



Success

GRADUATION EDITION 2022

Staying the Course

While many of America's youth remained home in their pajamas, our kids were on the rowing machines, exercising, and studying daily, logging tens of thousands of hours reading and sequencing ahead in their mathematics.

Mask requirements, vaccination mandates, virtual learning, lockdowns, and quarantining have seemed to enter our common parlance since early 2020. As difficult as life has been for all of us during the global pandemic, our seniors and our young have suffered the most. Isolation, loneliness, and depression are on the rise globally among these particular demographics.

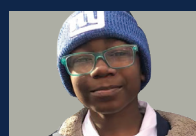
The immense blessing for a student enrolled in the San Miguel Program has been that our building was never closed during the lockdowns! Instead, New York State specifically asked us to remain open as a "child care agency," which we gladly obliged. While many of America's youth remained home in their pajamas, our kids were on the rowing machines, exercising, and studying daily, logging tens of thousands of hours reading and sequencing ahead in their mathematics. It worked!

Our high school acceptance list is among the most impressive in the history of our Graduate Support Program. Of note is that we have entered into a new relationship with Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, due in large part to the advocacy of Arshay Cooper. In his name, benefactors at NMH created a generous scholarship for low opportunity scholars who also row. We applied two of our students during this past admissions cycle and BOTH were accepted! As we have always known, rowing adds a quality to the student that many boarding schools find appealing. Please join me in celebrating Janelli Garcia and Fernando Garcia, Class of 2026 at Northfield Mount Hermon School. Hard work pays off!

Let us also celebrate the entire SMA Class of 2022. The typical grit exhibited by many of our students has seen them through the worst of the pandemic. They will forge on, most on a college bound track, and some looking towards careers that are skills based.

Deep gratitude is extended to our staff and faculty. They chose to report to work every day, dutifully seeing to the needs of their students, and always with a selfless attitude. Our donors have been especially generous, allowing us to serve this mission to break the cycle of poverty through education. As you read ahead, please know that your goodness is impacting so many families for the better. Our parents are grateful daily that they have this choice, the San Miguel Program, and the opportunities that we are able to provide.

With much gratitude,
Father Mark





John Castellanos

It has been a joy to watch John grow, both as a confident student and as a person. John is kind, humble and determined. To say that John is creative is an understatement. His ability to think “outside of the box” combined with his thoughtful, conscientious demeanor will lead him to endless opportunities. John has the intuition, insight and logic that allows him to produce thoughtful and profound ideas. He challenges assumptions, asks hard questions, thinks deeply and remains true to himself. John’s passion and knowledge of music goes far beyond his years and has also been continuously impressive. John will be attending Our Lady of Lourdes High School in the fall, where we know he will have the confidence and determination to reach his goals and dreams! **Lourdes is lucky to have him**, and we wish him nothing but success and happiness in the future!



Joseph Cordova

Joseph Cordova is quiet and unassuming, but beneath it all is a really gritty kid with a lot of heart. Joe will not speak unless spoken to, until you put him in the coxswain’s seat. Then it becomes a matter of life or death, and it is at those moments when we see clearly the talent and the potential in Joe as he yells out the commands to his team. Even though Joe began his rowing



life as a coxswain, he slowly morphed into a winning rower. Joe captained our winning quad boat at the Youth National Championships qualifiers in Lowell, Massachusetts, this past May.

Joe never complains either. Instead, he tackles the tasks at hand with skill and competence. For those reasons Joe was accepted into the Class of 2026 at Saint Benedict’s Prep as a Grey Bee. Joe will thrive at the “hive,” getting the job done as is typical for him. On the Passaic River he will develop further under the tutelage of Coach Craig White, with an eye on using his coxswain skills to access higher education.

Dependable and reliable, Joe never misses practice, and further has proven himself to be trustworthy and kind to his friends. Joe is a true team player, thinking about others before himself. Grey Bees are known for their determination which is why we all know that the high school “fit” for Joe is a good one. **Good luck, Joe!**



Jacob Crisostomo

Jacob has become a humorous outgoing young man. His consistency and steadiness have been a bedrock in the class of 2022. His favorite subject is math, where he enjoys finding solutions to challenging problems. While at San Miguel, Jacob participated in Latin club. Some of his most memorable experiences of San Miguel were during the Summer Scholars Program, where his summers were spent working on Maker projects, STEAM challenges and Wednesday pool parties. Jacob is hoping to work in cyber security after finishing school. In the fall, Jacob will be attending the P-Tech Program at NFA North, which will give him an excellent head start to achieving his career aspirations. Jacob can achieve great things as long as he continues striving to do his personal best.

Good luck, Jacob!



Cameron Ford

Cameron is an enthusiastic and curious student which has allowed him to thrive in the classroom. Over his 4 years at SMA, Cameron has grown from the student who you could always count on having a pencil stored in his hair to the young man he is today. Cameron embraces both physically and mentally stimulating challenges and uses his creativity to find solutions in everything from hands-on labs to his written work. He has a regular presence in our afterschool program. Over his 4 years



at SMA, he has participated in Maker-club, Drone-club, Robotics, Lego-club, and Latin club. This year with the return of Friday sing-a-longs, Cameron quickly found his voice. Cameron has become a staple in the school's choir, the *Miracles*. It is his competitive spirit that will motivate Cameron to overcome any challenge. **We wish Cameron the very best** as he calls



the NFA West, Big Learning Center his new home.



Fernando Garcia

During his Seventh-Grade year Fernando Garcia had his much-awaited awakening. With everyone around him seeing his potential, Fern had yet to embrace what the rest of us knew was possible. A little motivational talk with mom and Fern and everything seemed to change in an instant. His grades rose, his dedication to rowing increased, and within moments a new boy was emerging, filled with determination and confidence. We see this often in our program, as young children begin to believe in the positive messaging that surrounds them in our environment. These transformations are all part of the maturing process, but even still, when they happen, we are filled with joy.

Fern has become the top student in his class, as prodigious oarsman and a leader with a quiet, yet effective style.

Like his classmate Nelli, Fern has landed the Arshay Cooper Scholarship for rowing and academics at Northfield Mount Hermon School. We were totally amazed that this nationally coveted scholarship would be awarded to not only one, but TWO of our students – a rare testimony to the power of rowing at SMA!

Fernando made history for SMA, when he competed in the Independence Day Regatta on the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia in 2021. His four man boat was the first ever to compete in the 13 year history of our rowing program, placing in the middle of a field of 16 boats.

Janelli Garcia

Janelli Garcia is making history with her graduation from our Eighth Grade Class of 2022. Along with her classmate, Gianna Martinez, Nelli is the first girl to move through our program and earn a prestigious scholarship to an elite boarding school. Were that not enough, Nelli also landed the much-coveted Arshay Cooper Scholarship for Rowing and Academics at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts! None of this came as a surprise to her teachers and schoolmates. Nelli epitomizes grit and grace. She daily takes on her obligations, both in and out



of the classroom, with a commendable work ethic. Her intellectual pursuits are marked by her ability to take risks and to never shy away from her natural curiosity. Nelli has become a wizard at Laser Cutting, made possible by a generous donation from Anne Turnbull, in memory of her husband and former teacher, Bob Turnbull.

In the arena of sport, Nelli is a champion. During the National Ergathon Competition, known as the CRASH-Bs, Nelli came in THIRD place in her age group. Her tenacity when rowing is beyond description. As she built her strength by daily workouts on the erg, she also increased her mental stamina. Through it all Nelli has become stronger, better, smarter – the motto of our rowing program.

Congratulations to Janelli Garcia.

We are so proud of her progress while in our program, and we look forward to her future accomplishments at Northfield Mount Hermon School.



Leonardo Godinez-Perez

Leo has been a pleasure to have at San Miguel over the past four years, always bringing a smile and laugh to the classroom. He is a creative thinker and problem solver, which has served him well in his new favorite class, Digital Foundations. Leo is eager to learn new skills including the use of the 3D printer and laser cutter to enhance his projects. This year he was able to create a fun and innovative board game using these technologies that was well-received by our fifth graders. He hopes to use these skills as a mechanical engineer in the future. At SMA, Leo was involved in the soccer team and Latin club and was a frequent participant in Tech Time during fifth grade. We know that when he puts his mind to it, Leo can do great things. **We wish him the best** as a part of NFA's Class of 2026.



Hector Gomez

Hector joined San Miguel Academy in 7th grade and quickly assimilated into the class. Though reserved, Hector has been known to have a lighthearted sense of humor. Hector can always be counted on to complete his school chores and lend a helping hand around the school. He has taken to our STEAM program and loves creating projects using the 3D printers. One of the projects that stood out to Hector, was when he created an exercise game that can be used indoors during rainy days. We are all expecting that he will discover even more of his



talents in high school. Hector enjoys soccer and played on the SMA soccer team this year. He would like to pursue a career in welding and will be attending NFA North in the fall. **We wish Hector good luck in all his future endeavors.**



Gianna Martinez

Gianna is a charismatic student who exemplifies grit and grace. When she transferred to San Miguel Academy a year ago, she did not realize how much of her life would change. Though here only a short time, Gianna has embraced all that SMA has to offer. Within the first few weeks of school, she had overcome her fear of heights as she scaled a 100-foot rock face, becoming the first in her class to reach the top. During the school day, Gianna can be normally found in our STEAM center using the laser cutter. She has become our in-house production specialist. After the last bell at 4:00, Gianna joins our rowing team where her tenacity and determination shines as she grinds through the demanding erg practices. **Her drive to succeed will take her far in life.** We wish her the best of luck as she calls the Canterbury School her new home.



Jordi Morales

He freely admits that he was lacking in confidence for most of his life. Not anymore! Jordi embodies our mission to break the cycle with ample opportunities and positive messaging. Today, Jordi is confident in the young man he is becoming, and is looking forward to his new life at Saint Benedict's Prep in Newark, New Jersey.

Jordi began rowing during the coaching tenure of Cory Arias, SMA '16. Cory was a demanding coach with a no-nonsense approach. Jordi had never done anything athletic in his life, so to summon the courage to sit on an erg machine with accompanying pain tells you a lot about his character. There were days when Jordi would tell



Cory exactly what he thought about him, when Cory would challenge Jordi to embrace the pain and continue on. Jordi never quit, and has developed into a powerful oarsman. The pair are good friends today and mutually supportive.

One of the unintended consequences of rowing is that in almost every case, the students' grades improve. Such was the case with Jordi, to the point where he was able to earn a scholarship to SBP. Jordi will be coached by Craig White at SBP, a masterful mentor and well-known figure in rowing.

We hope that each child in our program "picks up what we are putting down." Jordi has, and has become a witty young man with a happy countenance. He is the best version of himself and we know that Jordi will continue to improve in subsequent years. **Thank you, Jordi, for never giving up.**



Sebastian Sanchez

Sebastian is a hard-working student that likes to put the needs of others first. He is a kindhearted young man who looks to lift the spirits of his fellow classmates by telling jokes and making people laugh. Along with his uplifting spirit, Sebastian is passionate about technology. He enjoys digital and technology focused after school activities such as Coding-club and Robotics. His favorite class is Digital Foundations where he has had the opportunity to explore the various offerings that can be found in the STEAM room. His inquisitive approach and perseverance will serve him well as he pursues a career in the technology field. Sebastian will continue his education at NFA West, Big Learning Center. We look forward to seeing all of his achievements yet to come.

God bless you, Sebastian.



Fernando Santos

Fernando is a positive and curious student who has added joy to the classroom. Never shying away from asking a question, Fernando shows intellectual curiosity and prowess. Fernando loves technology and has enjoyed our new Digital Foundations class this year. He has participated in Latin club, robotics, Lego Club, the choir, and even a special workout group before school with Mr. Snyder. He is also an avid member of the rowing team. The rowing team has helped him grow both physically and mentally, showing him the importance of having grit and



grace. Fernando says that his most memorable experience was the day he started at San Miguel because that day changed his life forever. We know that his life will continue to change for the better at the Church Farm School.

We wish him the best of luck!



Ja'siah Whitted



Over his 4 years at San Miguel Academy, Ja'siah has demonstrated that he is a patient, kind, and trustworthy student. He could always be counted on to step in and help when needed. Ja'siah is a conscientious student who impressed with his insightful thoughts and ability to produce work that exceeded expectations. His sweet and calm nature is matched by his well-developed sense of humor and his ability to express his individuality through his unique sock collection, which never went unappreciated.

We are so proud of Ja'siah for being accepted at Milton Hershey School

where they liked him so much, they asked him to start in March of this year. We look forward to seeing how Ja'siah will continue his journey towards a life of opportunities and success!



CONGRATULATIONS

to all
of our
Graduates!



2022 HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT

- John Castellanos
Our Lady of Lourdes High School
- Joseph Cordova
St. Benedict's Preparatory School
- Jacob Crisostomo
Excelsior Academy
- Cameron Ford
Big Picture Learning - NFA West
- Fernando Garcia
Northfield Mount Hermon School
- Janelli Garcia
Northfield Mount Hermon School
- Leonardo Godinez-Perez
Newburgh Free Academy
- Hector Gomez
Newburgh Free Academy
- Gianna Martinez
Canterbury School
- Jordi Morales
St. Benedict's Preparatory School
- Sebastian Sanchez
Big Picture Learning - NFA West
- Fernando Santos
Church Farm School
- Ja'siah Whitted
Milton Hershey School



SMP

So Many
Wonderful
Memories!



Save The Date



Defying the Odds

17TH ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP
DINNER

THURSDAY . SEPTEMBER 29 . 6:30PM WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB . RYE, NY

2022 Impact Honorees

Arshay Cooper | Jack & Helen Lynch
Frank & Suzanne Shiner



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