



# Ursuline Academy

## *Reflections on a Challenging Year*

Just as we headed into the world of the coronavirus with surprising speed, we seem to be emerging from it just as quickly and with a welcome sense of relief. It is refreshing to see smiles light up entire faces (outdoors, at least), to watch students revel in the near normalcy, and to look ahead to a well-deserved summer break.

We are grateful for the many sacrifices made during the past year as we faced the challenges of the pandemic together. The courage of our faculty, staff, students and families as we embraced change with flexibility and creativity has made us stronger as a community united in a common purpose.

We end the 2020-2021 school year with gratitude, and look forward to the fall with optimism and confidence in our ability to provide a quality educational experience for our students.

## WHAT WORKED WELL



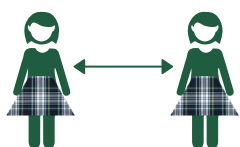
### **Technology**

The year-long effort to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in our Ursuline community also revealed some unanticipated benefits discovered from new ways of doing things. Investments in technology and faculty training made it possible for learning to continue throughout the year. Meetings and events, reimagined virtually, were met with higher levels of participation, extending outreach to more members of our student, parent, faculty/staff, and alumnae community.



### **Ursuline Traditions**

Beloved traditions continued in new formats. Each grade was still able to come together, socially distanced, for class retreats. We hosted joyful occasions such as the Eighth Grade Move-Up Ceremony, Senior Parent Brunch, Junior Ring Ceremony, National Honor Society, and Commencement with minor modifications, but more importantly, together in person.



### **Mitigating the Spread**

Measures taken to mitigate the spread of the virus at Ursuline have proven to be effective in minimizing transmission. Screening for students and employees, masking, social distancing, and other special cleaning protocols and practices put in place have helped Ursuline to prevent community spread on campus. We are thrilled that we made it through the year without any cases of COVID traced back to in-school transmission.



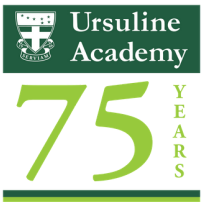
### Our Amazing Faculty and Staff

The Ursuline faculty and staff have been exemplary role models for resiliency, flexibility, and collaboration! Working in teams, teachers were incredible assets in supporting successful transitions through multiple schedules, adoption of new safety protocols, and modifications to teaching techniques.



### Community Partnerships

Ursuline is tremendously grateful for our caring community of parents, alumnae, and friends who partnered with us and went beyond the extra mile to enhance every class tradition and student event. Special thanks to the parent volunteers for their heartfelt demonstration of love and support in so many ways throughout the year. The generosity of the community also enabled us to exceed our goal for our day of giving and to paint a bright future for the Fund for Ursuline.



### A Spirit of Generosity

It's not too late to strengthen the Ursuline experience for your daughter and all Ursuline students by making a gift to the Fund for Ursuline. If you make your gift by June 30th, your name will be listed in the next Annual Report as a supporter. Whether this is your first donation or you can give again, let's finish this year as strongly as possible in honor of your daughter and Ursuline's 75th Anniversary. Make your gift [here](#).



# LOOKING AHEAD

It is only natural to want to know exactly what life at Ursuline will look like in late August and September, when sports tryouts and classes begin; don't we all yearn for life to be just as we always knew it? At this point, with easy access to vaccinations and the continued decline of the virus, we anticipate that our routines and schedules will be much more normal than the current year. However, notwithstanding the prevalence of vaccines, we know that conditions can shift rapidly and may require us to adjust.

### Expectations for the Fall of 2021

- Guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education indicate that we will be fully in-person without social distancing for classes and activities (athletics, drama, clubs, etc.)
- We expect that hallways and classrooms will be set up in their normal configuration, and that we will no longer need our larger spaces (Angela Hall and the library) to serve as classrooms or study halls.
- We look forward to in-person club meetings, and the return of large group gatherings, such as Masses, assemblies, and retreats, without social distancing.

### Questions Under Consideration

- We strongly encourage parents to have their daughters vaccinated. With the majority of faculty and staff vaccinated already, we anticipate similarly high vaccination rates among new faculty and staff. A fully vaccinated school population helps us best protect the health of our community and return to the routines that we know and love.
- We are hopeful that we will not need to require masks in the fall, but we recognize that masks are a very effective tool should transmission rates start to climb again. As long as the virus is a reality in the greater community, students, faculty, and staff will have the option to wear a mask if they wish to do so.

Please know that the health and safety of our school community remains our top priority. As we have done all year, our decisions will be based upon the recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

**Look for additional details later in the summer!**

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