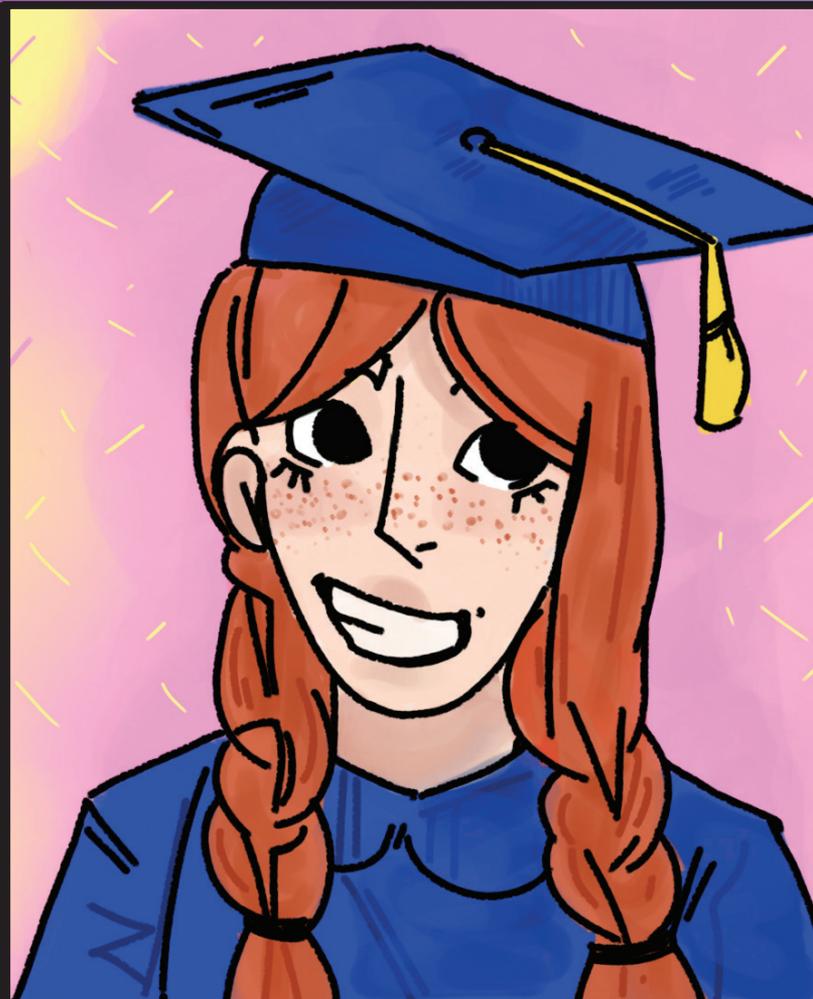




# The Torch Senior Special Issue



# A message from The Torch

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Although this school year ended abruptly for all of us, we are so glad the Torch got to produce four amazing issues and was given the chance to also complete this magazine during the quarantine. We wanted to take this opportunity to say goodbye to all our readers and talk about what the Torch has meant to us.

Although COVID-19 disrupted our final paper, the Torch staff decided to release this in place of the May issue and to still include some of the traditions. We have all had so much fun over the last four years on staff, and it is hard to believe this is the last time we will all be releasing a publication to our class. Even though this will not be released at the senior breakfast like usual, we sincerely hope the class of 2020 enjoys this issue as much as we all enjoyed working on it.

Good luck to everyone!

-Ella, Elizabeth, Tricia and Gwyn



# Reflecting on our community

## Model United Nations- Kris Selberg

Attending Pine View since second grade has given me 11 years to get to

know my community. There is a slight freedom that comes from leaving high school and entering completely new environments after feeling a tether to Pine View for such a long period of time. I believe that this link, albeit a bit looser after going to college, will always be with me and especially tied to Pine View Model United Nations (PVMUN).

I have no doubt that the self-confidence that I have gained from PVMUN will stay with me throughout the rest of my life. Of course, I have to leave PVMUN, but PVMUN and the intrinsic growth that came from being a part of the club will never leave me. Speaking in front of crowds, connections with other students (local, state, and international), and trips around the U.S. are some of my dearest takeaways from PVMUN.

PVMUN welcomes anyone into the club no matter what their passions or goals are. I have witnessed students interested in STEM, business, international relations, politics, sports, and more come together through PVMUN. This club gifts the self-esteem that allows these students to pursue their individual passions with no fear of criticism, and I recommend anyone who wants to better themselves as individuals to join PVMUN and become a part of its community.

The Drama Club has shown light onto a part of myself, as well as part of Pine View that would have

## Drama Club- Caden Kolesar

given me a sense of emptiness if I had not gone to my first meeting, almost 7 years ago. Starting back from my older brothers' forcible persuasion to get me to that meeting, I quickly fell in love with theater. Being given the ability to express someone else in the creative capacity of acting allowed me to be whoever I wanted to be while still being me.

Throughout my years, I learned different techniques and ideas about acting, directing, managing, and leading that have seemed to become engrained in me. The release and creativity involved in acting have given me memories which will never leave me. The "theater" part however, pales in comparison to the main takeaway from my years in Drama Club. As cliché as it sounds, the people I met and the friends I made were truly the reason I enjoyed my time in the club. From meeting my best friend in sixth grade doing a production of Peter Pan, to living with the person who first invited me to a sleepover in middle school, I have made relationships that will never cease, and will carry on with me for years to come.

## Speech and Debate- Ben Nicholson

Speech and Debate taught me that it's OK to fight with your friends.

I had spent the first 14 years of my life being told to lower my voice and to stop asking so many questions. Then, I stumbled into my first meeting. In it, 50 students with a propensity to argue, and absolutely no volume control, awaited me. These students built the backbone of the most meaningful community I've ever been a part of. These students taught me that it was OK to argue and that you could do so without demonizing the person you disagree with. These students taught me that it was OK to be loud when the world needed someone to speak. These students taught me that in a world that's often unequal, unfair, and undemocratic, sometimes it's OK to be upset.

My experience with Speech and Debate encouraged me to learn about the world around me and what I could do to change it. It introduced me to friends from across the country who would answer my phone calls at 2am when I just needed somebody to talk to. It helped me discover my passion for political activism and law and how to turn that into a career. In the world of social isolation brought on by coronavirus, Speech and Debate has kept me connected to the people and activities I love. I've participated in three online debate tournaments in quarantine with participants from across the country. At the start of each round, I have the honor of entering a Zoom call with the best friends I could ask for — ready to fight.

# A literary legend leaves his mark

by Naina Chauhan

There are not many differences between William Shakespeare and Language Arts teacher Paul Dean — they grew up in the countryside, have an unmatched sense of humor, write poetry, occasionally dress up in a leggings-and-blouse ensemble, sport an earring, and have a cult following. After 21 years of teaching, Pine View's very own Bard of Osprey will be retiring.

Dean's presence on campus has been characterized by his love for literature and chess. Both were inspired by his childhood librarian who encouraged Dean's love for reading in third grade and continued to foster it. During the summer, she would drive into the rural parts outside of town, where Dean grew up, to hand out books. One day she brought with her a chess set that she passed on to Dean. It was with that first chess set that he taught himself how to play and to this day, Dean still has one piece from the set.

Before becoming an educator, Dean worked many jobs to support himself and his family. In his childhood and adolescence, Dean worked a variety of jobs ranging from walking ponies, weeding onions and beets, to even working 20 hour weeks stacking sodas at a factory. As he studied at State University of New York College at Geneseo, he worked at a record store where he learned enough about music to then work for a jazz radio station. Following college he worked at a printing company where he learned to press books before being promoted to a management position. After working at the company for 10 years, Dean decided that he did not want to work in management for the rest of his life. Instead, he decided to attend graduate school.

Dean obtained his doctorate in English from Binghamton University. After receiving his doctorate, Dean thought it only natural to enter the field he pursued as an undergraduate: education.

"I don't know, I always admired teachers... It wasn't about wealth, that didn't matter, I just loved literature and I like kids — it was the perfect choice," Dean said.

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While he initially had planned on teaching

**He was a mentor to me in so many ways, but he also became a friend."**

Chris Pauling  
English Teacher

at a community college, after moving to Sarasota Dean met Pine View teacher Neal Scheifer at a poetry event, who urged him to apply for a teaching position at the school and thus Dean's journey at Pine View began.

Dean still remembers the anxiety he felt his first day at Pine View hoping that he would fit in. That worry, it seemed, was for naught. It wasn't long before he established himself and developed friendships, namely with his "neighbor" for the past 21 years, English teacher Cheryl Steele. In the two decades that Steele has worked literally side by side with Dean, she has seen his impact on students.

"He was the kind of person who had such a passion for his teaching and his students saw that... He always tried to push students to have that 'a ha' moment..."

In his unique, stimulating environment, you could see the emotional, social, mental, and physical growth in his students," Steele said.

In his teaching, Dean hopes to "have instilled in people a love for literature and have been the kind of teacher where students were not afraid to talk to me."

Alumnus Michael Shi was Dean's student for three classes and — now two years out of high school — Dean's teaching still resonates with him.

"Dr. Dean influenced me in the sense that I was always comfortable in his class and around him... He encourages you to do what makes you happy and to follow your dreams. He's really a believer in anything he thinks is righteous and has a worthy purpose," Shi said.

Dean's reputation on campus is one of distinction that few can match.

"What makes Dr. Dean so unique is his odd, eccentric personality. You've got this seemingly gentle old fellow walking around with a coffee mug in his (left) hand and a different tie everyday, who loves literature... I mean, I think the man says whatever he wants and whenever he feels. He's so authentic with you," Shi said.

Beyond his eccentric and humorous side,



those who personally interact with Dean never forget his comforting, open friendliness. Both Steele and English teacher Chris Pauling reminisce about approaching Dean to ask one question but then end up spending hours discussing poetry, jazz, or anything in life.

“He was a mentor to me in so many ways, but he also became a friend. When you trust a person you have no fear of sharing your shortcomings, and with [Dean], I could always ask for help,” Pauling said.

Shi added, “My favorite attribute of Dr. Dean’s is his friendliness... He transcends beyond the grade he teaches and the students in his class and he appreciates all. You don’t even have to like English class for Dr. Dean to be your best friend.”

When asked what he would like to be remembered for, Dean said, “I knew my stuff,” and according to Pauling, that certainly holds true. “[My first impression of Dean was that] he was overflowing with literary knowledge, he just knew so much about his profession... His knowledge of poetry, rhetorical devices, and literature was just mind-blowing,” Pauling said.

Steele adds that there was never a book or author that Dean didn’t know:

“He was a mentor to so many of us and he’s going to be so sorely missed... I hope that his legacy of literature and his passion for teaching will live through me,” Steele said.

In his retirement, Dean

hopes to travel across Europe, eventually substitute, and “read until my eyeballs fall out.” He also plans to use his new time to write more and add to the eight poetry books he has already written “in the tradition of William Blake.”

In his years at Pine View, Dean said one of his favorite memories is seeing his students graduate.

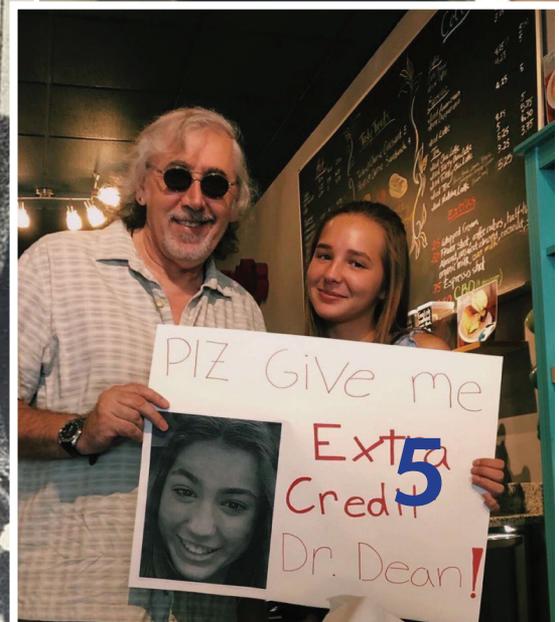
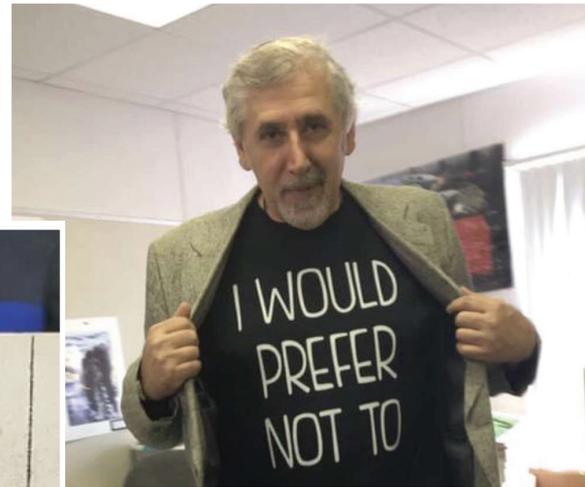
“The other day a man showed up at my front door with his wife... It was one of my old students and he told me he moved back to Sarasota and his son goes to Pine View now... He said that I was one of his favorite teachers,” Dean said.

Pauling speaks on what an influential teacher Dean is to his students: “We have teachers come and go and they all leave some sort of impact and the impact Dr. Dean has left is special... He is not a forgettable person — you just won’t forget a teacher like him,” Pauling said.

While Dean may be leaving, for now, it’s not forever for Pine View.

“I always said when I die I’d have my taxidermied body put in Room 205,” Dean said.

Dean’s legacy will continue to live on through the students and teachers he has influenced during his time on campus. Although you will not find him in Room 205 next year, the room and the teacher behind it will leave an everlasting impact.





-Spanish, SLD



# Onto the next Camino in life

by Grace Johnson

"It's been a great run. I have been truly, truly blessed to teach at Pine View during the last 33 years. I did spend my whole career there, so I'm a little biased, but I will say I would not have wanted to teach anywhere else," Spanish teacher Patti Gerlek said over the phone in regard to her newly announced plans for retirement.

With degrees in Spanish Language and Literature along with Psychology, Gerlek wasn't exactly sure what she wanted to do when she graduated from college. After working with Spanish speaking children in a mental health clinic, though, she said she stumbled upon teaching. Gerlek began working inside classrooms as an aide and, after this experience, knew she wanted to teach.

"I kind of fell into it. I didn't grow up always wanting to be a teacher... I had my language degree already, but had to go and get my education degree on top of that," Gerlek said.

After spending two years teaching in New Hampshire, Gerlek began teaching at Pine View, and not without making a significant mark.

"Some of my most favorite memories [at Pine View] are from working on student productions, such as Variety Shows and Miss Pine View," Gerlek said. "I was the founder of Miss Pine View... Some tenth-grade girls came to me and I started it with them, and for seven years I was the MC, the host. I loved doing that, getting to work with the students."

In December of 2019, she decided this year was going to be her last teaching at Pine View.

"I knew [retirement] was coming; I just wanted to make sure that I was done, that I was ready to move on with my own personal world. There comes a point, and I was told this by other veteran teachers when you just know that it is time. It's time to make the transition out of the classroom, and that's what I went away and thought about. And I said 'yes,' this will be my last year," Gerlek said, detailing her thought process on retiring.

While Gerlek is ready to retire, she was not prepared to say goodbye to her students so soon. In fact, she didn't even get the chance to tell students about her decision in person. Instead, she had to send an email.

"In that letter, I told [students] that I was retiring. My hope was to tell [them] the first day back after spring break. Rumors were out there, and kids asked me and I wanted to be really vague because I really wanted to make an announcement about it. And for me, as a teacher, I wanted closure. I wanted to say goodbye," Gerlek said, dejectedly. "I'm really disappointed that I won't get to stand in front of [my students] one more time and say, 'Buenos Dias.' As a teacher it's really important to have a beginning and an end, and I got robbed of that."

Gerlek is not looking to completely stray from teaching, though, as she plans to tutor students in Spanish along with instruct qi gong/tai chi.

After her initial retirement, she also plans to, of course, spend more time with family and eventually walk El Camino de Santiago (The Walk of Saint James) in Spain. She teaches her classes about the walk each year.

"I'm out of the classroom, but I am certainly not sitting in a rocking chair," Gerlek said.

Gerlek enjoys connecting with her students beyond the classroom, often offering to listen or give advice if a student requests it. Tenth-grader Zander Moricz, who has had Gerlek for multiple years as a teacher, frequently seeks her out for advice.

"Señora G. has supported me since I came to Pine View in middle school and has helped me through some of the most difficult times of my life. Over the last four years, we have established a tradition of tea time where I had a safe space to complain, worry out loud, and seek advice from one of the only people I can truly trust. Señora G. has never just been a Spanish teacher, without her I don't know where I would be or even who I would be. I love her and she has changed who I am and what Pine View is — for the better," Moricz said through a message when asked how Gerlek has impacted his life.

This statement shows just how deeply Gerlek has impacted even just one student, and, further, that she likely will be remembered in the way she wishes.

"I would like to be remembered as someone who taught the full child, more than just Spanish. [These kids] are more than just students in front of me who I have to dump information into. I want to be known as someone who really cared about her students," Gerlek said.

**I love her and she has changed who I am and what Pine View is — for the better"**

Zander Moricz  
Tenth-grader

# Students commit to service

## Thomas Kochevar

*The United States Military Academy*

By Odelia Tiutyama

Ready to embark on a life of service and leadership, twelfth-grader Thomas Kochevar is choosing to leave behind a traditional college experience for The United States Military Academy at West Point. Following in the footsteps of his sister, West Point cadet Kathryn Kochevar, he will take the next step toward his future June 29 with six weeks of Cadet Basic Training.

Since childhood, Kochevar has known that he wanted to pursue a future with regard to the military as his grandfather influenced him with his background in serving during World War II and the Vietnam War. However, it was not until an informational meeting about West Point his freshmen year that Kochevar truly found what he wanted to do.

In reference to the meeting, Kochevar said, "The first thing that caught my eye was a video they showed of the military training done over the summer. It was a bunch of college kids shooting rocket launchers and blowing stuff up. I started looking into [West Point] more after that and the thought of getting an education at such a prestigious school and having an outlet to serve my country really appealed to me."

With his choice to pursue a West Point education, Kochevar took on many leadership roles and both a mentally and physically grueling application process. After beginning his application by filling out a Candidate Questionnaire his junior year, Kochevar had to apply for a Congressional nomination, which he received from Vern Buchanan. As a cadet candidate, his next steps entailed a medical exam, candidate fitness assessment, and interview.

The Summer Leaders Experience (SLE) is a week-long, immersive camp for those interested in applying to West Point. Kochevar attended the selective camp the summer before senior year where he attended academic seminars along with experiencing military training, physical fitness and character development.

"I didn't expect to like SLE at first because I thought it was just going to be us attending some classes, but I ended up meeting a few people and we did a lot of different, fun stuff," Kochevar said. "I had a good squad leader who was super helpful, and I made a lot of connections with others. We also played a lot of sports, making it feel like a summer camp you'd go to when

you were younger, but this was more intensified. I would encourage other people to try it if they think they'd be interested."

During the application process, Kochevar strengthened his time management skills while reinforcing his leadership abilities through numerous extracurriculars. On top of serving as Assistant Captain his sophomore year at Sarasota Crew and Team Captain of a boxing team at Jaco Boxing & Fitness his junior and senior year, Kochevar

also founded the club Young Historians of America at Pine View.

As part of his club, Kochevar and members interview veterans and record their stories to ensure they will continue to live on after the veteran passes away.

In regard to his club, Kochevar said, "I had been thinking of starting

**I want to become someone that when I'm leading men after I graduate, I'm a leader they respect and trust. I just want to make a positive impact on the lives of people under my command in the future and ultimately, I want to serve my country."**

Thomas Kochevar



a club for a while and I got the idea because with my grandfather being someone that served during World War II, I always wanted to hear his stories. As our veterans continue to get older, it's important that we share their stories, so I created this club to make sure we did just that."

Although the academic portion of West Point is similar to other prestigious colleges, Kochevar has committed himself to a greater level of responsibility with the military structure. The school differs in that students must wear uniforms, perform certain duties that increase in responsibility with each year, and participate in a collegiate

sport. Students are also granted less freedom in their first year as Kochevar and other freshmen will only be allowed a certain distance away from the campus unless they possess a weekend pass, of which they receive a limited number. Cadets will also learn military courtesies and standards that they must live by every day entailing a more disciplined environment than traditional college students.

With the support of family and friends, Kochevar found out he was admitted into the military academy toward the end of March.

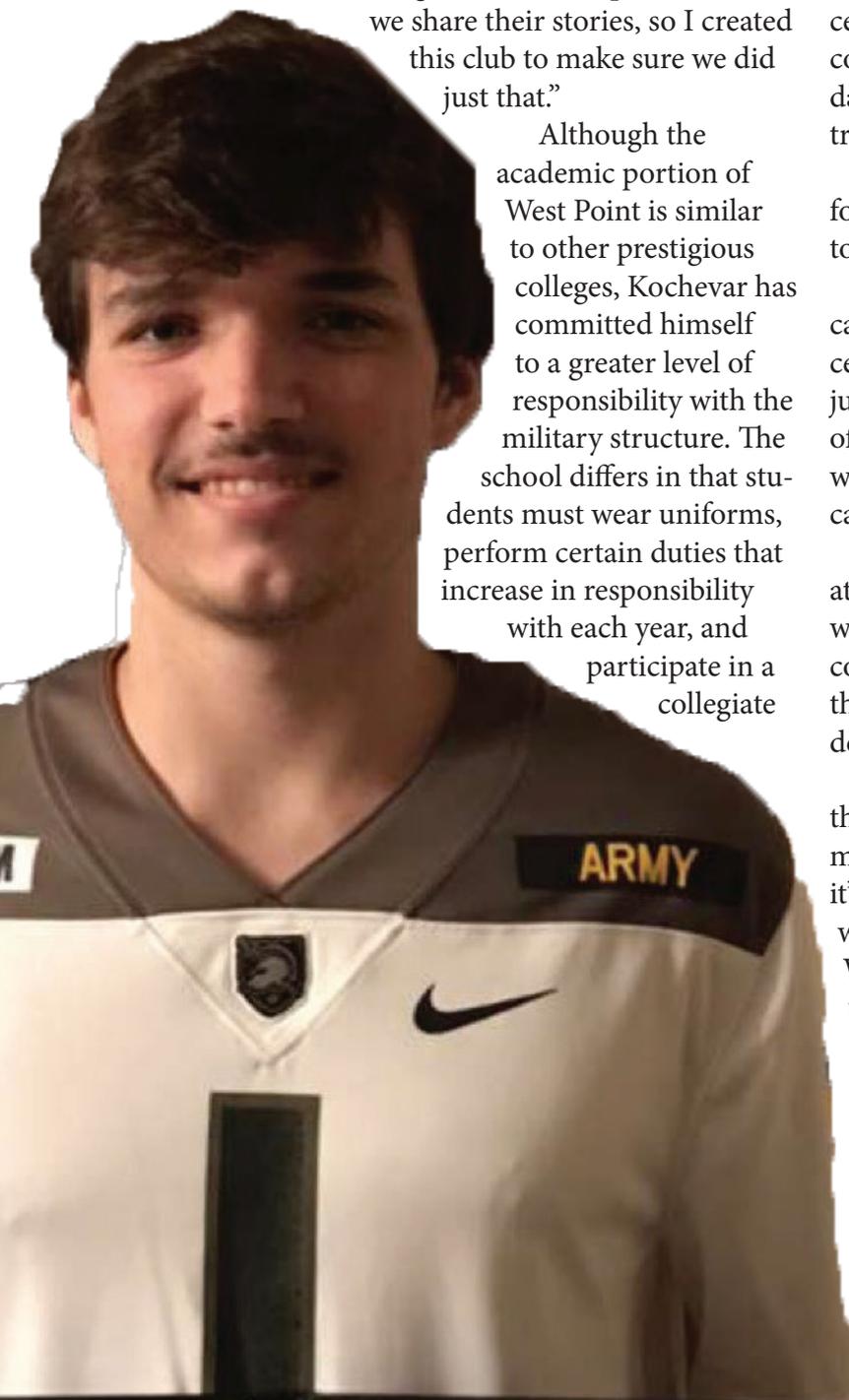
"I was super excited when I found out I got in because this is something that I've been working for and centering my life around for the past four years. I was just really happy because it was getting toward the end of when people were receiving their acceptances, so I was getting a little nervous and when I finally got the call, I felt like all my work had paid off," Kochevar said.

As he prepares to join the West Point community at Cadet Basic Training in June, Kochevar continues to work on getting in the best physical shape possible and complete required paperwork. Through this process, the incoming cadet has put a lot of thought into his decision.

"With the countries we've been at conflict with in the past 15 years, it is scary to think about the minimum of eight years of service I'll be required to do, but it's something I have really considered and I know I want to serve my country, as well as I trust the training West Point will give me," Kochevar said. "I'm excited to be in the military environment with likeminded people, though. The call to service brings together a lot of really amazing people that I am excited to get to know and learn from."

Recognizing that his process toward admission has been a marathon, not a sprint that he overcame with determination and grit, Kochevar believes that West Point will help him as he grows into the best version of himself.

"To grow as a person and become a leader of character. That's my biggest hope," Kochevar said. "I want to become someone that when I'm leading men after I graduate, I'm a leader they respect and trust. I just want to make a positive impact on the lives of people that are under my command in the future and ultimately, I want to serve my country."



# Madeline Smith

## The United States Naval Academy

By Tricia Saputera

Twelfth-grader Madeline Smith has committed herself to the U.S. Naval Academy, where she intends to major in oceanography or ocean engineering.

Prior to application to the Naval Academy, Smith had to apply for a congressional nomination. She applied to Florida senators Marco Rubio, Rick Scott, and representative Greg Steube, and received her nomination from Steube.

“I found out I had received a nomination in November from representative Steube, which I was ecstatic about because that’s a huge step and I just continued with my application,” Smith said.

The application to the academy was long and required many parts. Smith had to complete fitness exams, health exams, paperwork, teacher recommendations, and of course, the application itself with several essays. Smith was also interviewed by Steube’s nomination committee.

Jan. 13, when Smith heard the news of her admission to the U.S. Naval Academy, will be a day she will always remember.

“My day was completely normal, nothing eventful really, just another day at school. But then in my math class, which is sixth period, my teacher gets a call and tells me I have to see Dr. Covert before school ends...Right as I sit down, the phone starts ringing and Dr. Covert picks it up and he goes, ‘Hello, can I put you on speaker?’ ...It turned out to be the congressman on the phone that had given me the nomination and he told me and then I started crying,” Smith said. “I started crying when I found out and I couldn’t really speak but I managed to say thank you and I couldn’t wait.”

Smith follows her older brother into military service, as he graduated from West Point in 2012. He went on to serve two tours in Afghanistan and attend ranger school as well.

**10** “When he was graduating, I was in fifth grade,

and I remember going to the West Point campus and I was totally in awe...just seeing what he was doing at the Academy and then afterwards was just incredible,” Smith said.

Smith chose the U.S. Naval Academy because of her love for the ocean and marine science.

“It’s been a lifelong passion for me to be involved with the ocean and I’d always known since a young age that I wanted a career on the water so I had that going for me. I just knew that I wanted to go into oceanic studies, but it wasn’t until my brother that I considered an academy and Navy was the best fit for me,” Smith said.

Regarding marine science, Smith has pursued her passion by becoming an intern for Mote Marine Laboratory since ninth grade. There, she has assisted research and attended trips such as the Florida Keys to partner with the Coral Restoration Foundation and help plant coral.

However, before the Naval Academy, Smith will have to encounter plebe summer for seven weeks — boot camp. According to Smith, the mission is to introduce you to military life with tough physical training, intimidating obstacle courses, learning how to make formations and much more. It is currently scheduled to occur in late June.

One class in particular stands out to Smith; she is looking forward to taking the class seamanship and navigation, a course required for all freshmen.

“Typically it’s not people’s favorite class, but I’m excited to be introduced to it and to learn how to navigate on the water without a GPS or the other technologies that they have,” Smith said.

Additionally, Smith will be on the Naval Academy’s sailing team. Smith has been sailing with the Sarasota Youth Sailors since eleventh grade, and, although it is not an official recruitment, she will be on their team.

After graduating from the Naval Academy, Smith will serve in the military for five years. In the future, she plans on pursuing surface warfare.

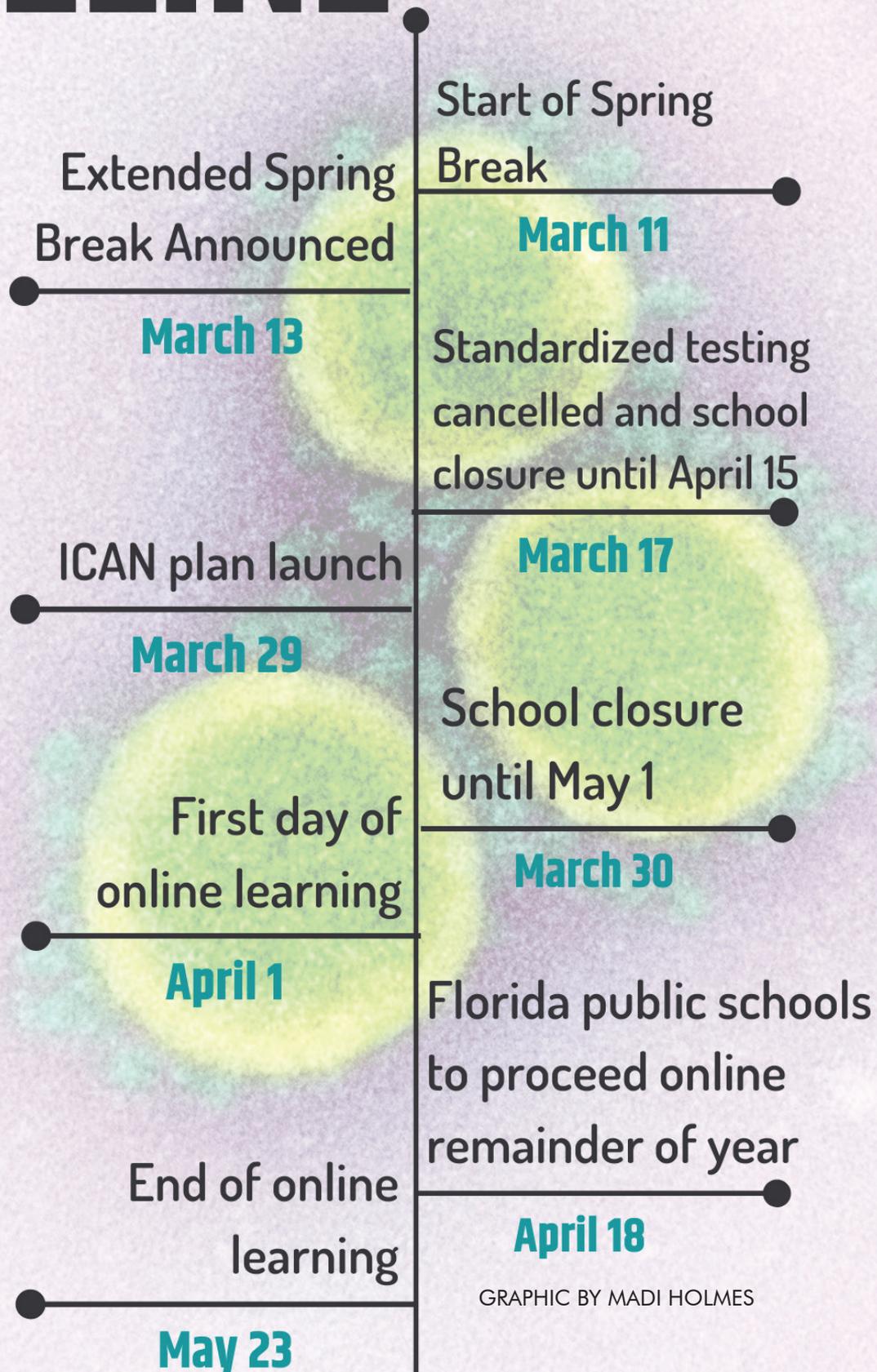
“It just kind of fits with who

I am and I’ve always dreamt about sailing on open seas and things of that nature, so it’ll be really cool to be a part of that,” Smith said.



# COVID-19 TIMELINE

# PINE VIEW'S STORY



GRAPHIC BY MADI HOLMES

# 12 CLASS OF 2020 PRESENTS

# Tangled



With COVID-19 ending the school year early for us all, the seniors on Torch decided “Tangled” would be the perfect theme. Not only does it follow the Torch tradition of choosing a movie that represents our class’ childhood, it also fits into our new normal: quarantine. Just like Rapunzel, we are all stuck in our towers, dreaming of the bright futures ahead of us. And a side note: Corona is actually the name of the kingdom in Tangled. How fitting.

## Messages from Our Class Sponsors

Dear seniors in the Class of 2020,

I can't believe y'all are seniors and will be leaving the Pine View nest soon! You all are some of the most talented, creative, and kindest students I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. I know this year is not what you expected — but this is a story you will tell for years to come — to your grandchildren. You all will do great things. Pine View will always be your home. We are always family, but go out there and do great things. I love you and am so very proud of you all!

Jessica Hentges

To the Pine View Class of 2020 –

It has been an honor to co-sponsor your class and a privilege to teach so many of you.

Remember that the right thing is not always popular. Sometimes you must break the rules. I’m thinking about the credo writing assignment in 10th grade – you already know so much! Be your best you. Some days that is very tough and that is ok, some days you will really shine and surprise yourself! Commit to be a life-long learner! Don’t jump to conclusions, be patient, ensure your information and sources are valid and reliable, and share your knowledge and experience.

Keep your smiling face to the sun and know that you’re never in this beautiful world alone! Your family, friends, colleagues, and so many more are also rooting for you and following your success. Be the good.

Be the strong. Be the smart. Be honest. Be you! Ask for forgiveness not permission. Say you are sorry and mean it. Be loyal. Consider your instincts and reflect on your own decisions. Calculate your risks. It’s normal to make mistakes. Go for it!

Think with your brain, then follow your heart. Share your gifts with the world and “Stay Gold”! Thank you for the memories!

Chris Pauling



# 14 CLASS OF 2020 COLLEGE DECISIONS

## IN-STATE

### U. OF FLORIDA

LAUREN ANDREWS  
MARGUERITE ANDRICH  
MAEVE BARGER  
JOSH CAPPELLI  
LINDSAY CARILLO  
BEN COVERT  
ETHAN DAYO  
DARA DOMBROWSKI  
WILL GETZEN  
MADISON HALCOMB  
SAVANNAH JAMES  
NICHOLAS JURCZYK  
KAYSHA KAPADIA  
GREGORY KARCZ  
LANA KATZ  
FAITH KERN  
WASEH KHAN  
CADEN KOLESAR  
PHOEBE LAFORGE  
CHRIS MASON  
EMILY MERRILL  
KARL MILLAND  
LILLY NELSON  
TRI NGUYEN  
ROBERT NOBLE  
HOPE PEGA  
ROBBY RIGANO  
MILO RUFFING  
FORREST ST. PIERRE  
HANNAH STICHT  
ABIGAIL TOTH  
BETSY WILLIAMS  
MAKENA WINCH  
ELLIE WINER  
CARTER ZILLECKIS

### FLORIDA STATE

### U.

JUAN AGOSTO  
ALEX BAIAMONTE  
KEMPER BERNSTEIN  
CAMERON BURNS

RACHEL CEFALU  
DAVINA CHANG  
LIAM COLLINS  
MADISON DAVIDSON  
LILY DOUGHERTY  
JOSH DUARTE  
DANIEL FERACO  
SOFIA GENTA  
ELLA HECHLIK  
MICAH KATZ  
RENN LEWIS  
ANDI LIN

NEVIN MADATHILATE  
RAEANNA MICHAEL  
EMILY NAIDEL  
ELLA PEAVLEY  
GABY PEDROTTI  
GWYN PETERSEN  
ALLY RACINE  
MICHAEL SCARLETT  
NICK SCHWAB  
VINNY SCUTERI  
JOHN STAINBROOK  
MORGAN WALTMYER  
RYAN WASSERMAN  
LIAM WILLIAMS

### EMBRY-RIDDLE

GABE MONZON

### FLORIDA ATLANTIC U.

HANNAH VARGHESE

### FLORIDA GULF

### COAST U.

JILIAN FULLER

### FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

LILY JOHNSTON  
DORIAN PHILLIPS

### FLORIDA INTER-

### NATIONAL U.

ZANE COMINGORE  
SOFIA KAREY

### FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC

ALEXANDER GAGE

### FLORIDA SOUTHERN COLLEGE

KACIE BATES  
GABRIELLA CONNELLY  
RILEY DAVIS  
MATTHEW MCCOOL  
DALTON SHUCK

### NEW COLLEGE

ARI GINSBERG-KLEMMT  
CARLTON LEFFLER  
DYLAN MEDLIN  
ISABELLA SUEIRO  
ISAAC TELLECHEA

### RINGLING COLLEGE

ELAINA MIZAK

### ROLLINS COLLEGE

RITA RHARDISSE

### SANTE FE COLLEGE

ANSEL SICKLER

### STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

KATIE BEAL  
EWAN FORD

### TCC2FSU

JULIA BLOM  
MADI HORLER

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# Seniors pursue creative aspirations in college

## Caden Kolesar

**University:** University of Florida  
**Major:** Music and Math

After years of working hard to improve both instrumentally and vocally, Kolesar is excited to combine his love of music and its escape from reality with his passion for math. Although he originally wanted to compose music, he is now unsure but plans to get a major in music and minor in music theory to keep his options open.

"I am not sure where this program will take me, and I do not want to make a set destination for myself because things change," Kolesar said. "Ultimately, all I know right now is that the program will take me to Gainesville, and I will see where I go from there."

## Josh Duarte

**University:** Florida State University  
**Major:** Statistics and Jazz Performance

"The dream is that I can move to a city and work for a corporation or business and that I can maybe do music on the side at night, maybe get gigs or just play at open events with other jazz musicians," Duarte said

He's been hired to play in pit orchestras at the Player's Theatre downtown, and he is in charge of organizing the PV Jazz Combo for events like weddings and ceremonies.

"You get to learn how to coordinate your own musical group, which is something that's hard to do...you get to learn how to deal with event organizers, how to coordinate getting rehearsals together, and getting ready for events," he said.

## Reed Spahn

**University:** University of Miami's Frost School of Music  
**Major:** Contemporary Guitar Studies and Music Production & Engineering

Not only is Spahn diverse in his music genres, he also plays a variety of instruments, including acoustic as well as electric guitar, bass guitar, drums, trumpet, and he even sings.

"I'm looking forward to being enveloped in a culture surrounded by music and being a part of a community that has other people that are as interested in musical ideas as I am. The collaboration is really important. I really want to be able to find people that are like me and have the same interests and drive," he said.

## Adam Porter

**University:** Tallahassee Community College  
**Major:** Music Education

Following five years of clarinet and three years of alto saxophone, twelfth-grader Adam Porter will be pursuing music education at Tallahassee Community College. Inspired by band teacher Victor Mongillo, Porter hopes to share his passion for music by teaching others.

"I think learning music and teaching music to others is probably the most fulfilling career I could go into, just because of how influential my learning of music has been in my life, like all the things I've been able to do through music. I just want to open up opportunities for as many people as I can and keep spreading it," Porter said.

## Natalie Taylor

**University: Emerson College**  
**Major: Musical Theater**

Between her participation at Venice Theater and Sarasota Players, Taylor has been in 30 shows. Her favorite role was as Swartzky in the Sarasota Players' production of the "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." She has also been in the Pine View production of "Little Shop of Horrors" in spring 2018. Taylor played the lead, Annie.

"I got to work with some of my best friends, and it was a role I had dreamed of playing for a long time," Taylor said.

Taylor was also the winner of the 2020 Miss Pine View show, during which she gave an ode to the difficulty of auditioning for collegiate arts programs before her performance. She spoke about how exclusive these programs are, accepting only tens of students out of thousands of applicants.

## Grace Casanova

**University: University of Central Florida**  
**Major: Theater and Psychology**

Grace Casanova got her start in theatre at a Florida Studio Theater (FST) summer camp, which sparked enough interest for her to enroll in year-round courses at the theater. Her experience at FST granted her an internship opportunity at FST for a wide-ranging course on lighting, costume design, and other aspects of the theater outside acting itself.

"That's when I realized that there's more than just acting in theater," Casanova said.

## Cara Kaminski

**University: Brown University**  
**Major: Visual Arts and Chemistry**

Kaminski said, "I love to paint because of emotional necessity," she went on to compare this emotional necessity to music or poetry and said, "I create because I need to express a concept or feeling in my head."

She said that art makes her appreciate the world more and see it in a different light.

"I find a little more beauty in everything because of art," she said

Kaminski explained, "I have always had interests in science and history, so I've been thinking about going to school for art restoration."

As well as Visual Arts and Chemistry, Kaminski said, "I think it's important to explore as many different interests as one can, so I'll probably end up taking classes in Spanish, criminology, poetry, etc."

## Luis Flores

**University: Yale University**  
**Major: Art History**

Luis Flores will be majoring in art history at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

His interest in art history began at a young age. His grandmother is an art historian, and she would bring him to local art museums and cathedrals when he visited her in Mexico.

"I used to view Mexico as more of a family thing, kind of like your typical family reunion thing that you just don't want to go, but as I had more experience with these vessels of art, whether that's modern art, whether that's Mexican muralists, just all these different types of art mediums, I really started to connect art with understanding one's place and one's culture and one's background," Flores said.

# Lindsay Farb

**University:** University of Michigan  
**Stamps School of Art and Design**  
**Major:** Graphic Design

Ever since she was young, Farb has had an interest in exploring the world around her in a unique way. She is very receptive to emotions people around her are going through, and channels that into her art. She views art as therapeutic because although she is a self-

claimed perfectionist, she can break rules in art.

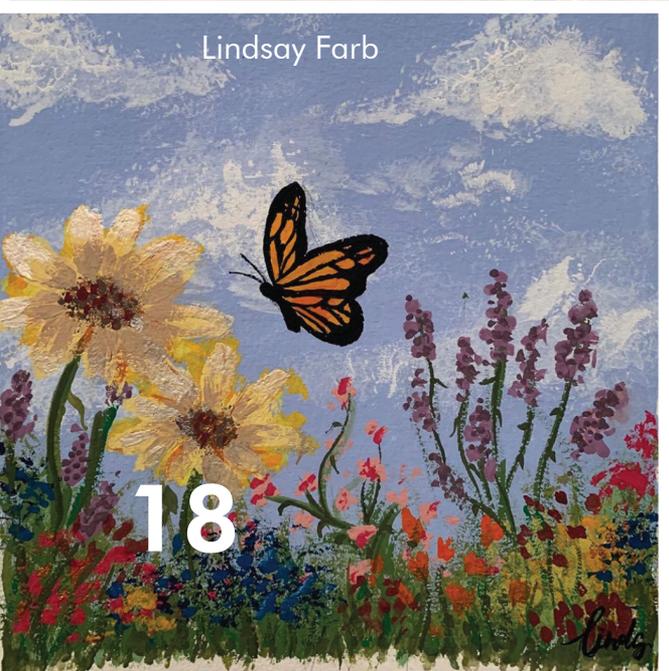
"I delve into concepts such as the fear of living unnoticed and the repression of trauma and anxiety, and various experimental observations of the world around me. As art is a universal language, I strive to create pieces that evoke contemplation of serious, normally unspoken topics, questioning reality, and observing unique beauty that may be found within the natural world.



Cara Kaminski



Reed Spahn and Josh Duarte



Lindsay Farb



Luis Flores



Caden Kolesar

# Students commit to athleticism

## Ben Zipay

**University:** Elon University  
**Major:** Sports Management

After playing the sport for a large portion of his life, Zipay describes tennis as a sport that takes a lot of mental and physical capacity.

"I don't think people realize how much work goes into it. Sometimes people think of it as kind of an easier sport to play, but when you're on the court, you're running miles in one match. And the training for it, it's not just something that you can just pick up," Zipay said. "You have to really spend a lot of time honing your skills, and just the mental focus that it takes, as well, to exceed. Tennis involves a lot of psychology as well as athletic ability and talents, so people really underestimate that part of it."

## Arik Katz

**University:** Harvard University  
**Major:** Pre-law Track

"In swimming, the work you put in is what you get out. There aren't any judges like in gymnastics or diving — the clock is your judge." Katz said "There isn't any subjectivity to swimming, which is really great. That's what draws me to it — plus it's great exercise...The most valuable experience I've gained through it is the benefit of working hard and having strong time management skills,"

Katz' decision to pledge to Harvard came for a multitude of reasons: "What attracted me to Harvard was the balance between academics, athletics, and extracurriculars. I considered other schools, but once I visited the campus and met the team, I knew it was the place where I wanted to be," he said.

## Gabrielle Connely

**University:** Florida Southern College  
**Major:** Undecided

Connely's dedication to lacrosse made things difficult for her during junior year. While trying to get recruited, Connely was forced to juggle academics, practice, and her job at local restaurant Valentino's. On weekends, she would travel for lacrosse.

For nearly three months, she participated in different clinics and toured colleges nearly every weekend. In order to focus on school and lacrosse, Connely made the tough decision to quit her job.

"I really want to keep myself disciplined," Connely said. "I had a goal to play in college, and I really wanted to play for a good program. I wanted to put in the extra work, so I've always kept that up."

## Sophia Edwards

**University:** Boston College  
**Major:** Biology

"Boston College has a strong academic reputation, school spirit and support for the sports teams, a gorgeous suburban campus, and it's a quick Uber or T ride into Boston," Edwards said. "I'm very thankful to be going there."

Having a good friend from the Lake-wood Ranch area who plays tennis for BC, Edwards has always had the school in the back of her mind. As she will officially be joining the BC tennis team, Edwards is ecstatic to experience the new team atmosphere in Boston.

"Tennis is an individual sport. I'm really looking forward to the team camaraderie in college tennis," Edwards said.

## Mia Hanes

**University: Tulane University**  
**Major: International Relations**

Hanes originally began her sailing journey with the Sarasota Youth Sailing program. As she pursues sailing competitively nine years later, her skill has allowed her to transition over to commanding high class boats.

Through sailing, Hanes was able to foster connections with people from all over the world.

"[My favorite part of sailing] is the people I've met along the way. My team, we've all known each other for ten years now... In a boat I used to sail, we used to travel all the time... I went to international regattas when I was younger, so I have friends that live in London and Spain that I met there," Hanes said.

## Theo Winegar

**University: Columbia University**  
**Major: Undecided**

Theo Winegar has been playing in national tennis tournaments since he was 12 and moved into international tournaments around eighth grade. Soon consuming his life, the sport became an integral part of Winegar's daily routine, leading him to complete school online for three years during seventh, eighth and ninth grade. He competed in tournaments across the country and in South America.

"The combination of tennis and academics there was well above some of their Ivy counterparts, so I thought that would be the best choice to receive a great education and still be able to play professionally after," Winegar said.

## Katherine Jordan

**University: Columbia University**  
**Major: Biochemistry**

Throughout high school, Jordan played for both the Venice High girls soccer team and the Women's Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) through regional club team Tampa Bay United.

Jordan had a unique recruiting situation, as she was scouted by college coaches as early as eighth grade. After a visit to Columbia's campus as a tenth-grader, Jordan ended up committing to the school early on.

"I went up to the campus [for a visit] and the coaches and players were all really nice and I love the school so it was all really good... I've now known the coaches for many years, and I've met players on the team as well as the class coming in with me who are playing soccer. It's exciting because I've already been able to become friends with them and be with them on campus," Jordan said.

## Rene

**Strezenicky-Franco**  
**University: Columbia University**  
**Major: Biochemistry**

*Sophia Edwards*

Though he now has a spot at one of the nation's top colleges, Strezenicky Franco didn't know where he wanted to attend school until quite recently; in fact, he did not know about Columbia University until about a year ago. This was because both of his parents are Slovakian immigrants, and, therefore, were not as familiar with the college scene in the United States.

"My parents weren't even able to go to college because they weren't part of the communist party in Slovakia... It got me very far from them moving here, so I'm very humbled, especially going to such a prestigious school. It's very crazy to me," Strezenicky-Franco said.

## Ian Brann

University: Davidson College  
Major: Chemistry

"I started swimming after I severely broke my leg and needed a way to strengthen it safely," Brann said.

Throughout his tenure as a swimmer for Venice High, Brann has competed in three high school state championships.

Brann goes to practice nine times a week, waking up early three school days a week to attend morning practice before going back after school every day. On top of these daily activities, the team practices Saturday mornings and has meets every month or so. Although the practice schedule is demanding, it has allowed Brann to reach the level of expertise required to be a member of Davidson's swimming team.

## Lucas Caragiulo

University: MIT  
Major: Electrical Engineering  
and Computer Science

Caragiulo received his acceptance letter alongside only a handful like himself from around the nation, and was elated by the news of his acceptance to MIT and the acceptance of him as a recruit for their track team. Although his acceptance onto the team at MIT does not guarantee the traditional four year tenure, Caragiulo fully plans on running throughout his college career. Caragiulo continues to remain focused on his academics alongside his greater pursuits in track



Mia Hanes



Sophia Edwards



Ian Brann



Ben Zipay



Arik Katz



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