

Walsh University Honors Program Presents

# Honorable Mention

Fall 2024 Volume 8: Issue 1

## Freshmen Honors Students



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# Welcome Freshmen Honors students!

## The Freshmen:

Kate Archer, Milei Baker, Sydney Becks, Gabriella Berlingieri, Nathaniel Borman, Anthony Bond, Noah Bott, Evan Braun, Caitlin Bray, Addison Burick, Corinne Casenhiser, Molly Durkin, Logan Figuerado, Paige Folk, Emily Gruey, Benjamin Jende, Garrett Kessling, Ava Littin, Arabelle Loyed, Winsten Lomax, Kylie Long, Aidan Markey, Kelsey McKeehan, Emilia McVicker, Abigail Meffert, Camryn Miller, Nadine Mohamed, Joseph Moorhead, Luke Moriarty, Alexandria Morris, Sachin Nallapaneni, Dawson Ohl, Holden Osborne, Carly Paugh, Hailey Plesz, Madison Reis-Elbara, Aiden Rodstrom, Aubrey Ross, Jenna Selby, Rylee Schor, Grady Schroeder, Lina Starke, Grace Tabellion, Andrew Temelkoff, Lilly Wojtala, Micah Wright, Anabelle Yensel.

Welcome to the Honors Family!

We are beyond excited to welcome you into our Honors family and Cav Nation here at Walsh! As you have gotten settled into your dorms and routines, we hope that you have begun to find Walsh home and enjoy what Honors students before you have found joy in.

While the Honors courses may be more difficult than what you are used to, remember that you are in the Honors Program because you are more than capable of handling it! Being a part of this program is a reward for all of the hard work that you did as students in high school. In the same way, completing the Honors Program at the end of the thesis process will be the reward for your hard work in college.

This first fall semester that you have experienced is only the beginning of the college journey. Though it is a commonly used phrase, your time here truly does fly by. So take advantage of every opportunity. Join the clubs that peak your interest. Participate in events in the Honors Program and on campus. Attend as many athletic events as you can to support your fellow Cavaliers. And create memories that will make your college experience memorable.

We wish you all well in your academic and career endeavors!

- Honorable Mention Co-Editors, Aliya Shine and Troy Mazzei



# Our Freshmen Honors students

Students participated in the annual Honors Student Mentoring event



The freshmen are paired up with a table of upperclassmen who are in similar majors as the student. The event is a great way for students to meet people and ask questions about their field of study.

# Sincerely, Your Honors Assistants

by: Izzy Rammel & Sophia Rosa

Hello! We're the 2024 Honors Student Assistants, and we just want to take a moment to welcome the new Honors freshmen and say how grateful we are for the chance to serve the Honors Program. We've loved working together to plan events and help to connect the Honors community. It's been such a great experience, especially with the different educational perspectives we bring to the role.

## Get to know us!

Sophia (on the left) is a junior studying Nursing. She competes on the Women's Golf team and has had a golf club in her hand from the time she was two years old! She is the vice president for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, a program that encourages student-athletes to engage with the community and raise money for various causes. She is also the vice-president of the Nursing club and a tutor for many Nursing and Honors classes. She is currently in the Junior Honors Project (JHP) phase of her thesis, for which she is working with Stark Parks, a local park system, to better understand various metabolic bone diseases and how they present in mammals, primarily opossums. After graduation, Sophia plans on taking the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) and working as a new-grad RN to build experience for graduate school.



Izzy (on the right) is a senior studying Government and Foreign Affairs and Theology, with minors in History and English. She's been running since middle school and now competes for Walsh's Cross Country and Track teams. Izzy is also the president of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, president of the Pre-Law club, and a tutor for GFA, Theology, History, Honors, and Writing. Her thesis, which she will present this Spring, focuses on rural attorney shortages and experiences in Ohio. After graduation, Izzy plans to attend law school in Fall of 2025.

The Honors Program has really shaped our time at Walsh. It's given us a strong sense of community, both within our cohorts and among the wider Honors student body. This has been valuable not just in the classroom, but in other campus organizations too. The seminar-style classes have helped us improve our debate skills and learn how to communicate better, while also bringing us closer to our peers through meaningful discussions. Even though we're at different points in the thesis process, we both agree that it's been an amazing chance to work closely with faculty and dive into research on topics that really matter. All in all, our experiences with the program have been overwhelmingly positive, and that's why it's so easy to give back to the Honors community. Keep an eye out for our upcoming service and social events this winter. We're excited to continue serving you all this year! ●

# Service & Social: How Honors students Serve their Community and Build Connections

by: Gabriella Berlingieri



Students at Refuge of Hope service event

During the Fall term at Walsh University, numerous students in the Honors Program participated in service opportunities that aided the North Canton and Stark County communities.

On September 20 and November 22, Honors students volunteered at Refuge of Hope in Canton. These volunteers helped the community by aiding Refuge of Hope's effort to provide food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare options for Stark County residents who are in need. Volunteers sorted donations and served meals. By assisting others, these Honors students demonstrated commitment to serving the needs of others and representing the goals and mission of Walsh University.

Freshman Honors students had the opportunity to meet with upperclassmen and choose a mentor during the Honors Speed Mentoring Event on September 25. Freshman spent time interacting with upper-class students that they shared similar majors, extracurriculars, and experiences with, switching every ten minutes, for thirty minutes. After the event, freshmen were assigned a mentor based on how they responded to a survey. Building connections with students who have experienced what college life has to offer is important for those that are new to Walsh University, and this event helped students interact with knowledgeable upperclassmen.

Honors students volunteered at the "Potter in the Park" event in Alliance on October 5, where they ran a station teaching children about science and density by making "potions." Other students assisted the park staff in making the event run smoothly. The Harry Potter-themed event was a hit and was an especially magical time for these volunteers.

Students got to jump into the fall season at a social at Maize Valley in Hartville on October 6. Students in attendance enjoyed pizza, s'mores, and a corn maze, all while bonding around a campfire. There is no better way to celebrate the beauty of fall than a fun afternoon at a pumpkin patch!

Dr. Constance and Dr. Taylor also hosted a Public Debate Event in the GLC that included workshops on October 3 and October 10, and a final debate on October 24, in which Honors students put the techniques they had learned to use. Students learned to think critically and articulate their thoughts in a confident manner, all while learning how to respect their debate opponents using Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric.

Thank you to all of the students that represented Walsh University by volunteering their time and effort in the fall! We look forward to more service opportunities and social events in the upcoming semester. ●



# Path to Success: The Thesis Process

by: Troy Mazzei



Justin Nienabar

## Honors Student Justin Nienabar's Experience with the Thesis Process

The Honors Thesis is a signature part of the Honors Program that has been proudly offered to every Honors student since the inception of the program over 30 years ago. From an academic perspective, the benefits of writing a thesis include improved critical thinking, research, and communication skills. Additionally, the thesis process allows students to receive one-on-one mentoring from a faculty member who is an expert in their field. The final product is also often used to enhance job and graduate school applications.

Yet, many freshmen and sophomore Honors students, who have not started their thesis, view the thesis as a terrifying hurdle. It's understandable why this happens, writing a thesis as an undergraduate student can seem intimidating to students with limited research experience. However, the reality is that at Walsh University the thesis is a highly scaffolded process. Every Honors student is given the support, knowledge, and skills that they need to succeed. That is not to say it's easy –it isn't – but it is achievable. This article describes the thesis process with insights from Justin Nienabar, an Honors student who successfully completed his thesis last year.

From the very beginning of their academic career at Walsh, Honors students are preparing for their thesis. In HON 120: Interdisciplinary Research and Writing, Professor Hepner introduces students to the types of writing they will need to do, the expectations they will face, and the resources they will utilize throughout the rest of their Honors careers. Justin soon came to realize that, by teaching him skills like writing in proper APA format and paraphrasing, "Dr. Hepner's class helped [him] learn how to do high quality and quantity academic writing" that he had never done before.

As the semesters pass, the other Honors classes that students take continue to reinforce high academic standards, truth-seeking, and professionalism. Justin specifically recalls the Theology and Science debate class featuring Professor Dabney and Professor Freeland as a class that "seemed like it was made specially for someone with my interests" and that "legitimately changed the way I see the world." However, Justin's favorite Honors class was "without a doubt, 'History of Atlantic Revolutions' with Dr. Constance. We learned how to write and deliver speeches, think critically, and debate."

Students truly start to embark on the thesis journey when they are four semesters away from graduation. This is when they take the newly added HON 331: Research Methods, a class which guides them as they complete an in-depth literature review on the topic they will be studying, called the Junior Honors Project (JHP). HON 331 students prepare an annotated bibliography, outline their JHP, and meet with their faculty advisors frequently as they write and revise their JHP. For those worried about their JHP, Justin advises: "Don't be scared of it, in reality 20 pages isn't that much of a time commitment. Rely on your advisors to guide your research and keep it focused. Communicate with your thesis advisor early on to establish that relationship and you'll be thankful for it in the long run."

Upon completion of their JHP's, students begin their thesis itself. Students are encouraged to select a topic that is of interest to them and that will benefit them in their future studies or career. For example, Justin did his work in one of Walsh's science labs, "trying to make photosensitizers, the molecule that causes the cancer killing reaction in phototherapy." Regardless of major, every student's thesis can be interesting and relevant to them. There have been students who have composed children's books, written novellas, created digital programs that allow students without wi-fi to access their schoolwork, studied physical performance in athletes, analyzed the impact of summer camp on social development, and even researched the beliefs and customs of different Amish groups.

Justin recommends that all Honors students, particularly science majors, are aware of the time they are going to need to put in. The summer after his sophomore year Justin stayed on campus and spent "between 200 and 300 hours" in the lab. And while the work was hard, Justin says: "I look back on that time super fondly now. It was an amazing experience to learn independence, do lab work, get to know professors, and build my resume for grad school. It helped me become like a real adult."

After students compile their data, they must synthesize it with the help of their advisors and other faculty, into a research paper. This is where the writings skills introduced in HON 120 become crucial, especially conciseness. "It was actually a lot less writing than you'd expect, most of the hard work is already done," Justin remembers. He continued that it is therefore crucial to "take good care of your data from the start, while you're doing your research, because you can't go back to fix it later." But as long as students' data is in order, "the writing may be rough, but it's not some final boss you have to conquer."

When students finally complete their thesis, they present their work to the campus community. While this may seem scary, Honors students real thesis presentation, where they uphold the value of their thesis to a panel of academic professionals, takes place before the start of their development of their thesis, allowing this thesis presentation to be a celebration of their hard work.

Justin's advice on the thesis presentation was simple, students must put in the work to memorize and refine their PowerPoints. He continued, saying it is also necessary for students to rehearse their presentations with their advisors to make sure that they are presenting their data in "an unbiased and ethical way [...] the further you go, the more important communication becomes." As long as students adequately prepare, the thesis presentation should be a "really cathartic experience." Justin remembered how "you get to see your family and the community you've built at Walsh all appreciate what you've worked so hard for."



Justin presenting his thesis this past spring.

Following their presentation, students may even have the opportunity to have their work published in peer-reviewed journals or to be uploaded to OhioLink's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation database. Some even present at Honors conferences like the Wittenberg Honors Symposium, the National Collegiate Honors Council, or the Mid-East Honors Association.

Throughout the process, whenever it got hard and he felt drained of motivation, Justin turned to his strong Catholic faith, reading scripture and reflecting on the life of St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower. Despite the struggles, Justin is thankful to have had the experience doing his thesis, calling it a "fulfilling challenge that shows you what you're truly capable of." ●

# Crafting Faith, Rosaries, and Unforgettable Memories with Dominic Gemma

by: Alyssa Cocchiola

Walsh University Senior Dominic “Dom” Gemma is currently pursuing a degree in Corporate Communications and Digital Media and has found ways to combine his passions, faith, and academics at Walsh. Dom is a member of Walsh’s Honors Program, sings in the university chorale and chamber singers ensembles, runs his own business, and is currently in the process of writing his thesis about intellectual property law and how the government regulates creativity.

“I chose this topic because I ... care about how creativity is regulated by the government. I love making music, and I also made my logo for my business, as well as all media that comes with it. In short, as time goes on, knowing how that stuff is regulated is going to be better for me in the long run, regardless of career path,” Dom said.

Academically, Gemma noted that he aims to be creative in his education at Walsh, having incorporated song writing and court cases into his academic work. He noted a specific court case, *Naruto v. Slater*, where the question of whether a photographer or a monkey owned the rights to a photo. Dom described his academic philosophy like this, “I know what the techniques I’m supposed to learn are, and rather than be stock, I made it my mission to have FUN in every class I take here at the university.”



Dominic “Dom” Gemma

Dom also runs a rosary business called Project 27 Ministries. He discussed how the business came about. “There is a bit of faith involved, but surprisingly, a lot of NASCAR. It all started by watching a YouTube video about a NASCAR driver named Alan Kulwicki. Alan was a high-strung guy who was sponsored by Hooters. He shouldn’t have inspired my faith at all, but he did,” he said. Apparently, Kulwicki wasn’t satisfied with the cars that his sponsors gave him, “So he decided to do it all himself, from building his own engines to his own cars and even hiring his own crew. The guy did everything to his liking and ended up becoming a champion,” Dom explained.



Dom’s Business Logo

After watching the Kulwicki video, Dom “took it to prayer.” This led him closer to the Catholic faith. During a time of uncertainty in his life, he began watching videos on how to make rosaries. Feeling inspired to create, Dom began gathering the supplies to create these rosaries.

The business soon flourished, taking on the name Project 27 Ministries for the twenty mysteries of the normal Rosary plus the seven from the alternative “Seven Sorrows” Rosary. “You end up with 27 mysteries to ponder in prayer, and given that I consider it my mission to help people better explore those 27 mysteries, you get the name ‘Project 27 Ministries,’” Dom concluded. ●



# From Cross Country to Caffeine: Camryn Barker Begins Research

by: Alyssa Cocchiola



Camryn Barker

Both in the classroom and on the field, Walsh University junior, Camryn Barker, navigates her packed schedule with precision. Camryn is a Nursing major, runs for Walsh's Cross-Country team, lives on campus, and on top of all that, is beginning the honors thesis process.

Over the summer, Camryn began researching for her thesis. Her love for sports led her to focus her research on caffeine usage in college athletics. She noted how starting the process over the summer helped her significantly. "Start early," Camryn advised, "If you can do something in the summer, do something in the summer—especially if you're an athlete. That helped me so much." She explained that being ahead was extra beneficial to her in light of her busy fall semester. "I already had that research foundation pretty much done, so I didn't have to do an overwhelming amount when I got here."

Though there is current research on caffeine in students, Camryn aims to fill a gap in the research by specifically studying student athletes. In the early stages of the thesis process, Camryn is still deciding what specific direction she wants to take her thesis. She is currently looking into how caffeine impacts the mental and physical health of athletes. On the physical side of things, Barker noted that caffeine intoxication is a concern for student athletes. "Caffeine intoxication is the symptoms you get from exceeding 250mg of caffeine," she explained. "When you do that, some people can get anxiety and nervous symptoms. There are different symptoms, like irregular rapid heartbeat, fidgeting... I just want to see why caffeine use is so prevalent in student athletes... and how that affects them."

Barker has seen a significant amount of caffeine usage in both her and her peers. "Personally, for running, I've used caffeine gels," she said. "I've used coffee before. I've used it for if I'm studying outside of school. I feel like it helps my performance, but I don't think I want to go to the real, athletic, physical aspect of it. Mentally, I think it helps." Camryn additionally advised students to select a topic they are excited about and applies to their lives. She said that since she drinks coffee and is an athlete, she can easily see why her research is important.

While Camryn is beginning the capstone of her time in Honors, she reflected on previous Honors courses she took at Walsh. "I really enjoyed taking a class with Dr. Clevinger: 'Bio Exploration and Exploitation,'" she explained. In HON 220: "Biological Exploration and Exploitation" students are introduced to the topics of systematics, environmental science, and conservation through readings about explorers. "That was my favorite class I've taken for Honors. I loved that class," she remarked. ●



Camryn with a Starbucks coffee

Coffee from Kozy Kabin in  
Louisville, Ohio



# Driven To Success: Commuter Ryan Moorhead's Honors Program Journey

by: Alyssa Cocchiola



Balancing band, the Honors Program, commuter life, and a double major, Walsh University junior Ryan Moorhead is making the most out of his experience at Walsh. Ryan is pursuing a major in both Cybersecurity and Programming with a minor in Business.

"I was really interested in computer science when I was in high school," Ryan explained. "I had a really good computer science teacher. He just made it fun for me. I kind of thought, 'This is something I enjoy. I want to go into it.' When I started looking for schools, I was like, 'Walsh is a Catholic University. It's got the major I'm looking for and [it's] close to home.'"

During his first year at Walsh, Ryan described the struggles of getting involved as a commuter. "It was hard to get involved on campus as I'm more introverted. My first year pretty much consisted of me going to my classes and going home," he explained.

To get more involved in campus, he picked up a job at the Help Desk on campus his freshman year. Even then, Ryan explained that he did not attend many campus activities, prompting him to join Cavs Cor as a leader the following summer. "I think that really helped me branch out, get to know people, and made me want to be involved on campus," he explained. "Since that transition between freshman and sophomore year, it's been a lot more of me going to events. I joined the band. I am starting to go to campus ministry. I think since the beginning of my sophomore year, commuting is really great. I've been able to see my family when I need to. Tomorrow, we're going to see my brothers play in the marching band in high school."

He noted that he is always on the lookout for emails about upcoming events. "I definitely think those kinds of

opportunities have been really good," he explained. "It's nice to see all my fellow Honors classmates going out and doing things as well."

He especially appreciated the Honors Program's efforts to take students to a pumpkin patch in the fall. This year, Honors students attended Maize Valley Farms in Hartville to pick pumpkins. In addition to events, Ryan also expressed a great fondness for the Honors

Program's courses, classmates, and teachers. "I like the people in Honors," he described. "They're enjoyable to sit with and listen to. We have similar mindsets. We're motivated, but intellectual. We have similar styles of humor, so [you can] make a little comment that puts a smile on someone's face. It's been a nice communal experience."

So far, Ryan's favorite course has been HON 222: "Music Innovators or Impersonators," taught by Dr. Thomas Roblee, Professional Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands at

Walsh. According to the class syllabus, in HON 222 "students focus on style and structure of various musical works and the historical impacts of those works while considering specific cultural developments throughout Music History." Ryan also works under the direction of Dr. Roblee as a member of the University band where he plays the tenor drums.

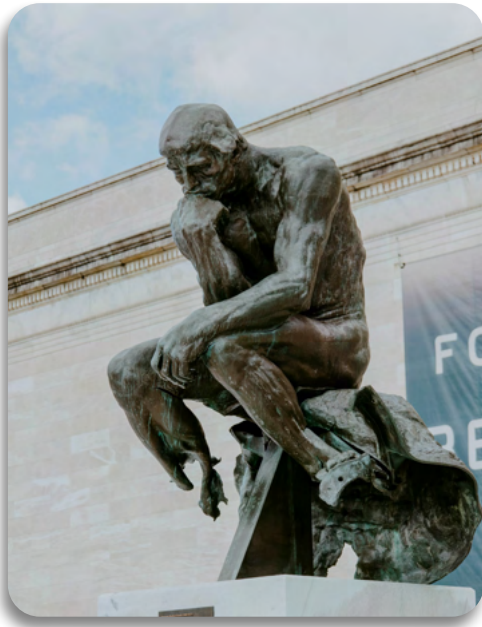
"I have Professor Roblee for band right now, but I hadn't had him [when I took this course]." Ryan enjoyed that the class investigated the question of "did this person steal their fame from somebody else or did they actually deserve the credit they got? ... It was a really interesting class, but I also got to look at the history of music that I had never gotten to take a look at before, having been in band for six years before Walsh," Moorhead explained. ●



Ryan Moorhead

# Course Spotlight: Honors 224 "Philosophy of Art"

by: Alexis Perretta



Statue in front of the Cleveland Museum

Art comes in many forms: music, literature, theater, photography, etc., and it has the power to inspire, challenge, and transform. In his course, HON 224: "Philosophy of Art," Dr. Joseph Vincenzo uses the writings of renowned philosophers to dive into the profound nature of aesthetic experience, the creative process, and the very essence of art itself. With over 50 years of experience dedicated to the study and teaching of philosophy, Dr. Vincenzo wants students who take this course to "develop a deeper and broader appreciation of art across several mediums."

In accordance with the Honors Program's mission, this course pushes students' intellect by engaging with challenging philosophical texts, allowing for students to hone their critical thinking, writing, and comprehension skills. "The course demands the highest level of rigor, requiring students to interpret and apply the ideas of influential philosophers to a wide range of art forms," explains Dr. Vincenzo. Over the course of eight weeks, students explore the works of Vico, Nietzsche, Bergson, Kant, and Merleau-Ponty, diving into texts such as *The New Science*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, *Critique of Judgment*, and *Eye and Mind*. Drawing on his personal experiences with monumental art and global travel, Dr. Vincenzo carefully selects primary texts that spark insightful class discussions. These discussions, in turn, inspire students to produce three thoughtful essays throughout the semester.

The impact of this course extends beyond the classroom. Dr. Vincenzo considers the most recent offering of the course, which took place last spring semester, to have been one of the most rewarding experiences of his 39-year career at Walsh University. Students, too, have expressed their enthusiasm for the course, appreciating Dr. Vincenzo's dedication to their learning. Even when faced with complex philosophical concepts, Dr. Vincenzo takes time to break down the material, ensuring that every student has a solid understanding. His commitment to student success fosters a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment.

Dr. Vincenzo recalled of his experience teaching the course last spring, "I loved the enthusiasm of most of the students. The course will stand out in my memory as one of the most successful courses that I have taught at Walsh University." Dr. Vincenzo teaches his HON 224 students that the word "enthusiasm" literally means "to be full of God" and later remarked that, at times, teaching the class made him feel exactly that. Dr. Vincenzo's passion for philosophy and art is evident in every class session, making the course a memorable experience.

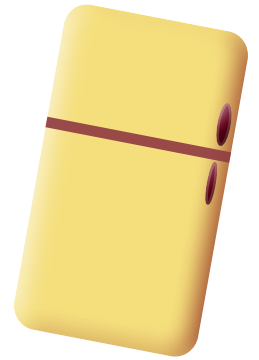
This course truly builds on what it means to be a student in the Honors Program. It challenges students to think critically, question assumptions, and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the human experience. For students considering this course, Dr. Vincenzo offers the following advice: "Ask yourself what life would be like without the human imagination, creativity, ingenuity, beauty, or the sublime." By immersing themselves in the world of philosophy and art, students can gain a deeper understanding of the human condition and the power of creative expression. ●

Dr. Vincenzo teaching a class



# The Honors "Fridge"

A gallery of our Honors students having fun and serving their community. Proud-moments and fun memories that are worthy of being hung on the "fridge" for everyone to see.



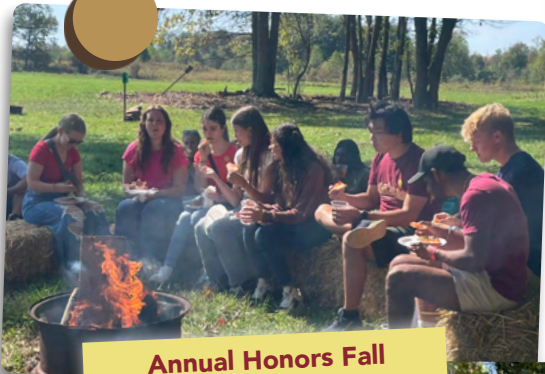
**Student-facilitate debate held by Dr. Constance**



**Service project for Black College Hall of Fame Golf Classic**



**Students with Pro Football Hall of Famer, Robert Brazile, and Dr. Renee Powell, pro golfer in the LPGA Tour and was inducted into the PGA America Hall of Fame in 2017.**



**Annual Honors Fall Social at Maize Valley**





Students serving at the Refuge of Hope



Students serving at the Refuge of Hope (continued)



Student at Beech Creek Gardens for a service event



Students serving at another Refuge of Hope event



## Annual Honors Christmas Party



Thank you for reading this edition of the Honorable Mention. We hope that it reveals a small piece of the work that the Honors Program students are doing to impact their lives and in the lives of those in the community.

Troy Mazzei  
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Faculty Advisor

Aliya Shine  
Co-Editor

Special thank-you to our student writers:

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Gabriella Berlingieri  
Alyssa Cocchiola  
Alexis Perretta

### Mission

The Walsh University Honors Program provides an enhanced, values-based educational experience to intellectually curious, academically talented, and highly motivated undergraduate students. The program's curriculum is innovative, diverse, and interdisciplinary; it supports a community of scholars that is equally diverse and innovative, as well as collaborative. The Honors Program experience develops leaders who pursue academic excellence, think critically, research independently, communicate effectively, and provide service to others.

For more information about the Honors Program, please contact Dr. Jennifer Clevinger or Dr. Nina Rytwinski at [honorsdirector@walsh.edu](mailto:honorsdirector@walsh.edu).



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