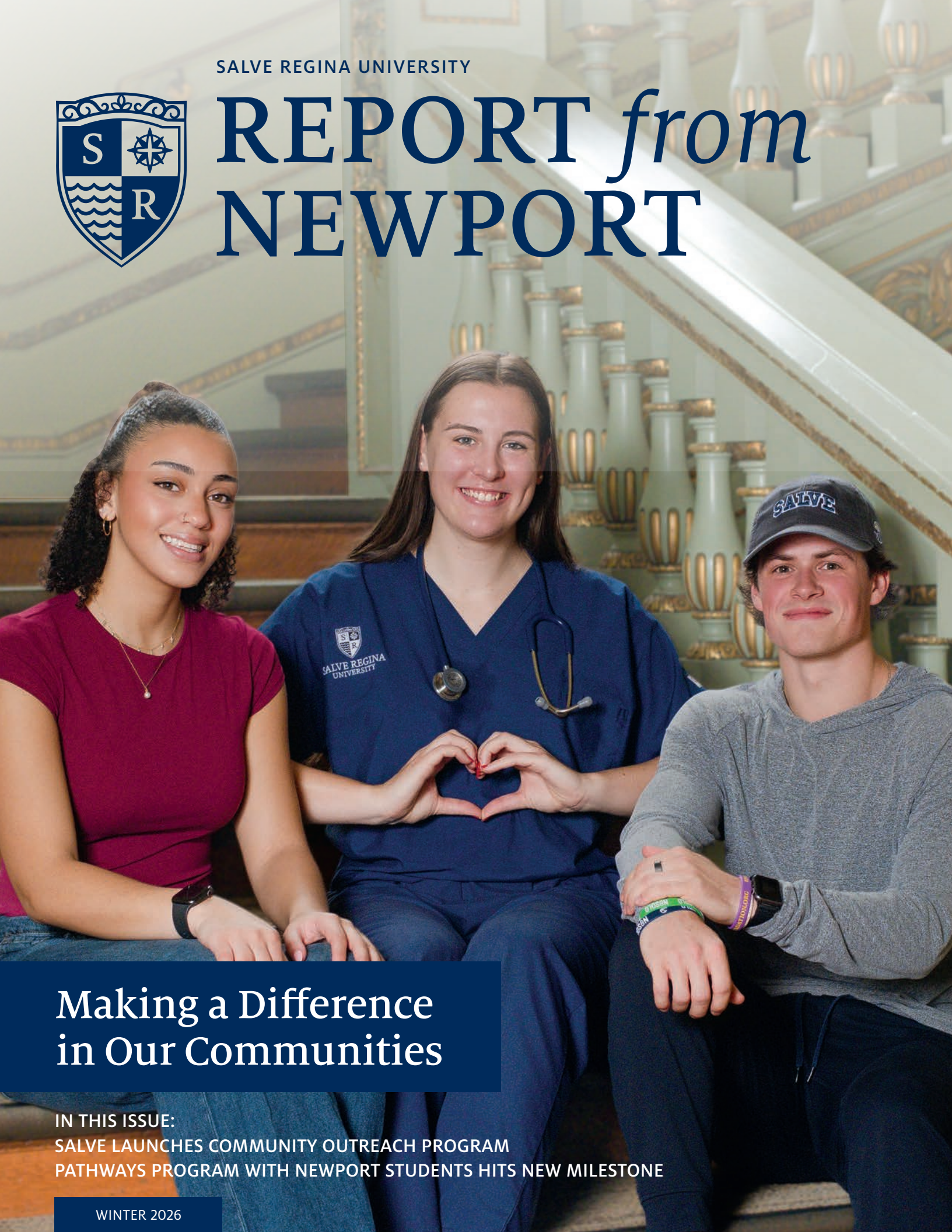
SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

REPORT *from* NEWPORT



Making a Difference in Our Communities

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WINTER 2026

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Report from Newport

The Magazine of
Salve Regina University

Winter 2026

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About the Cover
(From left) Liz McGuirl '29, biology major, Deanna Linscott '26, nursing major and Jonathan Hammel '26, accounting major, represent a few of the many academic disciplines in which Salve students are making a difference.

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SALVE REGINA
UNIVERSITY

Dear Salve Community:

Salve's longstanding tradition of service connects us with our local communities in so many ways.

From our new community health and wellness outreach program to our partnership with Rogers High School that prepares students for college, our Salve students, faculty and staff are mercy in action. Our alumni, too, bring the guiding vision of Catherine McAuley beyond campus into their own communities across the nation and around the world as they work to make a difference through meaningful and impactful change.

It is an exciting time as our campus landscape is transformed by construction and renovation projects such as our new residence hall and pavilion. As these new facilities take shape – and existing areas undergo upgrades – they will redefine the Salve experience when they open for the fall 2026 semester, creating a more vibrant campus for all.

Now in its final year, Salve's comprehensive campaign is already having a tremendous impact for our community. I invite you to join us by making this your moment to support the University as our students continue their work in the classroom and in the community, always with a dedication to our Salve mission that strives for a more harmonious, just and merciful world.

Wishing you all the best,

Kelli J. Armstrong, Ph.D.
President

OUR MISSION.
OUR MOMENT.
The Campaign for
Salve Regina University

For stories highlighting the impact of Salve's comprehensive campaign, look for ***Our Mission. Our Moment.*** throughout the issue.

OUR MISSION.
OUR MOMENT.

The Campaign for
Salve Regina University

Together, We Are Closing in on a Milestone

As the campaign enters its final year, President Kelli J. Armstrong reflects on this special moment in Salve's history.

President Armstrong is humbled and inspired as she shares the progress of *Our Mission. Our Moment.*

The support we've received is remarkable. The Salve community's commitment to our mercy mission is clear—and the more than $70 million raised demonstrates the power of that commitment. This campaign is making a lasting impact," said Armstrong.

"Our work to advance Salve is never done," she continued. "We've already achieved so much, but we can't be complacent – the stakes are just too high and I think of the students and their families who depend on us. Behind every dollar is a member of our Salve family who is impacted for the better because of the generosity of campaign donors."

With the campaign's $75 million goal in sight, Armstrong explained that there are three remaining priorities in the final stretch: the **Mercy Response Fund**, the **Athletics Excellence Fund** and the **Experiential Learning Fund**.

"The Mercy Response Fund is really a manifestation of our mercy mission," explained Armstrong. "It provides a safety net for students whose financial circumstances change during the academic year, outside of the normal financial aid process. If a parent loses a job due to a layoff or illness, students can apply for assistance. It's heart-wrenching when I speak with students who think they're going to have to abandon their education due to circumstances beyond their control. When they realize there's a potential solution, their gratitude is immense."

Recognizing the vital role that athletics play in the physical and mental health of Salve students, the Athletics Excellence Fund provides the resources necessary to upgrade campus facilities – including the strength and conditioning center, the sports medicine suite and the fitness center.

"Close to a quarter of our students are varsity athletes, and it's our responsibility to ensure that they have the resources to stay healthy and injury-free," Armstrong explained. "With our move to the NEWMAC, we are now in a more competitive league. There are also hundreds of students who are recreational athletes or focused on their own personal fitness. We want them to stay and play on campus, because that helps strengthen our community – so we need to improve our general fitness facilities, too."

Armstrong points to the Salve Compass Program as a driver for increased numbers of students applying to and enrolling at Salve, with the University yielding candidates who – in years past – might not have considered the school. The Experiential Learning Fund expands hands-on learning opportunities for Compass Summer programs, internships and other activities, including faculty-led research projects.

"We've built something truly special with the Salve Compass," said Armstrong. "It's our signature experiential learning program and this fund will create additional avenues throughout the year for students to put their education into action – gaining career-ready skills as undergraduates."

Armstrong concluded the conversation with an invitation to those who have not yet participated in ***Our Mission. Our Moment.***

"This campaign lifts our entire Salve community," she said. "I encourage families, alumni, and friends to invest in the area that matters most to them and to the mission we share. The power of one gift, your gift, is extraordinary. When taken collectively, the power of many is limitless."

FOR MORE INFORMATION
on ***Our Mission. Our Moment.*** and its priorities, please contact **MaeLynn Patten** at maelynn.patten@salve.edu • 401-341-2143.

Putting the Mission in Motion

A new health and wellness outreach program enables students to teach while they learn.

BY JULIE MILLER

OUR MISSION.
OUR MOMENT.
The Campaign for
Salve Regina University

THE SISTERS OF MERCY WERE KNOWN AS THE "WALKING SISTERS" in the 1830s when Catherine McAuley founded the order with a mission to leave the cloister and serve in the communities where they were needed. Even as time and technology progress, that mission remains at the heart of what makes Salve, Salve.

In September 2025, Salve launched a new Health and Wellness Community Outreach program focused on educating a rising generation of health care and mental health professionals by serving communities in need. Working from a new, fully equipped educational mobile unit and in partnership with health care and community organizations, Salve students provide on-site health care and preventive screening education aiding in the effort to decrease health care access disparities across the state.

U.S. Senator Jack Reed, who played a key role in making the program a reality, and Newport Mayor Charlie Holder, who is working with the University and community organizations to plan the outreach locations, joined the celebration to launch the new program.

"This program truly puts our mission in motion, creating exceptional learning opportunities for our students, supporting our communities and providing in-service training to our partner health care providers," said Dr. Kelli J. Armstrong, president. "We're so grateful to Senator Reed for championing this project."

Dr. Debra Cherubini and U.S. Senator Jack Reed

> "This program truly puts our mission in motion, creating exceptional learning opportunities for our students, supporting the communities and providing training to our health care providers.
>
> DR. KELLI J. ARMSTRONG

A WELLNESS CLASSROOM ON WHEELS

The heart of the program is the new 40-foot mobile educational unit, which is Americans with Disability Act (ADA)-compliant. It is equipped with two private counseling rooms and one exam room that includes health and wellness education models and materials. When it is out on its missions, the mobile unit is staffed by six to nine students and faculty from Salve's nursing, social work and health science degree programs, as well as the Salve Compass program, with drivers from Salve's Department of Public Safety.

Thank you to our community outreach program sponsors

BANK NEWPORT

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

> Rhode Island needs more health care professionals and Salve Regina is stepping up to help train and prepare the next generation of nurses, social workers, mental health professionals and others with hands-on experience serving Rhode Islanders in need, right in their communities.
>
> U.S. SENATOR JACK REED

The program is the brainchild of Dr. Debra Cherubini, associate professor of nursing and director of the new program. Reed played a key role in getting the project off the ground by delivering a $1,950,000 federal earmark from the Health Resources and Services Administration that enabled the University to purchase and equip the mobile unit as well as purchase new simulation technology for our nursing labs that support the program.

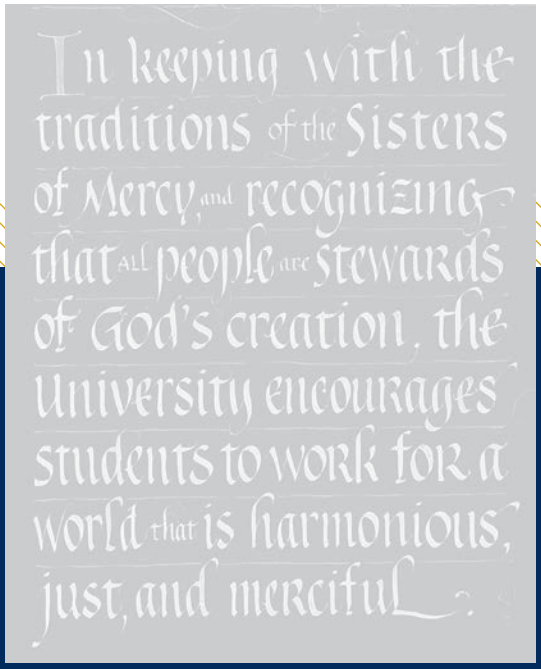
"Rhode Island needs more health care professionals and Salve Regina is stepping up to help train and prepare the next

generation of nurses, social workers, mental health professionals and others with hands-on experience serving Rhode Islanders in need, right in their communities," said Reed.

One of those future health care professionals is nursing student Taylor Barnaby '26, currently an intern in the pediatric emergency department at Hasbro Children's hospital in Providence.

"As a nursing major and a senior, I've been learning since day one that the first step in caring for people is prevention," said Barnaby. "We do this by educating people about the importance of screenings, the signs of chronic conditions and how to take precautions.

"With this mobile classroom we have the opportunity to do more than present to our fellow students and instructors," she continued. "We will work directly with members of the community, hear their questions and see what works and what doesn't, so we can learn while we teach."



MATCHING PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Working with Newport Mayor Charlie Holder, Dr. Debra Cherubini, director of Salve's Health and Wellness Community Outreach program, first identified local Newport organizations serving vulnerable populations, then began reaching out to understand what kinds of health care topics would most benefit their clients. In collaboration with the Edward King House Senior Center, Conexión Latina, the Boys and Girls Club and others, Cherubini identified the initial list of topics – stress and anxiety management, dental health, pregnancy wellness, how to read and understand food labels, and more.

Students participating in the program then prepared educational materials to address those topics, including lists of resources where people can get treatment and help.

"For this program to truly help, it's important that we don't just bring people what we want to teach them, but what they actually need," said Cherubini. "It shows students how important it is for them to do community assessment. Determining a community's needs ahead of time will help caregivers to be more prepared when their patients are actually sick. And we know that education and preventive care are highly effective in preventing chronic illness."

At the program's launch in September 2025, there were 12 community partners on board. The first mobilization was October 18, on the Salve campus, as a hub of the "Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide" event, where education focused on suicide prevention and support. Its first off-campus visits were to Saint Joseph's Church food pantry and the Newport Salvation Army, with more in the works.

Cherubini continues to work with Holder and local hospitals and community organizations across Rhode Island to plan the outreach locations for the mobile unit, and with local businesses who wish to support the program. For more information, please contact debra.cherubini@salve.edu.

TO SUPPORT
the Health and Wellness Community Outreach program, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

EYE CARE FOR RHODE ISLAND HELPS STUDENTS ENVISION CAREERS IN MEDICAL FIELDS

BY JULIE MILLER

To become a physician's assistant (PA), students need to have more than 1,000 hours of hands-on patient experience – before they can even apply to a PA program.

For close to a decade, Eye Care for Rhode Island (ECRI) has stepped into that role for Salve students, opening their practice to up-and-coming optometrists, PAs, research technicians and other health care professionals to gain critical experience. The Middletown, Rhode Island, practice is a top tier eye care provider committed to consistent excellence, compassionate service and professional integrity.

Dr. Kimberly Curesky, lecturer and health advisor in the Department of Biology and Biological Sciences, assists pre-health students and alumni with medical school applications and guides them on coursework, research and internships.

"While our nursing programs have clinical support, students in pre-health programs also are required to serve those all-important patient hours," she explained. "ECRI has been an amazing partner in helping us fulfill those requirements – not just for those who want to become optometrists, but for students in other pre-health programs too."

"None of us got here by ourselves. Bringing students along is paying it forward – someone did it for us," said ECRI's Dr. Frederic J. Kelley III, O.D. "Our method for training Salve students is based on how we train our own technicians. We put them in with the technicians and they become peers."

"The students coming here from Salve are motivated, curious and dedicated," he added. "When we bring in a young person who has a goal in mind, who wants to understand health care, it makes us better at what we do. Our patients also want to be part of helping local students to do well. It's nothing but a positive on all sides."

ON THE PATH TO A DREAM CAREER

For Jackson Brenek '26, a paid intern at ECRI, optometry has always been his dream career.

"When I was in first grade the teacher kept moving my seat up until I was in the front row because I couldn't see the board," he recalled. "My mom took me to the eye doctor, and I remember getting that first pair of glasses. Driving home from the appointment I could see trees, and words on street signs for the first time. It made my mom cry. I've wanted to help do that for a family ever since."

When he started at ECRI, Brenek observed the technicians for a week. Then he would get one patient task at a time,

Dr. Frederic J. Kelley III, O.D. and Jackson Brenek '26

> "Our method for training Salve students is based on how we train our own technicians. We put them in with the technicians and they become peers.
>
> DR. FREDERIC J. KELLEY III, O.D.

“I see how the doctors and techs talk to patients and get the answers they need. With kids and special needs patients it’s particularly important to get good answers. Seeing what these doctors do helps me understand how talking to the patient matters almost more than what you see.

JACKSON BRENEK '26

learning the charting system and gradually building up to taking patient medical histories, testing their vision, taking refractions to anticipate their prescriptions, dilating their pupils and sending them in to the doctor.

"The first learning curve is tough, but the doctors and techs take the time to help," Brenek said. "Beyond that, they are always pulling me aside to show me interesting things they see and bringing out their books. The knowledge they share helps so much – I'm exposed to things I wouldn't be learning until the second year of optometry school."

More importantly, Brenek values the patient experience. "I see how the doctors and techs talk to patients and get the answers they need. With kids and special needs patients it's particularly important to get good answers. Seeing what these doctors do helps me understand how talking to the patient matters almost more than what you see."

CRITICAL MENTORING

Samantha Winters '25 interned at ECRI while she was a biology major at Salve. Today she's working toward her Doctor of Optometry degree at New England College of Optometry.

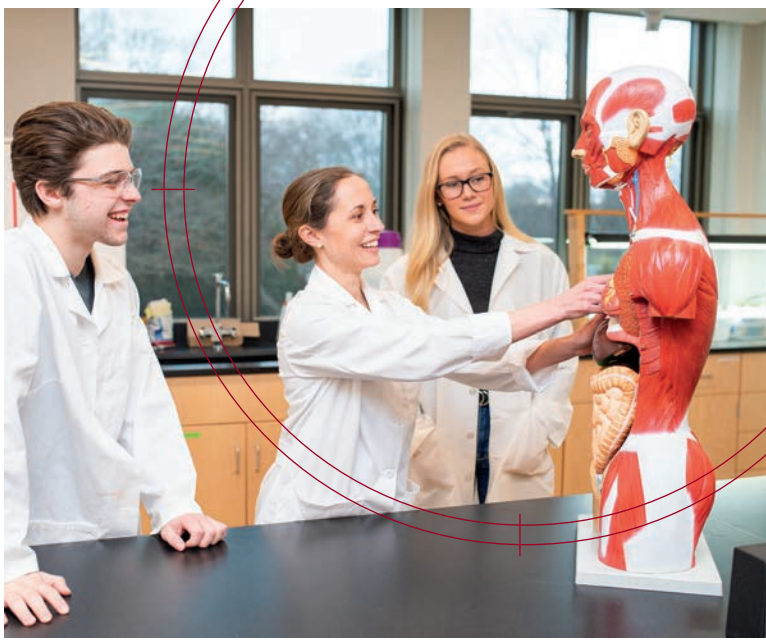
"I was able to shadow several of the phenomenal doctors at the practice and had the privilege to sit in on pre-testing, standard yearly examinations, emergency visits and ocular disease management visits," she said. "Whenever they had an interesting case they always made it a point to teach me and the other technicians about it. They loved helping us expand our knowledge. In my PA program we are learning about eyes now and I feel like a pro compared to everyone else in my class."

CONFIRMING THEIR PATH

While gaining hands-on time and building their patient care abilities, working with ECRI also gives students a feel for what it's like to work with patients day after day, and decide whether they truly want to pursue a medical career.

"Watching and working with a doctor lets you know... Am I down for this? What's it like to work with a patient who is pediatric or geriatric? Optometry school is a big financial and time commitment," explained Brenek. "It's priceless to be able to see doctors practicing – how they navigate challenges. How it brings them joy."

"The experience was nothing short of affirmative that this was the career I wanted to pursue, and that this was the manner and standard of practice I wanted to uphold for my own patients one day," said Winters.



Michaela O'Leary '25 worked at ECRI for two years while she was a biology student at Salve. Today she's in the PA program at Gannon University. "Helping so many patients each day was such a rewarding feeling, and I can't wait to do it for the rest of my life. I wouldn't be where I am today without all the staff at ECRI and because of that I am extremely grateful."

Curesky is grateful to ECRI and many other partners for their dedication to supporting Salve students by bringing them into their practices. Anchor Dental in Newport has given many Salve students experiential opportunities, as has Newport Fire and Rescue, Jamestown Fire and Rescue, and others. "Everybody wins when Salve partners with local businesses and organizations," she said.

TO LEARN MORE
about how to partner with Salve to help students gain hands-on experience in medical fields, please contact kimberly.curesky@salve.edu.

BY CATHERINE DOLAN '23

The Pathway to Possibility

COLLEGE BECOMES A REALITY THROUGH SALVE'S PATHWAYS PROGRAM.

On a wintery Tuesday afternoon, René Rodriguez '29 is already a step ahead.

His homework for the week is done. His math notes are organized, Italian vocabulary is reviewed and he has mapped out when he'll study, when he'll relax and when he can squeeze in a nap. As a first-year Salve student pursuing a challenging 3+2 dual-degree program in electrical engineering with Washington University in St. Louis – plus minors in Italian and data analytics –his schedule is full.

René Rodriguez '29 and Aïda Neary

But as he walks across Salve's oceanside campus toward Gerety Hall to help high school students rehearse their senior project presentations, Rodriguez doesn't feel overwhelmed. He feels prepared.

That instinct – to plan ahead, to juggle competing responsibilities, to see himself as someone who belongs in college, didn't happen by accident. It's the result of three years in Salve's Pathways Program, a college access partnership with Rogers High School and community organizations throughout Newport.

Rodriguez is now the first Pathways graduate to attend Salve. His presence in the classroom and on campus marks a powerful milestone for a program designed for students who, at one time, may not have seen college as part of their future.

"At first, even before joining the program, I didn't want to go to college," he said. "It was just a really far-away dream that I didn't think I could get. If I was thinking that way, imagine people who never got the opportunity to be in Pathways."

BUILDING A BRIDGE

The idea for Pathways didn't start with a curriculum or a grant. It started with listening.

In summer 2021, Aïda Neary, director of community educational partnerships and the Pathways Program, and President Kelli J. Armstrong spent months meeting with organizations across Newport – from the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center to local nonprofits and schools – asking a simple question: What do you think about Salve?

The response was overwhelmingly positive, with partners praising Salve students for their presence and impact throughout the city. Those conversations also illuminated an exciting opportunity; while Salve students were deeply engaged in Newport, many local high schoolers had not yet experienced Salve's campus firsthand.

Newport Public Schools is a Title I district, meaning a significant percentage of students come from low-income households. When Pathways began, Rogers High School had one of the lowest graduation rates in the state. The student body is deeply diverse, culturally, linguistically and racially, but not many were moving on to four-year colleges.

So Neary drafted a plan: a three-year program that would support students from 10th grade through graduation, offer steady college exposure, cultivate academic skills and prepare them for the application and financial aid process – all with consistency at its core.

Pathways students visit program graduate Erica Orellana (left photo, center) at George Washington University and tour the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (right).

"We have young people who have the intelligence and just don't have the opportunity," said Neary. "We have a lot of privilege being at a university, and we should use it in positive ways."

YEAR ONE: DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

Today, Pathways includes three full cohorts, totaling 36 students, where six languages are spoken.

"You cannot be what you cannot see," said Neary. "In Newport, our students grow up seeing the hospitality industry, construction, real estate. None of those things are wrong, but it's a very narrow casting. That's what they think they can do, and they don't see anything else."

So, 10th-graders spend the academic year visiting departments on Salve's campus and community partners around the city. One week they might be in the hydroponics lab with Dr. Jameson Chace learning about environmental science and botany. Another week, they're at the Newport Historical Society, where students learn from executive director Rebecca Bertrand '08.

College stops are also built into the program. Students explore campuses in Boston, Washington, D.C., or New York City, seeing 10 to 12 universities over three years – college tour experiences that, typically, are more available to students with greater financial resources.

YEAR TWO: EXPERIENCE AND PREPARATION

Junior year raises the stakes. Each Pathways student joins a small group and spends the year working on a community action research project, identifying an issue in a community they belong to and proposing a solution. Along the way, they practice college-level research, writing, interviewing and presenting.

For Rodriguez, the project was deeply personal. As a native Spanish-speaker, he was able to explore why Spanish-speaking students at Rogers High School don't wish to attend college or pursue higher education.

He talked with classmates from every grade level, as well as teachers at Rogers and professors at Salve, read articles from the Rhode Island Department of Education, and studied data about higher education rates among Hispanic students. His solution proposed a support group for students pursuing higher education, but the idea didn't end there.

"The students from last year took my project and raised it to the next level," said Rodriguez. "Now they have a program at Rogers called Latinos Growing Together. They've been

doing so awesome. I'm really proud they used my project to inspire their work."

YEAR THREE: APPLY AND EXCEL

By senior year of high school, Pathways becomes the place where college stops being abstract.

"In the fall, it's applying, applying and more applying," shared Neary. "We meet twice a week to get applications done, then every other week in the spring for financial aid."

There are summer readings, early brainstorming sessions on college essays and even a weeklong "orientation" between graduation and college, which is part of the Salve Compass program's Compass Summer, with current second- and third-year students serving as mentors.

For many students, including Rodriguez – who moved to Newport from El Salvador at age 11 and learned English in middle school during the pandemic – that day-to-day comfort on a college campus is transformational.

> "We have young people who have the intelligence and just don't have the opportunity. We have a lot of privilege being at a university, and we should use it in positive ways."
>
> AÏDA NEARY

"Being on Salve's campus a lot makes them believe they can be on any campus," said Neary. "That is huge. When nobody in your family went to college, you don't think that is a place where you fit. After three years, they know Salve. They're comfortable being on a college campus around college students."

Pathways draws support from across the University: faculty who open their labs and classrooms, librarians who help select summer reading, admissions and financial aid staff who demystify applications and more. In addition, Neary welcomes two social work students each year who become deeply involved in the operations and structure of the program.

Rodriguez, who is now a Pathways mentor, valued that personal support.

"We had mentors who were similar in age, and we could talk to them," he said. "Talking to Aïda, we're not going to get the same answers about college life as from actual college students. I really enjoyed having that extra help and support from people who already know what college life is like. It helped to make it feel even more possible."

PARTNERS IN POSSIBILITY

Beyond campus, a network of Newport partners anchor the exploration year: the Newport Historical Society, Fort Adams State Park, the Newport Tree Conservancy, Newport Art Museum, City Hall, even Island Cemetery, where students once did a scavenger hunt among the historic headstones. Donors – including van Beuren Charitable Foundation, John Clarke Trust, Eastern Bank Foundation and Rhode Island Foundation – help cover costs that students never see, from snacks, meal plans and supplies to overnight college trips that can cost thousands of dollars.

Every Pathways student who completes the three-year program is offered admission to Salve. For some, the program serves as a launching pad to different colleges and universities, but for Rodriguez, the decision was clear.

"Salve has been my top choice since I joined Pathways," he said. "I always liked how the campus feels like home. I knew I would not be overwhelmed by myself because I not only have the support of my parents and family, but I have Miss Aïda, and I know she will always support me and have my back."

FOR MORE INFORMATION
visit salve.edu/pathways. To support the Pathways Program, visit salve.edu/give-pathways or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

OUR MISSION.
OUR MOMENT.
The Campaign for
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COMPASS SUMMER PUTS STUDENTS ON THE ROAD TO STARTUP SUCCESS

When Claudia Jankovich '27 walked into "I2V – Ideation to Venture," one of Salve's Compass Summer programs in July 2025, she never imagined the week would lead to the creation of a real startup. Alongside business administration major Will Deschenes '26 and marketing major Da'kodah Girardin '27, Jankovich helped develop The Move – a nightlife app designed to take the guesswork out of going out. What began as a classroom project quickly evolved into an award-winning venture, earning the team first place at a statewide hackathon and a spot in a competitive accelerator program.

"The whole Compass experience taught us how to build a business from the ground up," said Jankovich, a global business and economics major. "We had one week to fully build a business plan and pitch an idea, and by the end, our group was the most ready to launch."

Will Deschenes '26 and Claudia Jankovich '27

FROM COMPASS TO COMPETITION

Part of the Salve Compass program, Compass Summer provides students with hands-on learning experiences that blend creativity, leadership and community engagement.

Under the guidance of Dr. David Altounian, associate professor, Dr. Teresa Starzecki, assistant professor, and Shelly Nicholas, lecturer, the three students built a comprehensive business plan for an app that helps users see what's happening around them in real time, providing insights into local nightlife – from venue capacity and demographics to live events and cover charge status. The platform also features a live group chat for users to connect and coordinate plans.

After Compass Summer ended, the group stayed in touch with their mentors and kept refining their business. They built a social media presence for The Move, gathered feedback from potential users and started looking for opportunities to pitch the concept beyond campus.

That's when Altounian shared news about a $12,000 Startup/AI Hackathon, a three-day statewide competition sponsored by yconic challenging participants to harness AI in new ways. Jankovich and Deschenes entered – and walked away as winners.

"There were more than 20 teams competing, not just students, but professionals too," said Nicholas, who co-led the Compass Summer program. "Claudia and Will were there every night until almost 2 a.m., refining their pitch and demo. They came in first place, won $4,000 in seed funding and advanced to the accelerator program."

THE MOVE PICKS UP MOMENTUM

"The problem we're solving is simple," Jankovich said. "When you go out, you don't always know what to expect. The Move helps you make that decision in real time."

The app's early traction was promising. Within weeks of launching their Instagram account, the team saw over 50,000 views and a 700% increase in engagement. Now, The Move is gaining even more support. Jankovich and Deschenes were recently accepted into the RIHub accelerator program, an eight- to 12-week experience in Providence, Rhode Island, that connects entrepreneurs with mentors, developers and investors to help turn startup concepts into scalable companies.

"We have everything designed – the layout, the colors, the features," Jankovich said. "Now, with the help of our accelerator mentors and developers, we're turning that vision into a working app."

THE COMPASS EFFECT

Jankovich and Deschenes credit Salve Compass and the supportive faculty within the Jean and David W. Wallace Department of Business and Economics for giving them the confidence and foundation to pursue entrepreneurship seriously.

"As a first-year student, I pitched an app idea at the entrepreneurship summit," Jankovich recalled. "That experience – and truly all of the professors in the business department – have really prepared me to stand up in front of a crowd and pitch something I believe in."

"Without the week we spent working on this over the summer, we would never be in the position we're in today. Nothing can replace hands-on learning and real-world experiences, and this program allows you to do all of that risk-free," said Deschenes.

"If you don't put yourself out there, you'll never know what opportunities are waiting," added Jankovich. "Compass Summer helped me realize that trying something new can open doors you didn't even know existed."

-Catherine Dolan '23

TO SUPPORT
Compass Summer programming and other experiential learning opportunities, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

A COMMON STORY TO UNITE A DIVIDED NATION

Colin Woodard's new book explores the roots of our division.

Colin Woodard, director of Nationhood Lab at the Pell Center, launched his new book, "Nations Apart: How clashing regional cultures shattered America," Nov. 5, 2025. The book recounts the perils of the things that divide Americans and the enduring unifying appeal of the Declaration of Independence.

With groundbreaking original data and historical insights, "Nations Apart" explores our nation's colonial era settlement patterns and the cultural geography they left behind; the roots of our struggles over gun control, immigration, health policy, climate change and other polarizing issues.

Woodard's book also offers a road map to right the country: a carefully researched, vigorously tested common story for the country built on the mission set forth for us in the document that first bound our regions together, the Declaration of Independence. Combining compelling storytelling with scholarly vigor, "Nations Apart" offers a blueprint for bridging the rifts that divide us and ensuring the American dream of democratic self-government will reach its 300th birthday.

"Twenty-first century Americans have increasingly been asking what still holds us together as a nation and are wondering if we no longer have a commitment to shared values and ideals," said Woodard. "Every nation is held together by the story its members have come to accept about where it came from, what its purpose is, who belongs to it and who does not. Without such a story it becomes difficult or impossible to initiate and sustain coherent public actions and, ultimately, to prevent a nation from falling apart."

Woodard is a New York Times best-selling author, historian and journalist. A longtime foreign correspondent, he reported from more than 50 countries on seven continents and, as an investigative reporter at Maine's Portland Press Herald, was a finalist for a 2016 Pulitzer Prize. His work has appeared in The New York Times, Politico, The Washington Post, The Economist, Smithsonian and other major publications.

Woodard also published opinion pieces on political division in The New York Times and Boston Globe as part of his book tour.

-Julie Miller

Nationhood Lab is made possible through generous donor support. To make a gift, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

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Bridging Divides

THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Salve's Leadership, Engagement and Democracy (LEAD) Program models civic discourse and engagement across the aisle, both on campus and beyond. Launched in 2025 by Dr. Mary Anderson, David and Carolyn Brodsky Chair in U.S. Constitutional Democracy and Culture, the LEAD Program embodies the University's mercy mission by developing young adults who are actively engaged in the world through civic action.

"LEAD fellows and scholars show that we have more in common than what divides us," said Anderson. "They actively participate in civic engagement to reduce polarization and build community."

"As a LEAD fellow, I am responsible for coordinating on campus events that promote civic engagement," said Jack Butler '28, a political science and finance major who became involved in the program in fall 2025. He also serves as a peer mentor for the Pell Center's Summer Institute of Politics and plays for the Seahawks football team.

"I hope to foster a community of open dialogue here at Salve and expand civic outreach and engagement in the local communities. I also have a role with the Rhode Island Leadership Program where I volunteer with the Rhode Island State House to support a cohort of high schoolers with a passion for civic engagement."

Expanding leadership opportunities on campus beyond LEAD is common among fellows and scholars like Chloe Desmarais '28, political science and

Elodie Chery '28

DEVELOPING YOUNG CIVIC VOICES

Loud & Clear, a new and innovative partnership with newportFILM, launched in November 2025, as Salve welcomed 65 eighth-grade students from Thompson Middle School for a morning of interactive experiences in which they explored the real-world connection between media literacy and civic participation.

As part of Civic LEAD, the initiative was developed by Dr. Mary Anderson, David and Carolyn Brodsky Chair in U.S. Constitutional Democracy and Culture, and Dr. Madeleine Esch, associate professor and chair for the Department of English, Communications and Media. Student activities included: participating in a mock school committee meeting to understand local government in action; producing their own newsreel; fact-checking viral content and evaluating credibility; and reflecting on their digital habits in a structured, game-show–style format designed to make learning both accessible and memorable.

One of the most exciting outcomes of this collaboration was the opportunity for Salve students to conduct a groundbreaking study on how middle-schoolers are identifying and interpreting news today. The insights from this research will help inform how educators and community partners can better equip young people with critical media literacy skills to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape.

history major, who is a student government leader, and Elodie Chery '28, political science major, who was recently named to the 2025-26 Newman Civic Fellow cohort by Campus Compact.

"To be civically engaged means having the willingness to be open-minded," said Chery. "This entails acknowledging that there is a problem and having the want and drive to make an attempt to find a solution."

LEAD encourages the importance of being good consumers of information and using critical thinking skills, which aligns with the mercy mission.

In partnership with Campus Democracy Challenge, Salve Votes, the Pell Center and McKillop Library, LEAD hosted a Civic Engagement Day on Nov. 11, 2025. The event fostered conversation, reflection and active engagement by removing barriers and bridging divides to respectful civic discourse. Participants learned that meaningful change only happens when a community comes together.

"Being an undergraduate researcher has strengthened my passion for learning and for engaging with topics and communities that are often overlooked," said Chery. "As an aspiring attorney, I hope to become a beacon of hope for those who cannot advocate for themselves."

-Tara Watkins '00

TO SUPPORT
the LEAD Program, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

WELCOMING SALVE'S NEW VICE PROVOST

> "I believe that the experience of learning, the journey of learning, is the most enjoyable, most important part of our education.

Dr. Aaron Lorenz joined the University community in January as Salve's new vice provost of graduate and professional studies. The former dean of the School of Social Science and Human Services and professor of law and society at Ramapo College, Lorenz takes over the role from Dr. David Altounian, who will continue to teach in the Jean and David W. Wallace Department of Business and Economics.

Lorenz's philosophy is to lead with kindness. "I believe that the experience of learning, the journey of learning, is the most enjoyable, most important part of our education," he said. "The graduate school experience enables students to see the bigger picture of their chosen field, whether they're first entering the workforce or established in their careers, and what they can bring to those spaces to enhance them and achieve personal fulfillment. I share Salve's focus on educating the whole person and am excited to build on the foundation Dr. Altounian has established with these programs."

Lorenz has more than 30 years of experience in higher education and holds a doctorate, master's and bachelor's degrees in political science from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, San Diego State University and California State University, Chico, respectively.

"Dr. Lorenz distinguished himself in a highly competitive search as a great collaborator," said Dr. Nancy Schreiber, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "He is an ideal fit for bringing our team of directors, faculty and staff together as we continue to elevate academic rigor and deliver what both undergraduates and working professionals need in a graduate program."

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Learning by Leading:

REIMAGINING THE NUALA PELL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Thirteen years after its founding, Salve's Nuala Pell Leadership Program has entered a new era – one shaped by deeper experiential learning, stronger ties to Salve's mercy mission and a sharpened focus on preparing students to become ethical, service-driven leaders in whatever fields they pursue.

Honoring the legacy of Nuala Pell – philanthropist, advocate for public service and wife of the late Sen. Claiborne Pell – the program remains rooted in the belief that leadership is not about power, but purpose. Today, as it evolves under the guidance of the Pell Center's associate director, Katie Sonder, the program's impact is clearer than ever.

"We think of students as actively engaged citizens, even as undergrads," Sonder said. "You can make progress on issues you're passionate about now, and we're going to give you the tools to help you through that process and enhance your toolbox of making change."

Open to rising juniors and seniors of all majors, the cohort is intentionally small, usually 10-12 fellows, and intentionally diverse. "We have a wide representation of backgrounds, majors and lived experiences that allows us to understand public policy from multiple angles," Sonder explained.

Finance majors sit beside cultural preservation students; political scientists collaborate with education majors. This range makes policy discussions more dynamic and policy solutions more creative.

But a comprehensive alumni survey in 2023 prompted the program's biggest redesign to date. What Sonder discovered surprised her.

2024-2025 Nuala Pell Leadership Fellows meet with Rhode Island Representative Gabe Amo at the Congressional offices in Washington, D.C.

"I expected the draw to be the D.C. trip," she admitted. "But students overwhelmingly wanted experiential learning opportunities where they could leave with something concrete and develop specific skills to become engaged citizens."

From that feedback, Sonder and her colleagues built a yearlong curriculum anchored in a capstone project: each student authors a full policy brief from scratch, learning the tools of policymaking step by step. Monthly sessions led by expert faculty and guest lectures from notable changemakers like policy analyst and author Susan Eisenhower or former White House chief speechwriter Cody Keenan, provide up-close access to the people who shape public life in classrooms, statehouses and the White House itself.

The result is a rare undergraduate opportunity: a deeply scaffolded journey through the policymaking process, culminating in a portfolio-ready deliverable and a trip to Washington, D.C., a centerpiece of the original program that still shapes the student experience. While there, fellows meet with Rhode Island's congressional delegation, ambassadors, nonprofit leaders and policy experts. For many, it's transformative.

Levi Mitchell '24, now a junior economist with Environment and Climate Change Canada and graduate student at the University of Ottawa, finds that the program's trip to Washington, D.C., still resonates with him today.

"It let us engage directly in discussions with decision-makers on public policy topics, including the environment, human rights and international concerns," he shared. "I still remember the insightful conversations, and the experiences strengthened my confidence in holding conversations with decision-makers and asking questions."

For current fellow Marsara Dunbar '27, a political science major and treasurer of Salve's Black Student Union, the program's restructured curriculum has provided both clarity and direction.

"I applied because of its emphasis on leadership development with a public service focus," said Dunbar. "Having a space on campus where I can gain skills that are applicable to my current leadership roles and my future endeavors is very important to me. I have a great interest in civic engagement and policy, and the program does a great job of intersecting the two through our monthly meetings."

What distinguishes the Nuala Pell Leadership Program from similar initiatives nationally, Sonder emphasized, is its grounding in Salve's mercy mission.

"When we talk about public policy and politics, we begin from an empathetic approach to leadership," said Sonder. "If you see something unfair or unjust, you have the power and ability to make progress against it."

As the program continues to evolve, its goal remains steady: empower students to enter the world not just well informed, but capable of strengthening communities, democracies and shared futures.

"We want students to look back and say: I know what I learned. Why it mattered. And I can take these experiences into my future opportunities," Sonder said.

-Catherine Dolan '23

TO SUPPORT
the Nuala Pell Leadership Program and other experiential learning opportunities, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

SEEKING OUT SALVE: FACULTY EXPERTS IN THE PRESS

Our media experts initiative shines a light on Salve's incredible faculty by increasing their visibility as expert sources on trending news stories in the mainstream press. By building relationships with journalists, they are becoming go-to sources for insights and quotes. Recent highlights include:

Dr. Mary Anderson, David and Carolyn Brodsky Chair in U.S. Constitutional Democracy and Culture, was a guest on WJAR-TV news discussing women in politics. She also published an opinion piece in The Providence Journal.

Dr. William Leeman, professor of history, published a guest column in the Providence Journal on civilian professors teaching in U.S. service academies and was a guest on the "Bartholomewtown" podcast.

Dr. Jim Ludes, vice president for strategic initiatives and executive director of the Pell Center, was a guest on WPRI-TV news discussing the Russia-Ukraine war and the ceasefire in Iran. He is also a regular source for the Associated Press and was quoted recently in a story about Dick Cheney's legacy.

Dr. Anna Matos-Mournighan, director of the healthcare administration graduate program, was quoted in three different stories in Providence Business News about health care topics in Rhode Island.

Dr. Chad Raymond, professor of political science, was tapped by WPRI-TV as an expert source on conflict in the Middle East.

Sam Sacco, senior lecturer of business and economics, was interviewed by Providence Business News, East Bay Post and WPRO radio for insight into the economic impact report for the Washington Bridge closure.

Dr. Melissa Varao, associate professor of business and economics, provided expert quotes around tourism topics for articles in Forbes and The Boston Globe.

-Julie Miller

Holiday Traditions

CHRISTMAS IN OCHRE COURT

Salve welcomed almost 300 members of the Salve family (and Santa!) home for the holidays. Guests reconnected as they enjoyed musical performances, seasonal delicacies, crafts and complimentary family portraits by the tree.

LUMINARIA

Salve's campus glowed with the lights of 1,000 lanterns honoring family and friends.

LIGHTS OF MERCY

Members of Salve's Mercy Society were honored at our annual Lights of Mercy celebration. The festivities included a moving choral performance by the University Chorus, a buffet dinner, a celebration of donor impact and the chance to dance the night away.

Men's Lacrosse:
RAISING AWARENESS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The Seahawk men's lacrosse team once again participated in the Out of the Darkness Campus Walk, which is hosted annually as part of Salve's health education and prevention initiatives to raise awareness about mental health, support those affected by suicide, and foster a sense of unity and hope. Held Oct. 18, 2025, the event is part of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's (AFSP) signature student fundraising series, designed to convey the message that suicide can be prevented, and that no one is alone.

"It's an important cause and a positive team event," said Patrick Cooney, head coach for men's lacrosse. "The team captains led the group with 30 or so team members participating."

"I think it was so important for our team to participate in the Out of the Darkness Walk because with close to 60 guys on the team, someone might be struggling without showing it," said Daniel Naglieri '26, team captain. "Walking together shows that our team cares, breaks the silence around mental health, and reminds every guy that we have each other's back. We have done the walk as a team for the past few years now, and love taking part in it."

Participants across athletics, as well as the entire Salve community, contribute to a movement that emphasizes compassion, understanding and solidarity while promoting community support, awareness and unity.

"It's important for Salve men's lacrosse to take part in the Out of the Darkness Walk to show our support for mental health and help break the stigma around it," added Adam Laber '26, team captain. "Walking together reminds everyone that we're a team on and off the field, and that no one has to face their struggles alone."

-Emily Winslow

FOOTBALL'S LIFESAVING MATCH

The Seahawks football team has a longstanding tradition of recruiting potential donors for the nationwide Be the Match bone marrow registry. The team has hosted an annual registration drive since 2012 to encourage the campus community to participate in the life-saving program.

Tommy Ohlson '25, assistant football coach and former Seahawk player, is the team's most recent donor match. After discovering that he was a match for a young woman in Switzerland, he flew to Ohio in November 2025 to undergo the procedure that will have a profound impact on her life.

> "It was an eye-opening experience," said Ohlson. "It really put the small, day-to-day hardships we face into perspective, because those problems don't feel so significant once you realize what some people are truly going through—like the woman I was able to donate to. I'm incredibly honored to be part of this experience and to represent Salve football.

Tennis Teams

SUPPORT ACEing AUTISM

The women's and men's tennis teams continued their partnership with ACEing Autism during the fall 2025 season. The volunteer-driven nonprofit organization, which was launched in 2019, is dedicated to helping children with autism grow, develop and benefit from social connections and fitness through the sport of tennis. Interim head tennis coach Casey Farrell '23, '24 (M) started volunteering as a first-year student-athlete and is now a program director for Newport, Rhode Island.

"We're up to seven sessions per season," said Farrell. "It runs in the fall and the spring now and I'm excited about it. It's eye-opening to every volunteer because we get so hard on ourselves in this sport but there's so much to tennis that we don't even realize."

The age range runs from 5-18 years old, with ACEing Autism Newport programs typically seeing children under 12. The program has grown to approximately 10 participants and each session includes a group warmup, allowing participants the autonomy to pick between different stretches, followed by work on a primary skill for the day and a group game.

"We always end with a group cheer," said Farrell. "It's usually 'we love tennis' or something like that. The primary skill has changed over the years – we used to need only one court, but now we split into three courts based on skill levels. The players have made friendships and want to play together."

The program operates with the help of volunteers and many of the Seahawk tennis players love to be a part of it. Student-athletes are matched one-to-one with a participant, and also help to run the administrative side of planning the sessions.

"ACEing Autism is a great program that truly impacts the community, creating a space where everyone comes together to support each child and build confidence in their unique playing style," said Cristian DeVivo '29.

"It's an opportunity for our team members to experience something outside of their majors or even alongside their majors and ask themselves whether working with kids is something they want to pursue in some way," said Farrell. "There are leadership opportunities available during the program, too. Each court has a leader who oversees everything and develops the plan for the day. Leadership is all around when you enter the real world so getting a little glimpse of what it's like to be the person in charge is important."

-Emily Winslow

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Seahawks Take Flight

BREAKS LAST YEAR'S RECORD

At Salve, athletics means more than the score at the end of a game. It's about teamwork, discipline and pride in representing something larger than yourself. For the University's nearly 700 student-athletes, that commitment is supported each year through Seahawks Take Flight, an annual initiative that raises vital funding for every Division III team on campus. Throughout October 2025, nearly 1,800 donors contributed raising more than $204,000.

As Salve's athletic programs continue to grow through competitive success in the NEWMAC and as both the men's and women's ice hockey teams rejoin the Conference of New England in 2026–27, the campaign's impact extends well into the future. It helps teams prepare for new levels of competition, visibility and success.

1,800
DONORS

$204,000+
RAISED

"The Seahawks Take Flight campaign provides our community with a unique moment to help further provide its athletics program with increased financial stability and opportunities that make playing at Salve all the more special," said Sean Sullivan, director of athletics. "We continue to be deeply appreciative of the generosity of our athletics donors – each of you is making a critical difference for our Seahawks."

THANK YOU to the many donors who support our Seahawk teams! To learn more about how you can enrich the student-athlete experience, visit salve.edu/give-salve or contact maelynn.patten@salve.edu; 401-341-2143.

For the latest news and scores, visit salveathletics.com.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT POWERED BY PEOPLE

With his latest venture, Ed Wu '06 makes giving back a priority.

At Empire Scottsdale, community is everything. The boutique coworking space is the latest venture from Ed Wu '06, whose entrepreneurial spirit began as an information systems science major with a love for computers and a willingness to work hard and take risks.

Empire is a project that combines Wu's knack for connecting people, his passion for design and a fundamental belief in the power of giving back to his community.

"I believe we were put on this earth to make connections with other people and to help one another," said Wu. "I don't think there's any other greater thing we can do with our time. Empire gives me a conduit in which to do that. It gives me space in a town that I absolutely love and the ability to bring people together for good causes."

Though it may be "business as usual" throughout the work week, on Friday evenings, Empire becomes a place where members can relax, have a beer, get to know one another and play a game of pool or ping pong. And, at least once a month, Wu goes one step further by bringing people together to support a local nonprofit.

"It's an excuse to get everyone together, support a good cause, and have some fun in the process," said Wu. "We've done some pretty crazy things to get people to come out for these events. For example, there's a local farm where you can rent animals for your event. Women will be dressed in the nicest outfits, holding a glass of wine in one hand and a chicken in the other."

Wu has also hosted fundraisers for breast cancer awareness month, Make-a-Wish and local animal shelters such as Arf-anage, a family-run nonprofit that delivered 50 puppies to Empire for an event that raised more than $5,000 and ended with several on-the-spot adoptions.

FROM NEWPORT TO SILICON VALLEY

Wu's undergraduate journey featured one of the things that Salve does best – an experiential learning opportunity that prepared him well for life after graduation. After being connected by a professor with a local manufacturing firm for an internship, Wu built software systems for the company and stayed on as an employee until he graduated.

"I gained so much working experience," said Wu, "learning what it was like to talk to somebody 20 years my senior and to interact with them; it was a challenge. There was a steep learning curve. By the time I graduated,

> I believe we were put on this earth to make connections with other people and to help one another... Empire gives me a conduit in which to do that.
>
> ED WU '06

Guests enjoy monthly fundraisers at Empire, where they come together for causes such as animal welfare and share space with adoptable puppies.

though, I felt so confident that I could work anywhere and do well."

After Salve, Wu packed his bags and moved to Silicon Valley, where he worked at a high-tech company, lived frugally and managed to save $100,000 over the course of the next three years. "It was the largest sum of money I'd ever seen in my life, by far," he shared, and a sum that allowed him to quit his job and start his first company, Vidyard, which he co-founded with a friend.

"I didn't know what the heck I was doing," Wu admitted. "I was making everything up as I went, trying to figure it out on the fly."

During that time, he learned how to build a product that people wanted, raise funds from venture capitalists, hire talented people and grow the online video platform into a successful company generating tens of millions of dollars in revenue.

Those lessons provided the foundation for his next venture, Side, an online real estate brokerage platform that Wu co-founded in 2016. Partnering with independent agents, the company provides behind-the-scenes support in an innovative business model.

"The software I've built makes it so that agents don't really have to worry about the weeds of their business," said Wu, who serves as Side's chief innovation officer. "It's a transaction management platform that takes care of everything from contracts and audit to payment, commission disbursements and closing.

"Every real estate agent who has joined us has seen tremendous growth, and instantly becomes an advocate for us, bringing in more real estate agents," he continued. "It's grown organically at a fast rate, and we now do $30 billion worth of home sales per year."

A GLIMPSE AT WHAT IT TAKES

Being a successful entrepreneur is not for the faint of heart and Wu offered some advice for those willing to give it a go.

"Pushing yourself into a state of extreme discomfort, as crazy as that may sound, is necessary if this is the journey you're about to embark on," he cautioned. "If you want comfort, if you want ease, work for a big company. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you do want to take the path of entrepreneurship, working for yourself, you should know what you're signing up for.

"I like to describe starting a business as smashing a boulder with a giant sledgehammer," he continued. "You never know when that boulder's going to split in half. You might be one more stroke away, you might be 1,000 strokes away. The boulder does not tell you at all, there are no hints. There's never a point in time where you're just like, oh, now I can kick back and relax and do nothing."

For Wu, it is the people he surrounds himself with that "make all the difference in the world. It makes it not even a job – it becomes something that you want to be doing, that you feel."

"I would say, if you spend time with me, I can guarantee you, no two days will be the same, you will never be bored, you will never be able to predict what's going to happen next," he shared. "I promise you I'll always have your back. I will always do whatever I can to take care of you, as I expect you to do the same for me."

-Mary Edwards '86, '12 (M)

SERVING NEWPORT COUNTY YOUTH AS BOYS & GIRLS CLUB CEO

In September 2025, six years after she joined its advancement team, Kelley Dow Coen '91 was appointed to lead the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County as its chief executive officer. This role is the culmination of a career that includes decades of service to the Newport community and illuminates how Coen embraces Salve's core values of mercy in action.

"We're 68 years strong within the Newport community, and we are multi-location," Coen said about the organization that is one of 5,200 Boys & Girls Clubs across the United States. The nonprofit serves more than 2,000 youth and families in Newport through its licensed childcare program, teen center, aquatics and athletics programs, Camp Grosvenor summer camp and in-school programming in Newport and Middletown.

When Coen stepped into her new role, the renovation of the organization's central clubhouse at 95 Church Street was already well underway. Set to be completed next year, the project will restore and expand the historic building — which dates back to 1872 and was Newport's first high school — by 8,000 square feet through a four-story addition that connects the main building with the gym.

"Ultimately, the goal is to serve more youth," Coen said. "We were at capacity in our old building and our facilities were holding us back in what we could do. The new facility is going to be a five-star experience." She explained that the space will be "child-centric and will welcome families differently from the moment they walk through the front door. Everything is designed to be seen through the eyes of a child."

Kelley Dow Coen '91 with daughters Ellie and Maggie

Although the organization is utilizing temporary space during the renovation, programs and services continue uninterrupted and Coen and her staff are planning carefully so all is in order to hit the ground running once the project is completed. "We want to open the doors to our new facility with everything ready to go," she said. "We're [striving] for operational excellence so when we move back, we are ready to respond to the community and do what we do best."

Passionate about meeting the changing needs and trends of today's youth and families, Coen's goals as CEO include offering more robust and innovative programs, such as eSports, podcasts, new performing arts activities and additional athletics. She is also committed to deepening partnerships within the community and focusing on workforce development by fostering a pipeline where youth who participate in the organization's programs can pursue employment opportunities there later on. Ever loyal to her alma mater, Coen also draws from Salve's pool of alumni and students to staff her team.

The Massachusetts native came to Newport as a freshman at the University and never left. "It's a classic case of a Salve girl," she joked. "I met a local — my husband was born and raised here — and I stayed and became part of the community through school."

She recalled her years as a student fondly and remembered Brother John McNiff, a trusted mentor whose guidance changed the course of her academic career. "He noticed I was struggling in some of my business classes and that I was excelling in all of the arts and languages, so he called me out," she recalled. "He said, 'You're not embracing the things that come naturally to you.' I never had someone be that honest with me and he did it in a way that was motivating." Ultimately, she earned her bachelor's degree in English language and literature.

As a student, Coen worked in the admissions office and for the Newport Preservation Society, experiences that instilled in her a deep sense of community. Her early professional career includes serving as a major gift officer at Newport Hospital and as a development officer at Salve, where she began honing her fundraising skills. These experiences laid the foundations for her successful journey at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County, first as director of development and then chief advancement officer, before she took on the role of CEO for the nonprofit.

"I wanted to find a position in which I could build an advancement team and grow it on my own," she said. "Then this opportunity arose. I've been an active part of the community now for 30+ years and my family was brought up here as well. It's a natural fit in so many ways."

-Claire Curry

Inventing the Newport Tartan

Kelley Dow Coen's idea to create an official Newport Tartan was sparked by her hometown's Saint Patrick's Day parade in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The parade organizers developed a tartan to draw revenue for various celebrations. Ever since she moved to Newport, Coen promised that someday, she'd do the same for the community she calls home.

The COVID-19 lockdown created an unexpected opportunity to pursue the project. "It was the four of us," she said, referring to her husband Chris and two daughters, Margaret and Eleanor. "We said, 'Let's try to think of things we've always said we'd do when we had time,' and that's when I was reminded of the tartan."

First, there was research to create the plaid color palette. Then the family learned about the design process with the help of an expert in Scotland and produced prototypes of the lambswool scarf featuring the vivid plaid design. Next, they presented the idea to the City Council, which unanimously approved it and the Coens' creation became the official tartan of the City of Newport, registered in Edinburgh.

Since 2021, Coen has led The Newport Tartan brand and 100% of the proceeds from scarves that are sold is donated to various causes. For example, scarves available through Salve's alumni commemorative collection sold out, and proceeds supported student scholarships. Sales also support many organizations and events in the Newport community, including the Newport Film Festival, the Newport Education Foundation and Newport County Mental Health. In her words, "At the core of The Newport Tartan is the goal of giving back to the city we love by supporting organizations that make Newport a better place to live."

LEADING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOMELAND DEFENSE

Not many people can say they feel a personal connection to their work. However, for Abigail Verille '18, '19 (MBA), her job hits home. After completing a high school internship within the intelligence community and admiring her sister's career as a Navy helicopter pilot, Verille set her sights on a related field.

"I wanted to find a national intelligence and cybersecurity program on the east coast, and Salve stood out," she said.

Today, Verille is a leader in program management for Lockheed Martin—the number one aerospace and global defense company in the world. She manages a team that is building and testing a command-and-control prototype environment that aims to support the U.S. government's Golden Dome for America missile defense system. Golden Dome for America, according to Verille, represents hundreds of billions of dollars in potential contract awards across the defense industrial base. She will be based in Colorado as part of the team at Lockheed Martin tackling how to integrate "a command and control layered, Integrated Air and Missile Defense architecture" to protect the homeland from evolving threats.

"From an execution standpoint, this inspires me," said Verille, whose trajectory in the defense industry has skyrocketed in the mere six years since her graduation from Salve's MBA program. Prior to graduate school, she was one of Salve's few triple majors—earning her bachelor's degrees in administration of justice, business administration and marketing, with a concentration in cybersecurity and intelligence.

Abigail Verille '18, '19 (MBA)

Completing this rigorous academic schedule required Verille to start her MBA in her junior year, a pace made possible by Salve's forward-thinking curriculum.

"Salve allowed me to shape my learning experience to ensure a successful career," she recalled. "In fact, I've applied everything I've learned from Salve about project management to my career."

Dr. Jim Ludes, executive director of the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, and Dr. Jennifer McArdle, former assistant professor of cyber defense, were instrumental in Verille's ambition as a student. "All my professors had career experience they applied to their teaching," said Verille. "I asked questions after class about career guidance, attended Pell Center presentations and absorbed as much as I could."

The defense industry offered the "room for innovation" that Verille sought. "Dr. McArdle ignited my passion for the technical and policy aspects of public-sector work," Verille recalled. Eventually, McArdle asked Verille to join a graduate research assistant program exploring technical innovation to enhance military readiness against multi-domain threats. "It was an amazing experience," recounted Verille.

It was this research that caught the attention of Lockheed Martin, where Verille began in strategy and business development leadership for airborne platforms, overseeing an electronic- warfare system that protects her sister's helicopter.

Verille quickly advanced to a "capture manager" based in New Jersey, leading strategy and coordinating all proposal activities. There, she secured a $36.7 million contract for a converged cyber, electronic warfare and signal intelligence program supporting the U.S. Army's modernization. Her leadership earned her a prestigious award given to the top one percent of Rotary and Mission Systems employees.

How does 29-year-old Verille juggle a 60-hour work week, drive next-generation defense technology and lead diverse teams in a traditionally male-dominated industry? She says she attributes her resilience to strong female role models and applies the same work ethic she first learned at Salve.

"Above everything else, whether it's supporting our forces abroad or safeguarding our homeland, the greatest reward is not only protecting my sister but saving lives," said Verille.

-Karen Carlo Ruhren

A Call to Action

Heather Byrne Clune '00 finds power in giving back.

Class of 2000 alumna Heather Byrne Clune's earliest memories include volunteering alongside her mother for the Children's Miracle Network telethon in Philadelphia. Her community-focused commitment continued through high school and, as a Salve student, she served through campus ministry, volunteer trips to Appalachia and as a member of Sigma Phi Sigma.

Nominated by classmates Jessica Martins Mink '00 and Andrea Plowman Pasternak '00 for the Exceptional Volunteer Award, Clune was recognized for her dedication to service during Reunion Weekend in June 2025. Described by both as inspirational, motivated and selfless, Clune's authenticity calls others to action.

With empathy, joy and enthusiasm, Clune lives the University's mercy mission in a variety of ways. From creating and delivering meals each week for the Kitchen of Hope at Saint Francis of Assisi in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, to working with teens both in her local parish and as part of 4-H, and volunteering for the Chris Collins Foundation, Clune demonstrates that making a more harmonious, just and merciful world is possible. She has also been involved at Salve in various ways, serving as a class representative, a reunion volunteer, a member of alumni event committees and more.

"It doesn't matter who you are," said Pasternak, "if Heather can lend a helping hand, she will and always with a big welcoming smile."

Mink agreed. "Heather does not do all this for accolades or profit but just because she feels the need to help others and truly enjoys giving back."

"It's just part of who I am," said Clune. "Volunteering has always been at my core. And it is such a big part of Salve. The opportunities there made cultivating my volunteer side easier."

Clune hopes to offset some of the negativity in the world by helping others to see the more positive aspects happening in communities.

"Small things can make a big impact in someone's life," she said, "you never really know how far each act goes." She believes that listening to others, no matter their socioeconomic status, and treating others with respect, compassion and empathy is key to building connection and community.

With faith and resilience – along with the support of her community – Clune has overcome challenging periods but giving back through such times keeps her grounded in her core values.

Looking to inspire others to explore volunteerism, Clune encourages those who are uncertain where to begin to try a one-time event or activity and involve family and friends.

"Do something you enjoy," she explained. "Start small, it's easier to commit after you've tried something a time or two. You might do a lot of different little things or one big event, whatever makes sense for your life."

-Tara Watkins '00

1972

Nancy Judge Whalen '72 shared a photo taken over Labor Day Weekend 2025 in Ogunquit, Maine, where members of the Class of 1972 celebrated 57 years of friendship and their 75th birthdays. Joining Whalen for the fun were **Patti Canavan Busse, Evie Cofone, Martha Cleary Fleming, Mary Ellen Doback Halloran, Dianne Taylor Hatch, Maryclare Johnson Heffernan, Mary DeMarino Lavin, Mary Cimini McGuinn, Linda Amoriggi Melis, Nancy Belanger Mulvey, Marilynn Kitchen Reycroft, Janet Coussa Robinson, Barbara Schiaroli and Patty Doran Wong.**

1985

Michael Holloway '85 dedicated one of the chemistry textbooks he authored, "The Analytical Chemistry Laboratory Companion," to Dr. Ascanio G. DiPippo and Dr. James Nugent, two of his professors during his undergraduate years at Salve.

1986

Dr. Michelle Costa '86 is the chief clinical officer at National Health Care Associates. She was acknowledged as a 2025 Pinnacle Professional Member and Inner Circle of Excellence honoree for her exemplary work in elevating long-term care leadership.

1988

Ellen Eggeman '88 returned to her career as a real estate agent, licensed in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut at Keller Williams Coastal. She specializes in downsizing and the senior population. In addition, she joined New England Institute of Technology as an adjunct professor in January.

1989

Barry Black '89 serves as the 62nd chaplain of the United States Senate. In a recent service at Howard University's Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel, he encouraged young people to keep the faith and seek their fullest potential amid troubling times.

1990

Janelle Roussel '90, '91 (M) opened Rhode to Adoption, one of only a handful of adoption agencies licensed in Rhode Island, with a mission to provide comprehensive adoption services, supporting families with compassion, integrity and personalized assistance, fostering lifelong connections.

1991

Edward Flynn '91 serves as a Boston City Councilor and is an advocate for finding solutions to the homeless crisis.

Linda Hurley '91 is the president and CEO of CODAC Behavioral Healthcare, Rhode Island's oldest and largest non-profit outpatient provider of treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. Recently featured in Ocean State Stories, a Pell Center initiative, Hurley has worked in substance abuse treatment and behavioral healthcare for more than 30 years and has been with CODAC since 1991. She has been a leader in working to effect policy change in Rhode Island, serving on numerous boards and coalitions and has also been called as a consultant for state and federal agencies, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration and the United States Senate.

Karen Urbec '91 is the director of library services at the East Bridgewater (Massachusetts) Public Library. She previously worked as an archivist in historic house museums and libraries.

1993

Robin Moyer '93 presented her research on the history of the Irish in Laconia, New Hampshire, at the Laconia Public Library in November 2025.

1994

Joe Burke '94 is the founder of Bearclaw's Academy of Music in New Milford, Connecticut. He built a career in music and met his wife through the creation of his music academy.

1999

David Kriso '99 is a clerk with the U.S. Postal Service and was published in Iconic Life Magazine in November 2025 with a story on the MSC Yacht Club and his family's adventure sailing on the MSC Meravigalia from Brooklyn to Port Canaveral and the Bahamas.

2002

Sarah Johnson Woodbine '02 won a Tech10 award from Rhode Island Monthly magazine. The award honors innovation and leadership in the technology field in the state of Rhode Island.

2004

Jennifer Paolozzi '04 is the multilingual learning director and school garden mentor at Nuestro Mundo Public Charter School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Jackie Burke Yun '04 was named assistant vice president of student experience at Emerson College in June 2025. She previously worked for the Harvard Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, where she served as executive director of the student center, and Boston University. In her new role, Yun will provide leadership and vision for key areas, including intercultural student affairs, the Center for Spiritual Life, student engagement and leadership, and student transitions and family programs.

2007

Jennifer Paquette '07 founded Renewing Touch Massage and Spa in Bristol, Rhode Island, and recently celebrated 15 years of running the business.

2009

Jüri Saska '09 served as commander of the Estonian Navy from 2017 until his retirement in 2024. His research on how Taiwan and Estonia are responding to airspace violations led to his participation on the International Centre for Defense and Security's panel.

2012

Patrick Keenan '12, '14 (M) and **Samantha Clarke Keenan '13, '14 (M)** are the parents of two sons, Andrew and Thomas. Patrick has built a successful career in cybersecurity and is currently working as the director for information security at Goodwin Law in Boston. Samantha has worked in project management and is the founder of Force Fitness, a gym in Ellington, Connecticut.

2017

Megan King '17 is co-founder and a clinician for the Berkshire Mental Health Collaborative. She developed her own group practice in Western Massachusetts after graduating in 2017.

2018

Mckenzie Kapsimalis '18 is founder and Chief Marketing Officer of the Tric Agency and was recently recognized in May with a Providence Business Women Award in the category of "Women to Watch/Creative Services."

2019

Brooke Pennington '19, '20 (M) is a marketing manager at TransEdge Truck Centers in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Heidi Silverio '19 serves as the Providence School Board Policy Committee chairwoman and was recently named a Woman of Wisdom by Sophia Academy.

2021

Fawzi Massouh '21 graduated from medical school in June 2025 and recently organized a meeting to empower young students interested in medicine to learn from Dr. Kimberly Curesky, lecturer and health advisor in the Department of Biology and Biomedical Sciences.

2023

Sam Johnson '23 was appointed Newport harbormaster in September 2025. In this role, he performs harbor patrol, water rescues and responds to public inquiries. He also oversees mooring and boat maintenance, cruise ship management and permitting, and coordinates with state and federal agencies.

2025

Grady Provost '25 is serving on a NOAA ship as a volunteer scientist helping with long term data collection.

Send us your news and updates! alumni@salve.edu

IN MEMORIAM

The Salve Regina community mourns the loss of alumni, faculty, staff and friends who have recently passed away.

Carolyn A. Bannon ’88, ’90(M)
Phyllis Coffey Bilowz ’60
Mary Ann Nutting Boucher ’80
Barbara Travers Brady ’60
Regina Curtin Branch ’63
Helen Newbury Burke ’59
Richard R. Claflin ’79
Sharon Hirst Clingham ’64, ’81(M)
Charles D. Coe, former faculty
Gregory J. Cornish ’98(M)
Ernest D. Corvese ’86(M)
Liane Carter Crowley ’96
Dolores Albanese Dupre ’53
Angela M. Foley ’67
Loretta Verde Furtado ’58
Mark P. Galonzka ’03
Normand C. Gauthier ’85(M)
Alison Quartermain Gersten ’85
Donald J. Hall ’79
Linda Bois Hebert ’77
Elizabeth Bright Houghton ’00
Carol Flynn Hoyle ’58
Mary C. Keenan ’11
Joann Lanigan Knorr ’68
Mary C. Langhorn ’61
Bruce A. Levine, former staff
Janice M. Ludwig, former staff
Jean M. Lynch ’63
Shirley Lopes MacGillivray ’57
Mary Lou Benoit MacNeill ’60
Frances Mournighan McGowan ’51
Curtis Moraes ’81
Jean Sullivan Moran ’81(M)
Andrea Di Giammo Musone ’67
Bradley J. Mussman ’91(M)
Sister Rosemarie O ’Brien ’63
Nicole M. Ousler ’93
Rosemary M. Prisco ’65
Claire M. Rayner ’82
Angela Casey Reilly ’63
Janet Richardson Riley ’71
Paul H. Shulver ’77, ’92(M)
Roger W. Slocum ’87
Alice Taddei Smith ’63
Eugene J. Sullivan ’75
David C. Taylor ’86(M)
Joseph B. Venable ’84(M)

Alumni from the Classes of 1986, 1987 and 1988 gathered in Newport in October 2025 for a memorial service for Stephen Dalton ’86.

Editor's note:
The above list was compiled on December 15, 2025.

THE WAVE

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Giving back to Salve gives me the opportunity to reflect on the fantastic experiences I had and helps me stay connected to the people making the mission happen.

- Jivanto Van Hemert '14

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Enjoy a perfect summer weekend with Salve friends while soaking in the best Newport has to offer.

Nominate a deserving classmate for an alumni award or volunteer to help spread the word.

Contact the Alumni Relations team at alumni@salve.edu | 401-341-2346 or visit salve.edu/alumni.

Registration and housing reservations open in early March.

See you in June!