



ST. NORBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ALUMNI NEWS

instagram: SNCSHawks

saintnorbertschool.org/alumni

December 2023

The JEWELL of SNCS

Supportive friendships inspire one alumna to pursue a career that makes a difference in the lives of so many.

Many best friends were made on the St. Norbert Catholic School black-top, but careers?

You bet.

Jewell (Justiniani) Allen (1988) remembers the day Nicole (Sharp) Rasmussen came to the school. It was second grade and there she sat wide-eyed, taking in her new surroundings. Jewell learned quickly that Nicole was a good listener and creative, like her, and they became fast friends.

"There were these trees on the playground, there's just one there now, where we'd go and Nicole would think up skits and we'd act them out," Jewell recalls. "We had so much fun."

Jewell and Nicole along with Amy Grimm and Shannon Gavin, all still friends to this day, loved to write and were very supportive of each other. Jewell credits this support for her career choice.

"I've always believed that things happen for a reason," Jewell says. "I think when I was at St. Norbert and had a rough day, I always had a friend there for me."

While at Mater Dei, Jewell decided she wanted to be a "sounding board" for others.

After high school she earned



Jewell (Justiniani) Allen and husband Daniel say they were thrilled to send daughters Kayla (left) and Catie to St. Norbert School, where the staff and faculty "love our kids so much."

a bachelor's degree in psychology at UC Santa Cruz, then travelled south for her master's at San Diego State University.

She married her college boyfriend, Daniel, now a senior paralegal at an immigration law firm, and together they started a family while she worked as a medical social worker for a few years in the San

Diego area.

Once their daughters were born, Jewell says, "I realized, this is hard, and I needed my family."

So the Allens relocated to Jewell's hometown of Orange.

IN THIS ISSUE:
Updates on students, staff
and faculty, events on
campus & more!

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ALUMNI in the NEWS

1970s

Bryan Randy Ruegger (1979), who holds a bachelor's from Loyola Marymount University and master's from Pepperdine Graziadio Business School, is a sales executive for Arc Home LLC mortgage lender in Orange County.

1980s

Ruth Ricks (1986), a registered yoga instructor, is helping clients with their mindful focus in Hollywood.

Chapman University School of Law graduate **Derek Riley** (1987) is practicing family law in Orange.

1990s

Called "a killer biographer" in the Hollywood Reporter, **James Gavin** (1991) is the author of four acclaimed books and dozens of New York Times features, a worldwide public speaker, a Grammy nominee, and recipient of two industry awards for excellence in music journalism.

After two decades of working in the fashion industry for brands like Gap and Lucky Brand, **Heather (Morton) Griffin** (1992) is the president and founder of Bluesalt Inc. apparel product development company based in Orange.

2000s

Sean Boulger (2001), who graduated from Servite and Long Beach State University, is content manager for Studio III Marketing in Los



The renovated bathrooms feature all new tile, toilets, partitions and fixtures. (Bottom right) Fr. John Money Penny extends a blessing over the bathrooms.

Worth the WAIT

After five years, countless obstacles and rising costs, the girls and boys bathrooms on campus were completed in November.

The project was initially slated to be completed over the summer but snags with the city's ADA permits delayed construction.

Completion was a long time coming. St. Norbert raised a significant amount for the work at its annual auction's Fund A Need in 2018 and 2019. The school's golf tournaments from 2019 to 2023 also helped supplement the cost, which ended up being \$175,000 for the remodel.

Principal Joe Ciccoianni says the bathrooms, located in the center of campus, are "beautiful."

"Sometimes things don't go as planned," Ciccoianni told SNCS students before Fr. John Money Penny blessed the restrooms in front of students, staff and faculty Nov. 6. "Sometimes things 'fall apart.' However, we should never give up, continue praying and trust that God is taking care of our needs and we'll eventually see things turn around, which they did."



BEFORE



DURING



AFTER



(Above, from left) SNCS alumni Sean McNamara, Jim Duquesnel and Tim McNamara are looking forward to playing in the 2024 SNCS golf tournament. (Inset) This year's tournament participants included Brian McHugh (left) and Sean McNamara.

Swinging FORE a good cause

In 1965, **Tim McNamara** (1972) was in the first second grade class to enroll at St. Norbert Catholic School. Now he's helping to ensure the school has what it needs to continue to educate children in the Catholic faith by getting out his golf clubs every June.

For the last several years, Tim and his foursome of alumni and alumni parents have participated in the St. Norbert Catholic School golf tournament. Participants include **Jim Duquesnel** (1976); Ray Gaitan, whose son **Anthony Gaitan** graduated St. Norbert in 1997 with Tim's twins, **Brian McNamara** and **Ashley (Blalock) McNamara**, and whose daughter, **Andrea Gaitan**, was in the class of 2004 while Tim's son, **Sean McNamara**, was class of 1999; and rounding out the foursome was **Chuck Adams**, whose sons **Andrew Adams** (2002) and **Danny Adams** (2004) graduated from St. Norbert.

"We really enjoy the tournament, re-connecting with other alumni families," says Tim. "At the same time we are connecting with new families as our grandchildren—Kennedy in first grade and Lily and Shane in preschool—are currently at St. Norbert. It's important to us to stay engaged especially with the third generation."

Save the Date!

Show off your swing at St. Norbert Catholic School's annual golf tournament Monday June 10 at Strawberry Farms Golf Club in Irvine. Assemble your own foursome or we'll match you with a group and enjoy a day of golf and camaraderie followed by an awards reception. The event includes a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start, putting and longest drive contests and hole-in-one opportunity. For information, visit saintnorbertschool.org/golf.



In addition to this group, participating alumni have included **Brian McHugh** (2000), **Ted Hoffman** (1978), **Nate Linnert** (1999), **Josh Linnert** (1997), **Aaron Hergenreter** (1999), **Christopher Waasted** (1999), **Tim Conway** (1999), **Adam Ernst** (1997) and **Mike Ernst** (1972).

Proceeds from the tournament support the school's Legacy of Light capital improvements fund, which provides safe, energy-efficient and beautiful campus upgrades for the school.

Angeles and also a freelance writer and blogger and content marketing and branding consultant.

After a successful run as executive chef at Chi Spacca on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles, Culinary Institute of America graduate **Ryan DeNicola** (2001) opened Perking House Coffee in the Yorba Linda Packing House serving coffee and specialty sandwiches.

Mater Dei alum **Kyle Gaw** (2007), who graduated from Chapman University School of Pharmacy earlier this year, is a certified pharmacy technician at Kindred Healthcare.

2010s

Servite alum **Dylan McCoy** (2013) graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and is now flying the friendly skies as a pilot for NetJets charter aircraft.

Mater Dei graduate **Jack Chorbajian** (2014) is studying at Chapman University Fowler School of Law on a full-ride scholarship.

Rosary graduate **Jade Sandoval** (2019) is in her third year of cheering on the the Lions at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles while studying business management.

Do you have news to share? We'd love to hear! Email your Alumni Update to alumni@saintnorbert-school.org.



AROUND CAMPUS

Join us at Pancake Breakfast

Check out all of the updates on campus and visit with former and current teachers and alumni at SNCS's Open House and Pancake Breakfast Sunday Jan. 28 in the Family & Youth Center (gym). Breakfast will be served 8 a.m. to noon; the alumni Mass is 10 a.m.; and the open house is 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Minimal Effort, Maximum Results

Alumna **Michelle (Ortiz) Navarro** (1990) is heading up St. Norbert Church's Christian Service food distribution and is looking for volunteers 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Join alumni, current families and parishioners as they assemble bags of food for more than 250 families each week behind the St. Norbert Family & Youth Center. To sign up, email christianservice@stnorbertychurch.org.

Invest in our Future

Honor a loved one who valued Catholic education by donating a monetary gift or non-cash financial instruments, such as stocks or mutual funds, to St. Norbert Catholic School. Our needs include:

- **SNCS Endowment Fund:** Provides financial support now and into the future. Funds are used to reduce or stabilize the school's deficit.
- **Tuition Assistance Fund:** Gifts of any amount help families struggling to meet their child(ren)'s tuition costs (about \$7,400/year).
- **Legacy of Light:** Contributions help finance projects that improve the school's safety, durability and energy efficiency.

ST. NORBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

LEAVE A *Legacy* THAT TRANSCENDS TIME

PLANNED Giving

Imagine the impact you can have on the future of Catholic education.

Ensure your legacy with Planned Giving to St. Norbert Catholic School.

To learn more, scan the QR code or visit www.saintnorbertyschool.org/planned-giving

(714) 637-6822 information@saintnorbertyschool.org



ALUMNI MEETUP

Alumni parents caught up at St. Norbertfest 2023, including (from left) Tom and Janetta Luebke, Richard and Lynn Guthridge, Ron and Liz Rangel and Rob and Barbara Perez.

- **Kathy Oldham Children's Fund:** Supports our school in a way that honors our dear friend Kathy Oldham and her love of family, children, faith and art education.

To arrange a donation, please call (714) 637-6822 or email info@saintnorbertyschool.org.

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As the girls grew, Jewell took a step she had never imagined—back onto the SNCS campus to enroll her older daughter in kindergarten, followed by her second daughter. Kayla, 19, is now studying architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology while Catie, 16, is a junior at Mater Dei.

Jewell says she enjoyed seeing the many changes at the school. Field day was less active in her day, just a movie and candy in the hall. Her PE teacher Mr. Ferley had been replaced by the “dynamic” Mr. Farley. She revisited her own childhood memories, like the time she landed in hot water with the principal.

“One day I was upset and yelled a bad word,” Jewell says. “Sister Francis carried around this megaphone and from across the blacktop she yelled for me to come to her. She sat me down in her office and, in her Irish accent, she told me, ‘People who use foul language are not applying themselves and don’t know how to express themselves better. Do you want to be like that?’”

Her answer was a resounding, “no,” and with that Jewell says she never cursed again.

A fond memory was sixth grade and favorite teacher Mrs. Biale, who introduced the concept of group work.

“For literature, she’d break us up

into teams and there would be one writer, one director, actors and a songwriter and we’d write a skit and perform it,” Jewell says. “The class would give it a rating and the winner would be announced at the end of the day. Mrs. Biale believed everyone had their own talents; she made everyone feel valued.”

In addition to writing, Jewell’s talents include

transforming lives. At Fountain Valley Regional Hospital, where she works part time, she ensures that new mothers have the services they need. Two years ago, she acted on her long-held dream and opened her own private practice focusing on psychotherapy. She treats all ages and has seen a dramatic increase in need since the pandemic.

“As a child, I was always curious why people do what they do,” Jewell says. “In a way I get a glimpse into that. It’s a total honor for them to trust me and realize that the relationships I’ve formed with them is therapeutic.”

Her greatest fulfillment, Jewell admits, is witnessing this relationship run its course.

“Recently, I had a client with anxiety who was going through a lot,” Jewell says. “After a year she told me she was OK, thank you for helping me. That’s the best thing—seeing their unique path and feeling like you’re making a difference.”



Jewell (Justiniani) Allen in 3rd grade

“I’ve always believed that things happen for a reason. I think when I was at St. Norbert and had a rough day, I always had a friend there for me.”



SNCS alumni who attended Mater Dei’s 20-year reunion included (back row from left) Chris Campbell, Mike Houston, Stephanie Bodnar, Jewell (Justiniani) Allen, Steve Locasio, Shannon (Gavin) Trautwein; (front row from left) Brian Broadbent, Allison (Casciari) Meyer, Nicole (Sharp) Rasmussen and Amy (Grimm) Le Reve Renderos.

Medieval Times circa 1993 (front row from left) Shannon (Gavin) Troutwein, Christine Quimbo (St. Jeanne de Lestonnac alum), Nicole (Sharp) Rasmussen, Jewell (Justiniani) Allen, Amy (Grimm) Le Reve Renderos, Steve Locasio; (back row from left) Todd Durdella, Scott Rayborn, Mike Droese and David Gaston.



IN MEMORIAM

STAFF & FACULTY

Sharon Dolan
Principal 1999-2000

Audrey Hoffmann
School Secretary

Jeanne Honikel
Health Room 1988-1997

Janet Llewellyn
Pre-K teacher

Sr. Francis O’Leary
Principal 1983-1997

Sr. Cabrini Riordan
4th Grade Teacher
1980-1983

STUDENTS

Peggy Sue (Bunch) Nay
Class of 1975

Timothy Michael Bunch
Class of 1979

Julie Griffis
Class of 1980

Darin Haskins
Class of 1980

Charlie Levandowski
Class of 1980

Paul Molthen
Class of 1980

Phillis Piczyk
Class of 1980

Mieke (Riccio) Small
Class of 1986

Ronald Arlt
Class of 1986

Greg Aarl
Class of 1990

Jonathan Schulte
Class of 2002

Alexander Benuzzi
Class of 2008

Kevin Hogate
Class of 2012