THE SPECTRUM

SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY FAIRFIELD, CONN

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Writing History: Students Earn Journalism Awards

BY **TESS DONLAN**
Staff Writer

In May, Sacred Heart University (SHU) graduate students Alexandra Maxwell and Chumani Heard, as well as senior Jenna Reynolds, won awards for their work submitted to the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists' (SPJ) College Journalism Contest. They worked for the Fairfield County News (FCN) to create and produce the stories that earned them recognition.

When the Easton Courier, a local news publication, nearly went out of business in 2020, SHU's School of Communication, Media & the Arts (SCMA) took over.

In just a few years, the Easton Courier won over 60 SPJ awards for local news coverage, and because of its success, it received grants from Press Forward, a foundation that donates to save community news outlets. The Easton Courier can be accessed online through their website, eastoncourier.news.

To write for the Easton Courier, undergrad students take CM-331 Topics in Journalism with Professor Ann Marie Somma.

"We didn't want to only focus on traditional written articles. We also wanted to offer videos and podcasts, which we did through FCN," said Professor Taciane Batista, current director of the Journalism and Media Production (JMP) graduate program.

"When these students graduate, they don't just have a degree; they also have a portfolio of professional work they can show prospective employers," said Professor Joseph Alicastro in the School of Media and the Arts, as well as former director of the JMP graduate program. "I think that's one of the reasons why our students are becoming so successful."

Graduate students also produce for these outlets as part of their internships. The SCMA offers three graduate assistantships for the Easton Courier and FCN, specifically for JMP students.

Alicastro said SHU alumni also return to do pieces for FCN. When working with local news on FCN, students gain professional newsroom experience, which is published through its website, fairfieldcountyct.news.

"They're working in a timeline, they're pitching a story, they're finding the right people to interview, they're putting all those journalist skills to practice," said Batista.



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University

Students in the TV studio at Sacred Heart University's Frank & Marisa Martire Center for the Liberal Arts.

"While working with FCN, I connected with so many incredible people who trusted me to tell their stories, making me the storyteller I am today," said Reynolds.

Maxwell was awarded first place in the feature story category for her project titled "A Connecticut School Becomes an Early Test of Civil Rights." Maxwell's multimedia piece told the story of Prudence Crandall, a teacher in Canterbury, Conn. during the 1830s who opened the first school for Black women in the United States.

Heard's second place finish in the general reporting category was for her story titled "Sacred Heart Poll Shows Sports Betting Scandals Hurt Trust in Pro Sports."

Reynolds earned third place in the video storytelling category with "At Sacred Heart a New Team Blazes a Trail in Women's Flag Football."

"The awards are so noteworthy because our students are being recognized for real work against other news organizations. That brings us great joy," said Alicastro.

The award recipients said they felt honored to receive recognition as it signified their dedication to storytelling. Both Maxwell and Reynolds attributed part of their success to the mentorship they received through SHU's journalism program and FCN.

"We can guide them, we can tell them about these opportunities, but they're the ones that pursue," said Batista.

Maxwell said being awarded is not only a success for her personally, but for the subjects within her story too. She said sharing the news of her award with her interviewees brought her a lot of pride

"All three students did a fantastic job on their stories, and it proves that we are going in the right direction, training students to be professional journalists when they leave here. It doesn't matter where they go; they're ready," said Batista.

Flossing into Fall 2028!

BY **OLLIE WEISMANN**
Staff Writer

Starting in Fall 2028, Sacred Heart University (SHU) plans to introduce a new Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene. This will allow students to enter a direct gateway to dentistry through Sacred Heart University.

The four-year program will be housed within the College of Health Professions as its own department. The program will be located on the second floor of the Center for Healthcare Education and will include classroom learning, lab work and hands-on clinical experience.

Karl E. Minges, Dean of the College of Health Professions, said the program is being created partly due to the demand for dental hygienists in Connecticut and surrounding states.

"My hope is that the program becomes a model for preparing highly skilled dental hygienists while also addressing a significant workforce need in Connecticut and the surrounding states," said Minges.

Professor Marie Paulis in the College of Health Professions, as well as the director of the upcoming program, stated that the idea originally came from Minges after researching dental hygienist demand in Connecticut and neighboring states in the Northeast.

"Dental hygiene is a wonderful profession that offers competitive wages, flexible schedules, and the ability to make a difference in the oral and overall health of clients," said Paulis.

According to incoming Director Paulis, students will spend their first two years completing prerequisite science and core classes before moving into two years focused more heavily on dental hygiene and clinical work. Some of the prerequisites will include biology, chemistry, microbiology, anatomy and physiology. and nutrition.

Once students advance further into the program, the curriculum will include subjects such as dental hygiene principles, radiology, oral anatomy, clinical rotations, pathology, histology, pharmacology, periodontology, local anesthesia and ethics.

"The program will be quite rigorous and will prepare students well for their clinical and national board exams that will be required for licensure," said Paulis.

A significant part of the program will be a complete hands-on experience. Students will work in a new twenty-unit community dental hygiene clinic in the Center for Healthcare Education.

At the on-campus clinic, students

Flossing into Fall 2028!
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News

Flossing into Fall 2028!

BY **OLLIE WEISMANN**
Staff Writer

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will provide cleanings and other oral health services to community members under faculty supervision. Minges said the university anticipates the clinic will serve more than 1,000 community members each year.

"As someone trained in public health, I am very excited about the potential of the teaching clinic to expand access to oral health services for individuals and families who may face barriers to care," said Minges.

"It is kind of a Goldilocks program, satisfying demand from both students who are highly interested in the program and a workforce that is eager for new dental hygienists to enter the field," said Minges.

Junior Katherine Snyder entered college as a biology major on the pre-dental track before switching to psychology after realizing she did not enjoy studying biology.

"Maybe if this program existed when I came to school, I wonder if I would have stayed on a pre-dental track," said Snyder. "Being a biology major made me lose passion for health sciences. I feel like if I were a part of this program, I would have stayed on track to pre-dental."

Pending accreditation approval from the Commission on Dental Accreditation, SHU expects to begin enrolling students in the Dental Hygiene program in fall 2028.



Daniel Passapera, Sacred Heart University
A shot taken during open house showcasing the Center for Healthcare Education.

Is No News Good News?

BY **AMANDA AURECCHIONE**
Staff Writer

CNN, MS NOW and Politico are seeking protection from a U.S. federal court in Washington, D.C. to continue access to the White House following President Donald Trump's ban on all three media outlets' access to the White House last month. The lawsuit will be heard again by the court on Oct. 8.

President Trump prohibited members of these news organizations from entering the White House on Sept 18, citing fabrication of news stories. Trump said the news organizations reported "fake news" and should not be allowed to keep reporting what he called fiction and lies.

News reporters were barred from entering the White House the following day, and their White House credentials were deactivated or confiscated, the Associated Press reported.

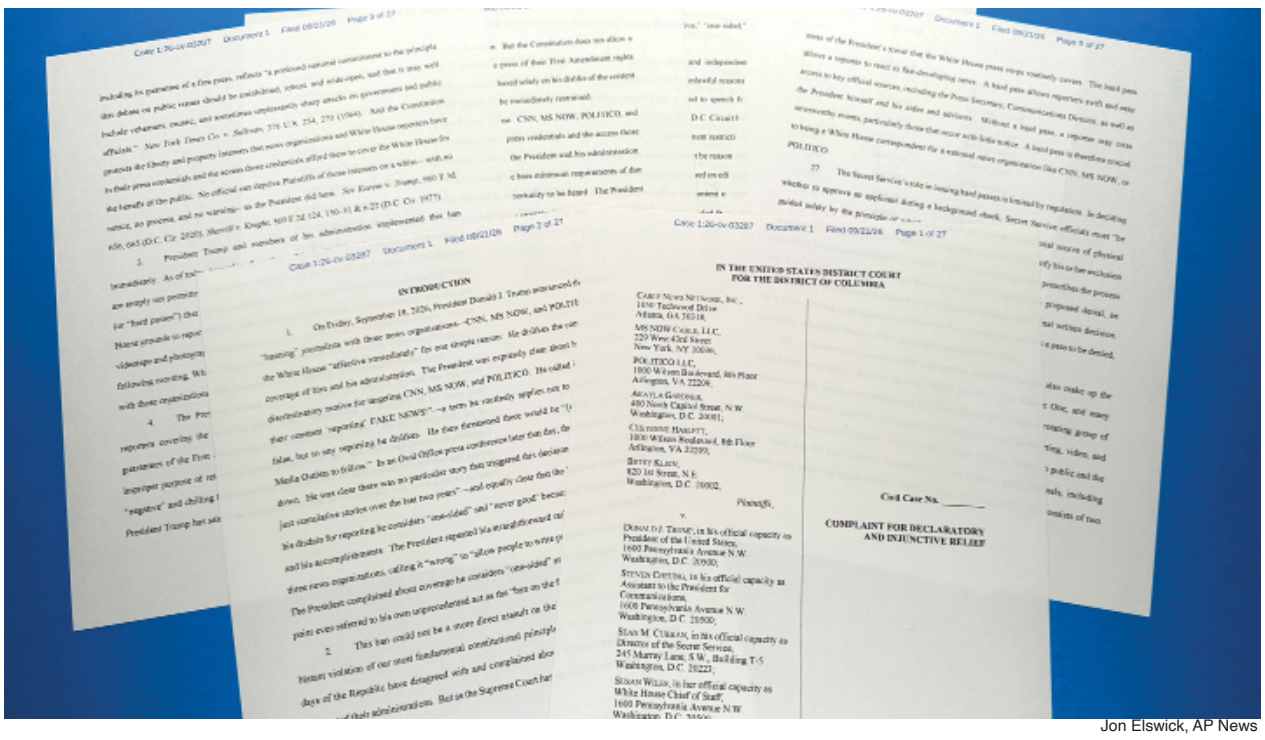
"Freedom of the press as protected within the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is one of the bedrock principles of American democracy," said Professor Gary Rose, scholar-in-residence of the School of Political Science and Global Affairs. Rose also authored over one dozen books, and is an expert in American politics and constitutional law.

According to Rose, press access helps ensure that information about government activities reaches the public and restricts opportunities for public officials to act without oversight.

These groups sued in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on Sept. 21. CNN, MS NOW and Politico claim that the ban was an act of retaliation for their coverage and viewpoint discrimination against their news organizations. They also claim that their reporters did not receive procedural protections before their press credentials were revoked.

However, the Trump administration disputes these allegations. Lawyers for the Justice Department said in court documents filed on behalf of the administration that these organizations released sensitive or possibly classified information that could affect national security. Limiting their access to the White House would remove one avenue through which they could obtain such information.

The controversy has also prompted a response from journalists. Groups such as AP, Bloomberg, The New York Times, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post have signed a statement expressing concern about government retaliation against media groups, as noted by the Committee to Protect Journalists.



Jon Elswick, AP News
Lawsuit that CNN, MS NOW, and Politico have filed, citing the first amendment, following their ban from the White House grounds.

The cooperation reflects the collaboration of press pools that provide several news organizations with access to the White House when space is limited. Removal of a news organization from a White House pool can reduce video footage, photos and firsthand observations available to other news organizations.

Professor Steven Michels, in the School of Political Science and Global Affairs, noted that this conflict has implications for others outside the organizations involved.

"Citizens need to be informed about what their government is doing in their name," Michels said. "Limiting access only to compliant media outlets will not help with that."

Michels highlighted the importance of having broader access, given that public trust in government and media institutions is currently strained.

"Having multiple outlets means a diversity of opinions and perspectives and a fuller accounting of what is happening," said Michels.

The current case raises issues related to White House press passes that have been litigated in the courts for many years. In Sherrill v. Knight, 1977, the D.C. Circuit held that denying a White House press pass implicates First Amendment interests and requires notice, an opportunity to respond, and a written explanation when access is denied.

Rose said the Sherrill case may be relevant to the current case.

"Legal experts suggest that the Sherrill case will serve as precedent for a future ruling," said Rose.

The case may test older due-process rules and newer questions about access to limited presidential spaces. A hearing on the preliminary injunction is set for Oct. 8 at 11 a.m. in Washington, D.C., the same day that the temporary restraining order expires.

Prof. Rose expects courts to rule more clearly as the case progresses. The three news outlets now have hard passes. The court is currently deciding whether the news outlets will retain these hard passes for the remainder of the lawsuit.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS

SATURDAY 10/10:
MEN'S ICE HOCKEY VS PENN STATE
7 P.M. MARTIRE FAMILY ARENA

THURSDAY 10/15:
PAWS & RELAX - THERAPY DOG EVENT
12 P.M. LINDA'S THIRD FLOOR FIREPLACE

SATURDAY 10/17:
SHU WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
10 A.M. CHAPEL QUAD

Features

Floods of Families

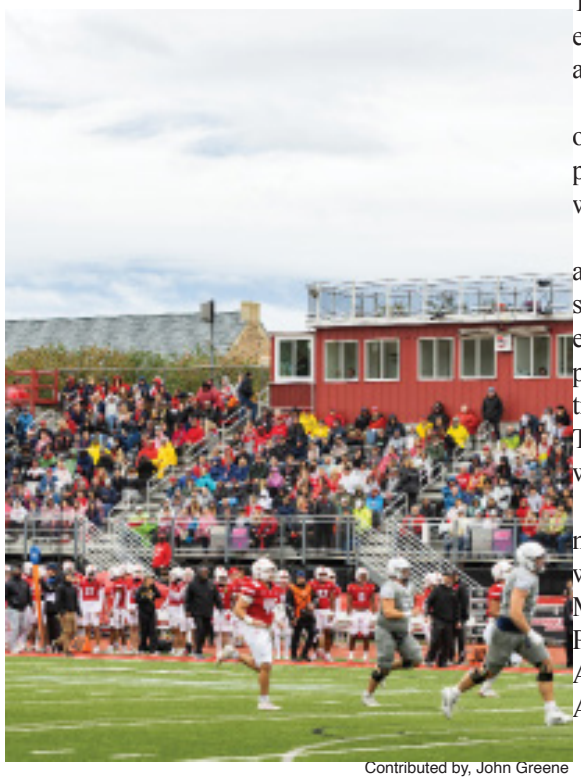
BY **MICHAEL CASTNER**
Staff Writer

Family Weekend gave students the opportunity to reconnect with their families while allowing families to experience campus life alongside them.

The annual weekend has been a tradition for 35 years, according to Katie Morovich, director of Student Involvement and First Year Programs.

"We center the events around crowd favorites and school spirit, bingo being one of them where we offer three sessions and the home football schedule," said Morovich. "From there we collaborate with different areas to create a schedule."

Events throughout the weekend included but were not limited to bingo, a Parents and Family Council meeting, a dance showcase, a choir concert, and a football game. The weekend was scheduled to end with Mass at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.



Contributed by, John Greene

Sacred Heart parents sitting in pouring rain to watch the football game during Family Weekend 2026

Rain and strong winds forced organizers to adjust several planned activities throughout the weekend.

"We made several adjustments to the weekend schedule to keep as many events running as possible while prioritizing safety, the only event truly canceled was the Tent Tailgate due to the excessive winds," said Morovich.

Several other events were moved indoors because of the weather. The Cider and Live Music event was moved to Red's Pub, while the Martire Family Arena show featuring Hank Azaria and the EZ Street Band opened early.

"We opened the doors to the Martire Family Arena show with Hank Azaria and the EZ Street Band early where we had a happy hour, snacks, games and raffles for ticket holders," said Morovich.

Despite the changes, students and their families were still able to take part in the weekend.

"My family came to campus because they were excited to attend the EZ Street Band concert, and to see me play with the marching band for the football game," said junior Luca Tedesco. "Despite the rain, and a lot of the on-campus activities being cancelled, there was still a lot to do. We had a really good time."

For first-year students, Family Weekend also provided an opportunity to show their families what their new college experience is like.

"My family came to campus to see me and watch the dance showcase," said freshman Gabriella Nicoletti. "It was nice to see all the dances in the program and my family got to see it."

With the weather being a large factor throughout the weekend, families were still able to come and visit their students and experience campus life.

"The weather didn't really affect our plans, but it was a little annoying with the rain," said Nicoletti. "We had to go inside because of the rain. It was an upside because I got to show them my work-study and the BV."

"The football game was my favorite event of family weekend, because I got to see our team win, and it was the best option available with the rain," said freshman Anthony Gerardi.

Despite the weather changes, Family Weekend still allowed families to strengthen their connection with the university community.

"The goal of Family Weekend is to strengthen the connection between families, their students and the SHU community, it gives families an opportunity to spend meaningful time with their students while experiencing the vibrant campus community, traditions, programs and activities that make up the SHU experience," said Morovich.

For Tedesco, Family Weekend gives families a chance to experience the college environment alongside their students.

"A lot of SHU students can't wait to go home to see family and friends, Family Weekend is an opportunity for the inverse to happen, parents and siblings come up to see what college life is like for a weekend," said Tedesco.

Despite the rain and schedule changes, Family Weekend gave students an opportunity to share their campus experience with the people closest to them.

Here For SHU!

BY **DANIELLA DILORENZO**
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart University students had the opportunity to hear from the founders of Here For You Clothing, Ellie Haney and Emma Kilbride, on Sept. 28 at 12:30 p.m. at the Center for Healthcare Education.

Haney and Kilbride gave a presentation about their mental health journeys and how their personal struggles inspired them to create a fashion advocacy brand. Students also shopped the brand's merchandise at the event, including their new collaboration with Sacred Heart that was released on Sept. 23.

Here For You Clothing uses fashion to promote mental health awareness and encourages people to support one another. The brand's ambassadors help spread its message that people are not alone.

"I wanted to become an ambassador because I have seen so many people struggle with mental health and not know how to deal with it," said ? and brand ambassador Julia Dimyan. "It can feel very isolating and feel like you are the only one experiencing it and having this happen to you."

For Dimyan, being involved in the brand is about creating a support system she believes is significant for people experiencing mental health struggles.

"When you are struggling it is so helpful to hear that someone is here for you," said Dimyan. "It makes you feel like you are not alone and that you are seen and heard."

Here For You began as Haney's creative pursuit during the COVID-19 pandemic that she later transformed into a business alongside her best friend and managing partner, Kilbride. Haney founded the brand after using clothing and design as a coping mechanism to deal with her own mental health struggles.

"I believe that if I knew people struggled like I did, I would have lived a very different life," said Haney. "If I knew that I was not alone, I would've been less afraid to reach out for help."

Haney now encourages students to utilize their own experiences as a source of creativity and motivation.

"Share your story. Share your struggle," said Haney. "It is healing for yourself and it is healing for others, and it is powerful."

Junior Ella Nocera, who owns multiple pieces from Here For You, such as their popular brand hoodies and their shorts, said the brand's clothing gives students the opportunity to support mental health advocacy in an everyday way.

"It's very important because it is a major thing in a lot of people's daily lives," said Nocera. "It's important to bring awareness to mental health and to remove the negative stigma around it."

Nocera also sees fashion as an effective way to reach younger audiences, especially college students. Wearing a piece of Here For You clothing can serve as a subtle but effective way to promote the brand's message while potentially creating conversations about mental health.

"Fashion targets a younger audience and is an unspoken advocacy," said Nocera. "It also promotes the brand itself when people wear the clothes they buy."



Instagram, @hereforyouclothing

Sacred Heart students show their support for Here For You Clothing and its mission to promote mental health awareness through fashion.

Here For You Clothing merchandise varies in price $32 to $74 depending on what is being purchased. Students can purchase clothing from the brand's website or storefront in Fairfield, Conn.

Beyond selling clothing, Here For You shares its message by visiting college campuses, high schools, and organizations across the country to tell their personal mental health stories and encourage others to do the same. Haney hopes these conversations continue beyond the clothing by helping people to feel comfortable speaking about their experiences.

"The more we normalize it, the more people will feel like it's OK to ask for help," said Haney.

CampusLife

It's Sweater Weather!

BY **KAITLIN SIEGEL**
Contributing Writer

As temperatures change at Sacred Heart University, students and staff are starting to trade in their summer favorites for fall staples. When walking around campus, it is easy to notice their change in style. Shorts, tank tops, and flip-flops are now being replaced by sweaters, jeans, boots and jackets as the weather gets colder.

One of the most popular fall styles this season is a classic oversized sweatshirt. Lots of students are often seen wearing crewnecks, hoodies, and quarter zips, especially when the temperature is cooler. Leggings, jeans and sweatpants are also super popular choices that students enjoy wearing to class.

As the season changes, so does the temperature; UGG boots, sneakers and other comfortable shoes become common on campus.

Fall colors are also being worn a lot more. Shades of brown, burgundy, cream, dark green and black are replacing the bright summer colors. Some students are even adding accessories like baseball caps, tote bags, scarves, and jewelry to complete their fall outfits. Layering has also been a big trend this fall. Pairing a shirt with cardigans and flannels is all the rage.

For students shopping locally, Fairfield has many stores that make fall fashion cute and easy to shop for. Stores in downtown Fairfield and nearby shopping areas give students an option beyond online stores. Shopping locally can also be a great way to find a small business and stand out from what everyone else is wearing.

However, transitioning a wardrobe from summer to fall is very difficult for living in such a small space. Limited drawer and closet space means students cannot bring their entire wardrobe to campus. Many students have to decide which summer clothes to keep at home and which to bring to college. Layering also makes the decision easier because students can continue to wear their favorite summer pieces under warm clothing like jackets and sweaters.

For Sacred Heart students, fall fashion is not just about keeping up with the latest trends. It is also about balancing how to find comfortable and realistic ways to dress for the changing weather and making the most with limited dorm storage. As temperatures continue to decrease, campus style will continue shifting into cozy styles that make fall the most fashionable time of the whole year.

Students are also finding ways to express their personal style while staying comfortable and prepared for unpredictable Connecticut weather through the fall season.

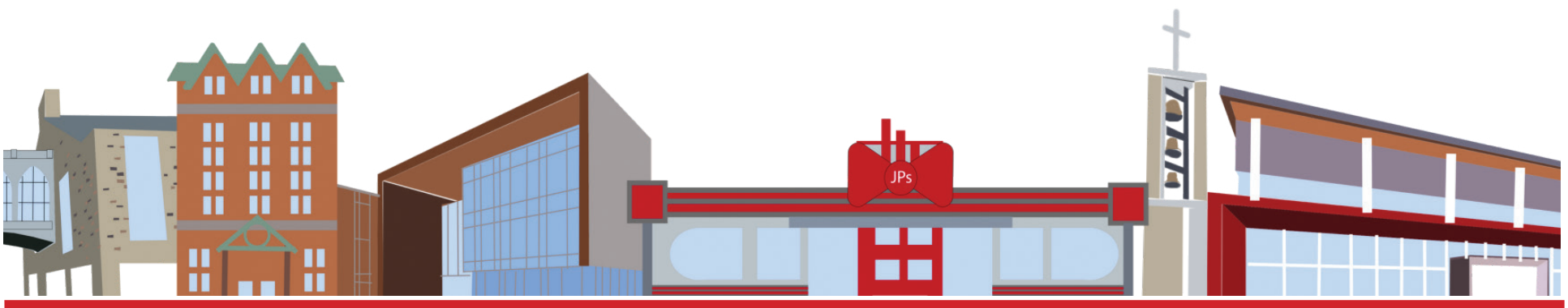
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Interested in contributing to Campus Life? Contact us at spectrum@sacredheart.edu

CampusLife

New Week, New Recipes

BY **GIULIANA ARMINIO**
Contributing Writer

Even with access to on-campus dining halls and resources like the Market, students also enjoy nights in while ordering out. With few freshman residence halls providing spaces to cook, students have to think outside of the box when it comes to meals.

Freshmen students around campus turn to snacks, ordering on DoorDash and grocery essentials.

Students on campus have many ways of getting groceries. DoorDash and Target runs using the SHUttle are some students' top ways of getting groceries on campus. Students tend to spend between $20 and $100 dollars every one to two weeks on groceries.

Freshman Dylan Kelly mentioned some of his favorite snacks and meals to make in his dorm, "Dots Buffalo Pretzels are a top snack in my dorm, and our favorite thing to make is Ramen and mac and cheese."

Freshman Sophia Makhoul mentioned some easy go-to meals for her and her roommate.

"I love making microwave meals like pastas and pizza rolls because they are so easy to make and really good." Makhoul also shared some of her favorite snacks she keeps in her dorm: Goldfish, Skinny Pop, M&M's and KitKats.

Freshman Julia Frigiano shared some easy meals she makes in her dorm. "My favorite meals or snacks are either Mac and Cheese, microwavable pancakes, or a protein shake. Mac and cheese is an easy thing to make, while a protein shake is also super easy since I just throw one in the fridge and drink it."

Frigiano also mentioned easy healthy snacks to make that are not available in the dining hall: rice cakes with banana and peanut butter and Uncrustables.

Sometimes students enjoy DoorDashing food straight to their dorms. One student shared how he and his roommate DoorDash food to their dorm once a week, normally on a Friday or Saturday, spending about $40.

Frigiano shared that she orders food via Uber Eats around once a week, spending around $30 to $50 on an order depending on where she orders from. Kelly shared a similar response, saying he spends around $20 a week on DoorDash.

Although DoorDash can be a bit pricey, students may enjoy a fast food meal every once in a while.

Overnight Oats

"Easy Overnight Oats" by Makinze Gore – Delish.com

1. In a medium bowl or large glass container, combine oats, chia seeds, cinnamon, and salt. Add milk, yogurt, and honey and stir to combine. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. When ready to serve, stir oats and top with desired toppings.
3. Make Ahead: Oats (without toppings) can be made 5 days ahead. Keep refrigerated.

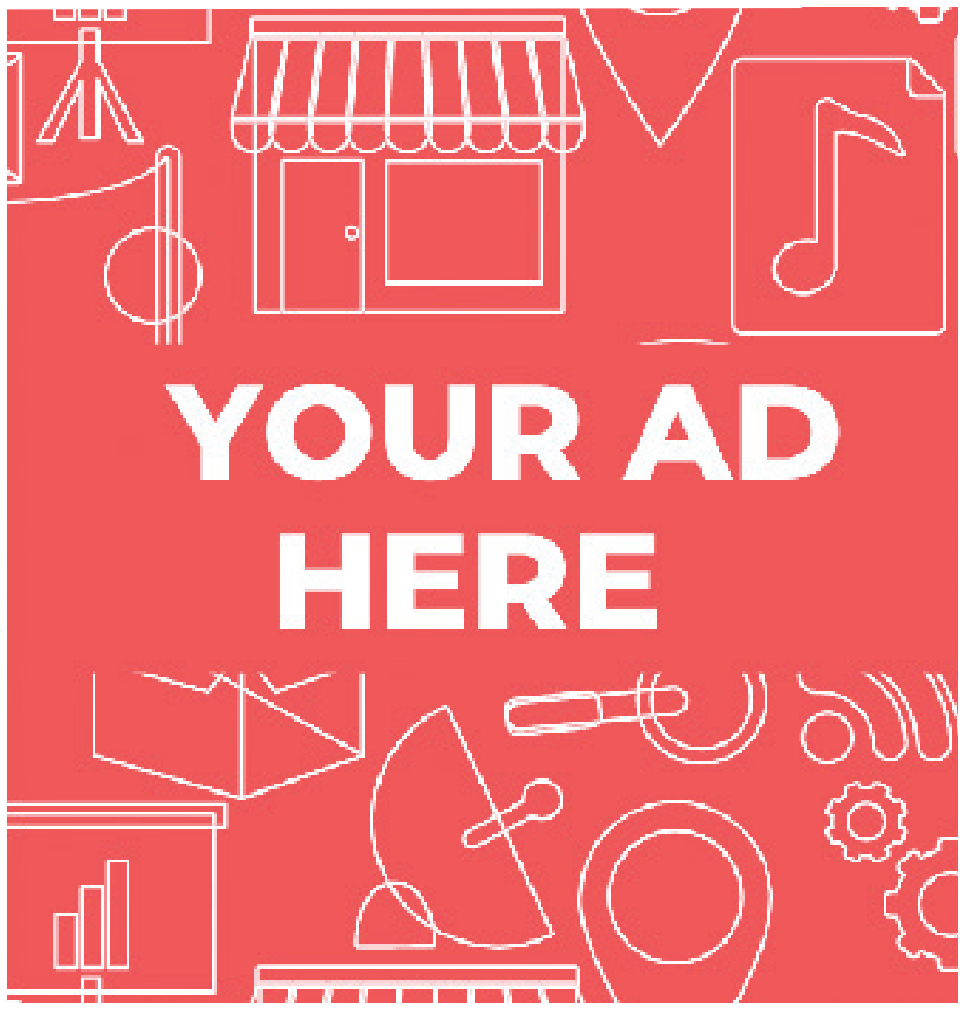
Ingredients

- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 2 tsp. chia seeds
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- Pinch of kosher salt
- 1 cup dairy or non-dairy milk
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- Peanut butter, jam, chopped walnuts, fresh fruit, and/or cacao nibs, for topping (optional)

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Arts & Entertainment

"Resident Evil": Film or Flop?

BY **REESE PHILLIPS**
Staff Writer

Released on Sept. 18, the newest video game movie "Resident Evil," directed by Zach Cregger, has become the biggest opening in the franchise, grossing $108.3 million globally during its first weekend.

Following a medical courier named Bryan, the film, unlike the other movies in the franchise, does not directly adapt a character, story or game. Rather, Cregger sought to make a movie that felt like playing a "Resident Evil" game.

Despite the film's success, this creative choice divided fans of the original games.

"I think audience expectations are the biggest obstacle to overcome in adapting an interactive game to film," said Gregory Golda, a film and animation professor at Sacred Heart University.



AP News

Director Zach Cregger on set of "Resident Evil."

Golda said films are linear whereas games are interactive, and thus directors are "damned if they do, damned if they don't" when it comes to making decisions on the story and what to include and exclude.

"You can't please everyone all the time," said Golda.

Golda described this issue as a "double-edged sword." He said if an established fanbase is "feeling good" and anticipation is high, they might show up and help the film make money.

"The problem with video game adaptations of any kind is that they can alienate those unfamiliar with the IP," said Golda, referring to intellectual property. "Many people may feel they don't have an entry point into the world, or that they aren't prepared to understand what's happening."

Keith Zdrojowy, a professor at SHU and Studio Manager of the broadcast studios at the Martire Center for the Liberal Arts, described his experience seeing the 2016 "World of Warcraft" film.

"It just had no heart to it," said Zdrojowy. "It was a 'that was a waste of our money' kind of moment."

Zdrojowy said the issue with game movies started when they were first being made in the 1990s, saying studios were only interested in using IPs to make money and did not consider what it would take to bring games to life.

"You have to follow the source material first and foremost," he said.

Zdrojowy listed the grimy adaptations of Koopa Troopas and Goombas in 1993's "Super Mario Bros." as examples.

"It's hard to make them believable. Like, where's the stakes? Where's the tension? Where's the drama? Is it supposed to be funny? Is it supposed to be dramatic? It's hard to do that," he said.

Zdrojowy said that what makes a video game adaptation film successful is sticking to the details.

"Mario's very campy. It's tongue-and-cheek. We're trying to save the princess, but we're also doing silly things like putting ourselves in a raccoon suit so we can fly," he said.

Both the new "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" and "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" grossed more than $1 billion.

"They followed all the logic of the video games," said Zdrojowy.

Sophomore and president of SHU's Short Filmmakers Club Owen Telesmanick agrees with staying faithful to the original games, using the "Mortal Kombat" movies as an example.

"They were more faithful to the adaptation in the second one rather than the first. It still wasn't great, but it was a lot better because they actually used the source material," said Telesmanick.

Zdrojowy said there is more meaning to these adaptations nowadays, as the people making these films grew up playing these games.

Director Zach Cregger discussed his fandom with the outlet ComicBook in an interview during the initial announcement of his "Resident Evil" film.

"I love the games. I've played all the games. I played "Resident Evil 4" a hundred times through. I'm obsessed with it," said Cregger.

"It's when you have people that respect the source material and are familiar with it on an intimate level, that's when it's easier to bring to life," said Zdrojowy.

The Encore: A Swift Return

BY **MOLLY RAZZINO**
Staff Writer

On Sept. 25, Taylor Swift dropped her new album "The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore." This extended version of her 2025 album featured four songs, each relating to her past relationships.

Swift is known for her surprise announcements of new music through clues posted on social media and fan speculation.

Susan Mazer, an adjunct professor at Sacred Heart University who teaches a class on "Women in Music," said the reason that Swift is able to do these events and keep her fanbase, Swifties, engaged is because it doesn't feel like a one-sided relationship.

"It's not one-sided, and I think that is why they do stay engaged and they do want to stay with her, because it feels like they are having an interaction with her," said Mazer.

This strategy engages fans in a way that lets them connect with her personally. AP News stated that Swift made an Instagram post when announcing "The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore," expressing her gratitude for the Swifties' overwhelming excitement and celebration of her last release.

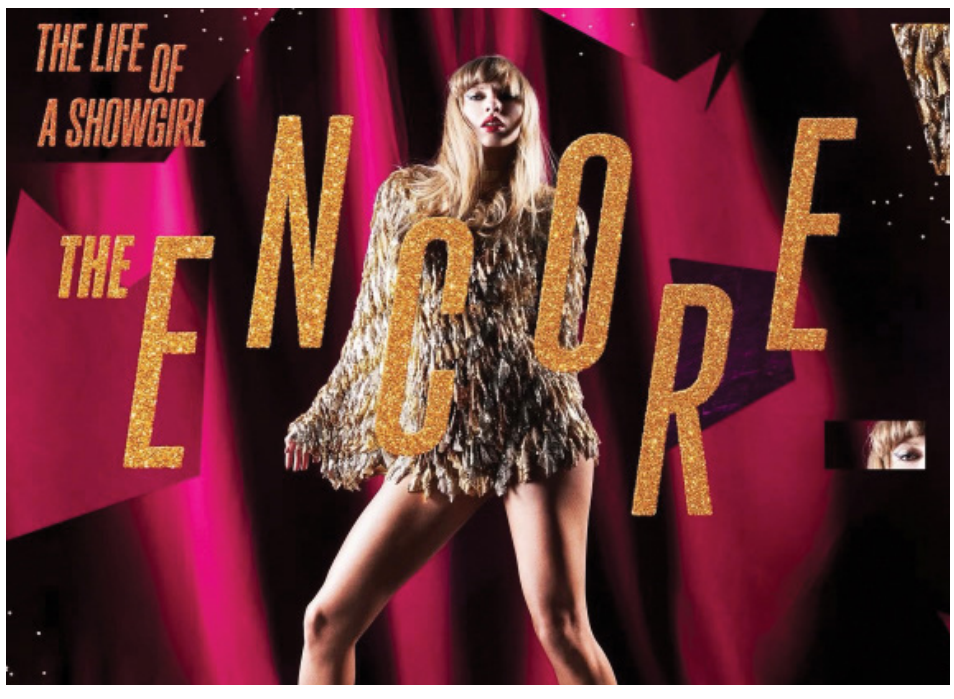
Mazer said Swift has been in the spotlight a lot and has always gotten pretty good press. She doesn't have to use her body or sexuality, and that ties in a lot with her online presence.

Junior Kate Whalen said another reason that the general population knows about her and listens to her music is that she is not just an artist, she is also a businesswoman. Even those who are not considered Swifties or even fans at all know of her, and her recent marriage to Travis Kelce has only broadened her audience.

"She's a very smart businesswoman, in my opinion, and I think people appreciate that," said Whalen.

Social media has also had a large effect on people and how they are exposed to and influenced by new music, old music, and staying engaged with people. People want to feel included and stay up to date on what is going on around them, while others want to explore and be exposed to new things.

Junior Paige Gutheil said she feels social media has a big influence because it introduces her to new music through short clips, which then makes her want to find the full versions.



Instagram, @Taylorswift

Album art of Taylor Swift's "The Life of a Showgirl: The Encore."

She said that people become naturally curious when they see others around them excited for something. It influences them to check out the music and the artist themselves to see what the enthusiasm is.

Mazer said Swift's strategy on social media is effective for her, specifically over other artists, because of her fanbase, according to Mazer. While other artists have set release dates and release a single as a teaser, Swift uses her social media platforms and the attention of her fans to make it a game.

"I think people pay attention to Taylor Swift because she has such a big presence in the music industry and has had a very successful career. Her influence reaches into culture and media, which makes people interested in her even if they don't listen to her music," said Gutheil.

Sports

Nobody Walks Alone

BY **MARLEY GURMENDI**
Staff Writer

On Sept. 24, students and community members gathered on Upper Quad for the annual Suicide Prevention Walk. Organized by the men's club rugby team in partnership with Alpha Delta Pi and the Student Nurses Association, the event raised awareness for suicide prevention while encouraging students to talk about mental health and support one another.



Instagram, @shumensrugby
Sacred Heart students outside for the Suicide Prevention Walk.

The first walk was held in 2020 to honor three students who died by suicide: Jelyn Lee, a member of Alpha Delta Pi; Ryan Lahiff, a member of the Student Nurses Association; and Peter DeSalvo III, a rugby player.

"When you see so many people gathered on the quad for one cause, it's really moving," said men's rugby president Thomas Ferreira.

Leading up to this year's event, all three organizations delegated tasks among group members to make the walk a success. They held table times to sell purple suicide prevention shirts to raise money for the cause, plus ribbons and buttons were distributed around campus to spread the word.

"Everyone had their own responsibilities, and they were remarkable to work with," said Ferreira.

At the event, sidewalks surrounding the quad were covered with hopeful messages written in chalk, including "you are loved," "tomorrow needs you" and "never walk alone."

Tables sold remaining event t-shirts, while the mental health awareness clothing brand Here For You offered Sacred Heart-themed merchandise and shared information about its mission of normalizing conversations around mental health.

"The t-shirts were a great fundraiser because not only did they raise money, but they also helped spread awareness," said Ferreira. "People could wear the bright purple shirts around campus, keeping the message visible even after the event."

Before participants began their walk around the quad, speakers from several campus organizations shared personal stories and reflections related to mental health and suicide prevention. While the event serves as a campus-wide reminder of the importance of supporting one another, it also holds a deeply personal meaning for the rugby program.

The walk was established in memory of former rugby player and alumnus Peter DeSalvo III, who lost his life to suicide. What began as a way to honor his memory has grown into an annual tradition that brings together students, athletes and community members in support of mental health awareness.

"When you bring together multiple organizations, students and athletes, there's power in numbers. It creates a welcoming environment and shows people they're not alone," said Ferreira.

The team further honors DeSalvo by hosting a Rugby 7s tournament each spring in his memory. Like the walk, the tournament has become a lasting tradition within the program.

"We started wearing the number three on our jerseys as a reminder that we're always playing for something bigger than ourselves. The walk reflects that," said Ferreira.

The walk can hold a different meaning for every participant. Some attend in memory of a loved one they have lost, while others walk in support of friends, family members or their own mental health journeys. Despite those different experiences, the intention is that no one should have to face life's struggles alone.

"It is important to speak up if you are struggling because there are so many people that want to help," said senior Julia Arnone.

The chalk messages covering the sidewalks may eventually wash away, but the meaning endures long after the event ends. For those who attended, the walk stood as a reminder that even during life's most difficult moments, there is always someone willing to listen, help, and walk alongside you.

"If you see someone walking by themselves, walk with them. No one's ever walking alone," said Ferreira.

If you or anybody you know may be at risk of suicide, contact Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

Bump, Set, Spike: Women's Volleyball Starts Strong

BY **OLIVIA FIUMARA**
Staff Writer

Sacred Heart women's volleyball team rallied together for a win against Niagara University in a Student Appreciation game on Sept. 26.

"Playing in front of the students during the Student Appreciation Game was truly a blessing. It has been nothing but fun to play in front of a crowd like ours and to represent SHU," said junior Miliani Villarreal.

The Pioneers have continued to show their competitiveness and individual performances as they move through their season.

"I would say our season has been nothing but amazing! There has been so much as a team for us to work on, learn from, and continue to grow. It's been super fun getting to work with athletes we have on our team," said Villarreal.

These girls have continued to improve throughout the season, building on playing with confidence and consistency. The early games of the season have allowed the team to learn from simple mistakes and improve in certain areas.

"At this point of the season, we know what we need to do. It comes down to refining our skills and continuing to work on improving our execution," said head coach Rob Machan.

The game against Canisius University on Sept. 25 was one of the first stepping stones into the start of the season. Sacred Heart beat Canisius 3-0, with the Pioneers starting by using an 11-point rally to build an 18-10 lead and continue to strive.

Villarreal led the team with 17 digs and 6 assists; sophomore setter Addy Franz had 32 assists, 10 digs, 3 aces, and 2 kills; freshman Renata Montini had 11 kills, a .524 attack percentage, and 2 digs; and sophomore Abbie Hagedorn had 11 kills, 3 aces, 2 assists, and 1 block.

"One thing that we did well against Canisius was staying patient and staying composed throughout the game. We always talk about how it's important for our team's success to keep our composure and be patient with the situations we are given," said Villarreal.

While Villarreal was more focused on how the team was able to regain self-control and be patient with the outcomes, Machan shared how he felt during the game, and the team was able to stay focused on the end goal.

"That was an uneven match with a lot of stoppages for reviews and challenges. I thought our team did a great job maintaining their focus. Canisius is a very good team, especially being at home, and to come away from that trip with two wins is a great way to start conference play," said Machan.

With the women's volleyball team continuing their season, the students have been able to watch the team grow and compete while also being able to show up to games and support the

team. For those students who regularly follow the team, the atmosphere in the Pitt Center kept the season more exciting and entertaining.

"From a student perspective, it has been exciting to watch the team continue to build their success over the past few seasons. The games at the Pitt Center also give the students a chance to come together and support the team," said junior Sara Giacchi.

The Pioneers wrapped up the weekend with a 1-1 record against Merrimack College and Quinnipiac University. On Friday, Oct. 2, the Pioneers defeated Merrimack, 3-0. On Saturday, Oct. 3, Sacred Heart fell to Quinnipiac, 3-0.



Jayden Hunter, Photo Editor
Lauren Hubert '27 preparing for a spike at the William Pitt Athletic & Convocation Center

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What the Cornell Case asks of Catholic Students

BY **MADELEINE MEDEIROS**
Editor-in-Chief

Too many of my female friends have been on the receiving end of nonconsensual sexual behavior before they ever set foot on a college campus. The case against the "Cornell Seven" brings the reality of sexual assault to the forefront of our conversations and forces us to face this dangerous pattern.

"Under New York law, being too drunk or high to consent to sex isn't necessarily enough to support a rape charge. The law distinguishes that from being physically helpless or incapacitated by drugs administered without consent," according to AP News.

But let's be perfectly clear: Coercion is not consent, and neither is being incapacitated.

The alleged gang rape occurred in October 2024 at Cornell University at the Chi Phi fraternity house, and the complainant, known anonymously as Jane Doe, was under the influence of alcohol and ketamine. Doe told campus police officers that the abuse lasted several hours.

Many have criticized how Cornell and the Tompkins County district attorney, Matthew Van Houten, have responded to the case. So why is this case gaining attention now, two years after the incident?

Because of a lawsuit filed last month, which led Van Houten to reopen the criminal investigation into the event.

"He initially had declined to prosecute, saying he had no evidence that the woman was raped or drugged against her will," according to AP News.

AP News also verified that he closed the case without ever speaking to Doe or reading her police interview transcript.

"[His] decision to not prosecute the case was based on the statement prepared by campus police and signed by the woman. The statement was a summary of the two days of interviews with her," and he did not receive a transcript of them, according to AP News. Van Houten said that the statements he received did not contain allegations of drugged coercion or forced sex acts.

Van Houten was willing to close the case based on a summary of interviews. That decision highlights institutional barriers in holding abusers accountable and the hoops survivors jump through to have their voices heard.

As for Cornell, online discourse claims that the young men accused of rape were only made to write essays or take classes as punishment. However, AP News reports the university "says it expelled some of the students, but hasn't said how many," and that some who were accused "but not found responsible of that allegation by the university, were ordered by the school" to write essays and take classes.

While Cornell has withheld details of expulsions and suspensions under federal privacy laws, many question whether those accused of such a serious crime deserve identity protection. And what about bystanders—what responsibility do they carry?

These are not merely questions with legal weight, but moral implications, too.

Catholic Social Teaching calls on us to be upstanding citizens, giving us a set of moral principles for how to operate in the world—specifically stewardship and solidarity.

In the revised edition of "Catholic Ethics in Today's World," authors Jozef D. Zalot and Benedict Guevin tell us that "[i]f a situation arises where an important decision has to be made, the steward has full responsibility to act and, in turn, will be held accountable for the decision that he or she makes," in reference to Catholic Social Teaching's seventh principle: stewardship.

Solidarity is equally relevant to bystanders.

"The crucial point to keep in mind is that solidarity means being in relationship with others," Zalot and Guevin remind us. "It does not mean feeling sorry for the other," but rather "that we are responsible for the well-being of others and we cannot turn our backs on one another or become isolationists."

Being a steward for the common good, for the women in our lives who have experienced sexual assault, means we move beyond sympathy and toward speaking up. Being an upstander can be as simple as active listening or intervening when something feels off.

So I ask you: At our Catholic university, how will you answer the call to speak up for the vulnerable?

The editorial page is an open forum. Editorials are the opinions of the individual editors and do not represent the opinions of the whole editorial board. Letters to the editor are encouraged and are due by Sunday at noon for consideration for each Wednesday's issue. All submissions are subject to editing for spelling, punctuation, and length.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 700 words and should be emailed to spectrum@sacredheart.edu. The Spectrum does not assume copyright for any published material. We are not responsible for the opinions of the writers voiced in this forum.

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