

# SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE

*ESTABLISHED 1994*



## 31ST ANNUAL SCHOLAR LEADER BANQUET

MARCH 31, 2025

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, The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy - Lauralton Hall, Lyman Hall, Mercy, North Haven, Notre Dame, Sacred Heart Academy, Mark T. Sheehan, Shelton, West Haven, Wilbur Cross, Xavier

VISIT THE **SCC'S** WEBSITE AT

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 Southern Connecticut Conference Scholar Leader recognition banquet – the 31st hosted by the league, presented by AVANGRID (UI, SCG and CNG).

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.

## 2024-25 SCC SCHOLAR LEADERS

**Amity Regional** – Hannah Guo, Dariush Raissi

**Branford** – Skylar Dunn, Akiel Lomotey

**Hill Regional Career** – Cyan Young, Jaylin Ambrose Cooper

**Cheshire** – Luke Mann, Bailey Vitanza

**Daniel Hand** – Eve Minickene, Anthony Nathaniel Walter

**East Haven** – Willow Torres, Aedan Connors

**Fairfield Prep** – James Callaghan, Emmett Tolisano

**Joseph A. Foran** – Devon Hines, Connor Rizzo

**Guilford** – Amy Shi, Luca Scafidi

**Hamden** – Leilani Camacho, Lucas Chauvot de Beauchene

**James Hillhouse** – Badu Smart, Hsiu-Mei Chow-Yen, Siulmane Santana Colon

**Jonathan Law** – Addison Barber, Cameron Upchurch

**Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall** – Francesca Colangelo, Paige Patrignelli

**Lyman Hall** – Margaret Corso, Thomas Barron

**Mercy** – Madelynn Katz, Ava Pear

**North Haven** – Antonina Novicki, Oluwadamilola Konigbagbe

**Notre Dame** – Benny Amarone, Julian Kubicz

**Sacred Heart Academy** – Surita Williams, Elizabeth Blair

**Mark T. Sheehan** – Danica Tangredi, Espen Fenstad

**Shelton** – Cole Ostrosky, Elena Gasbarro

**West Haven** – Justin Woychowski, Niamh Chesson

**Wilbur Cross** – Bella Brown, Chris Van Tassel

**Xavier** – James Schafer, Daniel Fischer

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

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## **Amity Regional**

*Andre Hauser, Principal*

### **Hannah Guo**

Hannah's success at Amity is impressive. Her academic record demonstrates her varied interests and places near the top of a competitive senior class. Her leadership within Junior State of America (JSA) has been remarkable, serving as Director of Member Engagement to Governor of the Northeast State. When JSA faced dissolution, Hannah demonstrated resilience by working to help transition to an equivalent national organization, Civic Leaders of America (CLA). She is Editor In Chief of our school newspaper, The Trident, and Vice President of Inclusion at Amity. She is a Student Government representative, sits on the Principal's Committee, and a member of the English National Honor society. Within her community, Hannah serves on the Woodbridge Youth Services Board and volunteers at the Woodbridge Town Library.

### **Dariush Raissi**

Dariush is an outstanding student and leader who has grown significantly over the past four years. Initially a shy freshman, Dariush developed into a confident, proactive individual, excelling both academically and in extracurricular activities. His passion for Biology is evident in his work at the Epigenetics Lab at Yale, where he consistently seeks deeper understanding. Dariush also made a profound impact on his school community as the Captain of the Varsity Tennis team and through his leadership as Executive Vice President in Student Government, where he helped revitalize school spirit. Known for his positive attitude and sense of humor, Dariush fosters a supportive environment and is well-liked by peers and educators. His resilience, leadership, and academic curiosity make him a strong candidate for college success.

## **Branford**

*Lee Panagoulis, Principal*

### **Skylar Dunn**

An accomplished student-athlete, Skylar excels both on and off the field, balancing rigorous academics with a wide range of extracurricular activities. As a dedicated member of the Varsity Field Hockey team, she demonstrates exceptional athleticism and leadership. A passionate actress, she portrayed a lead role in *The Greatest Showman* and was nominated for Best Young Actress in a Feature Film. In addition to her acting success, she has been recognized with the Smith Book Award and is an active member of both the National Honor Society and World Language Honor Society. Committed to service, she participated in two mission trips to Kentucky and volunteers with Camp Totokett. Along with her many accolades, she works part-time, exemplifying time management and determination in all areas of her life.

### **Akiel Lomotey**

Akiel Lomotey is a standout student-athlete who exemplifies leadership, dedication, and academic excellence. As Captain of the Varsity Football team and a standout tailback, he earned All-SCC Football honors for his outstanding performance on the field. His commitment to both athletics and academics is evident through his selection for the National Honor Society and recognition as the Jae S. Lim Math Award winner. In addition to his success in football, he is also a valued member of the Track Team, showcasing his versatility as an athlete. Beyond his personal achievements, Akiel gives back to the community by volunteering as a coach at multiple youth sports camps, helping to inspire and mentor the next generation of athletes. His work ethic and leadership make him an exemplary role model in all aspects of his life.

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## Hill Regional Career

*Shawn True, Principal*

### Cyan Young

Cyan is a stellar student who has challenged herself with some of the most difficult classes Career has to offer. Cyan has earned high honors since her freshman year with an impressive 4.24 GPA and ranks top 10 in the class. Cyan was a four year member of our girls varsity volleyball team. During her time at Career, Cyan's extracurricular are very impressive. She has been part of: University of New Haven Girls Math Club, Yale Splash program, Yale Pathways to Science, Quinnipiac Microbiology Program, Yale's MSEP program, and served as a Yale Chemistry intern. While being part of all these extracurricular activities and earning high honors, Cyan's has also found a way to volunteer at East End Baptist Church.

### Jaylin Ambrose Cooper

Jaylin is a bright young man that possess a great amount of talent, dedication, and leadership skills. Jaylin has been part of Career's Indoor and Outdoor track team during his four years at Career. Jaylin ranks in the top twenty at with an impressive 3.8 GPA. Jaylin is part of the award winning 558 Robotics team where he was instrumental to the drive team and pit crew. Jaylin was also part of the team that won New England Championships from last year. Jaylin has dedicated several hours of his time for the betterment of his team. Jaylin also has been part of the Yale Pathways programs for the last two years while volunteering at the local community gardens.

## Cheshire

*Kevin Hanlon, Principal*

### Bailey Vitanza

Bailey is a kind, hardworking, and humble leader at Cheshire High School. Academically, she excels in all her classes while dedicating her study hall each semester to assisting CHS Life Skills special education students. Serving as president of the CHS Best Buddies program allows her to foster inclusivity and connection which has made a lasting impact on her peers and the broader school community. A leader on the softball team, she is known for her competitive spirit and unwavering work ethic Bailey embodies the core values of Cheshire High School, leaving a lasting impact as both a scholar and leadership and caring leadership.

### Luke Mann

Luke is a responsible and driven leader who continuously challenges himself. His passion for STEM led him to take numerous advanced courses at Cheshire High School, solidifying his goal of pursuing engineering. A three-year varsity baseball player and team captain, Luke leads with dedication and inclusivity, mentoring underclassmen and fostering teamwork. His leadership extends beyond CHS as an assistant coach for Cheshire's Little League All-Star Team and a summer camp counselor. Luke's strong work ethic, commitment to excellence, and ability to inspire those around him have set him apart at Cheshire High School.

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## **Daniel Hand**

*Anthony Salutari, Principal*

## **Eve Minickene**

Eve is an exceptional student and leader known for her academic excellence and passion for learning. Her determination, resilience, and positivity allow her to take a rigorous course load while actively contributing to her community. She is a member of multiple clubs, including Math Team Captain for two consecutive years, treasurer of UNICEF Club, and Girls Who Code leader, while supporting her school as the Girls Ice Hockey Manager, a tutor, and a Robotics team member. Her ability to confidently embrace challenges has resulted in several honors, including National Honor Society, Math League Team High Scorer, French Seal of Biliteracy, and academic and PTO Awards. Eve's leadership, resilience, and intellectual curiosity will be an asset to any community.

## **Anthony Nathaniel Walter**

Anthony Nathaniel is an outstanding individual who has consistently excelled academically and personally. He has mastered the most rigorous courses at Daniel Hand High School, including 18 Level 1 courses. His academic accomplishments include receiving the AP Scholar and Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards in science and math. Outside academics, he is deeply committed to community service, volunteering as a student leader and active member of Habitat for Humanity for homeless building renovations. He has held several jobs, including a paid internship, and he offers private guitar lessons. Musically, he is a talented performer, serving as Band Captain in Show Choir and excelling in Jazz and Marching Bands. He has also contributed to the Varsity Track and Field team as a dedicated competitor and leader.

## **East Haven**

*Vincent DeNuzzo, Principal*

## **Willow Torres**

Driven by a passion for storytelling and leadership, Willow Torres has made a lasting impact at East Haven High School. As Co-President of the EHHS Drama Club, Willow has fostered creativity and collaboration, while her role as Reporter and Editor-in-Chief of our school newspaper, The Comet showcases her dedication to journalism. Her involvement in The Comet Beat Club and the National Honor Society highlights both her curiosity and commitment to academic excellence. Willow's academic achievement and personal integrity earned her the Student Sage Award and recognition from the East Haven Rotary Club. Outside of school, Willow gives back to the community—serving as a projectionist for the East Haven Arts Commission production of Descendants: The Musical, organizing books at the East Haven Hagaman Memorial Library, and inspiring younger students at our 8th Grade Open House and a variety of other school-based community service events.

## **Aedan Conners**

Aedan is a dedicated student-athlete and leader within the school community who balances academic excellence, athletic achievement and community service. A four-year member of the East Haven High School Boys Tennis team, Aedan is also a four-year member of the Bulldog Swimming program. For demonstrated leadership with both programs, he earned the title of captain his senior year. His achievements in the pool include being a six-time Connecticut Top 16 Swimmer. Athletic achievements aside, Aedan excels academically, serving as Math League President and a National Honor Society member. Passionate about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Aedan founded a non-profit organization, Students of STEM: East Haven and serves as Chief Financial Officer. His leadership extends to the Connecticut Swimming Senior Council and as an academic tutor and peer mentor at EHHS. For his achievements, Aedan was honored with the prestigious Harvard Book Award at East Haven High School's Academic Awards night.

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## **Fairfield Prep**

*Timothy Dee, Principal*

### **James Callaghan**

James is the embodiment of Fairfield Prep's Jesuit mission—intellectually competent, committed to justice, and a leader who serves others. A 4.0+ student, he relentlessly seeks improvement while cultivating fairness of mind. As Class President and Rector of Kairos 82, he leads with wisdom, warmth, and purpose, earning the deep respect of his peers and teachers alike. He speaks on behalf of his class, the student body, and Prep itself, addressing parents, benefactors, and students with eloquence and sincerity. Whether mentoring as a Peer Tutor, inspiring others through the Creative Writing Club, or leading in faith and service, James approaches every responsibility with dedication. He leads by example—focal when needed, quietly guiding when appropriate. Simply put, James is in a category of one when it comes to leadership.

### **Emmett Tolisano**

Emmett is an outstanding young man who exemplifies the Jesuit mission through academic excellence, leadership, and service to others. A dedicated student with a 4.0 GPA, he leads by example in the classroom and beyond. As a Student Ambassador, he welcomes prospective families with kindness, patience, and enthusiasm, inspiring younger students to follow his lead. His leadership extends to the Fairfield Prep Investors Club, where he played a key role in its formation, to Kairos 81, where he helped guide his peers in faith and reflection, and to Nourish Bridgeport, where he is a consistent volunteer. Beyond school, Emmett gives back as a youth baseball coach and mentor for younger athletes. Charismatic, compassionate, and deeply involved in his community, Emmett is truly deserving of this Scholar-Leader Award.

## **Joseph A. Foran**

*Max Berkowitz, Principal*

### **Devon Hines**

Devon Hines is an exceptionally accomplished student with a diverse and impressive academic and extracurricular background. She holds leadership roles such as Class Vice President and Model UN Treasurer, and is a Section Leader in the Strings Orchestra. Devon is also a varsity track athlete and a member of several honor societies, including National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Math), and Rho Kappa (Social Studies). She has earned multiple awards, including recognition as a Commended Student in the National Merit Scholar Program. Also, Devon's deep interest in science is evident through her participation as a Research Assistant at Hazra Bio Lab at the University of New Haven. Additionally, her volunteer work includes organizing community events through Key Club, volunteering at the Shubert Theater, and supporting National Honor Society activities. Her dedication to helping others, along with her extensive volunteer work, will earn her the designation of Graduation with Distinction.

### **Connor Rizzo**

Connor is an exceptionally talented student who has had a profound impact at Foran and in the community, showcasing a vibrant personality and infectious energy. Connor has an impressive academic record and has taken nine Advanced Placement courses and has been inducted into numerous honor societies such as the National Honor Society, Rho Kappa (Social Studies), Tri-M (Music), Mu Alpha Theta (Math), Quill and Scroll (Journalism) and Spanish Honor Society. His accolades include National Merit Commended Scholar, AP Scholar with Distinction, and an array of awards for academic excellence.

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He holds notable leadership roles as Senior Class President, Director of the Drama Club, Editor of the Mane Street Mirror, and is also a contributing member of Foran's Choir and Natural Helpers. He is a leader within the Mane Stage Players theatre productions, and has numerous starring roles in various school and community plays. Additionally, Connor has earned the honor of Graduation with Distinction as he has devoted over 220 hours to community service and also shares his passion for music with others as a piano and vocal instructor.

### **Guilford**

*Julia Chaffe, Principal*

#### **Amy Shi**

Driven by a passion for learning and service, Amy has made a lasting impact at Guilford High School. As the Peer Tutoring Coordinator, she dedicates her time to helping classmates connect with peer tutors to assist them with academic goals. Her leadership extends to the Science Olympiad team, where she serves as Vice-Captain, fostering collaboration and innovation in scientific, inquiry-based competitions. Committed to making a difference beyond the classroom, she co-founded the Guilford chapter of Habitat for Humanity, working to support affordable housing initiatives in our community. She also brings enthusiasm and dedication to her roles as Co-president of the Spanish Honor Society and Treasurer of the National Honor Society, where she upholds academic excellence and community engagement. With a strong work ethic and a commitment to helping others, she embodies the qualities of a true scholar leader.

#### **Luca Scafidi**

Passionate about environmental stewardship and community engagement, Luca has played a vital role in expanding student involvement with the Shoreline Greenway Trail. As a Board Member, he co-developed and revitalized the Student Engagement Program, helping to grow high school participation to 300 students from New Haven to Madison. He leads a team of six in organizing events like National Night Out and Earth Day, inspiring young people to connect with nature and conservation efforts. Beyond his environmental work, he is a dedicated employee at Bishop's Orchard, where he assists in training new staff and helps to plan children's events. In his role as Treasurer of the French Honor Society, Luca has helped to triple their fundraising efforts to support local community nonprofit organizations. Through his dedication to service, education, and preservation of nature, he has made a lasting impact in the community at large.

### **Hamden**

*Eric Jackson, Principal*

#### **Leilani Camacho**

Leilani is committed to excellence, as a dedicated scholar and leader. Amongst her many accolades, she has been recognized with the Trinity College Book Award, induction into the National Honor Society, Tri-M Honor Society, and National World Language Honor Society. With her selfless nature, she mentors elementary students, serves as a youth ministry leader, and volunteers extensively in her community. A highly respected leader in the school, Leilani has served as President and Secretary of the Human Relations Club, founded the "Be the Light" Club, and serves on the Principal's Advisory Group. She has inspired her peers to come together for meaningful causes such kindness, empathy, and diversity. Her ability to inspire others, commitment to service, and passion for learning define her as an exceptional individual with limitless potential.

#### **Lucas Chauvot de Beauchene**

Lucas is a gifted individual who excels in both academic, leadership and extracurricular pursuits. Lucas is a National Merit Commended Scholar, an AP scholar with

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distinction and an active member of the Math and National World Language Honors Societies. Beyond academics, he has been a Senior Apprentice at the Eli Whitney Museum, an accomplished swimmer and diver earning All SCC scholar honors, and a member of the film club. He is a co-founder of the Baking and Pastry Club where he prepares delicious treats for the staff to enjoy on Fridays. His autodidactic nature is evident in his self-taught Portuguese, guitar, and sour-dough bread-making skills. With resilience, initiative, and a passion for learning, Lucas continually strives for excellence, demonstrating intellectual curiosity and dedication.

### **James Hillhouse**

*Antoine Billy, Principal*

### **Badu Smart**

Badu's accomplishments include ranking in the top 3 of the senior class at James Hillhouse High School with a 4.56 GPA. Badu has achieved accolades such as; National Honor Society President, Yale Shafter Scholar and Early College Experience Ambassador-UCONN. In addition, Badu is a member and recipient of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., Delta Phi Chapter, 2025 Academic Achievement Award. Along with Badu's various academic accolades, he has been; Math Team and Chess Team Captain, founding member of the debate team, Youth for Christ Preacher, Certified Nursing Assistant and student council treasurer.

### **Hsiu-Mei Chow-Yen**

Hsiu-Mei's accomplishments include ranking in the top 10 of the senior class at James Hillhouse High School. Hsiu-Mei currently serves as Class President for the class to 2025. She has been a four-year member of the Student Council and has been inducted to the National Honor Society. During Hsiu-Mei's time at Hillhouse High School she has participated in numerous programs, including; Track and Field, Photographer for the Sentinel, SMPT representative, G.S.A Club and a student representative for the STARS-Planned Parenthood Partnership. Is a member of the New Haven Climate Change movement.

### **Siulmane Santana Colon**

In addition to being ranked 2nd in the class of 2025, Suilmarie represents Hillhouse in a variety of different ways. These include the following: National Honor Society member... CNA Certified... Agricultural Science Award for NHPS Science Fair... Seal of Biliteracy recipient... Youth at work employee... Virtual career awareness at Yale New Haven Hospital... Community artist - paint murals and revamp parks and recreation spaces throughout New Haven... Currently working to get EMT certification... New Haven Public Library volunteer



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## Jonathan Law

*Bryan Darcy, Principal*

### **Addison Barber**

Addison's academic achievements are impressive and indicative of her dedication to learning, which shows in her cumulative GPA of 4.51. Her academic prowess is further highlighted by her receipt of the George Eastman Young Leaders Award and Excellence in Journalism Award. Addison is also a member of the School Climate Committee and the SEL Committee, where she has been instrumental in fostering a more inclusive and supportive school environment. Beyond academics, Addison shines as a leader and a source of support for her peers. Her role as President of the JLHS Key Club and Lieutenant Governor of the New England Chapter speaks volumes about her organizational skills and her commitment to service. She has dedicated over 200 volunteer hours to initiatives that uplift her community. Addison is also the captain of our Volleyball Team, member of the track team and Social Media Editor of our school newspaper.

### **Cameron Upchurch**

Cameron has developed into an elite athlete, accomplished student and respected member of our school community during his time at JLHS. At the end of his high school experience, Cameron will have completed five AP courses and is ranked towards the top of his graduating class. His teachers value Cameron's leadership, questions and challenges he poses in the classroom that push all students forward. These academic achievements have allowed Cameron to be an elected member of the National Honor Society. He is also a three-season athlete on the football, basketball and track teams where his skill and leadership shine. His coaches say that while Cameron is talented, they love coaching him because of his work ethic and his constant desire to improve. Cameron is a member of the Future Business Leaders of America and gives back to his community. He will graduate with distinction while providing over 200 hours of community service in our community.

## Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Luralton Hall

*Beth Coyne, Head of School*

### **Francesca Colangelo**

Franny exemplifies outstanding character and leadership at Luralton Hall. She excels in rigorous AP and honors courses, is a member of the National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society, and received the Worcester Polytechnic Institute STEM Leadership Book Award. Elected as a Student Council class representative, she also serves as Key Club President, a Peer Mentor, and a Spirit Club member. As Varsity Softball captain and a CT Impact Softball Club player, she shines in athletics. Dedicated to service, she volunteers at Fairfield Little League Girls Softball Clinics and traveled to Panama with School the World to support community projects.

### **Paige Patrignelli**

Paige is a natural leader whose impact on our community has been remarkable. She has embraced a rigorous academic path, excelling in AP and honors courses, and is a member of both the National Honor Society and the National French 2 Honor Society. As President of the Spirit Club, Paige has significantly increased school spirit. She also manages social media for Luralton Athletics, overseeing content creation and posting. A dedicated Peer Mentor, she helps guide new students as they transition into Luralton Hall. Paige's leadership and character have earned her the Sister Mary O'Neill Mercy Character Award and the Albertus Magnus College Book Award.

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## Lyman Hall

*Joseph Corso, Principal*

### Margaret Corso

Maggie Corso is a dedicated student and leader, earning the Seal of Biliiteracy, St. Joseph's Book Award, and consistently making the High Honor Roll. As a two-year varsity swim and dive captain, she received the Trojan Award and was named to the All-Academic Team. She serves as Student Council president, a National Honor Society member, and participates in Best Buddies and the Trojan Ambassador Program; all programs supporting unity, compassion and support in our school community. Additionally, she manages the boys' swim and dive team and attended the Yale Leadership Conference. Outside of school, she works for Park and Rec, further demonstrating her commitment to leadership and service. Maggie's unwavering dedication and selfless service have made a lasting impact on our community.

### Thomas Barron

Thomas Barron, valedictorian and a dedicated leader, has proven himself as one of Lyman Hall High School's most outstanding students. As student council secretary, class representative, and president of Key Club, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership, organizing impactful community service projects. His role as stage manager for school productions showcased his creativity and technical skill. Thomas' commitment to service was evident during a church mission trip assisting those in need. Passionate about architecture, he attended NYU lectures and The Cooper Union's summer program to refine his skills. His academic excellence has earned him prestigious awards, including the Yale Book Award and the University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award. Thomas' ambition, intellect, and leadership make him a remarkable student with a bright future.

## Mercy

*Ann Drewry, Principal*

### Madelynn Katz

Madelynn is a leader both in and out of Mercy High School. As a result of her strong academic ability in honors and AP classes, she is a member of Mercy's chapter of the National Honors Society, Spanish NHS, and Math NHS. She is also a member of Medical Minds and Surf Riders at Mercy. During junior year, Madelynn received the Post University Book Award. She is very active in her religious community, serving as an altar server at her local church and a peer and eucharistic minister at Mercy. Outside of school, Madelynn volunteers in her community, works as a camp counselor at Westbrook Summer Camp, is a Save the Sound Captain, and has been a Competitive Irish Dancer since she was 8.

### Ava Pear

A member of the National, Mathematics, and Spanish Honor Societies at Mercy. Ava serves as Historian of the Student Council. She was a captain of the Varsity Field Hockey team, a member of the Ice Hockey team, and the Varsity Lacrosse goalie. She is part of the Ambassadors club, Broadcast Journalism club, and Social Media club. In her junior year, she was awarded the Saint Michael's College Book Award and she has also received the Modern History award and the Spanish award. Outside of Mercy, she is very involved with her Church where she serves as a worship leader and works in the Church nursery. She also spends her summers working as a camp counselor at the East Haddam Parks and Recreation summer camp.

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## North Haven

*Dr. Russell Dallai, Principal*

### Antonina Novicki

Antonina is outstanding. She is a recipient of the Yale Book Award and the Rensselaer Award for Achievement in Mathematics and Science. She is a member of the Connecticut Future Problem Solving Program, having won three state championships and attended the International Conference four times. And she is a member of the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, and Spanish Honor Society. Antonina is a leader in our school and town. She is the senior class treasurer and fencing captain. She also proudly represented North Haven High School at the HOBY leadership conference. Beyond all of these achievements, Antonina is a key community contributor and the treasurer and a founding member of the North Haven Leo Club, a youth community service organization.

### Oluwadamilola Konigbagbe

Dami is exceptional. He ranks fifth in his class and is a National Merit Commended Student, a recipient of the RIT Computing Award, and a member of the SCC All Academic Team. Inside and outside of school, Dami is a leader, actively involved in the community. He is the president of the senior class, and in partnership with his class officers, helped raise over \$10,000 for senior activities. Dami volunteers at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, a pet shelter, and his church's outreach team. He also recycles bottles for the environment and records his church's services. Over the summer, he volunteers as an assistant crew manager, leading kids to discover purpose and find community.

## Notre Dame

*Pasquale Izzo, Principal*

### Benny Amarone

Benny is a dedicated leader in our school community, serving as a Peer Counselor, Student Ambassador, and Student Government officer. As a co-founder of the Finance Club, he promotes financial literacy among students. He is actively involved in the Holy Cross Mission Club, Interact Rotary Club, and Leadership Club. Additionally, he participates in the Italian Club, Fantasy Sports Club, SAT Prep Club, and intramurals. A talented athlete, Benny plays on the Varsity Hockey Team and volunteers as a youth hockey instructor. His commitment to service extends beyond school through his work at Locket Meadow Farm and WHEAT Food Pantry. Recognized for his leadership, he participated in the University of Notre Dame Leadership Program and is a member of the National, English, Math, and Spanish Honor Societies.

### Julian Kubicz

Julian is a highly engaged student who excels in academics, athletics, and service. He is a Peer Counselor and active member of the Math Team, Chess Club, and Ski & Snowboard Club. Julian serves as president of the Fantasy Sports Club and participates in intramural sports. A hardworking athlete, Julian is captain of the Varsity Soccer Team and is a black belt at Pereira's Academy of Karate, where he also volunteers as an instructor. His commitment to service includes work with Habitat for Humanity, Yale New Haven Hospital, and the Toy Closet Project. Academically, Julian is a member of the National, English, Math, and Spanish Honor Societies and has earned the Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish, demonstrating his dedication to excellence in all areas of his life.

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## **Sacred Heart Academy** *Sr. Kathleen Mary Coonan, Principal*

### **Elizabeth Blair**

Elizabeth is a student whose journey at Sacred Heart Academy has been nothing short of inspiring. From the moment Elizabeth joined our community, she has embraced the spirit of learning and leadership with an enthusiasm that sets her apart. Elizabeth's academic pursuits have always been marked by her curiosity and willingness to dive into new challenges. Elizabeth has a broad approach to life—always seeking to expand her horizons and engage with the unfamiliar. Elizabeth has consistently maintained a high GPA while cultivating a rich social life, fostering happy and healthy relationships with those around her. She is a student who thrives on intellectual risk. Leadership comes naturally to Elizabeth, who has consistently demonstrated her ability to inspire and organize her peers. Her roles as Student Council Homeroom Representative, Class Treasurer, and Drama Guild Vice President are some examples of her commitment to her community. Elizabeth's leadership style is characterized by her ability to listen and empower others, whether as a Kairos Retreat Leader guiding her peers in moments of reflection or as a key member of the Campus Ministry Core Committee.

### **Surita Williams**

Surita is going to impact this world in a major way. Surita has a beautiful soul, compassionate while focused, self-motivated and highly organized, she is always ready for the next challenge. Surita is very interested in a future in medicine and has never wavered from that dream. Surita is an extraordinary student, always giving her full attention to each of her courses and outside responsibilities. She has been advanced in Math since she began attending Sacred Heart Academy and has continued to pursue it at the highest level. Outside of her academics, Surita is a vital member of our extracurricular and athletic life at SHA. As a member of our National Honor Society and the Math and Science Honor Societies, she gives up her free periods to tutor younger students who are struggling with the content. And as a student leader involved in STUCO, Peer Connection and Sisterto-Sister along with our Student Ambassador (Excelsior) club, it's easy to see how involved Surita is. Surita was a leader for senior class at their Kairos Retreat and her presence empowered others to share their stories. She chooses her activities, not because they look good on her resume but because they are things she loves to do and does well.

### **Mark T. Sheehan**

*Enzo Zocco, Principal*

### **Danica Tangredi**

Danica ranks in the top three in her class. She is a nominee for the U.S. Presidential Scholars program and is an AP Scholar with Distinction, based on top tier scores on the SAT and AP tests. Danica is a member of the National Honor Society, has earned the Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish, and serves as Secretary of her class. She is also President of our SADD chapter, serves as the Stage Manager for our drama and musical performances, and is co-captain of the Sheehan math team. Danica is a talented violinist, earning positions with the Cheshire Symphony Orchestra and at the CMEA Music Festival. Danica has received the Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards in Math, Science, Social Studies and World Language. She has received the Smith College Book Award and the Certificate of Recognition for Exemplary Volunteer Service.

### **Espen Fenstad**

Espen is an impressive student, earning distinctions as the valedictorian of his class and as National Merit Semi-Finalist. Espen is a Scholar with Distinction based on top tier AP scores and is a member of the National Honor Society. He is the recipient of

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the Harvard Book Award and the Rochester Institute of Technology Science and Math Awards. Espen has participated in a National Security Language initiative in Morocco, focusing on Arabic Studies and as an intern in the Department of Therapeutic Radiology at the Yale School of Medicine. Espen is the Treasurer of his class and serves as the drum major for our Marching Band. He is a member of the Jazz Ensemble and Concert Band. Espen is a member of a talented acapella group and is a member of the swim team. He's also a member of Sheehan's Asian American Culture Club, Debate Club, and Math Teams.

## **Shelton**

*Kathy Riddle, Headmaster*

### **Elena Gasbarro**

Elena is a dedicated athlete, serving as co-captain of her swim team in her senior year, where she truly led by example. Beyond athletics, Elena is an outstanding student, completing 10 college-level courses through high school and ranking in the top 5% of her class. She is Co-President of DECA, a Student Ambassador, and an active member of the Drama Club. Her passion for theater extends beyond school, as she has volunteered at Centerstage Theater since seventh grade, performing and assisting as an usher. Elena has also spent the past three years working at Jones Christmas Tree Farm. Her ability to manage academics, leadership roles, and personal interests like cooking, yoga, and playing with her dog showcases her well-rounded nature and strong time management skills.

### **Cole Ostrosky**

Cole is a well-rounded three-sport athlete in Football, Baseball, and Track, earning respect from peers and staff for his leadership and positive attitude, and is a State Open Champion in the 4x200 meter relay. Cole has taken 11 college-level courses through high school and ranks in the top 5% of his graduating class. Beyond his accomplishments, his involvement and willingness to help others highlight his strong character. Cole volunteers as an announcer at Little League games, assists in Bidy Basketball, and mentors younger athletes at summer camps, showcasing his reliability and dedication to his community. Additionally, he has a part-time job as a server at Brownson Country Club, and is a Student Ambassador at SHS, helping to welcome and support our incoming freshmen each year.

## **West Haven**

*Robert Bohan, Principal*

### **Niamh Chesson**

Ranking in the top 1%, as 5th in her class out of 430 students, speaks volumes to Niamh's academic commitment and intellectual abilities. Niamh makes significant contributions to the school community, serving as captain of both the varsity soccer and tennis teams, as well as a peer advocate, all of which highlight her leadership qualities. Additionally, she is actively engaged in numerous clubs, including the Academic Integrity Committee, Student Council, Model UN, and Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE). Niamh has earned Rotary Scholar Athlete Award and induction into the National Honors Society. She is a modest top achieving scholar-athlete and role model figure for young woman.

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## Justin Woychowski

Justin's academic journey is nothing short of extraordinary. As valedictorian, he ranks first among 430 students, a testament to his dedication and intellect. His selection for the Yale Book Award and recognition as a College Board Scholar are perfect examples of his scholarly achievements. He is an avid skier, frequently excelling in New England competitions, and has led our Submersible Robotics team to a championship. His leadership as a section leader in the WHHS Marching Band and his role as a peer advocate further highlight his ability to inspire and support others. Justin is a natural leader and is always eager to share his knowledge and contribute to the West Haven High School community to promoting a positive school climate and is a member of SADD.

## Wilbur Cross

*Matthew Brown, Principal*

## Bella Brown

Bella is a student at Wilbur Cross High and ACES Educational Center for the Arts, with a focus on visual art. Bella serves as Editor-in-Chief of both Cross Currents and the school's newspaper the Proclamation, helping to share student voices through writing and art. She's the school's Valedictorian, a Smith Book Award winner, Co-Captain of the Girl's Swim Team and Connecticut Swimming Scholar Athlete Award. She also works as a tutor and camp counselor, supporting younger students in both academics and personal growth. Outside of school, she enjoys swimming competitively and runs Beads by IB, an Etsy jewelry business.

## Chris Van Tassel

A dedicated student-athlete, Chris has excelled in both soccer and basketball while maintaining strong academic achievements. As captain of his soccer team, Chris earned All-SCC Second Team honors twice and was invited to the 2024 Connecticut Soccer Coaches Association Senior Bowl, also receiving Wilbur Cross Defensive MVP. In basketball, Chris served as a two-time captain, earning All-SCC Second Team (2023-24) and First Team (2024-25) honors. He was named MVP of both the 2024-25 "Super John Williams" Invitational and the 2025 Enaved Invitational. Academically, he is a Harvard Book Award recipient, a National Merit Commended Scholar, and a National Honor Society member.

## Xavier

*Nicholas Cerreta, Headmaster*

## James Schafer

Jimmy has gained diverse experience as a Delivery Driver/Dish Washer at Carmine's Pizza and an Assistant Lifeguard at Camp Nerden. He has earned recognition on the Presidents List, participated in XBSS, and is a member of the National Honors Society and Social Studies Honors Society. Jimmy received the University of Rochester Leadership Award and was named Volunteer of the Year at Camp Nerden. He has also been active in extracurriculars, serving as SAC Senior Class President, Peer Minister, and Coach/Social Media Manager/Videographer for Shake n' Bake. Additionally, he participated in Track and Field and Baseball. With over 300 hours of volunteer service at Camp Nerden, Jimmy demonstrates strong leadership, dedication, and community involvement.

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## **Daniel Fischer**

Dan has earned several honors, including Vice President of the Monsignor Wilson Chapter of the National Honor Society, membership in the National English, Social Studies, and Science Honor Societies, and the St. Michael's College Book Award. He serves as Senior Class Vice President and a Model Congress Delegate at Xavier High School, mentors underclassmen in the Empower Leadership Club, and has been named an All-State Lacrosse player. His service includes volunteering with the Ryken Service Society and Ambassador Club. As an athlete, Dan plays for the Xavier Varsity Lacrosse Team and 2Way Lacrosse Club. He also assists at A&L Farms and Saint Bridget Catholic Church. Additionally, Dan has received two National Spanish Exam certificates and maintains High Honors.

## **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 14th year the SCC has presented this scholarship.

## **WHAT IS THE SCC?**

Founded in 1994, the Southern Connecticut Conference is in its 31st year in 2024-25 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 560 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)

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### **SCC Leadership 2024-25**

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

**Vice-President:** Bryan Darcy, Principal – Jonathan Law HS

**Recording Secretary:** Anthony Verderame, Director of Athletics - East Haven HS

**Treasurer:** Jennie Casceillo

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

**Commissioner:** Al Carbone

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