



# TROJAN TRADITION

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5  
MAY 2016



## BGA/STA Alumni Family Day

### Save The Date:

Family Day At The Races  
Monmouth Park on  
Sunday,  
September 25, 2016  
at 11:30 a.m.



On Saturday April 23, 2016, we hosted our **First Alumni Family Day**. Over 200 people were in attendance. The day was full of great food, music, sports and an awards ceremony.

The day began with our varsity softball and baseball teams competing and winning their home games. At 12:00, alumni began to arrive and were greeted with happy smiles and everyone was given an alumni family day tee shirt. A sea of Bishop Ahr pride filled the cafeteria as stories from the BGA/STA days were shared.

With food provided by an alumni parent, Mr. Greg Lind, no one went hungry. Alumni were able to look at yearbooks, old photos, catch up with teachers, children had their faces painted and people teamed up to play a 5 on 5 basketball game. The day concluded with the 2016 St. Thomas Aquinas Award and Athletic Hall of Fame recipients being honored.

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**We hope to see everyone and their families next year!**



### A message from the Director of Advancement

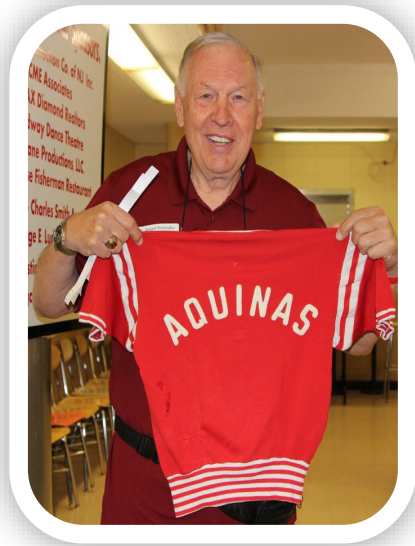
Check out the 5th Issue of our Alumni Newsletter. Sign up today to be a part of all the great new and exciting things happening with our **Bishop George Ahr/St. Thomas Aquinas Alumni**.

Have any exciting news? A new engagement, wedding, baby, job, sports news, know of an alumni death or need a prayer request?

Tell us, we want to share it and update your contact info at:  
**dchippendale@bgahs.org**.

All submissions must be received by **August 15th**.

**Next Issue: September 15th, 2016.**





**Thank You to Our Sponsors.**

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 Justin A Dews, '07  
 Margaret "Peg" Collins



## Athletic Hall of Fame

The Athletic Hall of Fame was established to honor those individuals who have excelled in their specific sport or sports while a student at STA/BGA High School. Recognition has also been given to coaches or team doctors for their outstanding dedication to the Bishop Ahr Athletic program.

### The following is a list of those Inductees:

Mrs. Karen Barnes  
 Mrs. Catherine Brady  
 Mrs. Maureen Brady-Kovacs '75  
 Mr. Jack Burns, '74  
 Ms. Sharon Cartwright, '87  
 Mr. Ralph Citarella, '76  
 Ms. Renee Doctor, '85  
 Mr. James Farrell, '85  
 Dr. John Ferrante, M.D.  
 Mr. Matthew Golden, '80  
 Mr. Alexis Greaves, '85  
 Mr. Fred Janiec, '76  
 Ms. Michele Lanigan, '96  
 Mr. Brant Lutska  
 Mr. John McDevitt, '87

Ms. Kelly McDevitt-Connors, '85  
 Mr. Joseph McLaughlin, '85  
 Mrs. Jamie McNally-Halloran, '98  
 Mr. William Melton, '85  
 Ms. Ann Mullan, '84  
 Ms. Yancy Munoz  
 Mr. Bill Pavlak, '76  
 Mr. Scott Runkel  
 Ms. Bethann Snell, '91  
 Ms. Sheila Sponauer, '77  
 Mr. Nicholas Tonzola, '88  
 Mr. Darrin Winston, '84  
 Mr. Michael Wolfthal  
 Dr. Patricia Zientek, '82  
 1984 State Champion Football  
 Team

## Athletic Hall of Fame



### 2016 Athletic Hall of Fame Recipients



- Anthony Aschettino
- Lynne Braine
- Theodore Brinkofski '08
- Anjelica Brinkofski '09
- Anthony Cavico '02
- Stanley Domin
- Ronald Hilliard
- Dennis O'Keefe
- Joseph Prehodka
- Joseph Prodocimo
- Monique Riddick '07
- Dr. Todd Ryan
- David Stanislawczyk '81
- Dr. Edward Stivers



## St. Thomas Aquinas Award

“Better to illuminate than merely to shine,  
to deliver to others contemplated truths than  
merely to contemplate.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

Throughout our forty five-year history, the St. Thomas Aquinas Award has been given to Alumni, family and friends who have continued to foster and exhibit in their life the Mission Statement of Bishop Ahr/ St.Thomas Aquinas High School.

### The following is a list of those distinguished individuals:

Reverend Msgr. Michael Alliegro  
Mr. Edwin Bast, '73  
Mr. John Borys  
Mrs. Catherine Brady  
Msgr. Richard C. Brietske  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Burt  
Mr. John Czajkowski, '84  
Mr. Robert Gironda  
The Felician Sisters  
Dr. & Mrs. Peter Freis  
Mr. Matthew Kellerman, '75  
Mr. Adolph Kuchta (Posthumously)  
Ms. Maureen Lynch-MacArthur, '79  
Ms. Melanie Mc Garry  
Ms. Amy McAuliffe, '86

Mr. William Gerald McCormick, '98  
Mr. Robert Merski  
Mr. Tom Michaels  
Mr. Joseph Parauda (Posthumously)  
Msgr. A.J. Perini  
Mrs. Frances Perlin  
Mr. Gary Phillips  
Mr. Joseph (Rocky) Prosdocimo  
Mr. Robert Reidinger  
Mrs. Maureen Rickerhauser-Krall, '74  
Mr. & Mrs. David J. Samuel  
Mr. Stephen Sienko  
Mr. Bob Sinka  
Mr. Michael Tirpak  
Sister Donna Marie Trukowski, C.S.S.F.  
Sister Cynthia Marie Babyak, C.S.S.F.  
Mrs. Arlene Hawk Cianciulli '74  
Mr. Frank Mac Kinney '94

## St. Thomas Aquinas Award



**2016**

### St. Thomas Aquinas Award Recipients



Susan Williamson  
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Roche  
Margaret Collins  
Joanne Eckert  
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Lind  
Sr. Marilyn Minter C.S.S.F.  
Mr. & Mrs. Alphonse Dama  
Dr. Janet Onufer-Michael OD.

## Sister Marilyn Marie Minter '74 Receives St. Thomas Aquinas Award



On Saturday, April 23rd, the Bishop Ahr High School community recognized those individuals who, being connected to BGA/STA, have continued to foster/exhibit in her/his life the Mission Statement of Bishop Ahr / St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Because she was not able to be at the ceremony, **Sister Marilyn Marie Minter '74**, while visiting the school on Thursday, May 12th, received this award. It was presented to her by Sister Donna Marie Trukowski, principal of the school.

Sister Marilyn Marie graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas High School in 1974. Although she was a pretty typical teenager (getting involved with a rock band and all which that meant), it was during her high school years that the seed of a vocation was planted. She found great joy in the company of the Felician Sisters, and she wanted “some of what they had.”

Sister Marilyn has been gifted by God with many abilities and talents. She has used these unselfishly and generously for the good of her religious community and for countless individuals and groups.

In the summer of 2000, Sister Cynthia Marie, Campus Minister at BGA, asked Sister Marilyn to help with Catholic Heart Work camp at Bishop Ahr High School. This is a weeklong service program that involves teens from all over the USA. Sister Marilyn immediately said yes and she, along with her guitar, roomed at the “BGA Hotel” for a week of service, community, prayer, and fun. Along with the BGA students, she created a skit based on a Bible story. At the end of the skit, she taught the group a song she had written entitled “God is a Good God!” Since that time, Sister Cynthia continues to teach that song to every new class that enters BGA. You can hear the students happily sing and dance to “God is a Good God” at athletic events, pep rallies, and so many other Bishop Ahr activities.

The mission statement of Bishop Ahr High School refers to “Christ as our model.” This has truly influenced Sister Marilyn who always tells her audiences that “it is all about Him.” She has her focus on Jesus, and she is well known for her greeting of “Praise the Lord!”





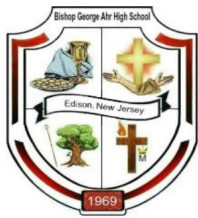
Bishop Ahr/St. Thomas Aquinas High School does much to instill a Christian environment of outreach, calling their students to be aware of and to reach out to those in need. Sister Marilyn has truly embraced this calling. She volunteered two summers to be present to the poor of St. Ignatius Nursing Home in Philadelphia. She participated in mission immersion experiences in Uganda, Kenya, Kamchatka, Mexico, and Haiti. Finally, in 2012, her missionary heart found its place in Jacmel, Haiti. Together with Sister Mary Inga, Sister Marilyn helped give birth to a ministry of presence. Over the past three years, the Felician Sisters' Haiti Mission has grown exponentially. Today the people of Jacmel benefit from

- A Mobile Clinic, which visits 12 sites in the mountain areas
- Mother Angela Kitchen, which feeds about 60 children a day
- English and Computer Classes for children of the area
- Program for Illiterate Women to learn to read and write
- Felician Artists Haiti
- Catechesis and Sacramental Programs
- "Water With Blessings" Program, which provides clean water for many families
- Pay-It-Forward Program, which teaches young people to reach out to others

When asked how she is, Sister Marilyn replies, "I am blessed." Yes, she is blessed, and those who have been touched by her presence and her words are blessed also. Thanks be to God for this wonderful woman, this Felician Sister, who continues the vision of Blessed Mary Angela 'to make God known, loved, and glorified,' and continues to live with passion the mission statement of Bishop Ahr/St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

Congratulations Sister Marilyn Marie Minter '74!





**Bishop George Ahr/St. Thomas Aquinas High School  
One Tingly Lane, Edison, NJ 08820**



Dear Alumni Family Day Attendees,

Thank you for your presence at the First Bishop George Ahr/St. Thomas Aquinas High School Alumni Family Day on April 23, 2016. The many smiles and happy conversations throughout this event were clear indications of its success. The Girls Varsity Softball and Boys Varsity Baseball teams, which helped lead off the day with their respective contests, were both victorious. Thanks and congratulations to both teams on their BIG HITS and solid wins! The scrumptious barbecue/buffet prepared and served by Mr. Greg Lind was also a BIG HIT, as were the event t-shirts supplied by Jim Tavormina (Team USA Sports). The fun activities and competitive games throughout the day added to the exciting atmosphere.

Thank you very much to our event sponsors: B&W Construction Co. of NJ, Inc.; CME Associates, RE/MAX Diamond Realtors; Broadway Dance Theatre; Hurricane Productions LLC; Portuguese Fisherman Restaurant; Century 21 – Charles Smith Agency, Inc., George E. Ludwig, D.D.S.; Justin A. Dews '07; Margaret “Peg” Collins; and Team USA Sports. Thanks to the Alumni Family Day Committee for all their hard work and perseverance.

Congratulations to all the St. Thomas Aquinas Award and Athletic Hall of Fame recipients who received their well-deserved recognitions at the concluding ceremony for this wonderful day in the history of BGA/STA!

We hope to see you and many more BGA/STA Alumni at our future events with wonderful opportunities to connect and re-connect! Photos will be available on our school's website: [www.bgahs.org](http://www.bgahs.org)

With prayers and gratitude,

*Deborah L Chippendale*

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Director of Advancement  
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## Hoops for Hearts Charity Basketball Game a Monumental Success



The 8th Annual Hoops for Hearts basketball game took place on Thursday, April 7th, 2016 at Bishop George Ahr High School. The game featured BGA faculty, staff and alumni playing against members of the BGA boys and girls basketball teams.

The event is truly a community effort. Joining the faculty team was 20 BGA alumni. The referees were Mr. Mike Perullo, '80, and Mr. Tim Lombardo, who is a present BGA parent. The announcer for the game was Mr. Dennis O'Keefe, faculty member and former head basketball coach, and the scorekeeper was BGA AD, Mr. Mike Wolfthal, who had a busy night with the final score being 113 - 110 in favor of the faculty and alumni team. The real winner, however, was the American Heart Association, for whom the event benefits. **This year, thanks to the generosity of the BGA community, \$5,000 was raised and donated to the American Heart Association.**

Student Council Vice President, Shelby Lubowicki, '16, and senior boys' basketball captain, Corey Ciszek, '16, co-chaired the event. Members of the Christian Social Action Club Hoops for Hearts committee and campus minister, Sister Cynthia Marie Babyak, worked diligently to make the game successful. At halftime, 50 people took the half-court shot challenge, and 6 of those 50 made it. The winners of the half-court shot challenge were, Lauren Barlow '16, Dylan Cruz '16, Stephanie Corea '17, Sara Decker '18 and alumni Tom Weiler '15. Senior Alexis Sofu sang the national anthem, and Mark Cellis '12, provided official basketball entertainment music on his keyboard throughout the game. The State Champion BGA cheerleaders helped everyone cheer for their favorite team and/or player.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to the faculty, staff, administration, alumni, parents, and BGA students who played and worked the event. We would also like to thank all who came out and supported this great cause.



## Austin Yson Missionary to Chile



**Austin Yson**, a graduate from the Bishop Ahr **Class of 2013**, recently returned from a two year missionary experience in Chile. Yson, a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, was asked to complete missionary work as a way of becoming a full member of the Church.

Missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints usually serve their missionary years between the ages of 18 and 25. Yson was no exception. He began the journey by raising money and applying to be a missionary for the Church. Yson explained that the fundraising aspect of the experience was based in community, “we [missionaries] all had to raise money for our trip. The money that is extra from my expenses would go to help other missionaries. This helped to spread the wealth and help missionaries who may not be able to raise the funds on their own.” Upon being accepted to the missionary program – Yson departed for a six week training program at a Missionary Training Center (MTC) where he was taught what it meant to be a missionary, what their daily tasks would be, and the role faith played in daily life.

Following his training time, Yson departed for Chile, a country in South America, which he would call home for the next two years. The purpose of the missionary work is to “go door to door with a message that can change your life” Yson explained. He knew that not everyone who would hear this message would be welcoming or accepting of it, but that didn’t deter him. Yson lived his time in Chile recognizing the effect he could have on people. “Helping people needs to be done while keeping a good attitude. If people can see my happiness, it opens the door to witness.”



Yson's daily life was met with routine that helped him to adjust with the culture shock. He would wake up daily at 7am and begin personal prayer and studying. At 10:30am he would participate in language study to help him learn Spanish. From 11:30am to 1:30pm Yson would go out and do missionary work. This missionary work would be going door to door preaching the good news and meeting people where they were. He would then return home at 1:30pm for lunch and rest before heading out again from 3:00pm-9:30pm for more missionary work. This routine is how he lived out his time in Chile. During his time there, Yson had the opportunity to baptize many people in the Church. Yson explained that for many people "prayer is the key to individual choice" concerning baptism.

Yson recalls working with one man find faith in Jesus Christ. "One time when we were out on missionary work, we met this guy who was walking who needed help. He was on drugs and realized that this wasn't good for his life. He wanted to quit for his young daughter. Within one week – he stopped drugs and within three weeks he was baptized. This is what made this trip meaningful. Being able to see people's faith grow."

Now that he's back from his missionary work Yson is hoping to start school and major in psychology. He thinks that this major will help him make an impact on people's lives. When asked about BGA's influence on his life, Yson was quick to explain that BGA helped him recognize that happiness and enthusiasm are important in any faith journey. Though he won't be doing missionary work in the near future, Yson is hopeful to continue to travel.



## BGA/STA Annual Golf Classic



The BGA/STA Annual Golf Classic was held on Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough, NJ. There were 84 golfers who participated and helped make this event a success. The proceeds go to our tuition assistance program here at school.

Golfers began the day with a continental breakfast and an 8:30 am shotgun start.



In celebration of **Cinco de Mayo**, there were salsa and chips along the way. The golfers enjoyed many contests throughout the course.

The day concluded with a BBQ banquet, tricky tray, raffles and an award ceremony.





## Darius Griffin Named Trojans Boy's Varsity Basketball Head Coach



On April 16, 2016 – Bishop Ahr High School announced that **Darius ‘D.J.’ Griffin**, graduate from the **Class of 2010**, would take over as the Head Coach of the Boys’ Varsity Basketball team. We were able to sit down with Griffin to talk about the upcoming year ahead and his hopes for the program.

**Alumni Newsletter:** Thanks for sitting down with us today DJ.

**Darius “D.J.” Griffin:** Not a problem.

**AN:** Let’s start by talking about basketball in your life.

**DG:** I was always involved in sports in my life, but basketball became a quick favorite. My father played college basketball at Rutgers (from 1978-1982) and that influenced my affection for the sport. When I got to high school, I began to look at basketball as a way to share my skill set and saw it as a possible way to get into college.

**AN:** What does it mean to be a coach?

**DG:** I think it’s an opportunity for change. For years there has been talk of a need for change in the Boys Basketball program. I think that this is an opportunity for this change to happen. It’s an opportunity for the program to strive to new heights.

**AN:** What does it mean to be back at BGA Coaching?

**DG:** There is a sense of nostalgia. There is a comfort of being home here at BGA. I feel like it’s an opportunity to complete something that was started back in 1992. In 1992 there was a goal to win the state game. When I was a senior we came close to achieve that – but just missed it. I feel like this is my chance to finish what we started.

**AN:** What are your hopes for the year/season ahead?

**DG:** We have a lot. I hope that we can go undefeated in our division, that we can win our division, be competitive in county and state games – and have a senior get accepted into a Basketball Program in college.

**AN:** These are some lofty goals for the program. How do you hope to accomplish this?

**DG:** We need to work on being prepared for the moment. It’s easy for us to watch the game, see what the issues are, but we struggle executing it in the moment. We need to be able to sacrifice who we are individually – to become what we want to be as individuals and as a team. We need to be willing to give up small luxuries to be champs. That’s how I’m hoping we can accomplish this.



**AN:** Looking at the 16-17 Season – what are you trying to teach the team?

**DG:** The motto I'm trying to stick with this year is "We're all we got." This is saying that we as a team, as a school, etc. are all that we have. We need to support each other. We have to trust that what our coaches and our teammates are doing is for the best of the team. It's with this positive attitude that we can make real progress this season.

**AN:** Who are some of the people in your life who helped shape your coaching style?

**DG:** My dad, Coach P (Joseph Prodocimo), and Kelly Williams (TCNJ Head Coach). They gave me passion for the game, not just on the court, but off the court as well. They taught me how to be patient with the players. They showed me strategy methods for the games and how to turn every experience into a teaching moment. They also taught me how to teach and coach at the same time. This mix is what is helping me transition into this role.

**AN:** How has student reception been (to you being named as head coach)?

**DG:** They have been receptive to the change. These players are getting used to the idea of a new coach. BGA hasn't had a new coach in quite a while – but they see what the program can become. They seem willing to go the distance to have changes happen.

**AN:** When you're not coaching basketball – what else are you up to?

**DG:** I'm a full-time Physical Education/Health teacher here at Bishop Ahr. I also coach Varsity Football in the fall and Varsity Track in the spring.

**AN:** That's a full schedule.

**DG:** It is, but it's always exciting – which makes the experience that much better.

Darius "D.J." Griffin graduated from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) with a degree in K-12 Health and Exercise Science Teaching. During college he played for TCNJ and became an undergrad assistant coach at TCNJ.



## By Popular Demand!

Mr. TJ Reilly, Class of 1997 and current faculty member, would like to announce the debut of his new CD, ***Because of You***.

The CD, which features covers of artists ranging from Josh Groban to Garth Brooks, is a compilation of songs that he has sung here at Bishop Ahr over the years, as well as some newly recorded covers. ***Because of You*** is dedicated to the many co-workers, students, alumni and family members that have supported and encouraged him to make a recording.

To order your CD, payments can be made by check, cash or on the Venmo app.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Reilly at:  
[tjreillycd@gmail.com](mailto:tjreillycd@gmail.com)

## Class of 2004 Alumnus Celebrates National Prayer Day with School Community



At Bishop Ahr High School on Thursday, May 5th after the Ascension Thursday school liturgy, Alumni Keenan Thomas, Class of 2004, spoke about the power of prayer to an enthusiastic audience.

Thomas graduated Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in telecommunications management. Upon graduation, he began a career in media sales at Katz Media Group, New York. Last year (2015), he obtained his master of divinity degree from Drew Theological Seminary, Madison. After this he no longer had a just a career, he now had a vocation with a call to bring the face and person of God to those he would minister to. Keenan, who currently serves as associate minister at First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, Somerset, stressed the importance of praying on a daily basis to calm and refresh oneself, whether it's to prepare for an important event or recover from daily stressors. The former Bishop Ahr basketball player, who describes himself as "someone seeking the

Kingdom of God while it still can be found," said his favorite scripture is 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Senior Katie Cavico said she was especially impressed by Thomas' point that he didn't cultivate a deep prayer relationship with God until his adult years. "Prayer is an important part of my life, but not with all of my peers, so it was important to hear that people can grow into a powerful prayer practice," she said.

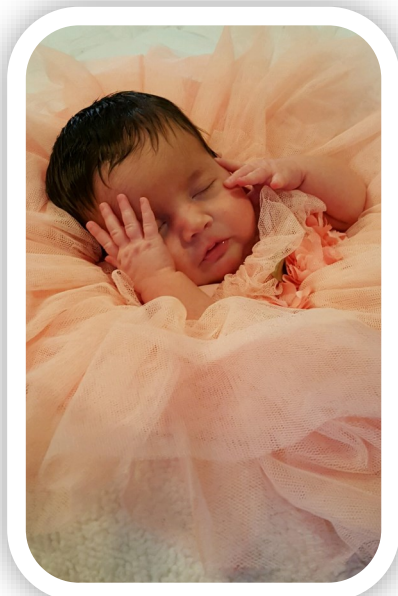
Deacon Richard Lutomski described Thomas as "an inspiration and a wonderful role model for our young adults who really search for that connection to God. "I first met Keenan while serving at Elijah's Promise soup kitchen with our students and when I listened to Keenan's words at the close of our liturgy I knew it was no coincidence that our paths crossed that day and that God sent him here to say what most of us need to hear in our daily everyday lives," Deacon Rich said. "It was a gift and a blessing from God to have him here to proclaim that message."

Mrs. Marlene Soncuya, BGA science teacher and one of Keenan's former favorite teachers remarked: "I was delighted to see Keenan. He was a good student and a pleasure to teach. I am so proud of the man he has become and I was very inspired by his speech."

"Keenan has an infectious smile! And makes you want to just smile right back at him. With humor, he was able to reach out to the BGA students and share the importance that prayer



## Alumni News & Announcements!



Kristin and Gary Eimont (parents of one of this year's Ahr Stars, Tyler) welcomed a daughter, Ava Marie, on February 25, 2016. She was 6 lbs. 14 oz. and 18" long.



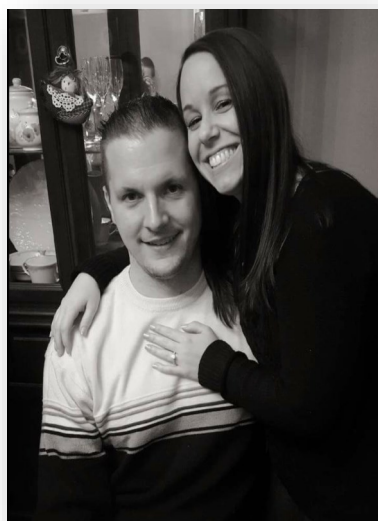
Congratulations to Catherine and James "Downtown" O'Connor '99 on the birth of their first child, Liam Joseph, on April 21, 2016.



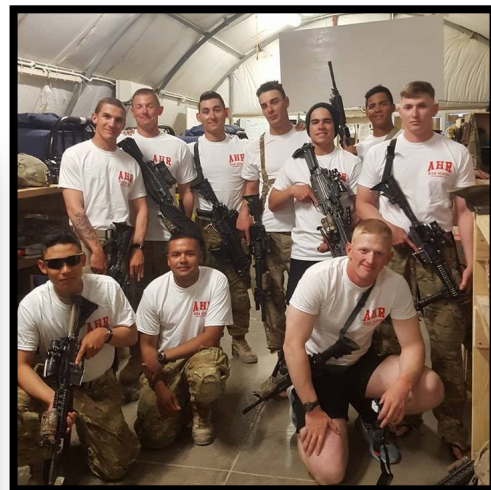
Congratulations to **Brittany (Keams '06 )** and Mike Kerwin. They welcomed a son, Logan Robert, on May 11, 2016. He was 7 lbs. 12.5 oz. and 21" long.



Ava is the first granddaughter for Mrs. Hrabar (school counselor) and niece of **Kim Hrabar '01**.



**Kate Mesavitz '03** is engaged to Matthew Unkel. Kate is a pre school teacher for the Hillside Public School system. Matt is an East Brunswick police officer. A November 2016 wedding is planned.



**Moses Negrón '08** and his squad stationed in Afghanistan send a THANK YOU picture to the BGA Community for their sweet donation care package.

## Recently Deceased Alumni



Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

**Stanley Szymanik, Jr. - Class of 2002**  
**Terry Tomalin - Class of 1978**

Visit the website for a complete list of deceased Alumni, Faculty and Benefactors.



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**Bishop George Ahr High School**

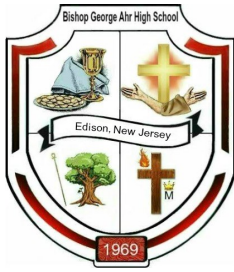


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**Thank you for your support!!!**



# Ahr Students are Tomorrow's Leaders.

## Upcoming BGA Events

- **June 4th:** Graduation
- **September 25:** Family Day at the Races

Going on



Take a picture in your BGA shirt and send it to me for the Summer issue of the newsletter.

## Office of Advancement

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**One Tingley Lane**  
**Edison, NJ 08820**



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