

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall



Kacie DeRosa '22 (right) and her mother Kara Kelly DeRosa '89, also mother of Kelly DeRosa '20, at Lauralton's Junior Ring Mass & Ceremony held October 8 in the grotto

Photo: Dave Casanave, Essentia Productions

Photo: Shades Snappers Photography

The Mercy Tradition of Educational Excellence

A LETTER FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Throughout its 115-year history, our School has endured many challenges including the current COVID-19 pandemic. How has Luralton not only survived, but thrived? Our Mercy tradition is the core of all we do, emanating through our hallways, our classrooms, and our campus community.

Luralton’s dedication to its Mercy Mission was evident over the past several months. As State regulations allowed for larger outdoor gatherings, we organized a second, more traditional celebration for our Class of 2020 held August 1 on the front lawn. Our staff diligently worked throughout the summer vacation on processes and facilities to ensure a safe re-opening September 8 following COVID-19 precautions. Our dedicated faculty is teaching in reconfigured classrooms while accommodating the needs of those 31 students choosing to learn from home. Students on campus have adjusted to one-way hallways, social distancing rules, different athletic protocols, and a new format for our annual musical.

As of this writing, we continue on campus at our full five-day schedule for each girl. And, whether we are on campus or need to adapt to our “Luralton at Home” online learning model, we remain inspired.

In January 2020, the Mercy Education System of the Americas (MESA) asked every Mercy school to participate in its new Mission Accountability Process which will occur once every six years. The purpose is to examine the ways in which our school “fosters excellence in Mercy Catholic education, rooted in the Gospel through the Catholic faith and the Mercy charism,” and to reflect on our challenges and future mission. As part of this process, I was asked to name a collaborative Heart of Mercy Committee to lead this effort, to “probe the depth, or heart, of your school to recognize your Mercy Catholic tradition.” Thank you to Shaileen Kopec ’64 (legacy mother ’35), Trustee, for serving as chair of our committee, and to committee members Charlotte Evans ’64, Trustee; Dr. Sue Cavar ’88, LH Science Department Chair (legacy mother ’45); Kathleen Shine, Director of Enrollment and 25-year LH admissions employee; Karina Brea ’19; and Victoria Elliott P’20, P’21 and McAuley Parents Association officer.

Fittingly, the theme of this issue of Hallmarks Squared is our Mercy tradition of educational excellence. Be sure to also watch our Junior Ring Ceremony at LuraltonHall.org/JuniorRing2020 and our new enrollment video at LuraltonHall.org/GirlsThriveHere. Experience our virtual tour at LuraltonHall.org/VirtualTour. Follow us on social media. You’ll see Mercy spirit, resilience, strength, and determination in our students, faculty, and staff through what is likely to be a prolonged challenge.

As we near the close of 2020, may we all channel Venerable Catherine McAuley’s optimism. Her desire for change and call to merciful action in the early 19th century continues to inspire. She is an ever-present reminder—on the path to sainthood—that one person can make a positive difference in the lives of the poor, sick, oppressed, and uneducated. We can all emulate Catherine’s “can-do” spirit through simple acts of compassionate service to those around us. For example, our own McAuley Club has served the hungry at Milford’s Beth-el Shelter consistently for 23 years. (See the Luralton Hall Religion Department Snapshot below for more facts about our religion and campus ministry program). Together, we can serve as Luralton’s “Heart of Mercy” as we work for a better world in 2021.



Our Dynamic Governance Model

We are pleased to announce that Marylee Jenkins ’83 became a trustee of the Luralton Hall Board of Trustees as of July 1, 2020. A partner at the law firm of Arent Fox LLP, Marylee has spent her entire career with an eye towards the future, working closely with numerous government and legal communities to improve existing laws and shape new ones as technology continues to rapidly evolve. Her clients come from a variety of diverse industries and she counsels on all aspects of intellectual property, including portfolio management, enforcement, strategy, and protection. Marylee, originally from Trumbull, holds a J.D. from New York Law School, a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Columbia University School of Engineering and Applied Science, and a B.S. in physics from Centre College.

“As the Board works to shape the future of Luralton, Marylee brings a passion for technology, engineering, and STEM education,” said Luralton Hall Board of Trustees Chair Paul Fama P’17. “She is a terrific addition to our leadership, and we welcome her perspective as an alumna with the insight of 30 years of business, law, and technology experience.”

Trustee Michelle Guzzi P’14 retired from the board effective June 30, 2020. Michelle served two terms for a total of six years as trustee during which time she was active in the search committee in 2016-2017 for our current head of school and most recently chaired the Advancement Committee. Prior to joining the Board, Michelle volunteered at Luralton as parent of Ann Marie Guzzi ’14, active in the McAuley Parents Association and serving in leadership roles for several major fundraising campaigns. In May 2015 Michelle and her husband Tony were awarded the LH President’s Medal at the Claven Awards Ceremony for their generosity and commitment to Luralton.

“Michelle has been a tireless supporter of Luralton, whether she was working to raise funds for the LH artificial turf field or as a parent cheering on the lacrosse and volleyball teams,” said Board Chair Paul Fama. “Our students are the beneficiaries of her decade of work on their behalf, and we are very grateful for Michelle’s years of dedication to Luralton’s Mission and for her valuable service to the Board.”



Head of School Elizabeth Miller



“I enjoyed hosting prospective students and their families for one-on-one outdoor walking tours of campus this autumn. Along with our new digital ads (shown here), admissions video, and virtual campus tour, we are finding new creative ways to bring Luralton to prospective students.”
– Elizabeth Miller.

LAURALTON HALL RELIGION DEPARTMENT SNAPSHOT	
8	Course offerings
4	Full-time faculty
1	Mercy Associate
86	Recipients of Frances Warde Service Award 2020
5	Student retreats offered annually
7	Religions self-reported by Class of 2023
100%	Compliance with U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Curriculum Framework
23	Years students have served Milford’s hungry (today’s McAuley Club)
4	Masses celebrated virtually since March 2020
18,814	Hours students served the community in 2019-2020 academic year

Love our Luralton legacy! Debbie Reyes Williams ’88 sent us this photo September 8 as she (wearing her LH class ring and senior sweater) dropped off her four daughters and her niece. Pictured are (front row, from left) Debbie and Toli Williams ’23 and (back row, from left) Ella Williams ’23, Maya Williams ’24, Krystle Garcia ’24, and Addie Williams ’23.



Diverse Literary Perspectives

In the V1-2020 issue of *Hallmarks Squared* mailed in June, Head of School Elizabeth Miller alluded to the work we do “to ensure that every young woman who attends Luralton feels welcome, known and loved.” We have since launched DEI@LH, our diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative. Professionally-facilitated activities held this fall included a virtual town hall for alumnae and virtual focus groups for current LH students who are women of color.

Among the wishes expressed by alumnae was that our curriculum reflect diverse voices. We would like to share just some of the components of our English curricula—reading selections in place long before our formalized DEI@LH initiative—which represent diversity not only of race but of thought, culture, religion, and gender.

For example, all freshmen study works by Latina authors including the novella *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros and *Before They Were Free* by Julia Alvarez, “Woman Work” and/or “New Directions” by African American author and poet Maya Angelou, “Harlem” and “Thank You M’am” by African American author and poet Langston Hughes, “Cinderella’s Stepsisters” by African American author Toni Morrison, and “Daily” by Naomi Shihab Nye, the Palestinian American poet.

Sophomore curriculum includes *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins about a female protagonist who challenges and subverts gender norms, and *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd about the female protagonist’s search for independent identity, racial discrimination and violence, and civil rights struggle.

Juniors at Luralton study Native American myths including “Sky Tree” and “The Earth Only,” works by African American freed slaves including the “Narrative of the Life of Frederik Douglass” and “Ain’t I a Woman?” by Sojourner Truth, works by groundbreaking female authors including *The Awakening* and “Silk Stockings” by Kate Chopin and *House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton. Students also examine themes of xenophobia and social and gender inequality in *The Crucible* by playwright Arthur Miller.

Seniors examine gender inequality and female subordination in Robert Browning’s “My Last Duchess” and social isolation, profiling, and application of Marxist theory in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. College-level courses delve into themes of racism from the “I Have a Dream” speech and “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr. to “The Color of Love” essay by Danzy Senna. Students also examine historic works by women including “Here Follow Some Verses Upon the Burning of our House” by Anne Bradstreet and “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury” by Elizabeth 1 as well as minority perspectives in the novel *Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood among Ghosts* by Maxine Hong Kingston and early feminist works such as “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Literary themes also include the emotional scars of slavery portrayed in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and the toll of war, violence, and poverty in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

“We are fortunate at Luralton, as an independent school, to have such autonomy and flexibility in designing our curriculum,” said Pamela Boynton, chair of Luralton’s English Department. A teacher at Luralton for eighteen years as well as parent of three LH alumnae, Ms. Boynton added, “Our curriculum also includes many traditional literary canons whose works contain themes of xenophobia and marginalization.” She cited as one example the theme of economic marginalization of poor migrant workers in the classic *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. “We continually revisit the curriculum as we strive to educate our young women about the world and to teach them to examine contemporary themes and human struggles through a literary lens.”



Quinlyn and Alexandra Elliott

WATCH OUR NEW VIDEO:
LAURALTONHALL.ORG/GIRLSTHRIVEHERE

Atomic Kid Studios

In Memoriam

We pray for all LH alumnae who have passed away this year, and we extend our deepest sympathies to all in our community mourning the loss of relatives or friends, due to COVID-19 or other causes, during this global pandemic. For a list of Luralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit: luraltonhall.org/inmemoriam

New Endowed Scholarship

Luralton Hall is pleased to announce that the Elsie Santangelo Scott Scholarship will be awarded annually to a Luralton student. The scholarship is available through a newly-created endowed scholarship fund, the generous gift of Elsie Santangelo Scott ’55 and her son John Scott.

The inaugural recipient of the scholarship for the 2020-2021 academic year is Madison Thompson ’21 of Derby who was awarded the scholarship on Mercy Day.

To qualify for the scholarship, the Luralton student must reside, as did Elsie, in the “Valley.” This scholarship defines the Valley as Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton. The scholarship has the potential to be annually renewable for the recipient during her time at Luralton for up to four years.

Head of School Elizabeth Miller thanked Elsie Scott and expressed her admiration for Luralton alumnae like Elsie who wish to help provide a path for future Luralton girls through their generosity and loyalty.

To apply for the Elsie Santangelo Scott Scholarship for the 2021-2022 academic year, visit luraltonhall.org/ScottScholarship to submit your application by July 1, 2021. Any student from the classes of 2022, 2023, 2024 or 2025 who will be attending Luralton and resides in the Valley in the coming academic year may apply.



Madison Thompson ’21

Shades Shutters Photography



Inspired by Our Teachers

Our LH teachers have never worked harder. They continue to deliver the highest-quality learning experiences to our students while adapting to COVID-19 safety practices that have significantly changed the classroom dynamic.

We believe if ever there were a time to honor our faculty, it is now! Please consider making a charitable gift today to the

Luralton Hall Annual Fund in honor of an individual Luralton faculty member, a department, or our entire faculty team. There are three ways to designate your gift:

- **Annual Fund**—Your gift in any amount will support faculty benefits including our 403(b) match and increased life insurance and other benefits for faculty and staff.
- **Endowment**—Your gift in any amount will support ongoing professional development.
- **Sponsor a Window**—Your gift of \$500 will help purchase a window for Phase II. A nameplate as you specify will honor an individual current or retired LH teacher, department, or the faculty as a whole.

Please go to luraltonhall.org/give to make your tax-deductible gift to the Luralton Hall Annual Fund today. Note your wish in the “Fund Designation” box. Or, you can mail a check in the enclosed envelope and note your designation. If you have any questions about making your charitable gift, please contact Director of Advancement Kathleen Kearns Donahue ’80, P’06, ’14 at kdonahue@luraltonhall.org or 203.877.2786 ext. 129.

“I continue to be inspired by our faculty,” said Dean of Academics Jan Powers ’75. “After we moved overnight to our LuraltonatHome online model last March, our teachers went on to lead students through the rest of the 2019-2020 academic year successfully—relying not on heavy homework assignments and independent study as many other schools did, but using live interactive virtual classrooms that required full participation. And, since reopening September 8, our faculty has been teaching our on-campus students at a full five-day schedule as well as the 31 of our 354 students who opted to enroll in LuraltonatHome.”

Ms. Powers continued, “I’m deeply grateful to our Luralton faculty members for their flexibility, dedication, and excellence in teaching.”

Please make your gift today in honor of our faculty who continue to engage and inspire our students—whether on campus or online—during this most challenging time.



INSPIRE HER
TO EXCELLENCE

#InspireHerToExcellence

PLEASE SEND CLASS NEWS TO: LAURALTONHALL.ORG/CLASSNOTES

Mercy Values Reflected in History

How are the Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns incorporated into your curriculum? This is the question each of Luralton’s seven academic departments will answer as part of the once-every-six-years Mission Accountability self-study project from MESA (see “Letter from the Head of School”).

LH History Department Chair Courtney Dwyer, who co-chaired our successful NEASC accreditation process in 2018-2019, worked with her team—history faculty Mark Allen, Trina Bowman, Lauren Korman, and Christine Miller—to complete their report in September. Following is a just a snapshot of nearly 180 examples in their report illustrating the ways in which our history curriculum addresses the Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns—Earth, Nonviolence, Women, Anti-Racism, and Immigration.

Earth – We strive to act in harmony and interdependence with all of creation. LH World History classes analyze how the desire for farmable land created conflict and impacted the physical environments of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Students also discuss and analyze how the Thirty Years War and Napoleonic Wars devastated not only populations but land and agriculture. Modern World History students learn about the physical and economic destruction of World War I and the unprecedented loss of life from prolonged warfare. They also study the suffering in the Soviet Union caused by Stalin’s policies of collectivization of agriculture and breakneck industrialization. Students understand the horror of dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan and the short and long-term effects. AP European History classes examine how the Industrial Revolution and the extrapolation of resources such as coal and iron, rapid urbanization, and the lack of sanitation impacted the earth and human lives.

Immigration—We work to ensure the dignity of immigrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking and stand in solidarity with all who suffer oppression. Students of Modern World History learn that Jews trying to escape from Nazi Germany in the early days of WWII were turned away by other nations. U.S. Government students learn about immigration laws and policies as they study our legislative, executive and judicial branches. U.S. History students analyze the reasons immigrants came to the United States between 1850-1900, the conditions in which they lived, and their significant contributions. Economics classes discuss the effect of immigration on world



Nonviolence—We promote peace in families, in communities, in business, and among nations. U.S. Government students convey their understanding of the First Amendment and the right of the people to peacefully assemble and to petition their elected government representatives through a Bill of Rights storyboard project. U.S. History students examine the major hurdles and accomplishments of the Civil Rights struggle in post-war America for various groups including African-Americans and women. AP European History students examine the peaceful, non-violent tactics employed by Mahatma Gandhi as he pushed for the independence of India from Great Britain including the doctrine of civil disobedience with its emphasis on non-cooperation, boycotts, and public demonstrations.

Anti-Racism—We oppose racism in all its forms. Racism contradicts Catholic Social Teaching, which calls for respect for the human dignity of every person. World History classes discuss the American reaction to Muslims in a post 9/11 world. Modern World History students trace the historical roots of anti-Semitism in Europe and Germany in particular. U.S. History students look at the political ramifications of the Indian Removal policy. They study the Brown v. Board of Education decision and the significance of the Civil Rights Act including the results of school desegregation. Economics classes examine the ways racism and sexism continue to impact issues of workplace and income equality. AP European History students study the concept of Social Darwinism and examine how it was applied in the era of New Imperialism.

Women—We work for the equality of women, advocating for their rights and speaking out against gender discrimination. Modern World History students learn about the contributions of women during World War II. U.S. Government students examine the history of women in politics and government from the period before they could vote, through the Suffragette Movement, to a few short years ago when the senate had to install a bathroom because none existed for the growing number of female senators. AP European History students examine the role of women during the Scientific Revolution and the ways in which the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions diminished the role of women as economic contributors to the family. Students examine the feminist movement after World War II and compare it with earlier movements for gender equality.

“Mercy values continue to inform our teaching,” said History Department Chair Courtney Dwyer. “Our goal is for our students to leave here as citizens with a knowledgeable worldview of history infused with a Mercy-inspired awareness.”



Time for Connection

How do we stay connected to each other, to our faith, to our School, and to our community during a global pandemic? When Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall closed campus from March 11 – May 28, 2020 due to COVID-19 and implemented the “Lauralton at Home” learning model, our annual three-day, off-campus Kairos retreat was cancelled along with other activities last spring. But, Lauralton’s religion faculty and student leaders wanted to make sure all LH students still had the opportunity to gather with peers, to reflect, and to find spiritual connection and comfort during a stressful time. With creativity and video conferencing technology, Kairos was held virtually June 2 – 4 with 38 LH students participating including seven student leaders.

Kairos, popularized in Jesuit high schools and colleges, is typically a four-day, three-night, student-led retreat. Activities allow time for introspection and are designed to build trust and a stronger sense of community. The word kairos, whose Greek origin is the “right time” or the “opportune moment,” has been adapted by Christian theology to mean “God’s time.”

Kairos Moderator and LH Religion Teacher Anna Wiciorkowska ’10, along with Religion Department Chair Damien Connolly and a team of LH student leaders, typically work beginning in September to develop our Kairos program. According to “Ms. W,” as she is known to her students, planning last spring was a challenge. “We knew there was some ‘Zoom fatigue’ setting in, and we tried to make activities feel as spiritual and personal as we could in a virtual format,” said Ms. Wiciorkowska. “And, based on feedback we received, the girls had a very meaningful experience.” As Veronica Butler ’21 commented, “I definitely had my doubts before, with it being online, and thinking I wouldn’t have the same experience that I had heard was so beneficial... I can truthfully say, from my experience and others’ reactions, how impactful Kairos still turned out to be.”

Head of School Elizabeth Miller has served as a speaker each year at Lauralton’s retreat. “Being invited to speak at Kairos has been one of the highlights during my time at Lauralton,” said Mrs. Miller. “I encourage students to join us for the next Kairos and to find out how the powerful call to ‘live the fourth’ can be life-changing.”

One of the major themes that emerged at our Kairos retreat is the divine that exists within each of us. As Ms. Wiciorkowska explained, students are reminded at Kairos that “there is more to a person than meets the eye. Sometimes, all it takes is a simple conversation, to really listen to what a person is saying, to remember that we are all connected as children of God.”

“Given the current strife in our world, it is a joy to see students of all faith backgrounds come out of this experience with friendships they may not have found had it not been for this retreat,” she added.



LH Kairos moderator Ms. Anna Wiciorkowska ’10 (far right) with students who participated in Kairos including (from left) Kate Backus ’21, Veronica Butler ’21, Julia Zapadka ’21, and Hanna Zabski ’21.



Join us for LH home games! This fall we implemented livestreaming capabilities at lauraltonhall.org/athletics-streaming so that home athletic events can be viewed remotely. Here, varsity soccer player Lily Koerner ’22 enjoys a beautiful October day on the LH field.

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall

Calling All Alumnae!

Do you know classmates who have recently moved, gotten married, or started a new job? Please remind them to update their contact info at LauraltonHall.org/myinfo



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Shades Shutters Photography



Students got into the holiday spirit helping LH Librarian Kristen Finnegan decorate the Helen Meloy Schwalje Library. From left are Charlotte Jenkins '21, Grace Polatsek '23, Sahnoya Rose-Blake '23, Katy Semosky '21, Kate Backus '21, and Mafalda Osiris '23. We wish our LH community peace and hope this Christmas, as we pray for a safe and healthy 2021 for all.