



# Celebrating Catholic Schools Week

Starting January 30 Part 3 of a 3 Part Series

## The Senior Experience

*Saint Dom's Seniors Proving they are ready for the next steps.*

When Eleanor Russell submitted the formal proposal for her Senior Symposium topic, she did so with nervous excitement. "I can't wait to start organizing this into an outline and see the project start to take shape." Eleanor is one of thirty-one seniors who are beginning to plan their Senior Symposium, a graduation requirement at St. Dominic Academy. The project entails a research paper, visual presentation, and an oral presentation that is delivered to the school community on the seniors' last day of academic classes. It is the capstone to their education at the academy, one that is designed for students to demonstrate their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, research, analysis, and media literacy skills, planning and goal-setting abilities, as well as other skills developed during their education at St. Dom's such as oral communication and public speaking skills.

The seniors begin the process in December looking for ideas and topics that generate evidence-based arguments and that lead to real world solutions. Colin Casserly says, "as younger students we know symposium is coming before we graduate. I am always looking at current events and problems in society and thinking, Is this something I can research? Can I come up with a solution to this?" Another senior, Julianne Cook, stated, "the project has made me think about the world in a different way. I think about issues presented to me through the news and media and try to look at those issues from all sides. What is the story? What is the message? What is the problem and what can I do about it?"

The day of presentation is made special for the seniors. They spend the day together listening and sharing their work, supporting each other, and celebrating the achievement of their hard work. Parents are invited to view their children's presentations and see how far they've come in their educational journey. Seniors also invite former teachers, alumni, and current students to the event. The school caters a special lunch of the seniors' choosing and the principal and administrators serve them. Patrick Manson remarked, "It's a special day. Most of us are nervous to present, but excited at the same time." Matthew Frett, a graduate of 2021 states of his experience, "Symposium Day was one of my favorite days. We spent the whole day as a class. By the time I was scheduled to present, all the nerves were gone, and I was excited to share my presentation."

Once presentations are complete, the seniors embark on their tenure of community service called Senior Involvement. In this extended term and final step before graduation, the seniors go out into the community to volunteer at local non-profit organizations to give back to their communities. "Involvement really is the best part of senior year! It's the reward

for all of our hard work and we get to give back," says Thomas Suckow. "It's the best way to help our community and return the support that they give us." The program provides the opportunity for students to live out the Dominican pillars of Community, and Service. Coupled with symposium, Involvement allows students to prove they are ready for the next steps in their educational journey. As senior Sydney Dick states, "We know when we leave school, we have the ability to be contributing members of society. We are problem solvers and leaders. It's a good feeling."



## Athletics At Saint Dom's

Persistence and perseverance. St. Dom's has a proud history of school pride, sportsmanship, and fierce competition in athletics. It seems as though the tide of luck and glory rotates from sport to sport and season to season giving each its turn in the spotlight. Sometimes the highlight is on a championship or a winning streak, and sometimes it is on a group or team as a whole. There are strong years and there are building years, but through them all are the common threads of persistence and perseverance. Our athletes learn their value in an athletic setting not because of their records, but because of their efforts. They learn the most valuable lessons: leadership, teamwork, and above all faith.

It's not uncommon to see the teams pray together before or after a game. In victory and defeat their faith comforts them, unites

them, and gives them the courage to brush themselves off and continue on. They themselves work together to improve each other and lift each other up and the results are seen both on and off the playing venue.

St. Dom's athletes continue to defy expectations. The words, "We can't" don't exist for them. Compare them to the New England weather - wait a second and they might surprise you! Teams that thought they had no chance frequently come back stronger from challenges and obstacles, celebrate their successes, and continue to persist and persevere in athletics and all other areas of their lives. The boys varsity basketball team is excelling, our pioneer year of coed middle school alpine skiing is thriving, our elementary soccer program is growing. Our tradition of hardworking and exciting hockey

continues. Our athletes feel valued. They know they can contribute. They are stalwart and persistent, and so they persevere and that means success.

Emma Theriault, a graduate of the class of 2019 reflected on her time as a student athlete at St. Dom's saying, "We are not just defined by our championships and our physical prowess. We take pride in who we are as people, not just our stats, trophies, and banners. We recognize our failings are just as important as our successes because they help us persist and overcome." She added, "We use adversity to build ourselves up, to find creative solutions that enhance our individuality... we can say with confidence that we are role models and leaders, that we care about each other and the world around us. That's what it is to be a Saint."



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