

# SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE

*ESTABLISHED 1994*



## 29TH ANNUAL SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET

MARCH 27, 2023

ANTHONY OCEAN'S VIEW – NEW HAVEN

**MEMBER SCHOOLS:** Amity Regional, Branford, Hill Regional Career Magnet, Cheshire, Daniel Hand, East Haven, Fairfield Prep, Joseph A. Foran, Guilford, Hamden, Hillhouse, Jonathan Law, Luralton Hall, Lyman Hall, Mercy, North Haven, Notre Dame, Sacred Heart Academy, Sheehan, Shelton, West Haven, Wilbur Cross, Xavier

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**[WWW.SOUTHERNCONNECTICUTCONFERENCE.ORG](http://WWW.SOUTHERNCONNECTICUTCONFERENCE.ORG)**

# WELCOME

Welcome to the 2023 Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Leader recognition banquet – the 29th hosted by the league.

This evening, we recognize forty-six impressive young people who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship and leadership in their respective school and external communities.

On behalf of the SCC, congratulations to the recipients and their families and best of luck in their future endeavors.

## 2022-23 SCC SCHOLAR LEADERS

**AMITY REGIONAL** – Francis Cavallaro, Aadya Wijesekera

**BRANFORD** – Lauren McCarthy, Kevin Zuniga

**HILL REGIONAL CAREER** – Sarah Murray, Kailey Bonilla

**CHESHIRE** – Anna Pociu, Asya Tarabar

**DANIEL HAND** – Matthew Xu, Julia Coric

**EAST HAVEN** – Amelia Westfall, Jason Toth

**FAIRFIELD PREP** – Matthew Mancini, Sebastian Rodriguez

**JOSEPH A. FORAN** – Mallory Janik, Liam Young

**GUILFORD** – Zachary Neiss, Riley Mullett

**HAMDEN** – Ella Powers, Jacob Venditto

**JAMES HILLHOUSE** – Elsa Holahan, Damarley Barrett

**JONATHAN LAW** – Caroline Doyle, John Neider

**LURALTON HALL** – Grace Polatsek, Alexandra Miller

**LYMAN HALL** – Hannah Tuxbury, Khang Diep

**MERCY** – Shannon Arsenault, Isabella Lee-Baldassini

**NORTH HAVEN** – Victoria Pachnik, Hunter Pageau

**NOTRE DAME** – Kyle Grande, James Lowman

**SACRED HEART ACADEMY** – Maeve McConnell, Yaritza Zecua-Herrera

**MARK T. SHEEHAN** – Nele Koepfer, Kieran Lu

**SHELTON** – Kaitlyn Bergers, Adam Sobh

**WEST HAVEN** – Sebastian Navarro, Maya Bermudez

**WILBUR CROSS** – Roselyn Nahuatlato, Young In Kim

**XAVIER** – Brendan Peary, Vincent Salamone

\* RECIPIENT BIO INFORMATION WAS COMPILED BY EACH SCHOOL'S PRINCIPAL.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 3**

## **AMITY REGIONAL**

*Andre Hauser, Principal*

### **FRANCIS CAVALLARO**

An outstanding leader in the Amity Regional community... Francis is a three-sport varsity athlete including cross country, basketball, and boys volleyball... 2022 SCC winter sports scholar-athlete... serves as President of the Amity Regional Student Government Executive Board... a member of the Senior Class Council... a semifinalist in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program... a member of the Orange Youth Services Advisory Committee.

### **AADYA WIJESKERA**

An outstanding student athlete and leader in the Amity Regional community... She is a talented tennis player and plays number-one doubles player... She earned All-SCC honors in 2022 and has been a member of two SCC team championships and two Class LL state runner-up teams... received National Merit Commended Scholars recognition ... was a presenter at the 59th annual Connecticut Junior Science and Humanities Symposium... writes for The Amity, the school's newspaper.

## **BRANFORD**

*Lee Panagoulis, Principal*

### **LAUREN MCCARTHY**

Captain of the Branford Field Hockey Team, Girls Basketball manager, member of the Young Women's Club, Secretary of the National Honor Society, World-Language National Honor Society, SCC Scholar Athlete for Fall 2022, All-SCC Player for Branford Field Hockey and led the team to the Class M state championship this past fall.

### **KEVIN ZUNIGA**

National Honor Society, French Honor Society, College National Hispanic Recognition Program, CT Bilingual Seal in Spanish and French, AP Scholar, Philip Delise Award (Top of class) in grade 10, Yale Book Award in grade 11, Jae S, Lim Book Award in Grade 11, Varsity Soccer, Varsity Indoor Track.

## **HILL REGIONAL CAREER**

*Shawn True, Principal*

### **SARAH MURRAY**

Sarah is one of the most committed, determined, and well-rounded students at Career High School. Her curiosity and passion for learning has led Sarah to explore all that Career has to offer. Sarah is currently ranked number 4 in the class with a 4.5 GPA, and is a two-sport athlete competing in both Indoor and Outdoor track. Sarah was also named Captain of both sports her senior year. Sarah is currently in all advanced placement classes and is the class of 2023 school historian. In Sarah's down time she contributes to the betterment of her community by volunteering at local track meets and helping support her Churches youth group.

# 2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 4

## **KAILEY BONILLA**

Since entering Career her sophomore year Kailey has excelled both academically and athletically. Kailey is currently ranked number 25 in the class with a 3.7 GPA. Kailey has demonstrated the ability to lead others towards a common goal and that was the reason she was named captain of the Softball team her Junior and Senior year. Kailey is bright, well rounded and dedicated to her academics. Kailey is a member of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and completed her Senior Capstone with a very successful American Red Cross Blood Drive at Career. Kailey has been named to the SCC softball second team her Sophomore and Junior year and has won SCC Scholar Athlete of the month in the past.

## **CHESHIRE**

*Mary Gadd, Principal*

## **ANNA POCIU**

Anna consistently demonstrates strong leadership and initiative, and she consistently demonstrates these skills as the President of the National Honor Society. She is an officer in the Model UN club and the editor of the school newspaper. Anna is highly involved in extracurricular activities and she is a scholar. She won a National German Exam Scholarship and traveled to Germany to participate in an immersive experience. Earning that scholarship was a feat in and of itself as the final test took 10 hours over 3 days! Having that rare quality of loving to learn, Anna never just goes through the motions - she dives in and is truly invested in everything she does. She is an outstanding student and contributes her talents to enrich our high school community.

## **ASYA TARABAR**

Asya is a brilliant yet humble student with a wonderful sense of humor. When Cheshire High School was unable to offer a math course to meet her academic rigor after she completed AP Calculus during her sophomore year, Asya continued to challenge herself by taking the newly developed Manufacturing courses. Not only is Asya intellectually gifted, she is also extremely active in school leadership and service. Asya demonstrates strong leadership skills at school, having been elected President of her Class for three years, she also is highly independent. She planned an entirely student-led rally for 5th District Representative Jahana Hayes and Senator Richard Blumenthal. Asya takes full advantage of any experience that will help her grow; she simply loves to learn. Asya connects with classmates and adults alike, and she stands out as a leader.

## **DANIEL HAND**

*Anthony Salutari, Principal*

## **MATTHEW XU**

Goal-oriented, compassionate, mature, well-rounded, and empathetic are just a few of the adjectives that come to mind when describing Matthew. His drive to challenge himself coupled with a never give up attitude have resulted in incredible success throughout his high school years. Matthew is the Captain of the Debate Team, Eco Club, Model UN, Math Team and Captain and Founder of our Chess Club. He is also a member of our indoor track team. His involvement outside of the classroom includes internship and volunteer experience including; software engineering, cancer research, and time at a local Nature Center. Matthew is a valued and active member within and beyond our school community fully committed to embracing challenges to create the very best version of himself.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 5**

## **JULIA CORIC**

Julia is an impressive young person who has excelled academically and athletically. Her ability to excel in the most rigorous courses while balancing the demands of being a high-performing student-athlete are due to her tenacity, dedication, and commitment to her goals. Julia's body of work resulted in her induction into the National Honor Society and she has received numerous academic awards. She is a major contributor to our school's indoor and outdoor track teams including being named Captain during senior year. She is also a member of multiple clubs: She's the First, Girls Who Code, and the co-founder of our Chemistry Club. Julia's leadership, compassion for others, and dedication to her school, and her goals, are nothing short of outstanding.

## **EAST HAVEN**

*Vincent DeNuzzo, Principal*

## **AMELIA WESTFALL**

Amelia is one of the brightest, most well-rounded students we have at East Haven High School. She has been an exemplary student and is a role model within our school community. Amelia is a decorated student and has been recognized for her academic success by earning a variety of awards for excellence, such as the Yale Book Award, the Gettysburg College Book Award, the University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Leadership Award and she participated in the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership program. Amelia has been very active in the school community, where she has been a member of the Leadership Council, the Debate Club, Health Occupations Students of America, and has served as a Class Officer. Amelia has written a book and is in the process of querying her novel to literary agents.

## **JASON TOTH**

Jason is the epitome of a scholar leader. An accomplished athlete, Jason more importantly makes his academic performance a priority. Over the course of his time at EHHS, Jason has challenged himself with a variety of Advanced Placement courses and challenging electives and has excelled academically. He has been recognized by the Southern Connecticut Conference as a Scholar-Athlete. As a student-athlete at EHHS, Jason has been a member of the Track and Field team, a member of the Football team and a member of the Wrestling team. For his leadership, Jason earned the role of captain of the football team during his Senior season and the role of captain of the Wrestling team during both his Junior and Senior seasons. Jason volunteers his time with the East Haven Youth Wrestling program, where he teaches the sport he loves to the youth of our community.

## **FAIRFIELD PREP**

*Timothy Dee, Principal*

## **MATTHEW MANCINI**

During his time at Fairfield Prep, Matthew has served as the Co-President of Habitat for Humanity, a member of our Ethics Bowl Team, and was the founder of a student run podcast title No Preparation. Matthew served Prep's Campus Ministry Department as a Freshman Retreat, Appalachia Immersion Trip and Kairos Retreat leader. On the field, Matthew was a contributing member of the Varsity Soccer Team. In the classroom, Matthew has been a leader, earning over a 4.0GPA and challenging himself with AP level courses across the sciences, humanities, and arts. Matthew's confident and giving nature has made him a true servant leader for the Fairfield Prep community.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 6**

## **SEBASTIAN RODRIGUEZ**

During his time at Fairfield Prep, Sebastian has served as the student leader for Fairfield Prep's Sikor-sky Club and Robotics Club. Sebastian was a Counselor at Fairfield Prep's first Innovation Camp last summer, where he taught middle school students for two weeks and led them through design challenges. He has been a member of the Jazz Band for four years and has performed at Prep and in the greater Fairfield community. Sebastian has been a member of the wrestling team for four years and is currently serving as the Captain this year. In the classroom, Sebastian has over a 4.0GPA and has exhibited excellence in the classroom across the arts, sciences, and humanities.

## **JOSEPH A. FORAN**

*Max Berkowitz, Principal*

## **MALLORY JANIK**

Mallory has been an exceptional student, ranking in the top ten of her class and earning the distinction of AP Scholar and SCC All Academic Team. She is a member of the National Honor Society and has been the recipient of numerous awards for academic excellence and community engagement such as the Brandeis Book Award and the Society of Women Engineers Award. Mallory has been a key member of the Cheerleading and Lacrosse Teams in all 4 years of high school and due to her strong leadership and respect from teammates and coaches, she was selected Captain of both. Additionally, she has shown strong leadership in the school and community as Vice President of her class in her junior and senior years, as a member of various clubs and organizations such as the Sound Lions Club, which focuses on environmental issues, and through numerous volunteer experiences where she dedicated her time as a Pop Warner Assistant Cheerleading Coach organizing fundraisers for the American Heart Association as well as the Children's Medical Center, Get in Touch Foundation for Breast Cancer Awareness, and Alex's Lemonade Stand for Childhood Cancer. Her compassion and dedication to helping others, along with her commitment to many hours of volunteerism will result in her earning the designation of Graduation with Distinction.

## **LIAM YOUNG**

Liam Young is an outstanding student who always brings a positive attitude to all of his endeavors. His extremely strong work ethic, dedication to learning, and desire to challenge himself has resulted in Liam achieving at an extremely high level throughout high school. He is ranked in the top ten of his class, has been recognized with numerous awards for academic excellence, earned the designation of AP Scholar, and is a member of the National Honor Society and Math Honors Society. Liam is respected by others for his humble and strong leadership at school and his care and compassion for others. He was selected as Captain of three teams - Soccer, Basketball, and Lacrosse - and is a phenomenal teammate who always leads by example. Additionally, Liam is a kind person who has volunteered many hours with his church and participated on a mission trip in Ohio, where he helped people repair their homes. Liam's commitment and dedication to those in need through community service will result in him earning the designation of Graduation with Distinction.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 7**

## **GUILFORD**

*Julia Chaffe, Principal*

### **ZACHARY NEISS**

In addition to being an outstanding student, Zachary is the team captain for our Science Olympiad team, and he has been an active participant in the Apple Pi Robotics team and National Honor Society. He has served the school as a peer tutor, earned his Eagle Scout in his freshman year, and has played the violin for ten years. He is particularly proud of his volunteer work this past summer at Yale New Haven Hospital. He has been instrumental in bringing a revitalized focus and success to our participation in the Connecticut Science Fair. In 11th grade for the science fair he presented his research entitled, "Understanding Attention Span: The Changes, How It Can be Manipulated, and its Importance Today." And in 12th grade, he presented "Sounds of Change: Music Therapy's Effect on Apathy in Parkinson's Disease Patients."

### **RILEY MULLETT**

Riley is an outstanding student, Captain of the Tennis Team, and a Captain of the Volleyball Team. By building positive team relationships on the Tennis team, Riley helped her teammates work together to advance to the SCC final this year and then go on to win states for the first time in GHS history. She has been a member of the Student Leadership Congress and participated in the Connecticut HOBY Leadership Conference. She has served as student class officer in your Junior and Senior years. She is especially proud of planning, initiating, and launching the peer tutoring program that provides tutors for middle school students. The peer tutoring program has grown to 22 tutoring pairs and has provided over 100 hours tutoring for students in middle school.

## **HAMDEN**

*Nadine Gannon, Principal*

### **ELLA POWERS**

Ella is an exceptional scholar who has demonstrated outstanding leadership to the school community. Her scholastic diligence has earned her the Smith College Book Award, SCC All-Academic Team and Superintendent Student of the Month. She has consistently achieved High Honors and is a member of the National Honor Society, Interact Club, Pride Club and Unified Friends Club. Ella is the President of the HHS Ski and Snowboard Club and the Co-President of the ECO Club. She, along with the ECO Club, led the campaign to obtain the Regional Water Authority Grant for the installation of a water bottle filling station to reduce the use of disposable plastic bottles within our school community. Ella has been a member of the Girls Soccer team for four years and has been the Captain of the Girls Tennis team for the past two years.

### **JACOB VENDITTO**

Jacob is an extraordinary scholar and student leader. He has consistently achieved high honors throughout his four years at Hamden High School and has been an integral member of the Hamden High School Soccer team. Jacob has proven his commitment to both his education and his athletics. He has received numerous accolades that include the Xerox Award, SCC All-Academic Team and National Hispanic Recognition Program. In addition, Jacob has participated in over 200 hours of volunteer service with his local church and worked as a referee for the Youth Soccer League, demonstrating his ability to serve both his school and community. At the same time, Jacob has maintained employment at the UPS store, working 20 hours per week to not only take care of his monthly expenses, but also save for his future. Jacob has truly exemplified the Hamden spirit of leadership through his pursuit of academic excellence, passion for community service, and desire to be self-sufficient.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 8**

## **JAMES HILLHOUSE**

*Mark Sweeting, Principal*

### **ELSA HOLAHAN**

Elsa has long been interested and involved in community organizing and advocacy efforts. In 2020, Elsa became a Youth Director on the Dixwell Q House Advisory Board and has since devoted her position to being a representative of the voices of New Haven's young people, and creating opportunities for intergenerational collaboration. Elsa has also dedicated much of her high school career to the advancement of racial and educational justice in the New Haven Public School district. She is an active participant in the grassroots organizing that demands for the investment in student wellness within our schools. Elsa is currently co-organizing an 'Intergenerational Abolition Project' aiming to study and discuss abolitionist praxis in New Haven Public Schools and the broader city itself.

### **DAMARLEY BARRETT**

Damarley has been a 4 year member of the James Hillhouse High School Junior ROTC Program. He currently is the highest ranking cadet at Hillhouse High School. In addition to his leadership with the JROTC, Damarley has logged over 200 hours of community service. He is a member of the National Honor Society, peer leader, and ranks in the top 5 of the class of 2023.

## **JONATHAN LAW**

*Bryan Darcy, Principal*

### **CAROLINE DOYLE**

Caroline Doyle is an Honors Student at Law who has taken a number of AP courses during her years including; Government and Politics, Language and Composition, European History, Seminar, Macroeconomics, Literature and Psychology. She is also the District Governor of the Keyclub in New England where she is our President and runs many events for the community. Caroline is also the captain of the Girls Tennis Team where she has received an SCC award for being a #1 Doubles Player, a Member of the National Honor Society, the National Math Honor Society and is the Social Media Manager of our SAVE Promise Club. Caroline has also gone well beyond 150 hours of community service while supporting the Milford Community at a local and state level.

### **JOHN NEIDER**

John Neider is a natural born leader. Athletically John has been An All-SCC Baseball, Basketball and Football Player while also serving as Team Captain. On the football field John is a two-time All-State Selection and this year was named the CT Coaches Association Player of the Year and the Gatorade Player of the Year. His leadership is seen throughout our hallways and in our community. John has volunteered his time with Pop Warner Football, youth baseball and basketball games showing leadership to our youth and having an impact on their lives. He has also worked with organizations to raise funding for Cancer Research and finds time to go to Elementary schools to read to students. John also excels in the classroom as an Honors Students while taking AP courses.



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## LAURALTON HALL

*Elizabeth Miller, Head of School*

### **GRACE POLATSEK**

Grace has held multiple leadership positions throughout her time at Lauralton Hall; most recently as Co-President of the National Honor Society, Co-President of Book Club, Cabinet Member of Engineering Team, and Cabinet Member of Latin Club. She is an active member of the Latin Honor Society and the Stock Market Club. Grace volunteers with the Only You Foundation and at her local public library to share her love for reading. She is often visible in her community helping those around me and always looking to lend a hand.

### **ALEXANDRA MILLER**

Alexandra's main leadership roles are Co-President of Latin Club, President of Stock Market Club, Cabinet Member of National Honor Society, and Lauralton Hall Peer Mentor. She also has participated in Latin Honor Society, Jazz Band, Milford United Percussion, the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Bridgeport, and the National Student Leadership Conference for Biotechnology. In addition to these, Alexandra received the Yale Book Award, American Citizenship Award, Excellence in Latin, Excellence in Mathematics, and CAS Outstanding Arts Award for Performing Arts. She held a leadership position working at Gold Rush Farm and was asked to judge the science competition at Davis Academy for Arts and Design Innovation Interdistrict Magnet School.

## LYMAN HALL

*Joseph Corso, Principal*

### **HANNAH TUXBURY**

Hannah has made a tremendous impact on the Lyman Hall community in the past 4 years. Hannah has taken 9 Advanced Placement courses, which she has excelled in. In addition to her challenging coursework, Hannah also was involved in several extracurriculars. Her club involvement includes: the Debate Team, STEM club, String Ensemble, Best Buddies and Music Studio Ensemble. Hannah also served as the Secretary of Student Council, served her class as Vice-President freshman and sophomore year, and President junior and senior year. She has been recognized several times for her achievements, including an induction into National Honor Society & the recently awarded "Yale-Seton Book Award." After graduation, Hannah is planning to continue her studies in the medical field and aspires to be a pediatric doctor.

### **KHANG DIEP**

Over the course of his four years at Lyman Hall High School, Khang Diep has both immersed himself and excelled in the most rigorous academic courses. As an aspiring mechanical engineer, Khang has taken 11 Advanced Placement courses, received the seal of Biliteracy in French, become an AP Scholar, and is a member of National Honor Society. In addition to his academic accomplishments, Khang is heavily involved in the Wallingford community as well, accruing over one hundred hours of community service. He is a member of the Lyman Hall outdoor track team, a member of student council, a karate instructor, and proficient in constructing computers. Because of his hard work and commitment to his future, Khang is ranked among the top 10 students in his senior class and is a US Presidential Scholar candidate.

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## MERCY

*Ann Drewry, Principal*

### **SHANNON ARSENAULT**

Shannon is a student leader at Mercy High School as Student Council Secretary, Mercy Ambassador Officer, Committee Chair for the Spanish National Honor Society, and a member of Fight Against Cancer. As a result of her strong academic achievement, she has been inducted into the National Honor Society, Math National Honor Society, and Spanish National Honor Society. In her junior year, Shannon was presented with the Trinity College Book Award. In addition, Shannon has been a competitive dancer at the Studio CT in East Hampton for 15 years and has been an instructor for the last four years. For the past two summers, Shannon has been a camp counselor at Camp Ingersoll in Portland.

### **ISABELLA LEE-BALDASSINI**

Isabella has been enrolled in Honors and Advanced Placement courses throughout her time at Mercy High School. She is a member of NHS, Spanish NHS, Tri-M Honors Society (Historian), Medical Minds, Social Media Club, Mercy Hiking Club (Co-Founder/Co-President), and is a Violinist in the Orchestra. Isabella has dedicated numerous hours of community service as a church lector at St. Mary of Czestochowa, as a side walker and facility support at Manes & Motion Therapeutic Riding Center, and at the Hospital for Special Care. Additionally, Isabella has participated in the Closer to Free Bike Ride and the 5k walk/ run for the Women & Family Life Center raising over \$1,000 towards programs for cancer research and mental health services to benefit children and families.

## NORTH HAVEN

*Dr. Russell Dallai, Principal*

### **VICTORIA PACHNIK**

The 2023 NHHS Valedictorian, Victoria is a National Merit Commended Student, HOBY Leadership participant, and Harvard Book Award recipient. She is the secretary of the National Honor Society, and a member of the Mu Alpha Theta (math honor society), Science, and Latin Honor Societies. Victoria is the president of Key Club, co-President of Latin Club, and co-founder and vice-president of Model UN. She is a four-year member of the varsity Swim & Dive team, competing in the SCC and State Class M Finals. Victoria is a SCC Scholar Athlete and SCC All-Academic Athlete. She participates in the Future Problem Solving (talented and gifted) Program. Victoria enjoys volunteering and has logged 150 hours of community service at venues including MidState Medical Center.

### **HUNTER PAGEAU**

Hunter, the 2023 NHHS Salutatorian, is a prodigious person and passionate leader, who dedicates his life to community enrichment and impactful leadership projects. He is a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, Italian Honor Society, and Mu Alpha Theta (math honor society). Hunter is an accomplished NORD Ambassador who has created legislation. He had completed over 300 hours of community service and five leadership projects while at NHHS, Hunter has effectuated lasting and positive change. Hunter planned and guided the initiative for CT RDAC to achieve equity for those with rare disorders. He is the founder of Youth Active in Rare Disease and the North Haven Diversity Group. He has led CT Rare Disease Day multiple times. Humble, kind, and determined, he will continue to steadfastly serve others.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 11**

## **NOTRE DAME**

*Robert Curis, Principal*

### **KYLE GRANDE**

Kyle participates in every aspect of our school community. He is a Peer Counselor, Student Government President, a member of TEAM ND (our student ambassador program), BRO (Brother's Reaching Others), leader of the Green Machine, and several honor societies. In addition, he is the captain of our lacrosse team. Kyle also founded, owns, and operates a car detailing business with over 100 clients.

### **JAMES LOWMAN**

Throughout his four years at Notre Dame, James has had a tremendous impact on our community. He is currently the captain of the wrestling team and president of the Interact Service Club. He has been involved with the Student Government all four years and currently serves as Secretary, is a Peer Counselor, and played on the varsity football team.

## **SACRED HEART ACADEMY**

*Sr. Kathleen Mary Coonan, Principal*

### **MAEVE MCCONNELL**

Maeve stands out as a leader not because she is sporty or popular and any of the typical reasons, but because she is kind down to the core, truly and unapologetically kind. Maeve continually demonstrates this kindness in the little acts of caring that she does, not to be noticed by anyone, but just because it comes naturally to her. Maeve has competed in more invitation-only Math Competitions than any other student I've ever known. She was one of the founding members of our Technology Student Association which competed, won in CT and in the Northeast Regionals qualifying for the National Competition which was held in Texas this past summer. Maeve is a student who not only takes the most challenging courses you can take; she is also involved in our Yearly School Musical and the drama performance and can often be found working with younger students as a National Honor Society tutor. Maeve loves to teach and is able to use her patience and skills working with students and giving them confidence as they face their next assessment. Maeve is an honest, open and thoughtful young woman. She sings in her Church Choir and in her spare time earns her own money on weekends as a dishwasher in a wine bar. It may sound like Maeve is too good to be true, but she is not. She is the real deal and a young woman who will make a difference in our world.

### **YARITZA ZECUA-HERRERA**

Yaritza is a young woman who has taken several AP classes, is a member in three honor societies, is co-captain of the M3 Math Challenge Team where they spend an entire day at school doing a math problem together, has received the Villanova book award and is a thrower for the Varsity track team. Yaritza is a hard worker, conscientious and willing to do what it takes to make her dreams come true. If you ask Yaritza about the accomplishments, she is most proud of, they are not about her. She is proudest about being a retreat leader for her class. She wasn't proud about being chosen to lead, she was proud that she was entrusted to lead. During her free time, Yaritza works with the students at SHA that are in need of academic support. She loves being able to explain the concepts of math and science in a different way and see their faces light up when they understand. Yaritza graduated from St. Martin dePorres Academy and goes back to her school to volunteer and help the younger students there. She relates well with these students because she appreciates all that she has been given and knows what it is like to not have a lot.

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## **MARK T. SHEEHAN**

*Enzo Zocco, Principal*

### **NELE KOEPFER**

Class of 2023 Valedictorian, US Presidential Scholar Program Nominee, AP Scholar with Distinction, Harvard University Book Award, Rochester Institute of Technology Computing Medal, University of Rochester Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Medal Award, AAPPL Seal of Biliteracy in German and Spanish, SCC All-Academic Team (soccer, tennis, indoor & outdoor track), Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Athlete, Record-Journal Scholar Athlete (soccer), UConn Mini Medical/Dental School Program Participant, Yale Young Women's Leadership Launch Participant, Scholarship Committee Head for National Honor Society, member of Tri-M Music Honor Society, Pit Section Leader (marching band), Outdoors Club President, Club Founder/President of Teen Empowerment in Social Activism Club, Ski Club President, member of Sheehan's String Ensemble, Varsity Choir, DECA, Soccer, Tennis and Indoor and Outdoor Track Teams

### **KIERAN LIU**

Class of 2023 Salutatorian, Yale Book Award, West Point Summer Leader Experience recipient, University of Vermont Citizen Scholar Book Award, Southern Connecticut Conference All-Academic Team (soccer, indoor track, outdoor track), Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Athlete Award, Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Leader Award, Certificate of Excellence in AP Statistics, National Honor Society Vice President, Cooking Club Founder and President, Asian American Culture Club member, Sheehan Dramatic Arts Society member, volunteer and job shadow experience at Griffin Hospital Department of Psychiatry, Project Leader for National Honor Society Clean Up Day, volunteer at Connecticut Food Bank, volunteer for Leukemia Society of Connecticut, member of Sheehan's Soccer team, Indoor Track team, Outdoor Track team and Concert Choir.

## **SHELTON**

*Kathy Riddle, Headmaster*

### **KAITLYN BERGERS**

Kaitlyn is a dedicated athlete and well-rounded student who continues to give back to our community. She is an outstanding leader on the field, on the courts and in the classroom. A member of our Field Hockey, Tennis, and Unified Basketball teams, Katie loves to stay active. Behind the high school sports scene, Katie is a 3rd degree black belt in karate and teaches Tang Soo Do students ages 3-12. In addition to being an active member of our Student Council, Katie has also been inducted into our National and Spanish National Honor Societies. In preparation for her future career, Katie has volunteered several hours a week with Echo Hose. In her "spare" time, Katie continues to enjoy the world of dance where she serves as a volunteer.

# **2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 13**

## **ADAM SOBH**

Adam can be described as outgoing, kind and intelligent, all characteristics that make for an excellent representation of Shelton High School. As class president, Adam is a constant source of school pride and shows true dedication to making SHS a better place. His leadership skills are highlighted during his time as captain for the SHS Varsity Soccer Team, as well as leading the Shelton chapter of Junior State of America (JSA). Furthermore, Adam has excelled in his aca-demics and has the drive to succeed in some of our most rigorous coursework, all while prioritiz-ing his time with family and those closest to him.

## **WEST HAVEN**

*Dana Paredes, Principal*

## **SEBASTIAN NAVARRO**

Sebastian is a senior at West Haven High School with a 3.6 GPA and has taken seven honors classes and two AP classes throughout high school. He is involved in the boys' varsity soccer team, holding the title of assistant captain his junior year and captain during his senior year, where he committed 22 hours a week for practice, traveling, and games. Sebastian took part in Yale Splash where he attended classes in the areas of health science, public health, and philosophy. He was also the vice president of the robotics club where he spent two hours a week with the team to help improve the robot design and testing it to compete in the High School competition. Sebastian was a part of The Birch Group LLC: Engineering Technology Challenge where he engaged and participated in group work that would help in solving disputes in the engineering work life. He has worked for Village Bistro and Grassy Hill Country Club, preparing food, working as a busboy, assisting with cleaning and table set up, all while demonstrating professional and great customer service. Sebastian has been awarded two times an all-conference soccer player, two times an all-academic conference soccer player, and a West Haven High School Scholar Athlete.

## **MAYA BERMUDEZ**

Maya is a senior at West Haven High School with a 4.15 GPA and has taken five honors classes throughout high school. She is involved in the girls soccer teams, serving as a captain her senior year. Maya is also a member of the national Honor Society. She has worked with the Blue Devil Summer soccer league as a coach and referee, a soccer camp for kids to play in organized games. Maya has been awarded the SCC All-Academic and West Haven Scholar Athlete awards.

# 2023 SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET – PAGE 14

## WILBUR CROSS

*Matthew Brown, Principal*

### **ROSELYN NAHUAUTLATO**

Roselyn is an exception leader, a sharp mind and a dedicated scholar. This National Honor Society member is captain of the Wilbur Cross Cross Country team as well as a track. In the sports arena she is a charismatic, caring and inspiring leader, pushing her teammates to their best through warm encouragement and leading by example. She has excelled in all her classes, finding particular success and interest in literature. A member of the Fem Lit Club, Roselyn has used her love of reading to share lessons about gender and equality with her teachers and peers. She works a part time job after school, preparing herself for the challenges of post high school life. As a soon to be first generation college student, Roselyn has high expectations for her career and looks to major in Finance and Economics.

### **YOUNG IN KIM**

Young has distinguished himself as a scholar and a leader throughout his time at Wilbur Cross. Holding a 4.9 GPA, he sits at the top of his class. As the chair of the New Haven Climate Moment Education Committee, he was instrumental in getting the New Haven Board of Education to adopt a leading Climate Resolution, helping ensure \$5,000,000 of federal funding get allocated to climate mitigation in New Haven. Young In also presides over the Wilbur Cross National Honor Society, leading this group of scholars in providing service hours that benefit the entire school and city. He is the definition of a scholar leader.

## XAVIER

*David Eustis, Headmaster*

### **BRENDAN PEARY**

Brendan is a man of many talents. He carries a 4.00 GPA and has taken six AP and five ECE courses. He is in six Honor Societies and is an officer in two of them. He is the Secretary of the Student Activities Council and was Xavier's senior representative at the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools Junior Retreat. He serves as a Peer Minister, a Big Falcon, and a member of the Empower Leadership Club. He is an accomplished Alto Sax player in our Jazz Band and the well-respected captain of Xavier's Sailing Team. He donates much of his time as an instructor for Learn to Skate USA. He is a tremendous school Ambassador and through his selfless generosity, serves as a role model to others.

### **VINCENT SALAMONE**

Vincent is a multi-talented individual. There is no grade less than an A- on his transcript which includes eight AP and six ECE courses. He is a member of six honor societies, an officer in three, and President of two. He is a member of the Senior Executive Board. Last year he was named AP Scholar with Honor and earned a Gold Medal on the National Spanish Exam. Vincent serves as an Ambassador, Big Falcon, Peer Minister, and member of the Empower Leadership Club. He has twice earned summer internships for ACMT Manufacturing which specializes in Aerospace Engineering. He devotes much his time to the Art Club and Students for Life. In his spare time, he teaches CCD to second graders at St. Peter Church in Higganum.

## BILL O'BRIEN COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP

Bill O'Brien served as Commissioner of the SCC for 10 years (1994-2004) and remains active with the conference. A retired banking executive, Bill is well-known for his passionate and unselfish community service efforts throughout the greater New Haven area.

At the conclusion of tonight's awards banquet, two \$500 scholarships will be awarded in Bill's honor.

Worthy recipients have a healthy balance of school and community activities that are value-added and embody the "spirit and passion" of Bill O'Brien.

To "fairly" identify the recipients, the league requested for those interested scholar-leaders to contribute a writing piece in addition to their resume of activities/achievements.

This is the 12th year the SCC has presented this scholarship.

## WHAT IS THE SCC?

Founded in 1994, the Southern Connecticut Conference celebrates its 29th year in 2022-23 with 23 member schools and nearly 23,000 students.

Recognized as one of the premier athletic leagues in the state of Connecticut, SCC member schools have captured more than 515 state championships since the league's inception.

More importantly, the SCC is recognized for its outstanding non-athletic programs and events in student leadership and the arts, which attempt to breakdown barriers and build bridges of understanding to its students.

For more information, visit [www.SOUTHERNCONNECTICUTCONFERENCE.ORG](http://www.SOUTHERNCONNECTICUTCONFERENCE.ORG)

### **SCC Leadership 2022-23**

**President:** David Eustis, Headmaster – Xavier HS

**Vice-President:** Julia Chaffe, Principal – Guilford HS

**Recording Secretary:** Vacant

**Treasurer:** Steve Trifone, Director of Athletics – Cheshire HS

**Chair of Athletic Directors:** Ernie Goodwin, Director of Athletics – Amity Regional HS

**Commissioner:** Al Carbone

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