

# Marian Catholic ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



DECEMBER 2021



## MERRY CHRISTMAS, THANK YOU, TO ALL OUR ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS

As the Christmas season approaches and brings with it a time for happiness and thanksgiving, we join alumni throughout the country, and those out of the country, in commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

This is also a time for us to say thank you to the many wonderful supporters of Catholic education, including hundreds of alumni who have helped us continue a tradition that started back in 1954.

Some 67 years later, because of you, a Catholic education remains affordable for every boy and girl who desire “an

exceptional education rooted in faith, family and tradition.”

As Christmas is about to arrive, members of the Marian Catholic family – administration, faculty, student body, coaches and, of course, our Alumni Association directors – offer our appreciation to you for helping to make that situation possible, and we wish you a blessed holiday season that includes good health and safety in the days ahead. We pray that each of your households will be filled with the peace, love and joy of Christmas.



*The beautifully-renovated and decorated chapel at Marian Catholic High School continues to remind us that Jesus makes a difference in our lives and that the Christ-centered, faith-filled environment in which we place our students is certainly something for which we need to be thankful.*



## YOU'VE HELPED US TO "BE MARIAN"

Dear MCHS Alumni,

It is incredible to think we have already reached the holiday season so quickly during my first year as Head of School. Time continues to fly by, and, as the Advent Season goes on, I reminisce upon my own final Christmas break at Marian Catholic, which is amazingly over 15 years ago.

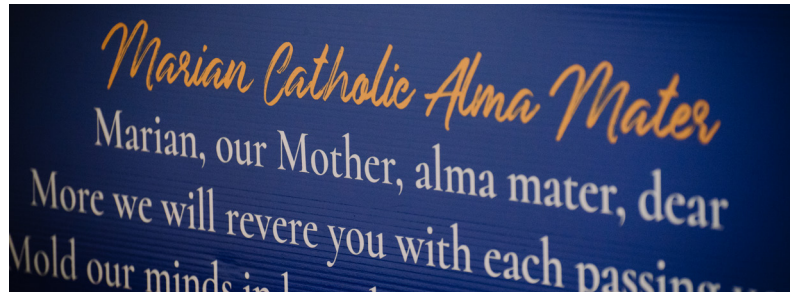
No matter when we graduated from our great school, we can remember that final year and Christmas break at Marian, and it still feels like yesterday.

Now, as we have grown near and far from our beloved Alma Mater, we celebrate Christmas with our loved ones, children, grandchildren, families and friends, but we always remember where we grew up and our time as Colts and Fillies.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus, during this time, I want to make sure I thank each and every one of you for your support of Marian Catholic. It is because of our love for Marian that we continue to work together to better our school for our current and future students.

I want to wish all of you a blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Continue to "Be Marian" in all that you do, and enjoy every second of this holiday season.

God Bless You,  
Michael Brennan, Head of School



## HELP MARIAN "BE MARIAN," JOIN OUR ASSOCIATION

We know our alumni are proud of the education they received at Marian Catholic and want to help certain the opportunities that were available to them remain available to this and the next generation.

One of the ways graduates can do this is by becoming a member of the Marian Catholic High School Alumni Association.

You can do that by going to the school's website, clicking on Alumni and following the prompt that includes a membership form.

In an era when Catholic schools are facing continuous challenges that have prompted many to close their doors, our alumni strive to be there for the next generation and for years to come. If each of us can do just a little, together we can do great things for our Alma Mater!



## Rock Music Ministry Alumni

Join us for our Marian Catholic Christmas Mass on Dec. 22, 9:30am



Matt Martin, James Rodino and Caden Kash.



Coach Stan Dakosty, Connor Rehnert, Tevin Walsh and Sam Homyak.



Assistant Coach J.D. Hackenberg, Mason Soult, Nova McGuire and Julian Hermay

## IT'S MORE THAN JUST ABOUT WINNING: COLT FOOTBALL TEAM, COACHES GIVE BACK TO COMMUNITY

Success can be measured in a number of ways.

For the Marian Colts' football team, it's not just about winning football games, although a four-game winning streak in November during a rebuilding year offers tremendous promise for the future.

Off the field, Coach Stan Dakosty and his players, have also performed exceedingly well. In fact, based on their recent volunteerism, during which time they showed the true spirit of the Christmas season, one might suggest the Colts deserve the "gold."

The Colts were one of only four teams that took up the request of The Salvation Army on Dec. 4 during what the non-profit organization labeled "2021 Football Ring Day," offering their services at the WalMart store in Hometown to collect funds for the Army in its mission to help those less fortunate.

Assistant coaches Billy O'Gurek and J.D. Hackenberg joined Dakosty and a host of Colts in manning the entrances to the store. Collectively, our "Colts" took in amazing \$708.08 in staffing the red kettles through the entire day.

"Marian community is known for giving back. We try to get our kids involved more in the community," said Dakosty,



Andrew Baran and Dylan Zullo with Coach Billy O'Gurek

who pointed out the Colt football program is designed to "working to win in the classroom, in the community and on the field," adding, "all three areas are important to the boys who play for us."

He added, "When we were up there (WalMart) with the kids, it was really neat to see them excited about the Christmas season, and wanting to help others. I'm proud of each them and our coaches and I'm sure the Marian football family is proud of them too."

That included Head of School Michael Brennan, who commented, "When we talk in school about being Marian, it is about far more than just when we are in the hallways or competing in an athletic contest. It is about being active in our community, and being role models for future Colts. Our student-athletes and coaches giving up their Saturday to help

those in need in our community is just one example of the service our programs give to help others. I was very proud to see the great participation to help the Salvation Army."

Thirteen area high schools were invited to participate in the Football Ring Day. Besides the Colts, players and coaches from Nativity, Blue Mountain and Schuylkill Haven gave of their time.

"Each team brought in much more than usual at each of these sites, and we are so appreciative and grateful for your help this year in our Red Kettle Campaign with the Salvation Army Service Units and the Pottsville Salvation Army Corps! Between these two groups, we make sure that there is Salvation Army assistance to anyone in need in every zip code of Schuylkill County," said Rebecca Netznik, regional manager of The Salvation Army Service Department.



Dylan and Jesse Rodino, with Rawlin Melendez

## 2020 MARIAN GRADUATE WINS SINGING AWARDS

By Rich Strack

(published in Times News, Lehighton)

She's not 21 yet and she's already a 10-year veteran of stage performances.

Olivia Stettler, now age 19, started singing when she was 7 years old and began her theater performances when she was just nine.

Her current resume lists 45 shows and while beginning her senior year at Marian Catholic High School, Olivia directed also her first musical at Center Stage in the Tamaqua Arts Center.

"When Olivia was in the eighth grade, she attended school in Tamaqua. She was nominated for a Majestic Award for Outstanding Lead Actress," said her mother, Heather. "She played Jojo in Tamaqua High School's production of 'Seussical the Musical.'"

In Olivia's senior year at Marian, 2019-2020, she placed first chair in her vocal range in the Schuylkill County Chorus Festival. She has taken voice lessons from the acclaimed Joelle Witner in Hazleton, Philip Pelkington in New York City and world-renowned vocal coach and performer Natalie Weiss.

When it comes to competition participation, this Temple University early childhood education major has attained more impressive accomplishments in her young history.

Olivia placed first in the 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 age groups at the Talent Explosion Performing Arts competition and won the overall solo vocal competition three times.

When asked if she gets nervous when performing in highly stressful competition events, Olivia offered a two-part reply.

"I do get nervous for every competition," she said, "but as far as theater events go, I'm nervous only before my performances. Once I step on stage,



I just enjoy it so much the nerves go away."

Olivia's favorite musical performers cross over several genres.

"I love the Beatles, Rex Orange County, Harry Styles, Elton John, Queen and Nirvana and the list goes on," she said. "I don't have one favorite song, but I like to sing a variety of Broadway tunes."

Speaking of Broadway, Olivia recently auditioned and was accepted into New York City master performing classes with stage stars Anthony Rapp, Reeve Carney and Eva Noblezada.

Three years ago, Olivia was selected to sing in a New York City cabaret with teens from the Broadway community. On Oct. 12, she was chosen to perform in the NYC adult cabaret.

To add another award to her growing collection, Olivia won first place in two age-related categories in the Talent Olympics competition held at the Split Rock Resort in Lake Harmony. Then, she finished in the top 10 in the Broadwaycon Star to Be competition.

"My mom sent a video of one of my past shows without me knowing and I was

surprised and excited to hear I finished in the top 10 and then I was shocked when I found out I finished in the top three!"

When asked what all of these achievements mean to her going forward in her life, Olivia replied without stars in her eyes and kept a sensibility of keeping her feet on the ground.

"I am going to teach early childhood with a concentration in special education," she said. "I'd like to minor in music so I can use music as a teaching tool with special education students."

She lives with her mother and father, Charles, in Tamaqua.

"We are so proud of everything Olivia has accomplished," said Heather. "She has worked so hard for every achievement and performance and to see her reap the benefits of her hard work is gratifying. She is amazing to watch."

Before Olivia Stettler steps into her school classroom to teach, this rising star will continue to earn an "A for Amazing" performances on stage in Broadway and in venues around the local area.

## IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

**Marian alumni and friends are asked to keep in their thoughts and prayers the families of the following:**

**Catherine A. (Durling) Anuso:** 75, of Bethlehem, passed away on Nov. 25, 2021. She was a 1964 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**William J. Bonenberger Sr.:** 90, of Tamaqua, passed away on Nov. 19, 2021. He was a 1948 graduate of St. Jerome's High School, Tamaqua.

**Michael A. Bretzik:** 74, of Jim Thorpe, passed away on Nov. 1, 2021. He was a 1965 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Michael J. Bubel Jr.:** 71, of Hometown, passed away on Nov. 22, 2021. He was a 1968 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**John M. Butcher:** 84, of Delray Beach, FL, formerly of Hazleton, passed away on Nov. 7, 2021. He was a 1956 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Kathryn (Campbell) Hartnett:** 71, of Southampton, passed away on Nov. 12, 2021. She was a 1967 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**Charles J. Knipper:** 72, of Lansford, passed away on Dec. 4, 2021. He was a 1967 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

**James R. McArdle:** 57, of Tamaqua, passed away on Nov. 14, 2021. He was a 1981 graduate of Marian Catholic High School.

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Part of our mission here at the Marian Alumni Association is to spread the "good word" among Marian graduates. We're interested in hearing from alumni and would like to share news about your families, careers, etc. with your classmates and friends. Of course, if we can help class members in their planning of reunions, etc., or if you just want to try to locate a classmate, send us an email at [alumni@mariancatholic.org](mailto:alumni@mariancatholic.org) and we will be more than happy to help you reunite with the Marian family.

## WE NEED CLASS REPRESENTATIVES TO HELP US GROW

Because class members know their classmates better than anyone, and a lot have continued to keep in touch with each other, the alumni association seeks class representatives to help us grow the association. The role of a class representative is to help connect their classmates with the school by informing them about what is going on currently at the school and within the association and engaging them through events and reunions. For more information on the association and how you can help your Alma Mater, contact Alumni chairman Bill O'Gurek, Class of '73, at [alumni@mariancatholic.org](mailto:alumni@mariancatholic.org).

### ***We know our alumni are proud about the education they received at Marian Catholic!***

Join our Alumni Association today for a nominal membership fee of \$10 per year. In an era when Catholic schools are facing continuous challenges that have prompted many to close their doors, our alumni strive to be there for the next generation and for years to come. If each of us can do just a little, together we can do great things for our Alma Mater! Go [www.mariancatholic.org](http://www.mariancatholic.org) and click on "Alumni" and "Join" to become a member today!



[WWW.MARIANCATHOLICHS.ORG](http://WWW.MARIANCATHOLICHS.ORG)



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