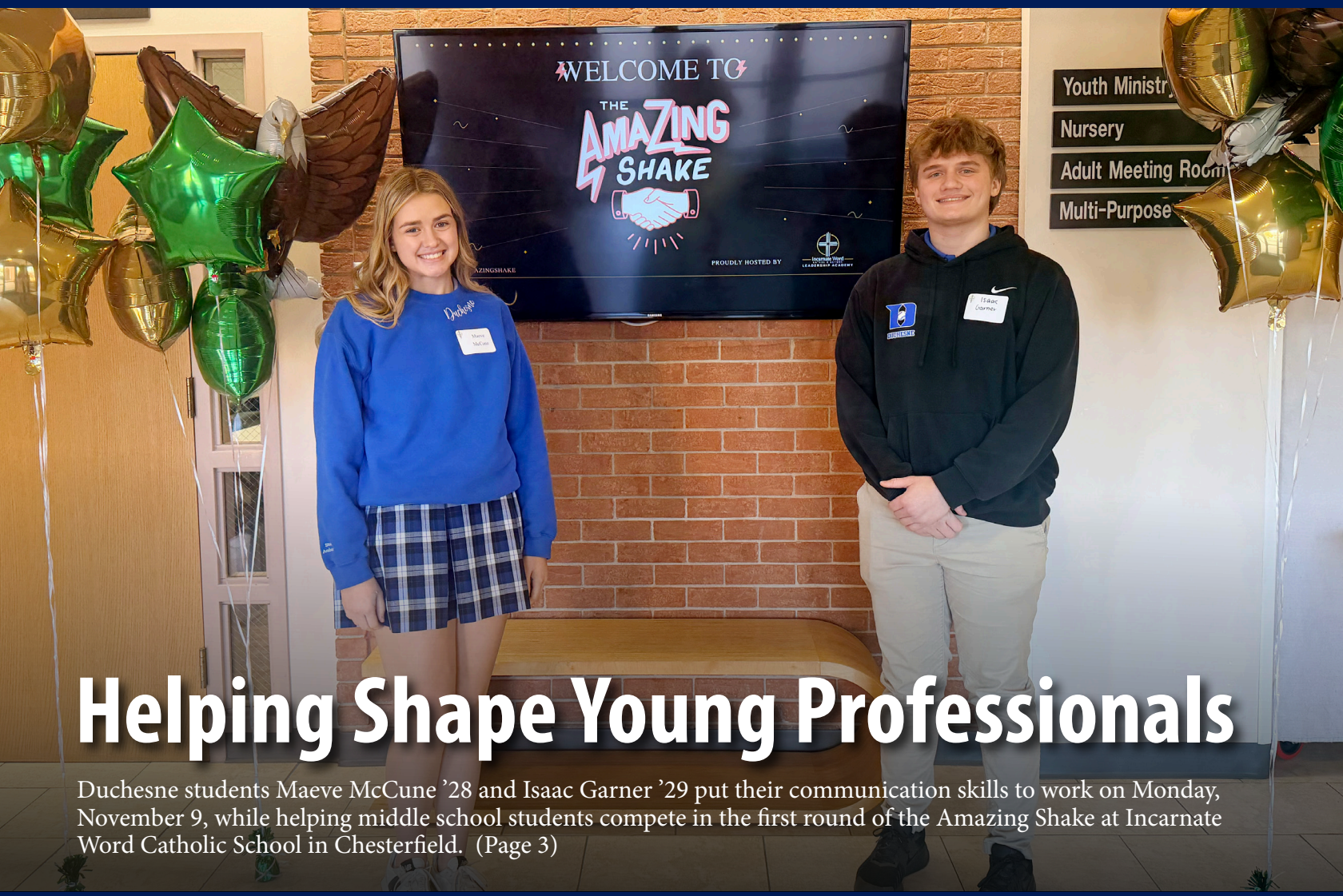
PIONEER PRESS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER • 2026



Helping Shape Young Professionals

Duchesne students Maeve McCune ’28 and Isaac Garner ’29 put their communication skills to work on Monday, November 9, while helping middle school students compete in the first round of the Amazing Shake at Incarnate Word Catholic School in Chesterfield. (Page 3)

UPCOMING DATES

November 18
NO LATE START
St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Feast Day Mass at 9:45 a.m.

November 19
Mass at 7:10 a.m. in the Chapel

November 21
Craft Fair 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

November 23-27
No School-Thanksgiving Break

November 25
Hockey-The Catholic Cup v. St. Dominic at Carshield Sportsplex at 8:30 p.m.

From the Assistant Principal of Student Life

A Season to Be Grateful



Debi Turner '96
Assistant Principal of Student Life

As Thanksgiving approaches, I'm especially grateful for this Duchesne life—and you've given me plenty of reasons. Last month, our theater students delivered a wonderful performance to a packed house. A sea of blue braved torrential rain to cheer our soccer team to an incredible district tournament upset. Parent volunteers came out in droves for Oktoberfest, many staying well beyond their shifts. Our entire community helped make Open House a huge success, welcoming prospective families into the school we love.

And today—insert dramatic pause—Kateri House won our Event Friday competition. Everyone loves a good underdog story, and I'm pretty sure even the other Houses couldn't help cheering a little for that one.

In my role, I get to see so much of the kindness, humor, generosity, and heart in this building. I wish I could share every moment with you, because your kids give us so many reasons to be proud. Thank you for trusting us with them and for the love and support you show our entire DHS family. I feel that support, and I don't take it for granted.

This Thanksgiving, I'm especially thankful for our health, for my family, and for this Duchesne life: the kids, the friendships, and the privilege of belonging to such a caring community. Wishing you and your family a holiday filled with love, laughter, and time to appreciate the people who keep showing up for you. May your hearts be full and your plates have room for one more scoop of mashed potatoes. There's always room.

Student Named 2027 Teen Miss Dance





Huge congratulations to Parker Borgmeyer '30 on being named Teen Miss Dance of DMA Chapter 28!

To earn the title, Parker showcased her talent and versatility across ballet, tap, jazz, modern, and acro, along with an interview and a solo lyrical performance. Next up, she will represent Chapter 28 this summer in Ohio at the National Dance Masters of America Teen Title Competition!

Way to shine, Parker!

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Shaping Young Professionals at Amazing Shake

Duchesne students Maeve McCune ’28 and Isaac Garner ’29 put their communication skills to work on Monday, November 9, while helping middle school students compete in the first round of the Amazing Shake at Incarnate Word Catholic School in Chesterfield.

McCune and Garner joined students from Vianney, St. Joseph’s Academy, and Ursuline to serve as judges for the Circle of Doom, one of three events held during the opening round of the competition.

The Amazing Shake is a competitive program designed to help students build confidence, discipline, respect, poise, and professionalism. Participants develop skills such as giving a proper handshake, working a room, handling a difficult phone conversation, interviewing for a job, and presenting to a crowd.



From Left: Maeve McCune ’28 and Isaac Garner ’29

Garner was impressed by the real-world skills the program emphasized.

“The Amazing Shake is an amazing program that prepares students for real-world experiences,” he said. “It teaches them confidence, professionalism, and being able to think on the fly.”

The program runs from September through March, with all Incarnate Word junior high students participating. Students advance through five rounds until two finalists remain. The eventual winner travels to Atlanta to compete in the Global Amazing Shake at the Ron Clark Academy, where the program originated.

This year marked the first time high school students served as judges for Incarnate Word’s competition.

During the Circle of Doom, 132 middle school students rotated through nine stations. At each stop, students were expected to properly introduce themselves before receiving a question they had not seen in advance. They then had 90 seconds to provide a detailed response.

McCune was among the high school students tasked with asking the questions and evaluating the responses.

“They all did a great job, and I loved hearing all the answers they came up with,” she said. “I also had the opportunity to provide them feedback, and we worked on the importance of eye contact, body language, and storytelling in an interview.”

Following each response, McCune, Garner, and the other judges offered positive feedback and constructive criticism on everything from handshakes and posture to speaking volume and the answers themselves.

For McCune, the chance to work directly with the younger students made the experience especially rewarding.

“The program was so amazing and provided the students a great way to work on their interview and professional skills,” she said. “Altogether, it was a really fun day, and everyone did so amazing.”

Adam Fritz, who helped organize the event, said the two Pioneers made a strong impression throughout the day.

“I was given rave reviews on how Maeve and Isaac spoke with the students and just how well they gave feedback, whether positive or on areas of improvement,” Fritz said. “We were so proud of them and cannot thank them enough for their time and effort.”

Garner left equally impressed with the program and what it could offer the students moving forward.

“The Amazing Shake was an awesome experience and should be offered to every student to prepare them for real life,” he said. “I am excited to see where the program will take these young men and women.”

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Duchesne Students Attend Unite for Justice Conference

Duchesne students took part in the Unite for Justice Conference late last month, spending two days learning alongside students from Catholic high schools across the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Director of Community and Student Engagement Caleb Johnson brought Haiden Bridges ’29, Parker White ’29, and Rowe Beckerle ’29 to this year’s conference, held at St. Joseph’s Academy and Washington University in St. Louis.

Johnson first learned about the conference through monthly meetings with others serving in similar roles at schools throughout the Archdiocese.

“We talk about different conferences and events that are coming up that would be beneficial for our school,” Johnson said. “One of the ones that was brought up was Unite for Justice. It’s a program that’s been going on for the past six years. This is the first year students from Duchesne attended.”

Each year, the conference centers around a different social justice theme. This year’s theme was “Rooted and Rising: Land, Voice, Sovereignty, and Justice,” with a focus on honoring Indigenous wisdom, uplifting Indigenous voices, advancing sovereignty, and working together for justice.

The first day at St. Joseph’s Academy gave students an opportunity to learn more about that theme.

One of the featured speakers was Eric Pinto, assistant director of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University. Pinto, a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Zuni communities, is also the son of Duchesne alumnus Jim Pinto ’78.



From Left: Rowe Beckerle ’29, Parker White ’29, Haiden Bridges ’29, Director of Community and Student Engagement Caleb Johnson

Pinto shared items connected to different Native American cultures and discussed Indigenous history and communities both in the St. Louis area and around the country.

“He did a great job of presenting different things that are going on around St. Louis, the Native American scene that was here in the past, and also just around the country in general,” Johnson said. “He did a really good job. That intrigued our students quite a bit.”

For Bridges, the experience offered a chance to see history and social justice issues from a different perspective.

“It was an eye-opening experience that showed injustices toward minority communities such as the Indigenous peoples, while exposing us to take a stance in learning new perspectives from the history we hear,” Bridges said.

White also appreciated the opportunity to learn directly from others.

“My experience at the Unite for Justice Conference was great,” White said. “I met awesome people who taught me great things about Native American culture.”

Students also participated in a prayer service with representatives from the other schools in attendance. Beckerle represented Duchesne by reading a passage and lighting a candle as students prayed together over issues affecting the world.

The conference also gave Duchesne students opportunities to meet students from other Catholic schools.

Rather than staying together throughout the activities, students were divided into groups with participants from different schools for team-building exercises and discussions.

“I had a great time at Unite for Justice,” Beckerle said. “It was a great opportunity to meet new people and engage in activities with them.”

“Each school had about three to six students, and we would spread out,” Johnson said. “They did a bunch of different team bonding, got to know people, and did some different things with that.”

The first day concluded with lunch provided by Cedar and Sage, a food truck featuring Indigenous ingredients. Students were able to try bison burgers inspired by foods from the Great Lakes region.

The second day moved to Washington University, where students participated in AMPLIFY: Stories of the Land at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum.

The program explored artwork examining relationships to the land, including the history of settler colonialism and Native resistance as well as contemporary issues involving globalization and climate change.

Students divided into groups for different activities. One group explored works created by Indigenous artists

(continued on pg. 6)

Sharing Faith Through Testimony



Mike Deluvia '13
Duchesne Board of Limited Jurisdiction Catholic Identity Committee

Why do you follow Jesus?

When was the last time someone asked you this question? It is part of our calling as missionary disciples to be able to give a **testimony** of our faith. "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Your story is important! As Pope St. Paul VI reminds us, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 41).

Sharing a testimony might be old hat for some and intimidating for others. If you haven't thought about this question recently, don't be discouraged. Now is your invitation to reflect on it: "Why do I follow Jesus?"

A good testimony generally follows four "acts" (borrowing from how FOCUS teaches its campus missionaries):

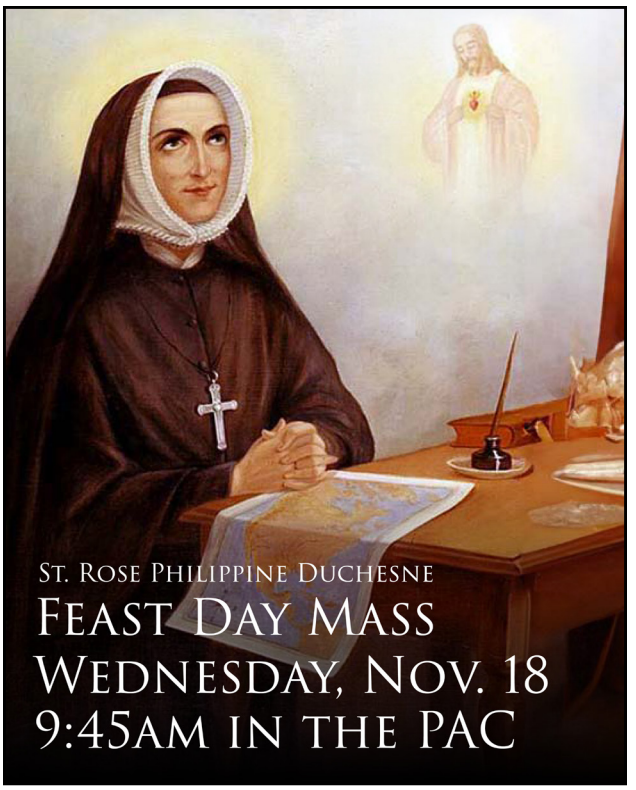
1. Life before Jesus Christ: What kind of person were you then? I was much more selfish and cynical. I struggled with mortal sin. It felt like I lacked foundation and direction. I mainly served myself.

2. Coming to know Jesus Christ: How did you encounter Jesus? The Lord gradually led me home. I began going to Mass and Confession again. Books by Scott Hahn and Brant Pitre restored my confidence in the intellectual side of our faith. I found friends who encouraged me along the path. The Holy Spirit drew me closer in prayer. Our Blessed Mother and the Rosary played a major role. I learned to accept God's mercy and love for me.

3. Life in Jesus Christ: What changes happened because of this encounter? Now, I find the Lord freeing me from the bonds of sin. I'm much happier, and I'm more at peace. I know the Lord helps me to be a better husband and father. I draw strength and wisdom from His Word and the Sacraments. As I encounter challenges and personal failures, Jesus is always there to help me. I hope to be with Him forever in heaven.

4. Inviting others to know Jesus Christ: When we finish our story, we can then ask our audience: "How will you respond to Jesus Christ? Would you like to know more?" The purpose of sharing our story is not to highlight ourselves, but to point people to Jesus Christ.

Consider this an invitation to reflect on your own life with Jesus. Prepare to share your story. It may just plant the seed of faith in someone else. If you feel you haven't encountered Jesus the way you'd like and want to learn more, please reach out. I would love to talk to you.





Aaron Cook Joins DHS Coaching Staff

Duchesne High School is proud to announce that Aaron Cook has joined the girls basketball program as an assistant coach.

"Aaron is going to be a great addition to our girls coaching staff here at Duchesne," Head Girls Basketball Coach Caleb Johnson said. "He brings a wealth of knowledge and playing experience that can really help take us to the next level as a program. He has already dove right in at our practices, and our girls have loved getting to learn from someone who has played professionally overseas."

Cook attended Westminster Christian Academy, where he earned All-Metro honors and helped lead the Wildcats to multiple district championships.

He continued his basketball career at the Division I level, beginning at Southern Illinois University before playing at Gonzaga University and finishing at the University of Georgia. Over the course of his collegiate career, Cook scored more than 1,200 points and recorded more than 400 assists.



Aaron Cook

Following college, Cook continued his career professionally, playing overseas in six different countries. Most recently, he played in New Zealand.

Cook also brings coaching experience to Duchesne. During the 2025-26 season, he served as a player development coach at the University of Missouri—St. Louis.

Athletic Director Renee Moore '86 said Cook's impact will extend well beyond his basketball background.

"We are beyond excited to welcome Aaron to our girls basketball coaching staff," Moore said. "I have known Aaron for a number of years, and while his basketball knowledge, experience and understanding of the game speak for themselves, it's his leadership and character that truly set him apart."

Moore said those qualities will make Cook an important mentor for Duchesne student-athletes.

"Aaron will have an impact that extends far beyond the basketball court, helping shape our players not only as athletes but as good people," she said. "We couldn't be more excited to have him as part of our program."

Please join the Duchesne community in welcoming Aaron Cook to the Pioneer family.

Unite for Justice Conference

(continued from pg. 4)

throughout the museum, while another took part in a presentation and art activity inspired by traditional artistic practices.

Johnson said the experience exposed the students to ideas and perspectives they had not encountered before.

"The kids thought it was awesome," he said. "It was definitely different for them. They hadn't heard or seen a lot of these different things, so they really enjoyed it."

He was equally impressed with the way the students represented Duchesne throughout the two-day conference.

"The other teachers and directors that were there really bragged on our students about how polite they were and how engaged they were," Johnson said. "I've met with them since then, and they constantly have been bragging on them."

Johnson said the students have already expressed interest in attending again next year.

"I think it's something that hopefully we can continue to do at Duchesne," he said.

The Incarnate Word Foundation helped make the conference possible by covering meals for students throughout the two-day event. The foundation also recently donated $3,000 to Duchesne's Pioneer Helping Hands program, which assists students with needs such as lunches and clothing for events like prom and homecoming.

For Johnson, Duchesne's first year at Unite for Justice offered students an opportunity not only to learn about a different culture and history, but also to meet new people and take part in conversations extending beyond the classroom.

FRITZ'S
Original
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Annual Catholic Appeal Essay Winners

Shoutout to our Annual Catholic Appeal of St. Louis Essay Winners this year!

1st place: Jocelynn Olson ’28

2nd place: Emily Small ’28

3rd place: Kate Wieman ’28

Congratulations, ladies!



Art on Display

Lucy Anstedt '28 was one of 13 secondary and collegiate-level students selected in October to paint a star for the Shaw Art Fair.

The artists each painted a 40-inch metal star with artwork that celebrates America's 250th anniversary of independence.

Congratulations, Lucy!

Let Your Pioneer Pride Shine as Bright as Your Clean Vehicle!



Thanks to Soapify Car Wash, you can purchase a Soapify Plus wash and they will generously donate half the purchase cost back to the Duchesne Athletic Boosters! For every $25 digital gift card you purchase, you get a beautifully clean car and the boosters get $12.50! Valid at both the St. Charles and St. Peters locations. Sales now through Dec 18th. Buy for yourself! Buy to gift to family and friends! You can support all of our DHS student-athletes and have a clean car this winter!

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The Finish Line Is in Sight — Help Us Bring the Sports Complex to Life!

A Message from President Paul Boschert '77



Dear Pioneer Nation,

What an incredible journey this has been for Duchesne High School! When we first shared our vision for a new Sports Complex, we knew it would take the support, generosity, and belief of our entire Pioneer community to make it a reality. Today, I am proud to share that we have raised $2.7 million toward our $3.2 million goal!

That means we are just $500,000 away from the finish line!

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every individual, family, alumnus, business, and friend who has already invested in this project. Your generosity has been nothing short of remarkable. You have believed in our vision, supported our students, and helped turn what once seemed like a dream into something that is now within our reach.

I would also like to extend a very special thank you to the Archdiocese of St. Louis and Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski for their support of Duchesne High School and their belief in the future of Catholic education. Their encouragement and partnership throughout this process have been invaluable. We are blessed to have an Archdiocese that recognizes the importance of investing in our young people and creating opportunities for them to grow in mind, body, and spirit. This project represents not only an investment in our facilities but also an investment in the future of Catholic education in our community.

And I am excited to share that we are currently finalizing the construction contract, with plans to break ground in February 2027! After months of planning, fundraising, and preparation, we are getting closer to the moment when we can officially put shovels in the ground and begin building something extraordinary for Duchesne.

But we still have work to do, and we need your help to finish what we started.

We are looking for a few more major donors, business partners, and community leaders who are willing to step forward and help us close this final $500,000 gap. Whether through a leadership gift, corporate commitment, or a meaningful contribution from a family who believes in the future of Duchesne, these final investments will make all the difference.

You might say we have baked the cake, and now we just need a few generous Pioneers to help us put the icing on it!

This project is about far more than a turf field, a new track, improved lighting, or upgraded athletic facilities. It is about creating opportunities for our students, strengthening our school community, and ensuring that future generations of Pioneers have the facilities they need to learn, compete, grow, and succeed.

It is about building a legacy.

For nearly a century, Duchesne has been blessed by individuals who saw what was possible and stepped forward to make it happen. The classrooms, facilities, and opportunities our students enjoy today exist because someone before us believed in investing in tomorrow.

Now it is our turn.

I am asking our alumni, parents, grandparents, business community, and friends of Duchesne to help us make one final push. If you have already given, please know how deeply grateful we are. If you have been waiting for the right moment to get involved, that moment is now.

And if you know a business, family, or individual who may be interested in making a significant investment in the future of Duchesne, I would welcome the opportunity to sit down and share our vision personally.

We are too close to the finish line to slow down now.

I truly believe that when the first game is played on our new field, when our student-athletes take their first steps onto the new track, and when our entire school community gathers in this beautiful new space, we will look back on this moment with tremendous pride. We will know that we came together, answered the call, and accomplished something that will benefit Duchesne for generations.

We have raised $2.7 million. We have $500,000 left to go. Let's finish this together, Pioneer Nation!

Thank you for your faith in Duchesne, your generosity, and your unwavering commitment to our mission of shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit.

The future is bright, the excitement is building, and I cannot wait to see what we accomplish together.

With sincere gratitude and Pioneer pride,



Paul Boschert '77 | President
Duchesne High School

Pioneering Our Future. Building Our Legacy.

Help Us Cross the Finish Line!

Make Your Gift to the Sports Complex Campaign!

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What a Wonderful Admissions Season at Duchesne!

From the Admissions Team: Dana Bryan & Danielle Lowe

What an incredible admissions season it has been at Duchesne High School! We want to extend a huge THANK YOU to everyone who joined us for our High School Fair and Open House. We loved welcoming so many St. Charles area grade school students and families to our campus!

Our Open House was another huge success! From our BBQ Club grilling delicious burgers and hot dogs to our Student Ambassadors serving up their famous dirty sodas, the day was filled with excitement, laughter, and Pioneer pride! It was wonderful seeing so many families walking our halls, meeting our teachers and coaches, and experiencing firsthand what makes Duchesne such a special place.

Applications Are Still Open!

The applications have been rolling in, and we couldn't be more excited about our future Pioneers! Although our initial admissions window has passed, Duchesne will continue accepting applications throughout the school year. If you know a family considering Duchesne, please encourage them to reach out. We would love to welcome them to our Pioneer family!

https://www.duchesne-hs.org/application-process.html

Don't Wait to Apply for Scholarships!

Our scholarship applications are now open, and we strongly encourage families to apply sooner rather than later! Several scholarships require an essay, and with Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks right around the corner, this is the perfect opportunity for students to set aside a little time to work on their applications. A little planning now can go a long way!

https://www.duchesne-hs.org/scholarships-financial-aid.html

Thinking About Transferring to Duchesne?

We are also accepting transfer applications for the second semester! If you know a student who is looking for a fresh start, a smaller school community, or a place where they can truly feel like they belong, we would love to talk with them about becoming a Pioneer.

Thank You

Thank you again to our current families, students, faculty, staff, and everyone who helped make this admissions season such a success. Our Duchesne community is what makes our school so special, and we can't wait to welcome our next generation of Pioneers!

Duchesne High School — Where You Belong. Where You Become. Welcome Home.

A Season of Giving: Pioneer Helping Hands Support Families This Thanksgiving

Caleb Johnson
Director of Community and Student Engagement

Thanksgiving is a time for gratitude, family, and coming together. But for many individuals and families, the holiday season can also bring financial hardships and uncertainty about where their next meal will come from.

That is why we are proud to highlight our Pioneer Helping Hands program, an initiative dedicated to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need a helping hand.

Through Pioneer Helping Hands, we are committed to helping provide Thanksgiving meals to families in need, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy a holiday meal.

Also, as a part of our Pioneer Helping Hands program, we have started a backpack drive. We have filled four backpacks full of food and meals for any student who finds themselves and their family in need to take home. We want those students to understand that we are here to help, so those backpacks will be located in Mrs. Debi Turner's office each week.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, we encourage everyone to remember those who may be facing difficult times. Whether through volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word, every act of generosity helps make our community stronger.

If any family is in need of assistance for a Thanksgiving meal, please reach out to Coach Caleb Johnson (cjohnson@duchesne-hs.org) or Becky Williamson (bwilliamson@duchesne-hs.org).

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From the Director of Advancement



Becky Williamson
Director of Advancement

Dear Pioneer Nation,

What an incredible school year it has been at Duchesne High School! There is so much excitement throughout our halls, and the momentum we are experiencing is truly something special. Our students continue to shine in the classroom, on the field, on the stage, and in our community. We are already celebrating more than 100 applications for next school year, and we couldn't be more excited about the future of Duchesne!

One of my proudest moments this fall was watching our students welcome prospective families at Open House. Our students are, hands down, the very best ambassadors for Duchesne High School. Their enthusiasm, kindness, confidence, and genuine love for their school speak louder than any advertisement ever could. They remind us every day why Duchesne is such a special place.

As we continue building on this incredible momentum, there are several meaningful ways you can help support our students and the future of Duchesne.

49th Annual Pioneer Gala —
Saturday, January 30, 2027

Tickets are officially on sale for our 49th Annual Pioneer Gala, taking place Saturday, January 30, 2027, in the Ameristar Casino Brilliance Ballroom!

We invite our alumni, parents, grandparents, and friends to join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating Duchesne. Whether you attend, sponsor the event, or donate an item, your generosity helps make this special evening a success.

Purchase Gala Tickets or Become a Sponsor

You can also support the Gala by purchasing items from our Amazon Wishlist. Every contribution helps us create an incredible event!

Support Our Gala Amazon Wishlist

#iGiveCatholic —
Give Today. Shape Tomorrow.

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 1, 2026, as Duchesne once again participates in #iGiveCatholic Giving Day!

Early giving opens on Monday, November 16, giving you an opportunity to make an impact before Giving Day officially begins.

"Give Today. Shape Tomorrow." is our theme this year, reminding us that every gift, regardless of size, helps shape the experiences, opportunities, and futures of our students. Together, we can continue making a difference for the next generation of Pioneers!

https://www.igivecatholic.org/organization/duchesne-high-schooligc

The Pioneer Fund —
Make an Impact All Year Long

The Pioneer Fund provides vital support for the everyday needs of Duchesne High School, including tuition assistance, faculty and staff support, student experiences, and academic opportunities.

As the calendar year comes to a close, please consider making a year-end gift, establishing a recurring monthly donation, or supporting Duchesne through a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your retirement account, if eligible.

A recurring gift is one of the simplest ways to make an impact throughout the year.

Support the Pioneer Fund

Sports Complex Campaign —
We Are So Close!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our Pioneer community, we have now raised $2.7 million toward our $3.2 million Sports Complex campaign goal!

That means we are just $500,000 away from the finish line!

This transformational project will provide our students with facilities they deserve, enhance our athletic programs, and create opportunities for generations of future Pioneers. From our new turf field and all-weather track to improved practice facilities and more, this project is about so much more than athletics. It is about in-

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vesting in our students and the future of Duchesne.

If you have been considering a gift, now is the perfect time to help us bring this vision to life!

Support the Sports Complex Campaign

Planned Giving —
Leave a Lasting Pioneer Legacy

For those looking to make a lasting impact on Duchesne High School, planned giving offers a meaningful opportunity to support future generations of students.

Whether through a bequest, estate gift, or another planned giving option, your generosity can help ensure that Duchesne continues shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit for years to come.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please reach out to President Paul Boschert '77 at pboschert@duchesne-hs.org or 636.757.6904.

Alumni —
We Want to Welcome You Home!

To our alumni, I want to extend a personal invitation: Come back to campus!

If you haven't visited Duchesne recently, I encourage you to stop by and see all of the exciting things happening. From improvements to our campus and classrooms to the incredible energy of our students, there is so much to be proud of.

Walk the halls, reconnect with former classmates and teachers, see what's new, and experience the Pioneer spirit that has always made Duchesne feel like home.

No matter how many years have passed since graduation, you will always be part of the Duchesne family.

As we enter this season of gratitude and giving, I want to thank each of you for the many ways you continue to support our school. Whether you give financially, volunteer your time, attend an event, share our story, or simply keep Duchesne in your prayers, you are making a difference.

We have so much to celebrate, and even more to look forward to. The future of Duchesne is bright, and it is because of the people who believe in our mission and invest in our students.

Please never hesitate to reach out to me with questions, ideas, or simply to schedule a visit. I would love to welcome you back to campus!

Once a Pioneer, Always a Pioneer!

With Pioneer Pride,

Becky Williamson

Becky Williamson
Director of Advancement
Duchesne High School
636.757.6931
bwilliamson@duchesne-hs.org

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LEAVES
ALUMNI FEATURES AND UPDATES

Bringing an All-New Original Play to the Duchesne Stage

Andrew Sweeso '17

For Andrew Sweeso '17, this year's Duchesne fall play began with a practical problem and ended with something entirely original.

Unable to find an existing production that fit the school's cast, performance space, and Halloween-week schedule, Sweeso decided to write one himself.

The result was The Weird Sisters, a full-length play inspired by themes and characters from Shakespeare's Macbeth, but set among modern high school students dealing with college decisions, busy schedules, relationships and, unexpectedly, newfound supernatural powers.

"This is the first full-length work that I've developed and finished and presented to the public," Sweeso said. "This was a bit of a leap for me, for sure."

Sweeso is no stranger to writing or the Duchesne stage.

While a student, he took creative writing classes and wrote several scripts for Acting class and Duchesne's student-written and -directed one-act plays. He also directed two one-acts of his own.

That interest continued after graduation.

Sweeso earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Saint Louis University. While an undergraduate, he took multiple creative writing classes, published a short story in SLU's undergraduate creative writing journal, and later served as an editor for the publication.



In graduate school, his writing shifted more toward academic and professional work, including a published article.

Still, The Weird Sisters marked something new.

The idea began forming at the start of the summer.

With the fall production scheduled for the week of Halloween, Sweeso and fellow director Brad Benne '03 initially looked for an existing play that fit the season. They also needed something flexible enough to accommodate an uncertain cast size after several experienced actors had graduated.

Eventually, Sweeso realized the most practical solution might also be the most creative one.

"Honestly, the most practical way to do it ended up being writing it," he said.

Sweeso began brainstorming around mid-June, using Macbeth and other works by Shakespeare as inspiration.

The first version did not last long.

He scrapped his initial outline, created a second one, and brought it with him on a family trip to Europe. That version met an even more unusual fate.

"I left that outline in the back of a taxi," Sweeso said.

So he started again.

The third attempt became the foundation for The Weird Sisters. Sweeso began writing the script in mid-July and spent the following weeks revising it, reworking characters, and connecting different storylines.

The script was not fully settled until roughly a week before auditions.

For Benne, reading the finished product came with some initial uncertainty.

"As I read through I was truly impressed with how good it was, the story, the characters, and the nods and ties to Shakespeare. It was all really good and honestly much better than several other published scripts I read previously," he said.

Rather than retelling Macbeth, Sweeso used Shakespeare's tragedy as a jumping-off point.

The Weird Sisters follows high school seniors Grace, Kate, and Rose as they work their way through an arduous classroom unit on Macbeth. Their lives become considerably more complicated when they suddenly discover they have become witches themselves, gaining the ability to summon ghosts, transform people into animals, and perform other supernatural feats.

Beneath the comedy and supernatural elements are some of the same questions that run through Shakespeare's play, including how people respond to power, fear, guilt, and uncertainty about the future.

The story was also written specifically with Duchesne in mind.

Sweeso designed the script so it could work with as few as five actors doubling roles if necessary. He created smaller roles for newer performers and larger parts that could challenge more experienced students.

He also wrote the characters with the voices of real teenagers in mind.

Sweeso said that after teaching several particularly talkative classes, he began intentionally listening to the way his students spoke.

"I'm like, 'Okay, this is kind of the way they talk,'" he said. "As I was writing characters, I tried to phrase the dialogue in a way that I could hear my students' voices while I was doing it."

That approach helped give the actors something they could make their own.

Madeline Magers '30, who played Ms. Porter, was performing in her first Duchesne production.

"It was one of the best things I've been able to be a part of," Magers said. "I had a fantastic time with everyone, and I felt it was a place where I could be myself. I was also able to make the character my own since it's never been played by another."

That opportunity was unique to the production.

Unlike most high school plays, there was no previous performance to reference and no established interpretation of the characters. Every role was being brought to life for the first time.

The original script also created an unusual dynamic for the directors and actors.

"It's not every day that a director of a high school play has the luxury of talking to the playwright and getting into their thoughts too," Benne said. "If I didn't exactly know what the intent of a line was, I could simply ask Andrew and in turn better help the actors understand as well."

Sweeso also wrote with the Duchesne Performing Arts Center in mind.

Recent upgrades to the theater's lighting equipment gave him opportunities to imagine scenes around different colors, spotlights, and LED effects. At the same time, some of his more ambitious ideas had to change once rehearsals began.

"There's a difference between what you do when you're sitting and imagining something in all its glory while you're writing and then the actual practical reality of making it work," Sweeso said.

The production ultimately included five different settings, requiring Sweeso, Benne, and the production team to find creative ways to transform the stage.

Benne handled much of the set design, while longtime volunteer John Dultz '79 helped turn the plans into physical sets. Students painted, moved furniture, and worked alongside adult volunteers to prepare the production.

Some changes came right up until opening night.

"We were literally putting new pieces on the wall two hours before opening," Sweeso said.

For Eleanor Kamer '30, who played Joey Lawrence, some of her favorite memories came from those moments surrounding the performance itself.

"What I most enjoyed about the play was the times when I wasn't acting," Kamer said. "Behind the scenes, or just all of cast and crew getting ready, so much funny stuff had happened. In all, I made some really great memories, and I can't wait to continue making more."

Benne said one of the most rewarding parts of the production was watching Sweeso guide something he had created through every stage of the process.

"Throughout the casting, the rehearsals, costume, set and technical design, and even all the way down to song choices, I enjoyed seeing Andrew so passionate throughout the process," Benne said.

He was equally impressed with Sweeso's willingness to seek feedback on something so personal.

"When you have a work like this that you put so much work and effort into, it may be hard to ask others for their opinion, but Andrew always welcomed input and feedback," Benne said.

That willingness to revise is something Sweeso also emphasizes to his own students.

As an English teacher, he encourages students to talk through ideas, present them to others, and give themselves space to rethink their work before considering it finished.

The process of writing The Weird Sisters reinforced those same lessons.

"There were a lot of scenes that just didn't work," Sweeso said. "There were scenes that I just cut."

For Sweeso, those lessons also connect back to his own time as a Pioneer.

(continued on pg. 15)

REUNITING WHERE IT ALL BEGAN — CLASS REUNIONS AT DUCHESNE HIGH

Recently Celebrated...



Class of 1971



Class of 1981



Class of 1976



Class of 2001

Class of 1981 – 45th Reunion at Duchesne on Saturday, October 10, 2026

Thanks to the Class of 1981 reunion organizers for hosting a great event! From left: John Orf, Pat (Suter) Sommer, Peggy (Ell) Skaggs, Chris (Kuehler) Shipman, Mary (Graveman) Barteau, Rita (Gould) Olendorf, Elizabeth (Johannesman) Meixner, Kathy (Baumann) Pingleton, and Karen (Borgmeyer) and Dave Toigo.

Class of 1976 – 50th Reunion at Duchesne on Saturday, October 17, 2026

It was wonderful to have so many alumni from the Class of 1976 return for their 50th

reunion! Thank you to the organizers who worked on this very successful event,

including Joan (Salter) DeSplinter, Molly (O'Brien) Reilly, Michaeline (O'Neil) Spears,

Charlie Smith, and many others.

Class of 1971 – 55th Reunion at Pio's on Saturday, October 17, 2026

Thanks to Marsha (Weber) Stocker and Keith Boschert for planning this great get-together, which featured an amazing video created by Keith (aka Martin Scorsese).

Thanks also to Mr. Sherry (Black) Knoblauch (that's you, Mark!) for being the event photographer that evening.

Class of 2001 – 25th Reunion at Duchesne on Saturday, November 7, 2026

Thanks to organizers Jake Vehige and Erin (Frodyma) Mulder for their time and efforts in putting this great party together!

Andrew Sweeso '17

(continued from pg. 13)

"The teachers who worked here when I was a student, many of whom still work here, made all the difference for me when I was preparing for college and adult life," he said.

As a first-generation college student, Sweeso said the transition to college and the process of finding his vocation were not always easy. He credits Duchesne with giving him a strong foundation for both.

"Our faculty has been blessed with teachers who are masters of their subject and passionate about what they teach," he said. "They modeled the love for learning and writing that I try to share and model with my students today."

It is a mindset Sweeso hopes young writers will carry with them as well.

His advice is simple: read widely, write often, and be willing to fail.

"Submit your work to journals and contests, even if you know it's a long shot," he said. "Failure is an essential part of writing."

He also encourages students not to dismiss writing assignments that may seem unrelated to their creative goals.

"The more you write, and the more variety you have in your experience as a writer, the more material and skill you'll have to draw on when inspiration actually strikes," Sweeso said.

Even after the final performance, he still sees room to revisit The Weird Sisters.

Because the play was created specifically for Duchesne's students and performance space, Sweeso is unsure whether he will eventually try to publish it. Doing so could require another round of revisions to make the production easier for other schools to perform.

For now, he plans to give the script some time before deciding what comes next.

"I'm going to let it sit in a drawer for a few months at least," Sweeso said. "Then we'll go from there."

Whatever happens next, The Weird Sisters gave Sweeso something he had never experienced before: the opportunity to watch a full-length story that began in his imagination take shape through actors, sets, lights, and the collaboration of the Duchesne theater community.

Benne was grateful to be part of that process.

"I was truly honored to be a part of the production and see it come together from the ground up," he said, "and I am proud of Mr. Sweeso for his hard work and dedication."



From the DHS 1967 yearbook: front row – S. Schneider, G. Hoelting, B. Budd, P. Howell, B. Schnarre, D. Orf, S. Sebacher; back row – M. Renken, student manager, D. Leahey, G. Mound, G. Luth, J. Penkoske, F. Brown, M. Morris, D. Hoelting, B. Kneemiller, D. Runde, Coach Father Tom Dempsey.

Save the Date...

Soccer Reunion with Fr. Dempsey! — at Pio's on Saturday, November 21, 2026

Calling All Soccer Players from 1965 to 1976!

If you played soccer at DHS between 1965 and 1976, please join us at our soccer reunion with Fr. Dempsey on Saturday, November 21, 4-10pm at Pio's. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, please contact Matt Luth at msluth58@gmail.com.

Class of 1996 — at Duchesne on Saturday, November 28, 2026

The Class of 1996 will hold their 30th reunion at Duchesne on Saturday, November 28, 2026. Julie (Smith) Weber is helping to organize the event. Email reuniondhs96@gmail.com or contact her at 636.219.2957 if you would like to help or have questions. PLEASE SIGN UP if you haven't already done so.

What About Your Class?

ALUMNI REUNIONS – is it time to plan yours?

Does your class year end in a 1 or 6 (such as 2001 or 1996)? It's time to plan your reunion! Contact Nancy (Rothermich) Kohl '78 at nkohl@duchesne-hs.org or 636.757.6925 to begin the conversation!

Duchesne can provide you with a class list and save-the-date postcards for those groups that have their event at DHS. You will have use of our Garden Courtyard, Chapel for Mass, and/or PAC for your get-together, dinner, dancing, games, etc. Smaller groups may want to gather in our Esports Center. A self-guided tour handout will be available for your guests.





FROM THE SPORTS DESK



Renee Moore '86
Athletic Director

What an exciting fall season it has been! Our athletic events have been filled with fun, excitement, and unforgettable moments. As the fall season comes to a close, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to our coaches, athletes, parents, and community for the incredible support shown throughout the season.

Looking back, the days and nights seem like a blur, but it's often in those blurred moments that the best memories are made. From team dinners and late-night bus rides and parent pickups, weekend games and tournaments, exciting victories and heartbreaking losses, these experiences have created memories that will last a lifetime. These moments are what make being part of our athletic community so special.

As we turn the calendar to November, our teams are already working hard and preparing for the seasons ahead. The familiar squeak of shoes on the hardwood and the excitement of our wrestlers preparing to hit the mats signal the start of another exciting chapter in our athletic year.

With a new season comes renewed energy, anticipation, and, most importantly, gratitude for the coaches, athletes, families, and supporters who make it all possible. We look forward to all that lies ahead and can't wait to see what our winter athletes accomplish!

CELEBRATING FALL SUCCESS

Golf

A huge congratulations to Naomi Grizzle '27, Kate Wieman '28, and Kannah Kesler '29, who competed in the two-day state golf tournament at Bogey Creek Golf Club in Farmington.

Cross Country

Fantastic performance by Audrey Hoffmann '27, who earned all-district honors with her 4th place finish in the district race and finished 15th in the state cross country meet in Columbia.

Continued congratulations to Audrey Hoffmann '27 for committing to run Cross Country and Track at Lindenwood University next year.

Volleyball

Congratulations to the following players who earned First Team Class 2 All-District Honors: Mia Piskulich '28 and Emmie Nikodym '29 and Second Team Class 2 All-District Honors: Molly Glosier '27 and Daley Meyer '27.

Soccer

Heck of a Start! Great job by Youssef Hannah '28 who entered the MSHSAA record books! On Monday, October 19, in a game at St. Charles High School, Youssef netted a goal in the first 35 seconds of the game, ranking #30 for "fastest goals to start a game."

Diamondline

The Duchesne Diamondline has been busy serving others. On Friday, October 9, the girls



held a donation drive to benefit St. Louis Crisis Nursery. The team collected hundreds of diapers, baby wipes, and other hygiene items that were donated to The Crisis Nursery. The girls also spent a day volunteering their time sweeping the playground, stocking the pantry, and much more. Finally, the girls made and donated blankets for the children at the St. Charles Crisis Nursery. Well done, Diamondline, we are Pioneer proud of you!

Speaking of Diamondline. Congratulations to Parker Borgmeyer '30 who was recently crowned Teen Miss Dance – Heart of America, DMA Chapter 28! Parker earned this title because of her auditions for ballet, tap, jazz, modern, and acro, plus an interview and a solo performance. Wow!! Parker will represent Chapter 28 at Dance Masters of America in Sandusky, Ohio, this upcoming summer! Way to go Parker!

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our Duchesne U.S. Bancorp advisor Athlete of the Month for September, Audrey Hoffmann '27. Thank you to Steve McKinstry for allowing us to recognize and honor our athletes who stand out in the areas of ability, sportsmanship, leadership, and community involvement.

Congratulations to Eric Greifzu '27, who was invited to attend the 2027 Scotland Junior Golf Invitational. This event brings elite high school players from across the United States and accomplished Scottish juniors to compete on historic links, including St. Andrews, Stirling, and North Berwick. Eric received this invitation based on his level of play in the 2026 season, as well as his demeanor and attitude. What an amazing opportunity offered to Eric!

FALL SPORTS THANK YOUS

Thank you to everyone who helped make our fall season run so smoothly. Thanks to our Booster Club members and parents for countless hours working the concession stand, especially to Scott '97 and Tara Hubert for their coordinating efforts. To all our livestream broadcasters, especially our soccer broadcast duo of Jason Boschert '98 and Mike Ryan '77, and our theology teacher turned football broadcaster, Doug Becker, for bringing life to the game for those Pioneer fans watching from home. Thank you to our dedicated football chain crew of Dave and Jake Hearst '16, John Bornhop '83, Russ Hubert, and Mike Ryan. Finally, thank you to Oktoberfest Chair Jason

Boschert and all our parent and alumni volunteers who continue to show up year after year to make the Duchesne Booth the best on the Riverfront! Your passion and dedication to making Duchesne the best is unmatched.

WINTER SPORTS DATES

• Monday-Wednesday, December 28-30: We will host the 50th Annual Duchesne Holiday Girls Basketball Tournament

• Tuesday, January 12: Ellen Parker Night, to honor the induction of Coach Ellen (Borgmeyer) Parker '76 into the GAC Hall of Fame, gametime 7pm vs St. Charles West.

• Friday, January 22: Honoring DHS Alumni who have been named Individual State Champions, gametime 7pm vs Bishop DuBourg

• Friday, January 29: Featuring Junior Diamondline and Freshman Acceptance Night, gametime 7pm vs St. Charles High School

• Friday, February 5: Coronation, gametime 7pm vs Priory

• Thursday, February 11: Grade School Basketball Night and Girls Basketball SENIOR Night, gametimes 5:30pm and 7:00pm vs Brentwood

• Friday, February 12: Pommer/Diamondline Reunion Performance, gametime 7pm vs St. Dominic

• Tuesday, February 16: Senior Night for Cheer and Diamondline, gametime 7pm vs St. Charles West

DATES OF CELEBRATION TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDARS!

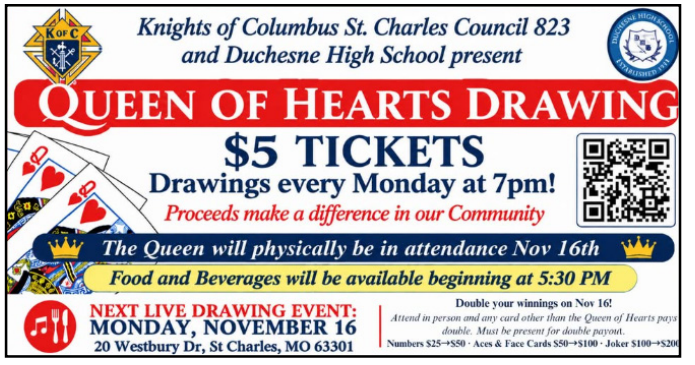
Attention Seniors! We will be holding our National Signing Day on Wednesday, February 3, at 8:30am in the gym for all seniors signing letters to play a sport in college. Please email me at rmoore@duchesne-hs.org to let me know if this pertains to you so that we can get you the information!

FINALLY

For information about the benefits of joining the Duchesne Athletic Booster club you can email duchesnebooster@gmail.com.

Stay connected and follow Duchesne Athletics on X at @Athletics_DHS, Instagram at duchesnehs_athletics and on Eventlink for game schedules and updates.





Forever Friends



The Class of 1973 continues to do a great job of staying in touch and getting together. Last week, this group enjoyed a golf outing at Lockhaven Golf Club in Godfrey, IL, followed by lunch at the Waterfront Grill in Alton.

From left: Wally and Jan (Egli) Karase, Ron Eastman, Jan (Wucher) Fravell, Barb (Morris) '75 and Bob Boschert, Patti (Schott) Dwiggins, John Prinster, Tricia (Jostedt) Cuba, Jack Witte, Greg Potter, and Bruce Brooks.

Champions

WERE YOU AN INDIVIDUAL DHS STATE CHAMPION?

If you won an individual State Championship while at Duchesne, please mark your calendar for your special recognition night:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2027

between the 5:30 Girls Varsity and 7:00 Boys Varsity Basketball Games

Spread the word! We don't want to miss anyone!!
Champs: please email nkohl@duchesne-hs.org with your contact details.

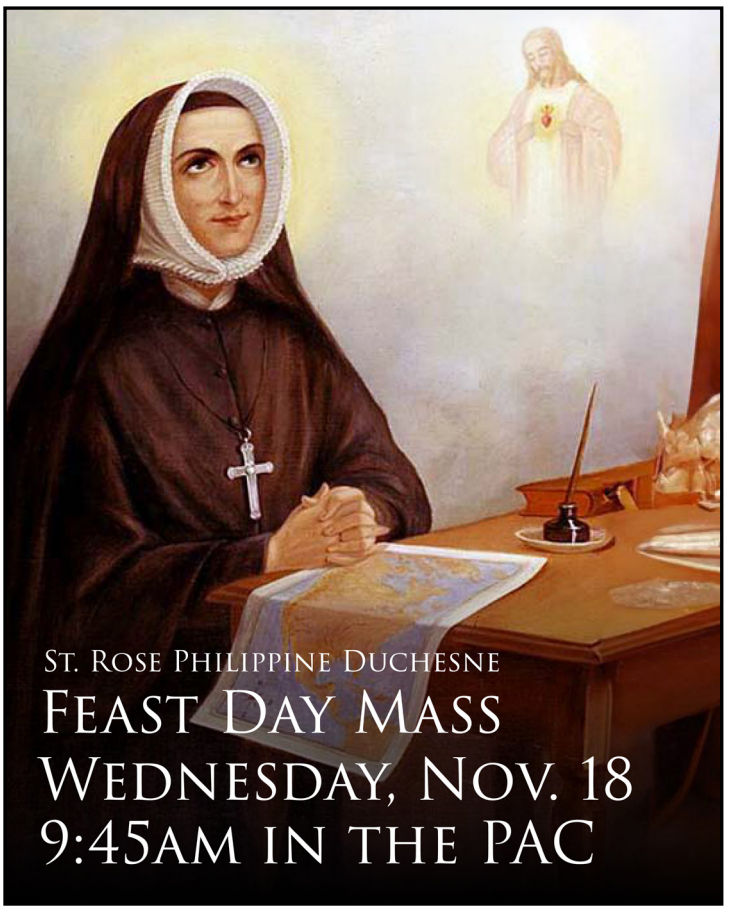
DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL
INDIVIDUAL STATE CHAMPIONS

1969	LARRY FISCHER (69)	880 YARD
1973	RANDY HENDERSON (74)	2 MILE
1974	RANDY HENDERSON (74)	2 MILE
1980	NAN FUNKE (83)	1600 METER
1982	NAN FUNKE (83)	1600 AND 3200 METER
1983	CHUCK LINSENMEYER (84)	HIGH JUMP
1984	LIZ BARRINGER (85)	HURDLES
1984	KERRIE BIRK (86)	1600 METER
1984	JAN LENOX (87)	HIGH JUMP
1985	KERRIE BIRK (86)	3200 METER
1989	ELISSA UTISS (90)	SHOT PUT
1990	ELISSA UTISS (90)	SHOT PUT
1994	JASON LEHMKUHLE (95)	1600 METER
1995	JASON LEHMKUHLE (95)	3200 METER
1995	KRISTEN BRUENING (98)	1600 AND 3200 METER
1995	KRISTEN BRUENING (98)	CROSS COUNTRY
1996	KRISTEN BRUENING (98)	3200 METER
1998	KEVIN O'SADNICK (99)	200 METER
1999	JENNY NOELKEN (2000)	3200 METER
2004	CHELSEA SCHRIEWER (05)	GOLF
2018	MITCH FAIRLESS (18)	HIGH JUMP
2025	OLIVER ROTHWEILER (25)	POLE VAULT
2026	ERIC GREIFZU (27)	GOLF


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RaisingCanes


St. Rose Philippine Duchesne
Feast Day Mass
Wednesday, Nov. 18
9:45am in the PAC



DHS Soccer Reunion with Fr. Dempsey

When: November 21, 2026
Where: Pio's at 403 First Capitol Drive, St. Charles, MO 63301
Time: 4-10pm
Food: Heavy Hors D'oeuvres
Confirm: By November 17
We are looking forward to seeing everyone on November 21!

Matt Luth
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