

December 2024

page 8



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Savio Family and Friends,



The phrase, *'Tis the Season* used to mean something. Each holiday season had its own special time on the calendar with minimal overlap. Each season had its own moment to shine. As with many aspects of life, the seasons got busier, overlapped, and became something to survive versus something to look forward to. Christmas shopping went from a planned, strategic schedule of visiting brick and mortar stores the day after Thanksgiving to get that special item before it sold out, to online shopping for “deals” in August as we sat alone on our phone or laptop. There is a real drop off of holiday spirit each year as trees come down, wrapping paper is thrown out, and the endless Hallmark Christmas movies dry up. Amidst all of this, though, is the true meaning of Christmas, the celebration of the birth of the Christ child.

Schools follow a similar path and go through the seasons too. The “welcome back” of the start of the year blends into the grind of October and then the kick-off of the holidays with Halloween, to Thanksgiving, to Christmas and New Year’s. As a Catholic school, we focus on our faith in all we do along the road of this journey. We try to keep the “main thing” the main thing. We pray for those who go through tough times associated with the holidays and donate time, talent, and treasure to serve those in need.

As you read this latest edition, you will see pictures and read articles about our journey so far. Yes, some are connected to the seasons, and all are connected to the “reasons” we are here. We thank you for your time, talent, and treasure through the “week of giving” annual fund kick-off, your generous support of time and volunteerism, and the other unique gifts you bring to our school. As you prepare for the remainder of the Holiday Season, open your Advent calendar each day, ponder resolutions for 2025, and remember the loved ones who watch from above, please take some time for “Peace on Earth” within yourself and take some pauses along the way. It is in those moments that we let God enter our head, heart, and soul.

One more thing, please be careful walking through the stores after Christmas as the aisles will be stocked with new items for Valentines Day and even Easter too. We may not be able to slow down the pace of the world, but we can make our own space within it.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cullen'.

TIM CULLEN | PRESIDENT





DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW THAT SAVIO SERVES MEALS YEAR-ROUND?

While there are other organizations that put on an annual Thanksgiving feast to help those in need, what happens the rest of the year? The “Feed My People” contingency from Savio provides an outreach throughout the year. Faculty, staff, and student volunteers sign up for early morning trips to Austin to assist in serving meals to the hungry. Then, they return to school for a full day of classes.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FRIENDSGIVING TRADITION?

The annual tradition of “Friendsgiving” is a Savio Parent Association and House Council school-wide event celebrated by all faculty, staff, and students the Friday before Thanksgiving break. Main dishes, side dishes, and desserts are brought by everyone and shared with all. The variety of offerings reflects the diversity of cultures at our school, along with the traditional turkey and fixings for which the holiday is known.

DID YOU KNOW SAVIO HOSTED ITS FIRST MAKERS’ MARKET?

On Saturday, November 9, nearly 200 shoppers experienced Savio’s first-ever Makers’ Market, organized by members of Savio’s chapter of the National Art Honor Society. Before the event, they learned about starting a small creative business. The students had discussions on supply costs, craftsmanship, pricing, marketing, and sales etiquette. The event hosted 27 different local artisans who each purchased a booth and sold a variety of handcrafted items. The booth fees (totaling over \$700) were donated to Periwinkle Arts at Texas Children’s Hospital.



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Music draws audiences into the spirit of the season

Under the leadership of Mr. Ronnie Stanford, Director of Music for St. Dominic Savio, the Christmas Concert, *A Celebration of the Season*, was held on December 4, in the Savio Gym.

Wind and string orchestra, guitar and jazz ensembles performed beautifully with several solo presentations known as “Coffee House Command Performances” delighted the audience.

Sister Mary Esther Downey, of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, joined alumni for the final performance (pictured below, large photo).



Seniors pray, reflect during last retreat

“Home is Here” is something this senior class heard at their freshman retreat at Savio. Three years, one month, and 27 days later, the Savio Class of 2025 experienced their last retreat with Savio, their Senior Retreat.

On their last retreat, the seniors had time to bond with their classmates, reflect on the past three years, and grow closer to God. A group of dedicated Savio teachers worked together to create a beautiful spiritual experience for the Class of 2025 at Eagles Wings Retreat Center in Burnet.

After the retreat, students shared how the retreat impacted them. They talked about how they could immerse themselves in the beauty of God’s creation. Taking a break from their worries, their school work, and even their phones, seniors were able to find God and see their peers in a new light while getting lost in nature.

During Adoration, seniors sat in front of Jesus, and Savio’s Campus Ministry Director, Gian Gamboa, led worship songs. By the last song, the room was filled with the voices of every senior singing. One student shared, “It was amazing! I just felt so grounded, and so close to everyone. Listening to everyone’s voices worshipping was so moving.”

Through this retreat, seniors were given a chance to have faith-filled conversations with their friends, grow closer to God, look back on the past three years, and look forward to what’s ahead. Savio Theology Department Chair, Mrs. Heyl, one of the teachers in charge of planning this retreat, said, “This year my favorite part was the homily that Msgr. Elmer, the retired priest who lives at Eagle’s Wings, gave at Mass. He spoke about his own memories of being a senior in high school and it reminded me that all of these students are going to go on to accomplish so many incredible things in their lives!”

Written by Marissa Lopez, senior 





Five Minutes with Fr. Tom

Most Rev. Joe Vasquez, Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, granted a request by Father Tom Reitmeyer, JCL, Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, for additional clergy to be made available for faculty, students, and staff of Holy Family Catholic School and St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School. We asked Father Tom for his perspective on the topic with a few questions recently and published a portion of his answers in the previous edition of the magazine. Here is the final installment of Five Minutes with Father Tom.

Why is it important to have clergy in our Catholic schools?

Father Tom: When people think about having priest chaplains in school, their thoughts usually gravitate towards things like Mass, confessions, exposition / adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, teaching theology classes, etc. Much of the value of the priest is seen as what he can do for the community that no one else can provide. However, the value of the priest just being present to the community is just as great. I remember from my own experience in a Catholic high school seeing our priest / principal at our sporting events, talking with students at lunch, visiting classrooms, going on retreats with us. We knew that he cared for us as a spiritual father. Seeing him walk the halls in his clerics was a constant reminder that God was with us and that God would not leave us without strong spiritual leaders. Since we had related to him in casual settings and had a relationship with him outside of the sacraments, it made it easier to speak to him and others about our questions regarding our faith and life in general. We knew he cared for us! I am also grateful for the presence of religious sisters and faithful teachers who sought to lead us towards Christ in every aspect of our school experience and not just in religion class. My hope is that the presence of priests, deacons, and consecrated religious will not only inspire our students to consider what God has called them to do with their life, but that the faculty, staff, and parents would also know that we are there to love them, support them, pray for them, and lead them to Christ.

How will they assist the students on campus?

Father Tom: The priest chaplains who have been assigned to the school campuses are there primarily to provide sacramental support and a priestly presence at school events and throughout the school day. We

will provide Mass, blessings as school events, increased times for the sacrament of reconciliation, exposition / adoration of the blessed sacrament. I have also encouraged Fr. Lijo and Fr. Roopesh to be available before and after school to greet students and parents alike. We hope to be able to provide spiritual support on retreats and staff days of reflection. We will also be available to visit classrooms, lead discussions among students (and faculty if asked), and simply spend time with students during lunch and at school events.

Recently, I visited the pre-K class who has adopted me as their priest for the year. While we mostly talked about Bluey and Paw Patrol, I loved spending time with them at the start of their day. I learned many of their names and they now know mine. I look forward to greeting them and giving them a high five when I see them! For two days in November, I led five sections of Sr. Mary Esther's Junior theology class. We discussed the history and theology of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well as had a conversation about what it is like to celebrate that sacrament and discussed what obstacles may get in the way of us frequenting the sacrament when we need it. I invited twenty-five students to join me for lunch each day for a discussion on a topic of their choosing. It was a question-and-answer session, but we broke bread and got to know each other better.

In addition to the increased presence of priests on campus, we also have two permanent deacons, Deacon Rudy Villarreal and Deacon Dan Lupo, who will be available several hours each month for one-to-one spiritual accompaniment for students, faculty, and staff, who sign up to meet with them. We hope to include more priests, deacons, and consecrated religious from the surrounding area so that the presence of clergy and religious is a common experience at our schools.





Fall Play delights audiences, features cameos by Savio faculty

The Fall Play, *You Can't Take it With You*, was performed at St. Dominic Savio on November 1 & 2. Alice Sycamore, (Clare Whitaker) the charming granddaughter of tax evader, Martin Vanderhof, (Luke Ford) falls in love with her boss's son (Nate Dobson). When her love interest and his family come to the house for dinner on the wrong night, the peculiarities of her eccentric family become apparent and alienate Alice's future in-laws.



Grandparents Day 2024




Warm hearts, big smiles, tight hugs, kind looks, Mass, and lots of visiting time describe the St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School's annual Grandparents Day celebration on November 20.

From an intimate 50-person gathering years ago to nearly 155 grandparents today, students joined their grandparents in the Savio gym for Mass celebrated by Father Francisco Rodriquez, III, Pastor, of St. William Catholic Church in Round Rock. Students were also "adopted" for the day by several grand friends who joined the celebration.

Gina Kerley, Director of the Advancement Department, and Stephanie Boss, Advancement Event Coordinator, hosted the event again this year.

"We served over 120 Danishes, seven food trays with meat, fruit, and cheeses, and offered a coffee bar and lemonade by Johnnie Beans," said Stephanie Boss.

Students had plenty of time to mingle with their families and several took photos outside in the courtyard with the Mary statue.

"It's important to tell your grandchildren your story, so they can pass it down to their family one day," said St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School President Tim Cullen, as he spoke with the families in the audience. 







ST. DOMINIC SAVIO BOOSTER CLUB 2024 ANNUAL EAGLE CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Booster Club of St. Dominic Savio held its annual Eagle Golf Classic at Berry Creek Country Club in Georgetown, on Monday, November 18, with 113 registered golfers. While the day started chilly and raining, clouds quickly gave way for a 10:30 a.m. shotgun start, and sunshine eventually showed up for the final holes. Thank you for supporting the Booster Club!

EAGLE CLASSIC OUTCOME

1ST PLACE

George Kelemen, Jerry Kelemen,
Evan Psencik and Randy Vega

2ND PLACE

Steve Ammons, Tommy Ledbetter,
Ish Mendez and Ben Modisett

3RD PLACE

Brett Haman, Kyle Meissner,
Mark Parinella and Domingo Valdez

LONGEST DRIVE: Matt Kata

CLOSEST TO THE PIN: Ed Tynes



3rd Annual Savio Golf Ball Drop

Students, faculty, teams, and staff helping with the 2024 Eagle Classic sold 537 golf balls for the third annual Savio Golf Ball Drop to support the Savio Booster Club. The winning number was #493, a golf ball purchased by Mr. Jack Cogwin, who won a \$1675.00 gift card. Thank you to all who supported the Savio Eagle Classic and the Golf Ball Drop this year!

MOST BALLS SOLD - TEAM

Cheer Team

MOST BALLS SOLD - HOUSE

Angelus House

MOST BALLS SOLD - INDIVIDUAL

3rd Place – Jayden Sosa

2nd Place – Cyprienne Milbrandt

1st Place – Tripp Reiman

CASINO NIGHT!



**January 25, 2025
6:30pm-10pm**

**\$50/person - BBQ Dinner - Margaritas - Savio Gym
\$500 in "Chips"**



Join Us for a Night of Fun, Food, and Community at Casino Night!

Mark your calendars for Casino Night at St. Dominic Savio! This special event promises an unforgettable night filled with great food, drinks, and activities for everyone, even if you are not a fan of traditional casino games.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Casino Night is not just for those who love gambling! We have designed the event to be fun and engaging for everyone, whether you are a card shark or simply looking for a great night out. Your ticket includes a delicious BBQ dinner, margaritas, and \$500 in "chips" to try your hand at a variety of casino-style games. Not interested in casino games? No problem! You can enjoy other entertainment, music, and the chance to connect with others in a lively, friendly atmosphere.

WHY ATTEND?

This is more than just a casino-themed event—it is an opportunity to build stronger community bonds. Come meet your fellow Savio parents, reconnect with friends, and make new connections. Casino Night is the perfect setting for a memorable evening, filled with laughter and shared experiences. Plus, this is our "kick-off" event for Soiree 2025 to be held in April. We will be collecting items for our live and silent auctions, and our wine and whiskey pull that evening. Attendees will receive extra gambling chips for any item they bring for Soiree.

Gather your friends and join us for an evening of community spirit and excitement. Get your tickets by scanning the QR code or by visiting tinyurl.com/saviocasino. We cannot wait to see you there! 🍷



THE SAVIO DIFFERENCE

Alumnae sisters open clothing boutique



"We learned the importance of serving during our time at Savio."

Connor Neill, Savio '17



moodzandvibe.com

@shopmoodzandvibe

5555 N Lamar Blvd, Ste J107

Austin, TX 78751

Tues-Sat 10am-4pm

Use code SAVIO15 for 15% off your entire order online or in store

Savio alumnae Connor Neill ('17) and Caitlin Neill ('21), have remained close to their faith while starting their own business, located in Austin.

Why/how did you start the business in high school?

We originally started the brand when Caitlin was a freshman at Savio and Connor was a freshman at Ole Miss. Caitlin started making beaded necklaces & bracelets for her and her friends and Connor's friends soon wanted their own for sorority & college events. Our first product line outside of jewelry was sorority pin-back buttons. We came up with the idea to rebrand as a clothing boutique during the pandemic and made it a reality in the fall of 2020.

How did Savio prepare you for being a business owner?

Connor: We learned the importance of serving during our time at Savio through things like Imago Christi Day and serving at Feed My People. We wanted to make sure that our boutique gave back. Since 2023, Moodz & Vibe has donated over \$10,000 to charities across the country through our shopping giveback program.

Caitlin: I took photography with Mrs. Robbins all through high school, completing an AP portfolio of self-portraits my senior year. Those classes have been very beneficial now that I am responsible for creating content for both our social media and website.

Describe your faith life today.

Connor: In college, I found a strong Catholic community at St. John the Evangelist, where I participated in Bible study and taught religious education. Since moving back to Austin, I have returned to my home parish of St. Albert the Great. Caitlin and I are very thankful for the support our parish family has shown our boutique!

Caitlin: Many of the friends that I have made at the University of Alabama are also Catholic so we often go to Mass at St. Francis of Assisi together. I am also part of a Greek life girls Bible study group.

Connor graduated from the University of Mississippi with a BBA in Marketing in 2021 and received her MS in Marketing Analytics from the University of Texas in 2022. In addition to running the boutique, she is a Senior Associate at Prophet, a global brand & marketing consulting firm. Caitlin will graduate with her BS in Fashion Retailing and a minor in Business from the University of Alabama in May 2025. Her plans after graduation are to return to Austin and run the boutique full time.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 6
Faculty In-Service -
no students

JANUARY 7
First day for students

JANUARY 11
TPSMEA Regional

JANUARY 11
Iron Eagles Robotics
Competition

JANUARY 11
Diocese of Austin
Saints & Scholars
Dinner

JANUARY 16
Blood Drive

JANUARY 17
Savio New Parent
Information Session

JANUARY 20
MLK Day - No School

JANUARY 24
Parent Social, Tony C's

JANUARY 25
Casino Night, Gym

JANUARY 25
Iron Eagles FTC
Xtreme Robotics
Competition

JANUARY 31
Winter Sports Pep Rally

JANUARY 27-31
Catholic Schools Week

FEBRUARY 7
Adoration

FEBRUARY 14
Savio Prospective
Parents Breakfast

FEBRUARY 20
SPA Freshman
Breakfast

FEBRUARY 16-20
Engineering Week

MARCH 17-21
Spring Break

Scan to see more events on
the school calendar:



Haute Spot
Save the Date



SAVIO SOIREE
APRIL 26, 2025





Save the Date!



**St. Dominic Savio Catholic
High School Graduation**



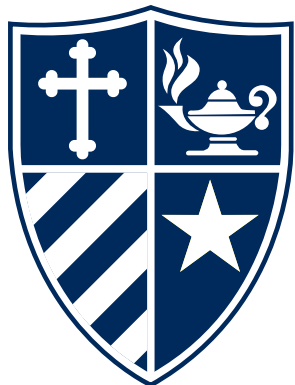
**May 24, 2025
10 a.m., Riverbend Centre**

Accepting Nominations Now!



*Watch your email for the nomination forms
or visit www.saviochs.org.*

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Forming Servant Leaders in the Image of Christ

MAKERS' MARKET

Over 200 shoppers attended Savio's first Makers' Market in early November. The event provided the opportunity for students to learn business skills while supporting Periwinkle Arts at Texas Children's Hospital.

