

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

Lauralton Hall



*Lord, send forth your spirit ...
and renew the face of the earth.
Psalm 104:30*

Prepared for Life

A LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

It is a challenge to convey a smile through a mask; yet, I hope the Class of 2020 could sense my joy as they were celebrated parade-style through our beautiful campus Saturday, June 20 and we awarded each graduate her diploma. Our senior class experienced a celebration like no other in Luralton's 115-year history (see related story inside).

The Class of 2020, all of our students, and all of us learned difficult life lessons this year that cannot be taught in any classroom—including that unexpected events happen over which we have no control. Yet we do have control over the ways we respond, and so many in our LH community chose to #MakeMercyReal.

Babette Gilles '21 shared her love of books by reading to blind senior citizens and creating a website to reunite teens with a shared love of reading while sheltering at home. Kaylor Garamella '22, her mother Shawn Polizzi Garamella '90, and grandmother Lorry Torre Polizzi '66 sewed 100 protective gowns for caregivers at the Mary Wade Home in New Haven. Bridget Moore '16 and Lily Delmonico '16 reached out to the Class of 2016—who missed out on the joy of being on campus for their last semester of college—and produced a video message of empathy and advice for the LH Class of 2020. And, if you follow our Luralton Facebook Alumnae page, you have seen our “LH Health Heroes” series in support of our dedicated and talented alumnae caring for others on the front lines.

I am saddened by the tragic loss of lives to coronavirus and inspired by our Mercy-filled community.



The evening of March 10, 2020 we announced we needed to close campus due to potential exposure to COVID-19. The next day, online learning was in full operation—classes conducted by video conference following our regular daily schedule, faculty interacting with students in as close to an in-person experience as possible. How did we pivot almost seamlessly? Six years of practice during inclement weather closures prepared us by fostering a continuous learning culture at Luralton. We are blessed with the technology, skilled faculty, motivated students, supportive parents, and determined community that allow academics to thrive during “Luralton at Home.”

Our faculty has worked tirelessly under the leadership of Dean of Academics Jan Powers '75, who is now celebrating 40 years of service to Luralton Hall. In addition to teaching, faculty held traditional extracurricular events virtually. As part of our Earth Week celebration, LH Science Teacher and Environmental Club Moderator April Kelley '85 encouraged students, faculty, and staff to create art from materials found outdoors. One result is this issue's cover art by LH English Teacher Catherine Gallagher '85 and daughters Margaret '15, Sarah '16, and Anne '18. LH History Teacher and Student Council Advisor Lauren Korman ensured that our spring Spirit Week was celebrated virtually. Religion Teacher Anna Wiciorkowska '10 moderated our annual Kairos retreat for students, holding a three-day student-led event online. Our counseling team hosted planned information sessions about college admissions and financial aid processes which actually resulted in greater attendance than previous on-campus evening events. As a School community, we have taken a giant step forward, becoming—by necessity—even more proficient and comfortable users of new platforms. Together, we continue to adapt, learn, and prepare for the future.

We look forward to returning to our beautiful campus and are prepared to meet new health guidelines. We hope you will be delighted to find that during this unusual time of unexpected campus closure, we have prudently invested in preserving and refreshing our facilities. The Luralton Hall Board of Trustees, as all good boards do, has guided our work with generative thinking to prepare for years to come. Our conscious effort to attend to needed refurbishments has included repaving 110,000 square feet of driveways and parking lots; cleaning, repairing and replacing gutters; replacing the library roof; and replacing all HVAC units for the Athletic Center. Thank you to the members of our Board's Buildings and Grounds Committee. To our Maintenance Supervisor Chito Lucas who has dedicated 32 years to Luralton Hall, and to our Maintenance Assistant Lon Barkman who has given 21 years of service, we deeply appreciate the work you continue to do day after day to keep our facilities operating smoothly and efficiently.

I wish the entire Luralton community a healthy and safe summer. We are prepared and excited to welcome in person our outstanding new Class of 2024, our record number of 12 new transfer students, and all of our returning Luralton students for the first day of classes September 8!

In Mercy,

 *Elizabeth A. Miller*
Elizabeth Miller, Head of School



Head of School Elizabeth Miller

A SPECIAL MESSAGE

On June 2, just before this issue of Hallmarks Squared went to press, I sent a letter to more than 6000 members of our community. In this letter I shared with you some of the ways we are working to ensure that every young woman who attends Luralton feels welcome, known, and loved.

We always have more work to do to achieve this goal.

We are listening.

As we continue to focus on advancing our Mission, I ask all who come through our gates to let this be your guide: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is Divine light in every human being.

If you did not receive the June 2 letter you may read it at luraltonhall.org/listening.

Please update your email address at luraltonhall.org/myinfo should you wish to receive future community-wide emails from Luralton Hall.



Luralton is Thriving

- ✓ Providing an all-girls education for 115 years
- ✓ Governing as an independent Catholic school of Mercy tradition, not reliant on diocesan or state resources
- ✓ Operating on a balanced budget
- ✓ Drawing students from 42 cities and towns and beyond
- ✓ Securing strong audit results repeatedly
- ✓ Enhancing campus facilities proactively
- ✓ Focusing on student-facing investments, funding innovation
- ✓ Investing in a forward-looking strategy to benefit generations to come
- ✓ Enjoying 98.2% student retention
- ✓ Welcoming a record number of recent transfer students
- ✓ Retaining our high-quality faculty
- ✓ Surpassing annual fundraising goals
- ✓ Leveraging generative leadership at the Board level and internally
- ✓ Earning continued accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges—having just completed a rigorous, 18-month process occurring once a decade
- ✓ Increasing affordability and accessibility by reducing co-curricular fees
- ✓ Earning outstanding college acceptances
- ✓ Introducing new signature programs including our dedicated Math Center and our Financial Intelligence Curriculum
- ✓ Nurturing social-emotional learning environment, including Luralton's First Year Experience program
- ✓ Excelling in STEM disciplines, including the only all-girls engineering team to compete in and twice win the Sikorsky STEM Challenge
- ✓ Reinvigorating Mercy traditions and honoring Catholic heritage, while welcoming students of all faith backgrounds
- ✓ Hosting thousands on campus annually for public events including Christmas in the Mansion, Irish Night, Daisy Run, and summer enrichment camp
- ✓ Forging partnerships with organizations pursuing compatible missions including the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Kiwanis Key Club, and others
- ✓ Offering vibrant athletics program with 15 varsity sports and 65% student body participation
- ✓ Showcasing fine arts with multiple vocal and instrumental ensembles, performance opportunities, and visual arts offerings
- ✓ Bringing compassionate acts of service to the Milford community and beyond designed to “Make Mercy Real”
- ✓ Personalizing college counseling services with a seasoned, expert staff (we ARE your college consultants)
- ✓ Offering the area's only authentic archaeological dig on our historic campus under direction of a State of Connecticut archaeologist
- ✓ Connecting our 7,000+ alumnae network through online platforms, regional events, and on-campus programming



Hope Cheever '20 and family are all smiles as they arrive at the LH Graduation Celebration on June 20, 2020



Proud graduate, Lindsey Gaspard '20

A Celebration Like No Other

Saturday, June 20, 2020 marked a historic day for Lauralton—a graduation motorcade through campus to celebrate our 96 graduates. Following COVID-19 safety protocols set by the State of Connecticut and local health officials, students and families paraded in their decorated vehicles through a festive campus to “Pomp and Circumstance” and the applause of Lauralton Hall Board of Trustees Chair Paul Fama P ’17, Leadership Team, Academic Team, faculty, and staff members. As cars arrived in succession, Head of School Elizabeth Miller and Dean of Academics Jan Powers ’75 awarded diplomas and yellow roses. Each graduate was photographed in her cap and gown outside the Mansion, ceremoniously helped plant her class tree, and was officially inducted as a Lauralton alumna to the sounds of the Fairfield Gaelic Pipe Band.

Leading the procession was Valedictorian Isabela Baghdady. An outstanding high honors student, Isabela was active in the YMCA Youth & Government (YAG) Club where she held several leadership positions including speaker of the house. A member of the tennis team, she also participated as a percussionist in Lauralton’s symphonic orchestra and jazz band and served as a peer mentor and member of student council. Isabela, of Shelton, will attend the University of Pennsylvania with plans to major in philosophy, politics, and economics.

Following was Salutatorian Caron Kim of West Haven. In addition to achieving high honors all four years, Caron serves her Korean community as a volunteer language teacher and in her church as a lector, choir singer, and Sunday school teacher. She could be seen on stage in Lauralton’s annual musical productions, vocal ensembles, and orchestra and jazz band performances where she played piano and saxophone. Caron will attend Harvard with plans to pursue government studies.



Catherine McAuley Award recipient Carly Weber '20

Lauralton’s highest honor, the Catherine McAuley Award, was presented to Carly Weber of Milford. The awards committee selected Carly for her kind and caring treatment of others, strong academic purpose, and infectious positive attitude. A standout writer, year-round swimmer on our state championship team, talented musician with campus ministry, dedicated YAG leader, political volunteer, and model citizen, Carly was honored as the senior who best demonstrates Mercy values. She will attend Fordham University.

Go to lauraltonhall.org/grad2020 to see a full list of Class of 2020 awards, college acceptances, and video including valedictory and salutatory addresses as well as highlights from the June 20 celebration



Congratulations to LH School Counselor Erin Chamberlain who was recognized by the Connecticut School Counselor Association in a virtual awards event May 14 for her work developing and serving as instructor for our FYE (First Year Experience) program. A Lauralton Hall Signature Program, FYE is a year-long course for all freshmen featuring curriculum designed for personal growth.

A Decade of Dual Credit

Through a partnership with the University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) program, Lauralton offers six concurrent enrollment courses taught by our faculty members who are certified UConn ECE instructors. Our students enrolled in ECE have the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit.

Across the six courses during the 2019-2020 academic year, Lauralton accommodated 82 ECE registrations as some students enrolled in multiple courses. ECE courses offered at Lauralton include AP Environmental Science, AP U.S. History, AP European History, Advanced Biology Honors, Economics Honors, and Music Theory Honors. Courses are taught (respectively) by Science Teacher April Kelley ’85, History Department Chair Courtney Dwyer, History Teacher Trina Bowman (most recently certified by UConn for AP European History), Science Department Chair Dr. Susan Cavar ’88, History Teacher Mark Allen, and Fine Arts Department Chair Margaret Sargent.

The majority of students who complete courses through the UConn ECE program have successfully transferred their UConn credits to the colleges or universities they attend. There is no additional fee for our students to enroll in ECE courses at Lauralton. Students potentially save thousands of dollars in college tuition, may advance class standing (assisting with dorm selection and more at some colleges), and can free up time in an undergrad’s busy life by possibly satisfying distribution and/or pre-requisites.

“We launched our partnership with UConn in 2010, and the option to earn college credits has shown to be very popular among our students,” said Dean of Academics Jan Powers ’75. “We continue to build our ECE course offerings—an academic opportunity not widely available at most independent schools.”



INSPIRE HER TO EXCELLENCE



The Gift of Inspiration

On October 1, 2020, members of the Lauralton Hall Class of 2022 will receive their Lauralton rings at the Junior Ring Mass in one of our most treasured traditions. To many alumnae, the ring symbolizes the special ties that bind their shared experience and is a reminder of the timeless circle of Mercy.

To those on our team working to advance Lauralton’s Mission, we see the ring as a testament to Lauralton’s relevance, endurance, and resilience since 1905. Today, we ask you to help us as we continue to work to educate and inspire the next generation of girls to achieve at their highest potential in an all-girls’ setting and culture unlike any other.

Please consider making a charitable gift today to our 2020-2021 Annual Fund. All gifts, regardless of magnitude, play an important role in inspiring excellence. Whether it is educational enrichment, athletic investments, signature programs, technology enhancements, financial aid, or faculty professional development, your gift has an immediate impact and provides critical, current-use support every year. For example, during this past academic year, the Annual Fund allowed for the installation of several device charging stations in key locations on campus—less searching for outlets and lost chargers and a big stress reducer for students. And, your gift to the Annual Fund this year will inspire school spirit as we install technology allowing us to livestream home athletic events under COVID-19 restrictions and beyond.

You can donate securely online at www.lauraltonhall.org/give. Or send a check payable to Lauralton Hall in the enclosed envelope. If you would like to discuss other ways to give, such as a pledge or stock transfer, please contact Director of Advancement Kathleen Kearns Donahue ’80, P’06,’14 directly at 203.877.2786 ext. 129.

We are grateful for your generosity. It will help inspire her—our student, your daughter, your granddaughter, or a girl you may not even know yet—to excellence.

#InspireHerToExcellence

LAURALTON HALL GIRL SCOUTS SCHOLARSHIP

Signature LH Program



From left, Alexandra Brenton '21, Head of School Elizabeth Miller, Maddie Plumb '20 and Caroline Taylor '20 in advance of National Girl Scouts Day, March 12, 2020

Girl Scouts Shine at LH

Lauralton is a long-time champion of its students’ active involvement in Girl Scouts. Three of our Girl Scouts–Madeline (“Maddie”) Plumb ’20, Caroline Taylor ’20, and Anastasia Meltzer ’20–have earned Girl Scout Gold Awards this year for making a positive difference in their communities.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the most prestigious award that Girl Scouts can earn. The award is based on successful completion of a project following a series of steps—from choosing an issue to creating and presenting a plan to taking action—all while maintaining detailed standards of excellence. Projects require at least 80 hours of work with the ultimate goal of educating and inspiring others.

In March, Maddie Plumb completed her Gold Award project, “Milford: A Tour Through History,” a three-part interactive walking tour designed to increase community interest in and accessibility to the town’s history. The audio component includes commentary from Head of School Elizabeth Miller about Lauralton Hall’s historic significance to Milford. With her strong call to serve, Maddie also is a certified EMT. At age sixteen (after completing 160 hours of classes), she started training in twelve-hour shifts on weekends. Today she accompanies emergency medical services teams in Stratford and Trumbull. She plans to study nursing at the University of Connecticut with the goal of pursuing a career in emergency medicine. According to LH Director of Counseling Yvonne Fosse-Previs ’90, it is rare to see a student become an EMT volunteer as a minor, let alone achieve certification, given the strict requirements and time demands. “Maddie has demonstrated great perseverance and a true commitment to training to help people in emergency situations,” said Ms. Fosse-Previs.

Caroline Taylor’s Gold Award project focused on the dangers of vaping. After months of conducting in-depth research, Caroline presented her findings to Lauralton’s freshmen during FYE (First Year Experience) classes in February. Discussion points included the addictive qualities and adverse health effects of e-cigarettes as well as the industry’s powerful marketing tactics. LH School Counselor Erin Chamberlain said that Caroline’s timely and well-documented presentation will be incorporated into the FYE curriculum for the class of 2024 as well. Caroline will attend

the University of Connecticut and is interested in pursuing psychology and neurobiology.

For her Gold Award project, Anastasia Meltzer ’20 shared her enthusiasm for science. Anastasia developed and implemented a program for children at the Southbury Public Library where she hosted fun STEM-themed projects monthly for nearly two years. Projects ranged from making slime and glitter tornadoes to building rubber band helicopters and simple pneumatic machines. Anastasia will attend Vassar College.

Alexandra Brenton ’21 continues to work on her Gold Award project with the goal of earning her Award in her senior year. Alexandra’s plan is to bring greater awareness to her Lauralton community about the impact of throwing away clothing and to engage others in reuse efforts to benefit both the environment and those in need.

“I am so proud of our Lauralton Girl Scouts, particularly our graduating seniors who have earned the prestigious Gold Award,” said Head of School Elizabeth Miller. “They inspire me to think about ways our School might further support the Girl Scouts, whose mission aligns with ours as proponents of young women as strong contributing citizens. This led to formalizing an initiative with the Girls Scouts of Connecticut resulting in a new Lauralton Signature Program,” added Mrs. Miller.

The program, the Lauralton Hall Girl Scouts Scholarship, is a partnership with the Girls Scouts of Connecticut organization and offers annual, renewable scholarships of \$2,500 to incoming Class of 2025 Lauralton students. In addition to meeting Lauralton’s admissions criteria, candidates must be active in their troop, have earned their Bronze Award, and be progressing toward their Silver and Gold Awards. Scholarship recipients are required to maintain strong academic standing and citizenship. This signature program also includes other plans for joint activities for the Girl Scouts of Connecticut and Lauralton.

“The Girl Scouts motto to ‘Be Prepared’ and their spirit of willingness to serve dovetails beautifully with our Mission at Lauralton,” said Mrs. Miller. “We look forward to offering this scholarship to deserving Girl Scouts who apply this fall and welcoming them to the Class of 2025.”



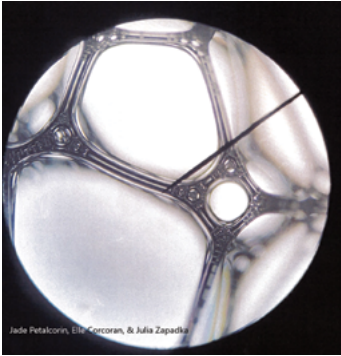
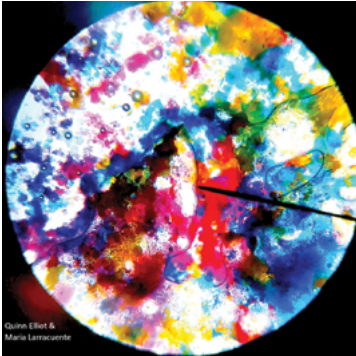
Maddie Plumb '20 delivers the results of her Gold Award project, including audio devices and tour maps, to the Milford Historical Society.

Science = Art

The difference between science and the arts is not that they are different sides of the same coin... or even different parts of the same continuum, but rather, they are manifestations of the same thing. The arts and sciences are avatars of human creativity.

– Mae Jemison, former NASA astronaut and the first black woman to travel into space

Earlier this year, Lauralton Cellular and Molecular Biology students learned about the mechanics and capabilities of the microscope in a creative way. Using ordinary materials such as oil, glitter, salt, and other substances found in the classroom, students captured magnified images on slides to create works of art including the examples shown here. “There are examples of beauty in the everyday teaching of science,” said Science Department Chair Dr. Susan Cavar ’88. “Our microscope art is just one amazing way to show the interconnectedness of science and art.”



Grow Your Network

Join our LinkedIn group: Academy of Our Lady of Mercy - Lauralton Hall! LH launched a social media initiative in January to grow a stronger online LH professional network using LinkedIn. The effort, spearheaded by Samantha Brittenham Wyman ’01, seeks to provide a more valuable resource through which Lauralton women help each other grow and succeed in their careers.

With more than 7,000 living alumnae, Lauralton women represent a wide range of professions, experience, and geographies. Whether you are seeking to expand your network, a college student looking for internships, a manager recruiting talent, or a transfer to a new city, LinkedIn is a powerful tool. “We want our young alumnae in particular to know that after they leave Lauralton, we as a community are here to mentor, advise, and connect them with opportunities,” said Elizabeth Miller, Head of School. “We are grateful to Samantha for lending her time and expertise to this project.”

Watch for news on LinkedIn about the LH professional community and, as circumstance permit, future alumnae gatherings and networking opportunities.

Please send class news and prayer intentions to:
LAURALTONHALL.ORG/CLASSNOTES

For a list of Lauralton loved ones who have passed away in the last year, please visit:
LAURALTONHALL.ORG/INMEMORIAM

SAVE THE DATES

Sept. 9, 2020

Opening Mass

~

Oct. 23-25, 2020

High School Musical

~

Dec. 5, 2020

Christmas in the Mansion

Preview Party

~

Dec. 6, 2020

Christmas in the Mansion

~

Feb. 27, 2021

Irish Night

~

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Mercy Education
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Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall

We continue to pray for the health and safety of all those in the Lauralton Hall community serving on the health care front lines during the COVID-19 crisis.

Thank you for your service.

Follow our #LHHealthHeroes series on the Lauralton Hall Alumnae Facebook page. Go to facebook.com/LauraltonAlumnae