



MADONNA FOUNDATION

HONORING 25 YEARS OF
EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN

*Franciscan Ministries sponsored by
the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago*

Madonna MATTERS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS AND FAMILIES OF THE
MADONNA FOUNDATION AND ALUMNAE OF MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL
JULY 2026 EDITION



Celebrating the Class of 2026



Class of 2026 Madonna Scholar Graduates

The Madonna Scholars Class of 2026 has much to celebrate. Through years of dedication, perseverance, and academic achievement, these remarkable young women have reached an important milestone and are now preparing for the next chapter of their educational journeys.

We are proud to share that all 17 graduating scholars were accepted into multiple colleges. Collectively, our scholars earned acceptance to more than 70 colleges and universities and were awarded an impressive \$7 million in merit and performance-based scholarships for academics, the arts, and athletics.

As they begin this exciting new chapter, we look forward to seeing the impact they will have on their college campuses, and within their communities. We are incredibly proud of all they have accomplished and grateful to have been part of their journey.

Congratulations to the Madonna Scholars Class of 2026. Your future is bright, and we cannot wait to see all that you will achieve.

MADONNA SCHOLARS 2026

JOSEPHINUM ACADEMY

Mya Shuttlesworth

MOTHER MCAULEY

Blanca Gamon

Juliette Heredia

OUR LADY OF TEPEYAC

Abril Gutierrez

Quethzali Sanches

REGINA DOMINICAN HIGH SCHOOL

Abigail Thiel

RESURRECTION HIGH SCHOOL

Aiyanna Bustamante-Cook

Aubrianna Cataudella

Natalie Mejia

Lorena Shero

TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

Julia Burgos

Allyson Korab

Eleanor Lopez

Josephine Lopez

TatyAna Markham

Josephine Rodriguez

Niara Wells

Madonna SCHOLAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

This school year was filled with phenomenal opportunities for our scholars. By exposing our scholars to colleges, careers, STEAM programs, financial literacy, health and wellness programs, and our Madonna High School alumnae, our scholars are building a network of support, a catalog of options, and a resume of opportunities to carry them successfully into the next chapter of their lives. Here are a few program highlights from the 2025-26 school year:

CAREER DAY AT ANDERSEN TAX

Our junior and senior scholars spent the day learning about a variety of careers at a large tax firm. They spent time touring the facility and meeting employees from various departments. Special thanks to Madonna HS Alum and Firm Partner Rosa De Luna-Frede.

WINTRUST FINANCIAL LITERACY

Madonna Scholars from Resurrection and Regina High Schools had the opportunity to visit the Federal Reserve and Wintrust Bank in downtown Chicago. As a long-time community partner, Wintrust has provided financial literacy workshops for scholars and parents for several years virtually and in their schools. This was the first time Madonna Scholar visited Wintrust to see how the bank operates and meet many employees from various departments since 2019.



Resurrection & Regina Scholars in Wintrust Lobby



Madonna Scholars with Representatives from Wintrust at the Federal Reserve Vault



Madonna Scholars visit to the Federal Reserve Bank

STEAM AT THE FIELD MUSEUM

Madonna Scholars had the opportunity to visit the Field Museum Teen Lab to learn about the biology of birds and the role they play in ecosystems around the world. They studied the evolution of various birds' beaks and hypothesized the reasons for their change over time. They also got to meet several scientists working behind the scenes.



Madonna Scholar Mya with an Ornithologist at the Field Museum



Trinity Madonna Scholars with Cook County Judge



Madonna Scholars at Cook County Court

— WOMEN EVERYWHERE WITH COOK COUNTY COURTS

Madonna Scholars from Trinity High School had the opportunity to participate in the Cook County Courthouse Women Everywhere Career Day program to highlight the multitude of careers opportunities in the criminal justice system. We are grateful for our supporters and the Cook County Court House for welcoming us again this year.

— COLLEGE VISITS

Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University—Sophomores,
Dominican University—Freshmen



Scholars and Parents on Northern Illinois University campus tour

— CLASS OF 2030 RETREAT

The Madonna Foundation is excited to welcome 27 new scholars to the class of 2030. Our incoming freshmen spent the day in Lemont on our beautiful Franciscan Ministries campus getting to know each other, reflecting on their goals for high school, and meeting our community including Franciscan Sisters of Chicago and Franciscan Ministries Home Office associates. Special thanks to Tara Segal the Chief Mission Integration & Pastoral Care for Franciscan Ministries, who lead an interactive day of fun, fellowship, and self-discovery for our newest scholars.



Freshmen Scholars at Dominican University



Class of 2030 touring Our Lady of Victory grounds



Class of 2030 Retreat



Mother McAuley Madonna Scholars

MADONNA FOUNDATION BY THE NUMBERS

The Madonna Foundation continues to grow our scholarships and programs as we journey towards the **“Road to 100 Scholars.”**

We hope you will help our scholars continue to excel by partnering with the Madonna Foundation to provide programs, opportunities, and scholarships for the next generation of leaders.

“The Madonna Foundation has set me up for success and changed my path for the future. With the gift of an all-girls Catholic education, I am becoming a better version of myself. I have learned to work through challenges and manage my successes. I feel noticed and appreciated by my peers and mentors. I am becoming a leader.

— **Charlotte | Class of 2027**



80

Scholars

in the 2025-26 school year



100%

College Acceptance Rate
for the past decade



100%

Graduation Rate
from High School
for the past decade



42

Scholar Programs

in the 2025-26 school year

— **Average GPA 3.78** for Madonna Scholars

— **1,674 scholarships** provided in the past 24 years

— **73%** are from minority backgrounds

— **59%** come from single parent households

— **77%** will be first-generation college graduates

— **54%** of Madonna families speak a language other than English as the primary language

— **\$42,564** is the average income for a Madonna family of four

— **47%** of families receive government benefits or public support (SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, SSI, Free or Reduced Price Lunch, etc.)

Madonna HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNAE



Class of 1986 with a friend from the Class of 2001

SPRING LUNCHEON

The Madonna High School Alumnae Reunion Luncheon was once again a tremendous success, bringing together alumnae from five decades of graduating classes. We had excellent turn out from our milestone classes including the classes of 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, 1971, 1981, 1991, and 2001.

With our biggest crowd to date, the afternoon was filled with friendship, laughter, memories, and Madonna spirit. A heartfelt thank you to the Reunion Committee for their hard work and dedication in planning this wonderful event. Special thanks also to the many former staff members who joined us and helped make the gathering even more meaningful.

We are grateful to everyone who attended and made the day so special.

SPIRIT OF MADONNA AWARDEES 2026



Bernadette Sigl,
Class of 1964,
was honored
to receive the
Spirit of Madonna

Award alongside fellow educators and dear friends.

A longtime history educator and department chair, Bernadette shared that her goal was never simply to teach dates and facts, but to help students appreciate the accomplishments of people throughout history and understand the lessons those achievements offer today. Concluding her remarks, Bernadette expressed gratitude to the Madonna community and reminded attendees of the *lasting impact a Madonna education has on generations of women.*



Judge Nancy Schuster Waites,
Class of 1971,
recipient of the
Spirit of Madonna

Award, was honored and surprised to receive the recognition alongside Bern Sigl and Madonna Carsello.

A history teacher at Madonna beginning in 1978, Judge Waites encouraged her students to appreciate different cultures and believe in their own potential. She credits Madonna High School with giving her the confidence to pursue her dreams, including attending law school while teaching full-time and raising a family.



Class of 1966 with the original sign from the high school building



Alumnae enjoying the luncheon



Class of 1996 alumnae



Madonna Carsello was
honored to
accept the Spirit
of Madonna

Award and reflected on her decades of service as a history teacher and department chair at Madonna High School.

Madonna shared her hope that students left Madonna with a sense of *competence, compassion, and contribution*; values that guided her teaching and reflected the school's mission. She concluded her remarks with a heartfelt message to her former students: *"I hope we served you well."*



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CONNECT WITH THE MADONNA FOUNDATION

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@MadonnaScholars



@Madonna-Foundation

ALUMNAE, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! CONSIDER SERVING AS:

- Guest speaker
- Event host
- Committee member
- Volunteer

Contact April Dumas-Gray at
331-318-5170 or ADumasGray@franciscanministries.org.

Celebrating 25 Years of Madonna Foundation

The Madonna Foundation is excited to celebrate 25 years of service in the 2026-2027 school year. We will be celebrating all year long, honoring our legacy, celebrating our accomplishments, and looking to the future. We are humbled and honored to continue providing scholarships and programs for young women.



HONORING 25 YEARS OF
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

In Her Shoes: School Experience & Lunch (*by invitation*)

Thursday, September 24, 2026

Madonna High School Alumnae Mass & Reception

Saturday, October 24, 2026

8th Annual Trivia Night Fundraiser

Saturday, November 21, 2026

Madonna Foundation Cash for Christmas Raffle

Saturday, November 21, 2026 (Drawing at Trivia Night)

First Look For Charity - Chicago Auto Show

Friday, February 12, 2027

Madonna High School Alumnae Spring Luncheon

Sunday, April 25, 2027