

Winter 2024



Brookwood
2022-24

The
**Brookwood
Magazine**

for alumnae, family, students, & friends

OUR BIGGEST YET

For the 2023–2024 school year, Brookewood has its highest enrollment, with a student body of 230+ students! Pictured here are all four houses gathered together at St. Paul's Park for the Feast of the Holy Rosary.







Festival Days

We give a quick primer on what days Brookewood celebrates throughout the year with our four house system.



Winter 2024

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and Alumnae Relations*

Brookewood School, established in 2006, is an independent day school for girls, grades K-12, located in Kensington, MD. Brookewood School admits students of any race, color, creed, and national or ethnic origin.

THE BROOKEWOOD MAGAZINE

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Cover image
Erin Peskowitz participates in tug-o-war during the Field Day festival. Photo by DJ Corey Photography.

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What a Joy to be a Bengal!

by Richard B. McPherson

It's no gigantic secret that I'm a huge Chesterton fan (as is evident in my costume choice for this year's All Hallows' Eve festival). Chesterton has countless great ideas, but his line on joy gets to the heart of Christian faith; joy is integral to following Jesus Christ! "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness," St. Paul writes to the Galatians (5:22). At Brookewood, we take the work of the Spirit seriously, as evidenced in our fruits.

The joy that exudes from our school is evident in the hallways, the classrooms, even throughout the town of Kensington! That joy is found in placing our trust in our Catholic faith. Students learn that by getting to know and love the Mass and getting "rid of sins" frequently, they will be happy. And deep joy is received through the knowledge that each student is a cherished child of God, something we teach with confidence and delight at Brookewood.

Alumnae, as you read through this year's magazine, we hope you have time to reflect on the joy of your time here and continue spreading that joy.

Families and friends, we hope to always keep joy as a marker for how well we're doing at Brookewood. The joy that defines us today will undoubtedly shape the promising chapters that lie ahead.

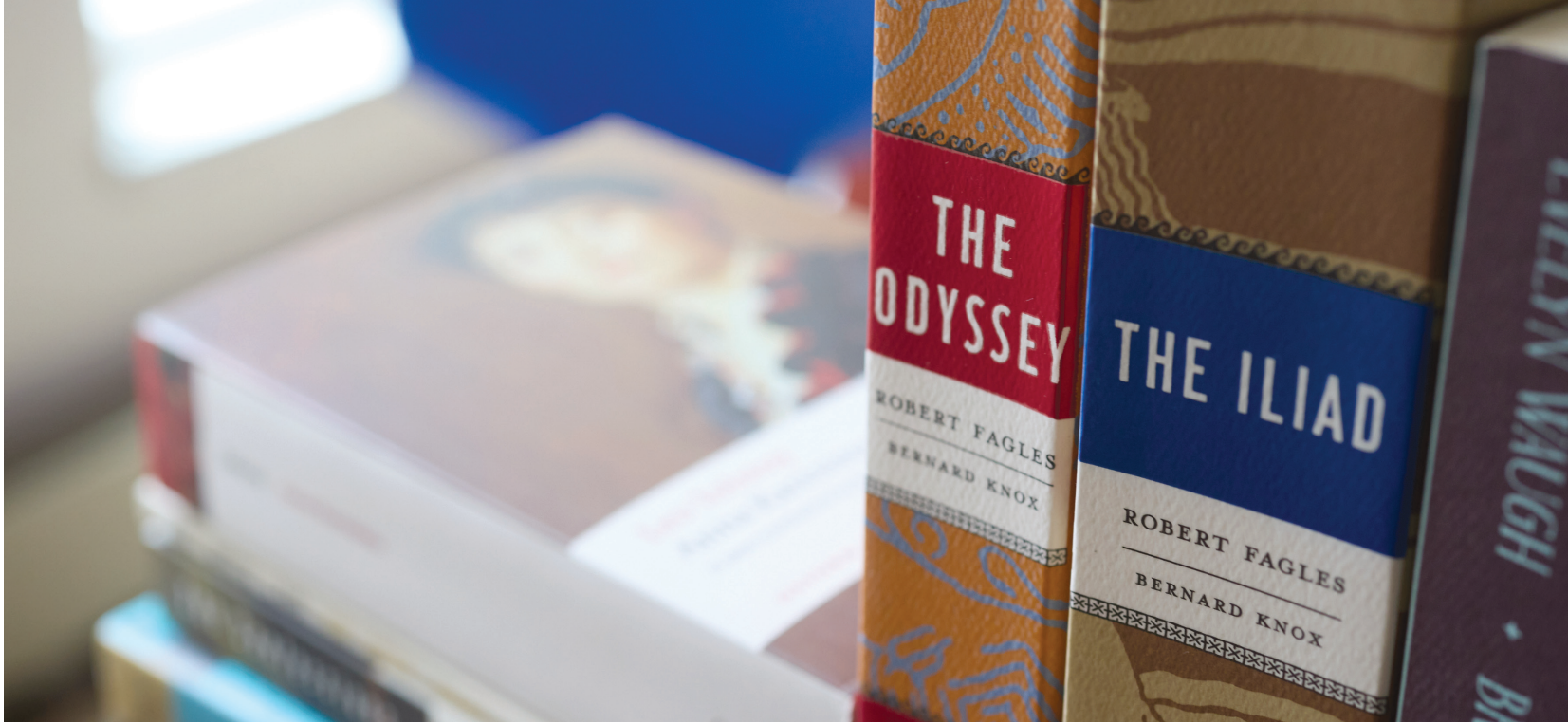


“Joy, which was the small publicity of the pagan, is the gigantic secret of the Christian.”

—G.K. Chesterton



Guess who...



Teach To and From What You Love

by Cherie Walsh

St. Augustine in *De Magistro* tells us that good teachers must have two qualities: they must love their subjects and they must love their students. This year, we've begun a mentoring program for new teachers, and the ensuing conversations among a big swath of the faculty—beginning teachers and their mentors—have shown that, indeed, these two loves happily dominate our thinking and our teaching.

Mrs. Ratti, for example, today at the photocopier worried a little that the students didn't see the beauty of an aspect of biology the way they might. Mr. Booz and I discussed a student's schedule change: would the new class help her spiritually and emotionally as well as intellectually?

This fall, I offered my poetry elective because a student asked me to and because the class is very fun to teach—since I have lots of questions myself, I find it a privilege to hang out with smart people and to explore a writing problem together within the parameters of what I've internalized from years of study. Similarly, Mrs. Vitz is offering her film history elective



because it's what she has loved to learn and what she loves to share. Mr. McPherson and the elegance of math, Mrs. Sorensen and Caravaggio, Mr. Acevedo and bugs...I could go on. When we're successful, when the patterns of thought or the content itself is contagious in the classroom, it's because our joy and our eagerness are contagious.

This issue of the *Brookewood Magazine* emphasizes festivals and school life. I'm proud that the Joseph W. McPherson Poetry Contest is now in its fourth year, bringing poet Sally Rosen Kindred to campus and allowing Brookewood students to compete (and shine). From the BSPA-sponsored class socials that bring the classes together in the fall to Field Day to dances to sports, school life is about finding as many ways as possible to help students grow in wholesome ways toward a simultaneous openness and confidence in their development as young women.

Teachers can help them by loving them, praying for them, showing them, and (on most days) modeling for them how to be intelligent participants reading deeply and well the best and most enduring aspects of culture.

FROM THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Cherie Walsh

Student LIFE

Brookwood Essentials



Mrs. Vitz teaches Great Moral Stories to the fifth grade students.



Great Morals for Growing Girls

by Glencora Pipkin

Mrs. Ann Vitz joined Brookewood this fall and now teaches a class called “Great Moral Stories.” She began her teaching career working with high-need children and homeschoolers, focusing on the virtues program designed by Mary Beth Klee called *Core Virtues*. This program bases its foundation on Aristotle’s four core virtues—prudence, justice, temperance, and courage, while encompassing various other virtues such as respect, diligence, honesty, and generosity. According to its website, the *Core Virtues* program “showcases quality children’s literature to nurture a robust and healthy moral imagination.” The ultimate goal is for students to “fall in love with the good,” and Klee has created a compendium of books from which to teach and explore these virtues.

In Klee’s practice, each month is dedicated to a specific virtue, and students focus on it through different stories. Each session begins with a discussion, aiming for virtues to be “caught” rather than “taught.” This approach encourages students to learn and apply virtues holistically in their lives, moving beyond memorizing definitions.

At Brookewood, girls set goals at the beginning of each month. For instance, elementary students set goals weekly, while upper school students do so monthly. Elementary school students maintain goal sheets containing the virtue’s definition and an application question (e.g., “How can I live the virtue of diligence?”). During class, students read a story, enjoy it, and then engage in a discussion led by Mrs. Vitz, where she encourages them to share their interpretations. Middle school students study stories of real people practicing specific virtues, while upper school students delve into case studies about high school students dealing with real-life conflicts.

The “Great Moral Stories” class is a natural fit for Brookewood School. The girls have already been exposed to excellent stories in their English classes and have established strong moral foundations through their religion classes. “Great Moral Stories” offers another avenue for students to seek the good, allowing them to recognize it first in great stories.



You can learn more about the Core Virtues program as well as access the various reading plans at corevirtues.net. If you want to learn more about Brookewood’s curriculum as well as see some of our classes in action, contact our admissions office at admissions@brookewood.org.



Joseph W. McPherson Memorial POETRY CONTEST

The Third Annual Poetry Competition

by Glencora Pipkin

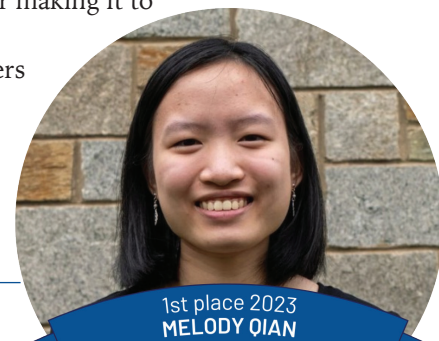
For the third year, the McPherson family has hosted a tri-county poetry competition/contest in honor of Joseph W. McPherson, the founding headmaster of Brookwood School who so dearly loved poetry. McPherson especially loved sonnets, penning thousands including his own collection of sonnets, *The Ark and The Dove*, which retells the story of the founding of Maryland.

In our third year, the contest received over 120 submissions from 25 public and private schools located in Washington DC, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. Any student in grades 9–12 in public, private, or home schools in D.C., Prince George's County, and Montgomery County, MD, was eligible to enter a maximum of two original poems for the competition. The judges then narrowed the pool down to ten finalists, who met on April 22 at Brookwood School in the multipurpose room for the final competition, in which the finalists would recite their own work before a crowd.

Ten finalists gathered in the multipurpose room to recite their own poem, all ranging in theme, style, and content. Brookwood had three finalists—Katie Stroot, Ana Pantoja, and Claudia Romero Garvey.

Melody Qian ('23) from Richard Montgomery High School came in first place with her poem "Celestial." Quentin Walsh ('23) from The Avalon School came in second with his Robert-Frost reminiscent sonnet "The Road Now Silent," and Ana Pantoja ('24) came in third with "Frog Jewels," which is featured on the opposite page. First, second, and third prizes were awarded \$1,000, \$750, and \$500 respectively. The seven other finalists won \$100 for making it to the finalist round.

Congrats to our winners and thank you to the McPherson family for their support and continued effort to honor Joe.



The Joseph W. McPherson Memorial Poetry Contest was started in 2021 in memory of Brookwood's founding headmaster. To learn more about this annual contest and to purchase McPherson's sonnets, visit <https://www.brookwood.org/jwm-poetry-contest.html>.

Frog Jewels

By Ana Pantoja

Along the trail, scattered in their positions,
Tiny soldiers stand guard, gazing warily at me through glazed eyes.

When I crouch to grab one, the miniature frogs bounce away,
With their smooth jelly-like skin slipping through my fingers

As easily as fireflies crawl through the cracks your closed hand
leaves. The tiny gray-green webbed feet leap in all directions,

Dappled, speckled creatures scattering everywhere,
Flustered once I've disrupted their rest in the rocky shade.

They move with the quietest landing plops of splattering raindrops,
Darting up, springing left, right, to new stations.

I gently place a handful of their bean-sized bodies on my head,
Striking a pact of alliance with these Lilliputians.

Madness in the eyes of the world,
And infinitely more splendid than any golden crown.



(l-r) First place winner Melody Qian, Second place winner Quentin Walsh, and Third place winner Ana Pantoja.



Melody Qian recites "Celestial" before the crowd at the Joseph McPherson Memorial Poetry Contest on April 22, 2023.

“
**Inspiring work
by an inspiring man!**
”

Amazon review

“
**A passageway to
understand Maryland's
founding.**
”

Amazon review

Joseph McPherson's *The Ark & The Dove* is a poetic epic, exploring the beginnings of the state of Maryland in 46 sonnets. For new and old history buffs alike!

The *Ark & The Dove* is available for purchase on Amazon.



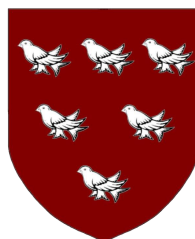
Four Houses for School Unity

The House system fosters relationships among Brookwood students by creating smaller communities for activities and celebrations. At the beginning of each year, students are placed into one of four houses for their duration of study at Brookwood. The houses are named in honor of women or families who were important to the founding of Maryland or the United States: Arundel, Bourbon, Custis, and Darnall. The Brookwood Houses correspond to the Houses at Avalon, Brookwood's brother school.

On festival days throughout the year, students gather into their respective houses and compete for points that accumulate throughout the year. Brookwood girls compete in their houses in the following competitions: poetry recitations, Capture-the-Flag, Field Day, St. Cecilia's Day, Jane Austen Day, Sacagawea Day, Madeline Day, Medieval Festival, All Hallows' Eve, and more.

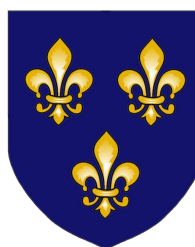


Lower School students Greta, Evie, and Penny Cameron get inducted into Custis House at the during the Feast of the Holy Rosary.



Arundel

Anne Arundel, daughter of Thomas Arundel, Count of the Holy Roman Empire and Baron of Wardour, married Cecil Calvert, later the Second Lord of Baltimore, who brought his father's dream of Maryland to fruition. She was the mother of Benedict Calvert, third lord Baltimore. Anne Arundel County, site of Maryland's capital is named for her.



Bourbon

Henrietta Marie de Bourbon was the youngest daughter of Henry IV of France and married Charles I of England who granted the charter of Maryland to Lord Baltimore. Henrietta Marie endeavored to ameliorate the harsh penal laws of England and nurtured the restoration of the Stuarts after the English Civil War.



Custis

Martha Dandridge Custis, a young widow, married George Washington. She shared his troubles and hardships as Commander-in-Chief for the Continental Army, which won American independence with help from the Bourbon king of France and was a gracious hostess for the President in his public duties and at Mount Vernon when they returned to private life.



Darnall

Darnall is the family name of several important women in Maryland history who married into the Calvert and Carroll families. Eleanor Darnall was the mother of both Daniel Carroll, signer of the Constitution and commissioner charged with planning and setting up the District of Columbia, and John Carroll, first Catholic bishop of the United States. Her Rock Creek estate encompassed what would become Kensington, Maryland.



Upper School Darnall House members get ready for a field day game of chicken fighting. Sydney Michael carries Mairin Wroblewski on her back (both class of 2024).

The House System

Brookwood's four houses

FESTIVALS

Feast of the Holy Rosary
All Hallows' Eve
All Saints Day
St. Cecilia's Day
Immaculate Conception

Annunciation/Maryland Day
Jane Austen Day
Sacagawea Day
Madeline Day
Points of the Rose
Medieval Festival

Feast of the Holy Rosary

The first festival of the year involves a house induction for new students, poetry recitations for each grade, and a field day competition with an assortment of outdoor games.



All Hallows' Eve

On the day before All Saint's Day (Nov. 1), all grades get dressed up in costumes of choice, play games, and end the day with costume awards.

St. Cecilia's Day

Brookewood celebrates the patron saint of music and art with a special afternoon of student group and individual performances.



...in the Spring



Maryland Day

Maryland Day is celebrated on the Feast of the Annunciation because the colonists waited until March 25 to unload their boats. Since the passing of founding Headmaster Joe McPherson, students recite a sonnet from his book and then play a game of capture-the-flag.

Jane Austen Day

8th–12th grade students celebrate the author by creating and enjoying a fancy banquet, playing music, reciting poetry.



Sacagawea Day

5th–7th grade students spend a day hiking and exploring in honor of Native American explorer, Sacagawea, who helped Lewis and Clark in their expedition of the United States.



...in the Spring/almost Summer



Madeline Day

C'est Madeline! Madeline Day celebrates the book series *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans. K-4th grade students dress up in iconic capes and hats, feast on French cuisine (brie! chocolate! pastries!), and parade through downtown Kensington.

Medieval Festival

Medieval festival is the last celebration of the school year, and it ushers in the new house captains. Many fun contests are played among the houses, with an emphasis on medieval games such as jousting.

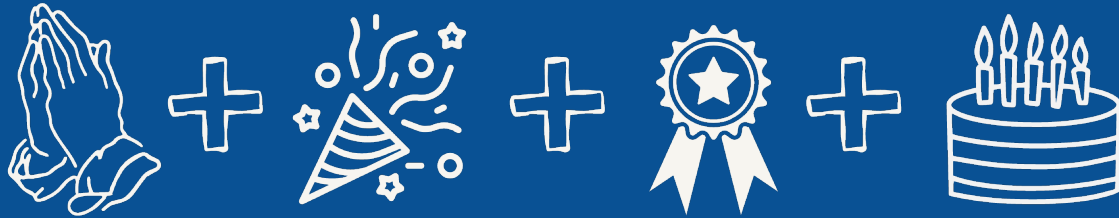




*Pictured from upper left moving clockwise:
Claire Raub stands nobly before the house naming ceremony;
Birdie Connolly jumps over a classmate as Avila McCarthy looks
on; Clare Hawley, Nicole Ortiz, Lucy Armstrong, Ana Pantoja
read at Mass; Susanna McHale celebrates Bella Romero's
induction into the Arundel house.*

*On opposite page: a bejeweled Elizabeth Lewis smiles, representing
the house Bourbon.*

Anatomy of a Festival



PRAYER + CELEBRATION + COMPETITION + FEASTING



Fall Circle

ALUMNAE REKINDLING THE FLAME AS TEACHERS

By Glencora Pipkin

Last May, I spoke with four of our alumnae teachers, four of whom I had taught English during my brief tenure as an English middle school teacher. Since I knew them as students, it was a sweet surprise to talk with them now as colleagues! In an interview with Rosie Wilson '16, Theresa Moynihan, Rachel Glaser, Veronica Brown '17 and Rachele Contini '17, I asked what made them all come back. Each of them had unique perspective on making a full circle.



Rosie Wilson '16

religion, history teacher
varsity soccer/lacrosse coach

I decided to come back to coach the Lacrosse team in 2021. I coached for two years, and then remembered how warm the academic environment was, so I decided to come back to teach. I noticed through coaching what positive energy there was to the girls playing games—no matter the outcome—and I missed that!



Rachel Glaser
music teacher

I had lots of great memories of the community at Brookewood. My love of music was always encouraged at the school, and I enjoyed the friendships and bonds I made while I was there. It was a formative time for me.



Rachele Contini '17
Lower School Italian teacher, 2022-2023

After the isolation from Covid, I knew I needed to work around people again! After my father had taught Italian for years at Brookewood, I felt comfortable doing what I had watched him do with the younger children: singing songs in Italian and enjoying the language. I had such fond memories of taking Italian with Mrs. Sorensen and I developed my passion for art history from her class.



Theresa Moynihan
3rd grade teacher
AP Government and Politics teacher

It was a delight to come back and teach the 3rd grade class, which has felt like merry chaos. The girls are always cheerful, and there's always an adventure! I remember how much I loved the festival days, in particular, capture-the-flag, so it's been great to come back to those old traditions, as well as seeing the new traditions that Brookewood's added on.



Alumnae Spotlights

Brookwood's alumnae in the world

Fulbright Scholar

Maggie

Hawley ('19)



Brookwood alumna ('19) and recent Washington & Lee University graduate Maggie Hawley was awarded the Fulbright Scholar in the spring of 2023. The Fulbright program, one of the United States' most prestigious scholarships, aims to improve cultural exchange by recognizing scholars, teachers, researchers, and others.

As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant, Maggie was placed at CEIP Princesa Tejina in the Canary Islands, where she has been teaching English language to students. Upon learning about her placement, she was thrilled she'd be situated in one of the most beautiful and biodiverse locations on the planet. She hopes to share her love for the island's biodiversity with her students, attributing her passion for the natural world to her days at Brookwood: "My passion for the natural world was greatly influenced by the emphasis on natural history at Brookwood. The curiosity and joy I gained from creeking, hiking, and exploring the outdoors as a child instilled in me a love for our planet and all living things. I hope to foster that curiosity and love of nature in my students."

Maggie's college journey at Washington & Lee embraced a multidisciplinary approach, focusing on English, education, and poverty and human capability studies. Notable accolades include the Resident Advisor of the Year award in 2021. Reflecting on her academic pursuits, she delved into 20th-century African American literature, particularly plays, and explored the works of playwright Suzan-Lori Parks for her capstone project.

Maggie also earned a secondary school teaching certificate in the state of Virginia as part of her coursework. She hopes to teach English in South or Central America after working at the TASIS summer camps.

When asked about her choice to teach, Maggie revealed that she initially considered journalism but disliked the journalism classes. She discovered her passion for teaching while talking about stories and studying pedagogy. Practicing teaching local 6th graders before graduating from Washington and Lee further solidified her decision. She affirmed, "I want to teach because I want to empower young people and equip them with the knowledge and skills to create a better world. If I can teach my students how to be curious, empathic, and engaged people, I think they will go on to do amazing things." Brookwood has no doubt that Maggie can equip these young minds to achieve amazing things. Congratulations to Maggie!

Manager at ADP

Gillian Giangrande ('18)

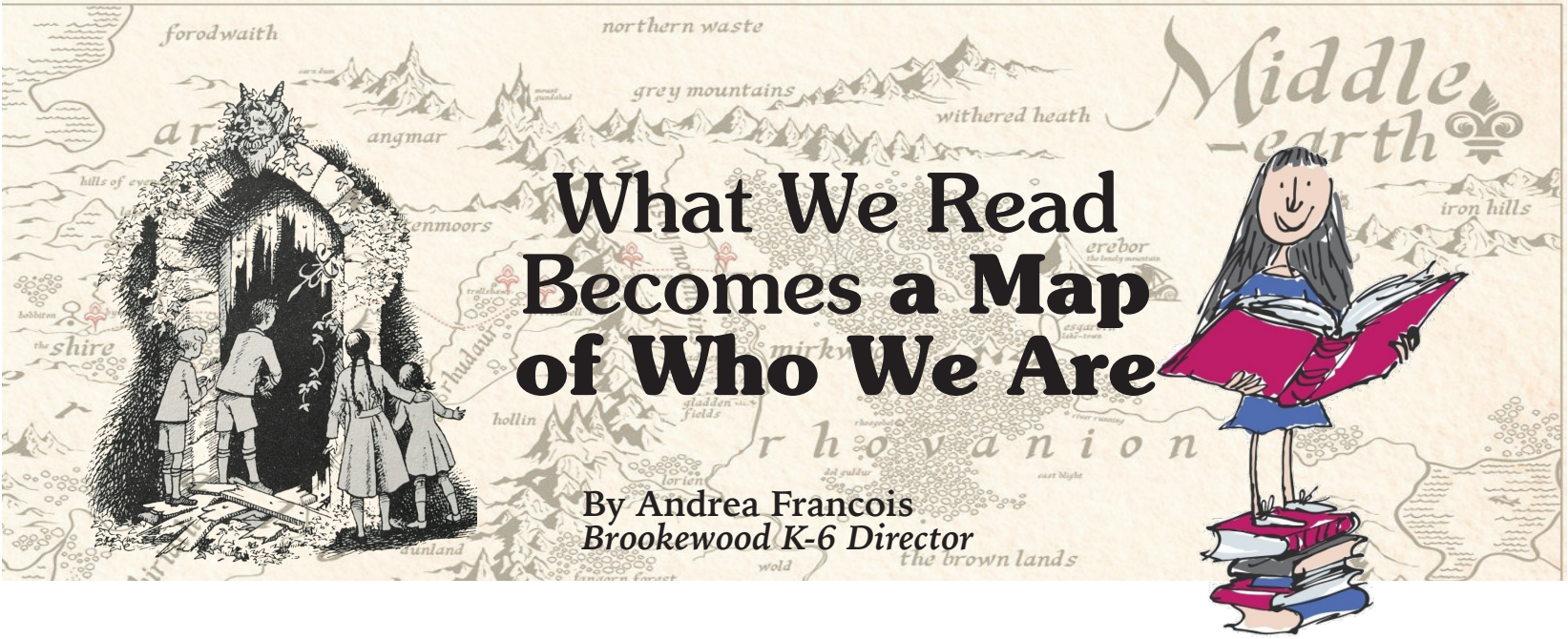


Gillian came to Brookwood her junior and senior years, succeeding in a swath of AP classes while swimming competitively with her club team in her downtime. She was awarded a D-1 scholarship to College of the Holy Cross for her excellence in swimming. After graduating from Holy Cross with a bachelor's in math and economics and a minor in statistics, she immediately joined ADP, a national human resources company, which gave her the ability to continue learning within her role as CPA centric manager. In her current role, she's helping to teach her clients about current policies within each state and to understand their own tax benefits.

Giangrande achieved promotions at a pace faster than the average (being promoted to centric manager within six months). She attributed her success and accomplishments to the delicate balance she maintains between her commitments to faith, family, and work. Her unsolicited advice to college grads: decide what you think is the most important to you. Do you value time more than your ability to make money? Make career choices that honor what's important to you.

Giangrande loves the current work she's doing, but knows that she has to prioritize space for daily Mass even within a high pressure job. However, she's noticed that people in her workplace respect her more for having Catholic values, rather than ostracizing her.

Giangrande feels so grateful for the time she had at Brookwood, as it was incredibly formative, bringing her lots of hope and joy in her faith from a community of fellow believers. She said the teachers especially were great witnesses of the faith: "they cared about my soul." Giangrande stressed. "It was clear that they wanted me to learn to my best ability and to do things for the greater glory of God." She now sees how important it is to seek out a community of other Catholics. Brookwood lit a fire of learning and love of faith in her heart that she has kept alive.



What We Read Becomes a Map of Who We Are

By Andrea Francois
Brookewood K-6 Director

The best book I've ever read is *Matilda* by Roald Dahl. I first read the story of a girl so extraordinarily intelligent that she could move objects with her mind when I was eight years old. My second grade teacher, Mrs. Travis, helped me pick it from the reading list, and I made a newspaper for my project. My mother still remembers this project and I have modeled one of my own class assignments on it.

For those of you unfamiliar with this work of literature, or those skeptics among you who might say, "but it's a children's book," let me assure you, *Matilda* has everything, but I'll limit myself to one element. (Seriously, I could talk about this book all day.)

Matilda is explicitly about how literature opens us up to others. Matilda is a brilliant child who has taught herself to read by age 3. She forms a relationship with the local librarian, who recommends a survey of great books for Matilda to read:

From then on, Matilda would visit the library only once a week in order to take out new books and return the old ones. Her own small bedroom now became her reading-room and there she would sit and read most afternoons, often with a mug of hot chocolate beside her. She was not quite tall enough to reach things around the kitchen, but she kept a small box in the outhouse which she brought in and stood on in order to get whatever she wanted. Mostly it was hot chocolate she made, warming the milk in a saucepan on the stove before mixing it. Occasionally she made Bovril or Ovaltine. It was pleasant to take a hot drink up to her room and have it beside her as she sat in her silent room reading in the empty house in the afternoons. The books transported her into new worlds and introduced her to amazing people who lived exciting lives. She went on olden-day sailing ships with Joseph Conrad. She went to Africa



Mrs. Kane discusses grammar with her class.

with Ernest Hemingway and to India with Rudyard Kipling. She traveled all over the world while sitting in her little room in an English village. (21)

What we have read becomes a map of who we are.

My parents read to me in their bed when I was young, every night. I would change into my pajamas and then I was allowed to lie in their bed while my mother read me *Little House in the Big Woods* or my father read me *The Hobbit*. I distinctly remember my feeling of outrage when I interrupted my father (*Princess Bride*-like) to correct him: "You didn't read that right. Thorin isn't dead because he is the hero." My father's reply was simple: "No, Thorin dies. And he is not the hero, but you don't know that yet." While obviously now I can see that Bilbo is the protagonist, Thorin Oakenshield is still the hero of

my eight-year-old heart. My memory of my sorrow at his death shows me who I was already starting to become: I have no interest in paragons of virtue; I want to hold close the ones who have lost their way.

Seven years later I lay in the same bed, home from school with bronchitis, and I picked up a book that my younger brother's teacher had sent home with him. In 1998, I was one of the first to sit with Harry Potter in front of the Mirror of Erised, which "shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts" (213) and see the reflection of Harry with his parents, who had died when he was just a year old. And I cried for the first time in three years for my father, whom I missed so much.

The only way to grow is to have a genuine interest in others. If you want to learn about yourself, you have to learn about others. You cannot sit before a mirror that only

“ ”

If you want to learn about yourself, you have to learn about others. You cannot sit before a mirror that only tells you what you already know.

tells you what you already know. To be changed by what we experience on the page or garner from the textbook, the movement must be outward first rather than inward. I have encountered what I think is every brand of resistant reader in ten years of teaching. (I'm sure there are a few new variations coming my way.) Resistant readers, young children who "just don't like to read" are quite often also my least enthusiastic students across all subjects. Low

energy, low curiosity, they are Milo from *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Now, of course, the mechanics of literacy, the complex exchange between written word and reader that conveys meaning, is a hugely difficult thing to master. A lack of enjoyment can easily stem from a difficulty with the process. It seems a cliché to say "if you don't like to read, you just haven't found the right book yet," but it is important that when reading is a difficult process that the literature be of high quality. I have yet to teach a student, no matter the ability level or interest in reading, who did not fall in love with (or at least begrudgingly enjoy) the richly layered story and gorgeous characters in Grace Lin's masterpiece *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*.

But, without stories that reveal the truth of human nature, without poetry that explores the minute grandeur of creation, without songs that stir the heart, students cannot know themselves, because they cannot know others, and therefore they will remain disconnected from their souls, strangers to their very being.

I have been blessed to learn from my own teachers through literature and through literature about teaching. Shakespeare's extensive exploration of love and leadership have helped me appreciate the demands and rewards of both (and I hope have made me better at both). Thomas Hardy's tragic *Jude the Obscure* makes me aware of how easily the careless words of a teacher can misdirect an otherwise promising life. Jo March's fulfillment in starting her school demonstrates beautifully that teaching is a calling to be answered, not a consolation for frustrated ambition.

And of course, Jesus is Rabbi, teacher.



The fifth grade class reads Caddie Woodlawn together.



But, without stories that reveal the truth of human nature, without poetry that explores the minute grandeur of creation, without songs that stir the heart, students cannot know themselves, because they cannot know others, and therefore they will remain disconnected from their souls, strangers to their very being.



Mrs. Nelson, our kindergarten teacher, encourages her students throughout their day.

When Matilda goes to school, she meets her kindergarten teacher, Miss Honey:

Miss Jennifer Honey was a mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. She seemed to understand totally the bewilderment and fear that so often overwhelms young children who for the first time in their lives are herded into a classroom and told to obey orders. Some curious warmth that was almost tangible shone out of Miss Honey's face when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer to the class. (66-67)

I loved Miss Honey as a child and I love her still. I loved Miss Honey's desperately poor cottage, her courage to overcome the abuse she had suffered, and that she quoted Dylan Thomas. When I talk about Matilda, I am reminded of how much I loved Mrs. Travis, my second grade teacher, who was much like Miss Honey in heart, though happily not at all like her in circumstance. And I remember to pray for Mrs. Travis, my very own first beloved teacher.



Brookwood & Avalon



Life of The Mind

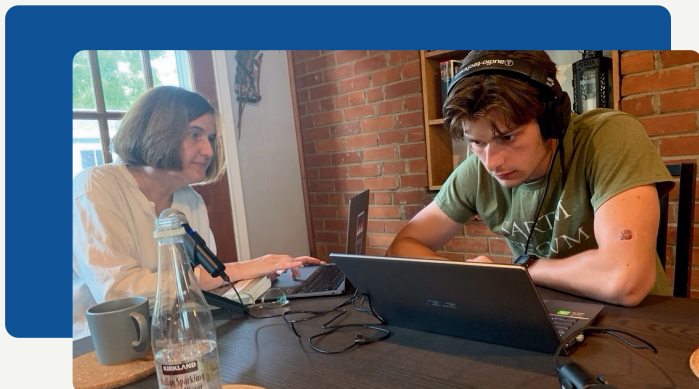
I am very excited to have started and to get to continue the Brookwood and Avalon Life of the Mind podcast. The project is an outpouring of my gratitude that I work with such delightful colleagues and get to be part of a project, i.e., Brookwood, that emphasizes intellectual inquiry guided by the Faith.

The podcast originates in the experience of teaching in the 2020–21 school year. As we all know, especially in retrospect, it was really, really important that Avalon and Brookwood were open in fall of 2020, but as we all remember, that school year was a total logistics-show: the air purifiers and their whirring racket, the microphones for voices to cut through the noise and across the cavernous spaces, the cameras and tripods and laptops to bring in the few girls on Zoom, and all of us schlepping it all around. It was glorious, but it was about on-the-ground problem-solving all the time.

It was easy to forget about what can happen in the classroom when it all lines up. It was easy to forget

about that moment—and as teachers we all know that moment—when the Holy Spirit is clearly present: students are listening to each other in new ways; new connections are being forged; deep learning is occurring. But I was getting caught up in computer cables, temperature checks, and so on.

One day, David Booz, religion teacher, who does a good job of keeping in the forefront of his mind what's actually most important, was in the office talking about teaching the Grand Inquisitor section from *The Brothers Karamazov*, and I thought about how we all need more of that: good conversations about ideas happening between and among the teachers—and reaching the larger Brookwood community. What ideas? Ideas of rationality and its limits, of Grace, of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Conversations between adults that students could hear if they want to—I thought a little about the famous John Senior seminars and how the students were asked to listen to the adults modeling



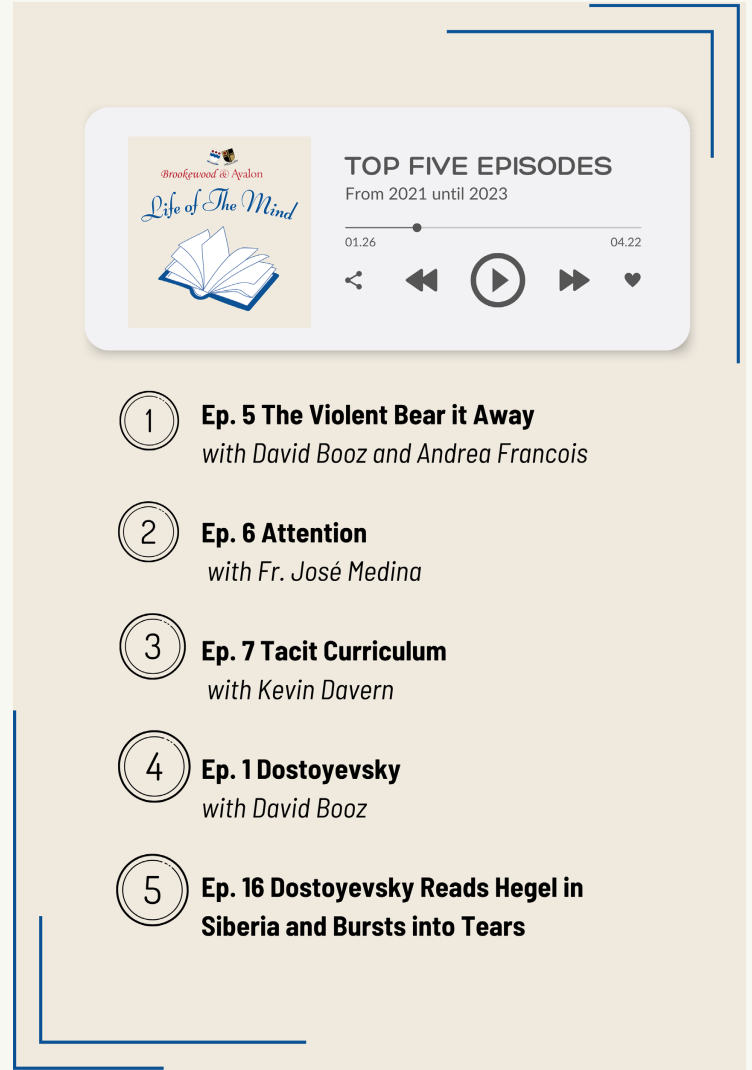
[T]hese conversations remind me of what has brought me to Brookwood in the first place and of the attitude of inquiry and exploration that sustains us as thinkers and lovers of the Truth.

a conversation—and that would give everyone a glimpse of the mind at play.

Another impetus for the podcast was my own son, Quentin, who graduated in May of 2023. I wanted to teach him what my best teachers taught me: that, in the words of Evelyn Waugh, the “world is an older and better place than [I] knew” and that participation in learning is a participation in that immensely valuable tradition. (Possibly, I needed a reminder, about every three weeks, of this fact myself.) So, I hired Quentin to produce the audio.

The Life of the Mind podcast began with that first conversation about Dostoyevsky, and since then I’ve talked to Rich McPherson about Chesterton, to Fr. José Medina about attention, to Kevin Davern about boys’ education, to Sally Rosen Kindred about poetry, to Andrea Francois about Donna Tartt, and to Tom Tobin about Walker Percy. The audio has been good sometimes, but at other times the makeshift nature of our studio has led to some echoing or impossible-to-balance voices. We’ll keep working on that. David Booz and Andrea Francois have become regulars on the show.

The podcast, with its origins as a Covid *cri de coeur*, has grown and I hope continues to grow into another way we talk and think together. Some episodes are more explicitly about what we do as a school—what we hope to teach, what we value—while others are more about ideas that are interesting to us, and there the conversation itself, the process of the discussion, carries the value. Overall, these conversations remind me of what has brought me to Brookewood in the first place and of the attitude of inquiry and exploration that sustains us as thinkers and lovers of the Truth.

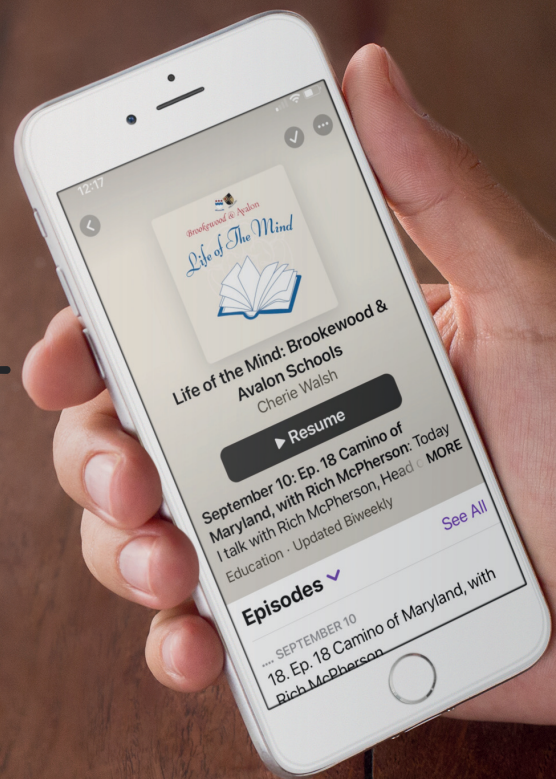


The image shows a digital interface for the 'Life of the Mind' podcast. At the top left is the podcast's logo, which includes the text 'Brookewood & Avalon' and 'Life of The Mind' above an illustration of an open book. To the right of the logo is a section titled 'TOP FIVE EPISODES' with the subtitle 'From 2021 until 2023'. Below this title is a progress bar showing a duration of 01:26 to 04:22, and standard playback controls: a back arrow, a double left arrow, a play button, a double right arrow, and a heart icon. Below the player is a numbered list of five episodes:

- 1 **Ep. 5 The Violent Bear it Away**
with David Booz and Andrea Francois
- 2 **Ep. 6 Attention**
with Fr. José Medina
- 3 **Ep. 7 Tacit Curriculum**
with Kevin Davern
- 4 **Ep. 1 Dostoyevsky**
with David Booz
- 5 **Ep. 16 Dostoyevsky Reads Hegel in Siberia and Bursts into Tears**



Download and Listen to
Episodes of
Life of the Mind on
Apple Podcasts, Google
Play, Stitcher, and
more



Volite Timere

THE CLASS OF 2023

GRADUATES

Front Row

Elif Özeydin
Abigail Rakow
Lucia Rosa
Nadia Haynes Ruhlmann
Cristina Isabel Aldrette
Benedetta De Marchi
Grace Than Marie Htay

Middle Row

Gabrielle Ellen Stanley
Morgan Claire Harrison Touchette
Anna Maria Ferrante
Molly Grace Collins
Genesis Yahfyah Cifuentes

Back Row

Rebecca Marie Barnes
Lydia Ruth Valentine
Lillian Solomon
Elisabeth Jane Bajwa
Allison Barbara Hunt

Not pictured

Isha Bhandary

Everything is a Gift

Brookewood parent and Managing Director at AVSI USA, Jackie Aldrette addressed the class of 2023. Below are excerpts from the speech.

Here is the first thing that I hope you will take away: **everything in your life, and I really do mean everything, has been given to you. And since life is lived through time, things are continuously being given:** your body...even down to your DNA, your family, the circumstances of your upbringing, your personality, your birth order and each and every sibling you may have, or not have. Did you choose any of these things? Did you do anything to deserve them? Why did any of us wake up this morning?

Everything is gift.

Pause to think about the last time you received a gift. What was it? Surely your mind doesn't stop at the *thing* you received, no matter how full of meaning. What would a gift be without someone behind it? Even the most expensive or otherwise special gift in the world would be meaningless if it was not given in a relationship between a "You" and an "I." So when I tell you that everything in your life and in every moment is a gift, this suggests that there is a Giver who is constantly at work, paying attention to you, in relationship with you.

And this absolutely does not mean that life is not full of contradictions and difficulties.

My work takes me around the world, across Africa, South America, Haiti, and most recently to the Middle East...to countries like Iraq and Syria.

One of my first trips was to Rwanda when you girls were toddlers. I'll never forget that I missed Cristina's first ballet recital when she was 3 because of that trip. I met my colleague Lorette, a beautiful, gentle Rwandese woman a few years older than I. She was about your age, a university student, during the horrific genocide, and her life, like those of her entire generation, was shaped by that excruciating experience. She brought me to the Genocide Museum with other colleagues...I had no idea who was a Hutu or a Tutsi, and I had no idea how each person was affected personally by the genocide. I remember reading the testimonies, gazing into the eyes of the victims and the murderers, with my heart pounding with the question: how can we live knowing that such evil is possible in our world? How can these young adults be so courageous as to face their troubled past together, to look at this dark stain on their country's history in bright day light and standing next to peers who very likely represent "the other side"?

...Rwanda, Haiti, Syria, Honduras, Kenya, Iraq...all of these experiences have left me with many difficult and dramatic questions which I cannot turn away from.

Do I deserve the life I have been given? Can justice exist in this terribly unequal world? And then the big question: what is being asked of me?

When I come home from one of these trips, and (con't on pg. 30)

2023 Graduates

The class of 2023 is Brookewood's 14th graduating class, with several students beginning and ending their K-12 school education at Brookewood!

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Buffalo State College | Calvin University | Canisius College | Carroll University | The Catholic University of America | College of the Holy Cross | Delaware Valley University | Drexel University | George Washington University | Gettysburg College | Indiana University, Bloomington | McDaniel College | Montgomery College | Mount St. Mary's University | Notre Dame University | The Pratt Institute | Purdue University | Roger Williams University | Salve Regina University | Temple University | Towson University | University of Dallas | University of Hartford | University of Miami | University of Maryland, Baltimore County | University of Maryland, College Park | University of New England | University of Vermont | Villanova University | Washington College | William and Mary University | Xavier University



Congrats GRADS

The Class of 2023

AWARD RECIPIENTS



ALLISON HUNT

Valedictorian
Maryland State Merit Award



ELISE BAJWA

Michael T. Stroat Prize



RUTHIE VALENTINE

Cardinal's Award



GRACE HTAY

Vince Family Prize



ABIGAIL RAKOW

Joseph W. McPherson Prize

embrace my husband and kids, I feel disoriented, facing once again these deep and hard questions. The second message that I want to leave you with is this: **the big questions that churn within you are essential to who you are and to finding your way in life. You must take them seriously.**

I would like to ask the graduates to pause for a moment and reflect: what are the big questions that you have in your heart today?

So how do we deal with these questions and get to the truth? First we can look at how others have dealt with them, through literature and philosophy. My set of questions find some suggestions in the Social Teachings of the Church.

But this is not only an intellectual exercise. I find myself carrying these questions, almost like wounds. I “ponder them in my heart,” [and I have] learned that it’s sometimes helpful being uncomfortable. Secondly, it’s essential to discuss them with family and friends. Lastly, we must pay attention to how God speaks to me in reality and reveals to me, sometimes slowly, a way forward.

...Here’s the third message for you to take home: **It is through belonging, attachment to people, a community, friends, family that I can know myself and can contribute in a meaningful way.** As we can see so clearly when we look at an infant or toddler, from our first moments of life we were bound to others. Naturally, as we get older we want to walk on our own two feet, express our opinions and make our own decisions...and this is right and good. But we don’t have to buy into the mentality that we have to be fiercely independent. This is not natural and not helpful. We need each other.



Grad Profile: Abigail Rakow

Abigail came to Brookewood in the second grade, the youngest of three sisters, who all graduated from the school. Abigail is a multi-talented artist. She spent years under the tutelage of Ms. Kearns, learning the art of working with oil paint, drawing landscapes, portraits and more. Her time here was littered with accomplishments: she was the lead in the 2022-2023 school play, *You Can't Take it With You* and acted in three other plays. She was a team member of Destination Imagination, in which she helped construct a drone for international competition. She designed the house t-shirts for the whole school last year (pictured below). She designed and sewed several costumes. She competed in Poetry Out Loud, placing in the state competition and also placing in the Joseph W. McPherson Poetry Competition.

Abigail currently attends Catholic University as a double major in studio art and business. In the meantime, she has held an art show, teaches sewing and more. Congratulations to Abigail!



A fall vegetable sketch completed during her freshman fall semester at The Catholic University of America.



Pictured upper left going clockwise: Rakow's All Hallows' Eve costume she designed and wore, a ruffle dress she designed from a used sheet, she and Lucy Armstrong acting in *You Can't Take it With You*, and the house logos she created for the school t-shirts.

Abigail Rakow painted this portrait of her sister Josephine under the tutelage of art teacher Ms. Kearns.

Bengals ON THE PROWL





V SOCCER 9-2-1 COACH BOAKYE



V FIELD HOCKEY 1-11-1 COACHES LOVE & BAJWA



V VOLLEYBALL 11-4 COACH ABDELRAZEK

Fall 2022

Brookwood's fall sports included varsity soccer, volleyball, and field hockey and middle school field hockey and cross country. Our varsity teams had several seniors playing on each team, as well as a few international students joining the team for a semester. Our volleyball and soccer teams enjoyed winning seasons, with 9 wins for the soccer team under Coach Boakye and 11 wins under Coach Abdelrazek.



MS FIELD HOCKEY 0-6 COACH DAVERN



MS CROSS COUNTRY COACH WILLIAMS



V BASKETBALL 8-6 COACH MCPHERSON
ASST. COACH BROWN



MS BASKETBALL 3-3 COACH DAVERN



MS SWIM COACH WILLIAMS



V SWIM 2-7 COACH BAJWA



MS LACROSSE 3-1 COACH BOOZ

Winter 2023 Spring

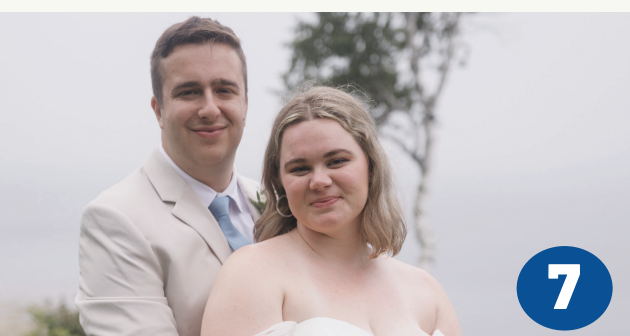
Brookwood's winter sports included middle school and varsity basketball teams, with the varsity team carrying a winning record. Our varsity swim competed in 7 meets, placing in 2 of them. Our middle school lacrosse played 4 games, coming out with a winning record. In the spring, alumna and current religion teacher Rosie Wilson ('16) coached the varsity lacrosse team to a victorious season, winning 9 of their 11 games. Congrats to our Bengals on a year well played.

Bengals ON THE PROWL



V LACROSSE 9-2 COACH WILSON ('16)

Alumnae UPDATES

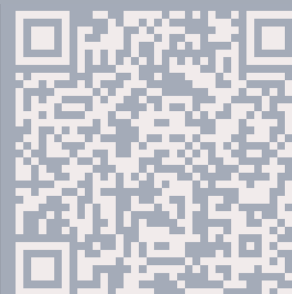


1. **Chiara Petruccelli** ('14) married Jared Philipps
2. **Marta Brown** ('13) married Dennis Mundt
3. **Katie Collins** ('15) married Tommy Shaw
4. **Morgan Kurtz** ('13) married Tyler Aaron Gamble
5. **Katie Davern** ('11) married Mike Lehmann
6. **Serena Vince** ('16) married Ruben Cano
7. **Kaylor Stroot** ('18) married David Bergman

DO YOU BROOKWOOD?

Consider supporting our school through a simple donation. Scan the QR code to donate now.

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JOIN US FOR 2024-2025

- | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|
| March | Spring Gala, St. Joseph Pilgrimage |
| April | Joseph W. McPherson Memorial Poetry Contest |
| May | Pilgrimage, Graduation |
| June | Alumnae Field Hockey Game |
| November | Autumn Auction |
| December | Poetry Out Loud |



Support Advancement

Contact the Office of Advancement, advancement@brookwood.org to volunteer for upcoming events, learn more about how you can help, or simply to update us on happenings in your own life.

UPCOMING *Events*



Saturday, 7 pm , The Avalon School

Annual Spring Gala

Join us as our faculty and students present song and dance numbers while parents and friends enjoy delicious food & drink. A major highlight of the year!

Mar
23
2024



Saturday, 8 am –6 pm

17th Marian Pilgrimage

Spend a day walking around 18.3 miles, praying, singing, and visiting DC area churches. The pilgrimage will start at St. Catherine Labouré and end at the Basilica of the National Shrine.

May
18
2024

NEW!

*The Camino
of
Maryland*

do you
camino?

Monday, June 10–Sunday June 23

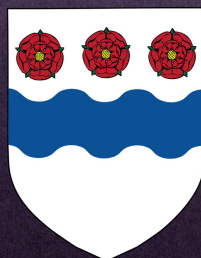
Camino of Maryland

A 14-day pilgrimage that takes you on an unforgettable journey from Point Lookout, MD to the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, MD. Walk some or all of the 218 miles! **Register at camino-md.org.**

Jun
10
2024



Brookewood
SCHOOL



Nolite Timere