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HOLY LIGHT

FALL 2024

A NEWSLETTER OF HOLY FAMILY INSTITUTE

ELEVATING PARTNERSHIPS, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, & CRAFTSMANSHIP: NAZARETH PREP'S CORE ARTS & INDUSTRY PROGRAM

Nazareth Prep is taking a new approach to workforce development education with its Core Arts & Industry Program. This innovative initiative is designed to equip students with essential skills and habits of practice, preparing them for the demands of the 21st-century workforce through the arts and dynamic pre-professional apprenticeships. This program is designed to complement and enhance the skill development that students gain through the internship program at the center of the school curriculum.

Unlike exploratory or recreational enrichment classes, the Friday Arts & Industry Core Courses offer students a rigorous and structured learning experience. Whether they are enrolled in robotics, dance, or culinary arts, students will develop valuable skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

These unique courses are made possible through a set of vital community partnerships. Current partners include Point Park University, BotsIQ, Sweetwater School of the Arts, Hill Dance Academy Theatre, and Hosanna House's Center for Aviation Technology



Freshman Kaylynn Harper practices 3D modeling in the Social Action and Innovation Laboratory (SAIL).

and Training. Nazareth Prep and its partners provide students with access to training from industry practitioners and experts in Friday classes on the Emsworth campus and at partner campuses across Pittsburgh. By engaging in industry work and craftsmanship, working alongside professionals, students gain practical experience and develop a strong foundation for further study and career pathway advancement.

In the Robotics Technician Pre-Apprenticeship program, for example, students earn industry-recognized credentials and gain professional experience in robotics and automation. By the third week of the course, students were already designing, building, and troubleshooting complex smart cars. Ninth-grader Tylah McCray initially found the design software challenging to learn, but she persevered. Her hard work paid off when her smart car successfully navigated the course after applying troubleshooting techniques learned in the apprenticeship. As Tylah wisely observed, "You just have to keep showing up each week and working through the challenges, and it gets better."

Continued inside ➔

2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

We are excited to share our annual report for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Please scan the QR code or visit hfi-pgh.org/2024-annual-report to learn more about our impact over the past year.



CONGRATULATIONS CHASITI, 2024 COURAGE HOUSE AWARD WINNER!

On November 12th, we celebrated our 32nd Annual Arthur J. Rooney Sr. Courage House Luncheon with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Each year, the Arthur J. Rooney Sr. Courage House award recipient is a Nazareth Prep alumnus. This year, Chasiti Strickland (Class of 2023) was honored with the award.

Chasiti, a remarkable and academically talented young woman, displayed a courage and maturity beyond her years in supporting her family through several transitions during the COVID-19 epidemic. Despite adversity, she excelled as a student and a campus leader. She graduated from Nazareth Prep as salutatorian and earned the prestigious Nazareth Award for Internship Excellence. In her Courage House remarks, she credited her mother's strength, her family's love and the support of her school community for her success.

Now a sophomore at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Chasiti is pursuing a degree in Computer Engineering with minors in Mathematics and Black Studies. Chasiti's practical courage, rooted in family love and a passion for learning, inspires us to strive for moral excellence in our everyday circumstances.



Chasiti Strickland, 2024 Courage House Award winner, with Dan Rooney, Pittsburgh Steelers Director of Business Development & Strategy

In the Nazareth Prep culinary classroom, Seniors Chris Bell and Kente Allen are introduced to the culinary arts by Chef Andrew Alvarez, Culinary Coordinator at Sweetwater Center for the Arts.



ARTS & INDUSTRY PROGRAM (CONT'D.)

Similarly, the Aviation Ground School course provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue careers in aviation. Aviation students take 10 hours of in-air instruction, in addition to four seat class hours each week that prepare them for licensing testing and for an array of aviation and aviation-allied careers. Junior Mark Stuckey, who is enrolled in the aviation course, is excited about learning to fly planes and drones from working pilots and getting licensed. "Even though it's a lot of work and I have to get up earlier on Fridays, it's worth it," he says. "It's an amazing experience."



Junior Mark Stuckey steps into the cockpit at Aviation Ground School.

In the arts, students study dance, culinary arts, painting, photography, and ceramics. These courses are designed to foster creativity, attention to detail, conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. These courses also expose students to career pathways in these fields. In the Sweetwater culinary arts classes, students moved from learning simple knife techniques in week one to producing complex appetizer menus at pace by week ten. In dance, students are developing professional stamina as well. "The first few weeks of the HDAT Dance Intensive were tough," admits junior Mariah Nash. "Long afternoons of dance training, especially that hour of ballet, were really hard. But we pushed through, downloaded ballet apps to practice, and now we can handle it. In the second class, we get to study jazz, modern, Afro-Caribbean, liturgical dance, and choreography. That teacher expects a lot from us too, but now we love it even though we pretend we don't."

All the Friday classes engage students in sustained practice and craftsmanship and give them weekly feedback from expert instructors. As a result, students are developing a stronger work ethic and learning to strive for excellence in all areas. Nazareth Prep faculty members who support the Arts and Industry course teachers are impressed by the students' growth in a relatively short period of time. They have observed how students have honed practice and craftsmanship skills in the Friday courses and are now applying them in their academic work and internships.

Nazareth Prep's Core Arts and Industry Program is more than just a collection of courses; it is a transformative educational experience aligned with the school's humanistic workforce development mission. By emphasizing soft skill development, practical experience, and rigorous curriculum, the program prepares students to excel in the dynamic 21st century world of work.

SPECIALIZED LEARNING HELPS STUDENTS EXPLORE STRENGTHS WITH NEW PAES LAB

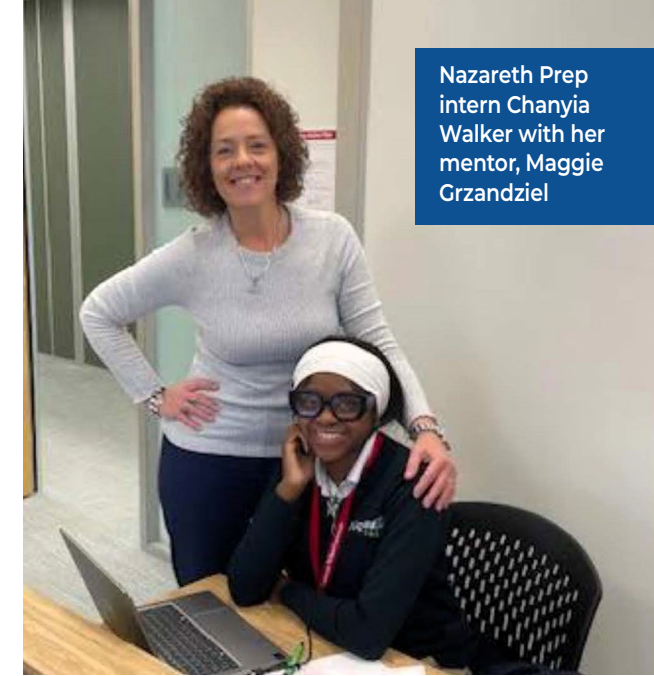
Through collaboration and a focus on individual strengths, Holy Family Specialized Learning strives to build a foundation for lifelong learning and positive social engagement for their students. To reach this goal, the staff and leadership implement new programs and techniques to meet academic, behavioral, and personal growth goals.

One of these new programs, the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab, is now open, offering students at Specialized Learning an incredible opportunity to explore career paths, identify strengths and interests, and build essential skills.

This hands-on environment is designed to be as much like a real workplace as possible, where teachers are supervisors and students are employees. Students clock in and out of work in the lab and work independently, building skills in one of the five components of the PAES program: consumer/service, business/marketing, processing/production, construction/industrial, or computer technology.

"The PAES Lab is a game-changer for students," said Emily Keefe, Special Education Coordinator at Specialized Learning. "It provides a safe, supportive environment where kids can discover their potential, build confidence, and prepare for meaningful futures. It's not just a program; it's a pathway to independence and success."

PAES Labs are typically located in middle and high schools. By providing job exploration and skill-building opportunities, the lab bridges the gap between education and workplace readiness. The PAES Lab at Specialized Learning is here to empower students, foster independence, and support success in their postsecondary journeys.



Nazareth Prep intern Chanyia Walker with her mentor, Maggie Grzandziel

INTERNSHIP PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

Nazareth Prep's Internship Program is a unique opportunity for students to experience the workforce and develop skills and knowledge that will launch them to post-secondary success.

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh's renowned private research university, has hosted numerous Nazareth Prep interns. Students get a look into the multi-faceted world of higher education.

Under the supervision of Senior Administrative Assistant Maggie Grzandziel, Junior Chanyia Walker interns in the university's finance department, supporting the team's administrative operations by preparing materials and signage for events and seminars, sorting and distributing department mail, assisting with onboarding materials for new hires in the department, and ensuring that the supply closet and office kitchen are stocked at all times.

Nazareth Prep relies on the commitment of partners like Carnegie Mellon University to help us equip interns with practical skills, a network of professional contacts, and a newfound confidence that will serve them well in their future careers.

To learn more about becoming an internship partner, contact Katie Sidhom, Vice President of Business Development, at 412-239-9025 or sidhom.katie@nazarethprep.org.



Specialized Learning students working in the school's new Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Holy Family

Last year, Holy Family Institute provided life-changing care to over 41,000 people. As the Christmas season approaches, we are reminded of the warmth, joy, and hope this time of year brings.

In this season of giving, we are deeply grateful for your continued support, and we hope you will consider a year-end contribution. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a real difference and brings hope to those who need it most.

If you would like to donate, please scan the QR code, visit hfi-pgh.org/donate, or use the enclosed envelope to mail your donation. Thank you for your support and may you and your loved ones be blessed this holiday season and in the year to come.



SNAP® TEAM IN TORONTO

Our SNAP® team attended the Child Development Institute Symposium in Toronto, where Program Manager Alysia Williams (center) served as a panelist for a discussion on program sustainability. We are so proud of this team and the incredible work they do with children and their families!