

November & December VILLAGER VIEW

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." - James 1:2-4 NIV

GRATITUDE AND GIVING EVENT

On November 19, OLMA hosted the first Gratitude and Giving event, a night that showcased OLMA's great progress and future potential. The school's community of alumni, parents, and friends was invited to spend a night in the new Leadership Center.

First, staff members shared their personal experiences at OLMA and expressed their belief in the school's mission. Then, students highlighted the importance of financial aid in their own OLMA journey, emphasizing that without the generosity of others, they would not have the opportunities they do now.

Along with the inspiring speeches, the Leadership 3 class filled the center, standing next to presentations of their Capstone Project. The guests were invited to mingle, enjoy the hor d'oeuvres, and talk to the students about their projects. The girls

were great examples of what OLMA is about: teaching girls how to lead and make an impact in their community. The capstones covered a variety of topics, from religious retreats to revamping the school greenhouse. As people toured the Leadership Center, they were able to listen to the girls' ideas and ask questions as well.

To top off the night, Mrs. Coyle unexpectedly announced that OLMA would be receiving another \$1 million donation by the one and only Mrs. Rose Marie Davis. Overall, the night displayed the great work done at OLMA and the importance of the generosity of OLMA donors. On behalf of the entire OLMA community, the Journalism iBlock would like to thank everyone who believes in OLMA and makes it the special school it is.



VILLAGER VIEW

OLMA WELCOMES KAREN ROGERS

This past November, the Villagers welcomed local 6ABC Action News Meteorologist Karen Rogers to OLMA to be awarded the Rose Marie Davis Woman in Leadership Award! Mrs. Rogers attended Rutgers University, earning dual degrees in Communications and Sociology, and Mississippi State University, where she earned the rigorous Broadcast Meteorology certificate. She grew up with nine brothers and sisters, the youngest of ten, which doubled as a loving family and strong support system throughout her career.

She was introduced and interviewed by senior Erin McGonigle, who asked about what motivated Rogers to become a meteorologist, how she balances work, family, and community service, and her advice to high school girls, especially at OLMA. She shared how she looks up to Rose Marie Davis and the positive impact she has left on those around her, emphasizing that she strives to be a strong leader like Davis. The biggest takeaway students concluded from Karen Rogers's visit was to be open-minded and flexible; you never know what opportunities may come your way.

As the first woman to receive the Rose Marie Davis Woman in Leadership Award, Karen Rogers sets a great example for how to be a strong female leader. OLMA teaches students that they have the power to reach their dreams, and with an annual award honoring women who have done just that, OLMA takes the next step in leading a world of change.

Erin McGonigle '26

JUNIOR RING MASS

Our Lady of Mercy Academy's Junior Ring Mass took place on December 8, 2025, on the day of the Immaculate Conception. Juniors were reminded that the rings presented to them are more than just a piece of jewelry. The rings symbolize mercy and the value of sisterhood. The entire school, along with the families of the Junior class, gathered together for the ultimate ceremony of sisterhood. The Class of 2027 received their rings and were told to have their loved ones spin the ring 27 times, with the last being the special spin that seals in all of the accumulated luck for the upcoming year. This ceremony was a wonderful and memorable moment for the Class of 2027!

Ella Cummins '27



VILLAGER VIEW

SPIRIT WEEK AND POWDERPUFF

The week leading up to Powder Puff was full of fun competition throughout the OLMA community! Spirit week began with a green-and-gold dress-down day and an epic rock-paper-scissors duel. It was a battle between all of the grades, but in the end, the freshmen won. On day 2, the dress down was bikers vs. surfers, and the students had a fun time finding hidden gold coins around the school. Next, on day 3, OLMA traveled back in time: freshmen went back to the 70s, sophomores to the 80s, juniors to the 90s, and seniors to the 2000s. Day 4 was dress-like-a-teacher day, and almost every teacher had a doppelganger walking around the school. Finally, day 5 arrived, the most anticipated day of the week: Powderpuff. The whole day was filled with excitement while waiting for the game. Each grade had been practicing all week, and everything was leading up to this moment. The school day ended, and all anyone could do was wait. Food trucks came, and students filled up before their game. Night fell, the lights turned on, and the game was about to begin.

We started off with introductions and themes. This year, the freshmen were Bad Piggies from Angry Birds, the sophomores were Speedy Sonic, the juniors went all-out neon, and the seniors represented the country with a theme of USA.

Finally, it was game time. First: Freshmen vs. Seniors. The freshmen put up a good fight, but in the end, the seniors came on top, winning the game. Next: Sophomores vs. Juniors. The score kept going back and forth, but the sophomores came out strong at the end. Finally, the championship game: Sophomores vs. Seniors. The game was close, and you could feel the fans' excitement roaring from their Adirondack chairs. It came down to the wire, but the sophomores had an amazing play, stealing the ball from the seniors and running it in for a touchdown.

With a groundbreaking win for the sophomores, they became the first sophomore class in all of OLMA Powderpuff history to win the championship. The MVP of the night was Vienna Fries, who scored many touchdowns and secured the win for her class.

Spirit week was a fun and eventful week that let us take a break from the stresses of school life. It is a week that reminds us of the sisterhood at OLMA, especially with the passionate and competitive spirit of the OLMA Villagers.

SEMI

On Thursday, November 6, the OLMA students attended their semi-formal, an amazing night that all grades enjoyed together. The night was held at Adelphia Restaurant in Deptford, where the girls enjoyed an amazing dinner and many refreshments! Every girl looked truly beautiful in their unique dress and stunning accessories. The seniors brought the energy and relished every moment at their last semi while the freshmen absorbed the magic of their first OLMA dance. With flower crowns, beautiful centerpieces, and a choreographed dance from two juniors, the night was definitely memorable for all.

Elizabeth Dodd '29



Alyssa Castellini '29

VILLAGER VIEW

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

This edition's Student Spotlight is Riley Rae Cercioğlu. Riley Rae submitted an 8th-grade essay to receive the Catholic Daughters of America's 2025 National Youth Scholarship Award! Riley wrote her essay based on this bible quote that stated "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." She took this quote and compared it to her current life. In June, she was informed that she won the award for a scholarship here at OLMA. Riley Rae represents the best qualities of hard work, character, and leadership, which is why she is such an amazing student.

Beyond her scholarship award, she is also a student who leads by example. She participates in class discussions, helps classmates understand the concepts of their lessons, and takes initiative when it comes to helping the school. She can be counted on by her teachers, and her peers admire her drive and determination. By recognizing her in the student spotlight, we hope to not only celebrate her achievements but also highlight the positive impact she has on those around her.

Gwen Greco '29



OLMA SPORTS

The Villagers' sports teams have been excelling so far this winter! The season has a while to go, and we're looking forward to seeing even more from these great teams. The swim team has been working hard in the pool and dedicating lots of time to help the team flourish. They are currently undefeated (5-0) with wins over Mainland, Atlantic City, Cherry Hill East, Ocean City, and EHT. They are currently ranked number one in the Cape Atlantic League. Keep up the good work!

The bowling team is constantly putting in 100% effort in every practice and match. The hard work has paid off and shows in the alley. They had a fantastic win against Hammonton. Freshman Taylor Pierson leads the team with the highest average of 108.77! She also leads the team's highest game with a win of 162.

With senior Gwen O'Hara and junior leaders Katelyn Coryell and Khalia Lewis, the basketball team has had an impressive season so far. Khalia Lewis reached her 1,000th point in a win against Absegami and continues to improve. Even after coming off an ankle injury, she scored 20 points against Cinnaminson on the road. Katelyn Coryell reached 100 career 3-pointers and has scored 110 points in just eight games. Starters Gwen O'Hara, Chynna Fiddler, and Lucca Grungo contributed to the win against CAL rival Absegami. We look forward to seeing their success as the season progresses!

Katie Capalbo '26



VILLAGER VIEW

OLMA CHRISTMAS

OLMA CHRISTMAS AND ADVENT ANGELS

Christmas at OLMA is one of the most anticipated times of the year. The Christmas season kicks off right after Thanksgiving when our amazing OLMA parents begin to decorate the hallways. Filled with bright lights, luscious green garland, and vibrant ornaments, you can count on the OLMA parents to make it feel like Christmas exploded in the school. The hallways bustle with not only bright decorations, but also with OLMA's most favorite and cherished tradition: Advent Angels, a tradition filled with love, giving, and thoughtfulness. Anyone who wants to participate fills out an interest sheet where they include all of their favorite things. The names are then drawn by a random student in the school who becomes the anonymous "Advent Angel." They are in charge of decorating their "Advent Friend's" locker and giving them gifts throughout the Christmas season. The tradition ends on OLMA Christmas, the last day before we leave for break, when Advent Angel identities are revealed as the final gift is presented. The day is filled with Christmas games and a surprise visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus! As everyone says their goodbyes before leaving for winter break, happiness and joy radiate throughout the school, and everyone leaves with a smile.

Sydney Bickett '26

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

All over the globe, families celebrate the holidays, marking the arrival of Christmas with long-established traditions and festivities. From seafood feasts in Australia to festive witches in Italy and even Santa surfers in SoCal, the history of these traditions creates a special bond for all throughout the holiday season. And even though countries around the world have created exciting, new, and big traditions, sometimes the ones that hold a special place in our hearts are the ones we've made with our own loved ones. So when thinking about the holidays, OLMA Journalism asked its fellow students, "What is your favorite Christmas tradition?"

The unanimous first answer was decorating. Whether it was painting ornaments, hanging popcorn garland, or putting the star on top of the tree, the girls love a good December afternoon dedicated to decorating. Students also shared fun memories of gathering around the tree with their siblings and singing Christmas classics. (And their renditions of Mariah Carey were scarily accurate.) Some of our OLMA families prefer a natural tree they choose each year, creating a tradition of going to their local Christmas tree farms, while others choose an artificial tree to decorate.

On the topic of decorations, Mrs. Keating celebrates the holidays with her family by participating in an unforgettable tradition: hiding the pickle! Every year, an ornament-shaped pickle is the last to be hung on the tree, and whoever finds it on Christmas morning gets to open up the first present! Some believe the tradition originated in Germany, but a poll from The New York Times found that 91% of Germans never heard of it. While its origins are unknown, it's safe to say that hiding the pickle is easily one of OLMA's favorite Christmas festivities.

However, some of our girls prefer a sweet treat instead of a "pickle." This includes delivering homemade cookies to friends and family, an act of holiday cheer! While these traditions vary, they each contribute to the Christmas season we all love. From OLMA Journalism, we hope you and your family had a safe and joyous holiday season!

TALENT SHOW

Thanks to our very own Leadership Council, a talent show was held here at OLMA! The show was hosted on the last day before the holiday break during the Christmas celebrations. Students were able to express their talents and share them with the school. There were three winning acts. In third place, junior MJ Howard sang a lovely cover of "Once Upon a December." Second place was given to Giabella DeMaria, Lily Ciavardone, and Anna Vitarelli as they played the piano, the harmonica, and sang a beautiful rendition of "Piano Man" by Billy Joel. Finally, first place was awarded to freshman Scotlyn Pace, who sang "Heart of Stone." Congratulations to both the Academic Team skit and the Treblemakers act for their great performances as well!

Daniella Brescia '29



Theresa Thomas '28

VILLAGER VIEW

MONTHLY SPECIALS

OLMA THANKSGIVING

When shadows spend a day at OLMA, when people visit for Open House, when families come for a tour, the lunch served at OLMA is always, always, always (or at least should be always) mentioned. Every day, Mrs. Stanzione, Mrs. Krebs, and Mrs. Saul prepare a spread that rivals even the fanciest schools in our nation. They pour love into their cooking, from morning cookies to delicious pasta. Girls at OLMA do not buy lunch because they don't feel like packing food—they buy lunch because the food at OLMA is delicious and never disappoints.

Perhaps the best lunch of the year, and proof that OLMA has the best lunch ladies as well, is OLMA Thanksgiving. The school celebrates Thanksgiving each year on the Thursday before break, and without the dedication of our cafe staff, this would not be possible.

Our wonderful chefs cook everything a proper Thanksgiving feast needs: turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, gravy, string bean casserole, sweet potatoes with marshmallows, apple pie, and of course, pumpkin pie. With a plate full of mouth-watering food, students can spend a lunch with their friends and be reminded of everything they have to be thankful for.

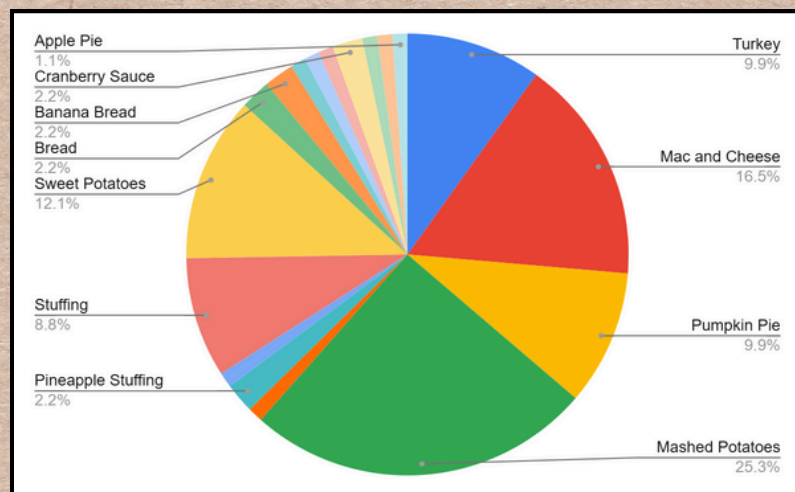
OLMA Thanksgiving is just one more aspect of OLMA that shows how much we all care for each other and how our school is like no other. Thanksgiving is about being with family and spending time giving thanks. OLMA Thanksgiving reminds girls that family can be found in all different places, and the family at OLMA is a family for life.

Evangeline Catanese '26

OLMA JOURNALISM IS GRATEFUL FOR...

APUSH 30 point curve - Dunking Donuts - strawberry acai refresher with lemonade - everything bagels - Starbucks - sunglasses - finishing the Leaf Project for extra credit - Sydney Bickett - Gwen Greco - crazy cupcakes - kindles - orange - beds - online shopping - diet coke - sushi - Gossip Girl - Dancing with the Stars - acrylics - OLMA - blue raspberry Jolly Ranchers - swedish candy - limited edition cherry Owala - 7Brew sugar cookie blondie - early action college applications being done - Stanley cups - Christmas - Jim Main's cannolis - Wingstop Louisiana Voodoo Fries - sweatpants - Chick-Fil-A chicken minis - ice water after Greece - a good nap - sun roofs - Day 3 - Apple CarPlay - Day 4 - milk chocolate - Saquon Barkely - cotton candy flavor - music - crunchy blueberries - crunchy green grapes - slightly unripe peaches - plums - light pink nail polish - strawberries - dress down days - warm towels - red velvet cake - OLMA smores cookies - Belly choosing Conrad - Kaylee Franklin - TikTok edits - Heimler - mixing jewelry metals - clean sheets - 67 - the word "love" - spicy Dr. Pepper

OLMA's THANKSGIVING FOOD FAVORITES



Kaylee Franklin '26

VILLAGER VIEW

HOT TOPIC

THOUGHTS ON ZOOTOPIA 2

On Tuesday, November 25, I watched the amazing movie Zootopia 2 for my Dad's birthday. When I was 7, I watched the first movie Zootopia, and I loved it so much that I was ecstatic when I found out there was going to be a second movie. Usually, sequel movies are never as good as the first one, but I was pleasantly surprised by how well they did with this one. Specifically, they did a great job creating a new, unique plot. I also loved the references to the original movie as the script writers added elements from the first into the second, creating a nostalgic feeling for the viewers.

Now onto the movie itself: I think something that has been keeping the viewers' angst is the slow-burning romance between Nick and Judy. The first movie was a little flirty, and there was a slight romantic vibe between the two. The second movie definitely explored their relationship, and I totally thought there was going to be a declaration of love at the end. Their trust, bond, and frequent flirting were definitely unusual for two regular work partners. Moving on, the jokes in the movie were great and had my family cracking up the entire time. I thought the quips were perfect for both kids and adults to enjoy. Nick is always funny, but the beaver was really the star of the show, with her voice, character, and humor. Finally, the plot twist was amazing, and even though I was invested the entire time, I was really taken aback when I found out the truth. Looking back, I can see all the clues leading up to the plot twist, but I was still in shock. All in all, I would say Zootopia 2 is one of the best movies Disney has made in a while, and I would definitely recommend that everyone give it a watch.

Erin McMahon '26

OLMA & PREP THEATER UPDATES

Join us on March 6, 7, and 8 to see OLMA and St. Augustine's spring musical: *The Little Mermaid*!

Take a look at who will be performing this spring!

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ariel- Stephanie Hope | Aquata/Princess- Kiley Boyle | Giana Verrico |
| Ursula- MJ Howard | Andrina/Princess- Abbie Bryson | Alexis McGrath |
| Prince Eric- Michael Sherron | Arista/Princess- Emily Arakelian | Rose Del Camp |
| Sebastian- Olivia Robinson | Allana/Princess- Marissa Monzo | Sage Hall |
| King Triton- Joseph Coco | Adella/Princess- Mia Mauriello | Victoria Vera |
| Flounder- Evelyn Cooper | Atina/Princess- Kari Ancharski | Aryana Santillan |
| Chef Louis- Trevor Clark | | Brooke Morey |
| Scuttle- Sadie Seabrook | Ensemble: | Justin Panella |
| Flotsam- Carter Berth | Jacqueline Hooven | Julienne Pabalines |
| Jetsam- Logan Berth | Scotlyn Pace | Akeem Mills |
| Grimsby- Will Dukich | Anella Furia | Puri Garzone |
| | Meghan Maupin | |

Sage Hall '29

VILLAGER VIEW

TEACHER FEATURE

Ms. Morrell is the kind of teacher who brings heart, leadership, and true purpose into everything she does, which is why she's so deserving of being our Teacher Feature. One thing that stands out about her is how deeply she values our school traditions- especially Sisterhood Day. She talks about it with such pride because it represents what she believes in: students bonding, lifting one another up, and sharing the real spirit of sisterhood. That spirit shows in her classroom every single day. She doesn't just teach us; she creates a space where we feel connected, supported, and proud to be part of something bigger.

What makes Ms. Morrell exceptional is how she empowers young women to believe in themselves. She is constantly giving us real-life skills, not just academic lessons, so we learn to trust our voices, speak up, and create positive change beyond OLMA. She models what strength looks like by the way she supports other women she works with-she listens, learns, and collaborates because she recognizes that everyone has their own unique gifts. In her classes, she teaches her students that being accountable, communicating clearly, treating everyone with respect, and putting in the work can make a real impact. Being in her classroom doesn't just make you smarter-it makes you stronger.

Another huge part of why Ms. Morrell shines at OLMA is the love she has for this school and what it stands for. Watching her own daughters grow up here only strengthened her belief in a faith-based education that empowers young women to become confident leaders. You can see the joy it brings her to witness students grow year after year, and that joy is contagious. She came to OLMA because she believed in the mission, and she stayed because she truly sees that mission alive in all of us. That dedication, that passion, and that constant encouragement are exactly why Ms. Morrell deserves to be recognized-and why she means so much to her students.

Isabella Bond '27



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