Hard work in this school never goes unrecognized. On May 1st, 2012 the school celebrated its annual “Years of Service” mass. This mass celebrates the Feast Day of St. Joseph the Worker and commemorates all the faculty members who have worked in Belen in multiples of five years, starting at 10 years of service. This year, the school celebrated 21 faculty members for their combined 420 years of service and dedication to the school. If it wasn’t for their excellent work, the school would not be the same.

Leading the race this year with 35 years of work and dedication to the school are Fr. Pedro Cartaya, S.J., and Mr. George Busse. Both of these men have worked at the school for 35 years now. Fr. Cartaya is known for his devotion to God and for his love of astronomy. He was a pioneer of the school observatory and continues to work there to this day. He is also known by most students for his quick-witted humor and for his ability to create a pun out of anything. No one can deny all of his contributions to this school.

Mr. George Busse serves as the school’s chief accountant. He has been handling the finances throughout that time and has done an excellent job in making sure the finances were taken care of. He is the father of three school alumni, the uncle of two alumni and the grandfather of another two who will graduate next year. He also, in his off-time, loves to swim and even does so competitively. Right now, he is ranked #7 in the nation in his age group.

Coming in behind the two frontrunners are Dr. Brian Wentzel, Fr. Perez-Lerena, and Brother Gerardo Garcia, who are all celebrating 30 years of service to the school. Dr. Brian Wentzel, a psychologist, teaches two classes of AP Psychology. He also serves as the school’s director of admissions and personnel and maintains great interpersonal relations with his students. He evaluates the incoming students and, whether in 6th grade or 9th grade, does everything possible to make sure each student starts off on the right foot at Belen. He also readily enjoys fishing in his off-time.

Brother Gerardo Garcia is one of the more memorable faculty members in the school. Almost every student that has Brother Gerry cannot deny that there is a certain presence about him that no one forgets. He taught Art History in the school for a long time and has now happily added teaching Social Doctrine to his resume. He is very well known for his dedicated work for the junior class and has earned the respect and admiration of all of his past and present students.

Fr. Perez-Lerena also has been dedicated to the school for the past 30 years in many different roles. As school president, he opened the current campus in 1981. Fr. Perez-Lerena has been the spiritual counselor for many grades in the school over the years. He is respected and admired by all his past students and was always looked to when something was bothering them in their lives. Whenever anyone in this school needs help, they know that Fr. Perez-Lerena will be right there for them.

Edging in behind these faculty members are those that have celebrated 25 years of service to the school. These faculty members are Mr. Jose Roca, Mrs. Ana Maria Menocal, Mr. Ralph Ledesma, and Mrs. Amalia Fuentes. Mr. Jose Roca has done quite a lot for the school over the past 25 years. He has worked very diligently in the administration as the Assistant Principal to the high school and also served as the Chairman of the Mathematics Department. For years, he has also served as head coach for the varsity basketball team. He currently teaches one class of Honors Pre-Calculus and also works to make sure that the academics of the school are kept in nice order.

Mrs. Menocal has worked very hard for 25 years in teaching the 6th graders English with kindness and passion. She is one of the first people that the incoming 6th graders see when they enter this institution, and she is very critical in making sure that these students get a good idea of what they need in order to do well in this school.

Mr. Ralph Ledesma is one of the main school counselors. He has worked with the Class of 2012 for the past three years and has done everything possible to make sure everyone in that class was satisfied with their lives and with their current situations in the school. He will be fondly remembered when the Class of 2012 leaves the school and will immediately start to make great impressions with other classes.

Mrs. Amalia Fuentes has given a tremendous amount of herself to this school for the past 25 years as a custodian. She is also a cancer survivor, which takes great courage and strength. Add that to her 25-year devotion to the school and you get someone who has always given everything she has.

Coming in behind these teachers and celebrating 20 years of service are Mr. Mario Parra and Mrs. Lourdes Vega. Mr. Parra has worked as custodian to the school over the past 20 years and Mrs. Vega has worked to make sure the bookstore is running smoothly and to deal with the constant needs of every student.

Mr. Thomas de Quesada, Mrs. Ana Fenton, Mr. German Delgado, and Mrs. Mercy Rodriguez were recognized for their 15 years of service to the school. And last, but most certainly not least, Mrs. Carola Calderin, Mr. Eric Ballesteros, Mrs. Silvia Pena, Mr. Luis Dulzaides, Mrs. Olga Ramon, and Dr. Maria Cristina Reyes-Garcia were honored for their 10 years of service to the school.
The library first opened its doors in Matanzas, Cuba back in 1955. It was funded by Miss Gertrude E. Guiteras as a memorial to her father Ramón Guiteras. In 1961, however, the government confiscated the property and transported a portion of the books to Russia in exchange for arms and other equipment. It wasn’t until 1971 that the library opened once more. With the help of Jack R. Guiteras (Belen ’48), the library opened its doors to students in the old school building on 8th Street the next year. To date, the Gertrude E. Guiteras foundation has contributed over $2.5 million to the library.

This year, Belen celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the opening of the Ramón Guiteras Memorial Library in Miami. On Wednesday, May 2nd, the library hosted an event to commemorate these 40 years, as well as in memoriam of the passing of Jack Guiteras. Members of the Guiteras family as well as the library’s board of advisors and local librarians from colleges and universities attended. At the event, author Zeida C. Sardiñas gave a preview of her soon-to-be-published book Men for Others: The Belen Jesuit Story, which tells the history of Belen starting from its beginnings in Cuba. It will be available for purchase in the Fall. Also at the event, Father Suarez recognized Mrs. María Eireos for her work at Belen. Mrs. Eireos has been working at Belen for over 40 years now, working as a library assistant. She has worked at the school longer than anyone else.

Thanks to her, the Guiteras Foundation, and many others, today the library houses a collection of over 35,000 books, 70,000 ebooks, hundreds of videocassettes and DVDs, as well as current subscriptions to popular and scholarly journals and local and national newspapers. The library also features the “Colección Cubana” where you will find books about Cuba as well as books written by Cuban authors, both in English and Spanish, some of which are actually quite rare. We also can’t forget the thirty-three computers that students use on a daily basis, without which many of us probably wouldn’t be able to survive school.
For three years, on Cuban Independence Day (May 20th), a ceremony has been held in the memory of students of Belen Jesuit, El Colegio de Belén, and the other Jesuit schools in Cuba who surrendered their lives for higher causes. This ceremony is held before their placement on what is called the Wall of Martyrs. Before the 21st, twenty-two men had been honored by this ceremony, and their pictures hang on the Wall. This year, five more men joined them during the fourth ceremony on Monday, May 21st, 2012 at 4 PM. This is a distinguished list, including men from a variety of walks of life: an electrical mechanic, two doctors, a pilot, and two prisoners of war. They all died fairly young, fighting for the freedom of their country in two different wars.

Dr. Ricardo Pocurull y Oña, the first honoree, died on July 20th, 1897. He was killed in a campaign during the Cuban War of Independence. Carlos Rodríguez Santana, Class of ’54 and an electrical mechanic, was killed in a camp, training for an invasion on Playa Girón on September 7th, 1960. Raúl Vianello y Alacán, Class of ’45, was shot down from his plane over Playa Girón on April 17th, 1961. Alfredo “Cuco” José Cervantes Lago, Class of ’51, suffocated as a prisoner on his way to a prisoner of war camp after the battle of Playa Girón on April 21st, 1961. Dr. José Antonio Muiño Gómez, Sagrado Corazón, Class of ’36, was executed as a prisoner of war in Habana on February 2nd, 1962.

The Wall of Martyrs is a living monument to the fallen members of our school community which will continue to grow as their stories become known. The Wall is located in the administration building, which is also where the ceremony on Monday, May 21st was held. So, if you have time, stop by the building and pay your respects to those members of our community who have fallen in support of noble causes.

Dr. Ricardo Pocurull y Oña
Carlos Rodríguez Santana
Raúl Vianello y Alacán
Alfredo “Cuco” José Cervantes Lago
Dr. José Antonio Muiño Gómez

By: Jose A. Prieto
For most students, summertime is a time to kick back, relax, and recover from a tough school year. For others, it is a time to travel the world and learn things that could never be taught in a classroom setting. Yet for some, especially sophomores and juniors, it is a time to go to college and learn even more. They aren’t actually enrolling in a university. Instead, they apply to summer programs, which are hosted by different colleges and universities across the country for students just like them. It may not compare to the first semester of senior year, but they still undergo a rigorous application process involving essays, applications, and recommendation letters. Many of our school’s students are accepted each year to different universities’ programs, including Georgetown and Stanford.

Junior Erik Garrigo attended the Entrepreneurship Institute at the School of Continuing Studies of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. over the summer of 2011. This summer program is an eight-day, on-campus course geared towards students who are looking into business and entrepreneurship as career possibilities. The program covers a wide variety of topics, from research, to public speaking skills, to teamwork. The application involved an online application, a recommendation letter, a transcript, standardized test scores, and a 300-word essay, a process not very different from a normal college application.

“At Georgetown University’s Entrepreneurship Institute, I learned about franchising and starting a company, among other things. At the end, we planned a service project implementing the management and delegation techniques we learned. I would definitely do it again,” said Erik of the educational value of his time at Georgetown.

Junior Devon Roura attended the Education Program for Gifted Youth at Stanford University in Stanford, California. This is a large program geared toward many different careers. Devon chose to attend the economics and business course, but other courses offered include arts and humanities, computer science, engineering, legal studies, mathematics, social science, physical and biological science and writing. This really is a program meant for students of all interests. The application process involves a preliminary application and a primary application, as well as an essay and a recommendation letter.

“I attended to get a better understanding of college life, particularly at Stanford. It was my first time truly away from home, so I was apprehensive at first, but my time at Stanford proved to be an awesome experience. I hope that I will be back on the Stanford campus next year and strongly encourage students interested in Stanford to attend,” said Devon of his time there and the reason for his attendance.

Sophomore Jorge Fleites has been accepted to this year’s Georgetown Summer School Program for High School Students, also at Georgetown University. This program has many different capsules for students aspiring to various fields. He applied to the Medical Institute. The application was very similar to Erik’s: a 300 word essay, a recommendation letter, multiple waivers, and his transcript.

“My friends Kenji Martinez and Chris Ayala went to the law program at Georgetown, and they said they enjoyed it and that it was a
very good learning experience. I’ve always wanted to be a doctor, and this program helps me learn about medicine and about college living,” said Jorge of his desire to attend. Most of these programs are already fully booked for this summer. In fact, all of the people who have applied to these programs already know whether or not they got in, which is truly a factor because the admissions process is so competitive. So, rising sophomores and juniors reading this: next summer, apply to a program. The application process may be rigorous, but in the end, the experience is worth it.
It was early one school morning, and I was waiting at my bus stop. It was a regular uneventful morning; I was tired and wanted to be in my bed counting sheep more than anything. However, something peculiar happened. A woman from across the street started approaching me, and there was something in her hand. The thing in her hand was a brochure. A brochure about a school named Belen Jesuit Preparatory School. She walked over to me, said good morning, told me about Belen, handed me the brochure, and walked away. The following school year, I was a student at Belen Jesuit Preparatory School.

Over the years, Belen has made a huge impact on my life and the way I see the people around me. Belen has given me an opportunity to better myself and to get on the right track to a bright and fulfilling future. This school has given me the ability to help those around me, because we are all children of God, and he loves each one of us unconditionally; a principle that is instilled in all Belen students. Before I came to Belen, I was not serious about my future, or what I wanted to do in the world. This all changed the minute I stepped onto the campus for the very first time in the eighth grade; it was at this moment that I realized I was intended for greatness. Why? Belen has the ability to make every student feel that they can change the world in some shape or form. Belen accomplishes this amazing feat everyday by having teachers, administrators, counselors, and many other community members who believe in their student’s abilities and gifts. If it were not for a few select people in my life who believed in me, I would not be the young man I am today.

In little over a year, I will be graduating from Belen. This got me thinking, “How will I give back to the institution that has changed my life in multiple ways?” The answer is relatively simple. I need to help other students like myself who do not have the means to go to Belen, to receive a world-class education. I am already working on a project meant to reward hardworking, under-privileged students with scholarships to attend Belen, this program is called OUTREACH, and it was created with the help of my friend Diego Rosette. Outreach is my way of giving back now, because Belen is changing my life now.

I have learned that the most important things in life are the Lord and your family. Belen has taught me to love my family, and this does not just mean my blood family, but also my school family or my ‘Belen family’. In my future, I will do whatever I can to help the school by donating to the school, promoting OUTREACH, and by telling everyone what a great institution Belen is. I will do whatever it takes to push young, eager students like myself towards a bright future, towards a great education, towards Belen Jesuit Preparatory School.
By: Mitchell Alvarez

My name is Mitchell Alvarez; I entered Belen in seventh grade back in 2006, and my legacy begins with my grandfather, Rolando Camargo. My grandfather was born in Havana, Cuba in 1941, and he attended El Colegio de Belen in Cuba until he graduated in 1959. Back in those days, Belen ran from kindergarten all the way through twelfth grade, and it allowed students from all over Cuba to live permanently in the dorms of the school for however long they attended the school. Belen was established in Havana, Cuba in 1854 by Queen Isabel II of Spain, and existed until 1961 when the school was confiscated by the Castro regime and turned into a military base due to its immense size. That same year, it was moved to the United States, setting up its first location inside the Gesu Church in downtown Miami, Florida. In 1981, after being moved from the downtown area to S.W. 8th street and 7th avenue, it was moved to its current location in West Miami-Dade. Over the years, my grandfather and I have grown closer and closer, not only because he’s my grandfather, but because we attend many Belen events together and are able to relate to many of the similar experiences throughout our days of attending Belen.

Over the years, Belen has been nothing less than a family to me. Every day as I step through the school gates, I feel comforted and right at home. Obviously, this second home has different rules and all, but it’s through these strict rules that I am able to grow and become a better person. This school teaches you not only academics, but also moral and ethical values that you will carry with you for the rest of your life. It forms you to be a true man for others, as well as an honest and caring human being. From talking with my grandfather, the one thing he always tells me is that the friends you make now will be the friends you will have forever, and I couldn’t agree more; I wouldn’t want any other group of men as my friends. I am currently a Senior, part of the Class of 2012, and I know that I can always count on my classmates, and that they will always have my back. In a couple of months, we will all be graduating and going off to college, but we will always be known as the Class of 2012 and as graduates of Belen Jesuit Preparatory School.

Over the years my grandfather has shared numerous stories with me from when he was a student at Belen back in Cuba. He told me that back when Belen was in Cuba, you were able to sleep at school in dorms provided for you. He said that the one year he stayed in the dorms, and once the night guard had fallen asleep, kids would sneak out in the middle of the night into the kitchen to get food. The staff would refer to the children who stayed in the school overnight as pupilos or internos. Today in Belen, we wear our Gala uniform for mass, which is our blue blazer and khaki pants. Back in Cuba, the students would attend mass every day before school started, and they would wear their uniforms as well a particular hat that they were required to wear.

Another relative of mine who attended Belen in Cuba is my grandfather’s older brother, Manuel Camargo Saavedra. Manolo, as they referred to him back in Belen, graduated in 1954. When he visits from his home in Mexico, we all get together and share stories about our fondest memories of Belen. The one thing I always feel when I hear these stories and the way they talk about Belen is their love and passion for the school. They always mention how thankful they are for having attended Belen, and how great it feels to be known as a Belen graduate. Both my grandfather and his brother have very close ties to the school today, having gone to school with some of the current faculty, such as our current President Fr. Pedro Suarez, S.J., and our 12th grade spiritual counselor, Fr. Pedro Cartaya, S.J.

Therefore, after attending Belen now for six years, I can definitely say that Belen has been like a second family to me - always treating me with the utmost love and respect. Graduating from Belen, as I hope to do in a couple of months, will be a great feeling of accomplishment, because Belen is known for its excellent academics and its preparation not only for college, but for life. As a graduate of Belen Jesuit, you are not only known as an alumnus from Belen, but as a Man for Others.
Webster’s Dictionary defines “legacy” as a gift, something usually left behind to be handed down from one generation to another. Belen Jesuit Preparatory School has a long history of creating legacies for those of us who are privileged to attend school here. Belen Jesuit also recognizes and honors families who have had generations of family members as its students. I do not have a Belen Jesuit family legacy. I do not have a father or grandfather who went to school at Belen Jesuit. It is up to me, therefore, to leave a legacy at Belen Jesuit when I graduate.

The first legacy I would like to leave is one of athletic excellence. I came to Belen Jesuit as a sixth grade student and was privileged to play baseball and basketball in both sixth and seventh grades. I am honored to say that I was the Most Valuable Player in basketball both of those years. In eighth grade, I have played volleyball and basketball, and hopefully, baseball season won’t be too far away. I believe it is important to play a sport at Belen Jesuit. Sports teach us to respect our bodies as athletes, to respect ourselves mentally so that we can play with our heads, not just our bodies; and we learn the importance of respecting others. I would like for every team that I am on to be a winning team. Some say that “winning is not important, it’s how you play the game,” but I disagree. Sportsmanship is important, but winning is good for Belen’s reputation. I like to hear that Belen is not only a good school academically, but also a good place to play a sport. I want to improve Belen’s reputation as a school of athletic excellence and leave that legacy for future students.

The second legacy I would like to leave is one of academic excellence. Belen Jesuit has almost always been known as one of the best schools in the nation. It is up to us, its students, to make sure that reputation is never harmed. It is also important for us “to step up our game” and ensure that this reputation continues to improve. Belen Jesuit is a difficult school. It is not easy to keep up with the amount of homework, quizzes, tests, and projects that seem to be constantly assigned. The grading policies at Belen Jesuit are tough. I have never felt that I was one of most gifted students at Belen Jesuit, but I always work hard and try my best. I am always told that all my hard work will pay off someday, and I am counting on that to help me leave a legacy of academic excellence at Belen. It is my goal to play a sport at an Ivy League college. If this happens, it will hopefully encourage students who come behind me to work hard, because they will know that if I do it, they can too. Academic success would be a wonderful legacy to leave.

Finally, I wish to leave a legacy of character and honesty, in order to honor not only my school, but the legacy of St. Ignatius. I recently read a short story about a Benedictine monk, a Franciscan monk, and an Ignatian priest. In the story, the three holy men are at mass when the lights go out. The Benedictine is happy because it is now a more simple mass. The Franciscan monk begins to talk about how Jesus brings light to the world. The Jesuit goes downstairs to fix the lights. I think that this story really explains the influence of St. Ignatius, because St. Ignatius did not just talk; he made things happen. He was practical and hard-working; a man who lived his life not for himself, but for others. One motto of Belen Jesuit is “Men for Others.” I hope that after I graduate, people will remember me as a “man for others.”

The goal of leaving my legacy at Belen Jesuit is not easy, because the men who have graduated from our school have mostly been men that we can look up to. My goals are for athletic and academic excellence; however, my most honorable goal is to continue the legacy of the works and character of St. Ignatius. A life of Ignatian spirituality includes work, prayer, and helping the poor, as well as friends, family, and fun. A life lived by the teachings of St. Ignatius helps us make good decisions, live a simple life, be a good friend, find God in all things, and love others. By living a life of hard work for the glory of God and the benefit of others, I can hopefully bring honor to our school as a Belen graduate. I believe that Belen Jesuit is truly a special place, and I am honored and privileged to be a student here.
By the time I graduate from Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in 2018, the school will have been in my family for over 100 years. Not only am I a name legacy, but I am also a Belen legacy. My great-grandfather, Eloy Angel Fernandez, graduated from Colegio de Belen en Compostela in Habana, Cuba in 1919. My grandfather, Eloy Angel Fernandez, graduated from Colegio de Belen en Marianao in Habana, Cuba in 1951. Because he lived in Virginia, my dad, Eloy Angel Fernandez, was not able to attend Belen; but I, Eloy Angel Fernandez, hope to continue these legacies. Other “Belemitas” in my family include my great-uncle, Emilio Fernandez, who graduated in the 1930’s, and my great-uncle, Albert Beguiristain Sampedro, who graduated in 1950.

When I asked my grandfather what Belen means to him, he said the people, the education (both academic and religious) and the overall experience that you only understand if you are a part of it. In reading my grandfather’s issue of Vincam from 1951, one of his classmates said it best when he was asked his opinion of Belen. Fernando Alvarez said, “We will only comprehend what it (Belen) will mean to us when we are no longer in it.” My grandfather, who is a retired attorney, has great memories of his years at Belen, and to this day still holds close those friendships he started at Belen a long time ago.

There are many differences between my grandfather’s Belen from the 1940’s and 1950’s and today’s Belen. Back then, the school had an elementary program. My grandfather started in first grade, and his tuition was $10 a month. Classes started with a daily mass at 8:30 A.M. There was an option to go home for lunch, and dismissal was at 4:45 P.M. The gala uniform was either a white suit or a black suit depending on the season. In your last year of high school, you were either in the science track known as “Ciencia” or in the language track known as “Letra.” English was taught as a foreign language. The school even offered a boarding option, and the boarders, known as “pupilos,” would live on campus but were given a free weekend every three weeks.

While many years and differences separate the Classes of 1919, 1951 and 2018, one thing does not change, and that is why we choose Belen. In 1951, my grandfather’s classmate, Francisco Alvarez, said, “In addition to giving us a first class intellectual and physical education, it (Belen) gives us the best moral education.” In 2012, I could not agree more.
won’t lie. Back in 2010, when I first found out that I was spending my first week of the summer in Belen’s Overseas Study Program (OSP), I was bummed out. I did not expect much out of spending a week in central Europe with teachers. But OSP is so much more than an outdoor Belen class. You actually enjoy, as corny as it sounds, a lot of the educational, cultural, and bonding experiences.

The major difference between OSP and any vacation with your family is the atmosphere. Usually, when I travel with my family, I expect to bum out and spend a lot of time chilling. On OSP, everything is timed and efficient. From your bathroom breaks to your walking, everything is timed and coordinated so that you can squeeze out as much as you can out of the whole OSP experience. That’s because most people don’t realize how there is so much to see and do in foreign countries until you’re with a history or civics teacher. Between Mr. Collins and Mr. Cleveland, I learned so much more than I ever thought I would about Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary, and the weird thing was that I really enjoyed it.

Learning about history right in front of you instead of in some picture smothered by text in your book is fantastic. What was amazing was how substantiated certain things I learned about in school became when I saw what they caused first hand, like the Soviet Union and World War II. The Soviet Union became a lot more real for me after I saw the Berlin wall. Even today, graffiti decorates the Berlin wall that shows what people were thinking when the wall was first taken down. I specifically remember one doodle of an American Chevy crashing through the wall, symbolizing the influx of American culture into the isolated people of East...
then head over to Rome, a city steeped in both religion and history.

Mr. Collins, Ms. Kenna, Mr. Padura, Mr. Cleveland, and Father Saenz, S.J., will be accompanying the students, parents, and siblings on the multinational excursion. Mr. Collins, a veteran of the Overseas Study Program, having been on 13 trips, is a huge advocate of the trip, and always promotes it to the school at the beginning of the year.

“The advantage of travel is known by anyone who has ever read about a foreign land and then has had an opportunity to be in that foreign land. While there is much to learn from reading books, the sights, sounds, and tastes of a different land are best experienced by being there,” said Mr. Collins

See Mr. Collins for more information about the Overseas Study Program, and remember that even if you weren’t able to attend this year, there’s always next summer!

Berlin. World War II came alive for me when we visited Dresden. Dresden was a peaceful, non-militaristic town in Germany during World War II. During the last few months of the war, the Allies bombed it, killing 25,000 people and nearly leveling the whole town. Although the Dresden we saw was rebuilt, some of the bombed out buildings were left untouched to show the atrocities of war.

OSP is not just an educational experience, but also a cultural one. I went during the summer of the World Cup, and I was pleasantly surprised to see the amount of dedication fans would show from the streets to the museums. It even shadowed the excitement for the Super Bowl you see back here in the states. I also experienced culture through the food. The foods I had during OSP ranged from Wiener Schnitzel to Sauerbraten, and they were fantastic. It takes guts to try some of the foods you encounter, but whether they turn out good or bad, you’re always happy you tried them. That’s because OSP is also a very bonding experience, and you get to know everyone involved a lot more after surviving the culture shock together. I went to OSP knowing only a few people, but I had a great time getting to know everyone else on the trip.

The Overseas Program of Belen is more than just a field trip during the summer; it’s a compliment of everything you learned about in school. I feel like the World History or Art History courses I’ve taken in school are only half the education. The other half is when you experience them firsthand. Cramming for finals does not solidify what you’ve learned during the year in your classes. That is what OSP is meant for, to complete your school year the right way.
Even though it was February, that afternoon, Lakeland Florida seemed hotter than usual. The tension in the environment made the air difficult to breathe, but Esteban, at that moment, was thinking of only one thing. It seemed just yesterday he had lost against his biggest competitor in that same final, but this time he was determined to take it back.

People like Esteban Gomez-Rivera remind us how lucky we are to go to Belen.

Esteban Gomez-Rivera joined Belen in 2006 as a seventh grader. That same year he was inspired to join the wrestling team. He soon showed tremendous potential and dedication. When asked why he stayed in Belen all these years, when he could have gone to any school on a scholarship he said, “The support and care I received at Belen is more important than any scholarship. My friends, teachers and coaches had become my family and I couldn’t ever leave that.” His coaches describe him as dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working.

In the 2012 FHSAA Wrestling Finals, held in Lakeland FL, Esteban easily made his way to the championship match. Competing in the 126 lb. Division in Class 2A, he went up against rival Jared Browning again. They were competing for the state championship title for the fourth year in a row. These two equally matched wrestlers have been rivals for a long time. Last season, Jared won the title and this year, in an intense fight, Esteban took it back. Esteban says that the moment he won he felt relieved to beat his biggest competitor in his senior year. Esteban graduated with two-second place finishes, and two State championship titles.

Esteban received a full scholarship to study accounting at American University, in Washington D.C. He is thrilled to wrestle for the school, and take his next step in life.
On the weekend of April 28th, the Belen Jesuit Crew participated in the Florida Scholastic Rowing Association’s State Sweep Championship. Over 50 teams from all over Florida participated in the regatta. The races took place at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota, Florida, 223 miles away from the school. The crew team participated in seven categories: Lightweight Four, Junior Four, Varsity Pair, Junior Eight, Lightweight Eight, Freshman Eight, and Freshman Four. The Junior Eight placed third, the Lightweight Eight placed second, the Freshman Eight placed third, and the Freshman Four placed first overall after qualifying for the next day’s final races. All three placed first scholastically. At the end of the championships, the teams placed 3rd scholastically and 5th overall in the boys’ division. Each race was almost a mile long at 1500m, and each category raced once per day.

The crew team still has two major races left in a successful season. The Scholastic Nationals will take place in New Jersey on the weekend of May 25th, and the U.S. Rowing Nationals are on the weekend of June 8th in Tennessee. Based on the team’s performance in the Sweep Championship, the future looks bright.

“I feel confident,” says sophomore Vincent Cendan. “This is what we’ve been training for all year. I think we’ll do well in the upcoming regattas.”
SI QUIERES AHORAR

Ahora ofrecemos hasta $6,000 anuales en cobertura inicial de medicinas de marcas y genéricas. Las medicinas genéricas son 100% sin límites y sin costo alguno en nuestras farmacias.

Ahora ofrecemos en nuestro plan los Nuevos Leon Healthy Living Centers, centros de actividades donde nuestros pacientes pueden tomar seminarios, clases de inglés, clases de computación, juegos, bailes, entretenimientos y asistir a nuestro propio gimnasio con todos los últimos equipos diseñados para las personas con Medicare.

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It’s all about South Beach this summer. Take time to enjoy the many amenities and restaurants that SoBe has to offer.

Jam to the beat of this summer’s hottest tunes including *Starships*, *Where Have You Been*, *Titanium*, and *We Are Young* by Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, David Guetta, and Fun. respectively.

By far, the most anticipated summer blockbuster is *The Dark Knight Rises*. This will be the third and final Batman movie for director Christopher Nolan.

Root for Team U.S.A. at the 2012 Summer Olympics held in London. The Olympic Games are from July 27th - August 12th and air on NBC.

For those of you who are not traveling overseas this summer, how about enjoying a staycation at Key West? You can take in some rays or chill with the locals.
As my days wind down here as a member of the Vincam staff, it has yet to hit me that it is really over. Over the past three years, I have seen so much of this little newspaper expand and change; I can remember my sophomore year and the motley crüe of individuals who gathered together to write for a class we were not even sure would mean anything; junior year growing in the craft and uncovering the creative side of design; and senior year keeping me awake until the wee hours of the morning, stress level through the roof and InDesign (undoubtedly the greatest program known to man) never being closed on my laptop, addicted to every moment of it.

I have seen the paper move from a print medium to an electronic one, gain color, change rooms and change advisors. Hilarious moments such as Jonathan Godoy’s deleted October issue, the entirety of the CSPA trip in New York and the day-to-day excitement which characterizes this unique group. Despite all of the new implementations and alterations, the real things that have impacted me the most were those things that stayed the same over the course of this wild ride.

Most impactful of the consistency of Vincam’s incredible character is the media department’s head, Mrs. Sue Collins. I can still recall that one class during freshman English when Mrs. Collins walked in (or was it zoomed in?) giving us her spiel on how great newspaper was. Two weeks on, two weeks off right? Honestly, there isn’t a single person in this school who has impacted me more than she has. Aside from all things newspaper, Collins has taught me journalism ethics, an unending need to pursue a story, and so many other lessons. The plaudits that fly her way from each and every one of us are more than deserved.

I do have to thank all of my peers on staff. Without them, this experience would have been all for naught. It hasn’t always been smooth sailing, but I could not have picked a better group of guys to be a part of this with. You have all really shown your talents not only for writing and design, but for making a tense situation comical and coming in the clutch when I needed it most from you this year.

So the question begs, was it worth it? This year’s restless nights, likely losing a few years of my life due to deadline stress, combating time itself to put out a great paper every edition; yes, a thousand times yes. To think that back in ninth grade I debated whether or not to take the newspaper journalism elective and if I hadn’t how differently things would have panned out. It has been are true blessing to work alongside the best staff an Editor-in-Chief could ask for. This experience has provided me with more growth than I could have ever dreamed of and it will no doubt resonate for years to come.
So, when I was told I had to write my farewell column after all this time, it seemed unreal. It feels like it was yesterday that I walked into the Vincam room as a sophomore, not knowing what to expect. I have made many great friends along the way, and I thank God for the opportunity he has given me to work with such great individuals. I was never the most creative or the most intelligent of the staff, but I know I enjoyed every second that I was with these people. People like Mrs. Collins and Mrs. De Aguiar have taught me many lessons which I will keep with me when I leave to college, as well as for the rest of my life. I thank all of the readers and fellow staff members who have contributed to my success in the past years as I close this chapter in my life.

By: Tony Forte

It was a regular, old day in Mrs. Jacomino’s, 6th period English class, until suddenly a little lady with shoulder length hair (littered in highlights) walked into the room. She was rather thin and I wondered if she would fly out the window if the wind blew the wrong way, but she had enough energy and fervor to fill the room. This was the day I came to know Mrs. Collins and the day I was introduced to the world of journalism.

Mrs. Collins spoke enthusiastically of the school newspaper and the opportunities that arise from it. From my first days of working on the newspaper, during my sophomore year, as a lowly staff writer, to now in senior year as the editor of the editorials section, Mrs. Collins’s lessons of hard work, self-reliance, and journalistic integrity have stuck to me (even if it waned a little bit this year due to senioritis). The newspaper journalism class always gave me something to look forward to as I drudged through the day. It began to feel less and less like a class and more and more like a job that I seriously enjoyed doing.

Like a job, there was always constant change and adjustment throughout the years from change of staff, to being relocated to the media center; to even losing my former coeditor, Ricky Cambo, but the biggest change definitely came this year when Mrs. Collins passed the reins onto Mrs. De Aguiar. With the change in leadership came a change in direction. The Vincam was now going to be online and its design was going to have more in common with a magazine than a newspaper. I admit that at first I wasn’t too crazy about the new direction; none of us were, but over time it grew on me and became second nature. The Vincam has become all the better for this new direction and I can only see it getting better in the future as the possibilities expand. It has been a great honor and pleasure of mine to be able to work with Mrs. Collins and Mrs. De Aguiar over the past three years as well as to write for you, the readers. I have absolutely loved working on the editorials section, publishing and voicing other people’s opinion and thoughts. I would like to thank my fellow staff members, for without them, working on the newspaper would not have been nearly as memorable or smooth, and it saddens me that I must leave them, and this school, behind.

By: Jesse Lorenzo
I still remember it like it was yesterday. Ms. Collins walked into my 9th grade English class to talk to us about what exactly the newspaper journalism elective was. She talked about how it wasn’t the quantity of work that you did, but the quality - how she would rather one good story over five bad ones. I felt like I had just seen an infomercial for some great new product and I told myself, “Don’t take this class. She is just trying to sell you on it so you get stuck working endless hours for no reward.” I promised myself that I wouldn’t use my one precious elective slot on newspaper journalism. Needless to say, I made a full 180 and took the class, reminding myself that if I didn’t like it I could take a different elective next year and that if I didn’t take it I would always wonder what would happen if I did.

The first day of my sophomore year I walked into the wonderful world of Vincam for the first time. There was no survey of mass media yet so it dove straight into journalism. There were about twelve sophomores in the class with me that year, about half of which have made it to this final issue three years later. Things sure have changed in these last three years that I’ve been here. We changed rooms and advisors. The Vincam changed from color to black and white to digital.

I have had my fair share of unique experiences over the past three years of newspaper. I had to sneak a camera into a local charity to take pictures of the homeless for a spread on poverty in tenth grade. In eleventh grade, I went to New York City with some of the staff for the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, and wore my Dwyane Wade Jersey and started Heat chants at Madison Square Garden for a Knicks-Grizzlies game which was met with an assortment of boos, laughs, threats, and death stares. Despite all of these close calls, the “News Room” became my asylum. I knew I could count on either of my two past advisors to help me out with anything, whether it be putting the finishing touches on a design before the deadline or just giving me somebody who I could talk to about anything. Ms. Collins dragged me into the depths of high school journalism, and with her stark realism always helped me see things for what they are. She wasn’t afraid to tell me that I completely ruined a layout the same way that she wasn’t, hesitant as she caringly insults my hair on a regular basis. Ms. De Aguiar took over as the newspaper advisor just this year, and she was able to give me a different perspective. She would order up “Muna Specials” (that’s what she called my features page layouts) like there was no tomorrow, and there was an understanding that I would have the spread done by the end of the period. She somehow managed to keep me on task, even as the senioritis slowly took over me.

Newspaper has truly been an incredible three-year journey that I hate to see come to a close. It definitely had its rough moments, but that’s part of what made it a great experience. It challenged me in all the right ways, and I wouldn’t trade what it for anything.

By: Nick Munarriz

Being a part of this newspaper has been a tremendous honor. I want to first thank my teachers throughout the years both in the mass media department and other classes which helped me become a better writer. I also want to thank my classmates within Vincam who pushed me to better heights, and continuously pushed the envelope when it came to diversity.

As a sophomore, I was allowed to explore different areas of newspaper from covering homeless people in Miami, to local sports within the same city. It helped me see many different areas in newspaper, and grow in my understanding of newspaper. The large amount of people in the class was extremely fun, and it allowed us to mess around with Mrs. Collins, like the time we played “JESP” throughout the entire classroom.

My junior year was my first year in the new media center, which gave us many more tools to grow in our understanding of media. This helped us for our senior year, which completely switched the newspaper to an electronic form. Without paper, it allowed us to be more creative and explore different types of design.

All in all, it has been a tremendous three years as a part of this staff. No other area or position of power in the school can have more of an effect than the newspaper. I hope and expect the upcoming years of the newspaper to be very exciting and interesting.
Four years ago, I remember sitting in my English class. It was an ordinary class at first, until the last fifteen minutes, when out of nowhere, an energetic and unfamiliar face walked into the room. She introduced herself to the class as Mrs. Collins, and she came to class that day to tell us about having the opportunity to join the newspaper or yearbook classes. I recall vividly my attention becoming absorbed by listening to Mrs. Collins talk about each program and how wonderful each one was. I had never seen someone show so much passion for something. Before that day, I had never considered joining the journalism field. I was a math guy, but there was something about that day that made me want to take a leap of faith and give it a try.

I entered the newspaper class my sophomore year, and in just a short time, I knew that this was my new passion and that I wanted to pursue this and become one of the best at it. Mrs. Collins showed me how to put my best effort and how to love the work that I would be creating. Joining newspaper that year not only helped improve my writing skills, but it also introduced me to some of the people who I call my good friends today and a part of my extended family at school. Over the past three years, many personal improvements as well as changes to the paper occurred. I first began as staff writer, and in my junior year, I became entertainment editor; yet, my senior year proved to be the biggest test for me as a journalist.

In the same year, I became co-editor-in-chief and the paper moved away from print to digital, making it exclusively online. These changes challenged me throughout the year in many ways. For the first time in two years, I had to make decisions and think creatively and outside the box as opposed to the fixed and universal set of rules and guidelines that I was taught years before. I had to think about the paper as a whole now instead of my designated section. Being editor-in-chief helped me acquire certain skills in my life sooner than expected. First, it taught me about the importance of work ethics and how to make sure that everything that needs to get done on deadline gets done. Second, it taught me how to see things in a different way rather than the generic two-dimensional formats visible to the eye. Finally, being in this leadership position made me appreciate all the small details that are usually taken for granted when putting work together. I wouldn’t have been able to conquer all these new obstacles if it were not for Vincam advisor, Mrs. De Aguiar. She helped me believe in myself when I doubted my ability to take on such a huge responsibility, and although with some difficulty at first, she helped me see with creative eyes new concepts and designs for this year’s new Vincam.

Today, I’m still amazed at how much I have matured as a writer and as a man. It’s hard to believe that my time at Belen has come to an end. For the past six years, I have roamed the halls, made many friends, hit the books, and even encountered many interesting experiences. I will be forever grateful for all that I have learned and all the opportunities that writing for the Vincam has given me. After I graduate, I will pursue the journalism skills that I have developed and take them to Miami-Dade Honors College, where I will write for my next alma mater’s publication. To my parents, friends and all the faculty that has in some way shaped me to become the person I am today, I thank you. I’m going to miss Belen, but specifically, and most of all, I will miss my home, the Communications Department.
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