

# Touchpoints

CEDAR CREST COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023



## Shining Stars



CEDAR CREST  
COLLEGE

[cedarcrest.edu/alumnae](http://cedarcrest.edu/alumnae)

# A New Way to Stay Connected!

Building and fostering connections with our Cedar Crest alumnae is as important as ever. Unique in their strength, empowerment, and support of one another, the bonds between our Cedar Crest sisters are like no other, and we want to ensure that they last a lifetime.

With 15,000 alumnae, finding the best way to retain these friendships and connections to the College long after graduation is a top priority in the Office of Institutional Advancement. We want to reach as many of our graduates as we can, so we have developed new strategies to engage our alumnae.

In September 2022, we introduced the new **Cedar Crest Events & News Bulletin** email, which features a calendar of current happenings on campus, including news, highlights, home sporting events, live performances and presentations, and so much more. This message will be sent out at the beginning of each month with the latest updates.

Alumnae, we welcome you back to campus for events that spark your interest. The email bulletin will include all the necessary dates, times, locations, and registration details. If you are not already receiving these messages but are interested, you can subscribe by visiting [www.cedarcrest.edu/EmailSignUp](http://www.cedarcrest.edu/EmailSignUp).



As a part of the Office of Institutional Advancement's 2022 Fall Campaign, alumnae received an "I Love CCC" decal in their mailboxes. They were encouraged to share their photos with their decal on social media, along with a quote on why they love Cedar Crest College. The first 40 submissions were entered to win an "I Love CCC" water bottle. Students, faculty, and staff joined in on the fun as well and got their CCC decal. Check out all the great pictures!

## Dear Cedar Crest Alumnae,



My first autumn at Cedar Crest College did not disappoint with the vibrant foliage, infectious energy of the students, and celebration of many events, a few of which are highlighted in this edition of Touchpoints.

One particular event stands out — the Alumnae Hall of Fame

Ceremony. It was an honor to welcome back to campus five incredible alumnae who were inducted as the second class in the Alumnae Hall of Fame. Their photos proudly hang in Blaney Hall and greet me every morning as I enter my office. These women serve as a reminder of ALL the remarkable alumnae Cedar Crest College launches into the world. As I start my second full semester here, I am constantly amazed at the changemakers and trailblazers that represent the College on a daily basis.

This edition of Touchpoints highlights many shining stars. These shining stars appear as current students, alumnae, faculty, staff, and philanthropists. Enjoy looking through the pages, and I hope they inspire you as much as they have inspired me.

Please be sure to mark your calendars for **Alumnae Reunion Weekend, May 19-21**. While we are celebrating the anniversary years of the classes of 3s and 8s, note that ALL alumnae are welcome. Feel free to bring your families for the Friday Night Fair or keep this as a special time to reconnect with your classmates. Saturday provides a full day of activities, ranging from tours of campus to faculty lectures to the beloved Strawberry Festival and a Dinner Dance to celebrate with fellow alumnae. Sunday will once again feature bingo, which I am sure will continue the fun-loving tradition of some healthy competition. Be sure to check out the full listing of events online at [www.cedarcrest.edu/reunion](http://www.cedarcrest.edu/reunion) and REGISTER EARLY! I truly look forward to seeing you there.

Enjoy the issue,

Mary Neuenschwander  
Director of Alumnae Affairs

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# Meet Our New Director of Athletics



***In October 2022, Cedar Crest College welcomed Christy Malone Fleagle as the new director of athletics. Fleagle is an accomplished leader in athletics, with 12 years of experience in administration and 17 years of collegiate coaching experience.***

She comes to Cedar Crest from Neumann University where she served as the associate athletic director for compliance and student services, as well as the senior women's administrator. Fleagle also served as the head women's lacrosse coach at Neumann for eight years, leading the team to four consecutive Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) championship games and an impressive overall record.

## **Get to know the new member of our Falcon Family:**

### **What attracted you to this role at Cedar Crest?**

I have known about Cedar Crest since my time as a college athlete, and I was always impressed by the College's rich history of academic excellence. I played lacrosse at Cabrini College, and I can remember playing Cedar Crest in a Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (PAC) championship game my freshman year in 1998. I was able to capture the title as well as the MVP award. I remember being so impressed by the smart young women

and strong players that graced the field on the Cedar Crest team.

### **What excites you most about joining the Cedar Crest Community?**

I am excited about the opportunity for growth in Athletics at Cedar Crest. I enjoy working with college athletes, and I look forward to helping them pursue their goals in both academics and athletics.

### **What do you hope to accomplish at Cedar Crest?**

I hope to bring in fresh ideas in recruiting and retention, bring great energy into a role that is so valuable to a campus community, learn more about Cedar Crest history, and get to know my amazing new colleagues. It's an exciting time for Cedar Crest, and there are some wonderful projects coming up for Athletics.

I hope to help our athletes not only continue to succeed in the classroom, but to continue to elevate our level of play. I plan to



## Meet Our New Director of Athletics

help the College recruit the best high school athletes in the area and across the country. Finally, I look forward to supporting our staff and athletes in a way that drives them to stay motivated to improve and to expect the best of themselves.

**I HOPE TO HELP OUR ATHLETES NOT ONLY CONTINUE TO SUCCEED IN THE CLASSROOM, BUT TO CONTINUE TO ELEVATE OUR LEVEL OF PLAY.**

### What do you look for in a coach on your staff?

I look for someone who is extremely motivated and willing to learn different strategies of being a college coach. I look for a coach who cares and is willing to walk the walk. College athletics is a grind, and I do think that the coaches that are passionate, hungry, and intentional with their sports are the coaches that succeed and capture wins.

### How does your experience as a student-athlete help in your role as an athletics administrator?

As a former student-athlete, I can 100 percent connect with our students' journey through college. I can relate to their time management challenges and busy schedules. Being a student-

athlete is a roller coaster ride — you have great moments of being able to successfully juggle all of your responsibilities, and you have moments when you need to lean on your team and coaches for support. I hope by sharing my experiences, I can help our athletes tackle any challenges that may come their way.

### Who do you consider the biggest influences or role models in your life?

I have a couple. My family role model would be my mom, Teresa. She taught me unconditional love and how to be a good mom to my baby girls. She is love through and through! My husband Tom has also influenced me by his love for me and our children.

My college coach, Jackie has been a wonderful role model as well. She has taught me how to be a successful college coach while being a great mom. She has juggled raising four amazing children and working in higher education, all with grace.

### Outside of work, what do you like to do for fun?

I love spending time with my family, my husband Tom, and my girls Tessa and Teagan. We love our Fleagle family time!

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For more information about Athletics at Cedar Crest College, visit [www.cedarcrestathletics.com](http://www.cedarcrestathletics.com).

## RECENT FALCON HIGHLIGHTS



The volleyball team captured the 2022 Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) Women's Volleyball Championship, marking its second-straight conference title.

The cross country team clinched the 2021 CSAC Championships.

Cedar Crest is the winner of 2021-2022 CSAC Institutional Academic Award — the fifth time in school history and third straight year that the College has won the honor.

Falcons claimed second place in the 2021-2022 CSAC President's Cup Standings — the best finish in school history.

Last spring, Cedar Crest announced the addition of wrestling as our 11th varsity sport and named Alex Depew as the inaugural head coach.

# 2022 Alumnae Hall of Fame Induction

On Friday, September 23, 2022, the Cedar Crest College community gathered in Blaney Hall to welcome five new inductees into the Alumnae Hall of Fame. These five individuals have maintained a strong connection to their alma mater and have made a lasting impact in their communities through their professional and volunteer work. Each honoree offers their own contributions both personally and professionally, and they serve as an inspiration to current and future students, as they forge their own paths as alumnae of Cedar Crest College.

## ANTA CISSÉ-GREEN '95

Cissé-Green was recognized for her tenacity in legal counseling and her drive for securing equal opportunities. Currently, she is senior vice chancellor and general counsel for The State University of New York Office of General Counsel. Cissé-Green serves as the chief legal officer to the board of trustees, the chancellors, the system administration, and the presidents of the state-operated campuses. She manages and supervises the SUNY Office of General Counsel consisting of 45 experienced higher education attorneys and paralegals.

## SUSAN SECCOMBE COX '73

Cox was recognized for her dedication to Cedar Crest College's alumnae. After her graduation from Cedar Crest, she began working in the Admissions Office to recruit students. In 1976, she was named the director of alumnae affairs. Over the years, her title changed many times until 1993 when it was permanently changed to the executive director of alumnae affairs, a position she kept until her retirement in December 2017. During her time at the College, she was dedicated to the connections she made with alumnae and established several programs that continue today. She touched many lives while here at Cedar Crest College, and her legacy continues as she graciously offers her service, support, and volunteerism to this day.

## DR. MAIA GREEN '02

Green was recognized for her scientific contributions in toxicology. After graduating from Cedar Crest, she pursued a Master of Science in developmental biology and teratology at Thomas Jefferson University. However, her academic career took a turn when she was asked to establish a computational toxicology laboratory at the University of Louisville. There, she pursued her Ph.D. and was one of the first ten Black students to graduate from this program in 2009. She is currently a director of toxicology at Hurley Consulting Associates Ltd., where she provides insight through scientific and regulatory reviews of nonclinical toxicology programs.



(Left to Right) Anta Cissé-Green, Dr. Maia Green, Dr. Robi Shalotsky Ludwig, Susan Seccombe Cox, Susan Everitt Hudgins

## SUSAN EVERITT HUDGINS '64

Hudgins was recognized for her financial expertise and service. She earned an MBA in finance and information systems in 1983 and was hired by the Wall Street firm of Paine Webber (now UBS). Hudgins was one of the first women to work on the New York City Stock Exchange floor. She progressed quickly to become the senior vice president and chief operating officer of the Municipal Securities Group. In 1998, she reconnected with Cedar Crest College, serving on the board of trustees with a focus on the College's finances. In 2010, she was elected board chair. Following her retirement from the board, Hudgins has remained deeply connected to the College as a loyal donor and a champion of our promising students.

## DR. ROBI SHALOTSKY LUDWIG '87

Ludwig was recognized for impressive psychological knowledge and reporting. She is a nationally known psychotherapist and award-winning reporter. Her practical experience as a psychotherapist began in 1988 when she worked as a counselor for patients with severe psychiatric disorders. In the 1990s, she worked as a psychology reporter for WETM-TV, the NBC affiliate in Elmira, NY. Ludwig has been appearing on broadcast media since 1997, and she is currently the executive producer and host of the Facebook Live Show, Talking Live. Her most recent book "Your Best Age is Now" published by Harper One, debuted in April 2016. Ludwig has appeared on multiple news outlets and is a regular on CNN, Court TV, Headlines News, News Nation, and Fox News. She also appears on national shows such as 20/20, The Tamron Hall Show, and The View.

# Partners in Nursing Honors Exceptional Nursing Alumnae



Partners in Nursing recognized the achievements of outstanding nursing alumnae at the Nursing Pinning ceremony held on Friday, August 26, 2022.



**NURSING EDUCATION AWARD -  
Dr. Xiomara Nazario Perez '09**

*Awarded to a Cedar Crest College Nursing graduate who exhibits excellence in nursing education and professional development.*

Perez graduated from Cedar Crest with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2009. She earned an MSN in nursing education and a doctorate in nursing leadership and administration, both from Capella University.

Perez has been a nurse educator for various nursing programs, in addition to holding nursing director positions throughout Texas and Idaho. Perez is the founding dean of nursing at Eagle Gate College in Boise, ID.

There, she started a new nursing school campus, including LPN, BSN, and master's entry programs for nursing. She incorporated ATI solutions throughout all three curriculums and has led the program through successful CCNE accreditation. In her spare time, Perez has authored the publication "Evidenced Based Falls Assessment Tool for Inpatient Behavioral Health Patients."



**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD -  
Carol Bosack Fox '83**

*Awarded to a Cedar Crest College Nursing graduate who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the field of nursing.*

Fox graduated from Cedar Crest with a Bachelor of Science in nursing in 1983 and earned her Master of Arts in management and health care administration from Penn State University. She is also a Certified Research Coordinator.

Fox has held numerous positions at Lehigh Valley Health Network, including ICU nurse in the Central Nervous System ICU, director of the Trauma Neuro Intensive Care Unit, clinical research coordinator in the Neurosciences Division, and was instrumental in developing the Advanced Spine Center and functioning as the nurse navigator.

Currently, Fox is the administrator of the Trauma Program for Lehigh Valley Health Network, responsible for directing activities of the Network Trauma Programs in collaboration with the Trauma Program medical director and vice president of the Trauma and Burn Service Line. She provides oversight of performance improvement, injury prevention, and continuing education as well as assuring registry data is accurate.



**SPIRIT OF COMPASSION AWARD -  
Rebecca Kleinwaks Settar '04**

*Awarded to a Cedar Crest College Nursing graduate who consistently goes above and beyond their scope of practice to improve the human condition of others.*

Settar graduated from Cedar Crest with a Bachelor of Science in biology in 1999 and then returned to earn a Bachelor of Science in nursing in 2004. Settar has shared her nursing expertise through various nursing appointments throughout New Jersey.

Settar also independently published her first book in 2021, "A Soft Place to Land: A Five Year Journey Through Foster Care." In Settar's words, "A Soft Place to Land" tells the story of foster care from the inside out. It is the true, heart-wrenching story of her 15 foster children and her family, as they together navigate the complexities of an imperfect system. Settar has fostered dozens of sons and daughters by opening her home and heart to children in need. She has welcomed youth of all ages into her family, including medically fragile babies born addicted to drugs and lost teenagers battling their demons in youth shelters and juvenile detention centers.

# A Special Homecoming

## Cissé-Green '95 Presents on Leadership and Personal and Professional Development



On the Friday evening of Homecoming 2022, Anta Cissé-Green '95 presented to a room of alumnae, students, and guests. Her presentation titled, "Leadership and Personal-Professional Development," walked the audience through her incredible journey starting in Senegal,

through working in retail, to entering law school, and now serving in her current role as senior vice chancellor and general counsel for The State University of New York Office of General Counsel.

During her highly engaging and inspirational speech, Cissé-Green shared her main strengths and weaknesses and detailed why identifying these is the key to unlocking your potential.

Throughout her presentation, she referenced a word important to Senegalese culture — teranga, which encompasses hospitality, kindness, and inclusion. In addition to explaining how she has incorporated teranga into her own life, Cissé-Green embodied the word through her actions and infectious personality.

It was a true pleasure welcoming the 2022 Hall of Fame honoree back to campus and hearing her story and words of wisdom.

## Naval Commander Cheryl Griswold '95 Returns to Campus



In September 2022, alumna U.S. Naval Commander Cheryl Griswold '95 returned to her alma mater ahead of Homecoming Weekend. On the first day of her visit, she celebrated with the cross country team, as they received their 2021 CSAC Conference Championship Rings. Griswold also enjoyed a campus tour and visited with President Elizabeth Meade and Vice President of Institutional Advancement Valerie Downing. That weekend, she spoke with prospective students at the College's Open House about her experience at Cedar Crest, her journey to the U.S. Navy, and the important lessons she learned along the way.

Griswold is a graduate of the Biology Program and was a member of the cross country team during her time at Cedar Crest. In 2019, she was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame for her success on the team.

Following her graduation, Griswold attended the University of Florida's College of Health and Human Performance to earn a master's degree in exercise and sport sciences with a concentration in clinical exercise physiology. She worked in a clinical setting before being commissioned in the United States Navy in 2006. As a naval aerospace physiologist, Griswold's work centers around the physiological threats associated with the flight environment of aviators and aircrew in military aircraft.



# Cedar Crest Receives Gift to Upgrade Communications and Humanities Center

**Cedar Crest College has received a major gift from Hank Narrow — formerly of Allentown — in memory of his late wife, Jill Stewart Narrow '70, who passed away in 2018. The impactful gift will be utilized to upgrade and maintain a historic campus building which will be renamed “The Narrows,” with the full name “The Narrows Communications and Humanities Center.”**

Used for communications and humanities programs, the building was originally named “Hillside House” when erected in 1916 and later changed to “Hartzel Hall.” “The Narrows” will undergo significant transformation into a state-of-the-art environment that will be beneficial to students in communications and the humanities. The building also houses offices and classrooms used by faculty and students in English, communication, history, political science, and Spanish.

Jill Stewart Narrow '70 had a successful 44-year career in public relations, marketing, advertising, sales, and writing. Her media included radio, television, internet, magazines, and internal and external corporate communications. At Cedar Crest, she majored in English and sociology. She and her husband were married for almost 45 years.



Jill wrote for *The Crestiad*, sang in the choir, and was a member of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society. After graduation, she tutored and mentored Cedar Crest students.

She was empowered by her Cedar Crest education and the lifelong friends she made at the College. Jill was passionate about the college's mission of educating women. Jill was able to reach the highest levels professionally and enjoy a successful career in a male-dominated industry, an accomplishment she credited to Cedar Crest for making possible.

Cedar Crest President Elizabeth Meade stated: “Mr. Narrow’s generous memorial gift will provide resources to renovate the space and provide a lasting income source for further needs. This transformational contribution to a core area of our mission is affirmation of Cedar Crest’s commitment to the longstanding impact the liberal arts have on our students and our community.”

Mr. Narrow stated: “This gift creates a legacy for Jill and her name will live in perpetuity. More important, however, are the benefits to inspire students’ success in their educational and professional pursuits. Further, the planned state-of-the art center will enhance Cedar Crest’s prominence in the fields of communications and the humanities.”

The Jill Stewart Narrow Endowed Scholarship for Communications was established by Mr. Narrow shortly after his wife passed away. The scholarship provides a continual source of financial support awarded annually to a qualified student studying in the field of communications.

Hartzel Hall was named to honor James M. Hartzell, a long-time trustee and the second major donor to Cedar Crest College. As part of the renovations and to honor the legacy of Mr. Hartzell, the entrance to the building will be named Hartzel Lobby.

# Full-Tuition Scholarship Winner Flourishes in First Year

**In Spring 2022, Cedar Crest College named Giovanna Sodano as the winner of a four-year, full-tuition scholarship. Sodano competed against more than 80 students from 14 different states at the College's 13th Annual Scholarship Competition held in February 2022.**

The annual Scholarship Competition aims to give high-achieving students a chance to compete for a variety of scholarships and to experience Cedar Crest's mission of educating future leaders through scholarship, global connectivity, wellness, and service. The competition consists of a three-hour exam covering the arts, mathematics, science, writing, and the humanities. The top 25 finishers are honored at a recognition ceremony, with the five finalists moving on to an interview portion of the competition.

"When my name was called as one of the top five finalists, I was in shock," says Sodano. "Later, when I got the phone call from President Meade saying that I had won, I couldn't believe it. I felt like all of my hard work had finally paid off. Winning a full-tuition scholarship is something that rarely happens."

**"Winning the Scholarship Competition for me meant that my hard work was being recognized."**

Sodano was born and raised in Naples, Italy, and moved to New York about six years ago. She graduated in Spring 2022 from Peekskill High School, where she was a member of several honor societies. Sodano enjoyed participating in her school's art club, staying active, and tutoring younger students in art and science.

She was first introduced to Cedar Crest in her search for a college that offered a genetic engineering major. After speaking to a Cedar Crest admissions counselor who had visited her school, she decided to apply and was later invited to participate in the Scholarship Competition.

Now a first-year student at the College, she studies genetic engineering and conducts independent research on campus with Dr. Richard Kliman, professor of biology and director of the Biology and Genetics & Counseling Psychology Programs. Sodano has been working with Kliman on sequencing genes of spotted lanternflies, an invasive insect that has spread throughout Pennsylvania.



"This experience has been really exciting because it has helped me get a sense of what I will expect from my research and my career in the future," says Sodano, who hopes to one day earn her Ph.D. and become a professor.

In addition to her classes and research, Sodano has been enjoying Cedar Crest's beautiful campus — pointing to the gazebo as a favorite spot to read and enjoy nature — as well as the women's college experience.

"Being here has made me love my decision to go to a women's college," she says. "I have never experienced such a friendly atmosphere, in which I feel safe and heard. Everyone here really supports each other, and it is such a warm and welcoming environment."

Looking to her college journey ahead, Sodano is excited to learn all that she can from her professors, determine her future career in genetic engineering, and have once-in-a-lifetime experiences, such as the Sophomore Expedition to Dublin, Ireland.

"Winning the Scholarship Competition for me meant that my hard work was being recognized. Now being in college, it reminds me to work hard and that I am here for a reason and am part of a supportive community," she concludes.

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**For more information about the annual Scholarship Competition, please contact the Admissions Office at 610-740-3780.**



# The 2022 Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching

The Cedar Crest College Alumnae Association presented Dr. LuAnn McCracken Fletcher with the 2022 Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching for her dedication and commitment to teaching and her standards of excellence in her role as a faculty member. This prestigious award was presented at the College's Founding Day celebration, where Fletcher shared an inspirational message using the words of some of her favorite writers:

I thought I would take a just a moment to share some ideas about education and possibility—we are here, after all, to celebrate Founding Day. Because I teach literature, I constantly hear in my head the voices of writers I've come to love—and so I thought I'd invite them to speak to you today. Thanks to Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, Roxane Gay, and maybe W.B. Yeats, though the quotation I've included has been attributed to him without clear evidence. Perhaps it would be better, in this case, to say Anonymous, because, as Virginia Woolf said, "For most of history, Anonymous was a woman. I can provide my sources later for the curious, but I'm going to guess that at least a few of you will recognize some of my quotations, which I've arranged in the form of a short speech on the value of education, particularly education for women, but really, the value of a college education in general:

*Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer ... It is thoughtless to condemn them or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.*

Charlotte Brontë, from *Jane Eyre* (1847) —

*Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one she has the means of settling well, without farther expense to anybody.*

Jane Austen, from *Mansfield Park* (1814) —

*The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.*

bell hooks, from *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) —

*Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.*

Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own* (1929) —

*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*

Yeats —

*If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.*

Toni Morrison, from a 1981 speech to the Ohio Arts Council —

*When you can't find someone to follow, you have to find a way to lead by example.*

Roxane Gay, from *Bad Feminist* (2014) —

## Alumna in Action



Since graduating from Cedar Crest College with a business degree, **Angela Castro '02** has enjoyed a progressively successful career.

Recently appointed to the chief of staff role at Acadia Healthcare, it's fair to say Castro has achieved her goal of securing financial security

and upward social mobility for her family.

For some, that may be enough. But Castro continues to strive toward greatness for the sake of others. She lives her life with an intense, purpose-driven determination to help people in need — both by vocation and by example.

"My biggest purpose, my goal, is to let other girls know that they can do it — no matter what their circumstance," she says. "I didn't take the normal route. I had kids early and had some detours with some poor decisions. And I was able to do it. So that tells anyone they can do it."

Castro didn't take a straight road to the C-suite. Growing up in a low-income project housing development, she was surrounded by violence: "I couldn't even give you a number of how many of my friends were shot and killed growing up right in front of me."

As a promising high-school athlete, she was courted by many colleges but lacked the support to navigate the application system. "We were project kids," says Castro. "They didn't help us in that way. I think they didn't even look at us as having an opportunity for college."

Yet Castro always knew she wanted a way out, she wanted to make something of herself.

At 25, when she suddenly found herself a single mother of two young children, Castro knew what she had to do: pursue her education so that she could give her children a better future.

She made the difficult decision to move the three of them into a shared bedroom at her mother's house.

"It was not the best neighborhood," Castro recalls. "This was the crack epidemic; it was so drug-infested. There was so much negative influence; so many families were being disrupted."

She began taking courses at LCCC in the hopes of becoming a nurse but soon discovered that, although she wanted to help people, nursing wasn't the right fit for her. She transferred to a local business school then decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in business. After visiting several area schools, the School of Adult and Graduate Education (SAGE) program at Cedar Crest quickly became her top choice.

It was the woman-centric atmosphere — the unique combination of power and support — that really drew her in.

"It felt like there was so much power on campus ... so much to offer, especially for a woman," says Castro. "I felt nurtured. I was going back to school as a single mom at that point, working full-time and going to school practically full-time, and I felt like the campus was just so warm and nurturing."

Castro was able to transfer her business school credits, and the flexibility of the program allowed her to take night, weekend, online, and even day courses while still working her full-time job. She was soon able to get her own apartment. Yet even with the supportive atmosphere, her school years were hardly easy. "When I look back, I think that's why people asked me, 'how do you do it?'" she recalls.

For years, Castro started each day with an early morning walk to drop her kids at school, hopped on a bus to Cedar Crest for classes, then took another bus to her middle shift job at Sacred Heart Hospital. While she worked, her kids went to after-school programs and her mother's apartment until she picked them up at 11 p.m. They'd walk the five or six blocks back home, go to bed, and do it all over again the next day. So how did she do it? "You just do it," she says, "I had to do it."

Castro credits her time at Cedar Crest — the healthy classroom interactions and intellectual debates with the other students

## Alumna in Action

from different backgrounds — with helping her find her voice and transforming her understanding of the world, and her place in it.

“Cedar Crest allowed me to give people grace in areas where I wouldn’t have,” she says. “The biggest thing it taught me — and I’m probably going to get emotional, but I didn’t think about this before — is meeting people where they’re at. I had to learn that there, because it was such a different world for me, that I learned that I could have grace in areas where I didn’t think I could.

“I was so defensive, where I came from, so reactionary, and [Cedar Crest] taught me that people can have a different

opinion than me, a different upbringing,” reveals Castro.

It’s that understanding of others, combined with a healthy dose of grit and determination that’s allowed Castro to thrive in her career, and to make such a positive difference in so many lives, both as a behavioral health care professional and as a role model for young women.

“There’s a lot of hopelessness in the community that I was brought up in, and I wanted to be that light for people, you know, that person that shows that there’s hope — no matter what your circumstances are today,” concludes Castro.

# *Lifelong Learning at Your Alma Mater*

**The Lehigh Valley Institute for Learning in Retirement (LVILR) is a non-profit that holds its non-credit classes on the Cedar Crest College campus.**

Membership is open to all retirees and to all others aged 55 and older. On-campus and Zoom classes are taught by members of LVILR, the Cedar Crest faculty, and others from the local community.



***We invite you to explore the Registration Package on the Spring 2023 Registration page (Available after 2/15/23) at [www.LVILR.com](http://www.LVILR.com). Log in to see the scope of the program and the range of our instructor expertise!***

## Featured Faculty



**Lauren Braun-Strumfels, Ph.D.**, associate professor of history, was invited to present a research position paper as part of a workshop at Oxford University on “Understanding Early Migration from Italy: The Case of Sicily and Louisiana.” This event, held on November 10, 2022, was hosted by the Italian Studies Program at Oxford. The workshop featured four position papers by scholars from the US, the UK, and Italy.



**Melissa Kamyab, Ed.D.**, assistant professor of education and director of the education master’s program, has been named to the International Literacy Association Administrator Task Force. This global group represents a broad spectrum of leadership within literacy communities, including superintendents, curriculum directors, building administrators, professors, and reading advocates, who will be tasked with reviewing professional learning resources that connect research to practice and with improving the quality of literacy teaching and learning in schools and districts across the country.



**Janine Kishbaugh '04, MS '09**, was awarded the prestigious Meritorious Service Award from the Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists (NEAFS) at their annual meeting in Niagara Falls, NY. Kishbaugh, who has been an instructor of forensic science in the Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences since 2004, has served as site chair for NEAFS for over a decade. Her hard work is one reason that the annual NEAFS conference is always at a high level.



Professor of Psychology, **Micah Sadigh, Ph.D.**, was officially recognized by the Academy of Psychologists as the top-rated presenter in the history of the Academy and for providing annual continuing education lectures for them for the past 20 years, all of which were approved by the American Psychological Association. Sadigh was also named a life-long honorary member of the Academy and will be delivering a lecture at their February 2023 meeting on the manifestations of meaninglessness.



2022 RANKINGS FROM

**U.S. NEWS &  
WORLD REPORT**

#BestColleges  
#CedarCrestCollege

**7**

**IN TOP PERFORMER  
ON SOCIAL MOBILITY**

**28**

**BEST VALUE SCHOOLS**

**AMONG THE TOP 50 BEST  
COLLEGES FOR VETERANS**

**AMONG THE TOP 100 BEST  
REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH**

## Standout Scholars



**Genevieve Ashley '23** was selected to receive an Award for Excellence as a Student Nurse from the Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN). She was among a group of nurses and health care professionals across the Lehigh Valley honored for their exceptional care — and one of only two students to receive an Award for Excellence as a Student Nurse. Ashley accepted the award in September at the 2022 LVHN Friends of Nursing awards program at the Steel Stacks in Bethlehem.



**Laura Billings '23**, an exercise science graduate student and interim head cross country and track & field coach, is training in hopes of being selected to compete for the USA Women's Bobsled National Team on the World Cup Circuit and in the 2026 Milan Winter Olympics. Billings was first introduced to bobsledding in June 2021 when she was invited to attend a week-long USABS (United States of America Bobsled/ Skeleton) Rookie Camp in Lake Placid, NY. She plans to participate in several races this upcoming winter season representing Team USA on the North America Cup Circuit and to compete in the Junior World Championship race in Germany.



### **MBA & MMS Students Complete Capstone Project**

As part of their capstone course, students in the Master of Business (MBA) and Modular Master of Science (MMS) programs served as a consulting group this summer for the Sixth Street Shelter, an Allentown nonprofit providing short-term and long-term transitional housing programs for those experiencing homelessness. Over the six-week project, the group was able to give back to the local community, while getting valuable hands-on experience working with a real organization.

Students in the group included: **Miles Clay '20, MBA '23; Gwen Sullivan Crowley '01, MBA '22; Sherin Elhefnawy '20, MBA '23; Leannie Jusino '22, MBA '23; Sierra Lockhart '22, MBA '23; Karen Long '21, M.A. '22; John Nedick, MBA '22 (Team Captain); Mark Rasmussen, MBA '22; Jayme Richter, MBA '23; Erin Salamone, MBA '23; and Sarah Sofia '20, MMS '22.**



# CEDAR CREST COLLEGE

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## Save the Date for Reunion 2023

**Everyone Welcome!**

**Special recognition of our anniversary years ending in 3s and 8s and a golden celebration of our 1973 50th Anniversary Class**

*Friday Night: Golden Club Dinner: 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Tompkins College Center*  
All alumnae who have celebrated their 50th class reunions are invited to return for dinner to welcome in the newest golden anniversary class of 1973.

*Friday Night Fair: 4:30 – 9:00 p.m. Blaney Hall Circle Quad*  
Join us for a fun night of food trucks, dessert, yard games, a caricaturist, magician, wine and beer, and much more. Consider bringing your family to show off campus, or make this a special time to gather with your friends and classmates for a casual and fun evening outside and under the stars. This year karaoke on the front porch of Blaney Hall. Share a solo performance or grab a group of friends and relive your song contest days.

*Saturday:*  
Enjoy a variety of activities through the day and evening. Be sure to register for the Strawberry Festival from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. in Lees Hall, join in for a class photo, and dance the night away at a Black and Gold Saturday Night Out Dinner Dance from 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

*Sunday:*  
Bingo Returns!!  
10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

[cedarcrest.edu/reunion](https://cedarcrest.edu/reunion)



**Cedar Crest College  
Reunion '23**

**Friday - Sunday  
May 19 - May 21, 2023**

