in "The Play that Goes Wrong", a co-production between Citadel Theatre, Theatre Calgary, and Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre. In 2023, RMTTC's Pimootayowin Festival featured a reading of her new play "The Shape of Paint Water". She was also a recipient of the 2023 "Yes I Can" award from

The Nellie McClung Foundation: "Emily brings authenticity and reverence for her heritage to her work, serving as a cultural bridge between tradition and innovation. Her dedication to her craft and her commitment to sharing meaningful stories make her a true trailblazer in the performing arts."



2012 On July 29, 2023, SMA teachers **Alannah Thibodeau '13** and **Jason Athayde** were united in marriage at St. Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church. Alannah has taught at SMA since 2018 and Jason has been on faculty since 2017.



2018 and 2001 Olivia Klus '18 recently graduated from the University of Manitoba with honors in Agri-Business. Throughout her time at school, Olivia explored all facets of the agricultural industry, gaining valuable experience in areas such as business solutions, accounts payable, logistics,

and grain grading. Now, she is making waves in farm advocacy, dedicating her time to supporting Manitoban producers. She now works in an operations position at Keystone Agricultural Producers, alongside general manager **Brenna Mahoney '01**. Olivia has her sights set on a future in policy work, recognizing the importance of shaping the regulations that impact the agricultural community.



2019 Anna Maidment graduated from the University of Hawai'i with a degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Management and a certificate in Ocean Policy and was recognized on the Dean's List. She was captain of the University of Hawai'i NCAA Division 1 Beach Volleyball Team and had

the highest number of wins as a pair in UH history. She was also named American Volleyball Coaches' Association Top Flight Winner, Academic All Big West winner, and was on the Big West Commissioner's Honor Roll. Anna's passion is ocean conservation; she is a shark safety diver and eco-educator, and volunteers with Access Surf and the Aloha Animal Sanctuary.

MARY – PATRONESS AND PROTECTRESS

The statue of Mary holding baby Jesus, located in the exterior alcove on the top floor of the Academy's 1902 building had deteriorated over the years with many pieces crumbling. This statue originally graced the school at its first location on Notre Dame Avenue in the late 1800s and was transported to our current building at 550 Wellington Crescent in the early 1900s.

In October 2022, the statue was carefully brought down and meticulously restored by Widmere Castings. After the restoration, the statue was displayed outside Holy Names Chapel for all to see. In July 2024, the beautifully restored statue was returned to its original location, placed upon refurbished footing.

The restoration was made possible through funding from the Government of Manitoba Heritage Resources Conservation Grant, the City of Winnipeg Gail Parvin Hammerquist Fund Capital Project Grant, and the SMA Foundation. Thanks be to God for all the hands and hearts that helped restore the treasured statue of our Patroness.



View additional before and after photos
www.smaphotos.ca/statue

IN MEMORIAM

With sorrow, St. Mary's Academy acknowledges the passing of alumnae and former faculty and staff. Please remember them and their families in your prayers.

Mary Kissel '38

Judith McGibbon (Kenway '41)

Roberta Coyle '42

Rosemary Devine (Convey '45)

Sheila McDougall '49

Georgette Milliere (Gladu '51)

Deanne Morse (Mollot '53)

Joyce Alexander (Barlow '55)

Marlene Vis (Wehrle '55)

Beatrice Kimery (Perreault '55)

Carol Dunn (Paille '57)

Catherine Gartner (Van de Mosselaer '57)

Frances Taylor (Schmidleitner '57)

Gabrielle Lancaster (Monette '60)

Jane De Leeuw (Grover '60)

Sandra Dewar (Kolt '62)

Marie Schnerch (Sharpe '62)

Christine Firman (Balcaen '69)

Michelle Harrison (Fortin '76)

Vanessa Kuzyk '87

Maila Gabriel '87

Allan Blahut (Staff 2005-2024)

Anne Demontigny (Staff 1979-1995)

Please send 'In Memoriam' notices to alumnae@smamb.ca.

MESSAGE FROM THE SMA FOUNDATION



Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
ST. MARY'S ACADEMY FOUNDATION

A COMMON PURPOSE: A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

At the St. Mary's Academy Foundation, advancement is synonymous with community-building. To me, community is more than just a collection of individuals; it's a tapestry of shared experiences, values, and aspirations that bind us together in a common purpose. It's about fostering connections, nurturing relationships, and supporting one another through triumph and adversity. It's also about creating a sense of belonging and inclusivity where every voice is heard and every contribution is valued.

At SMA, we believe that only through collective effort and collaboration can we fully actualize the aspirations of Blessed Mother Marie-Rose Durocher, who envisioned transforming society through the education of young women. SMA's 155-year legacy as a preeminent Catholic girls' school is a beautiful testament to the power of community-building. This power extends beyond the walls of our school and into the broader world around us where we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of others and uphold the principles of social justice and compassion that lie at the heart of our mission. But community-building is not just about what we do—it's also about who we are. It's about cultivating a culture of empathy, respect, and understanding where diversity is celebrated and differences are embraced. It's about recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of every individual and empowering each person to reach their full potential.

That's why I'm excited to invite you to join us in our efforts to strengthen and expand our community here at St. Mary's Academy. Whether you're an alumna, parent, friend, or supporter, there are countless opportunities for you to get involved and make a difference.

Volunteering your time and talents is one of the most meaningful ways to contribute to the life of our school. Whether you have a background in history, education, fundraising, event planning, or simply a willingness to lend a helping hand, there's a place for you on our team. From organizing alumnae events, serving as a mentor for current students, or helping out in the archives, there are countless ways to get involved and make a positive impact.

Another meaningful way to participate in community-building at SMA and help us advance the mission of the Academy is through philanthropic support. With every gift to the Bursary Fund, you are breaking down barriers to enrollment for a student who otherwise would not be able to experience the life-changing power of an SMA education. On the next page,

we share the story of one of the thousands of alumnae who have been the beneficiaries of an SMA bursary over the last 155 years. While you are reading, please know that demand for financial assistance is at an all-time high. We need your help more than ever and ask you to consider making a monthly or annual gift in support of this important cause.

If these options are not a fit for you, that's alright too. We invite you to attend one of our upcoming events or help spread the word about the work we're doing; every contribution, no matter how small is meaningful and makes a difference.

I am excited to share a new initiative that we are planning. The SMA Foundation is holding our inaugural Online Auction in November of 2024 to raise money for school programs. 100% of the proceeds from the auction will directly benefit students through enhanced program offerings, such as experiential learning opportunities, leadership development, mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and cutting-edge technology. There are many ways to play a meaningful role in the success of the auction and we definitely can't do it without you. We invite you to make in-kind donations of an item or service, partner with us as a sponsor, bid on your favourite prizes, and invite your friends to do the same. With your help, we can ensure that the students of the Academy are equipped with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-changing world and make a positive difference. For those of you who love a gala, don't worry! We'll be back with a glitzy fundraising dinner in January of 2026.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community and for your continued support of St. Mary's Academy. Together, we can create a brighter future for all.

Kate Hodgert-Fennell '99
Director of Advancement and Development
St. Mary's Academy Foundation
khodgert-fennell@smamb.ca or 204-478-6031



Bailey Harris speaking at Marian Awards Gala

OPENING DOORS: BURSARY RECIPIENT SHARES THE LIFE-CHANGING POWER OF COMMUNITY AT ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

I graduated from St. Mary's in 1998. I was a "super sixer", attending the school from grade 7 to 12. I received support through the bursary program for many of those years.

My parents had a plan. My sister and I would attend our community French immersion school and then enter St. Mary's in grade 7. We would graduate, go to university, build a career, and eventually have a family of our own. Soon after I was admitted to St. Mary's the plan slowly became less feasible. My parents divorced. The Canadian economy fell into a recession. A business was lost. And everything changed. But my parent's dream for me didn't change, and my family found itself in the difficult position where we needed help. My parents prioritized my education. Perhaps even more importantly, while our lives were in a state of flux, my parents wanted to give me stability. My dad shared with me that St. Mary's saved him. Life was unpredictable for many years. This school community eased some of the stressors in his life, by stepping up to help raise me. And this school really did help raise me. The teachers, administrators, and classmates each wrapped me up in a blue kilt and carried me forward as my teenage world was evolving.

In grade 12, the wonderful Mrs. Kruk taught AP English. We studied Tennyson's poem Ulysses.

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.

That quote has always stuck with me. We are shaped by all of life's experiences, and it's often only in hindsight that we realize the fleeting, seemingly insignificant moments are among the most important.

For me, St. Mary's not only provided me with the academic foundation that allowed me to do well in university, law school, and now in the practice of law, St. Mary's gave me this community.

It was Mrs. Duncan and her stories of her parrot.

It was Mrs. Coutu telling me that my purple doc martens, while excellent, did not meet the dress code, but that I should nonetheless wear them whenever else possible.

It was Ms. Mikijanec always being impeccably dressed.

It was Mr. O'Donoghue and his quiet encouragement before a physics exam.

It was Sister Marylyn, just being Sister Marylyn.

It was air bands to the Backstreet Boys.

It was running up the stairs from the basement to the third floor in three minutes between classes.

And it was the girls. Teenage girls are ... tricky. And we had a school full of them!

It was my friends who, one day noticed I wasn't at school and realized I had been dumped the night before. They skipped school, brought me candy, and sat with me while I cried. The next day, Mrs. Johnson didn't give anyone detention; instead, she hugged me and said, "There will be more, and better ones too."

This school community always had me wrapped tight. This sense of community is an incredible thing to offer a young girl, trying to figure life out.

I invite you to support the SMA Bursary Fund and open the doors to St. Mary's for students who might not otherwise have access. Your contributions will give young girls the opportunity to join and be shaped by this community. Attending St. Mary's is a privilege that should not be exclusive. Generosity from people like you has supported students like me for decades. On behalf of the St. Mary's Academy Foundation Board, I ask you to continue this tradition.

To parents and caregivers – think of those who dream of providing their daughters with the opportunities a St. Mary's education offers. To alumnae – remember and reminisce, knowing other girls deserve the same opportunities you had. And to those new to the community, welcome. You are part of something incredibly special.

Bailey Harris '98

Partner, Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP

Member, Board of Directors, St. Mary's Academy Foundation

Bailey's story, first shared at the 2023 Marian Awards Gala, has been slightly modified for reproduction in the Torch Light.

Donations to the Bursary Fund can be made at www.smamb.ca/support-us, by completing the enclosed Donation Form, or by contacting advancement@smamb.ca or 204-560-6924.

MARIAN AWARDS GALA



The overwhelming support on display at the Marian Awards Gala last fall at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was a real testament to the power of community in action at St. Mary's Academy.

We were honoured to posthumously present the 2023 Marian Award to Constanca (Connie) Magalhaes. Connie's legacy of faith, love, and family values lives on. We thank her daughters Ana '91, Cristina '93, Maria '95, Luisa '98, and Connie '01 for accepting this award on her behalf.

"We were [our mom's] priority our whole lives, and she taught us with unwavering certainty that nothing was out of reach. She pushed us to be the best versions of ourselves. The five of us roamed the halls of St. Mary's for 16 consecutive years. It gave our mom great joy to see us offered so many opportunities to engage in our community, our world and our faith, academically, athletically, socially, and in so many leadership roles.

There came a time in our long tenure at SMA that our family's financial circumstances changed dramatically. When our mom went to Sister Susan to advise that she would have to pull us out of the school, Sister Susan said with certainty, absolutely not. So, how special and meaningful that our mom is being celebrated here to help raise funds for other students who might not otherwise be able to attend SMA.

To the very end, our mom was so humble, selflessly tending to the needs of others always above her own. She forever made time for people, and was not afraid to roll up her sleeves to make things happen. Determined, strong, and so very generous with her energy, love, and time. She led by example, never seeking recognition. She left us so suddenly, and far too soon."

– Luisa Magalhaes '98

Together, we raised **\$125,871** in support of St. Mary's Academy. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to everyone who made the Gala a success. Our sponsors, with their vital backing, made the event possible. Our dedicated students, staff, and volunteers, with their hard work, made it memorable. Our attendees and donors played an invaluable role with their participation and generous contributions. Special thanks to Janine Stephens (Hanson '01), whose masterful emceeing elevated the evening and Bailey Harris '98, whose powerful remarks touched the hearts of everyone in attendance.

We are truly blessed to have such a generous and supportive community.



Left to right: Daughters Cristina Patterson (Magalhaes '93), Ana Gray (Magalhaes '91), Maria Neufeld (Magalhaes '95), Luisa Magalhaes '98, Connie Lidster (Magalhaes '01)



Left to right: Matthew and Janine Stephens (Hanson '01), Mary and Gregg Hanson



THANK YOU

MARIAN AWARDS GALA SPONSORS AND DONORS

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Michelle LaLonde & Tiber River Naturals

Lazy Bear Café

Sandra Martin (Alwis '97)
& Academy Bistro

Mottola Grocery & Pizzeria Gusto

Diane Ruest '94

So Over It

Janine Stephens (Hanson '01)

Sugar + Salt Bakeshoppe

The Cheesemongers Fromagerie

The Falcon Lake House

The Gates on Roblin

The Keg Steakhouse & Bar

The Pourium

These Four Walls

Delaney Vun '03, Zephyra Vun '05,
and Everett Vun '11

Yuk Yuk's

Gala Organizing Committee

Sina Aiello

Franca Cerqueti

Sylvia Falconer (Bator '01)

Bailey Harris '98

Laura McDonald

Adriane McElrea

Jennifer Tesoro '96

Tanya Wepler

Mary-Alex Puchniak Willer '03

Alexis Wolbaum '12

View Marian Awards Gala photos at
smaphotos.ca/mariangala2023.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Get in touch with the friendly team in the SMA Advancement Office to talk about how you can support St. Mary's Academy.

COMING EVENTS

HOMECOMING

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

Commemorative Years Brunch

Doors open | 9:30 AM

Brunch | 10 AM - 12 PM | SMA Cafeteria

Celebrating the classes of: 2014, 2004, 1999, 1994, 1984, 1974, 1969, and alumnae from the class of 1964 and earlier. Also welcome, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and former and current faculty and staff.

Mass | 12 PM | Alumnae Hall | All welcome

Touring and Tea | 1 PM - 3 PM | All welcome

www.smamb.ca/events/homecoming

ONLINE AUCTION IN SUPPORT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 18 - 30, 2024

The SMA Foundation is holding our inaugural Online Auction to raise money for school programs. 100% of the proceeds benefit students through enhanced program offerings, such as experiential learning opportunities, leadership development, mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and cutting-edge technology. With your help, we can ensure students are equipped with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-changing world and make a positive difference.

www.smamb.ca/support-us/onlineauction

ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA THE MUSICAL

NOVEMBER 28 - 30, 2024

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AT 7 PM | SATURDAY AT 2 PM

SMA's Dramatic Arts program is pleased to present Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical. Tickets available in October.

www.smamb.ca/events/dramatic-arts-production

DECEMBER CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024

Celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Light lunch served after Mass.

DRINKS UNDER THE DOME FOR THE CLASS OF 2024

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

2024 graduates return to their alma mater for hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Following the presentation of yearbooks, alumnae participate in a tour of the 4th floor and visit the picturesque dome.

OPEN HOUSE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025 | 7 PM - 9 PM

The evening begins with an Information Session in Alumnae Hall, followed by tours of our campus. All prospective students and families are welcome.

www.smamb.ca/admissions/openhouse

FEMALE WORLD SPORT SCHOOL CHALLENGE

JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Watch elite level female hockey. Hosted by the Flames Prep Hockey Team. www.fwssc.ca

ALUMNAE AND FRIENDS BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025

Join alumnae and friends, both established and new to their careers, for a mix and mingle event with a fireside chat featuring successful professionals in various fields. Refreshments will be served. www.smamb.ca/events/networking

MARIAN AWARDS BRUNCH

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2025

The 2024 and 2025 Marian Awards recipients are recognized at a special brunch. Everyone in the SMA community is asked to consider recommending a worthy candidate. Nominators are asked to complete the online nomination form at www.smamb.ca/events/marian-awards. Submit nominations on or before October 10, 2024.

50th REUNION ALUMNAE INVITED TO GRADUATION MASS

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025

Alumnae celebrating their 50th reunion are invited to join the Class of 2025 at Graduation Mass, followed by a special reception.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025

Inaugurated in 1975, International Day marks its 50th anniversary. Join us to celebrate the diversity and vibrancy of our community. Enjoy a variety of ethnic food, live entertainment, and raffles. Admission is free. Everyone is welcome. Hosted by the Parents' Guild.

www.smamb.ca/events/international-day

St. Mary's Academy, 550 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 0C1 | 204-477-0244 | www.smamb.ca

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ST. MARY'S ACADEMY IS PROUD TO PRESENT



ROALD DAHL'S
Matilda
THE MUSICAL

BOOK BY
DENNIS KELLY

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
TIM MINCHIN



NOV. 28 - 30, 2024

Thursday & Friday at 7:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets on sale October 2024

St. Mary's Academy, 550 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 0C1 | 204-477-0244 | www.smamb.ca

ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA THE MUSICAL is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com