



# The Blue Don Bulletin

MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL—REGINA COELI ORA PRO NOBIS

Summer 2021

Volume 7, Issue 3

## Madonna Class of 2021 Graduates

On Saturday, May 29, 2021, Madonna High School held its commencement ceremony inside Finnegan Fieldhouse located on the campus of Franciscan University of Steubenville. With many COVID precautions still in place, using this location allowed for more guests to attend the ceremony safely.

The class of 2021 were followed by the faculty and staff into the fieldhouse to “Pomp and Circumstance.” Class President Sydney Crawford sang the National Anthem, followed by a welcome to all in attendance. Madonna’s designated pastor, Very Rev. Dennis Schuelkens Jr., delivered the invocation. Salutatorian, Elyse Chartier and the Valedictorians, Sydney Crawford and Madalena Daugherty eloquently presented their speeches to all in attendance.

Commencement speaker, Dr. Kristen Finley Sobota ‘00, praised the class of 2021 for their resilience during the Coronavirus pandemic. The ceremony continued with Mrs. Amy Granato announcing the scholarships and grants awarded to the senior class. The thirty-three graduates were awarded in excess of \$2.7 million spanning over a four-year period. These awards and the



Madonna High School Class of 2021  
(Photo: Newbrough Photo)

### In this issue:

News	1-8
Athletics	9-12
Alumni News	13-14
Blue Don Fund	15
Stay Connected	16

colleges/universities seniors are attending can be found on page 2.

Principal, Mr. Jamie Lesho, handed each student his or her diploma. Elyse Chartier, Sydney Crawford, Jordan Dillon, and Krista Velegol led the singing of the Madonna High School Alma Mater. The new graduates were then instructed to move the tassels on their caps to symbolize their new status as alumni before tossing their caps into the air!

Congratulations to the Madonna High School class of 2021! The administration, staff, and faculty wish you all the best as you begin your new endeavors!



Left to right: Salutatorian Elyse Chartier, Valedictorians Madalena Daugherty and Sydney Crawford



#### Top Ten

Front Row: Jazzlyn Melnyk, Elyse Chartier, Madalena Daugherty, Sydney Crawford, Alexis DeMarco

Back Row: Cheyenne Carpenter, Jacob Bonner, Christopher Noble, Ryan Taylor, Krista Velegol



#### Senior Prefects

Left to right: Madison Bine, Krista Velegol, Domenic Brncic, Sydney Crawford



Dr. Kristen Finley Sobota speaks to the Class of 2021, students lead the singing of the alma mater, the new graduates toss their caps in the air.

Photo Credit:  
Newbrough Photo

## Class of 2021 Highlights

- Full or partial scholarships were awarded to 85% of the class. \$2,713,158 in scholarship funds over 4 years have been offered with \$1,365,908 being accepted over 4 years. 11 seniors qualified for the WV Promise Scholarship based upon their overall GPA, core GPA, and standardized test scores. These students met the academic requirements to receive \$4,750 annually towards their tuition and fees at public or independent colleges/universities in West Virginia.
- Institutional scholarships earned and accepted by the Madonna Class of 2021 include: **Baldwin Wallace College** Dean's Scholarship/Come Live the Experience Grant, **Columbus College of Art & Design** Goodale Park Scholarship, **Fairmont State University** Opportunity Level 3 Scholarship/SOAR Award/Charles J. McClain Presidential Scholarship Finalist, **Franciscan University of Steubenville** Commuter Grant/Center for Leadership Scholarship/St. Michael Scholarship, **Hiram College** Academic Merit Grant, **Indiana University of Pennsylvania** Dean' Scholarship/Come Live the Experience Grant, **Malone University** Malone Grant/Dean's Scholarship, **Mercyhurst University** Sr. Carolyn Hermann Academic Scholarship, **Miami University** Red Hawk Excellence Scholarship, **Thiel College** Dietrich Honors Thiel Merit Award, Thiel College Scholarship **University of Notre Dame** University Scholarship, **University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg** Merit Award, **West Liberty University** Sibling Grant, **West Virginia Northern Community College** Full Tuition Scholarship/Main Street Bank Scholarship/Irene Mindzak Memorial Scholarship/Dan Wilson Memorial Scholarship, **West Virginia University** Bucklew Scholarship/Scholarship of Distinction Level 2/Gold Tier Scholarship/WVU Mountaineer Parent's Club Student Body President Scholarship/ The Valedictorian Scholarship, **Westminster College** Jerb Miller Scholarship.
- Other scholarships accepted by the Madonna Class of 2021 include: Betty M. Shaw/Eva Belle Catlett Alpha Delta Kappa Fidelis Gamma Chapter Memorial Scholarship, Beulah T. Meyer Scholarship, Cecelia M. Serra Scholarship, Charles M. and Thelma M. Pugliese Scholarship, Cove Presbyterian Church Helen T. Hamill Memorial Scholarship, Eugene and Nell Petrucci Scholarship, Dr. John Capito Memorial Scholarship, Hancock County School Employees Credit Union Scholarship, Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Church Scholarship, Italian Sons & Daughters of America Scholarship, Larsen Educational Trust Scholarship, Louis F. Serra Family Scholarship, Madonna Blue Dons Girls' Basketball Scholarship, Madonna Class of '64 John Colesante Memorial Scholarship, Mary E. Smith Foundation Excellence in Service Scholarship, Michael J. Smoljanovich Memorial Scholarship, O.V.A.C. Mike Rose Memorial Scholarship, O.V.A.C. Betty Ann Ponzio Memorial Scholarship, O.V.A.C. Foundations Baseball Scholarship, Phyllis DiGiromalo Scholarship, Richard F. Santilli Memorial Scholarship, Rick Kucan Memorial Scholarship, Sandy Reardon Memorial Scholarship, Tony Ruskowski Never Alone Memorial Scholarship, Upper Ohio Valley Italian Heritage Festival Scholarship, Weirton Firefighters Association Local 948 Scholarship, Weirton Medical Center Staff Scholarship, Weirton Rotary Club Scholarship, West Virginia Knights of Columbus Scholarship, West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship, WVSSAC \$1,000 Scholarship.
- Graduates of the Madonna High School Class of 2021 plan to matriculate to the following colleges/universities in the fall: Baldwin Wallace University, Bethany University, Bluefield State College, Columbus College of Art & Design, Fairmont State University, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Grove City College, Hiram College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Malone College, Mercyhurst University, Miami University (OH), Tarrant County Community College, Thiel College, University of Notre Dame, University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg, West Liberty University, Westminster College, West Virginia Northern Community College, and West Virginia University.

Senior profiles and more information on the Class of 2021 can be found at [www.weirtonmadonna.org/seniors](http://www.weirtonmadonna.org/seniors)

Video of the 2021 Commencement Ceremony can be seen here: [Madonna Graduation \(boxcast.tv\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MadonnaGraduation)



**Madonna in the Community**



**The Novena for Life collection to help the Gabriel Project! Over 1600 diapers, 48 baby wipes, 37 baby wash/shampoo, and other assorted items were collected for families in need. Pictured with the items are Jazzy Melnyk, Pro-Life Club President and Mr. Takats, Pro-Life Club Advisor.**



**Madonna students joined students from St. Joseph the Worker for Chloe's Campus Cleanup. Students pick up trash from around both schools and St. Joseph the Worker Church.**



**Madonna students, families, and staff participated in another "Care-avan" where we drove past local nursing homes and care facilities to spread some joy.**



**Anna Backel and GiGi Orecchio organized a collection of items to be sent to Houston Children's Charity in Texas after the devastating winter storm. Students packed up 70 boxes of clothing and blankets!**



**Olivia and Madison Bine delivered sandwiches to the Friendship Room in Steubenville.**



**Madonna held a fee dress day to benefit A Child's Place CASA. Seniors Elyse Chartier, Marianna Martinez, Chris Noble, Adriana Lenhart, and Miranda Sole presented Kris Roberts with a check for \$260.**



**Members of the Madonna Interact Club assisted the American Legion with placing flags by veterans' gravestones for Memorial Day. Thank you to Rylie Cottrill, Luke Sweat, Elizabeth Elias, Maddy Long, Chuck Long and Mr Eloi.**

## Aquinas Award and St. Sebastian Medal Winners



Sydney Crawford, is the 2021 Aquinas Award recipient from Madonna High School. Sydney was selected by the faculty of Madonna High School. The award recognizes students for their outstanding qualities of faithful discipleship, academic excellence, leadership and service to the school, parish and community, reflecting the ideals of Catholic education epitomized by St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron saint of students. It is the highest honor a student can receive from the diocese.

Sydney is the daughter of Michael and Karen Crawford, and sister to Kelsey and Haley Crawford. She is an active member of St. Joseph the Worker Church where she volunteers at children's liturgy. Sydney is the class president, serves as treasurer of the Science Club, representative of the Interact Club and is a member of the Drama, Pro-Life, and SADD Clubs. She is the treasurer and member of the National Honor Society. She represented Madonna at the HOBY Leadership Seminar and the Weirton Youth Leadership Program. Sydney was an altar server and sang in the choir for school masses. She lettered on the Lady Dons Cheer team all four years, is a two year letterman of the soccer team, and a one year letterman of the tennis team. The cheer team qualified for the State Cheer Competition three times while she was a member. She earned a OVAC soccer championship, two cheer OVAC championships, and one cheer regional championship. She was a USA Junior Olympic gymnast for five years and qualified for state and regional competitions. Sydney will attend the University of Notre Dame and major in Neuroscience.

Madalena Daugherty and Lucky Pulice were selected to receive the St. Sebastian Medal from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. The St. Sebastian Medal is named for St. Sebastian, the Patron Saint of Athletes, because he was always depicted in fine physical shape. Madalena and Lucky are being recognized for being high-achieving student athletes and exhibiting the qualities of sportsmanship, teamwork, academics, and a high respect for school, classmates, teammates, opponents, parish, and the community.



Madalena is the daughter of Timothy and Juliana Daugherty, and the sister of Nina Daugherty. She is Student Council President and is a member of the Art, Interact, Pro-Life and Science Clubs. She is also a member of the National Honor Society. Madalena has participated in Weirton Youth Leadership and HOBY Leadership. She has lettered in volleyball for four years, softball for two years, and soccer for

one year. Madalena was named the OVAC softball player of the year and to the Second Team All-Star State team in 2019 and was the Three Rivers Athlete of the Week for her OVAC Soccer Championship winning goal in 2020. Madalena is a West Virginia University Bucklew Scholar. Next year, Madalena will attend West Virginia University majoring in Biochemistry.



Lucky is the son of James and Kelly Pulice and the brother of Carmela Pulice. He is on Student Council and is a member of the Interact Club. He is a four year letterman of the basketball team and two year letterman of the football and baseball teams. Lucky was named captain of the football and basketball teams in his senior year. He was a member of 1A OVAC Championship teams in baseball and football. He has been named to the First Team All-Area/All-OVAC in

basketball and football and named All-State honorable mention in baseball and football. Lucky will attend West Virginia Northern Community College majoring in Business Administration. Also he plans to work at his father's business after graduation.



# MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL

Regina Vukobratovic



Open House



Parker Haney won first place in the West Virginia Spring 2021 Stock Market Game, High School Division, sponsored by SIGMA Foundation. The Stock Market Game is a real-world, real-time program used by teachers across the state where teams of one to four students begin the simulation with \$100,000 in imaginary cash they can use to buy stocks, mutual funds and bonds on the NYSE and NASDAQ. Mrs. Lafferty's Personal Finance and Introduction to Business classes participated in the game.



Matthew Amaismeier, Santino Arlia, Cheyenne Carpenter, Nina Daugherty, Sofia-Teresa DiBacco, Nathan Elias, Nicholas Elias, Eliza Greco, Gabriella Green, Kristina Lesho, Marianna Martinez, Morgan Owens, Mark Pietranton, Luchenzio Pulice, Evan Quering, Thomas Ralston, Angelina Spickard, Olivia Tennant are the 2020-21 National Honor Society inductees.



Prior to prom our resource officer, Ricky Grishkevich, spoke with seniors and juniors about the dangers of driving under the influence. Students also had the opportunity to wear "drunk goggles" while throwing darts, cornhole bags,

and basketballs that allowed them to see how being under the influence can affect their vision, coordination, and reflexes.



Student Council treated the faculty to lunch from UrbanCoffee304 for Teacher Appreciation Week.



### ***Thank you and Farewell!!***

Madonna gives a heartfelt goodbye to three teachers this year. Mrs. Emily Gust (Drama and Music) will be having her child in August. Mr. John Colabrese (Science) and Mrs. Constance Lafferty (Business and Computers) are both retiring. Mr. Colabrese taught at Madonna for 11 years and Mrs. Lafferty for 14 years.

All three be missed greatly and we wish them the best!



One Mission One Day to Make a Difference, a day of giving, was a huge success thanks to all of you! \$14,445 was raised to go towards the purchase and installation of needlepoint bi-polar technology to clean and sanitize the air in Madonna. This has many benefits for Madonna including lower utility bills, reducing costs and time of cleaning the school, and healthier students and staff.



### Download Our New App!

Recently, Madonna High School has teamed with Moblize360, a company based in Weirton, to develop a school app. This app will provide families with current information, sports schedules and scores, and schedule changes. Also, this app is useful for alumni interested in staying up to date with Madonna. The user can decide which information to receive through push notifications. You can download it by clicking here: [Madonna App](#)



**Download The  
FREE Madonna  
High School App  
Today**

**STAY IN THE KNOW  
ON THE GO!**



## Our Partner Schools

St. Joseph the Worker School



St. Paul School

**Congratulations to the graduating classes from St. Joseph the Worker and St. Paul Schools!**



**St. Joseph the Worker School 8th Grade  
(Photo: Newbrough Photo)**



**St. Paul School 8th Grade (Photo:  
Newbrough Photo)**



During the school year, St. Joseph the Worker School and St. Paul School 8th grade students come to Madonna each morning for Spanish I and Algebra. This spring, they stayed a little longer and participated in two science experiments. Ms. Bilal did a chromatography experiment to separate out the different mixtures of chemicals present in ink. Mr. Colabrese gave them a lesson on conduction, convection, and radiation heat by having them cook hot dogs with a lightbulb in a shoe box.

Winter sports came to a close at the end of April! Although the season was not typical as it extended into April, our teams made the most of their opportunities. The boys basketball team made it to regionals, the girls basketball team won the City Championship against Weir High and made a trip to Charleston for the State Tournament, cheering placed 5th at States, and Evan Daniels placed 4th in the wrestling state tournament! Congratulations on memorable seasons Blue Dons!





## Individual Accomplishments

### Lucky Pulice

1,000 Career Points

106.3 River Player of the Week

OVAC All-Star

2nd Team All-State Team

1st Team 1A All-Conference



### Matt Amaismeier

Honorable Mention All-State



### Evan Bone

Honorable Mention All-State



### Santino Arlia

2nd Team 1A All-Conference

### Jazzy Melnyk

OVAC All-Star

2nd Team All-State Team (Captain)

1st Team All-Valley

1st Team 1A All-Conference



### Alaina Moore

Honorable Mention All-State

2nd Team All-valley

2nd Team 1A All-Conference



Evan Daniels reached 100 wins and placed 4th at States in the 182 weight class.



### Vanessa Alatis

Honorable Mention

All-State

1st Team 1A All-Conference



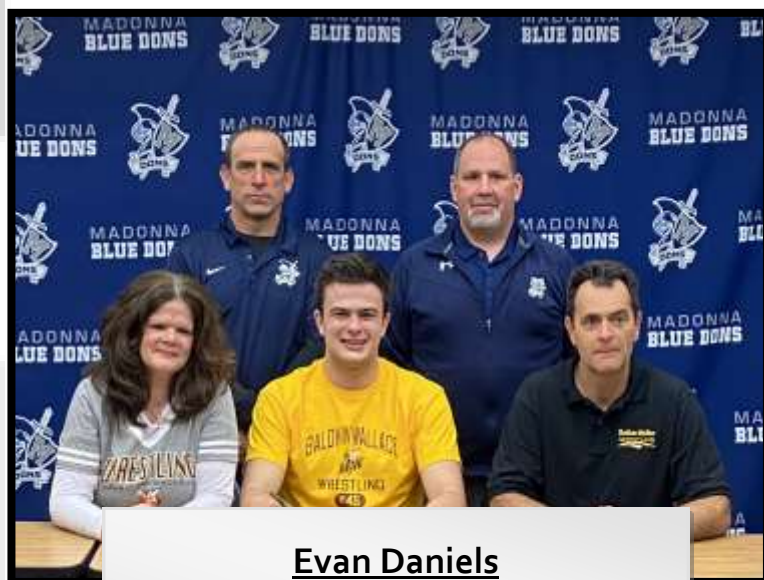
## Senior Signings

Seven seniors signed letters of intent to play athletics in college.  
Congratulations to all and good luck!



Dom Brncic

Baseball at Grove City College



Evan Daniels

Wrestling at Baldwin Wallace College



Jazzy Melnyk

Basketball at Franciscan University of Steubenville







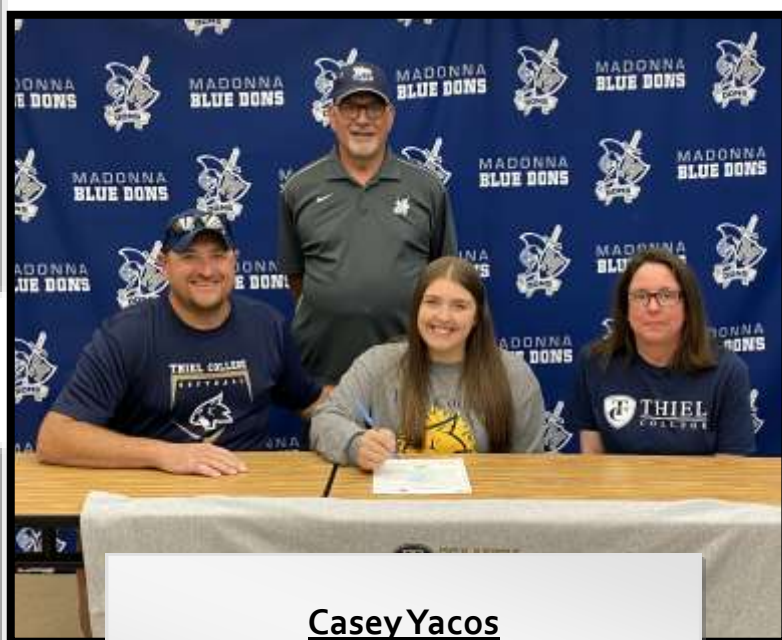
**Alaina Moore**  
Basketball at Westminster College



**Thomas Sessi**  
Football at Hiram College

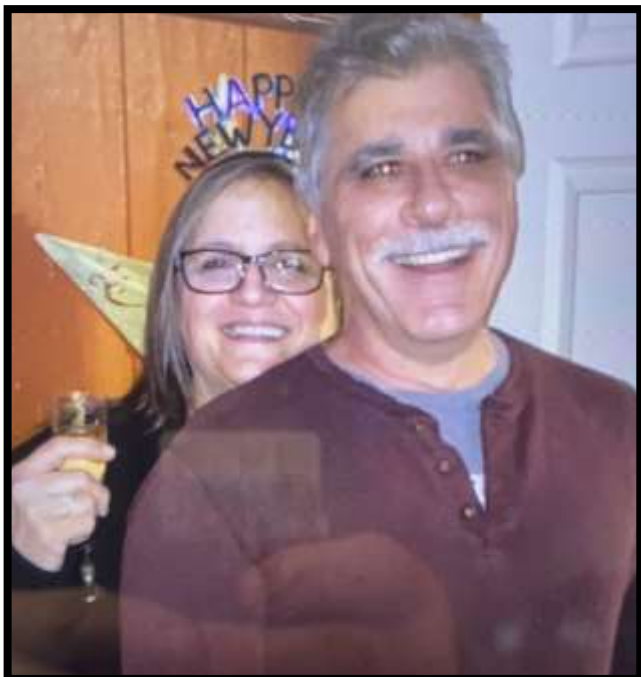


**Tyler Starvaggi**  
Baseball at University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg



**Casey Yacos**  
Softball at Thiel College

## Alumni Updates



**John Buffo '80, lives in Weirton. He is the father of 6; 3 boys, 3 girls, and have 15 grandchildren.**



**Dennis Lutz '68, is a retired speech-language pathologist. He currently lives in Tennessee and loves living there!**

### ***Madonna Alumni***

*Have reunion pictures to share?  
Have a new job? Did you get married or have a baby? Share your news with your fellow alumni! Send any information and pictures you would like to share to [cholmes@weirtonmadonna.org](mailto:cholmes@weirtonmadonna.org).*

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

We ask that you pray for the repose of the souls of our dearly beloved Madonna family members who have passed away in the last few months, including:

Karen Fabianich '66  
Joseph Tokash '63  
Walter "Woodie" Miller

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May the souls of the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

If you know of any deceased Madonna alumni or friends of the school, please contact Madonna at 304-723-0545



**Kelsey Crawford '20, was selected to be on Notre Dame's competition cheer team!**



**New Madonna alumni Dom Brncic, Jordan Dillon, and Mallorie O'Brien stand with their parents and Madonna alumni, Angela Starvaggi Brncic '90, Tanya Shoup Dillon '90, and Stephanie Sharpe O'Brien '90.**

**The tradition continues!**

**Pat "Fish" Finnegan '76, donated a flag to Madonna High School to his alma mater. Fish is a 20 year veteran of the Coast Guard. Thank you for your service and for your continued supports of Madonna!**





*"Always go forward and never turn back."*

*St. Junipero Serra.*

*Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. Isaiah 40:31*



**We are at 70% of our goal of \$105,000.**

**Help support the 2020-2021 Blue Don Fund today!**

The Blue Don Fund supplements funds needed to educate our students that tuition alone does not cover. The funds collected go to purchasing text books, classroom supplies, professional development for staff, and upkeep of the physical plant. Your generous funds have been essential to keeping Madonna High School running for over 65 years. To make your impact today, please send your tax-deductible donation to:

Madonna High School  
Attn: Advancement Office  
150 Michael Way  
Weirton, WV 26062

or go to [weirtonmadonna.org/giving/](https://weirtonmadonna.org/giving/)



Your donation could be matched by your employer! Check with your HR Department to see if your employer has a matching gift program.



Are you following us on social media?  
Keep up to date on all the latest news  
and events at Madonna High School.



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Madonna High School  
150 Michael Way  
Weirton, WV 26062

Tel: 304-723-0545  
Fax: 304-723-0564  
E-mail: [info@weirtonmadonna.org](mailto:info@weirtonmadonna.org)  
<https://weirtonmadonna.org>

***Do you know of alumni that would like to receive information from Madonna? Please let us know!***

**FAITH, FAMILY, SERVICE...THROUGH MARY**

***INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING  
MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL?***

***THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS  
YOU  
CAN HELP.***

Volunteer  
Serve on a committee  
Donate to the Blue Don Fund  
Include us in your will

For more information please  
contact Christine Holmes at  
304-723-0545 or  
[cholmes@weirtonmadonna.org](mailto:cholmes@weirtonmadonna.org)

**Upcoming Events\*:**

***Mark your calendars to join us!***

Friends of Madonna Picnic—August 21, 2021  
Homecoming—October 15, 2021

**\*These dates are subject to change.**

Visit our website [www.weirtonmadonna.org](http://www.weirtonmadonna.org) for the  
most up to date information.