



# 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



## FACULTY & STAFF

**Noah Avelar-Fortes\***

Front Office Support

**Brendan Bonner**

Teacher

**Colin Bradley**

Music Teacher

**Larry Cruz**

Teacher

**Graham Davidson**

Teacher

**Dolly Duarte**

School Counselor

**Ny-Jah Eastman**

Advancement & Program Assistant

**James Goldrick**

Head of School, Teacher

**Maddie Inlow**

Academic Dean & Teacher

**Fox Maxwell**

Teacher

**Beth Mello**

Director of Advancement & External Relations

**Devon Pires\***

Teacher

**Christine Quirk**

Administrative Assistant

**Calen Sandler**

Facilities & IT Manager

*\*Nativity Prep Alum*



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# DEAR SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS,



It is not lost on me that I am writing a letter for the “annual” report only eight months into my tenure. When I took the helm in July 2024, I knew that I was joining a strong team with growing momentum. The school leadership had just ensured another year of financial stability, laying the foundation for growth and development. I also inherited a strategic plan and a case for support that have served as important tools to continue to seek out and utilize resources. Both of those tools will continue to help us realize our vision of “Establishing Nativity Prep New Bedford as a model for closing the educational achievement gap for middle school age boys.”

As we enter our 25th year, this is an important time to both reflect on our past and embrace the journey ahead. I’ve had the honor of connecting frequently with our founder, Barry Hynes.

Through those conversations I have been able to understand the values at the core of our school’s foundation. I have connected with alumni dating as far back as our first graduating class in 2003, and as recent as our 2024 graduates. These conversations have reiterated the importance of the mantra “Nativity for Life” and our commitment to the school’s mission.

The essence of our mission remains the same: “to graduate young men who are confident, self-disciplined, intellectually ambitious, and socially and academically prepared for high school; young men who are ready to serve others and be positive citizens in life.” As the world outside of the walls of 66 Spring Street continues to change, we are committed to “preparing boys to navigate the world.” The destination is the same, but sometimes the tack changes. For this reason, we have adopted the Nativity “Navigators” as the school’s first mascot - the perfect embodiment of this sentiment.

To ensure success in these efforts, we are enhancing our community partnerships, evolving our curriculum and programming, and evaluating our facility. We recently completed a pilot program with New Bedford Research and Robotics that will become a regular part of our science curriculum for the ’25-’26 school year and beyond. We will continue working with Community Boating Center and Youth Opportunities Unlimited as ways to enhance our exploratory program outside of our building. In order to assess our facility, we have partnered with Saltonstall Architects to undergo a master facility planning process. Through this process we will explore the feasibility of our building, safety and ADA requirements, and options for both structural and cosmetic renovations.

The New York Times recently ran an article about the evolution of downtown New Bedford. In the article the author highlighted many different aspects of the city, including highlights of neighborhoods, food and shopping, transportation, and housing. Under a section labeled “Schools” they chose a beautiful picture of our building with a caption highlighting part of our mission - “Nativity Preparatory school is an independent, tuition-free middle school for boys in grades five through eight.” What an honor to be nationally recognized!

Thank you to all of our community partners, donors, families, faculty and staff, trustees, volunteers - and to the City of New Bedford. Without all of you, none of this is possible.

Cheers to the next quarter century.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christian Garris'.

**Christian Garris**

Head of School

## CHRISTIAN GARRIS RECOGNIZED AS TRAILBLAZER AT TABOR ACADEMY

Christian Garris received the Tabor Academy Trailblazer Award at Tabor’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day service. The Trailblazer Award is presented annually to a Tabor graduate who embodies Tabor’s mission “to educate and empower students to connect, serve, and lead.” The award celebrates a Tabor alumnus who has made impactful contributions in the fields of education and service, reflecting Tabor’s core values of care, collaboration, courage, and curiosity.

To share his award, Christian brought the entire fifth grade with him to Tabor. All of the boys - with front row seats - got to see Christian introduced, hear his speech and experience the enthusiastic response of over 500 people. Not only did the Nativity students cheer with gusto when Christian was presented his award, they also received warm applause when Christian asked them to stand and participate in his recognition.

## OUR MISSION

Nativity Preparatory School is an independent, tuition-free middle school that provides a comprehensive education tailored to serve boys of all faiths in grades 5 – 8 from economically-disadvantaged families in the Greater New Bedford area. Our program graduates young men who are confident, self-disciplined, intellectually ambitious, and socially and academically prepared for high school; young men who are ready to serve others and be positive citizens in life.

## OUR VISION STATEMENT

Nativity Preparatory School New Bedford will be dedicated to serving the needs of boys from economically-disadvantaged households in Greater New Bedford. Recognizing and truly understanding the educational and social needs of middle school-age boys, our program will be targeted to serve their specific needs. The school will continue its tradition of developing strong academic and interpersonal skills as well as fostering good citizenship, self-discipline, and a high level of empathy among its students. Nativity Prep will be closely linked to the community and will utilize the excellent cultural and educational resources of our New Bedford city campus to enhance the curriculum. Through its work, the school will be well known for closing any achievement gaps faced by its students and for graduating young men who care for themselves and for others.

## OUR CORE VALUES

Nativity Prep holds three core values: Scientia, Virtus, and Fides.

### SCIENTIA | KNOWLEDGE

We are committed to the lifelong pursuit of knowledge in order to broaden our perspectives, define our purpose, and reach our potential.

### VIRTUS | VIRTUE

We are committed to demonstrating and teaching virtue because our world needs men of humility and character to solve problems and stand for what is right.

### FIDES | TRUST & RELIANCE

We are committed to building a culture of trust because our communities grow strongest when we can rely on one another to act in good faith.



# ADMINISTRATOR SPOTLIGHT - JAY GOLDRICK

After 12 years at Nativity Prep, Jay Goldrick is moving on from the school, leaving behind a significant legacy. In many ways, Jay grew up both professionally and personally at Nativity. He started his teaching career at the school in 2010, moving to New Bedford from Chicago. As a member of the AmeriCorps two year fellowship program, he taught every grade and a variety of subjects including science, math, Latin, English and social studies.

He had a three year hiatus from Nativity Prep when he taught Latin and served as the Director of Athletics at Nashoba Brooks School in Concord, MA. Jay got the opportunity to return to Nativity in 2015 as Principal and was appointed Head of School in 2019, shortly before the pandemic. He was both Head of School and Principal for several years and returned to the sole role of Principal in 2024. Jay has a B.A. in Anthropology and Classical Civilization from Indiana University Bloomington and was a Fellow in the Lynch Leadership Academy at Boston College in 2017.

With the humility and humor for which Jay is known, he recently reflected on his time at Nativity.



## **Tell me a little bit about your journey at Nativity Prep. What have been the significant milestones along the way?**

The school is still open! Any positive thing that happened wasn't because of me. I had the good fortune to work with John Martin, a great leader and mentor who continued to push the school forward in many ways. I did my best to keep internal stuff moving in the right direction. I can't think of any one milestone generated by Jay Goldrick, but we always had solid teams, and we did make it through the pandemic in decent shape.

I had the privilege to get to know a lot of great kids and teachers. Everything that I'm proud of was the stuff that was the whole point of any given school year - making sure the kids ended up at a high school that would be a good fit for them, making sure the kids were in a better place than when they came in.

## **How have things changed at Nativity in the time you have been here?**

Right now the school is necessarily transitioning to a more balanced teaching model with both experienced teachers and AmeriCorps volunteers. It occurs to me that this transition could have happened sooner and more swiftly, but the issue has been mostly financial. Instead, we went from a culture of young teachers working and living together in a tight knit community to not being able to find and hire enough young teachers as the pandemic effects took hold.

There is still a lot of collegiality and fun shared among the current AmeriCorps teachers, but it's not exactly the way it used to be. The pandemic changed all of that.

The school has also evolved from being old school and not having any money to having a little money and being a little more progressive, if you will; it is emerging from the "real" old school days. Not a judgement, but the nature of time and change. Some old school things are the point in many ways - the handshake and eye contact, the shirts and ties, the building of self-discipline, and what those things represent. At the same time, things evolve. The old school people would say we've gotten softer - we have air conditioning and better flooring now!

The other change is the kids. Again, the pandemic and the challenges that come with phones and social media have had a tremendous impact on this generation. It's not the same world as when I started at Nativity.

## **How have you changed or grown as a person/educator in the time you have been here? Any lessons learned?**

Claire Carvalho [the former Director of Development] used to say you are getting your PHD in life. Teaching here easily was the most transformative thing that happened to me. It was bigger than you, you were getting paid very little and you were ok with it because that's what you signed up for. You've got to come in and give it your all - it's not a passive thing that you do here. It changes a person for the better due to the people you are surrounded by. I am still extremely close with some of my former AmeriCorps peers as well as some that had the misfortune of me as their boss... I'm happy I got to work with them as they navigated their first adult jobs and watched them grow up.

When I finally committed more of myself to the school, I really turned a corner... and in a way was ready to embrace the future - I got to meet my future wife! [Kaitlin and Jay met his second year at Nativity, got married in 2016, and now have three children.]

It's just not about you at the end of the day and every time you veer into selfishness, those are the times when you make regrettable mistakes. It can't be about you ... if it is, you should find another profession.



I was very lucky to be around peers and bosses of all ages who modeled how to do things well in a school. How to do something difficult with grace. How to treat a guest. How to deal with a kid who is down. How to deescalate a situation. I got to watch people like Steve Pettey and John Martin and my colleagues – I'd name them all if I could – lift the kids' spirits on a regular basis.

As an administrator, there have been many lessons. You have to act decisively, you need to protect people, you need to build order in one way or another. The pandemic, for example, was like, "What do you do?" You have to stay centered to some degree. Leadership can be lonely. It's generally one thing after another... flying blind in the pandemic was frustrating. There were no great answers. You didn't know who to listen to and any decision you made was criticized by half of the people. It was challenging managing oneself and the other adults - no one was at their best. You just wanted the kids to learn and have some fun.

Unfortunately, the pandemic also put some distance between the families and the school. The school is in the process of rebuilding that partnership now but prior to the pandemic, there was more involvement. The pandemic messed with a lot of things.

**What is your best memory of Nativity Prep?**

The connectedness is one of the things that makes the place special to me. The alumni come back in groups. I got to be around people who had high moral standards and were all in on something. They were people who helped you become a better version of yourself; I've been thankful to have those people in my adult life. We haven't always had all of the people and resources we've needed, but collectively we could often override whatever the deficits were.

It's not a specific memory but the best thing has been the opportunity to get to know every single kid and do something to improve their circumstances and opportunities. Seeing certain kids with really challenging backgrounds come out of the program a decidedly different person and doing well is amazing. Here's a space where a kid can come in and get to a different level - whether it's a kid who is failing and then gets decent grades or an eighth grader who gets admitted to just the right secondary school.

Engaging middle school boys in doing things they enjoy which leads to their betterment - that's the point - giving the kids some kind of academic foundation in a supportive environment. Middle school is about foundations and creating positive memories for the kids.

**What was the most challenging thing you had to do or experience at Nativity?**

The kids who were asked to leave were probably the ones who needed us most, but we didn't have the resources to meet their needs. It's hard to look into the eyes of a mom and tell her her child needs to leave.

**What are your hopes and dreams for the future of Nativity?**

I personally would love to see the school lean into serving the neediest population and take the hard road in terms of human services. Those are the kids who aren't always finding us and might benefit most.

It would be great for the school to acquire better facilities - more functional classrooms and gymnasium.

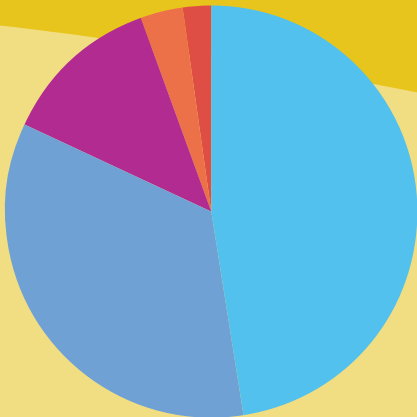
I hope the school always maintains the AmeriCorps volunteers. The school has the potential to become renowned for preparing the next generation of teachers - where they get the support and mentoring they need to become exceptional educators.

Speaking of teaching, if Jay remains in the field of education in the near term he plans to return to the classroom after he departs Nativity Prep. We thank him and wish him the best!

**INCOME FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024**

Individual 47.5%	\$632,056
Corporate/Foundation 34.6%	\$460,700
Special Events 12.5%	\$166,186
Donated Services 3.4%	\$45,083
Other Income 2.0%	\$26,848

**Total Income** **\$1,330,873**



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT - ALEISEA GUZMAN

Aleisea Guzman started at Nativity Prep this fall as the full time art teacher. From the local New Bedford community, Aleisea has brought six years of experience in art education and a passion for inspiring creativity and critical thinking in her students. She graduated from UMass Dartmouth in 2018 with a degree in Animation and Game Design and a minor in Sculpture and is currently pursuing her Master's in Art Education at UMass Dartmouth. This summer she will be presenting in the Czech Republic at the InSEA Congress 2025 on "Digital Media for Equity: Empowering Students in Low-Income and Impoverished Communities."

Aleisea enjoys working in both digital and traditional art forms, and has a particular love for animation, digital media, and hands-on mediums. She believes art is vital for whole-child development, helping students cultivate critical thinking, collaboration, and self-expression skills. She describes herself as adaptable, welcoming, and intuitive and has a special knack for helping people attain their goals.

Aleisea has already transformed the art experience at Nativity Prep for the boys. While she teaches them about art technique and form, her number one priority is developing students as a whole and helping them grow - particularly in confidence. How does she accomplish that? Her message to the boys is "you are the only person who can create your art."

She recently submitted a proposal as part of her master's program to develop a mural with the students at Nativity - and not just any mural - but one steeped in research on how co-creation and joint decision making benefit middle school students. The final product will be a mural designed and created by 7th grade students with input from the entire school, and it will be proudly located outside on the walls surrounding the playground.

When asked why Aleisea chose 7th grade to do this project, she said, "because they will be the leaders of the school next year, and they have the opportunity with a year ahead of them to think about what their legacy to the school will be."

Aleisea plans to lead the 7th grade classes through joint decision making and consensus building processes that help the boys unveil the collective identity of the school as a whole. There are several phases to the project. First they worked independently thinking about how to represent the school - thinking about what art does for a community, specifically street art. They blended their ideas with a partner's, and the class narrowed the potential themes down through an elimination style school-wide vote - Nativity Prep's own Mural March Madness bracket. The final vote included students, faculty and parents and they determined the theme for the mural. It will be a combination of **Legacy and Nativity Heroes** - a celebration of the enduring impact of Nativity Prep, highlighting the traditions, values, and the continued influence of past generations - honoring the individuals who have shaped the school, from its founders to key donors, staff, and influential alumni.

This year Aleisea introduced all of the students to Wacom digital drawing tablets. They are a powerful tool that emulates the strokes and movements of brushes and pens. During the design phase of the mural, students will have the option of working digitally using a browser based program called Kleki or with paper and pencil. Part of the process will also involve bringing in local muralist, Brian Tillet, to provide the boys with some creative direction and support.

Aleisea anticipates the project will be completed in June - well before the school plans to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Perfect timing!

One of the things that Aleisea appreciates most about Nativity is that "everybody is working together to guide the boys as a whole; it's beautiful. The best thing you can have is somebody who believes in you, and I think everybody here believes in the students." It is certainly apparent that Aleisea does, too!



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT - THE RIVET BROTHERS

Jacob Rivet is the oldest of three brothers who attended Nativity Prep. He and his siblings shared their transformative experience at Nativity during the Spring Fundraiser in May 2024.

Jacob graduated with the Hurtado class in 2017 and is currently a senior at Williams College studying history and global studies on a pre-medical track. At the time of his presentation at the spring fundraiser, he was in the midst of a study abroad semester looking at public health in India, South Africa, and Argentina.

When he looks back on his time at Nativity, one of the things he remembers most is the AmeriCorps volunteers' dedication to the students. While they pushed the students academically, they also formed close relationships with them. This continues to be very important to Jacob - the ability to seek help from his professors, attend office hours and to ask for letters of recommendation. **"I believe that all stems from having confidence, and that is the most important skill I developed and practiced during my time at Nativity. I also believe the true Nativity experience encourages all students to become confident in every aspect of their lives."**

One area in which Nativity Prep helped him develop confidence was in public speaking; he and his classmates participated in read-a-thons, plays, performing arts, and in class discussions. Nativity Prep also helped him develop confidence on the sports field. **"My brothers and I learned so much through sports by making mistakes and responding to them and knowing that you're resilient and you can get it next time."**

For Jacob these lessons have been invaluable. It may seem simple putting on a shirt and tie - the Nativity uniform - but it takes confidence to be different, especially in middle school. Jacob has had the confidence to attend an independent school, a rigorous liberal arts university and, in the future, medical school. Jacob attributes his success, in part, to Nativity Prep and the sense of community and family that defines the school.

Noah Rivet graduated from Nativity Prep in 2018 as a member of the Faber class. Like Jacob, Nativity Prep played a pivotal role in Noah's personal and academic development. **He attributes two important values he acquired to his time at Nativity Prep - the importance of curiosity and being comfortable in the uncomfortable.**

Nativity continuously pushed Noah to try new things and stretch himself by joining clubs, completing projects, learning new sports and playing a sport every season. As a consequence, Noah learned a lot about himself. After Nativity, Noah attended Saint Andrews in Barrington, Rhode Island. There, he became the school president, a tour guide, a student ambassador, and captain of the varsity soccer team. Currently, Noah is a junior at Union College studying mechanical engineering and can be found interning at New Bedford Research and Robotics. Once again, it was through Nativity, that he discovered his interest in engineering.

The youngest of the three boys, Simon Rivet graduated in 2021; he learned how to give a proper handshake, tie a tie, and leave a good first impression at Nativity Prep. His experience in middle school also taught him about teamwork. He remembers with fondness growing up with a group of boys in a very tight brotherhood. They did everything together - projects, sports, clubs, and special events like MABACH.

In sixth grade, Simon was assigned a mentor who helped him through many struggles and with whom he still keeps in touch today. The mentorship program was just one of many opportunities like the guest speaker program, the field trips and community service that prepared Simon for the future and to give back.

Upon graduating from Nativity Prep, Simon enrolled in Providence Country Day School in East Providence, where he is currently a senior. Simon will be volunteering in Peru for his senior project this May and will begin his electrical trade school in June.



**"Due to the standards Nativity held, and its diverse community, by the time I got into high school, the work seemed easy. Overall, the mindset that Nativity develops in these young men guides them in the right direction and paves an easy path for their futures."**





## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BRIGGS CLASS OF 2024

**Aaden Bajandas** - Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School

**Adolfo Cedillo** - Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School

**Elias Dar** - Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School

**Elijah Gamiotea** - Bishop Stang

**Isaiah Henderson** - Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School

**Jasye Jorge** - St. Mark's School

**Jayce Jorge** - St. Mark's School

**Trent Latimer** - St. George's School

**Daejon Pires** - Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School

**Emry Viera** - Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School

At the graduation ceremony in June, **Adolfo Cedillo** was recognized as the Briggs Class Correspondent. He will serve as the point person for keeping connections made at Nativity alive beyond graduation.

**Isaiah Henderson** was the recipient of the Claire Carvalho Award. This award recognizes one 8th grader who most embodies the mission and core values through the combination of academic excellence, strong moral character, outstanding leadership, and service to others.

## WHY I SERVE - MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



### Jacob Berman\*

My involvement with Nativity Prep began in August of 2005 as a fifth grade student. After four great years during which NP prepared me for a rigorous high school education, I graduated with the Gonzaga class of 2008. My journey with the school was far from over, however, as I returned in 2017 as an AmeriCorps Teaching Fellow. Over the next six years, Nativity fostered my professional growth and development as a teacher and administrator, thanks to the invaluable knowledge from many colleagues and mentors. Although no longer a faculty member, I hope to continue supporting our students alongside others who are passionate about the mission of the school. The close-knit community is what makes Nativity Prep so incredible, and I am thankful to be able to stay connected to it in this new capacity as a member of the Board.

*\*Nativity Prep Alum*



### Terry Schaefer Severance

Years ago, I was asked by a friend to just come see Nativity Prep. After a routine morning assembly I said, "I'm in. What does this amazing school need?" First, in 2014, I made a video about Nativity Prep, then became a Board member, and am currently in my third 3 year term. I serve because I deeply believe in Nativity's mission to give New Bedford boys a chance in the world. We may not serve a huge number of kids, but over 25 years, dozens and dozens have been given the gift of a great education, dedication to service, and the confidence which comes from care and community. With Christian Garis and the whole Nativity team leading the way, the "sky's the limit" for Nativity's boys, past and present, especially as we work to expand awareness and support of the school.



### Geoff Worrell

I have been committed to serving in the community for my entire adult life, from my early involvement with school councils and advisory committees in school systems, to broader roles as a trustee. I served on Tabor Academy's Board of Trustees for 22 years. During that time, I had worked with Rich Roller in various capacities, including his role as a college counselor for two of my three children. When Rich enthusiastically shared the mission of Nativity, I KNEW I wanted to be involved.

My strong desire to help make a difference in the lives of children is paramount to my mission in life. Giving people opportunities to thrive, chances to maximize their potential to contribute to make our world a better place, and helping families navigate the huge challenges of our world is why I am involved at Nativity. I feel strongly that the Nativity students will make a difference in our world, regardless of the professions or occupations they seek - we are working hard to make sure they are kind, considerate, respectful, and have a strong moral character.



### Rich Roller, Board Chair

I was approached by Jim Feeney, then Board Chair, and John Martin about getting involved with Nativity after I retired from Tabor. I came down to visit, went to a morning assembly and was "hooked." I am in my seventh year on the Board and third year as Chair. I serve because I love kids and I totally believe in Nativity's mission to offer a high quality, independent school education to boys who may otherwise never have the experience. In short, the opportunity to be involved with an organization that positively changes the trajectory of young lives is incredibly rewarding; it makes me feel good. When I think about what I value most it includes the culture of the school, the individual attention afforded each boy, the evident trust that exists between students and teachers, and the depth and quality of the relationships Nativity fosters.



## William Bullard



I have had the pleasure of being associated with Nativity for over five years, first as a mentor, a role I continue today, and then as a member of the Board of Trustees. I was introduced to Nativity's mentor program by a friend and long-time Nativity stalwart, Tom Beaton, who also suggested I join the board a few years later.

I was very impressed by the school's culture, mission, and commitment to these young men, and as I met many students in my first years of mentoring, by the students themselves; their hard work, energy and kindness to one another. I am now mentoring a second student and we are building a nice relationship.

Serving on the Board has been a terrific learning experience, with an exceptional group of colleagues and a strong Board Chair and Head of School. I am happy to contribute what I can, while believing I gain more than I get from both the mentoring and the Board relationships. Nativity is an exceptional school, with terrific values, commitment to education, and most importantly, dedication to each individual student and alum.



## Tom Quinn, Bristol County District Attorney

Attorney John Markey spoke with me in 2010 about getting involved with the school. He was involved with Nativity Prep; and stressed the importance of the school. The late Claire Carvalho asked me to serve on the Board shortly before I became District Attorney. I most value the opportunity provided to young males to have an educational experience that will help them move forward with their lives.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - MENTOR MANUEL SEQUEIRA

Manuel Sequeira, Community Police Officer with the New Bedford Police Department, is one of more than twenty mentors supporting the boys at Nativity Prep. Manuel began mentoring this year after delivering a Friday morning guest presentation. When asked to share his thoughts about the program, he said, "It's absolutely great! While I had good adults around me, I wish I had had a mentor growing up. This gives me the opportunity to give back and make sure young brothers are doing the right things with their lives and going in the right direction."

Likewise, Manuel's mentee, John, likes the mentoring program because he has the opportunity to hang out with his mentor and "talk about school stuff." He said, "It's like having another brother."

The mentorship program currently serves all of the 5th graders and a handful of boys from the other grades. The aspiration is to increase the number of mentors in the program, so that every boy can benefit from the guidance and friendship that comes from mentoring.





## EVENTS

The 2023-2024 year featured a number of events including the traditional Holiday Luncheon, Spring Dinner and Fundraiser, Mother's and Special Friend's Day and the Golf and Tennis Tournament. The Spring Dinner featured five alumni - Johnny Kazan and Tru Gonsalves-Cosme, who were the masters of ceremony, and the Rivet brothers who were our keynote speakers, and approximately 20 alumni who were in attendance.

Unfortunately, the 2023 Golf and Tennis Tournament was rained out. Many stalwart supporters, however, attended the dinner and auction held out by the pool under tents at the Bay Club. It was a success despite the rain.



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Noah Avelar-Fortes  
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