

The Excalibur II



Vol. 3, Issue 4

Nazareth Alumni Newsletter

July 2026

Latest Wave



All 89 Seniors Graduate, Becoming Alumni

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Keesha Desir responds to applause on way to getting her diploma

Remembering Coach And Russian Teacher

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Class of '86 Reunites As 2006 Gets Ready

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Marine Park Run For McCarthy Brothers

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Class assembled for the last time to hear valedictorian Alyssa McCaine, in gown at right, give her address, with faculty on stage.

Class of 2026 Has Graduation Rate of 100%

From **Maximus Abel** to **Arly Zapata**, 89 Nazareth seniors made the transition from students to alumni on June 5.

Nancy Roberts, the assistant principal for academics, announced at the beginning of the event that the Class of 2026 had achieved a 100 percent graduation rate.

The commencement ceremony, the 61st in the school's history, took place at the Christian Cultural Center on Flatlands Avenue.

The commencement address was given by **Heather Meyerend**, whose husband, teacher **Paul Meyerend**, died during the school year, and by her son, **David Meyerend**. They are pictured at right.

She encouraged the graduates to not let failures stop them. "There are times when you will just crash, but don't be in despair. Because you are made for purpose, and as long as you get up, you will be okay.

Valedictorian **Alyssa McCaine**

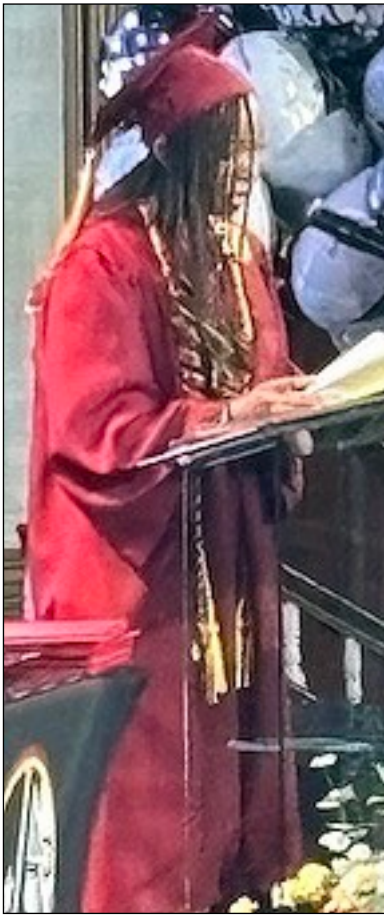


and Salutatorian **Lizmarie Recio** addressed classmates, family and friends (excerpts on Page 3) as did Principal Robert DiRe.

Among students who've made a final decision about college, six each are going to St. John's

University, Delaware State University and the New York Institute of Technology. Five are going to Long Island University. Others are going individually to such schools as NYU, Temple and the University of Virginia.

Valedictorian Alyssa McCaine: Keep Moving Forward



I grew up in a home where faith, discipline, and learning go hand in hand. From an early age, I was taught to approach challenges with patience, persistence, and trust in the process. That when things get hard, you don't quit. You keep going. You show up. You do the work, even when no one is watching. That lesson followed me into these halls.

And there were teachers who helped reinforce that lesson every day. Mr. DiRe pushed me to lead when I would've rather stayed quiet, and that discomfort is exactly where growth lives. Ms. Michel saw something in me academically before I could see it in myself. And Ms. Recio was always pointing us toward the next open door, toward opportunities we might have walked past if she hadn't told us about them.

That kind of belief, from teachers, from family, is what carried a lot of us through.

These four years weren't always easy. There were times I just needed to get through one class at a time, doing what needed to be done and going home. And I showed up. Somewhere in that quiet consistency, something was being built. The most important work often happens in places no one else can see.

My faith also shaped how I saw these four years. It reminded me that knowledge isn't just about achievement. It's about purpose. Humility. Integrity. Becoming someone worth becoming. Through the hard times, through heartache and pain, I knew I wasn't walking alone. I held onto that. I hold it still.

We celebrate the memories we've made, the lessons we've learned, and the people who helped us get here. But we cannot stay here. We have to keep moving forward, trusting that what lies ahead is greater than what we leave behind.

Salutatorian Lizmarie Recio: Little by Little, Growth

They really weren't lying when they said high school goes by fast. It feels like we just got here, and at the same time, like we've been here forever.

The days felt long while we were living them. The early mornings, the deadlines, the exams, the assignments we may or may not have started the night before. Yet, when we look back, the years seem to have passed in an instant.

Maybe that's because growth doesn't happen all at once. It happens little by little, in class-

rooms, conversations, successes, and mistakes we thought we'd never recover from.

Because high school was never really one straight line. It wasn't just classes, grades, or schedules. It was learning how to navigate challenges, discovering strengths we didn't know we had, and learning lessons we never expected.

Most of us spent these four years waiting to feel ready. Ready for the next test, the next responsibility, and the future. But if these past years taught us any-

thing, it's that readiness doesn't magically appear one day. Most of the time, you figure things out by stepping forward before you feel completely prepared.

And none of us did that alone.

There were teachers and coaches who challenged us because they saw potential in us that we couldn't always see ourselves. Administrators and staff members who kept everything running, supported us when we needed it, and managed to keep us on track. There were our

families who stood beside us through every version of ourselves: stressed, exhausted, confident, uncertain, and constantly changing. And there were classmates who shared this experience with us.





Coach with Michael Megaflu during the 2012 City Championship.

Todd Jamison, Long-Time Head Basketball Coach

Todd Jamison, who served as head coach of the boys basketball team at Nazareth for more than 21 years, died on May 25.

According to the school, Jamison led his teams to more than 300 victories, including in Catholic High School Athletic Association championship games.

"During his remarkable career," the school said, "he guided Nazareth to three CHSAA City Championships, two CHSAA State Championships, and five CHSAA Divisional Championships. He was honored twice as CHSAA coach of the year."

He was also named coach of the year three times by The Tablet.

"His impact reached far beyond the court, as he changed countless lives through his guidance, support, and love for others, the school said. He left Nazareth in 2018.

Former players and school staff were among those attending services on June 5 at Grace Funeral Chapels in Brooklyn.

According to a biography distributed at that service, Jamison, a graduate of Christ the King High School, served as an officer with the city's police department for 20 years after receiving a degree in business administration from City College.

You can comment on the school's Facebook posting [visit here](#).

Martin Doyle, Taught Russian from '60s to '80

Martin Doyle, who taught at Nazareth from its earliest years through to 1980, died May 6.

He was chairman of the Language Department when he left the school.

You can read a [full obituary here](#), or attach your comments to a [Facebook posting](#) about him.

Here is a remembrance from a former student:

By Jude Hayes '74

I think many of us can name one, maybe two teachers that have had a lasting impact on us beyond our time in high school. Mister Doyle was one of those special people for me both in and out of the classroom. Marty was a man of great intelligence with a wicked sense of humor. A teacher of Latin and Russian languages who later became the chairman of the foreign language department in the 1970's.

I took his Russian class for two years and still remember how much fun he made learning the language. He drilled us every day on the essential vocabulary, taught us folk songs and told great stories about his time in Russia while he was a college student. His teaching style was very supportive, never intimidating. I looked forward to coming to his class because we learned so much and we always had a laugh doing it.



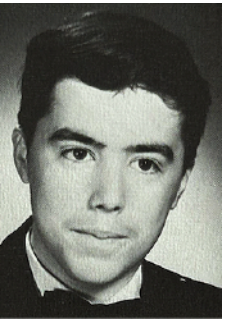
In 1979, after graduating Fordham University with a degree in Russian Studies I was lucky enough to go to Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) for two weeks with his wife and a handful of Nazareth students. It's a memory I'll always cherish. Marty and I stayed in touch over the years, and I always looked forward to seeing him.

He was a world traveler, an excellent chef, a gentleman and a scholar. He leaves his wife, Maureen, and two sons, Andrew and Lex, and a daughter-in-law, Aditi.

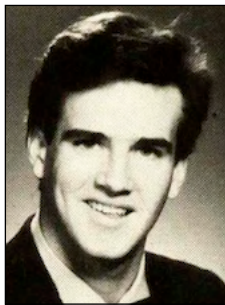
PASSINGS



Services were held April 24 for **Allison Lewis '90** who died April 5. To add to the condolences, [click here](#).



Kevin Silva '71 died in April. To leave a comment with others from his class, you can [click here](#) for the Facebook post.



Patrick Mullee '84 a class captain and former basketball star, died on May 10. Click [here](#) for [an obituary](#).



James Carney '85, who came from St. Jerome's, died in mid-June. To leave a comment on a posting about him, [click here](#).

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



Raffle Winner Saw Knicks Comeback

Karson Evans '29, a freshman, got to witness a bit of sports history at Game 4 of the NBA Finals as the Knicks came back from a 29-point deficit and, with a last-second tip in by **OG Anunoby**, beat the San Antonio Spurs, 107-106.

He was at the game with his uncle with tickets won in a raffle organized by Nazareth's Athletic Director **Mike Camacho**. Raffle chances were \$50 a piece, with five for \$200. After subtracting the cost of the Madison Square Garden tickets, a profit of roughly \$12,000 remained from the fundraiser, which the school said would be used to "provide opportunities for our student athletes."

Evans has a bit of sports history of his own. He was part of the Freshman Basketball team that went undefeated and won a city championship. The Knicks, by the way, went on to win the Finals 4-1 with another come-from-behind victory in San Antonio on June 13.

Speaking of Competition in San Antonio



Jayden Augustin '27, in poster at left, represented the school at the EGFH National Championship for esports in San Antonio, Texas, in mid-May. He played in, but did not survive, a 10-school bracket competing in Super Smash Brothers.



In front, from left, Lisa Burghardt, Ellen Montemarano, Kevin Pfundstein, Kerry McPhillips, Dawn McPhillips ('87), Nicole Cerullo (88), Donna Santarpia, Christine Garrity, Chris O'Donnell. Next row, from left, Ray Troiso, Joe Paradise, Joe Beissel, Margaret Boyle, Cesare Saponaro, Jaimie Anastasio, Alexandria Pertose, Sal Rabasco, Mike O'Neill, Tommy O'Shaughnessy ('85) In back, from left, John Walsh, Carl Gemelli ('87), Jackie O'Toole ('87), Dorothy Cummings ('87), Paul Ranieri, Mike Sainato, Chuck Norton, Michael Crowe, Chris Miccio.

Class of 1986 Enjoys a Race and a Reunion



The Class of 1986 hitched their 40th reunion to a running of the Kentucky Derby on May 2, gathering at a midtown Manhattan bar to reminisce and catch the race.

"It was a very good event," said **Alex Pertose '86**, one of the organizers. A group of friends, including some Nazareth alumni, had a Derby party at the bar a year ago and decided to latch on to it for their 40th reunion. Capra, along with classmates in photo at left, and **Chris O'Donnell '86** ran it. The party took place at Bourbon and Branch on West 33rd Street, and grads from other years were among the crowd of about 50.

"It's actually good for anyone who wants to do a reunion," she said. "It was very nicely done."

← **AT LEFT:** Long-time organizers of all the Class of 1986 reunions, Christine Garrity Sainato, Donna Santarpia, Kerry (Boland) McPhillips and Alexandria Pertose.



Jaime Anastasio, Paul Ranieri and Ray Troiso.



Classmates in Derby mode pose with broomstick horses.

Class of '06 Drawing Crowd to Kingsmen Hall



The Class of 2006 already has 50 people signed up for their reunion on July 18 in Kingsmen Hall, and they're aiming for more.

"Things are going good," said organizer **Joseph Markenson** in mid June. "I know for sure right now we have a guaranteed 50 individuals out of a graduating class of 109 or 113."

The event will run from 7 to 11 p.m., and the \$75 ticket, available here, covers a live DJ, catering and an open bar. The ticket site allows you to make a donation to the school, even if you can't attend that night, and there's a tab for teachers from the era if they want to attend. The event is even open to alumni from nearby classes "if they feel comfortable," Markenson said.

After their 10-year reunion didn't materialize, Markenson, who goes by Mark, decided to start early on this one, organizing a small gathering in a bar in 2020 to start to get the class back together.

Ramping up efforts in July 2025, he and another classmate began using online people searching services to build up the class roster.

Beyond Markenson, the committee grew to includes **Francesca Alexis, Charnelle Campbell-Mudho, Kahlil Haywood, Azana Simon-Alexander, Kenyba McLean, Cassandra Aphanord, Karl Folkes** and **Joshua Martin**

You can follow them on Instagram: @NAZO6REUNION.

Want to Update Your Classmates About What You've Done?

Just fill out the form at <https://nazarethrhs.org/alumni/alumni-news-updates/>

Want to Send Us Some Feedback?

Reactions? Story ideas? Questions? Please send email to advancement@nazarethrhs.org.

Want to Make a Donation to the School?

You have a number of options, all explained at <https://nazarethrhs.org/giving/>



The frontrunners — some thankful for the shade — start to spread out along the oval track in Marine Park as the race began.

A Run to Remember the McCarthy Brothers



ABOVE: Sklarly Meristil, who graduated from Nazareth a day earlier, crosses the finish line first with a time of 12:45. AT RIGHT: younger runners at the start, followed by members of the McCarthy family.

Under sunny skies on a warm afternoon, 15 runners finished the annual McCarthy Brothers Memorial Run/Walk in Marine Park on June 6,

The two-mile event included a number of high school athletes and members of the McCarthy family.

The memorial run began in honor of **Eugene T. McCarthy '73**, a major in the Marines who died during the Persian Gulf war. (See story on next page.). Two years ago it was renamed to include his brother, **Dennis**, a special agent for Homeland Security who died in 2018 of a 9/11-related illness.

The event was overseen by **Joe Keenan '73**, and run by the Rockaway Track Club, thanks to **Jimmy McVeigh '76**. Any proceeds will go to the Spirit of Nazareth Fund.





Abigail Pierre '26 places flowers at the memorial.

School Helps Rededicate Memorial for a Graduate

The annual rededication of a memorial to **Marine Major Eugene McCarthy** from the Class of '73 took place on Sunday morning, May 17, at Avenue N and East 31st Street.



Among the attendees from Nazareth was **Abigail Pierre '26**, who sang the National Anthem at the rededication ceremony and also placed flowers at the base of the memorial.

The major was killed during the Persian Gulf War. His helicopter crashed on Feb. 2, 1991, while he was flying a medevac support mission during Operation Desert Storm.

Long after the ceremony, Pierre said, "It was good to have the political leaders and veterans and others from the community all there in unison," to remember McCarthy.

FROM NAZARETH'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A Farewell Message From the Chairman

Nazareth graduated its 61st class of seniors in June. Its graduates were accepted in more than 75 different colleges (many of them to multiple schools) and with prospects for an incoming Freshman class of approximately 90 students, its future is encouraging, despite the existential threats of the additional closing of Catholic parish grammar feeder schools and the rise of competitive charter schools.

The past year saw the return of the popular Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony in April, a banner year for the annual September Alumni & Friends golf outing at Marine Park, and the annual McCarthy Run in memory of the McCarthy brothers, Eugene and Dennis, who gave their lives in service to our country. True heroes.

Other highlights include the success of the Development program as it topped \$300,000 in alumni and friends donations, the highest in our history. And interested alums who haven't seen their classmates in years have been networking to spearhead reunions, some hosted at Nazareth. Class Captains have been doing that, too,

and WE NEED MORE CLASS CAPTAINS to volunteer as class organizers!). **Click here for that.**

On the horizon for 2027 will be a "Dancing with the Stars Gala" slated for the spring and held at Nazareth. Shine up those dancing shoes for what

promises to be a fun night for generations of alums to celebrate together at Nazareth!!!

As I wrap up my 13th and final year on the board, the last three having the honor of being its Chair, the list of alums I have crossed paths with has been both nostalgic and inspirational.



JOHN WUESTMAN '68
Board Chair, 2024-26

Nazareth has always reminded me of the mythical "Phoenix" which rises from challenges and lives on and on!

I believe in the "specialness" of our school, the impact of its teachers and administrators on the lives of its students, the legion of lifelong friendships it has helped produce, and its place of importance as a Xaverian Brothers sponsored school for third and fourth generation sons and daughters of immigrant families in Brooklyn!!!

GOD BLESS ALL And "KEEP RISING".

8 Students Get Brother Matthew Scholarships

Eight Nazareth juniors were awarded tuition assistance from the **Brother Matthew Burke** Scholarship Fund in a ceremony and prayer service in the chapel on June 10.

The students were nominated by faculty, staff and administrators and had to write an essay and be interviewed by members of the fund's alumni committee.



Brother Matthew

Brother Matthew taught at the school and then was principal from 1969 to 1975. He died in November 2020 at age 82.

He was a "very influential educator" and pioneer, according to **Denis Wuestman '73**, one of the founders of the fund and a former member of the board of trustees who attended Nazareth during the brother's tenure.



Back row, from left, Denis Wuestman '73, a fund founder, with Megan Robinson, DeAndre Hall Jr., Stephane McKenna and Principal Robert DiRe. Front row, Makelia Piper, Kylie Barry Mitchell, Ruth Pierre, Theresa Theodore and Victoria Chanoine.

"He gave us space to grow and mature, but he held us accountable."

Principal **Robert DiRe** spoke about the importance of alumni donations and support.

The fund, in its sixth year, has raised more than \$308,000. Beyond scholarships, the fund is used for specific educational, academic and arts-related projects, as well as capital

improvements. You can donate to the fund by [clicking here](#).

This year, **Makelia Piper**, **Victoria Chanoine** and **Megan Robinson** were awarded \$5,000 scholarships while **Kylie Barry Mitchell**, **DeAndre Hall Jr.**, **Ruth Pierre**, **Theresa Theodore** and **Stephane McKenna** received smaller amounts totaling \$11,000.

Class of '67 Fund Agrees to Try Something New

In an unusual move, this year's \$10,000 scholarship from the Class of 1967 Endowment went to **Dejean Woodstock '26**, a student who graduated in June.

"Dejean's mom was having trouble paying for his senior year tuition," **Steve Gandley '67** explained in a note to his classmates. "**Principal Rob DiRe** had run the idea of issuing the scholarship for the current year and I advised that we were on board with whatever he thought was the best use of the award."

Gandley described Woodstock as "a model student with a 92 percent grade average, high SAT scores, and a member of



Dejean Woodstock and Steve Gandley the basketball team. He plans on being a business major at St. John's University.

"I had the opportunity to sit down and have a long con-

versation with Dejean and he seems like a fine young man — intelligent, articulate, humble, and immensely appreciative," Gandley wrote. "Additionally, so many faculty members approached me and thanked me for our scholarship in general and, in particular, for what we have done to help this young man. One after another, they spoke of Dejean in glowing terms."

The scholarship is funded by an endowment of more than \$170,000 that the classmates started setting up a few years ago. Gandley said the fund is still accepting donations. You can donate by [clicking here](#).

Help Wanted: School Posts a Part-Time Job

Nazareth is looking for an admin to work on development marketing and it wants make sure alumni are aware of the opportunity. Responsibilities would include:

- **Management of Donor/Advancement database:** To track the donations and generate acknowledgments and to manage the donation hierarchy, including setting up new funds.
- **Management of the Email Database:** This would include creating email campaigns for various fundraising events and for the distribution of this newsletter.
- **Website:** Involvement with the portions of the school's website dealing with donations (Giving), alumni events and the newsletter.
- **Annual Appeal:** Work with a small team to organize the annual appeal.

It is estimated that there would be a total of about 275 hours of work during each school's fiscal year. Thirty-five to forty hours would occur from July to September, with 90-100 hours from October to December. Then there would be two 60-70 hour stretches from January to March and from April to June. Much work can be done remotely, but some presence at the school will be necessary, particularly in the fall.

Click here for a **full job description**. For questions, email advancement@nazareth-rhs.org.

Nazareth 2026 Golf Outing

Hold the Date:

Monday September 21,
Marine Park Golf Course

Honoring Patrick Mullee '84
and Steve Gandley' 67.

You can get details
and eventually sign up
by [clicking here](#).



Breezy Birthday

Andrew Kohler, Andy Gemmell, Bill Hermance and John Samuelsen, members of the Class of '85, got together for lunch to celebrate Gemmell's birthday in mid June at Kennedy's in Breezy Point.



Career Day '26

The Career Day and College Fair on April 29 included a panel of friends of Nazareth talking about work. From left:

Sheldon Archer, assistant principal, Great Oaks elementary school; **Michelle Joseph**, a consultant and leader in nonprofits; **Elijah Stewart**, a broadcaster with WFAN; **Marie Wilson**, who told of her medical career; and **Sharon Brown-Veillard**, a lawyer and former board chair.

Teacher Teresa Sacks Retires After 22 Years

Teresa Grimaldi-Sacks '88 retired at the end of the school year after teaching at Nazareth for 22 years.

She had a bachelors degree in education from St. John's University and a masters degree with a concentration in mathematics.

She was primarily a math teacher but during her time at the school she also taught Living Environment (biology), anatomy and physiology, health, religion, and forensic science (a subject she said she loved).

She has served as a moderator for the National Honor Society and the cooking club which started at the school about six years ago. She was also the faculty union delegate.



Teresa Sacks standing at a farewell dinner on June 20 with Natalia Rodriguez, an administrative assistant.; John Wuestman, the board of trustees chairman; John Barrett, a former board member; and Robert DiRe, principal. Above, a closer look



Two years ago, in an essay for this newsletter, she wrote: "I love when our students come back and say what I did for them has helped them in their education, careers, and life in general."

Writing about her students,

she added: "When they come back and tell you the impact you have made in their life and choices they made and how they review life, [it] makes teaching here all the more special."

4 MAIDEN WAIVER CLAIMING Purse \$19,000			
4th Annual Nazareth HS Class of '67 Saturday Jug (Plus 40% N. J. Breed Enhancement)			
FOR MAIDENS, FILLIES AND MARES THREE YEARS OLD AND UPWARD, Three Year Olds, 119 Lbs. Or less, 123 Lbs. Claiming Price \$40,000. For Each \$5,000 To \$30,000 1 lb. (Registered New Jersey Breeds May Waive the Claiming Price). Five Furlongs. (Lennox) (Rail at 36 Feet)			
MAKE SELECTION BY PROGRAM NUMBER		TRAINER	JOCKEY
1	2	3	4
1 Red INTOTHEMYSTIC Bl.f.3 Authentic - Auspicious by Indian Charlie (NY) RR RODRIGUEZ, F. WITZ, C. IRVING Royal Blue, White Circled Yellow RR, Yellow Bars on Sleeves, Yellow Cap	2 White DARTY TIME Dk B/ Br.f.4 Not This Time - Poets Dreamed by Maclean's Music (KY) TEDESCO RACING LLC, TA HILLS, D'ZION Royal Blue, Red Circled TR, Royal Blue Band on White Sleeves, Royal Blue Cap	3 Blue BOUQUETRY Dk B/ Br.f.3 Complexity - Liam's Missy by Liam's Map (NY) DENNIS A. DRAZIN Navy Blue, Light Blue Diamonds, Navy Blue Cap	4 Yellow ARIA D Dk B/ Br.f.3 Galawi (IRE) - Sweet Tooth Sweetie by Smarty Jones (NJ) JANET A. LASZLO Chinese Red, Gold Triangular Panel, Gold Chevrons on Sleeves, Gold Cap
119 ANDREW WOLFSOFT \$40,000	121 CAROL CEDENO \$30,000	119 MELISSA IORIO \$40,000	119 JOSE GOMEZ Waive
5 Green THEGANGSALLHERE Ch.f.4 Irish War Cry - Amanda's Antik by Gold Token (NJ)	6 Black, Red Collar and Playing Cards, Red Diamond Stripe on Sleeves, Red		



Day at the Races:

Alumni, mostly from the Class of '67, and their guests turned out on Friday, June 26, at Monmouth Park race track in New Jersey for the "4th Annual Nazareth HS Class of 67 Saturday Jug" — a tradition begun by Lou Barretti '67. "A good time was had by all, according to classmate Steve Gandley. "Darty Time" and jockey Carol Cedeno won.