CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2013!

As new faces join the MHCA family, familiar ones are saying “see you soon”. Congratulations to the Class of 2013! Accepted in over 150 schools including University of California - Los Angeles, New York University, University of South Florida, Parsons New School, Rutgers University, Boston University, School of Visual Arts and Hofstra University just to name a few. They also were granted over 8.65 million in scholarships.

Vice Principal Dominic Stimola reminisces of his years at MHCA and of his last senior class before he retires. He has one piece of advice for all the girls. “Go Have A Wonderful Life!”

Good luck ladies and don’t forget to come home for dinner!

A MESSAGE FROM SISTER ROSALIE DI PERI

Dear MHC Alum,

Another year has passed and I am sure that the month of May brought you back to the halls of Mary Help where many memorable activities and events took place. May brings May Crowning, Gratitude Day, graduations, and much more all leading to the beginning of Summer. God bless you and may Our Lady guide and protect you during the summer and always.

Sister Rosalie
It was raining outside, but there was plenty of sunshine inside at the Second Annual Women of Distinction Luncheon held on May 8 at the Indian Trail Club in Franklin Lakes, NJ. Debbie Rohde and Rosemary De Pinto, luncheon co-chairs, along with the Dames of Mary Help and staff, transformed the club into a pink and green spring wonder. Eleven local vendors gathered to display and sell their fine products and all had committed to contribute a portion of their sales to support the students at Mary Help.

The two guest speakers were Annie Sanchez, the Valedictorian of the 1999 class of the Mary Help, and Sr. Caroljean Willie, S.C., Ph.D., a Sister of Charity. Annie, currently employed by Ernst and Young, spoke of her educational and spiritual journey and of her fulfillment of a lifelong dream to establish Debt Free Like Annie, a company to help clients achieve their personal and financial goals. And her work with Art in Motion, a non-profit organization, helps inner-city youth appreciate and explore the leadership and service through the arts.

Sr. Caroljean shared her extensive cultural experiences through stories and anecdotes, always emphasizing the theme that we all contribute to a piece of the puzzle that is our world. She is the author of Praying All Ways: A Intelligence Approach to Prayer and serves as the NGO representative to the United Nations on behalf of the Sisters of Charity Federation.

The theme of our oneness was exemplified by both of our speakers. After lunch, guests were invited to complete their shopping and socialize. A truly special afternoon had passed!

– Rosalie Stanton, Dame of Mary Help

The Dames of Mary Help’s Second Annual Luncheon

Left: The Dames of Mary Help who attended Deborah Rohde, Hilda Marmo, Twinkie Polizzi, Rosalie Stanton, Beverly Rohde, Maria Losurdo-Colangelo, Elizabeth Harkins, and Rosemary De Pinto.
Right: Guest Speaker and MHCA Alumna Annie Sanchez with current Mary Help Juniors.

NFL VS FMA

October 12, 2012 - Who said football players can’t play basketball! Mary Help of Christians Academy hosted “From Gridiron to Full-Court” where current and former NFL players, such as former NY Giants players Brandon Bing and Kevin Brock, Tampa Bay Buccaneers Kareen Huggins, played basketball against the North Haledon Mayor’s Office, United States Army, Don Bosco Preparatory High School and Mary Help. The night kicked off with a VIP Dinner in which guests had a chance to meet and greet with the players and soon after the games began.

Local businesses such as Big Jims, Belmont Grill, Metro Grill and others participated as vendors along with an NFL store that sold memorabilia. There was a 10K half-court shot and Mary Help’s cheerleaders were the half-time act.

The night was a great success and all proceeds went to Dreams for Kids and the Athletic Department at Mary Help.

Above: Former NY Giants CB, Brandon Bing playing one on one with Sr. Mary Jackson. Right: Michael Campbell and current MHCA Cheerleaders smile on.
WHERE’S THAT SISTER?
Sr. Karen Dunn, FMA

Don’t forget! Say it with a smile.”
That was the advice given to Karen Dunn and her classmates preparing to become Salesian Sisters in 1977 by Andrew Dunn, Karen’s father.

Karen was born in Rockville Center, NY, the oldest of four children of a “good, ole, Irish Catholic family.” Sr. Karen describes it in her own words. “Faith and religion were a priority in the life of my family. My mother especially tried to make faith a visible part of our life together. The reverence both my parents had for the things of God included a deep respect for priests and religious. I understood even as a small child that Sisters were special people who belonged only to God. From my earliest days, the ideal of dedicating myself completely to Him was firmly set in my heart.”

When the family moved to NJ, it was soon time to select a high school. As always, the primary concern of her parents was of the caliber of the religion program and an atmosphere that was best for their daughter. Mary Help of Christians Academy proved to be satisfactory. Karen writes, “Although I was apprehensive about leaving my friends for a school out-of-town, I was faithful to the trust I always had in my parents and I began my high school there. Those four years were ones of growth and fun as little by little I lived and breathed in the Salesian spirit.” This was another match made in heaven.

After a short stint in the “real world” after high school, Karen asked to begin her initial formation to become a Salesian Sister in August, 1977. She took with her that smile that she had learned and lived with her parents and her siblings—a hearty laugh and a good-natured spirit that has become part of her personality.

Sr. Karen speaks from her heart. “The detachment from my family was difficult, but God’s grace, shown especially in the support and encouragement of my parents, and in the understanding of the Sisters who listened, guided and directed me, made it possible for me to accept and embrace the life God was calling me to.” She prepared herself spiritually and professionally for her life as a Sister and made her first profession on August 5, 1980. As a Sister she continued her educational experiences, and received her B.A. degree from William Paterson University.

Her experience as an educator took her to many places. In all of them, she brought her unique personal joy and her hearty laugh proclaiming in her life the goodness of her parents and her God. Her primary focus is centered on keeping a healthy school environment through authentic communication, interpersonal relationships, and an integral education given to each student.

Sr. Karen is always willing to take time for the young people whom the Lord has called her to serve.

YESTER-YEARS: A LOOK BACK

Celebrating 50 years, the class of 63 get excited before a volleyball tournament.

Celebrating 25 years, class of 88 take a trip back to the Roaring 20s with Sr. Pat Roche

Celebrating 10 years, the class of 03 pose for the camera.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

INCOMING FRESHMAN: Denver C. ’17, will be attending New Jersey Institute of Technology’s Women in Engineering & Technology Initiative-FEMME8 Program in Biomedical Engineering this Summer. FEMME8 Program is a UNITE program that is funded by the U.S. Army through its Army Educational Outreach Program, and coordinated by the Technology Student Association, a national non-profit organization of middle and high school students. Denver received a full scholarship, $5500.00, to attend this program. Congratulations Denver, we wish you much success.

ENTERING SENIOR YEAR: Melissa H. ’14 will be attending a summer Business Camp at Ramapo College this summer. A one week intensive summer program for rising seniors who have a strong interest in pursuing a business major in college. The students will be instructed in the basics of entrepreneurship, economics and finance. This program is sponsored by the Foundation for Free Enterprise and only accepts 100 students from the state of New Jersey (50 boys/50 girls). Melissa was accepted based on academic achievement. Congratulations Melissa, Mrs. Riordan is very proud of you as well as MHCA!

For two years, we have participated in the Festival of Music at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, NJ, competing with other choirs and bands. We won first place in the Women’s Choir Level both years! I am so proud to accompany these girls and their expert teacher.”

- Sr. Mary Ann Caspary

MHCA performed “Fiddler on the Roof” after a twenty year hiatus. Fellow alumnae, and also former cast members of the original production of MHCA’s Fiddler, were also in attendance for the performances.
In Memoriam

Maria Scarfolatto
Class of 1959

“Your life was love and labour, Your love for your family true, You did your best for all of us, We will always remember you.”

The Jillian Gorman Scholarship Fund

Jillian’s years at Mary Help of Christians Academy were transforming. In her memory a student will attend Mary Help of Christians Academy

For more information, or to mail a donation, contact
Sr. Mary Rinaldi • 659 Belmont Avenue • North Haledon, NJ 07508

Yes! I would like to donate to the Jillian Gorman Scholarship Fund with my donation of:

_____ $50 _____ $100 _____ $150 _____ $250 _____ $500 _____ Other $________

Name: _____________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________ Email: ________________________________

_____ Check (Make payable to MHCA Scholarship Fund)
_____ MasterCard _____ VISA _____ Discover _____ American Express

Card Number: ____________________________ Expiration: _________
Signature: ____________________________
Sandra Trujillo Ventura ‘98

- I grew up in a single parent home with a mom that spoke little English, but was tough as nails. I knew that statistically speaking, the odds were stacked against me. Growing up I would always go against the grain, therefore the statistics were a driving force for me. I wanted to be more than what a statistic said I would be, and make my mother proud. God has taken me on a life journey beyond my expectations. While attending Ramapo College I learned and discovered many qualities about myself. I learned more about my strengths and weaknesses and realized, more and more, how lost I was. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my degree. I had often wondered what God wanted for my life, what His plan was for me. I can still remember where I was when I changed my wondering into a question. I asked God “what is your plan for me? What is my purpose on this earth?” I can still remember the moment, the day, the path I was walking on, and the confusion I felt when I asked that question. As time went on, God began opening doors and revealing what He wanted for my life. He began giving me direction and purpose. Although my transformation was not easy I always leaned on the Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” and Psalms 27:10 “Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.”

Since graduating Mary Help of Christians Academy in ’98 I have gone on to receive a Bachelor of Arts from Ramapo College in 2003, and recently graduated from New Jersey City University with a Master of Arts in Counseling. I took the Salesian sisters advice and prayed for my future husband whom I met at Ramapo. I have been married for 10 years, have 2 children, and am working alongside my husband as youth pastors in a church in Garfield, NJ.

Here I am 15 years later living out my purpose. I am working with adolescents in both the secular and spiritual realm. I am using all of my life experiences to work with kids and teens, to help them feel supported, find direction, be a listening ear, and cheer them on as they succeed. Mary Help of Christians was a good starting point for me. The importance of keeping God in my life was always taught and exemplified.

2002
Vanessa Arias-Martinez ‘02 recently earned her 2nd Masters in Public Health/Global Health Leadership from New York University.

2008
Melissa Sloan ‘08 earned her Master’s in Social Work from Fordham University this past May; she plans to obtain her license in Social Work as well. Melissa also recently became engaged to her high school sweet heart, Jonathan Rizzitello, and is planning a September 2015 wedding.
Simone Dominigues ‘03 - When I entered MHCA in 1999 I was introduced to the school’s every present motto: Beauty, Truth and Joy. These three words became the foundation of my education. We saw them and heard them daily. They became our mantra. The meanings of beauty and truth and joy have changed throughout my life. Today they have become very much tied to my career and have influenced the way I do my work.

I am a graduate of MHCA’s class of 2003. After Mary Help I attended Montclair State University, from where I graduated with a degree in Family and Child Studies. After graduation I began my career as an elementary teacher. I worked for the Clifton Board of Education in the city’s Botany Village. I saw beauty in the lives of the children I worked with, who, at such young ages had already overcome obstacles and struggles and whose families worked tirelessly so their children would have every opportunity. I felt there was truth and honesty in my work. I had so often heard the stories of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello who served the young and the poor and I felt as if I was, somehow, a part of that mission. There was joy in that, I felt as if I were closing a circle, what Oprah might call “an ‘ah-ha’ moment”.

I loved my time at School 12, teaching and learning with my first graders. I learned more from them than I could have taught, but after five years I was ready for something different. Last year I was given the opportunity to fulfill a life-long dream. I was offered a position at the Carlucci American International School of Lisbon in Sintra, Portugal and jumped on the chance. In August 2012 I made the move overseas. Today I teach twenty-one second grade at CAISL.

This has been a year of adjustment, exploration and new experiences. I am beginning to get involved in my local church and am finally starting to feel at home in my new community (being just steps from the Atlantic Ocean also helps). Thanks to social networking, I am able to remain in touch with family and friends, many of whom I met during my four wonderful years at Mary Help. I also keep up on what is happening at MHCA, which has always felt like a second home to me. I am redefining beauty, truth and joy yet again; beauty in my new surroundings, truth in my new experiences and joy in knowing that there is an old familiar place to which I can always return.
Teacher Feature

Vanessa Campos

After graduating from MHCA in 2005 I continued my studies at William Paterson University and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree and Secondary Education Certification Grades K-12. I started my career by substitute teaching at Robert L Craig in Moonachie and for the past three years I have been teaching at Mary Help of Christians Academy. I teach both the Middle School and High School, including Art History, Asian Ink, Mixed Media, 3D Design, Portfolio Prep and Digital Media. I also co-teach yearbook, run the Middle School and High School Art Club and all the art classes for Mary Help Summer Camp.

I also teach fourth & fifth grade art classes for an after school program through a non-profit organization called Art in Motion, which also happens to be run by MHCA alum.

I love what I do and I could not picture myself doing anything else.

Save the Dates

Alumni Picnic
Saturday, August 24
12:00pm-4pm

MHCA Class of 1963
50th Year Reunion
September 13, 14, 15 2013
Itinerary based on number of responses.
Please contact
Giovanna (Falciglia) Vollaro at giovannav27@yahoo.com or (973) 907-2680
or Marianne (DiStefano) Benn at mariannebenn@yahoo.com no later than July 10th.