

# Notre Dame

## HIGH SCHOOL

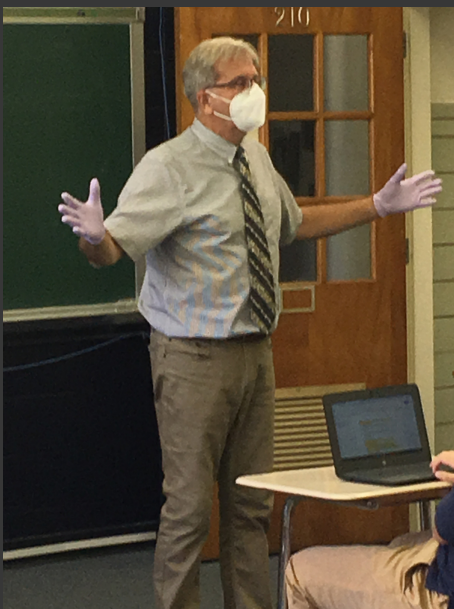
Grades 7 - 12

# CRUSADER CONNECTION

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL GRADES 7-12 NEWSLETTER

## A School Opening Like No Other!

The opening of the 2020-2021 academic year was like no other in Notre Dame's 65-year history! All students, faculty, and staff are masked, socially distanced, and screened daily for health concerns. While the school year is definitely "different" it still is good to be back in school together. This year, ND also welcomes many students who are remote learners joining classes via livestream while we engage asynchronously with our students from China. Our Crusader Pride is strong so we will face the challenges of this year with both GRACE & GRIT!



## SCHOOL IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Mr. John Olisky, the 41-year tenant in Room 210, begins Theology 9 (Understanding the Bible) while masked and gloved in the classroom but behind the mask, the always charismatic and engaging teacher is the same! #NotreDame65Anniversary

Please see more photos on page 6.

## NOTRE DAME CELEBRATES 65TH ANNIVERSARY



BY SISTER MARY WALTER HICKEY, RSM  
PRESIDENT EMERITA

Sixty-five years ago in September, 1955, the doors of Notre Dame High School opened to 341 students with sixteen teachers and one priest on the faculty. Thirteen teachers were Sisters of Mercy and three were laypersons. In 2020, the first day of school was September 14th; 251 students were enrolled and 29 of the faculty are dedicated and qualified laypersons. Some of our students are being instructed virtually and the rest are in school following the COVID guidelines of Chemung County Health Department.

Notre Dame's reputation for excellence was noted when it received early accreditation by the University of the State of New York in 1956 and the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges in 1961. The school continues its accreditation and review with both agencies; current students are challenged to succeed and actualize their potential to the fullest. The Class of 2020 received \$4,094,039 in scholarships. Most of the graduates were accepted at their number one choice school.

Many of the current traditions of our school have their roots in the early history of the school. The yearbook, *The Credo*, and the school newspaper, *The Maryleaf*, the Golden Mass and May Day still have an important role in the school today. The Drama Department began in 1956 with the production of *The Song of Bernadette*. Throughout the years musicals have developed the talent of many thespians. Athletics have always complemented academics and have been an important part of the school since the beginning. The boys basketball team was first to enter interscholastic competition in 1955 and football followed in 1959. Girls' sports began in the 70's under the leadership of Mrs. Peg Childs and her husband John. Currently the school supports 11 boys teams and 9 girls teams. We are proud of the many championship teams as well as the number of teams that have been recognized for their sportsmanship.

In 2012 Notre Dame welcome the seventh and eighth grade to our student body. In 2015 we began an international program with 3-W and the convent was converted into a residence for Chinese students. Ever changing, ever remaining the same.

Throughout the history of the school, we have weathered economic downturns and floods. Today our challenge is coping with COVID. In March 2020 school was closed and teachers connected with their students via ZOOM. They adapted to revolutionary new ways of meeting with their students. Their effort and determination to complete their courses made them HEROES. We finished the year with an outdoor graduation in Brewer Memorial Stadium.

Notre Dame continues to serve the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania providing a quality education in the tradition of our founding sisters of Notre Dame High School – the Sisters of Mercy. We could not have successfully completed 65 years without the help of our many loyal and generous friends and the dedication of our faculty and staff. It is time to celebrate our many years of service in education!



NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL  
ELMIRA, NEW YORK  
ESTABLISHED 1955

## MAKE MERCY REAL! MASK UP WITH MERCY

BY KAREN JENNINGS, INTERIM  
HEAD OF SCHOOL



2020 has shown us how intimately connected we all are to one another in our world. As we continue our work of empowering students to respond mercifully to the crises of our day, we reflect on the words of Micah.6:8: "And what does God require of you? To act justly and to love mercifully and to walk humbly with your God." What are the Crusaders of NDHS doing? We wear our masks, all day, every day, except when we are eating, to protect each other and our families. Our Seniors, under the direction of Alexandra Welliver '21, are running a school-wide book drive to provide books of their own to local children. Our faculty and staff are already pondering ways to accomplish Christmas Baskets and Golden Mass. Under the direction of Mr. Cody Riker, the drama department is working on a Christmas gift to our community to celebrate our 65th anniversary. The entire faculty and staff are working harder than ever to provide in-person learning 4 days a week with one virtual day of full virtual learning for our students.

Each and every day, I am proud to walk in to Notre Dame High School and see #MakeMercyReal coming to life all around me.



**"The faculty and staff are working harder than ever."  
- Karen Jennings**



Notre Dame is pleased to welcome Mr. Mike Johnston'64 back to Notre Dame as our Interim Assistant to the Head of School and Athletic Director. Mike graduated from ND in 1964 and also was our Guidance Counselor & football coach from 1971-1989. Please visit the Notre Dame website to read his impressive bio detailing his stellar career in education.

***Mike poses with his Senior-year CREDO yearbook from the Class of 1964!***



# WELCOME CLASS OF 2026



**Notre Dame is pleased to welcome our newest class! This year is the largest enrollment we have had in three years for 7th grade!**

## CAMPUS MINISTRY

### #CrusaderPenguin

BY MARIE MCCAIG, CAMPUS MINISTER/THEOLOGY FACULTY



If you are curious to know how we are pulling off the day-to-day operations at Notre Dame, consider the wonder of the emperor penguins of Antarctica! Their survival is contingent upon working together. They huddle together by the thousands, creating the warmth necessary to survive the brutal weather of Antarctica. They take turns monitoring the outside of their giant huddle. When the penguins on "outside duty" become dangerously cold, they instinctively move to the inside of the group to find rest and warmth.

The penguins could not survive if they did not continuously rotate. Like these penguins, our students are taking care of each other. Our staff/faculty is taking care of each other. We are united in our common effort to keep each other safe during this Covid-19 crisis. It is a privilege to witness our Crusaders tackling our daily inconveniences with a spirit of love. Let us pray for each other and those who are impacted by Covid-19.







## Greetings from the Guidance Office

The Guidance Office employs a "The Door is Always Open" policy for students to ask questions, seek guidance, or receive help on academic or personal/social issues. NEW THIS YEAR -- the Guidance Google Classroom has all kinds of information and forms for students to access, especially for upper classmen as they work on their college searches and applications.

### A WONDERFUL Announcement from the ND Drama Club



Notre Dame is pleased to announce one of our 65th Anniversary Events for the entire community to enjoy: the ND Drama Club will be presenting *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Show*. Presented in mid-December (date to be announced soon) via online streaming. You will be able to enjoy this holiday classic from the comfort of your own home!



## SCHOOL

## Snapshots!



**CONGRATULATIONS to Pratha Purushottam** who has been recognized for her exceptional academic promise and identified as a Commended Student as part of the National Merit Scholarship Program. Pratha placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

Notre Dame is adjusting to our "new normal" as we engage in school with masks, social distance, and both virtual and in-person instruction. Although at times challenging, we will display our CRUSADER PRIDE and persevere!

