



Saint Peter's

UNIVERSITY

Magazine
SPRING 2020

Cura Personalis Grows

Stories of resilience, connection and hope during the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic



INSIDE: THE TURNAROUND SEASON FOR MEN'S BASKETBALL

REFLECTION ON HEALING AND HOPE

We are at a moment when so many in our community are facing loss due to the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. To everyone in our Peacock family who has sacrificed, or is struggling with hardship, worry and grief, the Saint Peter's Jesuit Community offers a reflection on the life of our patron, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who recognized in his own spiritual journey that gratitude is quite possibly the greatest weapon God gives us against despair. When we take the time to be grateful, it diverts our gaze toward the light rather than the darkness. Light in the midst of darkness gave Ignatius and generations of followers what they needed to keep on with their ministry.

We hope that on Sunday, November 1 we can safely gather together for our annual Alumni Memorial Mass at St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church where we will honor dearly departed alumni, faculty and friends of the University, especially those who have passed in the last year.

MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS

In times of crisis, answering the call of others is more important than ever. This is especially true for the hundreds of Saint Peter's University alumni who've served as first responders or have been on the front lines of the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your generosity, compassion and resolve.

Moving Forward Together



The coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic isn't the first crisis Saint Peter's University encountered and it certainly won't be the last. In 1918, our classrooms were emptied due to World War I. The University closed for a dozen years and was resurrected by the Jesuits in 1930, better than before. We stood strong through the Great Depression, World War II, decades of urban decline in Jersey City, and more recently, 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy. We will get through the havoc COVID-19 has wrought, too, because our purpose and reason for being is guided by Ignatian values and principles.

Cura personalis, "care for the whole person," has been our North Star throughout this healthcare crisis. Even when we had to suspend face-to-face classes in mid-March, our faculty sustained its commitment to focusing on students as individuals and infused remote learning with warmth and concern. Despite the abrupt pause to the semester, administrators and staff responded to students' needs whether it was laptops for remote learning, accommodations for safe shelter or advice on how to proceed with a job search in the middle of a global pandemic.

By relying on our Jesuit mission, we took care of each other and the greater community. Athletics found a way for graduating seniors to say goodbye to their sport. The Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing went above and beyond to make accepted students feel they were already part of the Peacock community. The Jesuit community kept us spiritually connected and the Office of Campus Ministry sustained outreach, whether it was virtual prayer for students or food donations for people in need.

We are proud and deeply grateful to our alumni who have shown themselves to be Men and Women for Others throughout COVID-19. You are teachers who make it possible for children to learn in a virtual environment, medical professionals on the front lines of the crisis and leaders who ensure that the institutions people count on remain viable. You are donors whose outpouring of support made Saint Peter Day, our second annual day of giving, a huge success. You give us hope that better days are ahead.

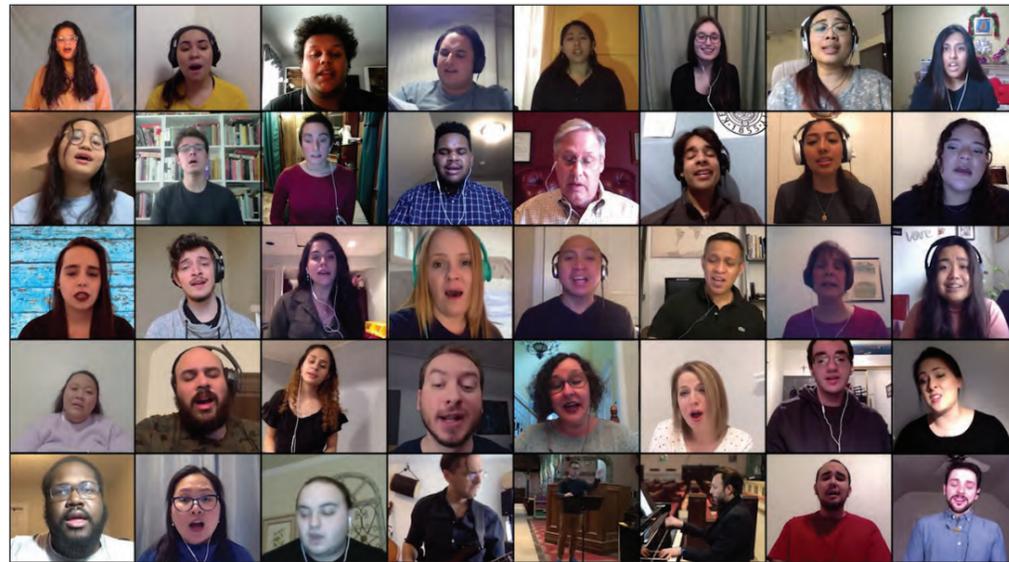
"Cura personalis, 'care for the whole person,' has been our North Star throughout this healthcare crisis."

Speaking of better days, know that our aim is to resume face-to-face classes this fall, following all directives and guidelines from the State of New Jersey, and adopting all social distancing measures and protocols to ensure the health and wellbeing of our community. This crisis has taught us how to be even more nimble and we will plan for every contingency.

No doubt, there will be additional challenges to navigate. With your faith in Saint Peter's and great love for this institution, we will move forward together.

With gratitude,

Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D.
President



Due to the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic, this is a special, abridged issue of *Saint Peter's University*. The regular magazine will resume in the new academic year.

HOW TO REACH US

Alumni News & Notes
 Email: alumni@saintpeters.edu
 Office of Alumni Engagement
 2641 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
 Jersey City, NJ 07306

Letter to the Editor
 Email: smalinowski@saintpeters.edu
 Editor, *Saint Peter's University*
 2641 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
 Jersey City, NJ 07306
 Telephone: (201) 761-6239
 Fax: (201) 761-6241

On the cover:

The coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic presented extraordinary challenges to the Saint Peter's University community, which relied on Jesuit principles such as *cura personalis* for guidance.

Above left:

Members of The Aidan C. McMullen Chorale, Saint Peter's University SCHOLA, The Alumni Glee Club and Group Singing Class debuted a song on YouTube on April 13.

CONNECT



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SPRING 2020 SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY

Volume 39, Number 2

Editor

Sarah Malinowski Ferrary
 Executive Director of University Communications

Editorial & Design Services

Erbach Communications Group

Contributors & Editorial Assistance

Angelina Boyer, M.B.A. '15
Photography
 Patrick Cucurullo '20
 GR Productions
 Beth Lochner
 Michael Marmora



Students and families facing financial hardship due to the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic received some welcome news in May. Saint Peter's University instituted a tuition freeze for all undergraduate, School of Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS) and graduate students in all programs of study for the 2020-2021 academic year. Returning full-time undergraduates will also benefit from a one-time *Cura Personalis* Grant of up to \$250 to be applied to unmet need in order to assist with degree completion.

"While there are many uncertainties in our lives these days, I do know that a Saint Peter's education must remain attainable, valuable and affordable," said University President Eugene J. Cornacchia, Ph.D., in a message to the student body. "Steps must be taken to ensure that you remain a part of our Peacock family." Saint Peter's average net price, which is the cost to attend after financial aid is applied, is currently less than the cost to attend many public universities in New Jersey. The tuition freeze and grants will further reduce students' out-of-pocket costs.



Saint Peter's University was proud to celebrate and recognize the Class of 2020 this spring given that the University's year-end gatherings were not possible. In order to honor the graduates virtually, the University developed a #SPU2020 Peacock Pride Wall, shared a surprise online commencement address on May 18 and a social media challenge, which launched on Monday, May 11. "As we learn more in the coming weeks, and our situation becomes clearer, we will work towards a plan to honor our graduates in person," said Frederick Bonato, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs. Saint Peter's is proud to have the Class of 2020 join the more than 33,000 graduates in the alumni community.

CURA PERSONALIS GROWS

By mid-March of this year, the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic ground life as we know it to a halt. These **Stories of Resilience** demonstrate how the enduring power of *cura personalis* helped the University prevail through the unprecedented healthcare crisis.

AROUND-THE-CLOCK CARE FOR PATIENTS AND STUDENTS

Teaneck, N.J., was an early epicenter of the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic and Margaret Edwards, A.N.P., nurse practitioner at Holy Name Medical Center and adjunct lecturer in the School of Nursing at Saint Peter's University, was in the thick of it. "We definitely saw a spike early on," said Professor Edwards, who teaches undergraduate and graduate courses at the University. The hospital quickly transformed into battle mode to treat the surge of COVID-19 cases and Professor Edwards moved to the front lines of care.

The month of March was a triage marathon as Professor Edwards and her colleagues worked around the clock. Weekdays, she screened patients for the virus via telemedicine. Weekends were spent coordinating the influx of patients from the Emergency Department to the expanded Intensive Care Units Holy Name quickly assembled to meet the growing demand. Despite working seven days a week under extremely stressful conditions, the nursing instructor remained accessible to her students.

"This is what we do...you have to embrace that if you are going to continue down this road."

"I love my students. They are a great group," said Professor Edwards, who has taught in the School of Nursing since 2012. In the middle of the spring semester, she, along with all other Saint Peter's faculty, transitioned all face-to-face courses—Health Assessment and the Clinical requirement for the B.S.N. program, and the graduate Adult Gerontology class—to remote learning. In the midst of the COVID-19 surge, the professor appreciated the flexibility of Saint Peter's nursing students. "I would send assignments or we might do a Zoom call for an hour to prepare for lecture when I had an hour break in the day," she said. By April, Pro-

fessor Edwards' work schedule adjusted to six days a week and classes were meeting regularly online.

Professor Edwards' extraordinary embrace of *cura personalis* or "care for the whole person," is not unique. Dean of the School of Nursing Lauren O'Hare, Ed.D., R.N., noted that another six adjunct lecturers sustained their commitment to patients and students throughout the pandemic. They include Catherine Alvarez, M.S.N., R.N.C., Barbara Crowley, D.N.P. '15, Alex Fitzsimmons, M.S.N., N.P., R.N., Olga Karlin, M.S.N., R.N., Katherine Labriola, M.S.N., R.N.-B.C., C.N.E., and Denise Quinn, D.N.P. Nurse managers and nurse practitioners at hospitals ranging from Hackensack University Medical Center to NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, these nursing professionals are true role models, according to Dr. O'Hare. "The experience they bring to the classroom is extremely valuable for our students," she said. Throughout the crisis, "They have been dedicated to the profession and dedicated to the students in order to provide them with the best possible experience all the time."

The healthcare crisis presented some teachable moments too, especially for B.S.N. candidates. "This is what we do," Professor Edwards stressed to undergraduates over the course of the pandemic. "It's what we've been trained to do. You have to embrace that if you are going to continue down this road." Still, the disease took an emotional toll. The nurse practitioner witnessed patients who initially appeared stable suddenly worsen needing intubation and ventilators. The calls for code blue, the alert signifying a patient is in cardiac or respiratory failure, were constant. "It was emotionally rough," she said. "We lost co-workers and physicians. But the resilience of the staff was incredible. People shifted into roles on the front lines and doing things they had never done before."

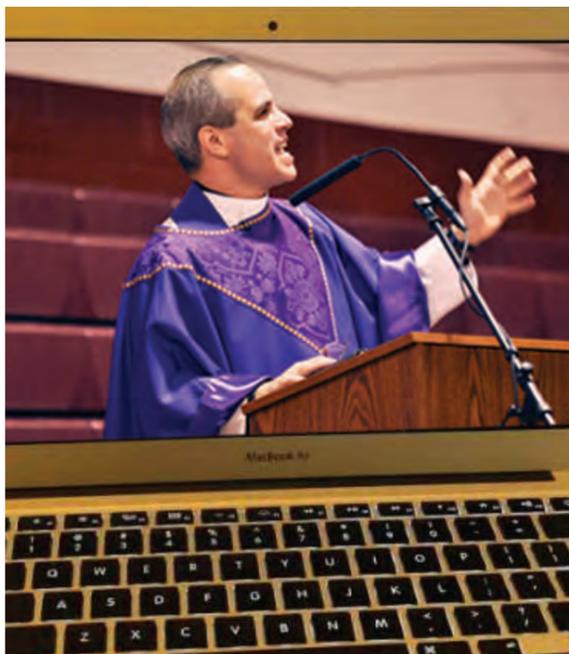
By late April, Professor Edwards could take a breath and reflect a bit on what the experience has taught her. "I'm always preaching to my students about time management," she said. "In trying to juggle all of this [caring for patients and students] I'm practicing what I'm preaching."

Students presented their case studies under the watchful eye of Professor Margaret Edwards, A.N.P., during their Nursing Care Adults & Aging II Clinical class, which was held virtually via Zoom.



Reaching Out

The concert series brought comfort and entertainment directly to people's homes with two Facebook Live events: Frank J. Fano performed an organ recital on April 8, and Julie Fristensky '73, Warren Fristensky '74, accompanied by Joseph W. Hill performed "Duets II" on April 22.



Vice President for Mission and Ministry Rev. Rocco Danzi, S.J.

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the Jesuit community provided comfort through Facebook Live Masses broadcast from their private chapel in the Jesuit residence. "We discerned as a community that it was important to welcome people into our time of prayer and celebration of the Eucharist," explained Rev. Rocco Danzi, S.J., vice president for mission and ministry.

As quarantines around the country continued, the daily Masses on their page, Jerseycityjesuits, showed a steady uptick in views from the Jesuit community's three apostolates—Saint Peter's University, Saint Peter's Preparatory School and St. Aedan's: The Saint Peter's University Church. The comments feature on Facebook allowed congregants to participate in the Mass in real time, posting prayer petitions and sharing the sign of peace. "I think people realized that the love of Christ and a spiritual connection were helping to move us through the pandemic," Fr. Danzi said.

In addition to Masses in English and Spanish, campus ministry provided opportunities for students to pray together through virtual offerings such as participating in the Rosary, a Lenten penance service and Eucharistic adoration. Fr. Danzi said, "I think we're coming away from this with a sense that we can explore more deeply the connectedness we can have through the virtual world."

STICKING TO OUR VALUES

The number of COVID-19 cases was rising exponentially on March 31, when members of the Saint Peter's University community donned personal protective equipment to pack up a sizable donation of non-perishable items from the Food Pantry. At this point in the pandemic, the University's Campus Kitchen, a ministry that redistributes food and meals from dining halls, cafeterias and local restaurants to those who struggle with hunger, had to suspend operation.

"Many of our clients are elderly and we didn't want to expose anyone to coronavirus," explained Associate Director of Campus Ministry for Community Service Erich Sekel, who oversees The Campus Kitchen. Food donations had dried up, too, since Campus Kitchen partner organizations were also shuttered. The Food Pantry, however, was available to emergency requests from members of the Saint Peter's community. That's when the Hudson County Housing Department contacted Sekel. The county had arranged safe shelter for homeless residents—many of whom were elderly or had pre-existing medical conditions—in a few hotels on Tonnelle Avenue.

Sekel, along with Edward Daniel '14, '16, recreational program coordinator at Saint Peter's, and Michael Parilla, a longtime Campus Kitchen volunteer, packed up 140 bags of canned goods and nonperishable food items the following day. "We've been blessed with the support of the community through food drives earlier in the year by Hudson Catholic High School and JPMorgan Chase," Sekel noted. "It was very important for us to get food to people who needed it. When in doubt or fear, you still need to stick to your values; you stick to what you believe in."



Associate Director of Campus Ministry for Community Service Erich Sekel

GIVING AND RECEIVING



Gabriella Ambrose '19, '20 has a unique perspective on the Jesuit belief of providing "care for the whole person." Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, she's generously given *cura personalis* to undergraduates sheltering on campus

as a Resident Assistant (RA), and has also been on the receiving end of the principle as a graduate student in the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) program.

When colleges and universities began to close their physical campuses in mid-March, Ambrose faced a dilemma. "Back home on Long Island, I don't have a bed to sleep in or access to Wi-Fi and other necessities to keep up with my classwork," she said. An RA for the past three years, she and a small group of undergraduates moved to Veteran's Memorial Court for the duration of the shutdown. There, Ambrose had safe place to shelter and continued to serve as RA.

"We're still connecting with the students, helping them with resources and making ourselves as accessible as possible."

"It's definitely more difficult and different from the normal RA experience," she explained. Ambrose misses the communal gatherings and events that are a staple of residential life, and added, "We're still connecting with the students, helping them with resources and making ourselves as accessible as possible."

The RA is also mindful of the higher levels of anxiety and stress residents are experiencing. "We have a number of international students who are missing family and home," she said. "I don't want to add to any of the stress they're experiencing or worsen their sense of fear." Ambrose admits the personal protective equipment she wears to perform

rounds and other duties "can look scary, so I always make sure to smile and reassure students."

As an undergraduate, Ambrose chose Saint Peter's University for its personal care of students and Ignatian mission to be "Men and Women for Others," tenets that have been the wind behind her back. Before completing a bachelor's degree in history, Ambrose interned and volunteered for a number of community organizations and nonprofits. She began graduate studies on an accelerated track senior year, currently works as an administrative assistant to two University academic departments, and is running to represent District 2 on the Hudson County Board of Freeholders.

Ambrose is also one of the youngest students in the M.P.A. program; most of her classmates have full-time jobs and children to take care of while they try to work from home. She is grateful for the *cura personalis* shown to herself and classmates. "My professors have been so considerate. They're in constant communication. There's been a lot of peer-to-peer and faculty-student support during this time."

COMMITTED TO HER COMMUNITY



By day, Keisher Harris '10, '20 is a phlebotomist for the Jersey City Department of Health & Human Services. Nights and weekends are devoted to completing the Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) at Saint Peter's

University and community organizing. "I love it, live it and breathe community," said Harris, who has served as president of the Storms Avenue Block Association in addition to volunteering for her church and local nonprofits.

Harris traded her usual duties in late March when the city opened two COVID-19 testing sites—drive-thru and walk-up—to slow the pace of the epidemic. She's been on the front lines to combat COVID-19 ever since.

Accepted Students Welcomed

Accepted students frequently choose Saint Peter's University after experiencing its *cura personalis* firsthand. Though COVID-19 postponed admission events and visits, the Office of Enrollment Management and Marketing quickly pivoted to engage prospective students. In addition to Virtual Accepted Students Day, the University organized multiple accepted student live chats, kept connected via text and email, and even went "old school," accompanying prospective freshmen, transfer and graduate students through the decision process by phone. It's all intended to deliver the personal attention and care Saint Peter's is known for.

"We're rediscovering and reimagining how we interact with prospective students and families," said Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing Elizabeth Sullivan. "*Cura personalis* isn't just our physical reality. It's in the spirit of everything we do."

Saint Peter's was also an early proponent to extend National Decision Day to June 1. "We knew students and families were going to need more time," said Sullivan. "We want to instill trust and confidence, so that no matter what the next few months look like, students will be welcomed into a community this fall."

TOGETHER APART

Saint Peter's University found innovative ways to remain connected to students during COVID-19. Here are some highlights:

- The physical closure of the campus didn't stop the **Guarini Institute for Government and Leadership** from bringing critical discussions of public policy directly to the Saint Peter's community. "Zoom in!" Chats with Jenny Davis Toth, chief of intergovernmental affairs at The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, and others provided a forum to learn about public leaders and the path to their careers.
- The **Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE)** moved its tutoring online, sustaining its commitment to helping students manage the college experience and achieve academic goals.
- The annual **Magis Leadership Conference** was held on April 14 as a Zoom webinar. The live event was attended by 118 students and the recording was made available for all students to watch on-demand.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR JOBS IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?



Alexandra Antonucci '20

The post-graduation plans of Alexandra Antonucci '20 were coming together. The honors student, editor-in-chief of *The Pauw Wow* and aspiring journalist was building a portfolio, making connections with editors and even landing freelance gigs with ROI-NJ and *Jersey City Times*. Then COVID-19

hit. Like thousands of graduating seniors around the country, Antonucci's last semester came to an abrupt end and the job prospects looked grim.

After receiving an email from the University informing students that services like the Center for Career Engagement and Experiential Learning (CEEL) remained available, Antonucci immediately reached out to CEEL using the subject line, "How do you apply

for jobs in a global pandemic?" Enzo Fonzo, CPRW, director of senior year engagement and success, called Antonucci the next day. The two spoke for an hour and Fonzo helped revamp both her resumé and LinkedIn profile to stand out to employers, and shared connections that could help the graduating senior in her job search.

"It's a tough time for students, so you want to be even more available than before," said Fonzo. The CEEL team also brought employers and alumni into the process of providing opportunities for students to network and connect. Student organizer Lia Finnegan '20 worked closely with career advisors to create the Alumni Panel on Career Strategies for Students in the Liberal Arts and Humanities. CEEL also facilitated Zoom meetings with the Peace Corps, hosted an online presentation on navigating the virtual job interview and kept in close contact with graduating seniors on career prospects. "Employers are still hiring during COVID-19," Fonzo stated. "The CEEL team has been very engaged with the students. They embody the spirit of *cura personalis*."

UPLIFTING SPIRITS

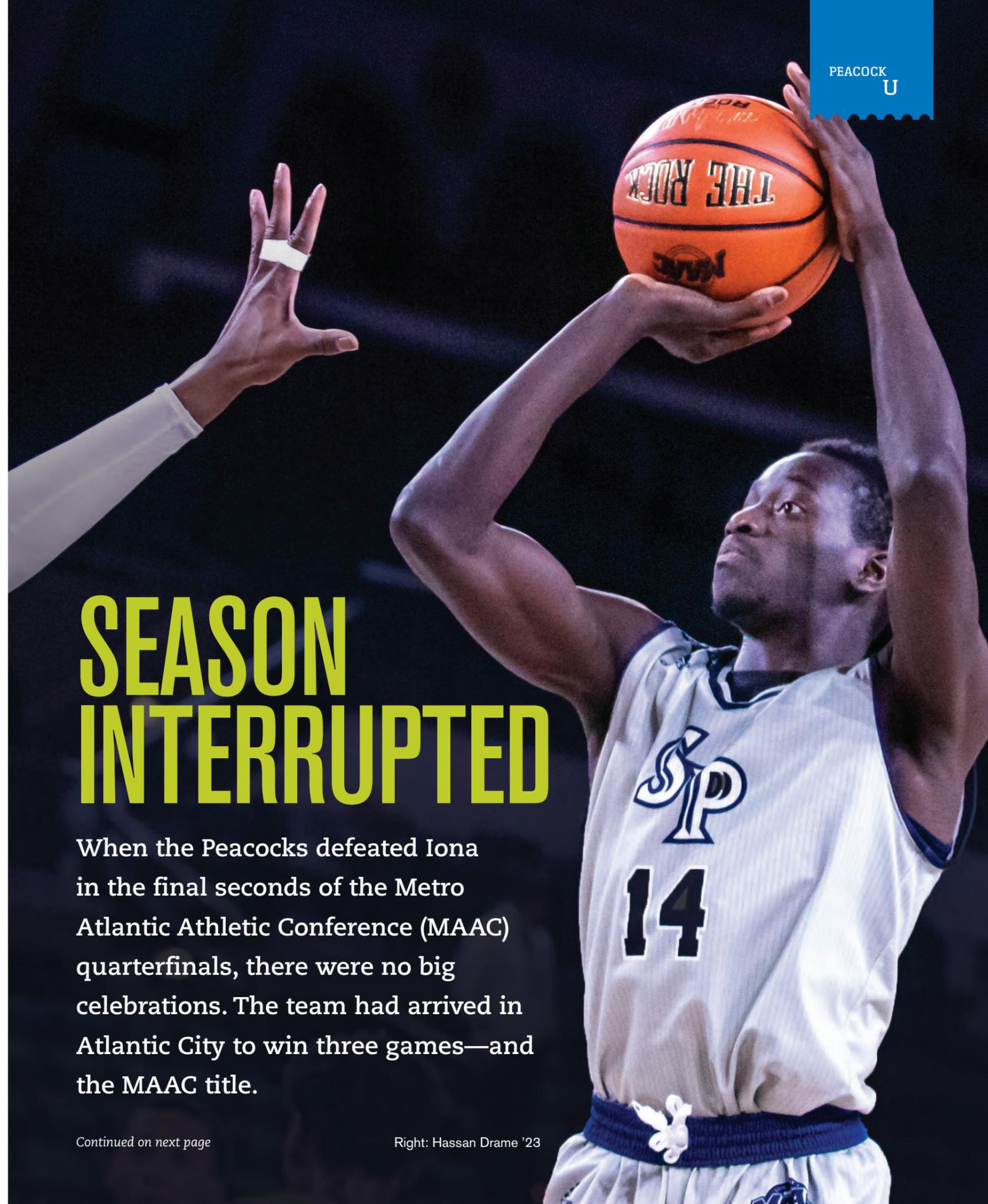
The Aidan C. McMullen Chorale was in the middle of preparations for its annual spring concert when COVID-19 made rehearsals and a live performance impossible. University Director of Music Joseph Legaspi, D.M., acted quickly. He wanted to do something for Chorale members who lost their concert, and the graduating seniors who would miss Class of 2020 sendoff events. "As a campus minister, I had to lift students' spirits," he said. "Music can bring people together no matter where they are."

On April 13, a moving rendition of Coldplay's "Fix You" debuted on YouTube, featuring 45 members of the Chorale, Saint Peter's University SCHOLA, The Alumni Glee Club and Group Singing class in the fine arts department. Putting the virtual arrangement



together was no simple task. Dr. Legaspi recorded a piano track that was sent to participants to record their vocals individually. He then edited the recordings into a singular performance that went straight to the heart.

The time and effort was worth it. The video was viewed 2,500 times the first week and garnered thanks and appreciation from the Saint Peter's community and beyond. "It's reached a lot of people," said Dr. Legaspi. "I hope it will reach more."



SEASON INTERRUPTED

When the Peacocks defeated Iona in the final seconds of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) quarterfinals, there were no big celebrations. The team had arrived in Atlantic City to win three games—and the MAAC title.

Continued on next page

Right: Hassan Drame '23

Continued from previous page

The next day, the season ended abruptly with the cancellation of the MAAC tournament due to the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. “At first, I was a little disappointed because my team was playing at a high,” said Head Coach Shaheen Holloway. “But then, when you start looking at the big picture, it was the right thing for the commissioner to do. This disease, it comes at you in an unknown type of way. It was the right thing to do.”

The season was one for the record books for the Peacocks, who finished 18-12 overall, with a 14-6 mark in the MAAC. Saint Peter's University became the first team in history to win four of the five major awards from the conference in the same season. “I thought it was a great year,” Holloway said. “I was very happy with the way the guys competed. They came out and focused and gave me everything they've got. That's all we ever asked for from day one—just go out, work and play your hardest.”

That's exactly what the Peacocks did. When the dust had settled, Holloway had been named The Rock MAAC Coach of the Year, while forward KC Ndefo '22 was named as both the MAAC Defensive Player of the Year and Sixth Player of the Year and Aaron Estrada '23 claimed MAAC Rookie of the Year honors.

Ndefo led Saint Peter's in scoring (8.5), rebounding (5.2), offensive rebounding (2.0), blocks (2.4), and steals (1.5) in his second season with the Peacocks. His 2.4 blocks per game and 66 total blocked shots ranked 23rd and 25th in the nation, respectively, and he was the only player in the MAAC this season to rank top 10 in both blocks and steals on the conference leaderboard. While Ndefo was a clear team leader, a host of other players also stepped up throughout the season—a testament to the team's depth. On any given night, Holloway tapped the talents of 10 core players, each of whom made key contributions to the record-breaking season.

Holloway is looking to some of his younger players to carry this year's momentum into next season. “I was really impressed with the young guys, and by young guys I don't mean just the freshmen. I mean the sophomores, as well,” he said. “Those guys came out and competed every night at a high level. Together, with my assistant coaches and staff, we were able to accomplish things that many people thought were impossible. I am just so proud of this team. I look forward to when we're back to work on the hardwood playing in front of the greatest fans in the MAAC.”

Senior Sendoffs

Many graduating senior student-athletes had their seasons cancelled as a result of COVID-19 or didn't get to say a proper farewell to their teammates, coaches and sport.

The athletics department created Peacocks' Tribune, an online forum for student-athletes, coaches and administrators to share messages, reflections on their Peacock experience, or simply say goodbye.

“This isn't the farewell tour I was expecting,” wrote sprinter Brandon Campbell '20 who had just recovered from injuries during the winter track and field season and was looking forward to spring. “Thank you for everyone who's been along with me for this journey. It's sad that this is how my career will end, but everything happens for a reason. Now it's time to see where God takes me next. I appreciate everyone who has ever showed support and been there for me at my highs and my lows.”



Brandon Campbell '20

And the SP Goes To...

The Department of Athletics honored eight individuals and four teams during a virtual rendition of the SP's on May 4, the annual awards banquet that recognizes athletic, academic and community achievement.

2020 Academic Team of Champions

Men's Golf Team

Scholar Athletes of the Year

Hunter Mason '20, Baseball
Georgia Verrastro '20, Softball

Iron Peacock Award

Anja Kane '22, Softball
Philip Smith '21, Men's Soccer

Comeback Player of the Year Award

John Gavura '20, Baseball
Rachael Johnson '20, Volleyball/
Women's Track and Field

Pride Cup

Men's Soccer Team

Community Service Award

Softball Team

Best Team Performance of the Year

Men's Basketball vs. Iona, MAAC
Championship Quarterfinals

Best Individual Performance of the Year

Dominic Laws '21, Men's Soccer
at Marist College

Bill Stein Peacock Pride Award

Joseph A. McLaughlin, Ed.D. '77,
professor and chair of sociology
and urban studies

5 minutes with...

Rachelle Paul was four months into her tenure as Director of Athletics when the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic ground athletics — and life as we know it— to an indefinite halt. Paul discusses the crisis, *cura personalis* of student-athletes and the way forward for Peacock Athletics.



How are you and everyone involved in athletics doing? How are you managing during this crisis?

We are doing okay. From a leadership standpoint, communication is first and foremost right now. We've been able to hold regular staff meetings and do some individual one-on-ones online. Our coaches are in constant contact with student-athletes to keep them engaged and connected. We're also meeting virtually with our Student Athlete Advisory Committee to get feedback on the challenges they're facing and relaying information and resources to help them through.

You've long focused on promoting the personal growth of student-athletes. How do you keep *cura personalis* at the fore when everyone in the program is apart?

Technology has been a saving grace. We're able to keep *cura personalis* in the forefront because we make sure decisions are made in the best interest of our students. Sports can be a big part of the identity of student-athletes, and we need to make sure they are physically and mentally well. That is the most important thing right now.

You hold two degrees from Canisius College. Does becoming A.D. at a Jesuit institution hold special significance for you?

It does. Having come through Jesuit education, the mission and

mentality of Men and Women for Others is very important to me. It's a culture I wanted to be a part of and curate. Whether we are managing this crisis or working to transform athletics, we're all in this together. Athletics is not in a silo. We're all working together toward a common goal.

What are your thoughts on athletics moving forward?

This is a truly exciting time for the University and in athletics, where we wrapped up our most successful year in quite some time. The men's soccer team got us started with a MAAC regular season title and we hosted the championship title game for the first time ever. The fan base at Jaroschak Field was electric and that momentum continued into the basketball season with some incredible support and home-court advantage that lifted both teams to successful campaigns. Even though we're in a challenging time right now, the goal is to keep transforming athletics for the future. 'A rising tide lifts all boats,' is something I said in my interview for this job. Athletics is a unique avenue to bring people together, and the value athletics brings to the University is something you can't put a price tag on. Moving forward, with the support and engagement I witnessed in just a few short months since I arrived, I truly believe we can continue this upward trajectory.

Anything else you want alumni to know?

During this challenging and uncertain time, the University community has come together to care for students, and to care for each other. I hope the alumni feel that connection too; they are an integral part of this family. I hope they know that we continue to work with each other and for each other, even though we are not on campus. Lastly, I would like to thank all of the alumni and fans of athletics whose financial support directly benefits our student-athletes.

Rachelle Paul became the 10th Director of Athletics at Saint Peter's University in November 2019. Prior to Saint Peter's, she most recently served as senior associate athletics director, senior woman administrator and deputy Title IX coordinator at Seton Hall University. Paul holds a bachelor's degree in communication studies and a master's degree in sport administration from Canisius College, where she also was a four-year letter winner in women's lacrosse and a two-year member of the women's soccer team.

Saint Peter Day Shatters Goal

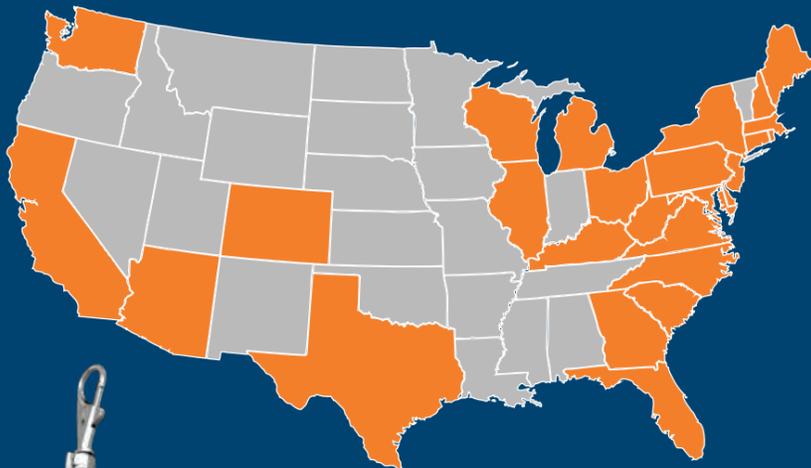
Alumni and friends demonstrated their belief in students, Jesuit education and the University on April 8, the second annual Saint Peter Day. Over a 24-hour period, a tremendous amount of support surpassed the initial financial goal, and set new records for donor participation. Here are the highlights:



618 Total Gifts **600** Total Donors **+35%** increase in participation

Gifts from Coast to Coast

While the majority of the Saint Peter's community resides in New Jersey and New York, the Peacock network extends far and wide and donors on Saint Peter Day came from:



Those that made a gift of \$25 or more in honor of Saint Peter Day received a special Saint Peter Tiny Saints® key charm as a way for the University to say "thank you" for being a treasured member of the community.

Exponential Impact

Matching gift challenges from:

- Garry Prime '65
- Doreen Catanio, CPA '85
- George Degnon '63
- Frank L. Fekete, CPA '75, board chair

99% of gifts were unrestricted allowing Saint Peter's to address its greatest needs and priorities.

THANK YOU!

During this time of uncertainty and crisis, your generosity ensures that talented, hardworking students continue their education, achieve better lives and become Men and Women for Others who make meaningful contributions to their professions and communities.

Safe at home, thanks to emergency fund



"I was given full support by the University to make sure that every student was taken care of," said Erin McCann, vice president for student life and development, who administers the fund. "This fund makes an immediate difference when a student is probably having the worst day of their life."

Since some Saint Peter's students don't own laptops—a must to complete the spring semester online—McCann purchased and distributed 50 Chromebooks overnight. In addition, McCann was able to provide money for gas, airplane and train tickets, and even a car tire to ensure that students could get home safely.

The fund was established in 1998 in memory of the late Jane Moulton Reuter '72, a successful communications professional. Her husband, Edward W. Reuter '64, a former vice president for student affairs at Saint Peter's, said, "The original intent for the fund was to invest in the futures of students by assisting them to complete their education. The hope is that with a degree, they will contribute to our world, and possibly create a ripple effect that encourages them to pay it forward in the future. So I'm very happy that it has been used to assist students during the COVID-19 crisis."

Students' lives were thrown into chaos when the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic abruptly closed the Saint Peter's University campus in March. The University was ready to help, thanks to generous contributors to the Jane Moulton Reuter '72 Needy Student Emergency Fund. The fund provides financial assistance to students facing severe and unexpected hardship so they can continue their Saint Peter's education without interruption.

The University quickly realized that many students needed support to travel home and complete the spring semester online.

ALUMNI SAY

To better understand the needs of alumni, Saint Peter's University conducted an e-survey in early 2020. Over a two-week period, 2,029 graduates from the 1940s to 2010s offered feedback on everything from the role of Jesuit education in shaping their lives to preferences for bolstering connections to *alma mater*. Here's what Saint Peter's alumni have to say:

Peacock Pride is Strongest

When it comes to Jesuit mission and overall perceptions of the University.

85% of alumni hold a positive to very positive impression of the University.

92% of alumni believe Jesuit education and the Saint Peter's experience played a significant role in their personal and professional lives.

31% of alumni say their affinity for the University has increased over the last five years.

Growing More Connected

Alumni want to boost their engagement with Saint Peter's in the following ways.

81% of alumni want more events and volunteer opportunities.

63% of alumni would like to see more investments in academic programs.

The Giving Factor



67%

of alumni cite the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings as important, but

66%

were unaware that alumni giving contributes to those rankings. A supportive alumni network can elevate Saint Peter's position because it's considered a measure of graduates' satisfaction and engagement with the University.

Stepping Up for Student Scholarships

Support for *Hearts & Minds: The Saint Peter's University Scholarship Celebration* remains strong, even though the signature event could not physically take place.

Each spring, *Hearts & Minds: The Saint Peter's University Scholarship Celebration* brings the extended University community together to support promising students who rely on the General Scholarship Fund to access Jesuit higher education and achieve a better future. 2020 was no different, even though the signature event which would have been held on May 1 could not take place due to the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. In the wake of the healthcare crisis, the need for student scholarships increased exponentially.

"This year, it's more critical than ever that support for *Hearts & Minds* continues even though the live event can't," said Susan Mitchell-Abbate '72, vice chair of the Board of Trustees and chair of the gala. As has been the case for generations, most Saint Peter's students will be the first in their families to earn a college degree. Today, a significant number of undergraduates come from low-to moderate-income households, more than 98 percent require financial aid and half cannot afford to contribute anything toward tuition.



Ruby Hernandez '20

support even more essential than ever."

Ruby Hernandez '20, who recently earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and management, is a scholarship recipient who took advantage of every opportunity at the University. She served as Honors Club president, studied abroad in South Korea, became certified in Bloomberg Market Concepts, worked as a legal assistant at the Hudson County Courthouse and achieved distinction by earning The Aidan C. McMullen, S.J. Memorial Fund for Excellence in Business Law Award. "I am the first in my family to go to college. Honestly, without a scholarship, I would not have been able to go."

Shortly after Saint Peter's classes moved online in mid-March, Hernandez landed an administrative position at Trinitas Regional

"Many of us were fortunate to go to Saint Peter's and received financial support to graduate and become successful. It's our turn to pay it forward and help the next generation."

Medical Center and completed her studies at home. She plans to stay in the position while pursuing a M.B.A. with a concentration in healthcare administration at Saint Peter's. "I want to get some experience and work my way up into healthcare administration," she stated.

The larger purpose of *Hearts & Minds* was recognized by more than 100 alumni, corporations, partners and friends who demonstrated their belief in Saint Peter's mission by renewing their commitment to the General Scholarship Fund through sponsorships



Maria Solorzano '84

and direct gifts recognized in a digital advertising journal.

Liberty Savings Federal Credit Union (LSFCU), a longtime sponsor of *Hearts & Minds*, didn't hesitate in renewing its commitment to the General Scholarship Fund. "We are here to serve the community, so it's an honor to partner with Saint Peter's," said Maria Solorzano '84, who has served as president and CEO of LSFCU since 2017. "We share common goals. LSFCU helps our members find financial stability. By donating, we help students fund their education and dreams."

With the fiscal year coming to a close on June 30, alumni and friends can still contribute to the General Scholarship Fund. Every gift, no matter the size, fulfills a longstanding promise. "It's all about paying it forward," said Mitchell-Abbate. "Many of us were fortunate to go to Saint Peter's and received financial support to graduate and become successful. It's our turn to pay it forward and help the next generation."

To make a gift to the General Scholarship Fund, visit saintpeters.edu/give.



Susan Mitchell-Abbate '72

COVID-19 put Saint Peter's students in an even more vulnerable position. "Many of our students work and go to school," Mitchell-Abbate stated. "A lot is expected of them. They work hard and appreciate every opportunity. Now, they are losing their jobs or being furloughed and their parents are too. This makes scholarship

SAVE THE DATE

The Saint Peter's University Scholarship Celebration

Friday, May 7, 2021

Honoring:
Patricia McQuillan Cummings '77 & Kevin Cummings
Cheryl & Joseph Della Rosa

The University gratefully acknowledges the following lead sponsors.*

— PRESENTING SPONSOR —

Patricia McQuillan Cummings '77
and Kevin Cummings



— LEADERSHIP CIRCLE —

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Kathy Fitzgerald Cocca '71
Mandel, Fekete & Bloom, CPAs



* Supporters at the time of printing.

It's the Right Thing To Do

Before the coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic, Kevin O'Neill, R.N. '16 could anticipate the daily challenges and rewards of caring for post-operative open heart surgery patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. "Controlled chaos," is how O'Neill, a critical care nurse, describes the pace of the unit. "The potential for patient complications is certainly there, but there's a certain rhythm to it that you fall into and get comfortable with."

That all changed in March as the number of COVID-19 cases began to surge and the hospital expanded its capacity to treat critically ill COVID-19 patients. Four years after earning his B.S.N. from Saint Peter's University, O'Neill was on the front lines of care.

"The ICUs began to fill up and they remained filled," O'Neill said. "For myself and the other nurses on the floor it was a huge change in the type of patient that we were seeing." Adjusting to those changes seemed insurmountable at times.

Though O'Neill got up to speed quickly on the clinical side of COVID-19, the relentless nature of the disease and its high mortality rate has been emotionally overwhelming. The critical care nurse is used to seeing good outcomes. "Cardiac patients get surgery, they get better and go home. There's a lot of satisfaction in seeing your patients get better and live their lives. That is not happening now. People are really sick and need a lot of care."

When he first arrived at Saint Peter's in 2014, O'Neill hadn't yet landed on a major. After two years of college



in Philadelphia, he took a two-year break before transferring to the University. O'Neill had an interest in science. His mother, Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department Lisa O'Neill Sanders, Ph.D., suggested he look into the School of Nursing. O'Neill gave it a shot. "The program was very rigorous," he recalled. "But as I went through, I was able to see myself doing this long term. After the first year, it was, 'OK, keep going.'"

Shortly after graduation from Saint Peter's, O'Neill became a float pool nurse at Newark Beth Israel, which is run by RWJBarnabas Health, a network of independent health-care providers in New Jersey. The 18 months he spent in a range of medical departments proved excellent preparation for the current healthcare crisis. "I was taking care of different kinds of patients," he said.

"It taught me to be flexible and to roll with the punches."

O'Neill is fortunate that his schedule remains manageable, but the work remains mentally exhausting. He's seen some patients recover. "It's a relief," he said. "It's a huge sigh of relief. We got one. It's encouraging, but it's also a reminder of how lucky that one person is."

Asked what he draws on to keep going, O'Neill responded, "I hate the cliché of, 'This is what I signed up for.' This is not what I had in mind when I entered the field. But that doesn't change the fact that the community relies on me and others to do the job we said we would do. There are people out there who need help. I'm not sick, but there are people who are. I can provide care for them. It's the right thing to do." 🏠



Thank You!

Because of you, we look to our past with pride and to our future with hope.

We can't thank you enough for all you do for Saint Peter's University. Your gifts to support our Jesuit mission, now and in the future, are as vital as ever. We are proud that our graduating students continue to demonstrate kindness, courage and strength. Educating our students to be Men and Women for Others provides hope for our shared future.

During this unprecedented time, we understand that it's important to provide for the people and places that matter most to you and to have a plan in place. If we can assist you as you look toward the future, just as we are, don't hesitate to contact us. We are here to help.

Linda Moore, J.D.
Senior Director of Leadership & Planned Giving
lmoore2@saintpeters.edu
(201) 761-6128

Sharon T. Morrissey, M.B.A., M.Ed. '13
Director of Planned Giving
smorrissey@saintpeters.edu
(201) 761-6126

Build a brighter future.

Current world events have underscored the need for Jesuit-inspired innovation to help solve our most complex challenges, especially in the fields of healthcare, science and public policy. Since 1872, Saint Peter's University has prepared its students to lead with passion and purpose.

Help today's students become innovators of the future by supporting The Saint Peter Fund. Investing in Jesuit education is one of the best ways to build a brighter future for our students and our world. Make a gift online at saintpeters.edu/give or call (201) 761-6109.

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