



# An Open Letter to Our Parents

A Second Home

- Isha Vaidya ('18)

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am writing this in our dorm kitchen. We're waiting for a pot of soup to boil. Siena is sitting on the ground strumming her uke; Gabby is singing and playing guitar next to me. I'm listening and looking out the window up at the last beams of light on the hillside. What a gift it is to have found a second home.

Four years ago things were so different. Then, Thomas Aquinas College was anything but home. Mom, you were driving us up Ojai Road to a school we knew nothing about, and we were all against you. I remember looking it up when we were pulling into the parking lot, "No textbooks? Dress code? *Catholic?*" These words were foreign and frightening for all of us. Our secular, California public education had never presented us with anything like TAC; but, at the same time, it had left each of us with a deep hunger for more — for something substantial, for something true.

Now, years later, we've discussed that moment with one another time and again. Each one of us was struck. We got out of the car and gazed up at Mary from her place atop the Chapel, surveying the whole campus. It could have been the summer heat that made us swoon, or maybe it was something else. We had no idea of the significance of this, our first meeting.

Needless to say, the drive home was markedly different. We — and you, I think — were in love.

Dad, you might not have been there with us, but you were as much in love with the school as we were after our tour. You carried the news of it to everyone you knew. Even though peers and high school counselors balked at our choice of a tiny, private, non-specialized college, you never once made us feel doubtful of our choices.

We were all struck by how wholeheartedly — and quickly — you embraced the school we were all starting to love ourselves.

As we've progressed through the program, that love has only increased. Siena and I are starting — with much excitement and many late-night conversations — to think of thesis topics for our upcoming Senior Year. Gabby has made it through Kepler and Ptolemy and is reading and re-reading everything with her usual voracity. I have found much consolation in reading St. Thomas Aquinas this year. Surprisingly I read it in *Latin* — I know, who would have thought? His insights on God have piqued my imagination and understanding and deepened my love.

These past few years I've seen profound changes in my life. I've found deeper peace, so much gratitude that I don't know what to do with it, and possibly the greatest fruit of this education: a delight in wisdom, although I make no claim to possess it.

We're so grateful to share our lives with you with every weekly phone call and the occasional surprise visit home. What a joy it is to share both the parts of us you've known and nurtured for 20 years, and those parts we're only now beginning to know ourselves. You've been there equally for the stress-laden phone conversations at 12:00 a.m. as for those laced with excitement — and possibly lots of philosophical jargon as well. And most impressive of all, you've enjoyed every minute.

You two don't just support us, but you take joy with us in all we experience here.



Siena ('19), Gabby ('18),  
 Isha ('18)

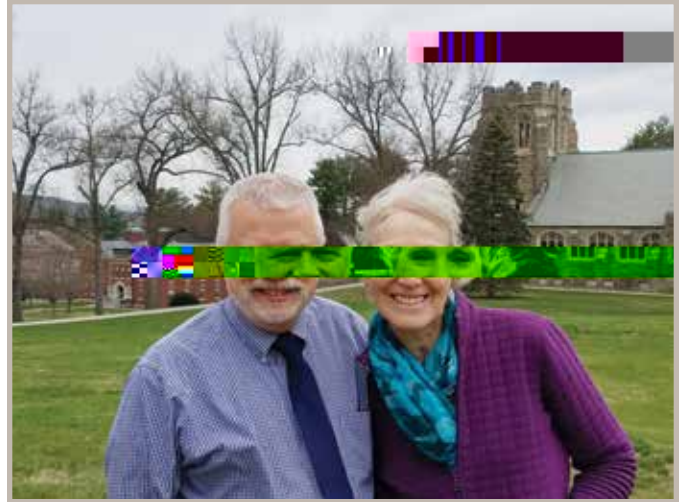
With love and gratitude,

# “God is Doing a Really Great Thing Here”

Parents Joanne & David Dowdy Celebrate 30-Year Reunion at the College  
Parents Need to Read Carefully

On May 2 the National Christian Foundation (NCF) donated to Thomas Aquinas College the gift of a campus in Northfield, Massachusetts. It's a property that Joanne and David Dowdy, parents of Will ('05), know well. For 35 years Mr. Dowdy has taught at the Northfield Mount Hermon School, which, from 1971 to 2005, operated on two century-old campuses, one of them the Northfield site. Indeed, it was from Mr. Dowdy that College officials first learned of the campus' availability.

In the following interview these TAC parents share their thoughts about the future of Thomas Aquinas College in New England and the role they have played in helping it to come about.



Q: How did you get involved with Thomas Aquinas College?  
A: We came on the faculty here at Northfield Mount Hermon School in the summer of 1982, and for our first two years lived on the Northfield campus that now belongs to Thomas Aquinas College. I had my first class in Stone Hall there. I have been an English teacher here for 35 years, and I'm also the faculty advisor for Cath

• : We went out for Will's graduation in 2005,

# Campus Life

## Class of 2018

## Rejuvenate

At the midpoint of the spring semester, members of the Class of 2018 took to the Ventura beach for an event they dubbed "Rejuvenate." Organizers define the term, originally coined by the Class of 2014, as "a renewal of spirits that are wearied due to two weekly seminars and an overload of Newton" and "a time to relax and reminisce with one's classmates of the last 2 1/2 years."



## Walk for Life

After the close of classes on Friday, January 20, some 260 Thomas Aquinas College students departed for San Francisco and the Walk for Life West Coast. At the request of the Walk's organizers, they once again took on volunteer positions, directing traffic and crowds, as they helped lead the way through the streets of San Francisco. Clad in their grey TAC sweatshirts, all prayed, sang, and peacefully called for an end to abortion alongside more than 50,000 fellow walkers.





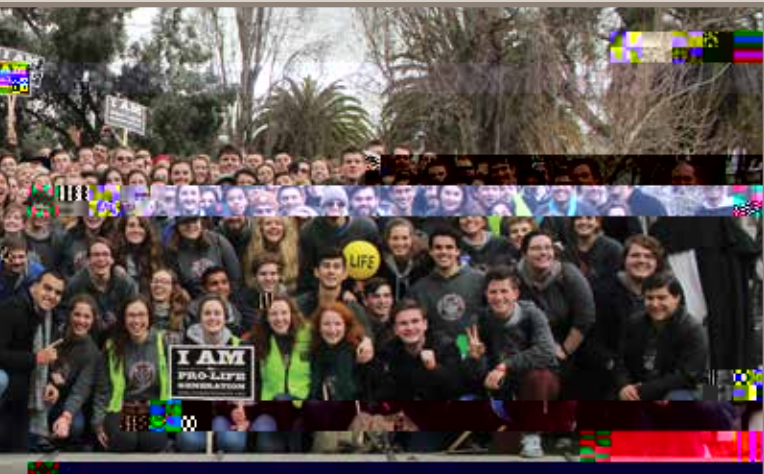


## Much Ado About Nothing



On Saturday, March 4, the St. Genesius Players treated Thomas Aquinas College students, faculty, and families to a production of William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Directors of the production were Zoe Appleby ('18) and Benjamin Trull ('19); lead performers were Jack Murphy ('19) as Benedick, Caroline Guinee ('19) as Beatrice, Andreas Waldstein ('19) as Claudio, and Rosalie Simoneau ('17) as Hero.

## Cambridge University Quad Run



Inspired by a classic scene from *Chariots of Fire* — in which Harold Abrahams successfully completes Cambridge University's Trinity Great Court Run before the King's Gate Clock strikes 12 — the students of Thomas Aquinas College staged their own, now-annual quad run in early April. The top runner was freshman Isaiah Briain, who set a course record with a time of 38.56 seconds, followed by sophomore Michael Johnson (39.40) and junior Kevin Eubanks (40.31).

# Tested & True

At the Perfecta One Ad Co. Case Study Workshop

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# “Little Philanthropy”

American Philosophical Association's Natural Science Lab.

“One of the things that distinguishes our academic program from many of the other orthodox Catholic colleges is that every student here studies math and natural science, for all four years, in great detail,” says Dr. John J. Goyette, a tutor and Thomas Aquinas College’s next dean.

“It is very important in order to think critically about some of the presuppositions that the modern world tends to adopt — such as the widespread belief that faith and science, or faith and reason, are incompatible,” he remarks. “To make those judgments in an informed way, you need to be able to think through what modern science actually has to show about the world. And there’s no better way to do that than in the lab, replicating some of the experiments that the original scientists performed, or at least experiments that are close to what the original scientific papers are describing.”

For this reason the College’s curriculum

# Parents' Corner

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As parents of young adults about to enter college, we often think we know what is best for our children. In our family, we definitely thought we knew what was best for our eldest son, Brandon. He would attend a well-known college, pursue a degree in engineering or business, and then move on to get his master's degree. As parents, we had it all planned — except this was not Brandon's plan.

Late in his junior year, as Brandon was walking across his high school campus, he noticed a fellow student in a Thomas Aquinas College sweatshirt, and the two struck up a conversation. The student described the College and its curriculum, and immediately Brandon was intrigued. He soon began a mission to learn as much as possible about the College. He pored over the website, read the college-guide reviews, and began to imagine himself attending this school that was so very different from what we had had in mind.

We initially pushed back: What would be his career path if he earned a liberal arts degree? What would he be giving up if he did not attend a "big name" school?

As summer approached we agreed that a campus visit was necessary. Much to our chagrin, as soon as he set foot upon the campus, he loved Thomas Aquinas College even more. You might even say he became *obsessed* with it. For the next several months, TAC was all that he would talk about.

Trying to be good, open-minded parents, we established some ground rules before a decision could be made. First, Brandon needed to sit in on some classes to *really* understand what the Discussion Method of teaching encompassed. Second, he needed to research the potential careers that would be open to him post-TAC.

Brandon made an appointment to come back to the campus in October, when school was in session, so as to observe a few classes — and his desire to attend the College only got stronger. Meanwhile, we also came to learn more about the College, and what we learned did much to relieve our anxieties.

When we mentioned TAC to friends, we were surprised and impressed with their knowledge and support for the College. We soon discovered the outstanding advantages of a liberal education — strong analytical and communication skills, plus the ability to look at ideas from different positions — and we were impressed by Thomas Aquinas College's unwavering commitment to our Catholic faith.

It soon became obvious that our son knew best!

Over the past four years Brandon has grown. He has become



a deeper thinker, interested in learning and understanding different perspectives, and always wondering about the world around him. When he was in high school, he was often single-minded in thought and often not very flexible with regards to differing viewpoints. The College has encouraged within him a broader search for knowledge, truth, and understanding.

His search has led Brandon to Pepperdine University, where, starting next fall, he will work to earn a master's degree in public policy. With the great education and faith-filled community provided by Thomas Aquinas College, our son now understands his mission in life: to go out into the world and make it a better place, and to always do God's work, no matter where and how He calls you.

Watching Brandon's growth has even changed the way we choose employees for our consulting firm. Whereas we used to hire only candidates with engineering or financial degrees, we have recently begun to hire young men and women with a liberal arts background. We have come to see that liberally educated workers — who can ask questions, think critically, discuss matters intelligently, and write effectively — make for some of the best employees.

We are very proud of our son's decision to attend Thomas Aquinas College, and we are grateful to all the faculty, staff, and benefactors that have made this college such a great institution.