

The Excalibur

The Online Nazareth RHS Student Newspaper



Graduation 2024 at Christian Cultural Center

Graduation 2024 – Let's Celebrate!

By: Briana Patrick, Class of 2024

On June 7th at CCC (Christian Cultural Center), friends, family, faculty and students celebrated the graduating class of 2024. All the graduating students have looked forward to this day since the beginning of their senior year.

We laughed and cried and said goodbye to friends, teachers, and administrators as we left. The ceremony was amazing, and Ms. Nancy Pierre '90 gave a stirring address about "Career, Character, and Courtship." We learned about the important steps we should take as we move forward from high school.

I have enjoyed my last four years here at Nazareth. For me and my

fellow graduates, Naz has been like a family. We have gained friendships and built close bonds with classmates, teachers, and other staff members that we will never forget.

Even though it is bittersweet to go, we walked across that stage with pride – pride in ourselves, our parents, our teachers, and our friends.

The class of 2024 worked hard these past four years and it has paid off. But this is not the end – it is just the beginning. As we now call ourselves Nazareth Alumni, we will take all the principals and morals that we have been taught and move on to the next exciting chapter of our lives!

June 2024 – Issue 3

Graduation Edition



- Special Events -

- 5/2 Field Day
- 5/10 Last Day of Senior Classes
- 5/17 Sports Awards Night
- 5/22 Senior Prom
- 5/27 Memorial Day
- 6/5 Senior Dinner
- 6/7 Graduation
- 6/11 Last Day of Classes
- 6/12-25 Exams
- 6/28 Last Day of School
- 6/29 End of Year BBQ

Four Years at Naz: What Have We Learned?

By: Amanda Jordan and Jaylen Jean-Pierre

Editor's Note: Amanda is the recipient of the NRHS Excalibur Journalism Award and the NYS Attorney General's Triple C Award for Character, Courage and Commitment. Jaylen is the recipient of the Bobby Montgomery Community Service Award.

The past four years at Nazareth have been a time of self discovery, trial and error, and growth. Beginning our high school journey in 2020 has taken a toll on us. However, we are happy to say that we have completed our four years with meaningful memories and a great story to tell. As we say goodbye to our younger selves and enter the next phase of our lives, there are many things that we can take from our high school experience. We want to highlight our most valued lessons and display the large role they played in our time at Nazareth. We hope that others can also benefit from what we have learned.

Amanda's Experience

A big part of my high school journey was learning to adapt and regulate my emotions. There were times when friendships, at-home circumstances, and other things changed, inviting downcast feelings. This required me to adapt in a way that would allow me to persevere. Of course, there are days when you don't want to come to class, let alone complete work. Instead of beating yourself up for feeling this way, understand that the personal reward is far greater than what you would gain by breezing through school.

I would advise underclassmen to continue working hard regardless of the outcome. Instead of allowing frustration to control you, acknowledge your feelings and choose to move forward. This will get you far in your pursuits and increase your endurance. Regarding friendship, friends come and go, and you may not leave high school with the same people you started with. This is very common and it's important for you to know that as you continue to find yourself, you will attract the people you need later in life. Lastly, I want to emphasize the importance of trying new things. I wouldn't be writing this



article now if I hadn't accepted the offer to do so. Today, I can say that I am more confident in my writing ability and am open to cultivating it. Put yourself out there. It's okay to be vulnerable because you can learn from every experience you have, whether good or bad.

I have greatly enjoyed my time at Nazareth, from the sports and monthly shows to the group work and study-filled nights. Being a cheerleader has taught me the true importance of being a team player and even helped me to cultivate a sisterhood with my teammates. The anticipation that came with each game was fulfilling and the talents exhibited during each show/play filled me with laughter and awe. I will cherish these moments and look back on them with fondness. Although the work was rigorous, I am grateful for it because it has allowed me to persevere, making me the student I am today. Though life comprises many uncontrollable challenges, the one thing we can control is our response to it. "Walk in faith" and trust that all that is needed will follow.

Jaylen's Experience

Throughout my high school journey, I've had my fair share of difficult times. But these past four years have also been filled with great moments. Those moments have taught me to stay focused on the positive things in life. I couldn't have made it

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What We Have Learned (cont.)

through without friends and family and the fun activities provided by the school. I've had countless laughs and good times that I'll never forget and that would've never happened if I had been too focused on the piles of work that needed to be done. Of course, a balance is needed to get through. As a student, you can't only focus on good times when you have work to do! Make sure you stay on top of your work and then make sure you have fun.

I had fun lifting weights in Brothers United and having wins and losses in the Chess Club. Other times I'd just sit and relax with my friends and hop from classroom to classroom with them. I am always told to "enjoy the moment since you'll never experience that moment again" – that's good advice!

Our Most Valued Lessons

Jaylen: Throughout our four years, we've learned the importance of putting God first in our lives. My senior quote is **"Put God first and the rest will follow"** – a quote that Amanda and I have lived by. Putting Him first has given us peace and helped us to get through the trials and challenges of high school life.

Along with the importance of that quote – the people around us have made the high school experience more enjoyable! Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens his friend." When you surround yourself with people who keep you sharp and on point, you are bound for success!

Amanda: My time at Nazareth has taught me to allow myself space to be present and enjoy where I am. Though your hard work is valued, it is important to remember to take breaks and practice healthy habits such as giving yourself grace and acknowledging your well being.

My senior quote is from Psalm 73:26, which states, **"My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever."** This scripture has helped me through countless nights, encouraging me that even when life starts to feel draining, I have a promise to cling to. It is one that provides hope and a future, one that gives comfort during hardship, and one that reminds me of God's unconditional love. We value this lesson because it has made us more well-rounded individuals. We will take the lessons we've learned with us in the future and hope that you can learn from them as well.



Senior Trip 2024

By: Jaenai Tercius



In April, the class of 2024 went on our three day long senior trip to Split Rock Resort in Pennsylvania. Throughout the duration of the trip, there were many activities that we could take part in every day, but here are some of the highlights:

There was an indoor pool and a water park that many of us enjoyed, especially since you didn't necessarily have to be an expert swimmer to get in the water and have some fun! In the lounge, there was karaoke and bingo held every day to either wind down at the end of the day or start up your morning.

There were also movie nights to attend whenever you wanted to

end the day with some select films. If you didn't want to watch a movie, though, there was a DJ dance party to attend instead, so you could grab your friends and get on the dance floor!

Personally, my favorite activities were the Mountain Coaster, which provided the thrill of a roller coaster with the beauty of mountain scenery, and the cozy bonfire that took place on the last night of the trip. Overall, not only were these activities fun, but they were also a good way for our class of 2024 to bond as we experienced our last few weeks of high school.



Jaenai Tercius

Prom 2024 – Dinner & Dancing at El Caribe!



XBSS Student Retreat 2024 – Part 2

By: Jazmyn Leger

Editor's Note: Ms. Sandy Michel (adult leader), Breanna Pierre-Toussaint (senior leader), and six junior leaders, including Jazmyn, attended the annual XBSS Retreat at the Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford, Connecticut in March. In the previous edition, Jazmyn shared the themes of the first two days of the retreat. In the continuation of her article below, she shares the themes of Days 3-5.

Day 3 Theme: A Unique Expression of God's Love

Today, our morning prayer was led by Xavier High School. We then had a thought-provoking activity in our small groups: **Asteroid!** Here's the scenario: An asteroid is going to hit our location. NASA has found a way to transport us to safety, but only three people from each small group can go. Each small group member is given a role to play: XBSS Student, Ex Con, Bank Manager, Gang Member, and Widow. We had three rounds of voting to determine which members of our group would be transported to safety. Before each round, we were given more information about each person. Our votes changed as we got beyond the stereotypes to discover who each person was at a deeper level. We all learned the importance of not "judging a book by its cover." We never know what someone might have gone through or is going through.

We also had a Reconciliation service along with a play, presented by St. John's Prep and Malden Catholic. A meditation service was led by St. Mary's Ryken. In the evening, we enjoyed several talks by adult leaders, including one by our leader Ms. Sandy! They gave valuable perspectives on leadership and how we can continue the legacy of our founder, Theodore Ryken, as we grow in our friendships and work together to fulfill missions of charity, compassion, and duty. To end the night, we had a prayer service that was led by Our Lady of Good Counsel.



Jazmyn (second from right) with her small group, led by Bro. Tom Puccio (far right)

Day 4 Theme: Manifest God's Love to the Peoples of the World

Our group from Nazareth led a morning prayer service that was about uniting us as one. Today was a big day for all of us! Every small group was going to go out and do a service project, including opportunities to participate in a soup kitchen, clean houses, and move furniture. My small group got to go to an all-Hispanic home for the elderly, Casa De Oro, where most of the residents were Puerto Rican. Our senior leader was also Puerto Rican and could communicate with them in their own language. The people we met felt comfortable with us and they were very thankful for our visit. This day opened my eyes to a new perspective: Helping is not only beneficial but it's rewarding – to see people happier and to be able to brighten their day.

We had our last small group meeting that evening. We each wrote cards to everyone in the group that expressed what we appreciated about them. This

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XBSS Retreat (cont.)

experience showed that people listened to you, understood you, felt for you and prayed for you. Everyone shared such heartfelt words, and it was one of the best parts of the retreat. We then traded hats from our schools – I got one from Lowell Catholic – and received our XBSS shirts. This year's color was blue! We ended the night with the last prayer service, which was led by Mount Saint Joseph.

Day 5 Theme: Stand Ready to Answer God

Our final prayer service was led by the coordinators of the retreat and all the senior leaders. It was a beautiful prayer service with amazing and inspiring speeches. We then had the ceremony where each school was given pins, and the senior leaders distributed them to the junior leaders. We took one last big photo as everyone shared goodbyes. We all felt like a big family. This retreat unites people for the better, and it leaves everyone feeling spiritually awakened.

Conclusion

The XBSS retreat is a chance for you to bring out the true passion, love, and leadership you have within you. The retreat provided so many valuable lessons, and all the coordinators did an excellent job of teaching and guiding us through this time together. Attending this retreat helped to improve my life and the way I think. I thank God for the chance to be around people who are true leaders and mentors for others.

Congratulations to the Class of 2024 – to Breanna, our senior leader, to Angelo, my small group leader, and to all the other seniors who helped guide and lead us during the retreat!

May God richly bless all the graduates as they move on to college and life after college. Always remember: “Nothing special is achieved without much labor, effort, and zeal” (Theodore James Ryken).

Class of 2024 Photos



Film Class 2024

By: Robert King

Whenever I think about screenwriting, I always remember something Ms. Roberts told us after one of our “table reads” – that participating in the Screenwriting and Cinematography classes provides a rare opportunity: Students can create something themselves.

Having a somewhat limited imagination, I thought I would struggle to produce a decent story – and to be fair, I did. Going into the class, I had no idea how to format a script or hide subtext in someone’s dialogue, and I imagine none of the other students had any idea either. Step by step, we learned how to correct every mistake in our writing until we could apply what we learned to movies.

Being able to watch shows and movies and pick up things that others would have missed, such as color, camera angle, and the subtext beneath the dialogue, makes me appreciate the art of storytelling that much more.

I remember doing our first table read earlier in the year – when our scripts were read and reviewed by students in both the Screenwriting and the Cinematography classes – and being extremely nervous. By the end of the year, I was bragging about our film to everyone I knew – even to some of my friends who had worked on the film themselves. In addition to improving my writing skills, I have come to develop a sense of confidence and pride in my work (although depending on who you ask, I might have been a bit too confident). Instead of being ashamed of the “cheesy” dialogue in my screenplays, I learned how to take that “cheesy” dialogue and make it indistinguishable from a casual conversation.

Even for someone who has little interest in screenwriting, cinematography, or film in general, getting involved in either class can teach so much more apart from just how to write or film a story.

Faith and Sports

By: Rosalie Henriques, Class of 2024



I have an activity that I love ... I love to run! This wonderful hobby does not cost money and gives my body a chance to move. I believe that God has given me the opportunity to engage in and appreciate this amazing activity. He has instilled in me the desire to aim higher and not give up as a runner and as a follower of Christ.

I love getting a chance to see my growth and believe that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). When I started running, I often found that I was the last one in a race . Now I am no longer in that category! I believe that with consistency in my workouts and prayer I will continue to improve.

I also enjoy learning how to value health and become healthier. Running has showed me to take care of my body because it is like a temple. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.” Developing your faith as an athlete will truly benefit you in every aspect of your life!

Valedictorian Address

By: Hannah Cowie



Good morning fellow graduates, esteemed faculty, proud parents, and distinguished guests. It is an honor to stand before you as the valedictorian of our graduating class. I would like to warmly welcome everyone in attendance and express my gratitude for being part of this memorable occasion.

As we celebrate the end of one chapter of our lives, a new one begins. The excitement and opportunities of the next four years stretch out before us. We each have the chance to create our own paths no matter what we are doing. Whether we are going to college, trade school, prep school, or the military, or joining the workforce, or even becoming entrepreneurs, the road ahead of us is filled with opportunities to shape our own future. The possibilities are endless!

During the next four years we will meet new people, face many obstacles, and encounter a variety of new experiences. For those of us who are going on to college, many of our classmates

may become part of our professional network and we should all look to build strong relationships with them. The many obstacles that cross our path should be seen as opportunities for us to challenge ourselves, so let's face them head on. As my dad always says, "Adversity builds character." Some of our new experiences will be great, some will be good, some will be not so good, and some will be bad. Let us all learn from these experiences, for they can make us better people.

Fellow graduates, for the past few years we've been referred to as teenagers but in the next few years, we're all going to be adults. As adults, we're going to have to make decisions. With every decision, we will have options to choose from, and each option comes with some level of risk. This is a time to take risks but also to remember to make good decisions. Stepping out of our comfort zone is the only way to grow, and as we grow, we change, and with change comes mistakes. In the words of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, "Change takes courage." And we're all going to be courageous, right?

Regardless of which path we take, we must always remember to continue learning, because knowledge is an extremely powerful tool. No matter what happens, our pursuit for knowledge should never stop. We've been learning from elementary school, to middle school, to high school, so now I would like to take a moment on behalf of myself and my fellow graduates to thank the people who have brought us here.

First, I would like to thank God, my parents, and all the faculty and staff at Naz. Thank you, Mr. DiRe. Thank you, Ms. Roberts. And thank you, coaches – especially Coach Katrina! And you all need to give your parents a huge round of applause, because without their support and tuition payments you wouldn't be here right now. Congratulations, class of 2024!

Salutatorian Address

By: Isabella Watson

Fellow graduates, faculty, and cherished loved ones – As we gather here today, I am filled with a mix of emotions: pride, nostalgia, and excitement. As the salutatorian for the class of 2024, it is my honor to stand before you today and reflect on the journey that has brought us to this moment.

Four years ago, we may have logged onto Zoom as wide-eyed freshmen, both eager to start high school and nervous about the possibilities ahead. Our year of hybrid learning, “fever-free,” and unexpected school closures taught us perseverance and gave us the grit to succeed in unconventional circumstances.

When I think of the past four years at Nazareth it shocks me to think that so many memories have passed by so quickly. We collected service hours at the last minute, turned the gym into the Barclays Center, and laughed at unlucky friends whose names got called at the end of eighth period. We've laughed together, butted heads, and tried our best to acknowledge a quiet nudge during a Socratic quiz, but more than that we have supported each other and created a community unique to us.

Within our little community, we've grown as individuals and shaped each other into people the world will be happy to meet. As we look back on our time here, I am reminded of the countless moments of happiness and connection that have made these four years so special – the times where we have uplifted one another, made each other laugh, and reminded ourselves to remain focused and finish each marking period strong.

And yet, despite all these memories, I am also reminded of the challenges we've faced. We've navigated hard classes and faced setbacks and failures. We've had to adapt to changes in our plans, deal with uncertainty and find ways to stay motivated when it felt like “Plus Portal” was against us.

But through it all, we have learned to persevere.

Our time at Nazareth has taught us to be confident in not only our ability to succeed but also in our character and what we can “bring to the table.”

When you reflect on your time at Nazareth, focus not only on the end goal but the journey you've taken to make it here. Look back on your past experiences and cherish them, hold those moments close to your heart and use them to navigate the world around you.

As we graduate today, we are not just celebrating our own achievements. We are celebrating the power of community and the strength of our relationships with each other. We are celebrating the mentors who have guided us along the way, from teachers to advisors to peers who have become like family.

Speaking of family, I would like to thank my own for always pushing me to do my best in my classes and teaching me the importance of education. To my teachers who have always supported me in all my endeavors and encouraged me to continue strong, I recognize your efforts and commitment to your students, and I appreciate them. And to my peers who have always put their confidence in my knowledge and were never shy about letting me know that they would look at my scantron if possible: You have all been an irreplaceable part of my journey and I'm thankful for your presence in my life.

Finally: Congratulations, class of 2024!



Alumni Address

By: Jaenai Tercius



Persistence, progression, prosperity – These are the three things that I will take away from my time at Nazareth Regional High School.

At first, transferring was a stressful event. Everything was new, from the people to the environment and the education I would receive. However, through the support of the staff, counselors, and teachers here, still, I persisted. Much of my daily routine changed dramatically, and because of the timing of my transfer, sometimes my schedule felt somewhat behind that of my peers. However, holding on to the encouragement of my parents through the difficulty, still, I persisted. Though I struggled when I wasn't getting all the opportunities I wanted, with encouragement and faith, still, I persisted.

As the semesters passed, though, things improved greatly. I met new people, who are now close friends of mine and are now graduating with me today. I've developed great

relationships with teachers and staff who have helped me along this journey. With these people around me, I progressed. Through classes I never thought I'd have the privilege to take, I progressed. Holding onto my faith and walking through all the doors that God has opened, I progressed.

Now, here I am, along with all of you today. With pride, I am happy to say that we have prospered through all the hardships that come with high school, including the long classes and the late nights that ended with waking up early the next morning to repeat the cycle five days a week throughout the school year. Nazareth has provided me with excellent mentors, good friends, and a smooth couple of years of my life that I never want to forget. I hope that your time here has also brought many positive experiences, that you've also made close friends or kept the ones you may have already had close to you, and that down the line, you can look back on these years here with pride as you continue to prosper in your lives.

As a new alumnus, I first want to thank God for allowing these years to go well, for bringing me where I am now, and for bringing you all here as well. I want to give my thanks to the principal, the teachers, and the staff that have helped me along my educational journey and given me skills that will be eternally useful to me in my future endeavors. And I want to say thank you to my parents, who have encouraged me in all the steps that I have taken and have trusted the decisions I have made throughout this journey. I hope that every single one of you will walk away from this journey with pride. Be proud of the journey you have taken and be excited for what is to come.

Persistence, progression, prosperity – These are my takeaways from Nazareth, and I hope they will be great tools for you as well as we enter this new milestone in our lives. To you all, and to Nazareth – Godspeed!



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