

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EDUCATING YOUNG MEN AT NATIVITY PREP



+ BACK TO SCHOOL +
Excellence Ahead

TRAILBLAZER

FALL
2023



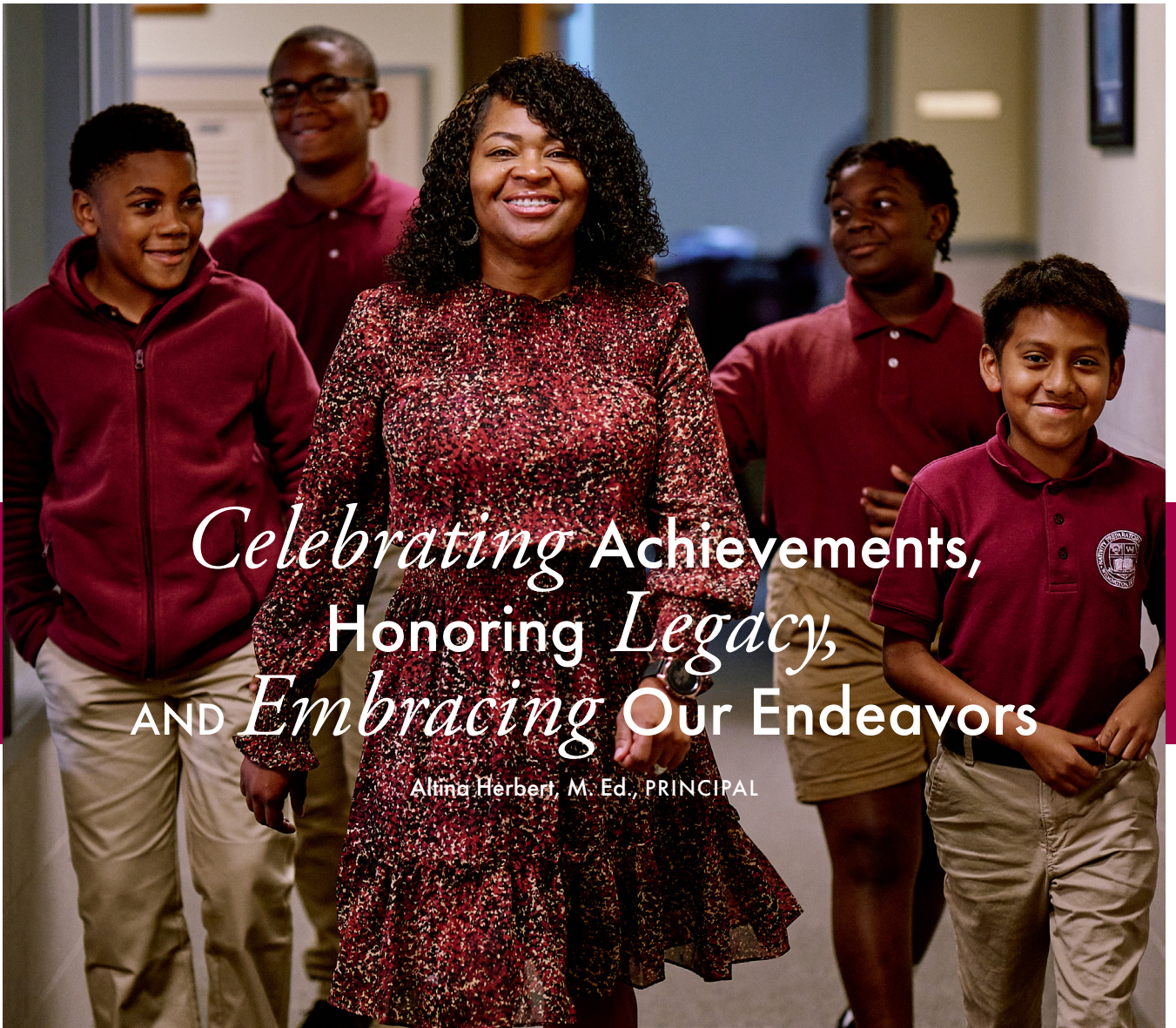
NEW PRINCIPAL WELCOME



DONOR RECOGNITION AND ANNUAL REPORT



NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION LAUNCHED



*Celebrating Achievements,
Honoring Legacy,
AND Embracing Our Endeavors*

Altina Herbert, M. Ed., PRINCIPAL



I am so excited to embark on this momentous journey with our students and it is with immense joy and pride that I extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our beloved Nativity Preparatory School.

Two decades ago, a vision took root, and from that vision, our institution was born. Over the years, we have grown and thrived, becoming a beacon of knowledge, a nurturing home for learners, and a community that values excellence above all else.

To Our Exceptional Faculty and Staff: Your dedication and unwavering commitment to our school have been the driving force behind our success. You have not only educated our students but also shaped their characters and guided them towards becoming responsible citizens of the world. Your dedication is the reason we are celebrating this milestone this year.

To Our Inspiring Students: You are the reason our school exists, and your enthusiasm for learning, curiosity, and accomplishments have been the heart of our community. As we embark on our 20th year, I encourage you to embrace this anniversary as an opportunity to reach new heights and achieve even greater milestones.

To Our Respected Board Members and Oblates: Your wisdom, guidance, and tireless efforts have played a pivotal role in steering our school through the ups and downs of the last two decades. Your unwavering belief in our mission and vision has been the bedrock upon which our institution stands tall today.

To Our Parents and Guardians: Each of you play an integral part in this journey. We pride ourselves on the opportunities that we have available to help each and every student succeed. You have entrusted Nativity Prep to continue to establish a foundation for a love of learning and brotherhood. We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure your child can achieve their highest potential.

As we reflect on our past accomplishments, we must also look to the future with a sense of purpose and anticipation. Our 20th anniversary signifies not just a milestone in our history but also a renewed commitment to our core values, a dedication to innovation in

Our 20th anniversary signifies an historic milestone and renewed commitment to our values and promise to our students.

education, and a promise to continue nurturing the minds and hearts of our students.

Throughout this special year, we will celebrate our achievements, honor the legacy of those who have contributed to our success, and embark on new initiatives that will shape the next 20 years and beyond. It is a year of reflection, gratitude, and aspiration, and I invite each of you to participate wholeheartedly in the festivities and endeavors that lie ahead.

Your support, passion, and collaboration have been instrumental in our journey thus far, and I have no doubt that together, we will continue to create an environment where excellence flourishes, creativity thrives, and students emerge as confident, compassionate, and responsible individuals.

As we stand at the threshold of this remarkable year, let us remember that our school is not just a place of education; *it is a place of dreams, of inspiration, and of growth.* I am honored to share this anniversary with all of you, and I look forward to celebrating the achievements and milestones that will undoubtedly come our way.

Welcome back to school, and here's to an extraordinary 20th year filled with memorable moments, remarkable achievements, and boundless opportunities! **NP**

Back to School Time

IT'S ADDING UP TO BE A YEAR OF EXCELLENCE

Jaeden M. Davis, EIGHTH GRADE

Excitement fills the air as the Boys are Back at Nativity Prep! The school's corridors echoed with laughter and learning as 5th- and 6th-grade students returned on August 29th. The energy intensified when all students joined on Tuesday, marking the beginning of a promising academic journey.

With a remarkable surge in enrollment, this year welcomes 55 students—a nearly 30% increase from the previous school year and an impressive 70% rise from the year before. This surge is a testament to the school's commitment to excellence and the community's trust in its educational mission.

Nativity Prep stands proud with several new teachers gracing its halls, bringing fresh perspectives and expertise to the learning environment. At the helm of this exciting chapter is the new leader, Principal Mrs. Alfina Herbert, who brings renewed energy to the faculty, a wealth of experience, and vision to guide the school forward.

The faculty and staff are bubbling with anticipation, eager to embark on this new academic year's journey. Their dedication is palpable, as they strive to shape their students into Salesian Gentlemen—individuals of integrity, compassion, and excellence.

As the Boys return to Nativity Prep, the campus comes alive with the promise of growth, achievement, and brotherhood. The stage is set for a year of learning, friendship, and transformation, fostering the development of not just students, but responsible and compassionate young men. We're pleased to introduce and share the perspective of one of our fine students, Jaeden Davis.

I'm Jaeden M. Davis and I'm 13 years old. I go to Nativity Preparatory School. I've been here for 3 years. When I first started in 6th grade, everything seemed confusing. But the teachers were really nice and helped me figure things out. I looked up to the 8th graders and tried to be like them.

In 7th grade, things were going well for me, except for one thing—MATH! I wasn't the best at it. But Mr. Ruth and Ms. Vanessa, the Graduate Support Director, were super helpful. They worked with me until I felt comfortable with math and started getting better grades. I started with a D+ and ended up with a B. I'm really grateful to Ms. Vanessa for arranging extra help and tutoring, and to Mr. Ruth for making things easier to understand.

Now, in 8th grade, it's been an interesting experience so far. Getting to know new kids and teachers can be a bit of a challenge. But I can see everyone works hard and they're all really nice and responsible.

"...my dream college is Harvard.

It's such a prestigious school and the work is challenging, which motivates me to work hard."

The high school I'd love to go to is Tower Hill. It could be a stepping-stone to an Ivy League School, which would be amazing in the long run. And my dream college is Harvard. It's such a prestigious school and the work is challenging, which motivates me to work hard.

I'm really into journalism. I've wanted to write articles for as long as I can remember. It's something I've always been good at and interested in. I also have this cool idea of starting my own podcast. I'd talk about what's going on in the world and interview all sorts of people, even those I might not agree with. I think that makes for really interesting conversations.

Geology is another subject that fascinates me, especially minerals and gemstones. And hydrology seems super important. It's all about testing water to make sure it's safe, especially after things like floods. Being a hydrologist sounds like a job that could really make a difference in the world.

Thanks for reading my story. Have an awesome day and never give up! **NP**

PHOTO BY ERROL EBANKS



The
GIVER

Just as world is perfect. Every thing is given
and no one has to die or suffer. There
is no pain. Every person is assigned a job
and a community.

When Jonas finds out he is singled out
to receive "the gift of seeing," he
discovers that the community of the State is
not what it seems. There is no pain, but
there is something else.

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Inquiring Minds Grow Over Every Season

HARVESTING THE BEST OF ART,
SCIENCE, AND BROTHERHOOD



Dear Mr. Myrland,
First, I thank you for
putting me on the team.
I had to use the mirror
to see the members of
the team. I like the
members of the team.
Thank you,
Maddy

No matter the season, young minds are ready to grow and thrive. This year we were excited to bring our students back to De Sales University for the Nativity Prep Summer Program and introduce a new STEM program once the new school year began.

Summer Program Returns

After a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Nativity Prep's summer program made a triumphant return to **De Sales University**.

Students were fully immersed in college life, residing in dorms, dining in the campus cafeteria, and attending classes taught by dedicated Nativity Prep faculty and De Sales professors. Five Nativity Prep alumni returned as counselors, exemplifying the program's strong sense of community and mentorship.

Academically, students delved into Shakespeare's *The Tempest* culminating in a live performance at the **Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival**, deepening their understanding of the text.



Recreational activities added a layer of excitement, ending with a thrilling day on the water with **Wake the World**. This blend of academics and adventure created lasting memories for the boys.

Special thanks go to **Fr. Greenfield, OSFS**, for his unwavering support. His dedication played a vital role in making the return to De Sales University possible.

Our summer program rekindled tradition and reaffirmed its commitment to student growth, learning, and community. Such programs remind us of education's transformative power

and the enduring strength of bonds among students and mentors. The experiences gained will undoubtedly shape our students' future endeavors and inspire their pursuit of excellence.

STEAM Days

Starting this fall, our students will engage in STEAM days every Wednesday. These activities aim to provide hands-on learning experiences across Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math domains. Through a variety of interactive activities, students will gain proficiency in STEAM principles, focusing on computer science and coding, through Nativity Prep partnering with two external organizations, **Capital One Coding** and **Avi I.T.**

Avi I.T. is a Wilmington-based non-profit organization. They designed their curriculum with a social-emotional learning perspective, creating space for open discussions related to S.T.E.M. subjects and the challenges students may encounter. Avi I.T. encourages students to express themselves through their work and introduces them to the world of



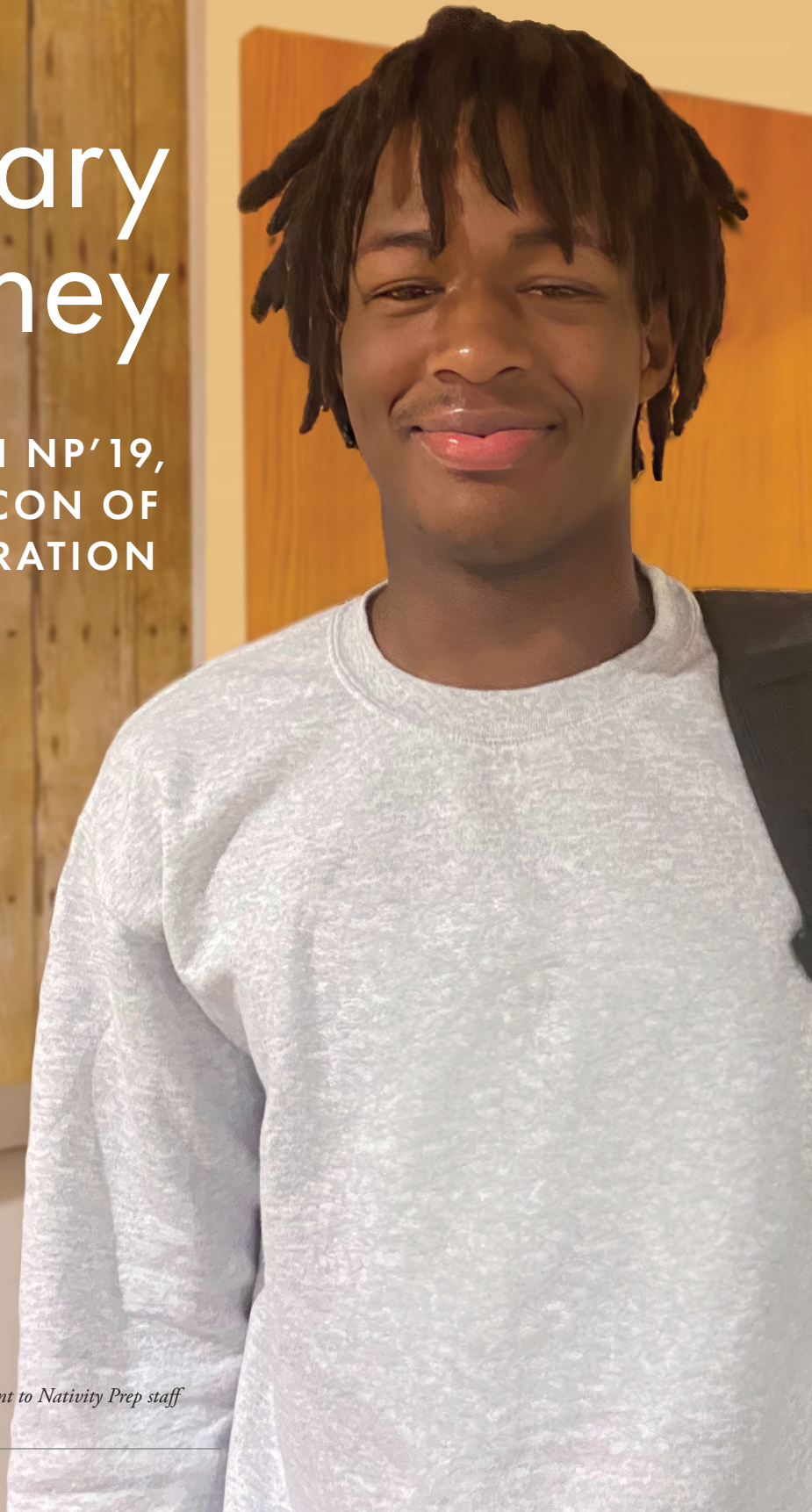
computer science as a potential profession. Students will explore topics such as Robotics, Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Game Development, and Coding using the Scratch application.

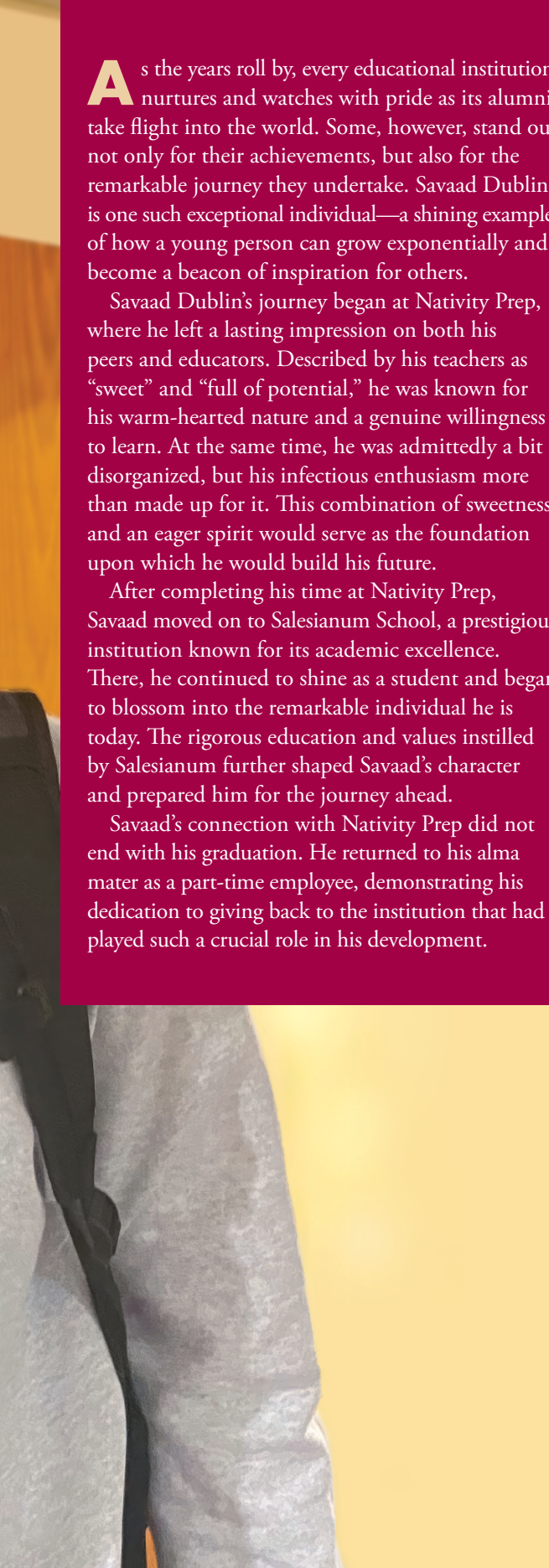
Capital One Coding facilitates a connection between their technologists and local school students and youth-serving nonprofits during a crucial phase of student development. Together, they delve into areas such as mobile app development, web design, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and other cutting-edge technologies through engaging hands-on mentorship. This 12-week cohort program is held in both the fall and spring months. At the culmination of each cohort, students have the opportunity to showcase their creations and knowledge gained through the mentorship partnership. **NP**

Exemplary Journey

SAVAAD DUBLIN NP'19,
A BEACON OF
INSPIRATION

Savaad Dublin's journey from Nativity Prep student to Nativity Prep staff demonstrates commitment to making a difference.





As the years roll by, every educational institution nurtures and watches with pride as its alumni take flight into the world. Some, however, stand out not only for their achievements, but also for the remarkable journey they undertake. Savaad Dublin is one such exceptional individual—a shining example of how a young person can grow exponentially and become a beacon of inspiration for others.

Savaad Dublin's journey began at Nativity Prep, where he left a lasting impression on both his peers and educators. Described by his teachers as “sweet” and “full of potential,” he was known for his warm-hearted nature and a genuine willingness to learn. At the same time, he was admittedly a bit disorganized, but his infectious enthusiasm more than made up for it. This combination of sweetness and an eager spirit would serve as the foundation upon which he would build his future.

After completing his time at Nativity Prep, Savaad moved on to Salesianum School, a prestigious institution known for its academic excellence. There, he continued to shine as a student and began to blossom into the remarkable individual he is today. The rigorous education and values instilled by Salesianum further shaped Savaad's character and prepared him for the journey ahead.

Savaad's connection with Nativity Prep did not end with his graduation. He returned to his alma mater as a part-time employee, demonstrating his dedication to giving back to the institution that had played such a crucial role in his development.

Simultaneously, he embarked on a part-time journey as a student at Delaware Technical Community College, showcasing his commitment to lifelong learning.

Savaad Dublin's chosen field of study, Counseling and Early Childhood Education, reflects his deep passion for helping others and ensuring that children receive the best start in life. His decision to pursue this path is a testament to his empathetic nature and his desire to make a positive impact on the lives of young learners.

Savaad's growth since attending Salesianum has been nothing short of exponential. He has not only excelled academically but has also matured into a responsible and compassionate young adult. His journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and the unwavering support of a nurturing community.

Today, Savaad Dublin is a great example for current students, both at Nativity Prep and Salesianum. His qualities shine brightly and serve as a guiding light for others to follow. Savaad's positive attitude, strong work ethic, unwavering integrity, and kindness are qualities that set him apart as a role model.

Savaad's positivity is infectious. He approaches every challenge with a can-do attitude, inspiring those around him to do the same. His belief in the power of positivity is a driving force in his life, encouraging others to tackle obstacles head-on.

Through hard work and determination, Savaad has achieved remarkable success in both his academic and professional pursuits. He exemplifies the notion that consistent effort and dedication are key ingredients for success.

Integrity is at the core of Savaad's character. He consistently demonstrates honesty, fairness, and a strong moral compass in all his interactions and decisions.

Savaad's kindness and empathy toward others are qualities that leave a lasting impact. He goes out of his way to lend a helping hand and make a difference in the lives of those around him.

In conclusion, Savaad Dublin's journey from Nativity Prep to Salesianum and beyond is a testament to the transformative power of education and the potential within each individual to grow, evolve, and make a positive impact on the world. Savaad's story serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for current and future students, reminding us all that with determination, kindness, and a commitment to lifelong learning, we can achieve greatness and leave a lasting legacy. **NP**

Giving Back and Gaining Experience

THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF AN INTERNSHIP

By Jahmae Leda, Class of 2018

Looking back to my early days at Nativity Prep nine years ago, it's hard to believe how my perspective has evolved. At the time, my older brother Romae was in 8th grade, which was considered the pinnacle of coolness, and Nativity seemed like this intimidating all-boys middle school with strict rules. However, as soon as I stepped through those doors, my outlook changed, and I met some of the most influential people in my life today.

Fast forward to my sophomore year at the University of Miami, where I got wind of the Toppel Internship Program. Instantly, I thought of Nativity Prep and how I could give back to my community back in Wilmington, Delaware. I reached out to Ms. Vanessa, and she helped set up an internship opportunity for me. This experience transformed my perspective on nonprofits and the immense impact of community work.

Before this internship, I had no idea just how much effort and dedication went into running and developing a school, especially a nonprofit one like Nativity Prep. Having never worked for a nonprofit before, I was stepping into the unknown. My role was primarily within the development office, but I wasn't entirely sure what that entailed. It turns out, the development team at Nativity Prep does the heavy lifting behind the scenes. Their main mission is to secure funding and attract attention from donors for Nativity. We understood that potential donors were out there, and it was our responsibility to find them and illustrate how their contributions would transform the lives of our students and the school itself.

Throughout this internship, I gained valuable skills. I witnessed an organization crowdfunding to keep a school operational, and I drew parallels to the marketing sector of a corporation. When we sought new donors, we essentially marketed the school while demonstrating how their donations could benefit everyone involved. These skills opened up new perspectives and nuances in the realm of business marketing. Additionally, I had the opportunity



Jahmae Leda

CLASS OF 2018

This experience transformed
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to contribute my ideas about how Nativity Prep could introduce new programs to attract fresh donors. I even suggested modeling after other nonprofits that teach students music and audio skills.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms. Mary Pat, Ms. Vanessa, Ms. Principe, and the entire Nativity team for orchestrating this life-changing experience for me. It's heartwarming to know that there are individuals dedicated to helping kids in the city access education and resources. I am living proof of the impact of Nativity's programs and resources; they instilled in me the significance of education and community service, shaping the person I've become today. **NP**

Shaping the Future New Alumni Association



NATIVITY PREP
Alumni Association

We are thrilled to announce the Nativity Prep Alumni Association, a vibrant community dedicated to celebrating and strengthening the bonds forged over the past two decades. As we enter our 20th anniversary, this presents us with a unique opportunity to reconnect, reminisce, and create new memories together. The Nativity Prep Alumni Association aims to foster a lifelong connections, ensuring the spirit of excellence and camaraderie endures through generations. We believe our alumni can make a meaningful impact on our community and beyond.

Facilitating Networking: Connect with like-minded professionals within our extensive network. Whether you're seeking career advice, mentorship, or collaboration, our community is here to support you.

Professional Development: Access workshops, seminars, and resources designed to enhance your skills and knowledge.

Giving Back and Community Engagement: Participate in meaningful philanthropic initiatives and community service projects that embody the values and ethos of Nativity Prep.

Celebrating Milestones: Join us for special reunions and events to celebrate our shared history and honor our alumni's achievements.

Staying Informed: Receive regular updates on developments from your alma mater.

We invite you to be a member of the Nativity Prep Alumni Association. To join, email Mary Pat Weidner at mpweidner@nativitywilmington.org. Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram for news and connect with fellow alumni. Stay tuned for further details about our inaugural event and other exciting initiatives we have planned for our 20th anniversary celebration. We look forward to rekindling old friendships, forging new connections, and collectively shaping the future of Nativity Prep. Together, we are a force for great things! **NP**

Class Notes

2007 Alex Johnson is the owner/operator of Johnson Development Corporation and a member of Nativity Prep's Development Committee.

2008 Morgan Smith, Esq., has joined our Board of Trustees. He and his wife Tracy are expecting their second baby, a girl, in January 2024.

2009 Shaquan Brown is Nativity Prep's FedEx delivery person. **Jarren Webb** is serving in the U.S. Army.

2014 Desmond Bagley and his partner welcomed a baby girl.

2015 Johnny Valenzo is studying to be a law enforcement officer. **Darnell Vaughn** spoke at 2023 Ignite the Night and graduated from DeSales University with a degree in TV/Film.

2016 Sal Velazquez served as a counselor for Nativity Prep's Summer Program. **Tony Dean** is currently a senior at University of Delaware and President of the Black Student Union. He returned as counselor for Nativity Prep's Summer Program.

2017 Brian Carbajal, a University of Delaware junior (Honors Program), has finished two leadership internships at JP Morgan Chase and Point to Point Wealth Management.

2018 Jahmae Leda is a sophomore at the University of Miami and returned to Nativity Prep as a summer intern.

2019 Saavad Dublin is currently studying at Del Tech and is employed part-time in Nativity Prep's Graduate Support Department.



Nativity Prep Alumni returned this summer as DeSales Summer Program counselors. Pictured are **Nysamere Ridley NP '17**, who attended Salesianum School on a full scholarship and is now attending the University of Delaware. **Salvadore Vasquez NP '16**, is a graduate of St. Mark's on a full scholarship and is now a student at Del Tech. **James Johnson NP '16**, attended Salesianum School on a full scholarship and is heading into his senior year University of Delaware. **Tony Dean NP '16**, attended Salesianum School and is now a student at the University of Delaware. **Darnell Vaughn NP '15**, attended Salesianum on a full scholarship and recently graduated from De Sales University.



SALESIAN HINTS FOR LIVING
in the Present Moment

WHAT IS
Salesian
SPIRITUALITY?

By Rev. Richard R. DeLillio

Saint Francis de Sales encouraged each person to attain sainthood through the doing of ordinary actions from their everyday life. He simply suggested they execute these actions extraordinarily well! St. Francis de Sales taught that holiness happens within daily living, and he believed that we grow spiritually when we perform our actions in God's presence.

Bury the hatchet about your past. And start over again. In life, we don't always end up where we like. Nor did we win the lottery or get that big promotion we tried so hard to accomplish. Our big dream never happened. Yet, we did manage to achieve some things—like good health, and a loving and caring family.

When St. Jane Frances de Chantal's widowhood shattered her family life, De Sales told her to get a new dream. Later she explained how she did exactly that. "We strive for that loving union of hearts which brings about a holy peace, and the kind of blessing we desire to have in the house of God and his holy Mother." Conclusion: Be forgiving of others and yourself.

Overlook flaws. See before always the big picture. Our life journey is as important as our destination. When we make a mistake along the way, it doesn't cancel our gifts or any goodness done until now. It just means we made a mistake! Our God always would rather forgive than punish—and He does. Our God loves to give us another chance.

Francis de Sales wrote, "This life is short, but valuable for by means of it we gain eternal life! It's not the amount of years we live, but rather the life we give to each year we have. **NP**

My First Day of School

BORROWING PENCILS, MAKING NEW FRIENDS,
AND HOPEFUL LIFETIME LEARNING

By Bill Chapman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR



On August 29, 2023, I was excited to attend my first day of school at Nativity Preparatory School. For many years, I have loved and supported the mission of Nativity Prep and I have had the privilege of serving as a volunteer and board member. But on this day, it was extra special because it was my first day of school as an honorary member of the fifth-grade class. I was nervous, anxious, and curious to meet the new principal, Mrs. Herbert, to hear from the president Mr. Brian Ray, and to meet my new classmates.

I felt welcomed as I walked into the building. Mary Pat Weidner, the Director of Development, snapped my picture and then I took my place for the first assembly led by Principal Herbert and President Ray. President Ray told us that this year, as we celebrate the school's 20th Anniversary, we should focus on two words: *respect* and *gratitude*.

After reciting the Nativity pledge, I went to my first class where Mrs. Moore introduced us to the novels we would read this year. The first two books we were assigned

were novels written by Christopher Paul Curtis and Jerry Spinelli. I also had the chance to meet some of my new classmates, Isaac, Danny, Kyle, Nasir, and Rakiem. I had forgotten my pencil, but luckily my new friend Isaac lent me one so I could take notes. We learned that Mrs. Moore is a football fan and she let us know we would be doing several book reports.

When class ended, my new friends headed off to another class while I had to return to a world where respect and gratitude are not always emphasized and practiced like they are at Nativity Prep.

As I left, I heard Maya Angelou's voice reminding me that "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did but people will never forget how you made them feel." Leaving Nativity Prep on my first day, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the work that the faculty, staff, students and families, volunteers, and donors do that help to make Nativity Prep such a magical, wonderful place. I left feeling motivated to complete my first two reading assignments and as always I left feeling better and more hopeful than when I came. **NP**

FAST FACTS

for the 2023–2024 School Year

55

TOTAL STUDENTS

Largest 5th Grade
SINCE INCEPTION

Wait Lists

FOR 5TH, 6TH & 7TH GRADES



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Call 302-777-1015 x120 • Email mpweidner@nativitywilmington.org



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Contact Mary Pat Weidner for corrections at mpweidner@nativitywilmington.org



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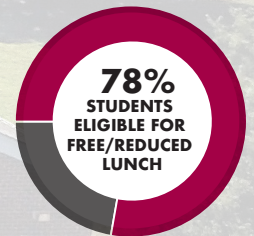
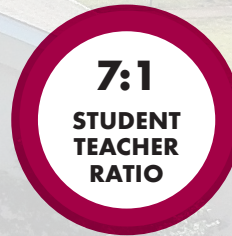
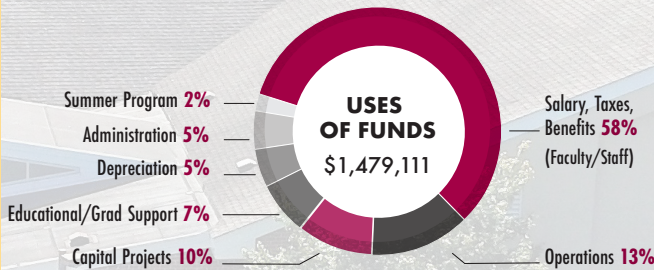
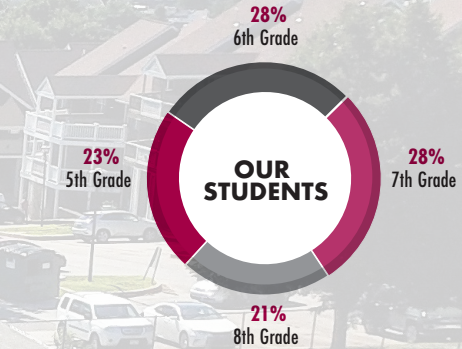
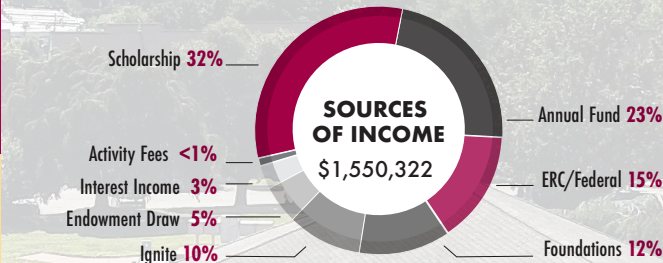
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GRADUATE STATISTICS

172
NATIVITY PREP
GRADUATES

166
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES

98%
HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION
RATE

27
ATTENDING
PRIVATE HIGH
SCHOOL

5
ATTENDING
PUBLIC/CHARTER
HIGH SCHOOL

44
CURRENTLY
IN COLLEGE

2
IN TRADE
SCHOOL

5
IN MILITARY

12
WORKFORCE

51
COLLEGE
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