

HSA Happenings

Edited By: Mackenzie Taylor and Finn Schmidhuber

TO BE HONORABLE IS TO SERVE



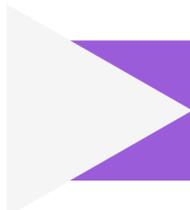
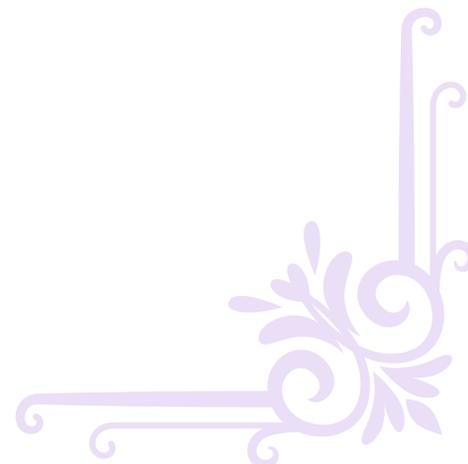
HSA Happenings is...

A student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association. Its purpose is to supplement the West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.



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Letter From the Editor

Hi H.S.A. Members, Alumni, and Prospective Students!

Can you believe we're already over halfway through the semester?! As the holiday seasons start approaching, there is so much to celebrate, especially our incredible Honors community! After having what I'm sure was a much-needed fall break, Honors students have been busy back at their numerous involvements, one of which being H.S.A. Happenings. We have a great edition for you all this month with a special focus – education!

Whether it be alumni who have taken what they learned at WCU with them after graduation, current students engaging in the WCU community or their alma maters, or even students and faculty studying abroad, quality education is a key value here at WCU's Honors College. The countless opportunities offered on campus and abroad have had such an undeniable positive impact on all involved, and our hope is that this edition highlights this reality and our gratitude!

Sincerely,

Mackenzie Taylor

Mackenzie Taylor



Anything else you want to share in your alumni spotlight?
"That students are always welcome to reach out!"
Email Mackenzie Taylor (mt947930@wcupa.edu) for contact information

Alumni Spotlight

Michelle Filling-Brown, PhD



Honors College Class of 2002
Honors Seminar Program
Major: English BSED
Current Position: Associate Provost of Academic Affairs and Professor at Cabrini University

Favorite Honors Memory:
"Christmas caroling in Kevin and Kenda's neighborhood in Exton!"

Honors Capstone:
After School Program at Peirce Middle School

Study abroad:
Studied the Renaissance and Reformation throughout Europe through PASSHE Honors Study Abroad. California University of PA sponsored the experience - traveled to Italy, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and England.

Involvement at WCU:
Dance Production Workshop, Phi Sigma Pi, HSA President, Resident Assistant in K-Hall, Student Assistant in Office of Service Learning and Volunteer Programming, the Bear Fair

Higher education after WCU:
English MA and PhD from University of Delaware

Where they are now:

"I live in Royersford with my husband, Pat, and dog, Angel. Our youngest son Jameson is in college (gasp!) and is rarely at home these days. I serve on the board of Fostering Hope, a non-profit that serves children in the foster care system in PA. I'm also very involved with the Purple Feet Foundation which serves middle school youth from Philadelphia and Harrisburg through summer enrichment programming. This is my 15th academic year at Cabrini University where I serve as the Associate Provost. So much of how I teach and mentor students emanates from what I learned at WCU in Killinger Hall in the Honors Program. My husband and I am passionate about our IG project @prettyexcellentlife which is all about promoting mental health wellness, strengthening relationships, and living a joyful life -- follow us!"

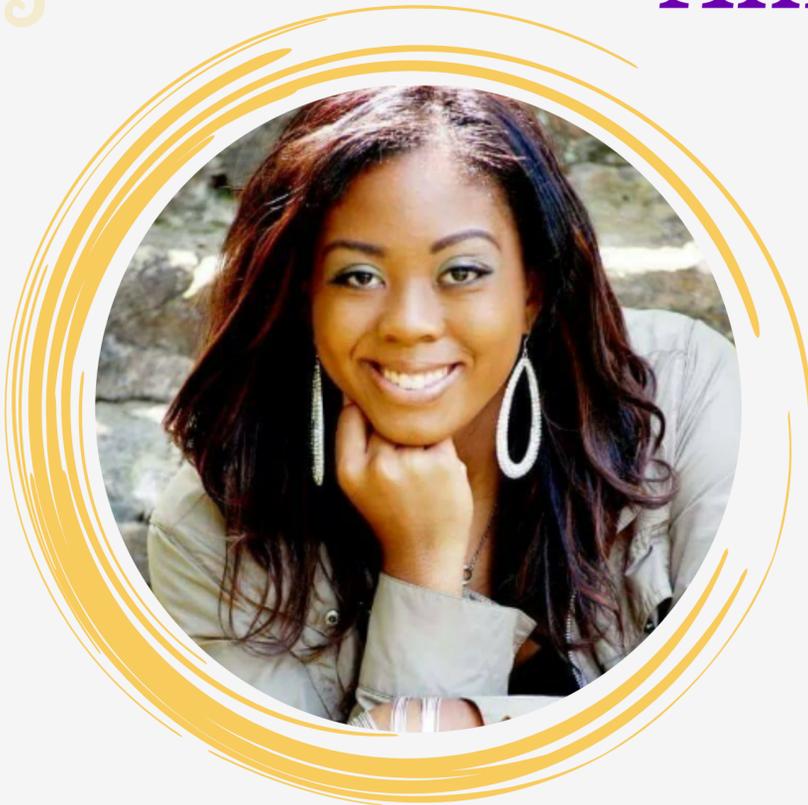
Favorite Honors Class:
Public Speaking with Kevin
(I mean how could I say anything other than that? But I do remember a lot from Charlie Hardy....good history comes from asking good questions!)

Anything you want to share?
"I am very grateful to Kevin Dean - his belief in me shaped who I am today. With certainty, I wouldn't have pursued my PhD if it weren't for the WCU Honors Program. As I've led multiple study abroad experience, I think back to how my own Honors study abroad was a transformative experience."

Educator Alumna Spotlight

By: Mackenzie Taylor

Amari Gilmore



Honors College Class of 2020

Major: Middle Grades Preparation Education with a Language Arts Certification

Minor: Reading, Civic and Professional Leadership

Current Occupation: 5th-grade science and social studies teacher at Jenna Boone Area School District

How did Honors help you during your time at WCU?

“I was a part of the inaugural bridge class actually...It gave me a community to connect to. I was already pretty connected; I was pretty involved in school. But it really challenged me to think very differently about the world that I lived in... I did go to South Africa with Dr. Dean and the gang. I think that was in 2018 that I went. That experience by itself was life changing... Honestly, just the faith that Dr. Dean puts into all of us, that carried me through a lot of different moments, knowing that there's a couple people on campus that believe I could do stuff... College is not an easy time for anybody, and having a community that you can actually connect to is really super important to making sure that you get through it and see it to the other side.”

What's a piece of advice that you'd give current students?

“Everything is a learning experience. Take your failures and your successes, and learn from both of them. Honors is a very safe space to actually fail. So fail often.”

What is one of your favorite memories from Honors?

“I think about South Africa often...When I was there, we were in one of the safari vehicles at the time, and I had to use the bathroom. So they just say to get off the safari vehicle and go into the bush and use the bathroom. I followed instructions, and when I came back from using the bathroom, a cheetah came out of the brush with me. Right in the street, it was like 15 feet away from me. And everybody was staring at the cheetah and staring at me, and I was like, ‘do I move quickly? Do I not move quickly?’ And I got back in the vehicle and was fine. But it was a terrifying and alarming experience. But also hilarious because when we got back from the trip in general, Dr. Dean had us reflect on a moment, and this is the moment I chose. And we were all hysterically laughing. Because it was genuinely funny– terrifying, but a really, really funny story to tell.”



Educator Alumna Spotlight

By: Mackenzie Taylor

Amari Gilmore

How has Honors helped you post-graduation?

“I find myself teaching my students little things about what I learned in the Honors College, the motto of ‘be flexible’. If you go to South Africa, that’s something that you will hear multiple times. My plans as a teacher never ever go as planned. I learned a lot about flexibility. I learned a whole lot about leadership itself, not just because of leadership minor, but because of the lessons that Dr. Dean puts into his classes... Actually, I set my classroom up very similarly to how Dr. Dean does, which is funny as I reflect on that right now...I like to push my kids hard at first so that they know my expectation is high so that they give me their best work.”

Any closing remarks?

“Off the top of my head? We really need teachers. So maybe people should consider that. I’m half joking right now. But kind of serious. I think Honors actually has a lot of people with big hearts in it. I think that’s the kind of program that Honors attracts – people with big hearts. If they’re not sure what they want to do, check out education. A lot of good teachers are probably hiding in Honors and they just don’t know it yet.”

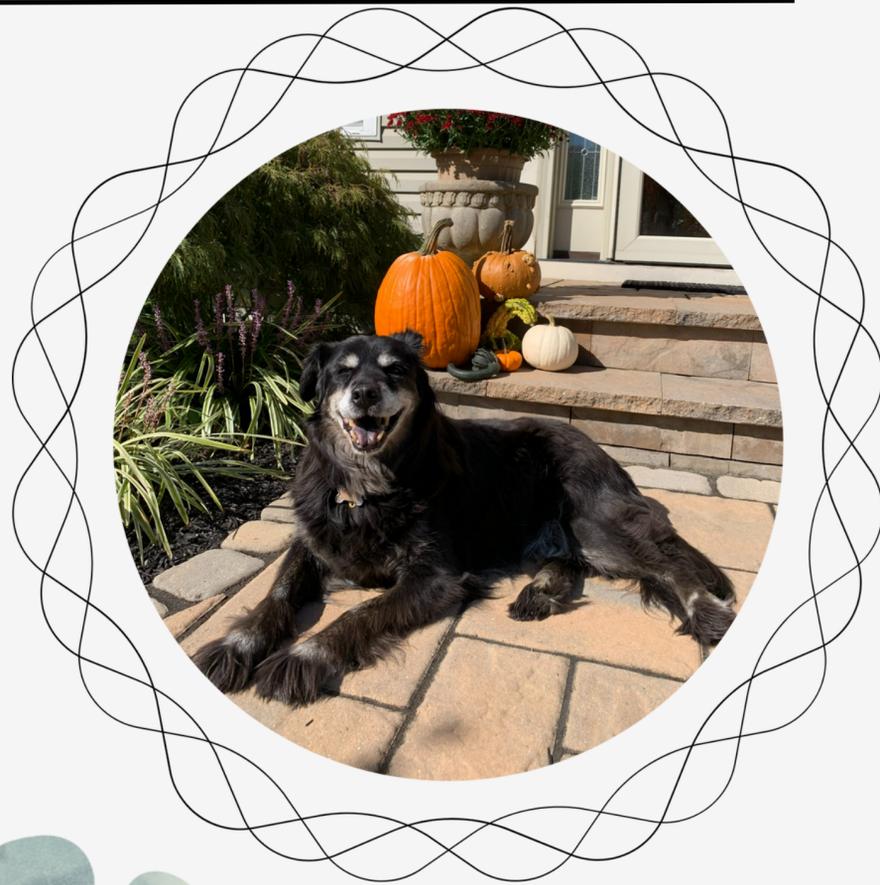
Thank you!

Pet Party!

Pictures provided by those named below



Courtney Parker



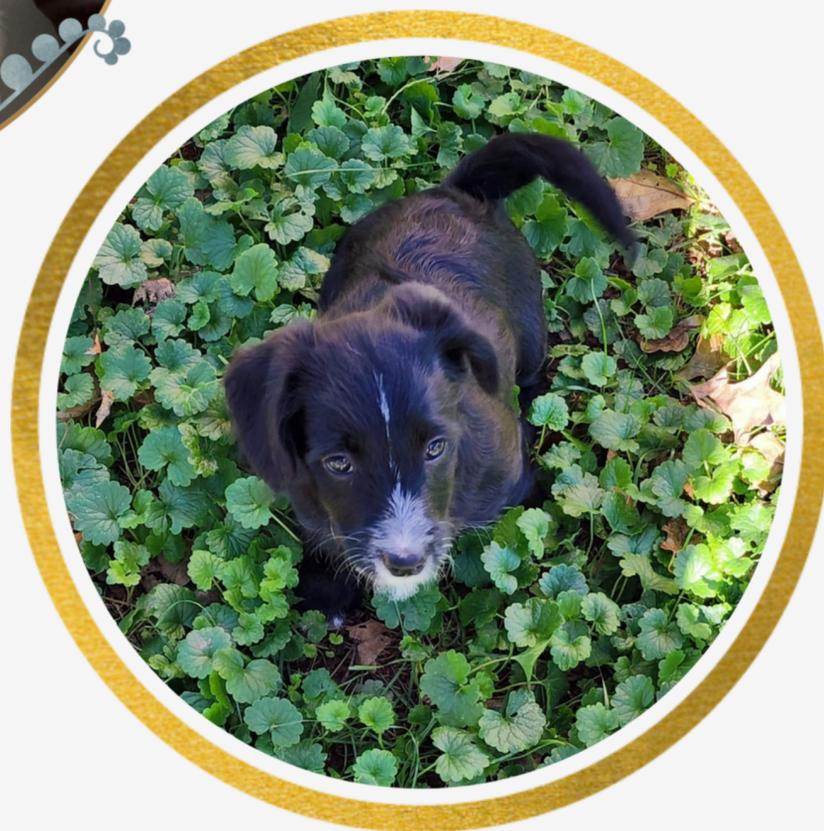
Cecilia Tabor



Grace Riley



Paige Reali



Isabella Nimmerichter

Back To My High School

By: Keilah Hanley, Maddy Oehme, and Gabby Sasso

Over fall break, Honors students in the Recruitment Committee participated in a program called Back To My High School. This program involves current students connecting with their mentors from high school and visiting their old schools to give a presentation to students about Honors. Sixteen students participated, visiting a total of fifteen high schools to promote WCU Honors.

Two of the students who participated in this project were first-year students, Maddy Oehme and Gabby Sasso. About this experience, they wrote, “On October 18th, Maddy and I had the opportunity to go back to our high school, Donovan Catholic, in Toms River, NJ. We presented to a group of students to share the benefits of the WCU Honors College. Our goal was to engage and interest juniors and seniors into applying and joining the honors college. Many of the students know alumni or have heard about the school in general, but not many had heard about the Honors College. We used the PowerPoints that were provided by Keilah and shared our own experiences. Many of the students were very interested in the program. At the end, we asked them if they would consider applying, and almost everyone raised their hands. We hope that our love for the Honors College will inspire more students to apply in the future.”

The goal of this project is not only to promote WCU Honors in high schools, but also to give students an opportunity to maintain a relationship with the teacher, counselor, coach, or other figure who they would consider their mentor throughout high school. We love giving students the opportunity to share where they are now with their former high school classmates, and hopefully, we will see some students from Maddy and Gabby’s high school here at West Chester next year!



Maddy Oehme
and Gabby Sasso
during their visit!

Interfaith Action

By: Joe Blaney

This year, the Interfaith Action Committee has a number of new goals in addition to working on returning events such as Better Together Day! One goal that the committee is working on this semester is creating a partnership with a local non-profit or service organization to engage in weekly service. The work will not only provide an opportunity for the Interfaith Action Committee to connect with the local West Chester community, but also to connect to the other faith organizations on campus through collaborative service.

This is an ongoing process and is an extension of the mission which the committee created at our first meeting: “The Interfaith Action Committee’s mission is to promote collaboration, dialogue, and understanding of religious and spiritual traditions across West Chester University’s campus. We accomplish this through collaborative service and on-campus events designed to introduce the community to unfamiliar traditions.”

- Joe Blaney



Sports Recap

By: Caitlyn Esch

Come see what's happening with sports in H.S.A.!! Many honors students are involved in women's soccer, field hockey, volleyball, and some intramural sports that would love your support! You can look on IMLeagues for an entire schedule of intramural sports or the wcupa athletics website!

The women's soccer team is crushing with a standing of 14-0! Upcoming home games are on October 22 vs Kutztown at 2:30 pm and October 29 vs East Stroudsburg at 12:00 pm, but don't forget to wish them luck for their away game at Millersville on October 26!

Field hockey is doing great as well, with a standing of 9-2! Upcoming home games are October 22 and 29, as well as November 5 and 9! Be sure to wish them luck against East Stroudsburg (Oct. 26 @ 2:30) and Bloomsburg (Nov. 1 @ 4).

Volleyball is standing at 16-7, and still going strong! Come support them for upcoming home games on October 25, 28, and 29, and wish them luck for away games at Bloomsburg, Shepherd, and Shippensburg!

The indoor intramural soccer team- the Hungry Soccer Addicts- has a playoff game coming up on Wednesday, October 26! Come support them in the recreation center at 7:00 pm on court 1 against Prestige Worldwide. They are currently seventh in the open league and have one of the best sportsmanship ratings!

Come out and support these teams that are working so hard and are doing great!

- Caitlyn Esch



The Hungry Soccer Addicts are following in the steps of last year's championing HSA team!

Creative Writing

By: Galee Griesler

Halloween Haiku

FULL MOON PEERING DOWN

CREATURES CREEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT

GATHERING CANDY

- Galee Griesler

HAPPY HALLOWEEN



Media in Ireland

By: Dr. Lordan and Dr. Rainear

“I loved getting to know everyone on the trip. Sharing all of the same experiences really bonded us together, and I can’t wait to study abroad again!”

- Liz Kosten

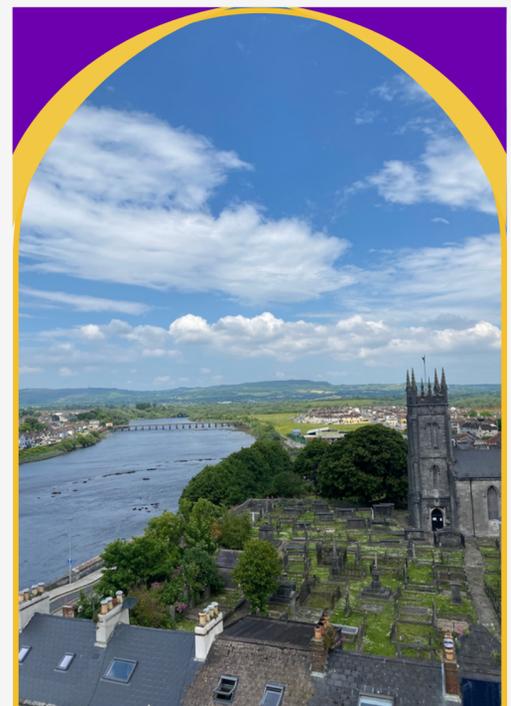
Twenty-one students, two chaperones, and three Irish cities. What could go wrong? Well, there’s COVID, but that’s only part of the story.

In June of 2022, the biggest class of West Chester University students headed off to Ireland to visit Limerick, Galway, and the Republic’s capital, Dublin – to study the history of Irish Media. The goals were to learn as much about Irish media, Irish history, and the Irish people as possible. Mission accomplished.

Students met on the WCU campus a few days before the trip to get familiar with each other, share their anxieties about travel, and get a brief overview of what makes the Irish Irish.

A canceled flight from Philly to Newark did not dissuade the group, as they simply hopped on a charter bus for the first leg of their trip to the Emerald Isle.

Once in Limerick, the group visited the offices of Southern Media and Advertising, a well-known creative boutique with a variety of European clients. They went on to attend the Lime Tree Theater and visited the haunts of Frank McCourt, the author of Angela’s Ashes. Later in the weekend, the group traveled to the town’s infamous Milk Market, and then got the chance to visit King John’s Castle along the Shannon River. Only a day later, they found themselves kayaking on the same water.



“A trip like Ireland is one that changes each individual for the better. Having the opportunity to immerse yourself in a different culture for almost a month allows you to gain a deeper awareness of the various ways people choose to live”

- Kiah Saxman



Galway, considered Ireland’s most musical city, was the second leg in the course (I bet you’ve never heard the song “Galway Girl” before). Students presented their “expert projects” on topics ranging from The Irish Times newspaper to RTE, the national broadcasting facility. The Galway excursion also included a visit to Flirt FM, the radio station at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Unfortunately, it was at that point that COVID struck the trip, hitting both faculty and students. Some members had to quarantine while the trip rolled on for those who tested negative.

Dublin, the largest of the three cities, offers a vibrant and diverse urban environment, where students visited Trinity College and the headquarters of one of the key brands in the entire country, Guinness. The group also visited the General Post Office and Kilmainham Gaol, two of the most important historic sites in the country.

The 2023 version of the course will be held in the first summer session in June. Honors students who are interested in joining or learning more about the trip should contact Dr. Adam Rainear at arainear@wcupa.edu or Dr. Ed Lordan at elordan@wcupa.edu.

- Dr. Lordan and Dr. Rainear

“My favorite part of the Ireland trip was getting to enjoy another country with some great friends! Also, the Cliffs of Moher!”

- Matt Cobos

Jocelyn Brown's Capstone

By: Jocelyn Brown



This fall, I am interning with the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo, so I needed my capstone to be something that I could complete from afar. After my two short-term study abroad experiences this summer, I had so many thoughts about education abroad running around in my mind. Therefore, I decided my capstone would be planning the Spring 2024 Norway study abroad experience, which Honors will continue to run every other year. My work consists of two parts: the trip in May and the class during the semester. While I'm in Oslo, I have been touring museums/landmarks and emailing non-profits to see what educational excursions would benefit the class the most. For example, I visited our partners at the American College of Norway this month to get a historical tour of Moss. I am also collecting sources and building lessons for the class leading up to the trip so students feel both personally and academically prepared for their time in Norway. My capstone paper literature review explores experiential learning, guided reflection, and other factors that make a successful study abroad experience. Because I could not travel abroad until college, I hope this class attracts similarly dedicated students who may not get the chance to see the world otherwise. I hope future Honors students who get to go on this experience will have fun, feel safe, and grow their confidence in their status as global citizens.

- Jocelyn Brown



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