

SENIOR SHOWCASE

Class of 2017

As high school seniors in the Diocese of Camden graduate and the next step in their life’s journey “commences,” the Catholic Star Herald asked these young men and women about their time in South Jersey Catholic schools, what they would say to future high schoolers, and what's next.



CAITLIN MENSAH,
HOLY SPIRIT HIGH SCHOOL, ABSECON
Activities: Choir; Rowing; Liturgy Club; Spartan TV
Plans for the Fall: American University, Washington, D.C.

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic school?
“I appreciate the fact that my faith has been the backbone for not just my high school academia but my life. When things are hard or I find myself in despair, I remember my faith and that with God by my side I can accomplish anything.”

What will you miss the most?
“I will definitely miss my friends and the relationships I have made over the last four years. It is unbelievable to know that these four years truly did fly by before my eyes. The friendships I have made have shaped me into the person I am and I know that I will have those very friendships to last a lifetime.”



KYLE ABO,
ST. AUGUSTINE PREP, RICHLAND
Activities: Band, environmental club, Knights of St. Augustine, fencing, National Honor Society, Latin National Honor Society, student government
Plans for the fall: Villanova University

What was your funniest high school memory?
“During my junior year, the seniors pranked the entire school community by paying a local petting zoo to come to school. When the petting zoo arrived, all of the students and teachers were simply flabbergasted when livestock and other assorted animals were released for everyone to see and touch.”

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic high school?
“Being able to learn in a faith-filled environment, oriented around God, is a blessing... Studying in a Catholic high school enabled me to not only learn what we as Catholics, believe, but also why we believe what we believe.”



CYNTHIA NGUYEN,
CAMDEN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, CHERRY HILL
Activities: Dance Team; Student Government; Baking Club
Plans for the Fall: Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Funniest high school memory:
“Walking over 10 miles around historical Philadelphia to win a scavenger hunt for my Honors U.S. 1 Class. After many teams gave up, we kept going for the bragging rights and the \$5 gift card to Wawa. My legs were sore for the next 3 days.”

Piece of advice:
“In high school, it is easy to constantly compare yourself to others. Therefore, my one piece of advice is to only focus your energy into doing the best that you can do.”



DANA DURHAM,
OUR LADY OF MERCY ACADEMY, NEWFIELD
Activities: Student council, National Honor Society, blood drive, softball, basketball, Spanish club
Plans for the fall: The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic School?
“What I appreciated most was getting an in-depth look into the Catholic faith. I am a proud Catholic now.”

What is one piece of advice for incoming freshmen?
“Stay on top of your studies... always!”



ELIJAH HARDEE,
ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL, HAMMONTON
Activities: Student government, marketing assistant, wresting, football
Plans for the fall: Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic high school?
“When you attend a Catholic school, you will not only leave with a great education, you will graduate with an understanding of what it takes to become a respected man or woman in society. You will learn what it takes to live your life in unity with God. You will find out who you really are.”

What is one piece of advice for incoming freshmen?
“Develop in the following three areas: organization skills, note taking skills, and time management skills. A lot of people say that high school is hard. If you master these three skills, it will be much easier.”



RYAN CASSIDY,
GLOUCESTER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, GLOUCESTER CITY
Activities: Student Council; Ronald McDonald Teen Advisory; National Honor Society
Plans for the Fall: Boston College

Funniest high school memory
“Traveling to Europe with a group and friends and belting out songs from Les Miserables.”

What do you most appreciate?
“Studying a wide variety of subjects while being in an environment where you are free to explore your faith openly.”



GRACE JABLONOSKI,
PAUL VI HIGH SCHOOL, HADDONFIELD
Activities: Student council, field hockey, lacrosse, swimming, choir, campus ministry, peer leadership, religious education instructor, Kairos rector
Plans for the fall: St. Joseph University, Philadelphia, PA

What was your funniest high school memory?
“My funniest Paul VI moment would be Kairos when all of the students attending the retreat hid from Teddy (my twin brother and co-leader) and me, making us believe they had run away!”

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic School?
“I most appreciate the sacrifices my Mom and Dad have endured to allow my siblings and me to attend Paul VI High school.”



THOMAS PIRO,
WILDWOOD CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, NORTH WILDWOOD
Activities: Campus ministry, National Honor Society, golf, chess club
Plans for the fall: St. Andrew’s Seminary at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

What do you most appreciate about going to a Catholic school?
“I appreciate the spiritual environment of the school. Whenever I was stressed or worried or had a lot of assignments, I always knew that I could walk down the hallway and sit in silence in the chapel to calm down.”

What is one piece of advice for incoming freshmen?
“Don’t be afraid to go out and meet new people. Wildwood Catholic might not be the biggest school, but as freshmen my class and I were all nervous. We eventually became friends and learned to appreciate each other.”