

# Alumni Pride

The Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy Alumni Association Newsletter



Pictures from Rudis II 2014

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Dear Fellow Collegians,

To make this publication as appealing and interesting as possible, we need your help! Send us an update of what you've been up to—any special news, job successes, or other relevant information that you'd like us to know about. Please include your year of graduation in addition to your news. Links and photos are always welcome too. Submit updates to [jkern@eriesd.org](mailto:jkern@eriesd.org).

Additionally, we welcome your feedback. What kind of stories do you want us to publish more of in the future? Feel free to pitch us a story idea and become a contributor. With your help, we can ensure that our newsletter will always be your newsletter.

Sincerely,

Jon Kern '04 and the staff of "The Alumni Pride"

We could not have produced this publication without the tireless efforts of alumni and current students. I would like to thank my writers: Keay Crandall, Kim Davis ('01), Logan Ford, Emily Kraut, Mr. Ken Nickson, Dylan Pickard, Kaitlyn Reigel, Hannah Rhodes, and Iralys Rivera.

I would like to thank all who contributed to the design and layout of this work: Maria Czerwinski, Kelly Huff, Abby Merlino, Anthony Palaszewski, Sydney Seabrooke, and Alyssa Troyer.

Finally, several people volunteered to edit and give feedback on the articles and layout, and this material has been improved through their expertise: Dakota Palmer '14, Charles Santini '02, and Mr. Rick Schneider; however, chiefly I want to thank Kim Davis '01, whose hard work throughout the months has made this magazine's writing much stronger.

Thank you for your hard work and effort!

## Hello Alumni!



Many of you may not be familiar with me, but my name is Ken Nickson, Jr., and I am the most recent addition to the administrative staff to enter the prestigious doors of Collegiate Academy. Prior to Collegiate, I have been in the City of Erie School District for over ten years, working at seven different schools as a teacher, education specialist, and, administrator.

This is my second year here at Collegiate, and I am finally beginning to feel as though I am becoming familiar with the unique culture for which we are known. Over this time, I have been here to create new memories via old traditions, including: Beachwalk (and the famous Chicken Toss), displays of our students' musical and theatrical talents, Academy on Parade, dances, and my favorite, the Rudi Awards.

Much of my appreciation for the Rudi Awards stems from my uncle—who some of you may have had: Mr. George Colao. I have fond memories of him telling me stories during family Christmas dinners about playing the drums in a faculty band.

In addition to this, I am happily married with five wonderful children, all of whom attend Erie's Public Schools. Here at Collegiate, we are also a family, and it makes working here that much more enjoyable. It's great to walk in day after day with staff and students that are appreciative, thankful, and focused on advancing themselves. It has been a pleasure, and I look forward to experiencing more of the dynamic culture and climate that Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy has to offer.

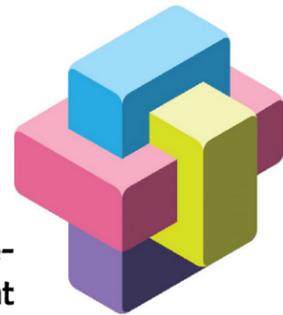
The most important part of my participation in the Alumni Association, however, is being able to connect with all of you. Because of this connection, I encourage all of you to take a proactive role by getting involved with the Alumni Association. I hope to bring us closer as a community, and any little bit helps, whether it's in communicating with each other, being an active participant in social media, or simply attending our meetings. Last year, the alumni involved were able to put on Collegiate's first ever Rudis II—an event designed with the intent of integrating the alumni association with our current students to enhance Collegiate's culture. Who has the next big idea, or knows what's coming next? Stay tuned and find out!

Farewell and best wishes,

*Kenneth E. Nickson, Jr.*  
Associate Dean

# The Future of Education

Article by Kaitlyn Riegel  
Layout by Sydney Seabrooke



**SAMSUNG**  
**SOLVE**  
FOR TOMORROW

Earlier this year, Collegiate Academy received a grant from Samsung for \$125,000 after winning Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow engineering contest. The project was created and developed by Collegiate's 2014-2015 Principles of Engineering class, taught by Mr. Peter Reed. The project started with a proposal of instituting vertical farming in urban areas, which would be implemented to increase the public's accessibility to fresh vegetables at a much cheaper price. This proposal was chosen along with four others from the state of Pennsylvania. Following an entire lesson plan, a video was submitted. The top fifteen videos were chosen by Samsung, and once again, Collegiate was picked. Following this triumph, the team of students traveled to New York City, where three of the students presented the project, and answered judges' questions. Our project's video was then put on Samsung's website. The fate of who received the \$125,000 grant was left to the public voters.



After a few weeks of constant voting, number watching, and all of the students (including the graduating class of 2015) and faculty reaching out to friends, family, and alumni via social media, Collegiate once again reigned supreme. Mr. Reed mentioned that the Alumni Association also reached out to all of the alumni via email and Facebook. Collegiate received over 90,000 votes during those few weeks. Not only did that lead to a \$125,000 grant, but also to everyone in the Collegiate family being able to take pride in the building that has affected us all so deeply. As Mr. Fleming explained, "Really, most of what happened as far as us doing that [getting so many votes and ultimate-

ly winning the grant] was the school kids taking the initiative to make that happen." The closest school was tens of thousands of votes behind us, which once again demonstrates just how close-knit this Collegiate family is—past, present, and future.

The big question remains: what are we doing with that \$125,000? After receiving a price list from Samsung, and plenty of number crunching, We received ninety laptops (all of which are already in the building, getting wired into the district network), thirty tablets, thirty Chromebooks, fifteen cameras, and three new TVs. This technology is not just being used in the technology department and computer classes, but rather, being used throughout the entire building. The laptops will be available to all students and teachers to sign out.

So, this first year will be an experimental period where we will examine all the ways in which they can be used to enhance the student body's education. Using the tablets to access Khan Academy in our SAT Prep classes is already on the table for consideration. The cameras, with their still and video capabilities, will be used for a plethora of classes and assignments as well. And finally, the three TVs will be used for presentations during open houses and other events.

With all of the technology we were able to purchase because of the Samsung grant, Collegiate plans to do great things. The current student body will be able to experience the new laptops and other equipment and will be discovering all the ways our new technology can help us learn even more, and future classes will be able to benefit from those discoveries. With our many thanks to Samsung and all of those that helped Collegiate achieve this feat, here is to the future of education.



# To Watch the Changes

Article by Hannah Rhodes  
Layout by Kelly Huff

As I sat down for an interview with Collegiate Academy's own kitchen legend, Ms. Jay, I felt as if I were only just meeting her for the first time. Of course, we'd been briefly introduced before and we interact on a near-daily basis in the school cafeteria, but in reality we barely knew each other beyond names. We quickly learned the basics: Ms. Jay has been working for Collegiate Academy and—before that—Academy, for 18 years now as I'm just completing my fourth year as a student. As we continued to talk, I slowly learned more than I'd ever known about my school from the woman who has watched—and lived—every single change.

The delightful Ms. Jay began her time at Academy High School in the 60s and graduated in 1971. In a brief description of what the school used to be like, Ms. Jay mentioned everything from Driver's Ed to police dogs. Times have definitely changed, and although current Collegiate students will never know the nerve-wracking joy of driving around the peninsula for class, it seems that most of the changes are for the better.



Ms. Jay's Senior Portrait

"There were times," Ms. Jay admitted, "You ran out of school. Things were happening, fights... it was a time of racial unrest."

Learning these details of old Academy culture was a somewhat shocking surprise to a current Collegiate student. However, the Academy that Ms. Jay attended as a high school girl was the Academy she loved. Her favorite memory was graduation day...

"We graduated in the Stadium. (Our) homeroom teacher for four years, the gym teacher. . . got a little teary-eyed. To see her a little mellow, tearing up—we started to tear

up too. She was a tough cookie." Although the students often went to games at the Veterans Memorial Stadium, most had never really been on the turf or in the spotlight. There was a light rain that day, but it still was special for Ms. Jay and her classmates that year.

Since then, Ms. Jay has seen the whole spectrum of changes (the good and the bad) as Academy became Collegiate. Other than various changes in kitchen protocol, including an entirely makeshift system as the kitchen was under construction, Ms. Jay specifically highlighted the change in the school atmosphere.

"The politeness is better. 'Please and thank you,' you don't hear it at other schools. It's the pride students have here. It's a joy to

walk in the door every day. It's like coming home!"

As a student, hearing these words was a warm surprise. I had never stopped to think about how far this school has come—both in its academic advancements and in its atmospheric changes. It amazed me to see the smile on Ms. Jay's face as she really thought about the students today. After our interview, I felt an unmistakable sense of pride in the fact that my own school felt like a home to an irreplaceable member of its staff.

The pivotal question of our interview was this: What has been your favorite part of being involved at this school for so long? Ms. Jay's answer? "To watch the changes."

*"It's a joy to walk in the door every day. It's like coming home!"*



Ms. Jay 2015

Article by Keay Crandall  
Layout by Kelly Huff



Mrs. Nichols

Only last school year did Mrs. Barbara Nichols depart from Collegiate Academy's walls, and she is eager already to hear from us again, chiming "I would be happy to help out!"

Mrs. Nichols worked as a guidance counselor at Collegiate, aiding and sometimes forcing students to complete their college applications. This is arguably one of the most time consuming and strenuous positions to be held at Collegiate. Since leaving her position to Ms. Amy James in January 2015, Mrs. Nichols has relished vacation and travel time with family and friends. Most recently, she has traveled to Montreal for the Formula One race along

the mouth of the St. Lawrence river, visited her son and his family in Chicago, and soon hopes to visit her mother-in-law in Dallas. The time off has allowed her to pursue interests that were piqued over years of working with students, but that she never had time for because of the demands of her career. She mostly enjoys following an undemanding schedule and spending time with loved ones at her leisure.

Despite the horror we may relive when remembering our college application processes, Mrs. Nichols says that she "... [Misses] hearing the college/career plans of the senior class and their enthusiasm and energy as they experience the college application process." It was comforting to hear that she "...[Misses] the terrific staff and administration as my colleagues are the best team ever." Her feelings truly emulate the great connection between all the students and staff that have had the opportunity to have the Collegiate Academy experience.

Mrs. Nichols hopes to visit sometime in the 2015-2016 school year to see one of the plays or concerts put on by current students. Due to a more flexible schedule and a renewed sense of energy, she expects to more thoroughly enjoy the events Collegiate has to offer.



Mr. Taylor

Mr. Russell Taylor thinks of his retirement from Collegiate at the end of the 2014-2015 school year to be the start of a "forever summer," which he expected to kick off with a trip to Sicily when back surgery seemed more eminent. He recouped quickly enough to spend the last couple weeks of summer enjoying the beautiful Italian city. Mr. Taylor was a huge asset to Collegiate: he facilitated student government, which could arguably be its own job, and somehow found time to teach AP Psychology and help establish the Student Art Gallery and Emporium.

He is currently developing plans to start a second career involving only things he wants to do. We wish him luck in that dream. The plans he has have become clearer since his retirement but not clear

enough to share with us at this point. We suspect he will be working on spending his perpetual summer in more lavish European cities.

Mr. Taylor misses hosting Collegiate Academy events the student government organizes annually; he misses Beachwalk, the dances, and the class events, including Sophomore Lockdown and the freshmen event. Although, he does not miss (for the most part) working to plan these activities. Mr. Hilsinki has taken the liberty and apparently not too tantalizing responsibility of helping to facilitate these major events in the immediate future. Mr. Franz has taken over Mr. Taylor's classroom, which Mr. Taylor has told us is where he "Misses teaching the Magical Mystery Tour of Psychology" to upperclassmen.

Mr. Taylor misses the Collegiate atmosphere and the positive energy he felt from students. He relishes the times when his own children were his students in his classroom and joked that he misses Leroy the lion. Mr. Taylor hopes to become involved with the alumni association and the planning of future events when he has more time to offer. Mr. Taylor can't wait to come back home and see what great things happen next with the future classes of Collegiate Academy.

# Teacher Feature

Article by Dylan Pickard

Layout by Abby Merlino

Because Mr. Fleming was so reluctant to brag, we asked Emma Frost, a student, to give her perspective on him. She spoke of his readiness to help and determination to the school, saying, "Whether it is creating a better atmosphere through his comic relief, taking time to talk to students when they need it, or being an active participant of extracurriculars (Math Club, Robotics, and Samsung Solve for Tomorrow), he is always willing to go the extra mile." Thanks for your hard work, Mr. Fleming.



## Mr. Fleming

Mr. Fleming was selected as the Teacher of the Year and he thinks it is a tremendous honor to be recognized by his fellow teachers and his students as someone who is worthy of such a title.

He did not have much to say when interviewed about it, however. He says that he doesn't have a soapbox about it and that "Every teacher is worthy of Teacher of the Year, I just had a good year." When asked what made him different or what made him stand out, he only responded, "I don't think I'm different from other teachers," but couldn't help adding in, "although I am better looking than Nicolia." He spoke humbly and with appreciation.



## Mrs. Pohl

For this issue, we asked teachers for funny stories and moments that they could reflect on and talk about. Mrs. Pohl helped by talking about her adventures with Travel Club, specifically in Spain, and reminiscing in memories of her students.

"Reflecting on our trip to Spain, I remember the wonder on the faces of Rebecca Hahn and Felicia Clemente when they stuck their toes in the Mediterranean Sea. Also, I remember Jared Schaaf and Carly Dodick dancing on the subway and seeing Emily Keiser's face light up whenever she held a conversation with a native Spaniard. Karen Adams, Coleen Kresse, Megan Humes and Connor Drost had a blast doing the "Catwalk" in Parque Guell and Leah Taylor fooled our tour guide while pretending to be Russian. She captured the whole crowd with her antics! And last but not least, how could I ever forget Andy Faytak, Kendrick Tate, Steve Simmons and Jake Esper and their silly fur hats. They wore them everywhere!"

Thank you for sharing, Mrs. Pohl.



## Mr. Shaut

Mr. Shaut has joined the Collegiate teaching staff once again after teaching for six years at Strong Vincent high school. Before that, he had taught at Collegiate for five years and now he is making a return. He is teaching AP Human Geography, Honors World History, and Honors Modern American History while assisting Mr. Lasher in Model United Nations.

Mr. Shaut is happy to be teaching at Collegiate and it's nostalgic for him as he returns, especially because he is teaching in room 106, the same room he taught in when he started teaching. He said his favorite parts of Collegiate are Beachwalk and the general atmosphere of the school which has always been comfortable and very academic. He has always liked the school because it's where he started. The teachers working here are good mentors, the students are welcoming, and Collegiate's events and privileges are always fun for him. Mr Shaut enjoys traveling and has been to Spain. He is also a fan of any Pittsburgh sports team, cheering on the Pirates, Penguins, and Steelers.

Welcome back to the staff, Mr. Shaut!

# In Remembrance:

Adam Carrol '03

Article by Kim Davis

Layout by Sydney Seabrooke

It saddens me greatly when I see something amazing that Adam would have loved. I will never get to see his face as *The Avengers* plays, or discuss why *The Walking Dead* is such a great show. Adam was always up for seeing any scary movie, and he actually enjoyed them like I did. We would spend hours discussing our favorite parts or how we would have done something different. I always feel his absence when I head to Tinseltown. Yes, I have my popcorn and my blue slushie, but Adam is missing from the experience, and the void he has left is still very apparent to me. I can't look over and see the screen lighting up his smile or hear him laughing as Will Farrell cracks another joke. That is the part that hurts the most. I try to comfort myself with the thought that Heaven most likely plays PG-13 movies, so hopefully he will get to watch most of the movies I know he would love. He just won't get to watch them with me.



I was a junior when I met Adam Carroll. Everyone knew him as the kid in the wheelchair. He was very quiet in the beginning, as most of us are as freshmen. After visiting him in Shriner's Hospital, he opened up more and we found we had a lot in common. We both loved board games and listening to AC/DC as loud as possible. Adam had a great sense of humor, and he and his family welcomed me with open arms. He became family to me. I remember his patience as being one of his main strengths. He was very patient with the Muscular Dystrophy (MD) that would often break his bones and cause him to be hospitalized for periods of time. MD took away his ability to walk and run, which

most of us take for granted. I never heard him feel sorry for himself or feel angry at what life had tossed his way. For Adam, there was always a reason for everything, even if he could not see it. He would also point out all of the newest features that his new wheelchair could do.

Years go by as they will, and Adam and I did not always get to spend as much time together as we used to. He briefly attended Edinboro University with me, before getting his own place. He worked closely with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and Voices For Independence. He wanted to make the world better for everyone. That's how big Adam's heart was. Adam texted me in May of 2008 to say he had a minor surgery at Hamot coming up and that I should not worry if I didn't hear from him for a bit. After a month of silence, I knew something was wrong, and his sister Valerie confirmed I was right. When I saw Adam the next day, he was on a respirator, unable to do more than hold my hand. It was hard to smile and crack jokes and not cry, but if he could keep a brave face, then so could I.

I received the call on July 25, 2008 that Adam was gone. He was surrounded by his family, and he was at peace. I believe he is looking out for me, his family, and all of the others that he loved. I believe he would be proud of his sister Valerie earning her teaching degree and settling down with a great guy. I believe he would love to see how articulate and mature his niece Tiana has become. He only knew her as a baby and now she is in middle school. Adam's family friend, Jim Brown, wrote his eulogy. He stated, "[Adam] was an inspiration to us all, reassuring his family that he would be fine whenever they worried about him. He was a very brave young man, never frightened when going into surgery, just seeing it as another obstacle in life to overcome. Adam never let his disease get in the way of the things he wanted to do. Adam wasn't physically strong, but he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders. I can think of no one who could have done it better. He will be sorely missed and remembered with great love by all." I believe that Adam would appreciate being remembered that way.



Adam and I attended my Senior Prom together in 2001. We had a great time. Adam pushed his wheelchair back against the speakers and rocked out the entire evening.

# MR. TAYLOR'S RETIREMENT

Article by Kim Davis  
Layout by Maria Czerwinski

When I met Mr. Taylor, I was a super awkward, shy kid starting Wilson Middle School. Mr. Taylor taught sixth grade Social Studies, and through him, I learned about Greek Mythology and many other ancient cultures that only exist on paper now. Mr. Taylor also had an after school program for students that were struggling, either academically or personally. He genuinely wanted every single student to succeed, and he took the time to know each student. He didn't have to do this. I had many teachers that didn't bother to learn my name, let alone what my interests were. Mr. Taylor listened when I discussed my love of writing, and he was very encouraging. I had a poem published in an anthology in eighth grade, and a large part of my willingness to share was due to his encouragement. When he retired this past year, I was very touched to see that he had kept a folder in his cabinet with the poems I sent him over the years. He believed in me and that was so important to me, an overweight kid who was picked on daily. Middle school was indeed a form of hell for me, but his class was always a break from it.

I don't like to talk about it often, but Mr. Taylor's influence kept me alive more than once in my life. Anyone who suffers from depression knows how exhausting it can be. I didn't feel like many people cared what happened to me, and I always felt dark thoughts lurking behind every situation I was in. Mr. Taylor listened to me when I needed someone. He listened to everything. His responses were never hasty but instead, came from deep thought. He didn't tell me to quit being sad or to grow up and act my age. He pointed me in the right direction and never saw my depression as an ugly, unmentionable thing. He said it gave me sensitivity and allowed me to see others who were also suffering. He was right. I would like to think that through suffering I have gained insight and can recognize the signs in others who need someone to listen to them.

I do miss seeing Mr. Taylor as I walk the halls of Academy. I am lucky to say he has been my teacher, my colleague, and my friend. If the goal of a teacher is to help others, then I would say Mr. Taylor has achieved that goal many times over. I wish him the best in his retirement and hope he continues to remain involved with Collegiate Academy.



These are pictures from Mr. Taylor's Italian adventure.

# Looking Back

Article by Logan Ford  
Layout by Abby Merlino

## Hannah Rush



Sometimes help comes from the most unexpected classes. This statement can hold true for Collegiate classes, and it definitely holds true for Collegiate Alum Hannah Rush. When asked about her favorite memory from Collegiate, Rush explained that the details of many events such as each Beachwalk, each Rudi Awards, and the Winter Olympics are blurry to her.

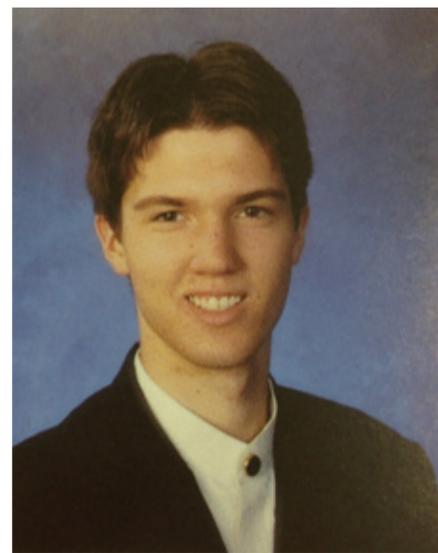
Rush clarifies, "My memories are more focused on the people I made them with." She gets even more specific, "Most importantly, I will never forget the teachers. The teachers at Collegiate Academy are truly top notch. They are patient (I mean really...look at what they put up with each day), willing to help with absolutely anything at any hour of the day, and they each have a unique personality. From Mrs. Nicolola's cartwheels to Mr. Fleming's ability to make AP Statistics enjoyable."

Hannah began attending Gannon University after her time at Collegiate. During her sophomore year she changed her major to Biology. Rush explains that the change even came as a shock to her, "I swore up and down that I never wanted to take another biology course for the rest of my life (now I say this about Chemistry)." Nevertheless, Hannah graduated from Gannon and has just arrived in Houston, Texas for an initial army training course in Fort Sam. She is commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Looking back, Rush claims that the class that was most beneficial class Collegiate gave her was Biology. Rush reiterates that even classes that students dread while enrolled in can and are beneficial, "I was extremely thankful for everything that Mrs. Supinkski had taught us and tested us on. Now, I can't imagine studying anything else."

To the current students, Hannah would like to say, "Always keep an open mind. When I was in 9th grade, if someone told me that I would be a biology major and would join the U.S. Army, I would have told them they were crazy." She has learned that time brings changes, and that they can very often be good changes. Rush goes on to tell students that their homework load is a blessing in disguise, which is another view that has evolved with time. "College offers many opportunities to lose focus of why you're there. If you can establish a good routine now, then hopefully it will carry over and be one less thing you have to worry about in the future."

## Charles Santini



With the busy commotion of day to day life, and the never ending call of careers and families, it can be difficult to keep up with old classmates and fellow alumnus. We were able to catch up with Charles Santini from the Class of 2002. Charles landed a job as a financial advisor after deciding to switch careers. Santini explains, "It gives me the chance to work with and help individuals, families, and businesses." But working as a financial advisor is not his only endeavor.

Charles also works on The Mockerie, which is a fake news source similar to The Onion, but specific to Erie. "I only started that a few months ago but it has grown faster than I could have ever imagined," Santini reflects. "It started out as a fun idea and hobby quickly turned into a potential business and voice within the community."

When asked what single skill Santini would attribute his success to, he quickly responded with public speaking, "it's probably not a traditional choice, being able to speak in public has helped me more than any other skill

or degree that I've obtained over the years."

He goes on to explain that public speaking is a skill that the majority of people do not have, and that being able to speak in public makes him stand out from all of those who do not.

We asked Charles to recount his Collegiate days, he told us one story in particular, in which he was an office monitor. "Every "B" morning, first period, I would make my way to one of Mr. Vogt's science classes. I'd plant myself in a seat and wait for him to call attendance, then say that he didn't call my name. It took him 5 minutes every time for about a month to figure out I wasn't in his class and kick me out. He did it all with a smile on his face, of course."

