

The Excalibur II



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Nazareth Alumni Newsletter

October 2025



Going For The Green

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Tom Del Mastro lines up a putt at one of the earlier holes of the day. There were 29 sponsors for the 18 holes at Marine Park.

Alumni Have a Good Day on the Golf Course

Nazareth's annual alumni and friends golf outing on September 15 drew about 110 golfers and netted more than \$30,000, to significant increases from the preceding year.

Joining the organizers this year were **James Kennelly '79** and **Gerard Fitzgerald '84**. The event honored each of their fathers (Donald and Gerard, respectively) at a dinner.

Denis Wuestman '73, another organizer, said Kennelly and Fitzgerald drove the event, recruiting new participants, getting sponsors and adding other fundraising features "That's what turned this thing into a huge success, they were creative and went above and beyond."

In addition to smaller raffles, the new organizers ran four live auctions where participants bid on a Chris Mullen jersey, a dinner at Rao's in Manhattan, a piece of art and the use of a house in Saratoga for a week.

Joe Keenan '73 — a board member like Wuestman — added a 50/50 raffle, which yielded \$3,500 for **Bob Mc Manus**. Keenan and **Gerry Ferrante '73** are among the organizers who last year restarted the event. That outing had 80 golfers and netted \$11,000. **Mike Russo Jr.** won for the longest drive, and **Andrew Gemell '85** got his tee shot closest to the pin.



A long line of carts ready to head out. Below at their first hole, the 15th, Tommy McVeigh '77, Peter Acquavella '77, John Shannon '76, and Tom Del Mastro '76.



In an effort to better showcase the school, several current Nazareth students attended the golf event to help out along the course and to mingle during the event with participants, who were reported to have been impressed. For example, **Davon Jean Francois**, a senior, composed and delivered a well-

received prayer at the dinner.

Those helping out included several family and friends from the Kennelly and Keenan teams. "They were outstanding and made the event run smoothly," Wuestman said.

Tickets cost \$250 for a single golfer. Proceeds will go into the Spirit of Nazareth Fund.



Drivers at the ready, Pete DeGroot '80, Jack Spadaro '87, Dan Rubino and Dan DeGroot (Pete's brother and the guy seen on Page 1) prepare to tee off.



ABOVE: Jim Hermance (a Tilden grad) with brother Bill Hermance '85, Andrew Gemmell '85 and Paul Crockett.



AT LEFT: Jesus Linares '73, John Ward '73, Gerry Ferrante '73 and Joe Keenan '73 size up their positions on the green.

BELOW: A parade of golf carts heads out as the morning session began. The outing used a "shotgun" approach, with foursomes starting at different places along the course to be efficient.



A group of current students came to help out with running the event. Taking a break are Kimora Samuel '27, Ruth Pierre '27 and Zaria Jacob '26.



A Message on the Outing, Page 7

Class of 2000 Reunites at the School

About two dozen members of the Class of 2000 and their guests gathered in Kingsmen Hall on August 2 for a reunion.

"I think everyone was very excited to see each other and catch up," said **Undrea Wilson**, one of the organizers.

The evening featured conversation, food and drink, a DJ and a photo booth, as well as a few trivia games, one of which was played on the Kahoot! platform. That one dealt with trivia about the school in 2000 and yielded a bottle of wine for winner **Deanah McLeod**.

In addition to Undrea Wilson, organizers included **Mayra De Peña**, **Kai Williams**, **Jeremy Folkes** and **Sakeena Pennington**.

The class made a \$375 donation to the school's Spirit of Nazareth fund in memory of classmate **Rachelle Arbouet**, who died in 2018.



MOST OF THE ATTENDEES: Seated, from left, Kerona Samuels (and her son Kayden), Alecia and Ayesha Hinds and Undrea Wilson. Standing behind them are, from left, Mayra De Peña, Natasha Nurse-Clarke, Deanah McLeod, Jamal Riley, Keisha Richardson, Kai Williams, Jeremy Folkes, and Nikkia Prescod. Standing in back, from left, are Ebonique Whyte Emilsen, Nicholas Millet, Jermaine John, Matthew DeSimone, Ernest McCaine and James Anderson



FACULTY FROM THEIR ERA: Nicholas Millet and James Anderson flank Rick Dolan, a teacher since '83.



QUESTIONS FROM 2000: Organizer Undrea Wilson, left, leading the party through a trivia game.



From left, Carlene Welsh, Mena Hope, Geneva Farrow, Reed Tunison, Monifa Workman, Ebonee Andrews, Patrick Saint Louis, Sue Lai Marge, Danielle Robinson-Marchand, Tyeisha Carter-Wedderburn, Erika Glemaud-Berrios, Schmika Rischer, Makini Beck, Tichanna Fields, Rinaldi Cetoute, Dwayne Birch, Damien Fields, Jabar Braithwaite, and Gregory Bourne. Plus a few we missed.

An Informal Get-Together for the Late 1990s

While some members of the Class of 1997 kept in touch with each other long after graduation, they never got around to having a reunion at the 20- or 25-year mark, according to **Ebonee Andrews**.

But conversations in December at the funeral of a classmate, **George Fogg**, prompted them to plan a gathering this year, which they opened up to other classes.

“When we lost our classmate George, that really hurt us,” Andrews said, and they decided to have a gathering over the summer.

“We called it a reunion but it wasn’t anything like a big formal reunion. It wasn’t anything like a sit-down dinner,” Andrews explained. “Everybody got together and just started talking and

reminiscing about things that happened while we were at school.”

People even dialed in remotely, via Facebook. The event, for about 40 people, was held Saturday, July 26, at 333 Lounge and Restaurant on Flatbush Avenue, near Grand Army Plaza.

The event drew alumni from as far away as California and Georgia, and the class invited grads from other years.

There were about ten from the class of 1998, a half-dozen from the class of 1996 and a few from other years.

In addition to Andrews, organizers included **Schmika Risher** and **Devon O’Reagan**, who played on the football team with Fogg back in the 90s.





The band, on stage at left. Below from left, Dennis Casey, Robert Flynn, Brian Franca, Mike Cunetta and John St. Clair.

Musicians From the 70s Offer Up an Encore

“Rewind” was there for a reprise.

About 120 people, many of them Nazareth alumni, turned up on Saturday, afternoon, October 18, for a performance by former classmates at the Tamaqua Bar & Marina in Gerritsen Beach.

The band, which calls itself Flatbush Rewind, included **Mike Cunetta, Fred Sweeney, Dennis Casey, Robert Flynn, John St. Clair, Johnny Malar** and **Brian Franca**.

The musicians, mostly from the Class of 1972, came from five bands called Windham, Hotspur, Street Magic, Soup Dejour and Roamin’ Cadillacs that played Nazareth dances in the early 70s.

The group dedicated its first song to **Kevin Davitt**, a fellow grad and musician who died in May and who was behind a similar performance a year ago.



At right, they must be serious — their fans have shirts. Far right, Johnny Malar, on drums at left, also brought his trio, called the “Three Johns Band” to play a short set.

Answering a Question of Biblical Proportions

Greetings to all alums and their families and best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season as Thanksgiving and Christmas approach.

In June of 2025, the “McCarthy Brothers Run” returned to Marine Park and a very successful Golf Outing was held at the Marine Park Golf Course in late September. Besides the organization and hard work of the many alums who organized, promoted and worked tirelessly on the events, current students from Nazareth participated in both programs.

What impressed me most was the interaction between the past and the present as today’s kids parti-



JOHN WUESTMAN '68
Board Chair, 2024-25

icipated in the events along with the alums of years ago.

At the closing luncheon of the September golf outing, Principal Rob DiRe and Athletic Director Mike Camacho

brought several students who led the 100+ golfers in prayer, and a few talked briefly to the whole group about **their** experiences at Nazareth, today, as students – what Nazareth means to them and has meant so far during their high school years.

After remarks, the kids joined the alums at different tables to swap stories of the “old days” and the “new” as everyone there shared their Nazareth experience.

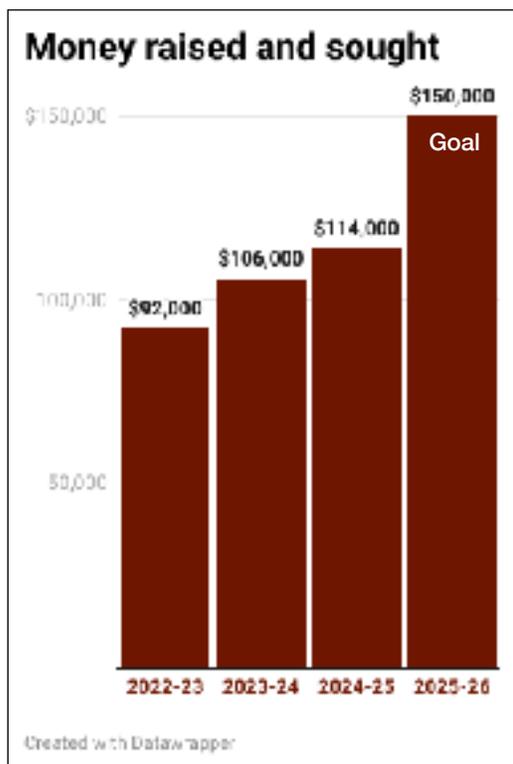
Yes, the golf outing was very successful from a fundraising aspect, but the true “success” was the blending of the generations and the

remarks I heard from many alums about the kids who spoke. Truly heartwarming to hear.

As I was listening, I thought of the Biblical quote in John 1:46 of the question about the small, unremarkable town near Galilee (I think), the town of Jesus’ childhood: “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

The answer, at least at that luncheon, on that day in Marine Park, was a resounding **YES!!**

In appreciation to all alums who support us and to the families that have sent their sons and daughters to Nazareth for 60 + years, **thank you** and may Nazareth have many more years to come!!!



‘Spirit of Nazareth’ Drive Starting

By Denis Wuestman '73
Development Committee Chairman

We will be launching our 2025-26 Spirit of Nazareth Annual Appeal before the end of November.

Our annual appeal has an immediate impact on our students and is used to support our mission through tuition aid/scholarships, technology, education initiatives and expense management.

Donations also help with new programs. As an example of how the Spirit Campaign helps, this past school year saw the class of 2025 earn over \$10

million in college scholarships with their strong academics, the Girls Varsity Basketball team was crowned State Champs, and all the clubs (athletic, Excalibur newspaper and Robotics clubs – to name a few) continue to build and thrive.

Last fiscal year, the Spirit Campaign generated \$114,000 for Nazareth, which was up from \$106,000 the year before.

Our goal this year is \$150,000.

You can donate to the drive at any time at <https://nazarethrhs.org/giving/spirit-of-nazareth/>

Thank you.

Graduate Makes the 'Power 100' List

Sheldon McLeod '85, the chief executive officer of the Kings County Hospital Center, landed at the 33rd position on "The Brooklyn Power 100" list compiled for the "City & State website" this summer.



He called the ranking a testament to the hard work of everyone at the hospital.

"This recognition is truly a reflection of the dedicated staff at Kings County who work tirelessly every day to provide high quality care to the Brooklyn community," he said in a statement from the city's Health and Hospitals Corp.

"I am proud to lead a team that not only meets the health needs of our patients but also uplifts and advocates for the communities we serve."

The publication, an online media organization that covers New York's local and state politics and policy, publishes annual rankings of city leaders to document changes in the local power structure.

It said McLeod made the ranking for having "balanced financial strategy with cultural healing,

expanding services" while championing a community mural program. He shared the spot in the rankings with the CEOs of two other New York City Health and Hospitals Corp. hospitals: South Brooklyn Health and Woodhull Medical Center.

"In a borough where public hospitals are lifelines," City & State explained, "these

CEOs are reshaping community care."

McLeod says he was an athlete at Nazareth, running track and playing on the football team that won a MetroBowl title in 1984.

After studying philosophy and psychology at Long Island University, he was recruited by the city's department of health.

In January 2018, McLeod, who has made the "Power 100" list before, became CEO at Kings County, a 639-bed acute care teaching hospital, after serving at chief operating officer since October 2014.

Before that he worked for 16 years at a variety of other health organizations in the city. You can see a [biography here](#).



New Captain for '88

Teresa Grimaldi-Sacks '88 has joined the Class Captains, bringing to 21 the number of classes represented.

Class captains help Nazareth help maintain current contact information with alumni, share information on reunions and alumni events and offer guidance on enriching alumni connections.

If you would like to represent a class not already on the list or to learn more about the program, contact: Denis Wuestman via email at: dwestman@nazareh-

Class Captains

- 1967: Steve Gandley
- 1968: John Wuestman
- 1969: Dan Jordan
- 1971: Marty Keating
- 1972: Bob Stack
Brian Kilgannon
Stu Fitzpatrick
- 1973: Mike DiFede
- 1974: Jude Hayes
Steve Melsom
- 1978: Gary Brasco
- 1979: Rich DiMatteo
- 1980: Kevin Dowd
- 1982: Chris Buckley
- 1983: Richard Pierre
Michelle Taylor
- 1984: Patrick Mullee
- 1985: Doreen Penner-Schnidler
- 1988: Teresa Grimaldi-Sacks
- 1989: Bev Chanoine
Margarita Argento
- 1993: Renée Volny-Darko
- 1995: Michael Bailey
- 1999: Deanna Philippe
- 2002: Sheldon Sucre
- 2004: Calvin Fletcher

Alumni Event at the Game

A group led by Deanna Philippe '99 is planning an event at Nazareth.

Saturday, December 6 at Noon
Varsity B Team vs. Holy Cross

[Visit the Nazareth site](#) for details in the coming weeks.



An Alumna Pursing a Life in Education

As early as grade school, **Deanna Philippe '99** says she knew she wanted to be a teacher. "I just didn't know the 'what'."

This fall, Philippe left Cristo Rey Brooklyn after 11 years, most recently as principal, to lead a public charter school.

"I'm excited," she said. "I feel like the new student joining a new school."

In grade school, Philippe says her mother was skeptical of a career in education — she wanted her daughter to pursue medicine or law. But her father came up with a list of 21 questions for her about her plans. "I guess I passed the test," she said, because he said she would have their support.

As a Nazareth student, she found that "great teachers, including Mr. Sme and Mrs. Caputo, were the ones who made me think I wanted to be a math teacher." Friends struggled with math, but she did well.

However, difficulty with college math made her switch to English. She received a BA in English and education from St. Francis College and later earned two Master's Degrees at Queens College, in literature and in school and district leadership.

She began at Cristo Rey, in the former Catherine McAuley High School building, in August 2014, where she taught English for two years before becoming assistant principal. She had been principal for the past five years.

It was the "best experience for me, professionally," she said. "Becoming an administrator actually made me a better teacher. The Cristo Rey network is just so rich with talent and

support. They have very intentional leadership coaching in the network, they have someone who's just for curriculum, they have someone who is just for corporate work study, they have someone who



is just campus ministry and religious studies, so what a wealth of talented, smart people with individualized talents to help every school leader lead, So it was phenomenal."

Cristo Rey Brooklyn, with 255 students, is part of a 41-school network across the nation. The school has a college prep curriculum coupled with a corporate work study program that has students at a job one day a week, contributing to their tuition and learning about the world of work. It allows the

school to enroll students who might otherwise not be able to afford a college prep education.

Philippe said the goal was "to make sure that our young people are not just seeing themselves as laborers but becoming professionals working in corporate America."

"They have a mentor there," she explained. They're being trained at their corporate sites, and that mentorship really does lead into opportunities in college and beyond.

She's working now as principal in residence at Ascend Public Charter High School, which opened in 2015 in the renovated historic Pitkin theater in Brownsville. It has 248 students.

She said the team at Ascend "was pretty clear to me that they've got really good strengths, but what they're looking to push and move is academic excellence and adult accountability. So really holding the teachers to a high bar. And that makes me excited because that's exactly what I did" at Cristo Rey."

She is happy to be "staying in an underserved area of Brooklyn. "I needed to move and grow professionally and also just create space and create an opportunity for a younger leader in the building to step up and do different things there."

A runner in her spare time — she ran track at Nazareth — she is a class captain for Nazareth and also serves on the board at St. Athanasius Catholic Academy on Bay Parkway. "I am trying to stay connected to local Catholic academies because they are struggling . . . more than the Catholic high schools."

‘Coach Will’ Hosts 60 At Track 4 Life Barbeque



Will Thomas, who coached track at Nazareth from 1985 to 1992, hosted 60 alumni and their families at a barbeque at his home in Middletown, Del., in early July.

The Naz Track 4 Life alumni group gets together every two years, Thomas said, and plans to hold their next reunion in 2027 at the school.

This year’s event drew alumni from 1984 to 1992 and from as far away as Georgia and Florida.

Thomas said that past events, which have drawn as many as 90 people, have taken in informal donations but that the 2027 reunion will sell tickets in order to increase the money raised for the school.

The Coach Will Naz Track School Grant was created “to

assist track student-athletes who otherwise could not afford a private Catholic education. You can [donate by clicking here](#).

Half of the funds are set aside as a block grant for the Nazareth track team to help cover uniforms, supplies, travel, equipment, and more.

Update Classmates on What You’ve Been Doing

CLASS OF 1968

Richard Tracy, Nacogdoches, TX: Ulster County Community College, Union College Schenectady (Biology major), MD degree (Univ of North Dakota school of medicine),

family practice internship and residencies: Kingston, NY & Allentown PA. Delivered a few babies named “Tracy.” Happily married a younger Catholic RN wife and have been enjoying recent retirement, my three adult children and continually learning about my Catholic faith. Regards to my classmates!

Bestfamilydoctor@hotmail.com

(Richard Tracy attended Nazareth from 1964-1967 and later graduated from Catskill High School.)

CLASS OF 2015

Jeremy Rigault, Brooklyn, NY: Working at FedEx at JFK Airport as an international document agent, dealing with custom brokerage and customers calling about their shipments. Graduated Kingsborough Community College with an Associate of Applied Science degree in 2018 and then went to NYC College of Technology for a Bachelor of Technology degree for Computer Systems in 2022. Also in my downtime, I have managed multiple databases with some European friends since 2023.

TAKE A SURVEY

In an effort to reach more younger alumni, Renée Volny-Darko '93 developed a brief online survey that will be emailed to people from the classes of 1990-2020, asking what expectations they may have about the alumni experience. We hope to share results in the next issue.

CLASS OF 1977

Stephen Risley, Las Vegas NV: It’s been 48 years since graduating. Presently selling real estate in Las Vegas. God Bless All !!!

Got an update? Use the form at <https://nazarethrhs.org/alumni/alumni-news-updates/>

Hall of Fame Committee Has Nominees

A committee to consolidate and revive Nazareth's Athletic Hall of Fame is working through a list of 30 nominees so far.

The committee hopes to make a decision sometime in November. Those selected will join a refurbished Hall of Fame that will be presented at an event on April 18.

Nominations were solicited in the spring and the initial deadline was extended to mid-October to get more names. Even though the deadline has now passed, you can still read about the criteria for making [nominations here](#).

Mike Camacho, the school's athletic director, heads the committee. Other members are former teacher **Rick Dolan**, **Gary Gooden '85**, **Monique Fischer '82**, and **Joe Keenan '73**, a trustee.



A plaque that used to be in the lobby has joined other elements in the gym balcony.



Four of the individual-style plaques from the later Hall of Fame in the gym.

Meanwhile, In an Older Hall of Fame

Pete Gaughn '73, a track star during his time at Nazareth, is scheduled to be inducted into Manhattan University's Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday, November 8 for his cross country, indoor and outdoor track achievements at that school.

Manhattan, where he graduated in 1977, described him as a "great middle distance runner and leader who paced Jaspers to some of the program's greatest relay performances."

Being Back in League Is a Challenge

Nazareth's football team expected a challenge in its return to the Catholic High School Football League this season. The team has an 0-6 record so far.

"It's been tough," said **Mike Camacho**, the athletic director. "Now we're playing the big hitters — Christ the King, Holy Cross, Mount St. Michael's. We had a really great game against Cardinal Spellman, which we wound up losing by a safety."

"They've been competitive and they have good spirits," he said of the team. "So I'm

happy about that."

The team's final game is set for November 1 against Holy Trinity at Aviator Sports Complex, and that will be the final game seniors play in a Nazareth uniform. Many of those 18 seniors started with Coach **Gary Gooden '85** as freshmen, knowing the school did not have a team at the time. "They may not win games," Camacho said, "but they at least built the foundation to be back in the league, and that is something that we really wanted."

Check [here](#) for final results.

SAVE THE DATE

Memorial Mass November 10

To mark the intentions received from donors, alumni, family, and friends.

You can add to the [intention list here.](#)

[Check here later](#) for a link to a livestream of the event.



Class Get a Footstone for a Former Teacher

The Class of 1967 arranged for a footstone at the gravesite of Brother Russell/Tom Cully in Winston Cemetery in East Durham, NY. They are planning a brief

memorial service on November 3 followed by lunch nearby. Contact Steve Gandley, etiennegandley@gmail.com or text him at 201-663-3593 if you're interested.

PASSINGS



Daniel Dougherty '71 died on August 6 after a long fight with lung problems. He was married, with six children and several grandchildren and he had been living in Fresno, Calif. You can sign a [guestbook kept by the funeral home.](#)

To notify us of someone's passing, send an email to advancement@nazarethrhs.org with a link to an online obituary.