

# Madonna matters



June 2021

## Stories and Highlights of the 2020-2021 School Year

The Madonna Foundation, sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, continues the tradition the Sisters began at Madonna High School in 1949. Established in 2001, the Foundation has provided more than 1,400 awards totaling \$3.3 million in scholarship funding, along with dynamic college readiness programming. To all our supporters and donors who help us to create the next generation of accomplished and compassionate leaders, we say THANK YOU!!!!



Back Row: L to R: Martina P., Hannah A., Crystin M., Maria V., Jessica O., Priscilla B., Maddie F.  
Front Row: L to R: Ryan C., Xitlali P., Nabihah A., Alexis H., Jennifer R., Nairobi D.

### Our 2021 Graduates

All 14 Madonna seniors graduated this spring and will attend college in the fall. Their hard work and dedication resulted in multiple acceptances and scholarship offers from colleges and universities coast to coast! The aggregate total of scholarship offers was more than \$4,720,000.



5 seniors received exemplary awards for their dedication and service all four years as a Madonna Scholar. Pictured L to R: Ryan C., Hannah A., Alexis H., Jennifer R., Priscilla B.

### Madonna Scholars 2021

Congratulations to all graduates as they begin the next stage of their educational journey:

Jessica Olmos  
University of Michigan

Priscilla Badu  
University of Notre Dame

Martina Pavlovic  
DePaul University

Ryan Cheever  
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

Hannah Astudillo  
Illinois Wesleyan University

Maria Villalobos  
St. Xavier University

Nabiha Ahsan  
Oakton Community College

Kayla Vergara  
Hope College

Crystin McKay  
Western Illinois University

Alexis Hernandez  
Columbia College - Chicago

Jennifer Rosales  
Arrupe College

Xitlali Perez  
Loras College

Nairobi Diaz  
Concordia University

Maddie Fields  
College of Southern Nevada



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### Connect with the Madonna Foundation

- Facebook @Madonnianpride
- Instagram @madonnascholars
- www.madonnascholars.org
- Phone 331.318.5170
- egarbrecht@franciscanministries.org

### Alumnae we want to hear from you! Consider serving as:

- Guest speaker
- Event host
- Comittee member
- Volunteer

Contact Betsy Garbrecht at 331.318.5170 or egarbrecht@franciscanministries.org.

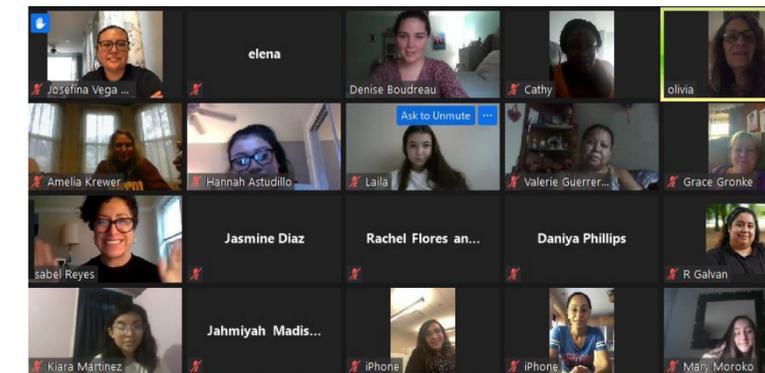


Madonna Scholars at Mother McAuley High School

## Madonna Scholar Programming Highlights 2020-2021

### FASFA/Financial Aid

In October, we partnered with Arrupe College of Loyola University, which presented a virtual workshop for our scholars and families focusing on the college application and financial aid processes. This workshop was especially critical for our seniors this year as the pandemic presented a unique set of challenges in applying to college. We are so grateful for this continued partnership with Arrupe College and Loyola University.



Our Madonna Scholars and families listened as Isabel Reyes, Associate Director of Admissions at Arrupe College of Loyola shared important information regarding the college scholarship and financial aid process

### Wintrust Smart Money Workshop

Smart Money, a financial literacy workshop for scholars and their parents conducted by Wintrust Bank, a program partner, was held in November. During the two interactive sessions, participants learned the basics of spending, saving and creating personal and household budgets. Wintrust presenters gave helpful advice on how to best navigate difficult economic times and avoid falling into financial ruin or a mountain of debt.

### Career Day

To gain an understanding of potential career paths and exposure to a variety of professional environments, Madonna Scholars participated in a virtual Career Day. Our guest speakers included:

- Monica Simzyk, Chief People Officer, Franciscan Ministries
- Cathon Threat, Vice President, Lamb Weston
- Andrea Urban, Vice President-Global Tax, Thought Works
- Mary Margaret Brosnaham, Cook County Judge
- Denise Makowski, Principal, Chicago Public Schools

The common message of these highly accomplished women urged our scholars to follow their passion and rise above limitations imposed by society to achieve their goals. Our scholars were encouraged and heartened to hear the stories of these successful women who worked hard and overcame obstacles to reach the pinnacle of their careers!

LIVING joyfully

### Service Projects

To instill and foster the spirit of giving back, scholars participated in a number of service projects. In December, Madonna scholars created beautiful hand-made Christmas cards and baskets of Christmas treats for the Franciscan Sisters and residents of the Mother Teresa Home. In February, the scholars created door hangers and wrote letters of encouragement for our dedicated staff of heroes working in all of our senior living communities and St. Jude House, ensuring our residents care and safety during the pandemic.



Door hangers for our front line heroes

### Summer Internship Program

Two recent Madonna grads spent summer 2020 working on Madonna Foundation projects for the Franciscan Ministries corporate office. The summer internship program enables students to gain valuable work experience and provides an opportunity to build skills such as problem solving and time management. During the internship, scholars' confidence grew as they successfully completed project tasks and acquired skill sets that will help them in college and their future careers.

## Madonna Scholar Programming Highlights 2020-2021

### STEAM – Argonne National Labs

To further scholar interests in STEAM, the Madonna Foundation formed a new program partnership with Argonne National Labs. Our scholars heard from a panel of women scientists at Argonne. They discussed careers in cyber security, bio-medical engineering and other new and emerging careers in science and technology. We are so grateful for this new partnership and the exciting potential careers that lie ahead for our students.

### ACT

A new partnership with the Princeton Review provided Madonna scholars with ACT test preparation and individualized study throughout the year. Access to year-long prep class materials and online instruction helped them increase their ACT scores, opening more doors to college acceptances.

### International Women's Day

In partnership with DePaul University, scholars participated in a zoom presentation marking International Womens Day on March 8. They spent an inspirational afternoon with recent DePaul grads from backgrounds similar to our scholars, who talked with them about their careers and the path they took to get there while overcoming obstacles on the way.

### ALUMNI SHARING KNOWLEDGE



**KIRA JONES**  
Founder  
Cacti Wellness



**BETSY LUGO**  
Assistant  
Creative Artists Agency



**VANESSA CADAVILLO**  
Deputy National Finance Director  
Catherine Cortez Masto  
for U.S. Senate

Thank you to DePaul University for sharing their alumnae's stories with the Madonna Scholars.



Junior and Senior Madonna scholars at Trinity High School

The COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing presented challenges for all six of our partner schools. With some creativity and flexibility, we were still able to provide all the quality programming and support to our Madonna Scholars. The ACT prep classes were moved to an online platform and the STEAM workshop, financial literacy and other programs were conducted virtually. Although some schools were closed and others adopted a hybrid model, our scholars continued to thrive and meet the challenges they faced. By providing additional online resources and creative problem solving, our scholars proved resilient and completed another successful school year. We are proud of our scholars who went above and beyond to ensure their success.

### Our Scholars

Seventeen freshmen were selected for the 2020-21 school year. We also welcomed back 17 sophomores, 14 juniors and 14 seniors.



Freshman and Sophomore Madonna scholars at Trinity High School



Madonna Scholars at Our Lady of Tepeyac High School

## Supporting Madonna Foundation

### Madonna Mile

More than 100 participants joined in the socially-distanced Madonna Mile fundraising walk in August 2020. Participants hit the trails in their hometowns and were able to safely complete their walk. Walkers from California to Florida joined us for this event while supporting our scholarship fund. This year's walk was sponsored by Terri Roselimier (MHS Alumnae class of 1974) through her business, Automated Business Designs, along with other local area businesses. If you would like to sponsor this year's walk or find out how to participate, please reach out to Betsy Garbrecht at 331-318-5170.



Pictured above is Terri Roselimier with her family and colleagues

### Madonna Roast

The Madonna Foundation hosted Madonna Roast, a coffee and conversation event to discuss the importance of equity in education and the path to college. A cold Saturday morning in February was the perfect time for coffee and a chat at this virtual event. Participants received a free packet of coffee sent to their house just for signing up! We are so grateful to our guest speakers, Dr. Denise Schoenbachler, Endowed Professor, Northern Illinois University; Rosa DeLuna-Frede, Managing Partner, Andersen Tax, and Karime Sanchez, a former Madonna scholar currently studying at Columbia University in the City of New York. Guest speakers sparked interest by sharing new opportunities for supporters to become engaged. We are also grateful to our event sponsors who made this event possible. All proceeds raised were used to support Madonna scholarships.

## Save the Dates

### Madonna Mile Walk

This August we will once again host a socially-distanced Madonna Mile fundraising walk. Be sure to register by July 20th so you can receive your t-shirt! Contact Betsy Garbrecht at 331-318-5170 for more details or sign up online at [www.madonnascholars.org](http://www.madonnascholars.org).

### Trivia Night

The Madonna Foundation Trivia Night is back! Mark your calendars for October 1st and get your teams together. Be sure to visit our website, [www.madonnascholars.org](http://www.madonnascholars.org) or call 331-318-5170 for more details.



Peg Ranstead and Katie Peterson enjoyed their walk from their home in Florida



Mary Mosser stopped for a quick photo with her dog while completing her mile walk.



Denise Schoenbachler, PhD, Northern Illinois University explains to guests how the Madonna Foundation provides the tools, guidance and support to help young women be successful in college.



Former Madonna scholar, Karime S. shares how the Madonna Foundation helped her achieve her dream of attending Columbia College in New York.

## Madonna Advisory Council

To further the work of the Madonna Foundation, the Madonna Advisory Council was formed in fall 2018 to bring together a group of professional women deeply committed to our mission. Well-established in their careers and communities, they work with us to build awareness of our mission and expand networks, guide strategies, advocate on our behalf to broaden our base of support, and personally support us through giving at a leadership level. We are most grateful for their commitment to the future of the Madonna Foundation.

### Three of our Advisory Council members share with us why they serve to further our mission:

I am on the advisory council of the Madonna Foundation because I believe that a Catholic education should be available to students regardless of income, and I believe the personal support and sisterhood that the Madonna scholars enjoy because of the Foundation will help to nurture intelligent, thoughtful women who are true assets to their families and to their communities.

– Mary Slowik



Madonna High School

I work on behalf of the Madonna Foundation on the advisory council because I believe in Catholic education and to be able to help girls receive an excellent and supportive education makes me smile.

– Barbara Sipe



I serve on the Advisory Council because I want to help the young girl who aspires to be something great and just needs a little help to get there.

– Andrea Urban



Madonna Scholars at Resurrection High School take a break from their studies to enjoy some fresh air this past spring

## Leave Your Legacy through Our Planned Giving Program

You can also support us through your estate plan. Your legacy will extend for years into the future; impacting and transforming the lives of many young women ensuring promising futures.

For more information on any of our charitable giving opportunities, contact Betsy Garbrecht by phone at 331.318.5170 or via email at [egarbrecht@franciscanministries.org](mailto:egarbrecht@franciscanministries.org).