

Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

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Fall 2021

Dover Retreat Welcomes Returning and Incoming Scholars



Scholars are all smiles at their first event back together for the new school year

By Garrett McCloskey '25

Aaaand we're back. The Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program (GPSP) kicked off the 2021–2022 academic year at the Dover Retreat during the weekend of August 28–29. One year removed from the COVID-19-induced virtual retreat setting, the GPSP returned to the Connors Family Retreat and Conference Center for the Dover Retreat. On the 80-acre estate owned and operated by Boston College, Scholars re-connected after a summer apart.

Junior Caroline Bald said, "I loved being able to be back in person and meet the new class face to face. I feel like everyone was able to develop stronger connections and further past ones."

One hour after arrival, Scholars shared their first of five meals together. Later, they introduced themselves and then split into small groups. In these two small group sessions led by seniors, Scholars of all classes shared stories about their experiences at BC and in the GPSP. Upperclassmen gave ad-

vice to the underclassmen, and underclassmen pestered upperclassmen with questions about everything from internships to Boston public transit system navigation.

Following those sessions, each individual class gathered for a breakout session. Seniors discussed their post-graduate planning, juniors talked about internship planning, sophomores workshoped their Social Justice Project, and freshmen met with Professor Bailey to discuss the expectations and GPSP opportunities in the first-year experience.

"Having the retreat in-person strengthened the dynamic between each class, especially since we did not have any of these types of events last year," said sophomore Kenny Dao. For the sophomore class, this retreat was their first opportunity to meet the entire GPSP community in-person.

"The primary goal of the retreat was to build our community," said Professor Kathy Bailey, Director of the Program. Throughout the weekend, students of all classes could

be seen intermingling with one another.

"I was able to offer insight about choosing classes, adjusting to college social life, and getting better at managing time," said Dao. "That being said, coming off an abnormal year and listening to the upperclassmen, I felt like I was still a freshman because of how much I had missed."

Another closely related goal for Bailey: introducing freshmen to the Program and its upperclassmen. Facilitating activities such as small group sessions, community meals, and a game night, upperclassmen were more than welcoming of the new GPSP class.

"[The retreat] was a great experience," said freshman Sam Peterson. "Having the opportunity to get to know not only my class but the upperclassmen as well was invaluable. It was the perfect launching pad for the year." When Professor Bailey was asked if she believed that her goals were met with this retreat, she responded, "Yes, I do! I absolutely do!"

Junior Scholars complete IPLP on US-Mexico Border

By Izzy Jones '23
&
Julia Kim '23

For the summer of 2021, we traveled to Nogales, Sonora, Mexico to volunteer with Iniciativa Kino para la Frontera or KBI, an organization that focuses on providing various types of humanitarian aid such as food, temporary shelter, legal aid, first aid, mental health services, and other preliminary services for migrants across Mexico and Central America. Their mission is to “promote US/Mexico border and immigration policies that affirm the dignity of the human person and a spirit of bi-national solidarity.” They have adapted in innovative ways during the pandemic, by minimizing contact with their meal service to running a public pressure campaign virtually to encourage humane policy during Biden’s first hundred days in office. KBI collaborates with other nonprofits who specialize in certain areas, like the Florence Project for legal aid and Save the Children for education.

Our duties were centered around direct service to migrants from 8am - 3pm. Typically, we would alternate between two areas, food and clothing. Food service included preparing food for that day, washing dishes, and serving food outside. Working in the roperia entailed noting peoples’ sizes and selecting a shirt, pants, socks, underwear, and a toiletry kit.



Izzy Jones and Julia Kim pictured with other volunteers near the U.S.-Mexico Border

We also taught English classes in the afternoons to the children that were living in the shelter. Once a week, we helped from 4pm-8pm in the afternoon shift. This shift included serving dinner to those living in the shelter and organizing activities for the children to do (puzzles, games, movies, etc). We were able to see about four to five families, that we became familiar with during their stay at Kino, leave the shelter and await their asylum hearings in the United States. We even joined one of the women at the border to say goodbye to her and her son as they crossed into the US.

After having been at Kino for a couple of weeks, I, Julia, had the opportunity to take on responsibilities in the First Aid

room, which is where I ended up focusing my time towards the end of the two months. I generally worked with a physician or former Physician’s Assistant. I scribed for them in Spanish while they spoke with the patient - recording names, country of origin, ages, symptoms, and diagnosis. I would prep medications based on what I heard while the lead physician spoke with the patients about their conditions.

Our experience affirmed this quote from Father Greg Boyle, “We go to the margins not to make change, but to be changed ourselves.” Working in the migration aid space was both incredible and intense and gave us the opportunity to learn about ourselves, migration, and what humanitarian aid actually looks like. Not everyone will have the opportunity to physically go to the border, so it is through conversation and sharing of experiences that we can try to demonstrate how these migration issues extend beyond the physical border wall and impact all of us.

When we arrived, we were surrounded by people from all different backgrounds - some studying engineering, international relations, occupational therapy, biochemistry, and other fields. But despite our differences, we were all connected by the common interest in humanity, kindness, compassion and the desire to change the world for the better, in whatever way that meant to the individual.



Photo courtesy of: Izzy Jones

Jones and Kim provided multiple types of humanitarian aid while on their IPLP experiences

An IPLP Experience from Celén, Ecuador



Photo courtesy of Charlie Viehl

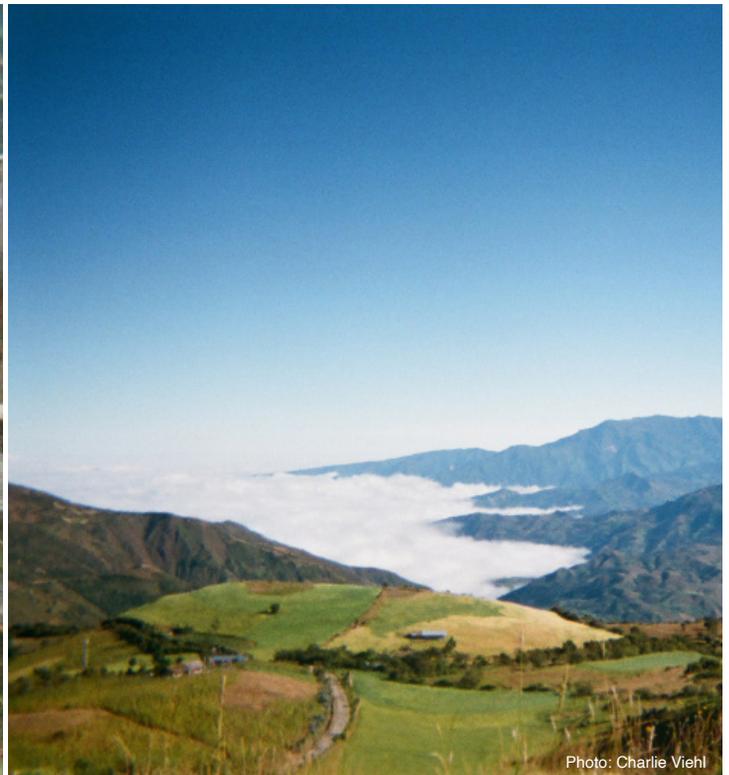


Photo: Charlie Viehl

Junior Scholar Charlie Viehl lived with an Italian host family for six weeks in the mountains of Southern Ecuador

By Charlie Viehl '23

For the summer of 2021, I traveled to Celén, Ecuador, a remote town in the Andes mountains. As I was planning my summer, my research eventually led me to Francesco Ferron and Operazione Mato Grosso (OMG). Francesco and his wife Ana, their two-year old daughter Rachele, and 10-month-old son Mattia hosted me for six weeks in Ecuador.

OMG is a group of Catholic missionaries that began in the 1970s with Italian volunteers donating their money to South America. Now, they have more than ten missions in Ecuador, as well as others in Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia, and Italian volunteers continue to send money.

While the day-to-day operations of each house vary, they are all operated by Italian families or priests who speak Castellano (the dialect of Span-

ish spoken in Ecuador), and their main purpose is to help those living in the surrounding communities. The level of poverty within the Indigenous communities of Southern Ecuador is quite extreme, so the aid they provide often consists of basic human necessities.

The massive grounds of the mission in Celén houses a woodworking cooperative, cows, a greenhouse, corn fields, beehives, chicken coops, a trout farm, and a massive kiln for making bricks and roof tiles. I helped construct homes, split wood, gathered fresh honey, made roof tiles, worked in the greenhouse, and delivered wood and food supplies to the mayorcitas (elders) of Celén.

I also accompanied Francesco on some of his weekly trips. After Sunday Mass, Francesco gave work out to those in the local community who are in financial crisis, and drove those in need of medical assistance

to the nearest hospital, located three hours away in Cuenca. Over my six weeks of volunteering, I was able to experience an aspect of nearly every project that the mission takes on. The mission truly does so much to help the indigenous communities of Southern Ecuador.

While I was abroad, I learned Spanish by full immersion. My host family spoke only Italian and Spanish, so we could only effectively communicate through Spanish. Both Francesco and Ana helped me along the way, and our shared experience of learning Spanish as a second language was incredibly helpful. They understood the nuances of the language as well as common mistakes one might make while learning. Francesco knew just a little bit of English, but was eager to have me help him improve his grammar and vocabulary. As a result, we were both unafraid to correct one another, nor be corrected.

By the time I left Ecuador, I could easily hold my own with Spanish in nearly any situation, including when I worked with the locals without Francesco there to help me get by. Just by living day-to-day in Ecuador, working construction jobs, or helping Ana in the kitchen, I was able to expand my Spanish vocabulary and perfect my grammar. I even picked up a little Italian from Rachele, who adorably repeated words like “andiamo,” “encora,” and “mangiare,” over and over, eventually enough for me to retain them.

Whether jamming together with our guitars, teaching each other card games, or simply playing with their two little kids, I grew close to Francesco, Ana, Rachele, and Mattia. In just six weeks, I was able to form a close bond with my Ecuadorian/Italian family, but I still wish that I had had more time.

Sophomore Social Justice Project: The Faceless America

By Charlie Neill '25

Three panelists sat at the long table at the front of the room in Gasson Hall. Behind them, “Undocumented Immigration in the Boston Area” was displayed on a projector screen. As 7pm approached, the mix of faculty and students in the audience quieted down, and the Class of 2024’s Social Justice Project began.

The presentation was the culmination of months of work by the sophomores. After many of the sophomores worked with immigrants during their summer PULSE experience, they decided to focus on undocumented immigration for the annual project. The plan was to highlight a range of issues, including the effects of COVID-19, socioeconomic disparities, and poor living conditions through the lens of undocumented immigrants’ unique experiences.

Paxton Decker '24, summed up the importance of the project from his own perspective. He said, “I was concerned that since Trump left office, people were forgetting that undocumented immigrants were still facing immense struggles and their problems were not going to be suddenly solved just because the president was no longer an explicit racist. When our class discovered how many undocumented immigrants in the Boston area there potentially were, 1/5th of all immigrants and possibly higher, we settled upon focusing on the undocumented in the Boston area.”

Mikayla Quintana '24 introduced the panelists: Marilynn Johnson, a BC professor whose work focuses on urban social movements in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Denzil Mohammad and Jaisung Sun, who work for the Immigrant Learning Center of Malden, Massachusetts, which works to compile accurate information about immigration in the United States.

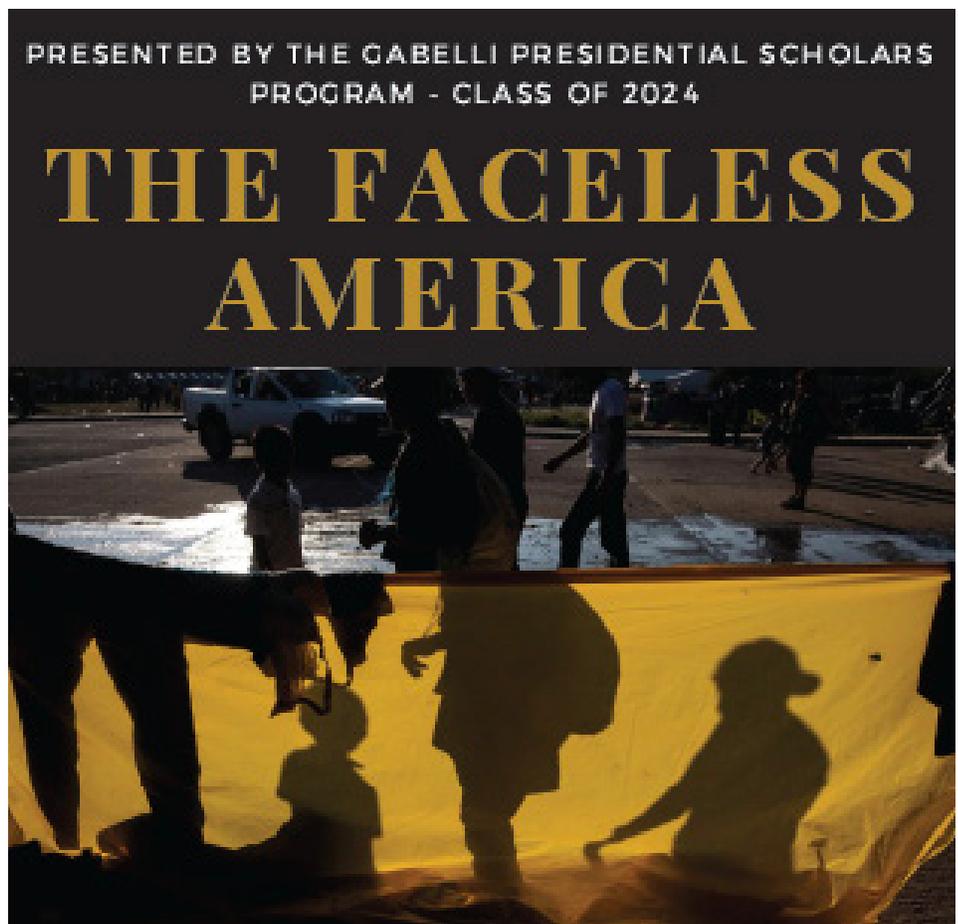
Professor Johnson began the presentation by discussing the perceptions of immigrants throughout the history of the United States, explaining that the US originated as a country of immigrants from all over the world. During the early 20th century and World War II, however, opinions on immigrants changed dramatically. Na-

tive born Americans started rejecting immigration because they feared losing jobs to immigrant workers. While the total number of immigrants entering the US increased during the Cold War, people from capitalist countries like Mexico and Haiti were still denied entrance to the US. Professor Johnson closed out her part of the talk by pointing out that today’s immigration levels have been dropping for years, and that Americans often fear immigrants because they do not fully understand immigrants’ role in American society, especially after 9/11, and the Trump administration’s anti-immigrant stance.

Denzil Mohammad and Jaisung Sun continued the presentation by focusing on the reality of the immigrant population in the Boston area today. They touched on some common misconceptions about immigration in the US, including that immigrants are less likely to work than the general population. In fact, immigrants are actually more likely to work and make up 42.5 percent of agricultural workers and

almost 50 percent of maintenance workers. Contrary to public opinion, the undocumented can and do pay taxes. They explained that undocumented immigrants have an extra incentive to pay taxes because a good tax record can increase their chance of becoming citizens. The IRS even recognizes this, and gives out “Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers” that allow workers to pay taxes without having a Social Security Number. Undocumented immigrants also commit fewer crimes than the general public because they can be deported for even small infractions. In all of these ways, immigrants are crucial to supporting the US economy.

As people started leaving the room, Quintana commented on the work her class had put into making this project a reality. “I am so grateful to see how my entire class came together on this project, and I have especially enjoyed seeing how we all adapted to setbacks and prepared ahead of time for challenges of virtual connecting and the still-overhanging effects of the pandemic.”



Dover Class Photos

Class of 2022



Photo: Justin Knight

Back row (left to right): Jack Manoog, Aroub Yousuf, Lazaro Alvelaez, Daniel Ulanovsky, Angelo Villadolid, Robert Cerise, Jakob Weiss
Front row (left to right): Will Riherd, Brittney Gedeon, Gabriela Prostko, Grace Christenson, Jenna Mu, Kelli Rodrigues, Molly Funk, El-lana Lawrence, Josh Fording. Not pictured: Peter Pinto

Class of 2023



Back row (left to right): Connor Roukey, Aidan O'Neill, Molly Binder, Liam Dietrich, Ben Siegel, Mercedes Hoyos, Hannah Yoon, Lauren Gillet
Front row (left to right): John Bottei, Charlie Viehl, Greg Estime, Rishi Srinivasan, Izzy Jones, Caroline Bald, Julia Kim. Not pictured: Neha Suneja

Class of '22 completes Summer Internships

By Elizabeth Schwab '25

Emerging from a year of COVID-19 restrictions, the GPSP Class of 2022 found various ways to develop their professional careers, interests, and academic passions over the summer of 2021. Working on renewable energy projects in Vermont, interning with Deloitte's SHINE Marketing Program, and helping out the Department of Accountable Care and Clinical Integration at Boston Children's Hospital were just a few of the internships placements for the seniors.

Jakob Weiss, a biology, pre-med, major, worked as a Care Navigation intern at the Community Resource and Wellness Center at East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. He helped run food distributions, including receiving food shipments, bagging items, and distributing them to patients. In addition

to his work at the Health Center, Jakob took an online class with BaseLang to improve his conversations with the many Spanish-speaking patients.

He assisted patients with completing emergency rental assistance applications for state programs in MA such as RAFT, ERMA, and ERAP. Jakob helped produce \$80,000 in approved rental and utility assistance, yet noted the highlight of his experience was not the dollar amount itself. He explained that the "sense of relief and justice" his patients felt made his internship most impactful.

"This experience was an unforgettable exposure to the salience of social determinants of health in shaping health outcomes. As a pre-med bio major, I'm sure that the powerful lessons I learned during this experience will stick with me and shape my

trajectory as I take my next steps toward medical school and beyond," Jakob said.

Jenna Mu '22, a global public health, pre-dental, major, had a virtual research internship at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which is centrally located in Nairobi, Kenya. Jenna worked alongside environmental economists and public health professionals in the Biodiversity and Land Branch of the Ecosystems Division of UNEP. Working to protect the environment through research and policy initiatives, Jenna conducted comprehensive literature searches on the economic benefits of pollution prevention, translated papers from Spanish to English, and conducted data analysis.

As a recent recipient of the Truman Scholarship, Jenna hopes to pursue a career in

dentistry and policymaking. She said, "by working with environmental economists at UNEP, I learned how to quantify the short-term economic costs and long-term economic benefits of sustainable initiatives. In the future, I hope to combine my interests in global health and environmental justice. Specifically, I hope to become a dentist and policymaker that simultaneously tackles dental disparities and environmental degradation."

Even with COVID-19 restrictions, each senior emphasized that they gained a variety of new skills during their internship experiences - ranging from stakeholders analysis to pollution prevention. All of the seniors will undoubtedly continue to develop these skills during their senior year and beyond as they enter their future professional careers.

Mario Gabelli visits The Heights for Family Weekend

By Hector Tyser '25

The Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program was pleased to welcome Mario Gabelli to The Heights for Family Weekend in late September.

The event provided an opportunity for classes to mix in a social setting after over a year of limited personal contact due to the pandemic. It was great to be able to learn more about the families of friends within the Program, and meet the mentors who provide an added layer of guidance and support to the Scholars.

Mr. Gabelli spoke briefly to the group about the value of the students in the context of the success of Boston College as a whole, as well as the importance of giving back to worthy institutions through charity, as he has done not only through the GPSP but other ventures as well. Mr. Gabelli went on to discuss the Jesuit values that made BC particularly unique before welcoming the Class of 2025 to the school.



Photo: Hector Tyser

Mario Gabelli addresses Scholars and their families this September

Class of '24 completes Summer PULSE



Back row (left to right): Noah Kim, Chris Ficeto, Kenneth Heikes, Andrew Hoffman, Fran Hodgens, Paxton Decker
Front row (left to right): Ashley McKnight, Kenneth Dao, Mikayla Quintana, Nicole Masuoka, Chris Conyers, Srina Lacet, Katy Gilmore

By Nicole Masuoka '24

Like most other events last year, the Sophomore PULSE Summer took a virtual turn. Instead of coming together at the end of the school year to live in Greycliff Hall, the Class of 2024 all went back to our separate homes and met through Zoom meetings. Each Thursday afternoon was spent hearing from a variety of professors and guest speakers in our weekly PULSE seminars. These lectures, combined with weekly readings and writing assignments, ensured that we all left our six-week Summer PULSE Program with a greater knowledge of current social injustices and the importance of service.

We took what we learned in class and applied it to our two PULSE service placements. All thirteen of us spent half of our volunteering time working with Missing Them, a digital memorial and obituary archive for those lost to COVID-19 in New York City. Each week we met with Anjali Tsui, a project editor for Missing Them. Aside from our weekly group Zoom meetings to learn about the Missing Them process, most of our work was done asynchronously.

Each of us was assigned six to ten fami-

lies to contact about the passing of their loved ones. Fran Hodgens '24 said, "writing obituaries for people I never knew is not something I ever planned on doing as a college student... I had to develop ways through which I could convey empathy through the phone, or even over Zoom, to people I had never met before."

For the other half of our volunteering time, we worked with various organizations. These organizations included 826Boston, Community Work Services of New England, Educational Development Group, Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, Project Place, YMCA International Learning Center, and the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health.

I worked at the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health with Kenny Dao '24. The part of the Center we collaborated with was called the BRYT Center, located at Brookline High School. The BRYT Center provided Brookline High students with academic resources after missing class due to either physical or mental health reasons. I tutored in subjects from chemistry to statistics to algebra and I helped students complete the assignments necessary to catch back up with their classmates. An in-person service placement made my

PULSE experience a little more normal and provided much needed breaks from Zoom. The ability to be in person with the students fostered a greater bond between us and enabled me to be a more active tutor.

Fran Hodgens taught English to immigrants with an intermediate level of fluency at Educational Development Group in Brookline. He notes that most of his adult students had left behind professional careers to come to the US. Although many had unpredictable work schedules that acted as a barrier to class attendance, "many of them made it work, wearing headphones and Zooming in from their workplace as they sorted luggage, worked in factories, or served customers in coffee shops. Two students spent their entire lunch hour each day on Zoom so that they could improve their English proficiency," said Hodgens.

Days filled with Zoom meetings from our placements and lectures gave us invaluable knowledge and experience. Considering the Class of 2023 did not get a PULSE experience at all, we counted ourselves lucky to have the opportunity to volunteer in our placements, even if it meant doing it virtually.

Welcome GPSP Class of 2025!



Jason Adhinarta
Tangerang, Indonesia

Mairead Gatcliffe
Miami, FL

Garrett McCloskey
Villanova, PA

Julian Castro
Miami, FL

Margaret Hynes
Chicago, IL

Charles Neill
Washington, DC

Ai-Kee Cheung
Boston, MA

Johany Jeune
Malden, MA

Jake Ottiger
Rocky River, OH

Hayoung Cho
Charlotte, NC

Anisha Kundu
Sudbury, MA

Samuel Peterson
Rockville, MD

Maria Fernanda De Nadai
Sao Paulo, Brazil

Hunter Linton
Westminster, MD

Steven Roche
Hanover, MA

Faith Drescher
Hinsdale, IL

Caroline Macneill
New Orleans, LA

Cyrus Rosen
Wilmington, DE

Elizabeth Schwab
Old Brookville, NY

Sancia Sehdev
New Delhi, India

Nicholas Tukuru
Ossining, NY

Hector Tyser
London, UK

Moira Ujda
Atlanta, GA

Alumni Announcements

Anne Halli-Tierney '02 was promoted to Associate Professor of Medicine at The University of Alabama, and was also awarded tenure

Scott Gentile '06 has been appointed Mathematics and Statistics Coordinator of Hunter College's Mathematics Education M.A. and B.A./M.A. Program (for aspiring Middle and High School Math Teachers). And is continuing as the Math & Stat Dept's Gateway Lecturer, Assessment Coordinator, and General Education Math Course Coordinator, as well as President of Hunter College CUNY's Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa

Joe Zabinski '10 married Aleena Paul in New York on October 23rd

Kelly McCartney '11 and her husband Brian Zimcosky welcomed their son Colin Donald Zimcosky on June 30, 2021. Colin weighed 7 lbs 8 oz and was 21 inches long at birth. Everyone is happy, healthy, and busy figuring out the best baby layers for the Chicago winter

Ameet Kallarackal '18 made Forbes Magazine's 2022 30 under 30 list

Arturo Balaguer '21 is headed to Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine fall of 2022



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