

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY FAIRFIELD, CONN

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Notre Dame Prep of Sacred Heart University

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER

Assistant News Editor

On Friday, Aug. 23, Notre Dame Catholic High School announced that the school's name will be changed to Notre Dame Prep of Sacred Heart University, along with a revised logo.

This announcement was made in a statement by Notre Dame Principal Dr. Christopher Cipriano, which was sent out to the "Notre Dame Community" via email.

"What has changed is the use of 'Prep' instead of 'High School' and the addition of Sacred Heart's name to reflect our direct association with the university," Cipriano said in the email.

This announcement comes nearly seven months after SHU and the Diocese of Bridgeport reached an agreement to purchase Notre Dame for \$15 million on Feb. 1, as The Spectrum previously reported.

"As you can see, the name 'Notre Dame' remains unchanged – as it always will. Our Lady will continue to guide us, and our strong Catholic faith remains a cornerstone of all that we do each and every day," Cipriano said in the email.

"We believe this logo honors our past and celebrates our future as we begin a new era with Sacred Heart," Cipriano continued in the email.

"The logo revisions and the use of 'Prep' reflect our relationship with a Catholic institution of higher learning."

Brendan Williams '24, former Editor-in-Chief of The Spectrum, attended Notre Dame prior to coming to SHU and said that the proximity between the schools played some role in his decision to attend SHU.

"I always knew it was a possibility being that it was the college right across the street, and I had some opportunities as a student of Notre Dame to explore Sacred Heart more and learn what was available to me," said Williams, citing the communications programs as something that interested him about SHU.

According to Williams, rumors of a potential SHU purchase of Notre Dame persisted for many years, dating back to when his older sister attended Notre Dame, but there was always skepticism on whether it would occur.

"I remember talking to my friends and people who also went to Notre Dame, and everybody was a bit shocked when the news came out at first," said Williams. "For it to actually come to fruition and be announced, it was a bit of a surprise when it actually came true."

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continued on pg. 2



George Triebenbacher, Assistant News Editor

Notre Dame High School preparing to change their name to Notre Dame Prep of Sacred Heart University, along with a new logo.

New Dorms Open for Freshmen Pioneers

BY LAUREN KEHRLE

News Editor

As the academic year moves forward in full swing, campus is the site of new beginnings for both freshmen students and the spaces that some of them will call home for the next year.

Located adjacent to one another on the north side of Pioneer Village, Catherine of Siena and Michael McGivney Hall are the university's latest dorms to open their doors to students.

Combined, these new three-floor buildings house approximately 460 first-year students, primarily those who are part of the Thomas More Honors program.

Each pod-style suite contains two double bedrooms for a total of four residents per space. They also include study spaces, laundry facilities and lounges with kitchenettes, a setup almost identical to Mother Teresa Hall.

Despite these similarities, the new dorms are distinct from other residential buildings on campus, including those on Upper Quad, because of the sky bridge that unites their top floors.

"While in other buildings the bridges are basically a hallway or might have some lounge space, the bridge connecting these two halls contains two study rooms, a communal kitchen and a large living room with space for at least three separate groups of students to hang out," said dual Residence Hall Director Tom Dess.

"I hope that the students will venture out of their pods to build connections and learn from each other," Dess said. "We have a wide array of diverse viewpoints and experiences to share."

In addition to Dess's role in overseeing day-to-day activities and promoting a positive image of campus living, seven Resident Success Assistants (RSAs) are assigned to each dorm. These upperclassmen are responsible for ensuring that the students on their floor are equipped with the resources that they need to have a successful year.

Already, the RSAs are hard at work creating an environment that

cultivates confidence and connection among all.

"One of our goals is to foster friendships between residents. The pods are very separated, so generally the suitemates won't leave their room as much," said sophomore Matthew Meaney, an RSA on the third floor of McGivney Hall. Although this pod-style arrangement sets students farther apart physically from others in their dorm, the bond between residents of Catherine of Siena and Michael McGivney Halls stands as a testament to the significance of SHU's vision behind these structures to bring Pioneers closer together.

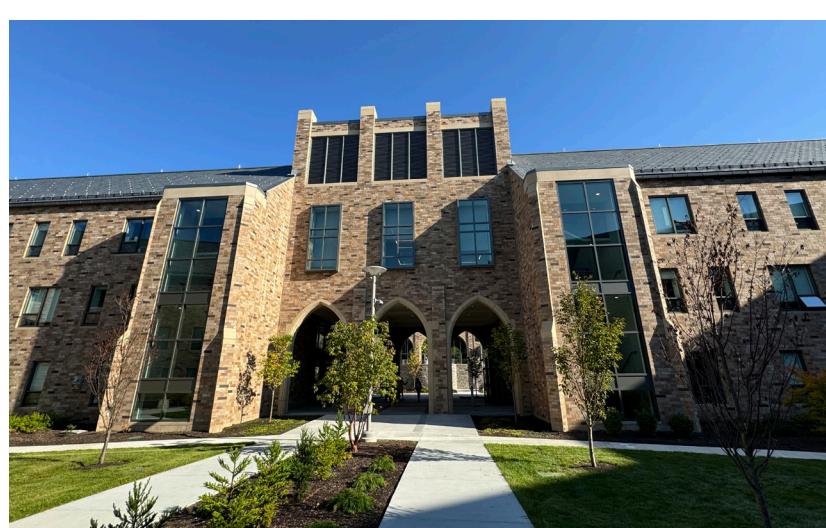
"The sense of community is already there. It has very much been one building instead of two," Meaney said. "It's more a question of which side you live on rather than which building."

The overarching intention of integration between both halls reflects SHU's ongoing commitment to the core values of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT). According to the university website, it "aspires to achieve prominence through innovative teaching, learning, and research while cultivating a campus community that is recognized as caring and creative."

While this mission has been executed in the eyes of the staff, residents are also attentive to the seamlessly welcoming design of the new dorms.

"When I first walked in, I felt like this was a place where I could hang out with all of my friends," said freshman Adrianna Talluto, who lives on the first floor of McGivney Hall.

"I suggest doing work in the common areas and talking to everyone you pass in the halls. You will never know what friends you can make if you don't say hi to your neighbors," Talluto said.



Jake Walsh, Co-Assistant Photo Editor

Brand new first-year dorms, Catherine of Siena and Michael McGivney Halls on Sacred Heart's Main Campus.

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Notre Dame Prep

BY GEORGE TRIEBENBACHER
Assistant News Editor

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Cam Connelly '23, who also attended Notre Dame, said that he wasn't surprised by either the purchase or the name change.

"It was always in the rumor mill, especially as Sacred Heart grew, around here at least," said Connelly. "It was really just a matter of time until it happened."

Connelly said that he believes that these developments will help propel Notre Dame going forward.

"I see this as the next logical step in Notre Dame's evolution," said Connelly. "Having Sacred Heart as the overarching entity is nothing but positive for the future."

Junior Dylan Brown said the fact that the name's overall theme remained constant is positive.

"I like how they still honor the core values of the school; they kept the name and didn't change it too much," said Brown. "I feel like it's good that there still honoring it, but it's interesting that they put Sacred Heart University in the name."

Brown said that he wonders about the exposure that Notre Dame students will get to SHU going forward, comparing it to the dynamic between Fairfield Prep and Fairfield.

"I feel like [Notre Dame students] are going to be more informed in classes about what Sacred Heart has to offer, and they might offer classes that can give you [college] credit," said Brown.

On July 2, SHU President Dr. John Petillo announced that the purchase of Notre Dame was finalized on July 1.

Notre Dame is directly across from SHU's campus on Jefferson St.

For more information about the SHU purchase of Notre Dame, visit <https://www.shuspectrum.com/archives/news/shu-to-purchase-notre-dame-high-school-for-15-million/>.

The Sacred Heart Spectrum

Teen charged in Georgia shooting and his father to stay in custody after hearings

BY AP NEWSROOM

WINDER, Ga. (AP) — The 14-year-old suspect in a shooting that killed four people at a Georgia high school and his father, who was arrested for allowing his son to have a weapon, will stay in custody after their lawyers decided not to seek bail Friday.

Colt Gray, who has been charged with four counts of murder, is accused of using a semiautomatic assault-style rifle to kill two fellow students and two teachers Wednesday at Apalachee High School in Winder, outside Atlanta. His father, Colin Gray, faces related charges in the latest attempt by prosecutors to hold parents responsible for their children's actions in school shootings.

"You don't have to have been physically injured in this to be a victim," District Attorney Brad Smith said outside the Barrow County courthouse. "Everyone in this community is a victim. Every child in that school was a victim."

The father and son appeared in back-to-back hearings Friday morning with about 50 onlookers in the courtroom, where workers had placed boxes of tissues along the benches, in addition to members of the media and sheriff's deputies. Some victims' family members in the front row hugged each other and one woman clutched a stuffed animal.

During his hearing, Colt Gray, wearing khaki pants and a green shirt, was advised of his rights as well as the charges and penalties he faced for the shooting at the school where he was a student. He was escorted out in shackles at the wrists and ankles.

The judge then called the teen back to the courtroom to correct an earlier misstatement that his crimes could be punishable by death. Because he's a juvenile, the maximum penalty he would face is life without parole.

Shortly afterward, Colin Gray was brought into court dressed in a gray-striped jail uniform. Colin Gray, 54, was charged Thursday in connection with the shooting and answered questions in a barely audible croak, giving his age and saying he finished 11th grade, earning a high school equivalency diploma.

Colin Gray has been charged with involuntary manslaughter and second-degree murder related to the shooting. Arrest warrants said he caused the deaths of others "by providing a firearm to Colt

Gray with knowledge that he was threat to himself and others."

The charges come five months after Michigan parents Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first convicted in a U.S. mass school shooting. They were sentenced to at least 10 years in prison for not securing a firearm at home and acting indifferently to signs of their son's deteriorating mental health before he killed four students in 2021. The Georgia shootings have also renewed debate about

safe storage laws for guns and have parents wondering how to talk to their children about school shootings and trauma.

The hearings for the father and son came as police in the Atlanta suburb of Dunwoody said schools there and nationwide have received threats of violence since the Apalachee High School shooting, police said in a statement. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation also noted that numerous threats have been made to schools across the state this week.

According to arrest warrants obtained by The Associated Press, Colt Gray is accused of using a "black semi-automatic AR-15 style rifle" in the rampage. Authorities have not offered any motive or explained how he obtained the gun or got it into the school.

He was charged as an adult in the deaths of Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14, Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Cristina Irimie, 53. A neighbor remembered Schermerhorn as inquisitive when he was a little boy. Aspinwall and Irimie were both math teachers, and Aspinwall also helped coach the school's football team. Irimie, who immigrated from Romania, volunteered at a local church, where she taught dance.

Additional charges will be filed against Colt Gray, Smith said. When the teenager was taken into custody Wednesday, authorities did not know the identities or conditions of the nine people injured in the attack, so they weren't initially able to file charges related to those, he said.

Colt Gray denied threatening to carry out a school shooting when authorities interviewed him last year about a menacing post on social media, according



AP NEWS
A memorial is seen at Apalachee High School after the Wednesday school shooting, Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024, in Winder, Ga.

to a sheriff's report obtained Thursday. Conflicting evidence on the post's origin left investigators unable to arrest anyone, the report said. Jackson County Sheriff Janis Mangum said she reviewed the report from May 2023 and found nothing that would have justified bringing charges at the time.

The attack was the latest among dozens of school shootings across the U.S. in recent years, including especially deadly ones in Newtown, Connecticut; Parkland, Florida; and Uvalde, Texas. The classroom killings have set off fervent debates about gun control but there has been little change to national gun laws.

It was the 30th mass killing in the U.S. so far this year, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University. At least 127 people have died in those killings, which are defined as events in which four or more people die within a 24-hour period, not including the killer — the same definition used by the FBI.

The cases will be presented to a grand jury, which has its next scheduled meeting Oct. 17, Smith said. Grand jury proceedings are not open to the public or news media. If the grand jury issues indictments for Colt and Colin Gray, they will then be scheduled for arraignment. Colt Gray faces another hearing on Dec. 4.

Martin reported from Atlanta. Associated Press journalists Charlotte Kramon, Sharon Johnson, Mike Stewart and Erik Verduzco in Winder; Trenton Daniel and Beatrice Dupuy in New York; Eric Tucker in Washington; Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia; Kate Brumback in Atlanta; and Mark Thiessen in Anchorage, Alaska, contributed to this report.

Headlines You May Have Missed This Summer:

June

- 6/5:** "SHU Professor Awarded Grant to Research Ancient Greek Municipality"
- 6/18:** "Alums, Students Win Healthcare Information's Research Contest"
- 6/25:** "SHU Students Developing Database for Sikorsky Archives"
- 6/26:** "SHU Students Take Top 10 Spots in Excel Contest"

July

- 7/8:** "SHU's College of Business & Technology Appoints Associate Deans"
- 7/12:** "SHU Management Professor Receives National Recognition"
- 7/23:** "Brad Dancer Named GM of WSHU Public Radio"
- 7/25:** "SHU Hires College of Health Professions Associate Dean"

August

- 8/7:** "Pioneers Present at Media Literacy Symposium in the Azores"
- 8/22:** "Annual Anti-Racism Symposium Highlights Hope"
- 8/26:** "New HR Vice President Hopes to Add and Enhance Programs"
- 8/26:** "Hive Minds"

Features

“Paws and Relax” with Scarlett the Therapy Doodle

BY SARA HASENEY
Assistant Features Editor

The Student Wellness Education and Empowerment Team (S.W.E.E.T) club is hosting their “Paws and Relax” event on Wednesday, Sept. 11. This event is taking place from 12 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. on the third floor of Linda McMahon Commons.

Their “Paws and Relax” event features dogs trained by Therapy Dogs International. All students are invited to come and relieve their stress. Students can go to Linda’s and be comforted by Scarlett the Therapy Doodle.

Junior Olivia Franco, the President of S.W.E.E.T said the therapy dogs accentuate how important it is to take breaks in order to promote positive mental health for students. These events are organized to ease stress surrounding the new academic year.

“We schedule therapy dogs to make regular visits to campus to remind students it’s important to take a purposeful break and that it is normal to struggle with your mental health. Mental Health Awareness is so important because there is such a big stigma around the topic. People think they are so alone in their Mental Health journey but so many people are struggling,” said Franco.

Junior Olivia George, the S.W.E.E.T Stall Street Editor says the therapy dogs make their way to campus frequently throughout the semester.

“S.W.E.E.T hosts our Therapy Dog events at least once a month. Specifically, the dogs and their owners will come around busy times for students such as midterms and finals.

Contributed by Olivia Franco, '26
New logo created by S.W.E.E.T President Olivia Franco
for the therapy dog event.



This allows students to take a break and get away from their academic stressors to take care of themselves and their mind,” said George.

The club’s mission is to create a community within Sacred Heart University where students can go to seek resources, feel empowered, and eliminate the stigma around the struggle with mental health.

“S.W.E.E.T benefits students by not only opening up the conversation around mental health but by also providing opportunities and resources for students to support themselves during their time at college,” said George.

Junior Arianna Whitton, S.W.E.E.T’s Mental Health Initiatives Chair said the presence of the dogs tend to remind students of home and can make students feel more relaxed. This can be helpful for students, especially during exams.

“Seeing the dogs for a lot of people brings people immediate serotonin. We usually host the events in Linda’s, so when people walk up the stairs, they are so much happier after, putting a smile on their face. The dogs also give students a sense of home being around the dogs,” said Whitton.

She said that the club will be active participants during Suicide Prevention Week. S.W.E.E.T will be in attendance at the events promoting mental health awareness, such as the Prevention Walk on September 10.

Whitton explained that S.W.E.E.T. members who were able to attend the walk gave out resource cards and represented the Green Bandana Project.

S.W.E.E.T hosts events throughout the year that students can attend and participate in. They host table times where students can get involved with “The Green Bandana Project.” The Green Bandana Project is a mental health awareness movement where students can get a green bandana to wear on their backpack to serve as a reminder that no one is struggling alone.

Whitton also said that in the upcoming weeks, S.W.E.E.T will be in the academic budlings handing out cards with words of affirmation on them.

S.W.E.E.T is a resource in the Sacred Heart community where students are reminded that they are not alone, and there are people who they can turn to. People can get involved with S.W.E.E.T by attending therapy dog events or following @shu_sweetpeered on Instagram to stay up to date with any upcoming events!

SHU’s Suicide Prevention Week

BY MOIRA STAPLES
Features Editor

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. This is a time dedicated to spreading awareness for mental health issues and remembering the lives lost to silent battles.

According to the University of Michigan, suicide is the second leading cause of death in college students.

To raise awareness, Sacred Heart University’s Alpha Delta Pi (ADPi), Men’s Rugby team, and Student Nursing Association are hosting their annual Suicide Prevention Week.

“This week, all of September, and always means being the smile that someone needs to continue their day,” said ADPi Vice President of Member Development Abby Volpe. “To hold this event on a college campus, I am incredibly sensitive to the fact that anyone of my peers or classmates could very well be struggling right before me.”

Volpe explained that the goal of this week is to remind students of the resources available to them and the community at Sacred Heart that is there to support them. She emphasized that no one should feel like they are alone.

“If any individuals are walking alone during the walk, it is my goal to make it a point to pass by them and just smile, or say hello,” said Volpe. “This simple gesture can be the reason why someone decides to continue on. I walk so that no one else has to walk alone.”

This event is in honor of students Jelyn Lee, Peter DeSalvo, and Ryan Lahiff, who tragically lost their lives to suicide.

Volpe said that this year will be different. Rather than mourning what the SHU community has lost, this will be a “celebration of life” honoring all the good the students did before their passing.

The celebration began with a remembrance mass at the Chapel on Sept. 8 and continued with a Suicide Prevention Walk at Upper Quad on Sept. 10.

“For the Student Nursing Association, this walk is a way to pay tribute to

someone who has had an impact on the community while also promoting a cause that is closely related to the values of nursing,” said Student Nursing Association President Amanda Beberman. “It’s an opportunity to remember and honor Ryan’s legacy while actively contributing to a cause that seeks to promote mental health awareness in the future.”

Along with the walk, the SHU Men’s Rugby team also hosts the annual Peter DeSalvo Memorial Rugby Sevens Tournament in honor of their teammate.

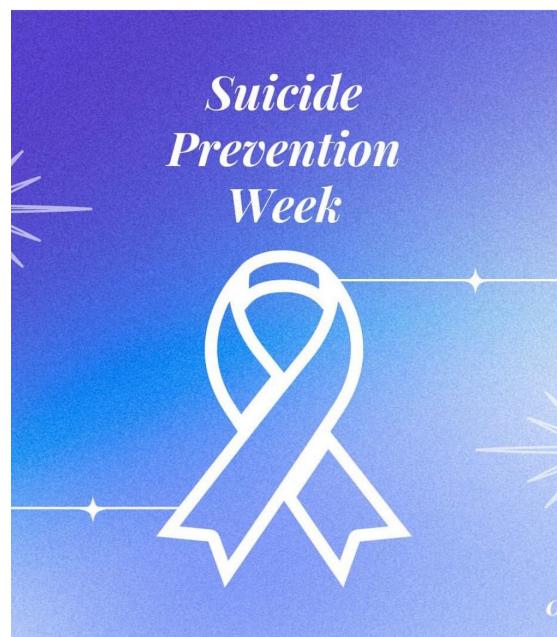
“This is by far the most important thing that the rugby team does,” said President Jeremy Suhr. “These events will touch people’s hearts forever.”

“If you see somebody at the walk that is on their own, I encourage you to join them and start a conversation,” said Suhr.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please contact the SHU Counseling Center at 203-371-7599. A counselor is on call 24/7, even after office hours and on weekends and holidays.

For emergencies, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988.

“Every person on campus needs to know that they are not alone,” said Suhr. “The help is always there. All you have to do is ask for it.”



Instagram, @sacredheart_sna
Suicide Prevention Week promotional post.

For counseling services and support reach out to the university resources:

Counseling Center

Open 9-5 on Weekdays
Walk-Ins Welcome or Make an
Appointment: 203-371-7955

s.w.e.e.t. Peers

Follow the s.w.e.e.t. Peers on Instagram
@shu_sweetpeered and stay updated
on the programs run by their team

Public Safety

Routine Calls: 203-371-7995
Emergency Calls: 203-371-7911
or 203-374-9352

Honoring Audrey Niblo

Audrey's Corner was created in honor of junior Audrey Niblo, a Spectrum staff writer, who passed away from an illness in 2018. In living a life of kindness, positivity and love of animals, Audrey chose to follow a path of joy, even as she was open about the many struggles young people face, including bullying. In articles, creative writing and photography, Spectrum continues to promote the messages of Audrey's life for all students. This year, Audrey's Corner content will appear periodically throughout Spectrum's editions, representing the themes that connect its messages to campus life, news, sports, features, and arts and entertainment. If you would like to contribute your ideas or provide content, please contact Spectrum at spectrum@sacredheart.edu.



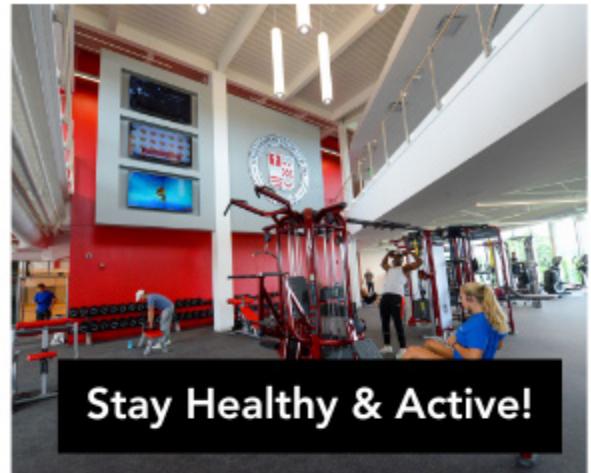
Get Adjusted! 9 Tips for Freshman



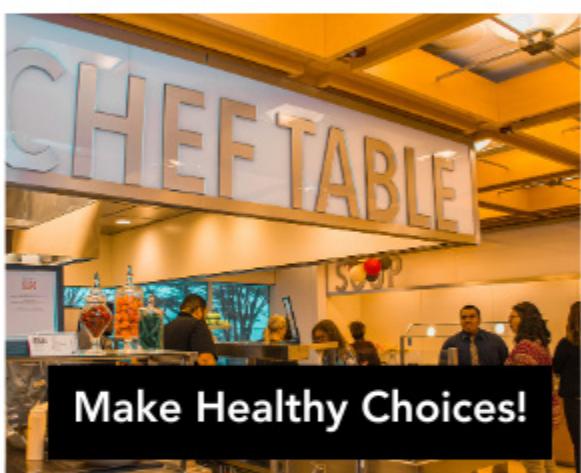
Create a Budget to Stick with!



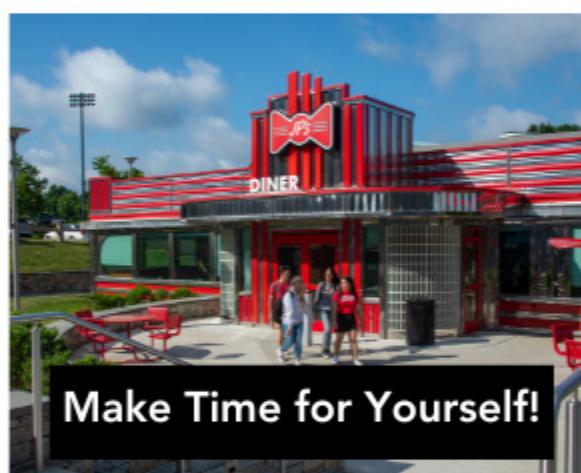
Get to know your Professors & Advisors!



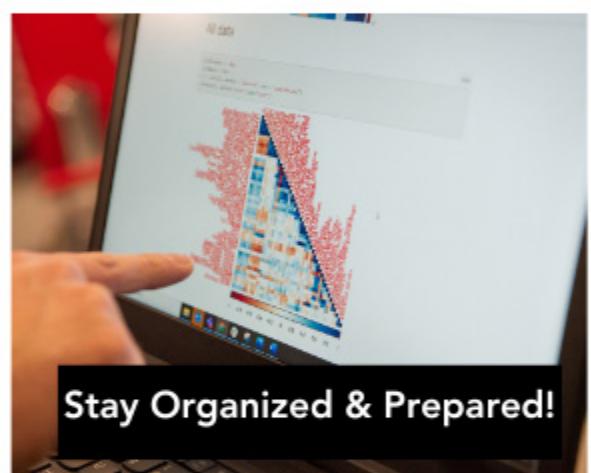
Stay Healthy & Active!



Make Healthy Choices!



Make Time for Yourself!



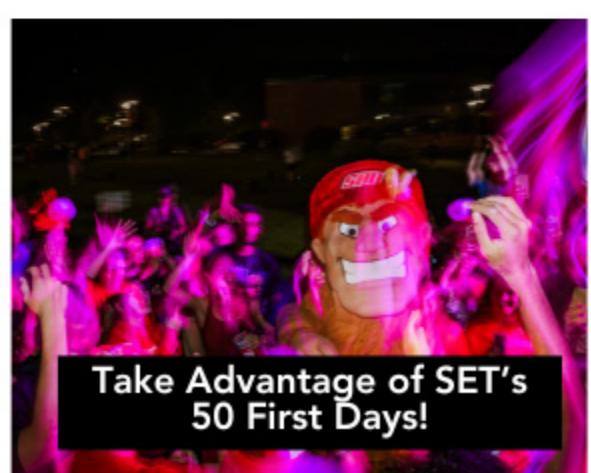
Stay Organized & Prepared!



Don't Procrastinate Deadlines!



Get Involved on Campus!



Take Advantage of SET's 50 First Days!



Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

Campus Life

Hydration with Heart: *The Rise of Emotional Support Water Bottles*

BY EMMA RICOTTA

Assistant Campus Life Editor

From “VSCO girls” popularizing the Hydroflask to the Stanley Cup and Owala blowing up on TikTok, reusable water bottles have been a true sensation to the public.

Reusable water bottles have many benefits, including the reduction of plastic water bottle usage, as well as being a reminder to drink water. However, should people be replacing their therapists with their reusable water bottle?

The emotional support water bottle trend can be traced back from TikTok where users started posting videos of themselves using their bottles as a way to comfort themselves.

Senior Ashlyn Spinelli is known by her friends for always carrying around her emotional support water bottle. “Carrying my water bottle has become such a routine. It’s just something that I always have with me, which at times is a comforting sense of stability,” said Spinelli.

According to CNN Health, it is proven that a sense of anxiety occurs if people

are theirs at home or lose them.

Senior Katie Plitt says that she feels nervous if she ever forgets her water bottle at home. “If I don’t have my Stanley, I will not drink enough water, but if I do have it with me, I know that I will be hydrated,” said Plitt.

For many people, the act of carrying a water bottle around can connect to their emotions and their mental health.

“Honestly, if I forget my water bottle at home, I know it’s going to be a bad day,” said Spinelli. “It’s become such a big part of my life, and it is so weird to think that I have a bad day just because I leave a water bottle at home, but it’s true.”

While water bottles may not replace the emotional support of a therapist, it is proven that they benefit one’s well-being. Next time you’re walking around campus and see students grasping onto their water bottles, remember that it is not just about staying hydrated, it’s also about finding comfort.

Emma Ricotta, Campus Life Editor

Senior Ashlyn Spinelli with her Owala water bottle.

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Arts & Entertainment

TAP Takes “Reject Me Already” to Edinburgh

BY BELLA GENERAZO

Assistant Arts & Entertainment Editor

This past summer, Sacred Heart University’s Theatre Arts Program (TAP) took on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where the original musical written by alumnus Paul Richard Keegan, “Reject Me Already” (RMA) was performed. The team landed in Scotland on July 31 and performed 21 times.

The performances ran from Aug. 2 until Aug. 24, and they only had two days off throughout the run. They performed each night at the Greenside Venues. Each night, the people in the cast would play a different role, and the audience would decide who played which part.

Junior Katie McCabe was the props designer for the show, and she worked with the cast and crew during the summer, leading up to the cast’s departure to Scotland.

“I loved working with this team. I was lucky to already know everyone I worked with, making it easy to communicate with them,” said McCabe.

McCabe produced about 40 props for the show, and had to find things like flip phones, a record player and shopping baskets. She said, “I had to find a polaroid camera, with working film, since a scene in the show required a photo to be taken on the spot.”

McCabe was excited to see how the production had grown since its initial iteration. “I have loved ‘Reject Me Already’ since we first performed it in 2023, and the changes that were made in this version made me love it even more,” said McCabe. “I was so interested in seeing how our playwright worked and adjusted the show as we continued to run it.”

Junior Sage Sperling was an actor in the production and had to learn



Instagram, @rejectmemusical

The cast of the new musical, “Reject Me, Already”. (Left to right) Chris Conte, Sage Sperling, Grace Peknic, Sean Ryan, Colleen Degenaro, and Nick Rubano.

many different parts alongside their peers. “I think the best part of this production is how hands-on it was, at least for me. I enjoyed putting in all of the work that I did, not only as an actor, but designing costumes as well,” said Sperling.

Once they got to Edinburgh, they spent many days advertising their show and getting people to show up for their performances.

“Personally, what I liked more about the Scotland audience was that they didn’t know us, and they weren’t afraid to make the couples and characters what one in the US would traditionally want,” said Sperling. “In Scotland, they simply didn’t care. If your intro was funny and you flirted with the audience enough, get ready because you’re Casey or Cameron that night.”

Getting to play multiple different characters was something the cast had to adjust to, but they enjoyed the experience. “I tried to stay neutral during performances of course, however I’d have to say that my favorite character to play was actually Cameron,” said Sperling. They didn’t get to play that role in Scotland, but they felt it was great to live in that nerdy, shy world again just for a moment, as they felt personally connected to the role.

Senior Grace Peknic, a fellow member of the RMA cast, said, “The best part of this experience was doing what I love alongside my best friends who I love and admire so much.”

The Fringe Festival allowed her to make new connections, along with enhancing old ones.

“I made a really great connection with a fellow Greenside performer, whose show was immediately after ours,” said Peknic. “Everyone at the Fringe shares a very special bond. It’s truly the Olympics of Theatre. We are all performing and marketing our show every day during the Festival.”

“The lesson of the show is that everyone deserves a picture perfect romance. The Fringe only solidified that I take with me every lesson I have learned through Sacred Heart and TAP,” said Peknic.



Instagram, @rejectmemusical

Promotional poster for “Reject Me, Already” by Alumni Paul Richard Keegan.

50 First Days of Arts & Entertainment

BY JESSICA BALOGH

Arts & Entertainment Editor

Sacred Heart University’s (SHU) annual First 50 Days event series kickstarted on Sunday, Aug. 25 to welcome first-year students into campus life. According to SHU’s website, these campus-wide programs are aimed at making new students feel at home and provide an opportunity to meet other students, faculty and staff. There is a wide range of activities to get involved in whether social, academic or athletic, but for those looking for more artistic endeavors, there are several events to look out for.

The First Year Experience (FYE) is a continuation of the New Student Orientation, supporting the transition of first-year students into college life and providing them with the resources they need. The FYE team coordinates a range of events to get involved with throughout the First 50 Days.

“It’s a way to get them involved with the campus life early on, I think it’s especially important to give them these kinds of outlets and resources from the beginning because it’s this time they are learning to adjust,” said senior Julia Fernandez, FYE Co-Coordinator.

Fernandez, who is an art student, wanted to incorporate different artistic elements and creative ideas into the FYE events. “Art at the Heart,” an event that is taking place on Thursday, Sept. 12, is one that she worked closely on.

From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the 63’s lawn, students can paint a mural together. The FYE assistants there will be keeping track of what residence halls first-year students are coming from and whichever one has the most participation will have the mural hung up in their building.

“I don’t think we’ve done something like this before. Actually having the students come to this and have some pay-off by getting to walk through their dorm hall and knowing that they were a part of that and met people through it,” said Fernandez.

The Theatre Arts Program also has several events during the First 50 Days such as writing workshops and coffeehouses, but one that has many opportunities to get involved with is improv.

“The improv shows are hour-long fun events we have every month for people to come and watch. Every week, however, we have rehearsals where we work on our craft and get ready for the next shows,” said senior Joe Dunn, Improv Chair.

At rehearsals, there are three opportunities to perform giving everyone a chance to do a scene and get involved. According to Dunn, improv is very community-driven and a great way to meet new people as there is always a rotation of participants at rehearsals.

“If not involved already, it’s never too late to be doing improv. We love seeing new faces and giving people chances to perform. We meet Tuesday 9:30 p.m. - 11 p.m., and Wednesday-Thursday 8 p.m. - 9:30 p.m., all in HC 103,” said Dunn.

Crochet for a Cause, which began in the spring of 2024, is new to the First 50 Days. The club is open to all students, no matter their knowledge of crochet.

Their first 50 Days Event “Crochet-Along,” is on Sept. 12 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in HC 105. Participants will be given yarn and hooks to be taught how to make little bookmarks.

“It’s a small simple project that also includes a lot of the basics of crocheting so once you get down the first like few stitches you can pretty much do anything,” said senior Erin Edgar, President of Crochet for a Cause.

“It’s definitely a very unique club and I think it offers something that not a lot of clubs offer, it’s very relaxing and it has just good vibes. When you walk into the room everybody’s always so positive and excited,” said Edgar.

The First 50 Days, while aimed towards first-year students, are open to all students regardless of class year.

“These events keep things fresh, and you never know who you can meet. We have the luxury of being at a school that’s such a good size, there’s always opportunities to meet new people and you never know what kind of connections that you’ll make until you put yourself out there,” said Fernandez.

Sports

Women's Volleyball Hits the UConn Court

BY MARISA MUSACCIO
Co-Sports Editor

In their inaugural season in the Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC), Sacred Heart University's women's volleyball started off their season with a record of 3-3.

Despite the team's start, Head Coach Rob Machan is confident his team can be contenders with their new conference competitors.

According to Machan, "We're a pretty good team, we should be one of the stronger teams in the MAAC. The excitement is the new locations and facing teams we've never played before."



Mark F. Conrad, Sacred Heart University

Senior Camryn Luginbuhl
preparing for the upcoming
volleyball season.

The Pioneers began the 2024 season at the University of Connecticut's (UConn) invitational, capturing two out of three victories.

Machan and his Pioneers are optimistic for the future as first-year Miliani Villareal earned Libero of the Week and Rookie of the Week for her performance at UConn.

"She's an outstanding player," said Machan. "She's come in and embraced the challenge, that was her first collegiate match she ever played in and performed well the whole weekend."

The prospect of their newly decorated first-year isn't the only cause for excitement. The new renovations to the William Pitt Center, the home of the Pioneers, has attached a great deal of anticipation to this season.

Senior Camryn Luginbuhl is looking forward to taking advantage of the team's new home for her senior year season.

"For my senior year, I'm really excited to have stadium style seating, it's going to draw a lot of attention and a lot of people are going to

come and support us," said Luginbuhl. "I'm really excited for the environment it's going to create."

Senior Cristina Montanez said she has seen a lot of development in the Sacred Heart athletics department during her time at the university.

"I have seen this university grow so much since I was a freshman, and I am so glad that we have such a strong community of student-athletes," said Montanez.

"It is exciting to have the opportunity to play in the upcoming Pitt Center. Every athlete dreams of playing on a home court with a big crowd filled with friends and family cheering for them," said Montanez. "Since the addition of the Martire Family Arena, those of us who play at the Pitt are very excited to play in an environment like that one."

Coach Machan, who has been at the helm of Pioneers women's volleyball for seventeen years, is also highly anticipating the new renovations to the Pitt.

"This is going to be like the hockey arena, it's going to be an event in itself," said Machan. "It's going to be a place that you'll just want to go and support teams."

"I couldn't have guessed this in a million years," said Machan. "I feel so happy and blessed to be a part of this growth."

In addition to the growth and excitement surrounding SHU athletics, the women's volleyball team strives for greater success in their first season in the MAAC, as they were projected to finish third overall in the conference preseason poll.

"Being picked third in the preseason poll in our first year of being in the MAAC is nice, but we want to accomplish more," said Montanez. "Winning and execution will come when we stick to our game plan."

Machan believes his team is special and has the ability to succeed this season.

"This group specifically is one of the closest knit groups I've had, and I've been doing this for a long time," said Machan. "They want to have success and they work together, it's a unique thing they have and I think it's a recipe for success."

Machan and his Pioneers take the court next on Friday, Sept. 13 against Bryant University at West Point.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.

Pickleball's Campus Takeover

BY SHANNON TUTTLE
Co-Sports Editor

A new facility and club sports team are making their way to Sacred Heart University's campus this fall. Say hello to club pickleball and its soon-to-be courts!

Located next to Seton Hall and the SHUPAD Package Lockers, three pickleball courts are under construction and projected to be completed by Oct. 1.

"From 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., those courts will be open and free for anyone to use," said Ashely Lane, Director of Club Sports and Intramurals.

The new pickleball courts will feature an enclosing fence and timed lights for play to continue into the night. A free renting system with campus concierge is also underway for students, faculty and staff to take out paddles and balls for recreational purposes.

"In my hometown, I have to drive to the pickleball courts, so I'm excited for these to be accessible and brand new courts," said freshman Gianna Schembari.

The responsibility and maintenance of the courts falls under Lane and the club sports office, however, the original idea for its addition to campus was Denise Tiberio, Dean of Students.

"She thought students would love it," said Lane. "So we surveyed the campus to find where we can put them."

The official plans were set and construction soon followed for SHU's first pickleball courts. Tiberio wanted to capitalize on this opportunity and asked Lane about another addition to the university, a club pickleball team.

Registration for the new team opened with the school year. Around 20 students have signed up to be members of SHU's first pickleball team, including Freshman Ryan LaMania.

"I'm so excited," said LaMania. "It's perfect because the people that want to take it seriously will, but if you're just there to have fun, which is what most people are doing, you can't really be mad at them."

Currently, Lane is overseeing the team as they practice on Thursday from 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. at the Bobby Valentine Health and Recreation Center. Once the pickleball courts are finished, the team will move the practices to their new home two or three times a week.

As of now, the only other college in the area with a club pickleball is the University of Connecticut, who Lane plans on scheduling a tournament with in the spring.

"I hope more schools adopt the idea of pickleball so we can get it more popularized," said Lane.

For now, club pickleball is more of a recreational sport. LaMania describes it as "more relaxed," given there are no games scheduled for the fall and practice is only once a week.

"I like playing in games, but I also don't want it to be so serious where I have to practice every single day of the week," said LaMania.

Free registration for the team is still open and welcome to a wide skill range of players. To join, go to the club sports website under "Current SHU Students." Once the medical paperwork gets clear, players will be ready to take to the court!

SHU Football Starts Independent Season

BY JOHN HEINZE
Assistant Sports Editor

The Sacred Heart University (SHU) football team began its 2024 campaign with a loss against Delaware State University, falling short 17-15. This game was the first of a new chapter in which SHU football will compete as an independent program.

"Our focus is one game at a time but let's try and win as many as possible because we could have a shot at getting an at-large bid to the FCS [Football Championship Subdivision] playoffs," said head coach Mark Nofri.

Only 14 teams across the country get an at-large bid to the FCS playoffs. These 14 teams are selected by an FCS playoff committee. Despite the added pressure of competing independently, the players remain confident.

"If I'm being honest, I don't think anything really changed," said Tyreke Brown, a graduate student. "I feel as though everybody has the same mindset and everybody has the same mission. I think we all want to win at the end of the day, and I think regardless of if we were in a conference, the end goal would be winning to get to the playoffs."

Brown helped lead a strong defense in their opener, contributing a sack and a tackle for loss. The biggest issue week one was on the other side of the ball, specifically in the red zone.

"We saw a lot of positive things in terms of the kids playing hard, they played the whole 60 minutes, and they didn't quit when they got down in the fourth quarter. I think they have great attitudes; they pull for one another, and again we moved the ball up down the field," said Nofri. "When we got into the red zone, we need to cash in a little bit more with touchdowns instead of field goals, and I think it's a different outcome."

There is reason to believe the offense will break through in the coming games, largely in part to the veteran running back tandem with graduate student Jalen Madison and senior Xavier Leigh. Madison rushed the ball 11 times and accumulated 54 yards,

while Leigh added 91 yards on 14 attempts and scored the lone Sacred Heart touchdown.

"We have a great relationship. I feel like we're a great one-two punch because we both do things a little bit different, he's obviously way faster than I am and I can really run the ball between the tackles, so I feel like we complement each other well," said Madison.

Having veteran leaders on this team will be a crucial factor as the younger pieces develop.

John Michalski is starting games at quarterback this year and is just a sophomore. Prior to the week one matchup, he had never thrown a pass at the collegiate level.

"We have a new quarterback, so I really think you know just him getting comfortable building confidence and I think once he does that we'll be good," said Madison.

Coach Nofri also displayed his confidence in the young quarterback.

"Do what coach [Kevin] Duke and coach [Matt] Gardner are telling you to do, don't try to do too much, and make the big play. You're a good player, we know you're a good player, trust your reads, trust what they're teaching you and they're giving you and take what they're giving you," said Nofri.

In a season of moving pieces and new beginnings, SHU football will look to right the ship in the coming weeks. SHU's next game is Sept. 14 at home against Georgetown.

Sacred Heart Athletics contributed to this article.



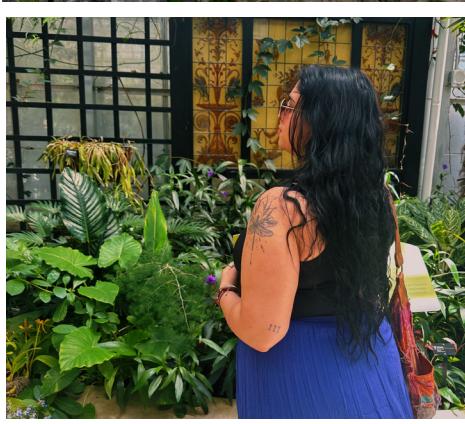
Instagram, @shufb_

Photo of Senior Matt Kling during Sacred Heart's win over St. Anselm on Saturday.

The Sacred Heart Spectrum

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