

# The Excalibur

The Online Nazareth RHS Student Newspaper



Principal Quiles with Ethan and Tristan White

June 2021 – Issue 3

Graduation Edition



- Special Events -

- 5/3 Commitment Day for Seniors
- 5/14 Last Day of Classes for Seniors
- 5/26 Senior Prom
- 5/31 Memorial Day
- 6/3 Senior Dinner
- 6/4 Graduation
- 6/11 Last Day of Classes
- 6/14-24 Exams
- 6/25 Last Day of School

## Class of 2021 – You Are Overcomers!

By: Daniel Korede, Class of 2022

Goodbye class of 2021 – You will be missed! The seniors of Nazareth for this school year had their graduation ceremony on June 4, sitting under a large tent on a cloudy day. This year's ceremony was especially emotional and significant because of the unique challenges that the class of 2021 had to face and overcome as the pandemic continued.

The class of 2020 was also affected by the pandemic. The cancellation of their senior trip and their prom was disappointing, but they still received the recognition that they deserved at a unique graduation. The students lined up in their cars with their families and were able to receive their diplomas in person from Principal Quiles. The faculty and staff, lined up around the block, were able to greet each senior and family as they passed. As each senior received their diploma, we all celebrated with honking horns, clapping hands, and congratulatory shouts through our masks!

This year the class of 2021 enjoyed a unique and fun senior prom, a senior dinner and awards ceremony that was held under a large tent in the school parking lot on June 3, and a graduation ceremony the next day that was also held under the large tent. Many of us were praying for good weather, and the rain held off just long enough for both events to be a great success. Since the faculty and staff were on a podium that was not under the tent during the graduation ceremony, we are especially grateful that the stormy weather did not start until later that afternoon!

The speeches during the graduation ceremony were inspiring, marking the end of the seniors' high school journey and the beginning of their transition to college. As the class of 2021 enters a new chapter in their academic careers, we wish them a great future. Class of 2022, now it's our turn!

## Four Years at Nazareth: A Graduate's Reflection

By: Courtney Bentham, Class of 2021 Valedictorian

I came to Nazareth as an “unruly boy.” I challenged everything that I was expected to accept. “Your child will call this place their second home.” *Yeah, right.* “Nazareth is a family rather than just a school.” *They're just saying that so I enroll.* “The fastest four years that will fly by in your life.” I doubted it at the time. So, I challenged that statement, closed my eyes, and let time run its course.

Freshman year: I came in as an awkward boy even though some students I knew from my middle school had come to Naz. I was not ready to open up to my peers yet, not until I started joining clubs. Then came Fright Fest. I had considered not going at all, for there were only a couple of people I could call acquaintances at the time. I went anyhow, thinking Jahbari and I could stick together (as he had gone to my middle school). We went around the park and then ended up getting separated. *Welp, I thought, there goes the only person I really know.* I wandered around the park for a bit before Mrs. Quiles found and “adopted” me since her son had recently graduated and she wouldn't be seeing him for a while. This is when I started feeling the “family” aspect of Nazareth that my mother had championed for so long while my brother was attending. *Huh, I guess this place isn't as bad as my middle school at least.* I found myself happy with the place I was in, especially being able to just hang out with teachers like Mr. Hewitt during fifth period lunch and being able to join more than one club and expand my horizons. I felt liberated, and I wasn't going to let anyone take my joy away!

Then came sophomore year (my favorite year!). I had enrolled in *two* math classes, something I could never fathom or even consider as an eighth grader who nearly failed math. Having both Ms. Allison and Mrs. Caputo teach me was both the most challenging and the most rewarding experience. I also took physics and won the science fair, defying my expectations for myself once more. This is the year I connected with people the most. I joined track and began taking robotics and engineering much more seriously. I became friends with people like Ethan, Tristan, Dillon, and Jaharie through my classes and extracurricular activities, making this year the one I enjoyed the most. Several of the teachers noticed my strengths, including Mr. Gando, who selected me to be a student representative. I felt that I was making a difference, doing something that only I could do. It felt great, and I was, for the first time in a long time, truly “happy.”

Junior year was a year of, well, unexpected events. I had to begin setting an example for the freshmen and sophomores to follow, leading me to form a military group with a few of them (they called me Mr. President!). We went to Fright Fest again, and instead of having no one to be with, I naturally had a group of friends with Jaharie, Ethan, and a few others, a far cry from my first experience as a freshman. Then, one event turned school into what seemed like a travesty. COVID-19, they called it. *Ha! Even if it reaches America like Ebola, it's just going to be contained and we'll be fine... Right?* Wrong. My expectations blew up in my face. The thing that I felt would

never affect me, affected my city in the worst way possible. Being sent home, I felt robbed of my life, robbed of my time, robbed of my sanity, and robbed of my happiness. Still, we persevered. We made videos instead of doing live shows, something I couldn't imagine being possible at a public school. Once again, the boy from eighth grade failed to prove Nazareth wrong ... We are a family!

Senior year was the “test year” for me. My determination, my drive, and my willingness to succeed were all tested. I trekked through the online days while I made sure the in-person days lasted. There was not much to do as mostly everything was shut down for half of the year, but I was okay seeing at least one of my friends come to school. The eighth grade me had once more lost his challenge as I had, literally, been calling Nazareth my second home.

By the time I opened my eyes, I was on the stage giving a speech at graduation. For the last time, the boy from eighth grade who had challenged everything he heard about Naz was proven wrong. High school had flown by more quickly than I could have ever imagined, and I had gained a sense of self-esteem and confidence, along with many people I could call friends for a very long time. Finally, the “unruly, awkward” boy who had entered as a freshman had faded away, thanks to my family at Nazareth Regional High School.

# Prom 2021 - It's Carnival Time!



Left to right: Michael Iannelli, Courtney Sacks, Courtney Bentham, Tanisha Guirand, Jaharie Waterman

The Royal Court (left to right): Justin Bermudez, Josiah Barden, Jack Donato, Amber Ford-Forbes, Erica Dorestant, Tanisha Guirand



Having too much fun!

## Class of 2021 – Favorite Memories

By: Tanisha Guirand, Class of 2021  
Co-Salutatorian

My time at Nazareth has had many memorable moments. That is not surprising since I have been surrounded by amazing people for four years. My experience here has been magical, wholesome, and comforting all at the same time.

The memory that best encapsulates every aspect of my experience at Naz takes me back to my sophomore year when I was in a play directed by Mr. George, our Campus Minister and Religion teacher. The play was the Stations of the Cross for Easter and every sophomore had to participate in some way for a graded assignment. It was super fun having to stay after school with my friends to rehearse the play, and it was even more rewarding seeing how the whole school reacted to our hard work. Every day after school we would have practice, and although acting was a bit out of some students' comfort zone, we all still tried our best to memorize our lines. We were doing it to get a grade, but we all excelled in rehearsals because we wanted to give an amazing and worthy performance.

It was a fun bonding experience and a great way to get us all out of our shells. Everyone was just a student playing a role and everyone was forced to get to know each other. On that stage there weren't any friend groups or cliques; it was the whole class working together to share a beautiful story to the best of our ability.

This experience was magical because it took everyone's breath away. It was wholesome because the entire sophomore class was proud of the outcome of our hard work. And it was comforting because even though not everyone was Catholic, everyone felt comfortable playing a role in such a beautiful story.

This memory will forever hold a place in my heart because it reminds me of a time when I was carefree and of a moment when I was so close to all the students in my class. I will never forget it and I will never forget Nazareth!

By: Jaharie Waterman, Class of 2021  
Co-Salutatorian

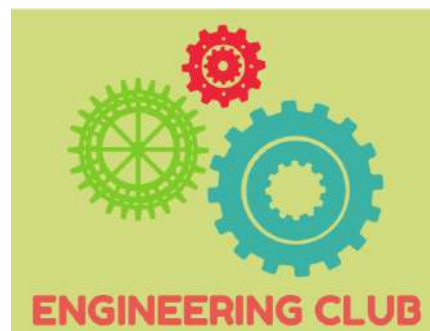
My favorite memories of my time at Nazareth are all connected with technology. I have taken part in robotics since I was in the fifth grade, and I have always loved it. When I first came to Nazareth, I realized that everyone had a certain activity or club that kept them wanting to go to school. That club for me was the Engineering Club.

I have so many great memories of what my friends and I did as a club with Mr. Trama. One of my favorite memories is of setting up the sound system for mass and just having fun with my friends.

Even with the advent of COVID-19, this club was able to meet in person once the students were allowed to return to the building in November 2020. For the rest of the school year this inspiring club continued to cause me to want to be in the school building whenever I could.

Many things in the world shut down and stopped because of the pandemic, but the Engineering Club didn't. I am so happy it didn't because it contributed to my senior year being the best it could be.

During the last four years my experiences in the Engineering Club have been amazing, and I wouldn't give them up for anything. They contributed to who I am. Because of this club I found myself more and know what I want to do in life, using technology to make this world a better place.





# Graduation 2021 in Photos



Graduates sitting under a large tent during graduation and looking toward the podium where they would receive their diploma from Principal Quiles

A group of our male grads letting the world know – We made it ... and no one can stop us now!



Several of our female grads showing off their creatively decorated graduation caps

# Making History Come Alive!

By: Demetria Baptiste

This school year Nazareth Regional High School welcomed the latest addition to its staff, Ms. Destiny Kirk. Known to the students as Ms. Destiny, the Brooklyn native joined our community in the beginning of the school year. She teaches Social Studies classes, and I have been privileged to be a student in one of her U.S. History classes.

## What made you want to become a teacher?

I never really thought that I would be a teacher but became a teacher when the opportunity was presented to me. I took the opportunity because I wanted to learn more about the education system, and I believe this experience will help me to accomplish my long-term goal of running for office to help better the education system for children.

## Are there any specific experiences that made you want to get into teaching?

When I was in high school, I went to a high school where the staff was nothing like the staff here at Nazareth. There was a time when I was struggling academically, and I recall a faculty member telling me I was not able to become the person I wanted to be or attend a four-year college. So, one of my biggest goals in becoming a teacher is to let you and the other students know that it's okay to struggle and you can always overcome those struggles. As a teacher I think it's important to be here for my students, especially now during the pandemic when they are struggling not only academically but also socially and mentally. That experience helped to make me the teacher that I am because it makes me more nurturing to my students.

## Why did you choose to teach History at Nazareth?

I chose to teach History because it has always been one of my best subjects. For example, when I was in high school, my score on the U.S. History Regents Exam was 97. And my major in college was Politics and Government. I've always been good at Reading and History!

## Why did you want to teach at Nazareth?

I chose to teach here because my brother went here, so I was familiar with the staff and the school, which is part of my local community.

## If you didn't teach history, what class would you be teaching?

If I didn't teach history, I would probably be teaching English.

## How was your first year as a teacher here?

My first year was successful. I was a little nervous because I started in the second quarter. At first, I was not sure about what I was going to do or how I was going to do it, but it went better than I expected, and I will be back next year!

## One of the classes you will be teaching when you return next year is Race and Politics. Can you tell us more about that class and share how you feel about it?

I am very excited about my Race and Politics class. I think it's important to have these conversations with young people of color because we live in a world where these issues still impact us. In my Race and Politics class, we are going to examine different identities, including our own. We're going to talk about the government and politics throughout history. We'll start with slavery and continue to the present time so we can see how everything is connected. The class will be interactive and based primarily on class discussions. I will be teaching the students how to have these hard discussions about race and how to interact with someone different from you, because you might discover one of your classmates has an opinion different from your own. I didn't get to have these conversations in high school, so the first time I was exposed to conversations about race, politics, and law was in college. It can be uncomfortable if you've never experienced such conversations or don't know how to get your point across without getting upset or being offensive. As part of your preparation for college, it's important to have those conversations now.

## Girls' Basketball

By: Reyna Scott

Our girls' basketball team experienced many struggles this year, but we were able overcome those struggles and have a successful mini-season.

Covid-19 greatly impacted our team during the past year. We were not able to work out together the way we normally would, so we were not able to continue building our team chemistry in the usual way. However, we still found ways to work out together and build our team chemistry throughout the pandemic.

Our coaches would hold online workouts while we were at home so we could stay in shape. We never stopped pushing, hoping that we would be able to play together and have a season, so we wanted to be ready and stay prepared.

Although the pandemic was a setback that almost took away our opportunity to compete this year, we had a great comeback when we were able to play in a tournament. **Our record in the tournament was 5-1!**

Since our team was so eager to get back on the court, we played with a "chip on our shoulder" and with a lot of energy. Each one had a role to play and did so well, scoring when needed and helping us to win.

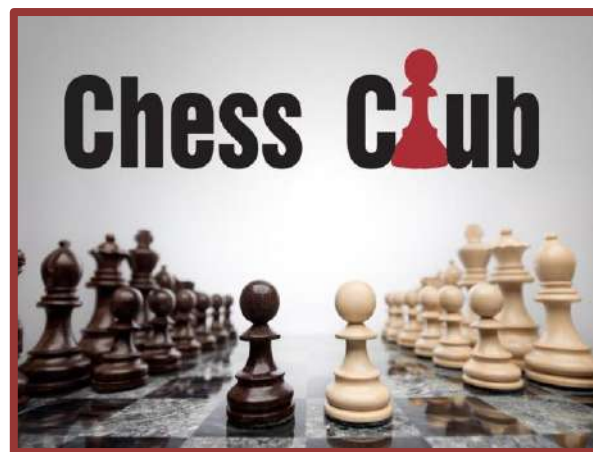
If this season had been a regular one, I am confident we would have had a great one, especially with the mindset we all had!



## Chess Club

By: Rosalie Henriques

As a freshman at Nazareth, I started my high school experience in the middle of a pandemic and was not quite sure what to expect. In the beginning of the school year, I was offered an opportunity to select a club to participate in. I am happy that I decided to be in the Chess Club!



This club offered me an opportunity to enhance my chess playing skills and meet other students who share my interest in chess and becoming a better player. I was also able to be a part of a group that helped me to feel comfortable, and most of all I was able to just have fun.

During the time of the Covid-19 pandemic so many sad things have been happening. It was so nice to have a wonderful teacher providing support and to look forward to being part of an exciting club each week.

I love using my brain and competing against others. I was also given a chance to play chess on a website. Joining the Chess Club was a wise choice and I hope that others will be willing to join such an awesome group. Chess Club is the way to go!

*Editor's note: As part of our hybrid model this year, the students in the Chess Club could play in person or remotely by connecting via Zoom and playing each other virtually on Chess.com.*



# Art Club Thrives at Naz

Editor’s note: The theme of these art projects is the diversity of our heritage. The one below is a collaborative effort of the Art Club.



As nature embraces a diversity of plants, so should America embrace a diversity of children.  
By Sephora Vixama

By Richard Dorestyl



By Tracey Thompson



Collaborative effort by Art Club with Air brush background by Dylan Augustin



Irish-American Heritage – By Gina Allison, Faculty Advisor for the Art Club





## The Excalibur Staff



### Writers:

Demetria Baptiste  
Courtney Bentham  
Tanisha Guirand  
Rosalie Henriques  
Daniel Korede  
Reyna Scott  
Jaharie Waterman

### Advisor:

Mr. Meyerend