



# A Year in Review at the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences



## News and Notes from the Dean

As we reflect on another extraordinary year at the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that we have achieved together. This newsletter captures just a fraction of the meaningful work, transformative programs, and inspiring stories that define our community.

This year, we advanced education and innovation through initiatives like the NYPISHS Symposium Series, bringing important health topics presented by NYP experts to the forefront, the IPE Seed Grant opportunities for faculty scholarship and Anatomage Table training, equipping students with cutting-edge tools and real-world experiences via IPE fellowships.

Community engagement remained a cornerstone, with initiatives such as the Thanksgiving Basket Drive, Walk4Hearing, and Green Chimneys Earth Day visit, fostering empathy and service-mindedness among our students.

Our students and faculty have shone brightly, with achievements ranging from OT students winning 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Hynes Innovation Challenge to raising funds in the Speech & Hearing Carnival to

participating in the Global Nursing Experience in Ireland to receiving honors like the Pi Theta Epsilon induction. Our faculty had publications and presentations across the country and conducted illuminating scholarship on a variety of topics important to health and well-being.

As we continue to expand our reach and impact, we are building a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking community that prepares our graduates to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

Thank you to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners for your unwavering support.

Wishing you all a restful and rejuvenating summer, and I look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead as we continue this incredible journey together.

*Kavita R. Dhanwada*

Kavita R. Dhanwada, Founding Dean

In this newsletter  
you can expect:

**Campus Events  
and Community  
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**Faculty  
Achievements**

**Stories of  
Impact**

**Gaels Giving  
Back**

**New Faculty  
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Updates**

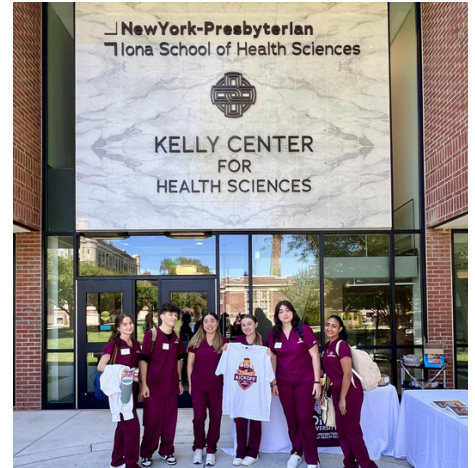
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## Events



### Bronxville Fun Day

In what has become a cherished tradition on the Bronxville campus, the NYPISHS Dean's Office welcomed our students back to campus with a **Bronxville Fun Day** on September 5. All who attended got to enjoy fresh cookies and cold drinks while playing lawn games on the quad.



## IFTC Open House Highlights Commitment to Accessible Mental Health Care

On October 17 and 18, the Iona Family Therapy Center (IFTC), located in the lower level of Sieker Hall on the Bronxville campus, welcomed the community to an Open House, offering a firsthand look at its vital role in supporting mental health.

Visitors toured the Center and learned how graduate students in our Marriage and Family Therapy program - under the supervision of experienced faculty - provide affordable, high-quality therapy for individuals, couples, and families. Services are offered without a waitlist, demonstrating the Center's deep commitment to accessible care, while at the same time preparing the next generation of competent and compassionate therapists.

The Open House also served as a platform for networking and collaboration, sparking new ideas and partnerships. Guests left with a renewed appreciation for the Center's supportive approach and its efforts to make mental health care available to all.

To learn more or schedule an appointment, email [IFTC@iona.edu](mailto:IFTC@iona.edu) or call (914) 633-2418. Most appointments are arranged within 24 hours.



### The IFTC can address various concerns, including:

- **Couples and marital therapy**
  - **Co-parenting support**
  - **Divorce**
  - **Family conflict**
  - **Parenting support**
  - **Relationship counseling**
  - **Academic underachievement**
  - **Anxiety**
  - **Bereavement**
  - **Bullying**
  - **Coping skills**
  - **Depression**
  - **Personal growth and development**
  - **Stress management**
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# NYPISHS Student Health Fair

The NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences proudly hosted two Student Health Fairs this academic year, each highlighting the passion and expertise of our students while drawing strong support from the Iona community.

On October 23, NYPISHS held its first-ever Health Fair on the Bronxville campus and it was a huge success, becoming our most well-attended fair to date! Students, faculty, and community members came out to explore a wide array of health-focused activities and services. Notable highlights included free hearing screenings by Communication Sciences and Disorders graduate students, an engaging educational session led by Occupational Therapy students, and insightful research presentations from our accelerated nursing students. Adding a sweet touch to the day, the Student Occupational Therapy Association hosted a very popular bake sale in support of breast cancer awareness, drawing crowds and raising funds for an important cause.

Building on that momentum, we took a fresh approach this spring by combining our Student Health Fair with the Nursing Department's annual Blood Drive, in partnership with the New York Blood Center. Held on April 24, the joint event kicked off at 11:30 AM and quickly became a hub of activity. Students, faculty, and visitors explored engaging displays, and participated in free health screenings.

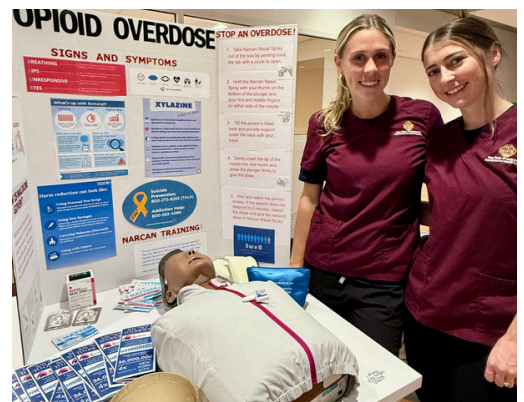
This semester's Health Fair offerings showcased the diverse talents and interests of our students, including:

- Interactive demonstrations of adaptive equipment by OT students, measuring hand strength and wrist flexibility using real-world assistive technology.
- Research poster presentations from nursing students tackling critical issues such as cyberbullying and gun violence in the U.S.
- A Health and Wellness tabling event, addressing mental health needs in college students and the effects of poor nutrition on children.
- Blood pressure screenings conducted by nursing students, encouraging health awareness and proactive care.
- Hearing screenings by CSD students, emphasizing the importance of hearing health.

Running alongside the fair, the Blood Drive in the Sommer Auditorium was also tremendous success. With a target of 40 donors, the event surpassed its goal by collecting blood from 56 donors!

What was evident at both events was the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration and interprofessional education, a cornerstone of a SHS education. Students from various programs worked side-by-side, exchanging knowledge, supporting each other's efforts, and getting to know one another. This shared commitment to health and community service made the events not just impactful, but deeply meaningful.

We're incredibly proud of everyone who contributed to the planning, execution, and success of these events. Thank you to all who participated, volunteered, and attended - your support helps make NYPISHS a place where learning and community come together. Planning is already underway to make next fall's fair even bigger and better!



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## Pre-Finals Recharge: Pilates, Yoga & Sweet Treats

On December 5, the NYPISHS Dean's Office, in collaboration with the Health and Wellness program, hosted a much-needed Pre-Finals Recharge event on the Bronxville campus, offering students, faculty, and staff a welcome opportunity to pause, unwind, and reset ahead of finals week.

The day began at 10 AM in the Kelly Center with freshly baked cookies and steamy hot cocoa. It was the kind of mid-week comfort that only a little bit (maybe a lot!) of sugar and community can provide. By 12:30 PM, the activity shifted to The Commons, where Health and Wellness Graduate Assistant and Occupational Therapy student Yu Ting Lin led an energizing Pilates session. The workout offered a revitalizing mix of strength training and flexibility exercises, designed to help participants reset both mentally and physically. She didn't go easy on the participants, leaving many with the sort of pleasant tinge of sore muscles only a good workout can provide.

Yu Ting's session was so well received that we were thrilled to welcome her back for a second round on April 8, as the campus once again geared up for finals and the end-of-semester push. While turnout was a bit smaller than the December session, it was exciting to see some fresh faces, including undergraduate students from the New Rochelle campus, join in on the movement. The vibes remained just as supportive and uplifting, reminding everyone that wellness isn't just about physical health, but also about fostering a sense of community and balance during our busiest times.

Events like these continue to be a cornerstone of our commitment building community on the Bronxville campus.



*Self-care*  
**IS EMPOWERMENT**

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# Symposium on Health and Well-Being Lecture Series

This year, the NYPISHS Dean's Office proudly launched its inaugural Symposium on Health and Well-Being Lecture Series, bringing together thought leaders to explore the groundbreaking topics shaping the future of healthcare.

The series debuted on Tuesday, October 1, with a timely lecture, *AI in Healthcare: Shaping the Future of Medicine*, given by **Dr. Ashley N. Beecy** at the Sommer Center on the Bronxville campus. As the Medical Director of Artificial Intelligence at NewYork-Presbyterian, Dr. Beecy provided the audience with insights of how AI is transforming patient care - from predictive analytics to personalized treatment plans - while also addressing the ethical considerations and long-term implications of this rapidly evolving technology. Following her presentation, she was joined on stage by **Lisa Linsangan**, NYP's Chief Nursing Informatics Officer, for further discussion on the AI's usage. The evening wrapped with a lively Q&A, where attendees further explored the real-world impact of AI in healthcare.



On December 5, the spotlight turned to the important conversation of social determinants of health with our second lecture, *Health Justice: Building an Equitable Future in Healthcare for All*, featuring **Dr. Julia Iyasere**, Senior Vice President of Health Justice at NYP and Executive Director of the Dalio Center for Health Justice. Dr. Iyasere delivered a powerful and deeply moving talk on health equity, highlighting the systemic barriers to care and offered a roadmap for future practitioners to advocate for marginalized populations. She shared anecdotes from her own journey as a physician, offering a real-world perspective on the urgent need for equitable healthcare. Dr. Dhanwada later joined her onstage for a candid conversation on the intersection of health equity and healthcare access - core values that align with the NYPISHS mission.



Our February 6th lecture, featuring a panel of healthcare leaders from NewYork-Presbyterian, set a new attendance record for the Symposium! Students, faculty, staff, community members, and friends from NYP filled the Sommer Center for *Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: A Practitioner's Perspective from NewYork-Presbyterian*.

The distinguished panel brought together experts across multiple disciplines who demonstrated how their collaborative approach enhances patient care. Panelists included:

- **Christa Kleinschmidt, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FNP-BC** - VP and Chief Nursing Officer
- Iona alumna **Ava Perez, '23BSN, RN**
- **Marianne Grandusky, MPAS, PA-C** - Chief Physician Assistant, Hematology/Oncology
- **Dr. Calvin Hwang, MD, MPH** - Associate Chief Medical Officer
- **Donna Tinling-Solages, MPA, RN, CCM** - Director of Care Coordination
- **Brittany Shinn, MS, OTR/L, CSRS** - Assistant Head of Occupational Therapy
- **Ellen A. Goldberg, MA, CCC-SLP** - Manager of Speech Language Pathology



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Through an engaging case study presentation, these professionals illustrated how their individual expertise contributes to a comprehensive care team. The presentation sparked tremendous interest, leading to an extended Q&A session where students gained valuable insights into real-world interprofessional practice. This event exemplified our commitment to preparing students for collaborative healthcare environments where integrated, patient-centered approaches lead to optimal outcomes.



Our symposium series had its final presentation for 2024-2025 on Tuesday, April 1 with *The Future of Healthcare: Workforce Trends and Industry Needs* – an exploration of healthcare career opportunities featuring top executives from NewYork-Presbyterian.

The event opened with a keynote address by **Shaun Smith, JD**, Group Senior Vice President and Chief People & Culture Officer at NewYork-Presbyterian. Drawing from his personal journey from corporate America to healthcare leadership, Mr. Smith shared how he found his professional purpose in a mission-driven environment—highlighting the transformative power of aligning a career with personal values.



Following the keynote, a distinguished panel of NewYork-Presbyterian leaders offered dynamic insights into career growth and adaptability:

- **Jessica O'Brien Gufarotti, MS, RN, AGCNS-BC** – Director of Administration
- **Matthew Baird, MA, MPA** – Senior Director of Service Lines
- **Tara Ritchie, MBA** – Vice President of Operations and Planning

Each speaker brought their unique perspective on navigating the complexities of healthcare leadership. Through personal reflections of their own paths, they stressed the value of embracing unexpected opportunities and stepping outside of one's comfort zone.



An exclusive networking reception closed out the evening, when students had the rare opportunity to connect directly with NewYork-Presbyterian recruiters, an advantage not typically available to early-career professionals. This meaningful engagement allowed students to showcase their potential and gain valuable visibility within one of the nation's top healthcare systems.

Our ongoing partnership with NewYork-Presbyterian continues to create opportunities for students and strengthen our school community. We look forward to expanding this impactful collaboration in next year's symposium series.



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# Community Engagement

## NYP Weill-Cornell MC Trauma Program S.T.E.M. Summer Internship

Last summer, the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences partnered with NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center to launch a six-week, part-time STEM Summer Internship for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors from under-resourced schools in New York City.

Offered through Iona University as a summer bridge course, participants earned three college credits while gaining early exposure to health sciences and potential career pathways. The program was led by Dr. Robert Curran, Injury Prevention and Community Outreach Coordinator at NYP/WCMC.

The curriculum introduced students to the multifaceted challenges of violence and injury prevention and treatment, empowering them to return to their communities with critical, practical knowledge. Through hands-on training in simulation labs, students practiced essential medical skills such as suturing, cardiac arrest response, and laparoscopic procedures. They also received Stop the Bleed certification, a vital emergency response credential.

On July 24, students visited the Bronxville campus to explore the Kelly Simulation Center alongside Nursing faculty, delve into rehabilitation with Occupational Therapy Director Dr. Laurie Olson, and study human anatomy with Dr. Christina Nevers, Health and Wellness Program Coordinator.

This innovative partnership not only gives students valuable insights into healthcare careers but also jumpstarts their college education and fosters meaningful community impact.

## Walk4Hearing

On September 15, the Iona University Speech and Hearing Club, alongside the ASL Club, participated in the NYC Walk4Hearing. As a result of their fundraising efforts, they raised \$900 for those impacted by hearing loss!



## LIRIC Open House: A Walk Through the Decades

On October 17, second-year Occupational Therapy students in our Promoting the Occupational Performance and Participation of the Older Adult course hosted a vibrant Open House for members of LIRIC (Learning in Retirement at Iona College). While LIRIC members frequently volunteer with OT students throughout the year, this special event was a chance to welcome new faces and reconnect with familiar ones.

Themed “Rewind the Decades,” the day featured interactive stations representing different eras, where LIRIC members could reminisce and engage with nostalgic visuals, music, and props. From the swinging ‘60s to the tech-filled 2000s, each station sparked lively conversations and joyful memories, making for a beautiful trip down memory lane.

For the OT students, the event was more than just a celebration, it was a meaningful learning experience. Watching participants share personal stories and reflect on memories offered firsthand insight into how reminiscing can stimulate cognitive engagement and enhance emotional well-being. The LIRIC Open House was a beautiful blend of reflection, connection, and learning, leaving both students and participants enriched by the shared experience.

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## Thanksgiving Basket Drive: Coming Together to Give Back

Last November, Iona University's Office of Mission and Ministry hosted its annual Thanksgiving Basket Drive.

With an overwhelming need in the community, departments across the Bronxville campus came together in a powerful show of generosity and compassion.

Thanks to the incredible support of students, faculty, and staff, the drive provided much-needed Thanksgiving meals to local families, helping to brighten the holiday season for many.

If you're interested in participating in next year's drive or want to learn more about supporting Mission and Ministry's outreach efforts, we encourage you to get in touch and discover more ways to contribute!



## Graduate Open House: Successful recruitment efforts lead to increased enrollments

NYPISHS Director of Graduate Admissions, Daniel Gallagher, led efforts for two Graduate Open Houses this year; one in the fall semester on November 25 and one this spring on April 10. The November event took advantage of the Thanksgiving break when many college students return home and drew 48 prospective students, making it a key opportunity for recruiting not only for fall programs but also for those accepting students in the spring semester. As a result, seven new MS Nursing students and 5 new Mental Health Counseling students enrolled in NYPISHS programs for spring 2025.

The Spring Open House welcomed **Jyothi Rai**, Senior Vice-President, Chief Talent Officer at NewYork-Presbyterian, who spoke about the current healthcare landscape and trends in the workforce, important topics for anyone considering graduate school. Prospective students were able to hear from alumni and engage in breakout sessions specific to their program of interest. During these interactive sessions, attendees connected with faculty and current students, gaining valuable insights to aid them in their decision.

The enthusiasm was palpable as attendees were highly engaged, and every session ran over the scheduled time thanks to the lively conversations and genuine excitement from both students and faculty. Both events were a resounding success, as they allowed us to showcase what makes Iona, and SHS so special - the people.

## Spiritual Growth on the Bronxville Campus



The Bronxville campus continues to expand its offerings, enriching both academic and spiritual life. The Office of Mission and Ministry introduced two special Lenten celebrations at the Sommer Center. On Wednesday, March 5, the campus hosted an Ash Wednesday service at 3:00 PM, followed by a Rosary Prayer at 3:30 PM.

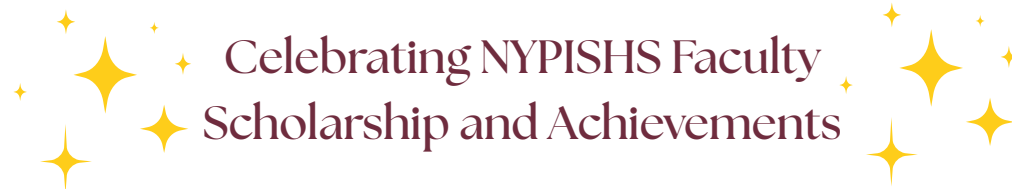
Then, on Friday, March 7, the community gathered for a Rosary Sonata Lenten Concert at 6:30 PM, featuring performances by Iona faculty, students, and Fr. Vaughan.

Both events were met with an enthusiastic turnout, and due to their success, the Office of Mission and Ministry plans to bring similar opportunities to Bronxville next year.

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# Welcome to New Faculty and Staff in 2024-25!

- **Dr. Angela Chlebowski** – Senior Clinical Lecturer – Nursing
- **Dr. Liang-Ying Chou** – Clinical Lecturer – Marriage and Family Therapy
- **Dr. Megan Conti** – Clinical Lecturer – Social Work
- **Dr. Monica Diamond-Caravella** – Visiting Professor – Nursing
- **Dr. Christine Dixie Douville** – Senior Clinical Lecturer – Nursing
- **Julia Frampton** – Program Coordinator – Occupational Therapy
- **Dr. Paula James** – Senior Clinical Lecturer – Nursing
- **Kylie Johnston** – Project Coordinator – Interprofessional Education
- **Regan Nikol** – Administrative Assistant – Social Work & Marriage and Family Therapy
- **Dr. Tremaine Sayles** – Clinical Lecturer - Mental Health Counseling
- **Dr. Heather Theysohn** – Assistant Professor – Occupational Therapy
- **Antonio Rodriguez** - Laboratory Technician, H&W



## Celebrating NYPISHS Faculty Scholarship and Achievements

The NYPISHS community proudly celebrates the research contributions, personal, and professional achievements of our faculty members. Please join us in congratulating them!

### Dr. Dixie Douville EdD, MSN, RN, Senior Clinical Lecturer of Nursing

Served as an expert panelist for **“What I Wish I Knew”** session at the Northeastern University Doctoral Residency in July 2024.

In August 2024, she presented **“Integrating Mindfulness Meditation in Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum”** at the *Nursing P.I.E.R. Conference*, sponsored by Nuvance Health and Sacred Heart University.

Dr. Douville was also recognized in September 2024 as a Transformative Educator by the Northeastern University Graduate School, receiving the esteemed **Dissertation Award** for **“Just because I failed, does not mean I am a failure: An action research approach to exploring and supporting the needs of the repeating nursing student,”** reflections on fostering resilience and success in nursing students.

### Dr. Brittany Lynch, Assistant Professor Social Work, MSSW Program Director

**“Reflecting on How Voting Can Elevate Marginalized Voices: Social Workers' Role in the 2024 Election,”** was featured in the Fall/Winter 2024 edition of the *New York City National Association of Social Workers' Currents* newsletter. It explores the vital role social workers play in promoting civic engagement and empowering marginalized communities during critical elections.

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### Bridget Messina MSN, RN-C, Nursing Simulation Lab Manager

Presented a webinar (May, 2024) for the *Society of Pediatric Nurses* on **“Revolutionizing Pediatric Nursing Education with Virtual Reality,”** highlighting the transformative benefits of virtual reality in education.

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Dr. Christopher John, '02, Adjunct  
Instructor in Social Work



In September 2024, a newly minted Dr. Christopher John earned his **Doctor of Social Work (DSW)** from Capella University. His doctoral project was entitled, "**Social Work & Co-Occurring Disorders: Improving Integrated Care through Action Research.**" Dr. John is to be congratulated even more so as his degree was completed while working full-time at the Westchester County Department of Community Health AND teaching 4 sections of Introduction to Social Work at Iona each year!

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Dr. Christy Solorio, PhD, MS, RN, CNE,  
CPN, Assistant Professor of Nursing  
and Nursing Students

We're thrilled to share that a poster submitted by three nursing students and Dr. Christy Solorio has been accepted for presentation at the upcoming AACN *Access, Connection, Engagement Symposium* in Indianapolis, IN, this June. Titled, "**Collaborative Inquiry: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Undergraduate Nursing Student-Faculty Research Partnerships,**" the poster highlights the valuable outcomes of student-faculty collaborations in nursing research.

The students involved in this project are **Ava Kotliar**, **Ria Malik**, and **Aidan Paul**. Each of these senior students worked alongside Dr. Solorio on their Honors thesis research projects, all of which will be showcased during Scholar's Day in April.

In addition to the poster presentation, Ava Kotliar and Dr. Solorio co-authored a full-length article on the same topic, which has been *preliminarily accepted* for publication in the *National Student Nurses Association Journal*.

Congratulations to Dr. Solorio and all of the students for their hard work and dedication - looking forward to seeing the continued success of these projects!

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Dr. Adele Stanley, PhD, MSN, RN,  
FNP-BC, Assistant Professor of Nursing



In May 2024, Dr. Stanley published "**Electronic Cigarettes Use and Anxiety Among College Students: 'Trapped in that Cycle'**" in the *Journal of Addictions Nursing*, shedding light on the growing link between e-cigarette use and anxiety among college students.

Dr. Stanley was also honored with the Westchester County 2024 **Women of Distinction Award**, recognizing her significant contributions to the community.

In April, she presented a poster at the ATI Summit in Orlando, Florida, titled "**Cultivating Resilience: Integrating Self-Care, Meditation, and Creative Practices in Teaching Strategies for Undergraduate Nurses.**" This collaborative project with **Professor Binny Singh** explores innovative ways to support nursing students' well-being and resilience.

These accomplishments reflect Dr. Stanley's ongoing commitment to advancing education and promoting student well-being in nursing.

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# Faculty Scholars Showcase: Celebrating our Community's Scholarship



The NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences launched our Faculty Scholars Showcase to spotlight the important research taking place in our community. This initiative aims not only to highlight innovative scholarship but also foster collaboration and engagement within our School.

The inaugural event on December 3 featured Dr. Jennifer Gerometta, who presented her sabbatical research on using a story-based curriculum to enhance phonological awareness in pre-K to 2nd graders with speech and language disorders. The second showcase, held on April 1, spotlighted Dr. Dixie Douville's dissertation on faculty strategies for supporting struggling students.

This initiative offers an opportunity for faculty, students, and staff to connect with the transformative scholarship shaping our academic environment. We look forward to additional participation from faculty and staff in future showcases, where we celebrate research that drives learning and growth across our School.

## NYPISHS Launches New Seed Grant to Advance Interprofessional Education (IPE)

The NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences announced the launch of a new Seed Grant from the Dean's Office aimed at advancing Interprofessional Education, a cornerstone of our mission to prepare healthcare professionals for collaborative, patient-centered care in today's complex healthcare environment.

IPE fosters teamwork, communication, and mutual respect across disciplines, ensuring better care for patients and communities. The NYPISHS IPE Seed Grant is designed to support innovative projects that seamlessly integrate IPE into curricula and practice, furthering our commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration. This initiative reflects our unwavering commitment to advancing interprofessional education and improving healthcare delivery for the communities we serve.

To qualify, the proposals had to include at least two faculty collaborators from different disciplines, emphasizing the value of interdisciplinary partnerships and shared decision-making. Active student participation is a key requirement, offering hands-on learning opportunities that prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals for real-world challenges. Grant recipients receive up to \$4,000 to support project supplies, along with additional funding for conference travel to present their outcomes—amplifying IPE's impact on education and practice. Up to two grants are awarded, providing a platform to drive innovation, collaboration, and transformative education.

The first two awards were given to the group of **Dr. Michelle Veyvoda**, **Dr. Michael Higgins** and **Lauren Dwyer** from Communications Sciences and Disorders for their project entitled *Developing Interprofessional Skills Among Future Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists: Undergraduate Aural Rehabilitation Training*. The second group awardee was made up of **Dr. Laurie Olson**, Professor and Program Director of OT, and **Dr. Nancy Vidal-Finnerty**, Associate Professor, CSD with a project entitled *Collaborative Dysphagia Care: An Interprofessional Educational Initiative for OT and SLP Students*. Both groups are working diligently on their projects and will present their findings with their students in the fall semester.



## Celebrations of Life – Congratulations!!

**Dr. Heather Theysohn, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy**, on her marriage this fall! Wishing you and your new husband nothing but happiness and joy.

**Ms. Kylie Johnston, IPE Project Coordinator**, on her marriage this fall! A larger celebration will be upcoming for family and friends next year.



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## Kudos - NYPISHS Students!

### Health and Wellness Student Gains Real-World Experience at Fidelis Care Internship

During the summer of 2024, Health and Wellness student **Alexandria Bitetti** completed an internship at Fidelis Care New York in Spring Valley. As a marketing intern for the Healthcare Marketing track, Alexandria gained hands-on experience processing insurance applications, enhancing her customer service skills through direct client interactions, and collaborating with representatives to streamline operations. She also worked alongside the community relations team, helping to plan local outreach events, and participated in provider meetings with doctors from various specialties.

A standout moment of her internship was attending a three-day conference in St. Louis, MO, home to Fidelis Care's parent company, Centene. There, Alexandria heard from Centene's CEO, COOs, and VPs, gaining valuable insights into the company's operations and vision for the future. Alexandria was honored to be Fidelis Care's first-ever marketing intern and the only intern that summer to work in-office five days a week. She capped off her experience with a one-on-one meeting with Fidelis Care President Tom Halloran—also an Iona alumnus—who sought her feedback and shared his own career journey.

Reflecting on the experience, Alexandria said, "My internship at Fidelis Care New York was an invaluable opportunity that allowed me to gain hands-on experience in healthcare while contributing to a company committed to community well-being. It was a truly unique experience, and I left with new connections and skills that will benefit me throughout my career." She encourages fellow students to pursue internship opportunities, noting that they provide practical experience, meaningful connections, and valuable skills that will shape their professional paths.

### Speech and Hearing Club Hosts Successful Carnival Fundraiser



On Sunday, April 27th, the Speech and Hearing Club brought the spirit of community and care to life with a vibrant carnival fundraiser held on the Murphy Green Lawn at the New Rochelle Campus. The event aimed to raise \$2,000 to sponsor a family from Iona's Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic, ensuring they receive free clinical services twice a week for a full year.

With the support of over 25 co-sponsoring campus organizations, the carnival had a wide array of games, raffle prizes, a bouncy castle, and classic carnival treats. The event was designed not only to raise funds but also to build awareness of the life-changing impact speech and hearing services have on families.

The turnout was enthusiastic, with clinicians, students, and families all coming together for a fun-filled afternoon despite some not-so-great weather. In the end, the Speech and Hearing club exceeded their fundraising goal and extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended, volunteered, or supported this meaningful and personal cause.



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# Kudos - NYPISHS Students!

## Occupational Therapy Students Win Big at the Hynes Innovation Challenge

We're proud to announce a major achievement for our Occupational Therapy students, who claimed first *and* third place in this year's Hynes Innovation Challenge! These remarkable students are not only thinking creatively, but are designing solutions that make everyday life more accessible for all.

First place went to **MaryBrigid McManus, Eunice Anderson, Colleen Slevin, and Yu Ting Lin** for **SipSation**.

Designed with the neurodivergent community in mind, SipSation is a discreet self-regulation tool cleverly disguised as a water bottle. While many rely on tools like fidget spinners to stay calm and focused, the fear of judgment can be a barrier. SipSation allows users to self-regulate privately, all while also staying hydrated.

Third place was awarded to **Nicole Karmin** and **Grace Massaro** for their user-friendly invention, **Bracelet Buddy**.

Putting on bracelets can be a frustrating task, especially for individuals with limited mobility and dexterity issues. Bracelet Buddy solves this by acting as a helpful extra hand, holding the bracelet in place so the wearer can fasten it independently and with ease.

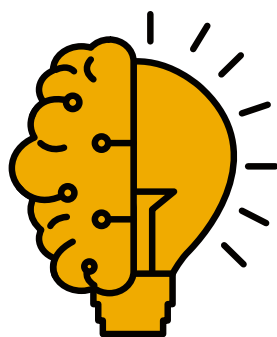
Congratulations to all our student innovators! We're inspired by your commitment to designing tools that empower others and improve quality of life.



**MaryBrigid, Eunice, Yu Ting and Colleen**



**Grace and Nicole**



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# NEWS from Nursing

## Nursing Blessing of the Hands and White Coat Ceremony

Each fall, the Nursing program marks a significant milestone in its students' journey with the Blessing of the Hands and White Coat Ceremony, symbolizing their transition into clinical practice.

This year's event on September 25 was particularly special, as it welcomed the largest cohort of accelerated and traditional students in the program's history, a testament to the its growth and impact.



## Nursing Pinning Ceremony

On December 13, the Nursing program hosted its Pinning Ceremony for the accelerated cohort, marking the pinnacle of their journey from students to professional nurses. Surrounded by family, friends, and faculty, the eleven graduates were celebrated for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance in completing this rigorous program. The afternoon was filled with pride and emotion as each student received their nursing pin, a symbol of their commitment to compassionate care and the beginning of their professional careers.

On May 9, the Spring Pinning ceremony had 21 traditional BS in Nursing students receiving their pins. This is the largest graduating class for the Nursing thus far. The ceremony is a heartfelt tribute to their achievements and the bright future ahead. We are so proud of our graduates and can't wait to see the positive impact they will make in the nursing profession!



## Sigma Theta Tau International Chapter Established at NYPISHS

On December 13, the NYP Iona School of Health Sciences, in partnership with the Alpha Gamma Theta Board, celebrated the chartering of Iona University's newest chapter of Sigma

Theta Tau International, the honor society for nursing excellence. Held at the Sommer Center, the event also featured the inaugural induction of exceptional nursing students and nurse leaders.

STTI recognizes excellence in nursing scholarship, leadership, and service. Membership, by invitation only, is extended to nursing students and community nurse leaders who demonstrate outstanding achievement. Among the inductees were faculty members **Professor Binny Singh** and **Professor Esther Krinsky**, honored for their exceptional contributions to the nursing profession. Congratulations to our student inductees: **Kaleigh Burke, Kathleen Fenlon, Ariana Forohar, Alexis Galaz, Ria Malik, Theresa Mandile, Shawn Matthew, Maya Peluso, and Joseph Silva** on their academic success.



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## Nursing Students Prepare for Professional Practice at NYP with RN Day

On October 7, 32 BS accelerated and traditional senior nursing students along with 2 Nursing faculty participated in a Professional RN Student Workshop at NewYork-Presbyterian Weill Cornell, designed to support their transition into professional practice. The full-day workshop featured six expert-led presentations aimed at bridging the academic-to-clinical practice gap—a challenge many new nurses face when entering the workforce. Dr. Lori Perlstein, VP of Professional Development, highlighted the benefits of NYP's accredited RN residency program, emphasizing how it helps new graduates adjust successfully.

Students also gained valuable insights into legal issues in nursing practice from John Campano, NYP's VP, Senior Counsel, and RN and attorney Victoria Graef, who shared real-world case studies and best practices for handling legal challenges. The talent acquisition team offered practical tips on job searching, resume writing, and interviewing, preparing students for their first RN positions. Additionally, three patient service managers/directors shared advice on meeting professional expectations, excelling during interviews, and thriving in their first nursing roles.

To bring the experience full circle, a clinical nurse with two years of experience shared candid advice on managing reality shock and adjusting to the demands of professional practice. The workshop was a tremendous success, thanks to the expertise of NYP's speakers and the partnership of Dr. Susan Chin, Program Director, Academic Partners. We look forward to expanding future workshops, ensuring our nursing students are well-prepared for the realities of today's healthcare environment.



## Turning Grief into Purpose: One Student's Inspiring Nursing Journey

Nursing senior Molly Guillaume was featured in an ABC News story this spring, highlighting her remarkable perseverance in the face of personal tragedy on her journey to earning a nursing degree.

At just 14, Molly lost her father to complications from multiple strokes and dementia. Four years later, she faced another devastating loss when her mother, a dedicated nurse, passed away from COVID-19.

While many might have felt defeated, Molly turned her grief into motivation, honoring her mother's legacy by following in her professional footsteps. Now, with graduation just days away, Molly is poised to fulfill her dream of becoming a nurse.

Read her story here: <https://abc7ny.com/post/woman-became-orphan-teenager-shares-inspiring-story-graduates-nurse/16052256/>



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# Iona University Nursing Program Launches Global Experience in Ireland

In May 2024, Iona University proudly launched its global campus in County Mayo, Ireland, marking an exciting new chapter for international learning. As part of the campus's inaugural opening, the BS Nursing program was among the first to offer a course abroad, providing students with a transformative educational experience immersed in Ireland's rich culture and healthcare system.

Students completed a 3-credit course over two weeks, with classes held at the Westport House Estate, one of Ireland's last privately-owned historic homes. Nestled on 400 acres of breathtaking countryside with panoramic views of Croagh Patrick, the estate provided an idyllic and serene learning environment. Taking full advantage of the majestic grounds and unusually warm, sunny weather, students occasionally held classes outdoors, making for an unforgettable educational experience. A total of 13 BS nursing students—10 post-baccalaureate accelerated and 3 traditional undergraduate rising seniors—enrolled in NUR 302/3020: Healthcare Perspectives, a required course for the major. Led by Dr. Shery Watson, Director of Nursing, the course explored historical and contemporary trends in nursing through a global lens, broadening students' understanding of the profession's evolving landscape.

One of the highlights of the program was a clinical immersion at Mayo University Hospital in Castlebar, Ireland. Students spent two days shadowing Irish nurse preceptors, gaining firsthand insights into the Irish healthcare system and nursing practices. This unique experience allowed students to compare and contrast Irish and U.S. patient care models, fostering mutual learning and cross-cultural exchange. Despite differences in systems, both groups shared a universal dedication to delivering high-quality, safe patient care, highlighting the common values that unite nurses across borders.

Building on the program's remarkable success, the Nursing program is offering this course and clinical opportunity again coming in May 2025 for both accelerated and traditional students. It filled up fast and 16 Nursing students will have a chance to have a global nursing experience.



## MS in Nursing programs host successful CCNE Site Visit

The Master's in Nursing program hosted a successful CCNE site visit from March 26–28 on the Bronxville campus. While the final report is still pending, the visit itself went exceptionally well. We're optimistic that the team's thorough preparation will be reflected in the outcome when results are shared later this summer.

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# NEWS from OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

## OT Honors Induction Ceremony

The Occupational Therapy program hosted its second Pi Theta Epsilon induction ceremony of the Omega Chapter on December 4, honoring six outstanding second-year students for their academic excellence and dedication to advancing the field of Occupational Therapy. This year's distinguished inductees were: **Jennifer Albert, Patrick Daly, Grace Massaro, Julianna Miro, Chloe Morgan, and Aleksandra Niedzwiecka.**



The evening began with a welcome from Dr. Dhanwada followed by an inspiring keynote address by **Lisa Yokana**, an innovative educator and entrepreneur, who shared valuable insights on creativity and leadership in healthcare. Third-year OT students, Jessica Brand and Charlene Perez, also offered words of wisdom, reflecting on their own experiences and offering encouragement to the new inductees. Program Director, Dr. Laurie Olson, praised the students for their exceptional dedication and achievements, expressing her excitement for the impactful contributions these six rising professionals will make as they continue their Occupational Therapy journey.

## SOTA Fundraising Efforts

The members of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) are no strangers to making a positive impact! Year after year, they continue to impress us with their good deeds. In October, they hosted a delicious bake sale to raise awareness for breast cancer, offering a variety of tasty treats to attendees of our fall Health Fair.

In December, they teamed up with our friends at Elizabeth Seton for a holiday toy drive, benefiting children who live at the Yonkers facility. Not only did they deliver a large number of toys, but they also raised over \$1,000 for this amazing cause! Way to go, SOTA! We couldn't be prouder of the incredible work you're doing in the community.



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# NEWS from MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

## NYP Iona Students Lead Mental Health Workshop for Older Adults

On November 14, graduate students from the Marriage and Family Therapy program led a mental health workshop for nearly 40 older adults at the Kelly Center on the Bronxville campus. This was the second of three workshops sponsored by a grant from The Community Fund of Bronxville, Eastchester, and Tuckahoe as part of its mental health initiative.

Under the guidance of Dr. Christiana Awosan, MFT Professor and Department Chair, third-year master's students **Anjali Parmar** and **Jazenda Garcia** facilitated the hour-long session, focusing on the importance of maintaining mental, social, and relational health. The workshop offered practical strategies and reflection opportunities to promote overall well-being.

A powerful statistic shared during the session struck a chord with attendees: chronic social isolation can be as harmful to health and longevity as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. This insight deeply resonated, particularly with caregivers, who expressed a strong interest in learning more about fostering social connections to combat loneliness. The workshop's impact and positive reception have sparked interest in additional programming. NYP Iona students, in collaboration with The Community Fund, will provide another workshop on June 17 that continues supporting older adults in the community.



## Marriage and Family Therapy Program Ranked #1 Nationally by CounselingPsychology.org

Congratulations to our Marriage and Family Therapy program for being ranked #1 in the nation by *CounselingPsychology.org*! This recognition reflects key strengths including selective admissions, strong completion rates, affordability relative to local cost of living, and, most importantly, the program's academic rigor and the exceptional expertise of its faculty. A truly well-earned honor!



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## NEWS from SOCIAL WORK

### Social Work Students Explore Community Needs in New Rochelle

This fall, senior social work students took part in an annual walking tour of New Rochelle as part of their Social Work Practice III course, which focuses on group, organizational, and community-based practice. During the tour, students conducted a community needs assessment, gaining firsthand insight into local challenges. A highlight of the tour was a visit to the Lincoln Park Community Garden, where they met **Linda Tarrant-Reid**, a local advocate. She shared how the garden helps combat food insecurity and supports community well-being. This hands-on experience deepened students' understanding of community development and advocacy, reinforcing the real-world application of their social work skills.



### Social Work Students Gain Powerful Insights at the Tenement Museum

This fall, junior Social Work majors from the Social Welfare and Society course took a meaningful field trip to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, where they immersed themselves in the realities of poverty and housing at the turn of the 20th century.

Walking through the preserved tenement apartments, students gained a visceral understanding of the harsh living conditions faced by immigrant families. The experience drew powerful parallels between historical struggles and modern-day challenges of poverty and housing insecurity. Through this hands-on exploration, students examined the evolution of social welfare policies, the societal values that shaped them, and the institutional barriers that continue to perpetuate inequality. The visit directly aligned with the course's objectives, deepening students' understanding of the historical roots of social welfare and strengthening their commitment to social justice—core principles of the social work profession.



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## Senior Social Work Students Advocate for Change During Week of the Peacemaker

During Iona's Week of the Peacemaker, senior Social Work majors showcased their advocacy projects, the culmination of a semester-long effort in their Social Work Practice III course. Through task groups and advocacy initiatives, students tackled social issues such as justice, equity, and conflict resolution, applying their skills to drive meaningful change. The projects reflected students' ability to analyze systemic barriers, collaborate across disciplines, and develop client-centered strategies. Rooted in the profession's core values of social, economic, and environmental justice, their work demonstrated the transformative power of advocacy. The presentations inspired peers and attendees, highlighting the students' dedication to building a more just and equitable society—a powerful reflection of social work in action.



## Social Work Students Explore Nature-Based Therapy at Green Chimneys on Earth Day



On Earth Day, April 22, social work students, led by Professor Andy Peters, took a tour of Green Chimneys' Farm and Wildlife Center in Brewster, New York. The campus operates a nature-based therapeutic program for children impacted by trauma, and students were able to meet the animals, view the facilities, and learn from nature specialists about the work they do with kids. Many thanks to the Green Chimneys staff who shared their valuable time and welcomed the group so warmly, including **Miyako Kinoshita**, Education Program Manager Nature Based Services, who is pictured second from the right.

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# Interprofessional Education

## Expanding IPE: Fostering Collaboration and Real-World Impact

This year, we were thrilled to welcome **Kylie Johnston** as our new IPE Project Coordinator. Kylie has been working to expand IPE offerings and boost awareness across NYP Iona School of Health Sciences. Thanks to her efforts, this fall semester was packed with dynamic IPE activities that enriched our students' learning experiences.



## Simulations and Workshops Strengthen Collaboration

Students from Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Communication Sciences & Disorders participated in a simulation focused on a healthcare team caring for a child with cerebral palsy in an inpatient setting, practicing how to share space and collaborate across specialties. The success of this simulation has paved the way for more hands-on experiences in Fall 2025.

In addition to simulations, Foundations of IPE I Workshop on October 5, where 193 first-year students from seven disciplines, Nursing, CSD, Marriage & Family Therapy, Mental Health Counseling, OT, School Psychology, and Social Work came together.

Interprofessional groups of 10 students worked on a case study involving a young girl with autism, including a faculty-led simulated role-play.

Earlier, on September 28, 97 2<sup>nd</sup> year students participated in Foundations of IPE III Workshop featuring a compelling discussion with Dr. Ken Hardy on healthcare and educational disparities. Students reflected on their own identities and professional roles, gaining deeper insight into equity and collaborative practice.

## Bridging Classroom Learning with Community Field Fellowship Experiences

This year, we expanded the Community Field Fellowship experiences to help students apply their academic knowledge in real-world healthcare settings. One participant who really was moved by her experience was Aleksandra Niedzwiecka, an Occupational Therapy student, who joined the Calvary Hospital Interdisciplinary Team Fellowship, focusing on end-of-life care.

During the fellowship, Aleksandra collaborated with MFT and Social Work students, attending team meetings where sensitive topics around death and dying were discussed.

Through weekly virtual reflections, she gained valuable insights into compassionate care and effective interprofessional communication.

Reflecting on the experience, Aleksandra shared:

“Being in the room with professionals and observing their collaboration gave me a new appreciation for the unique contributions of each discipline. The mutual respect and teamwork I witnessed highlighted the power of interprofessional care in enhancing patient outcomes. This experience has significantly strengthened my collaborative skills and deepened my understanding of culturally responsive, trauma-sensitive practices—preparing me for the complexities of modern healthcare.”



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# Faculty Essay

## Enhancing Our Teaching Through Community Service at Willow Towers

*Nancy Vidal-Finnerty, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, Associate Professor,  
Communication Sciences and Disorders*

At Iona University, community service is a core component of the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (SLP&A) programs, offering students invaluable real-world experiences that enhance their clinical skills and deepen their understanding of patient care. Through hands-on service, students develop empathy, interdisciplinary collaboration skills, and a greater awareness of the complexities of treating individuals with dementia across diverse cultural contexts.

As an SLP educator with extensive clinical experience in geriatric and pediatric settings, I have seen the transformative power of experiential learning. To enrich our curriculum, I frequently invite guest speakers to share their personal experiences with communication and swallowing disorders, fostering student reflection and empathy. These encounters cultivate patient-centered perspectives and spark meaningful discussions on real-world clinical challenges.

Building on this foundation, I have incorporated service-learning components into several courses, focusing on underserved populations where research and follow-up care are often limited. One area of focus is the growing need for quality-of-life treatments for patients with both dysphagia and dementia. As people live longer, there is a pressing need to provide effective therapeutic approaches that maximize comfort and dignity for those managing chronic conditions.

Our current partnership with Willow Towers Assisted Living exemplifies this commitment. Launched in Summer 2024, this initiative provides students with hands-on experience in enhancing communication skills, social interaction, and feeding support for residents.

Students learn to:

- Use swallowing therapeutic strategies and compensatory maneuvers to promote safe and comfortable oral feeding.
- Adapt communication approaches to align with patients' preferences during socialization and mealtimes.
- Prioritize quality of life and patient comfort while implementing evidence-based interventions.

Our Service-Learning Goals:

- Promote didactic interaction through traditional therapy techniques and innovative approaches.
- Enhance socio-linguistic engagement using music and language facilitation strategies.
- Support safe and optimal feeding through swallowing techniques and postural adjustments.
- Prioritize patient and caregiver preferences in treating advanced dysphagia and dementia.

This service-learning experience allows students to apply classroom knowledge in authentic clinical settings, while honoring the voices of both patients and caregivers. Beyond building clinical competence, it fosters empathy and social responsibility, shaping compassionate, patient-focused professionals.

The students' enthusiasm for this initiative has been inspiring. Many choose to continue their service throughout the semester or return for additional experience, recognizing its profound impact on their growth as future clinicians.

Looking ahead, our mission is to expand these service opportunities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration that benefits both students and the community. By prioritizing quality-of-life treatments and integrating the perspectives of patients and caregivers, we are preparing the next generation of SLPs to deliver compassionate, effective care in an evolving healthcare landscape.

### CSD Student Reflection on service learning opportunity

"Volunteering at the Willow Towers was an incredible opportunity that profoundly impacted my journey as a future speech-language pathologist. Through hands-on experiences with residents who face severe disabilities, I've gained insight into the diverse range of communication disorders an individual may endure, including aphasia, dysarthria, cognitive communication disorders, and swallowing difficulties.

I've witnessed the vital role of enhancing the Quality of Life (QoL) of an individual, which includes physical, cognitive, social, spiritual, religious, and economic domains. As a graduate student clinician, working directly with residents at the Willow Towers has helped me develop my interpersonal communication skills, allowing me to build meaningful connections and effectively collaborate with the multidisciplinary team. Additionally, I am looking forward to my Dysphagia class to apply evidence-based practices and techniques from my studies here at Iona University, to deepen my academic knowledge and implement this into real life clinical practice. I came to understand that even the simplest gestures, such as a smile or a moment of attentive care, can significantly improve a patient's happiness and overall well-being. This experience solidified my passion for speech-language pathology and motivated me to continue striving for excellence in providing compassionate and effective care to those in need."

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## Gaels Giving Back – Thank you!!

### Gratitude for Supporting the Occupational Therapy Community Engagement Lab

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Marlene Piturro, PhD, an Iona alumna and a valued member of the NYPISHS Dean's Advisory Council for her generous philanthropic gift in support of the new Occupational Therapy Community Engagement Lab. Her contribution has enabled the OT program to acquire essential equipment, including adaptive tools and sensor technology, significantly enhancing the lab's capabilities.

While still in development, the lab is already becoming an innovative hub where students, guided by OT faculty, can explore and apply new technologies in real-world settings such as the recent acquisition of a 3D printer that allows OT students to create adaptive tools for clients. It is also fostering meaningful connections with the local community, particularly with older adults. Through this initiative, community members have been invited to campus to learn about assistive tools and adaptive technologies, while students have engaged in interview assessments and observations with LIRIC members.

Thanks to Dr. Piturro's generosity, the Community Engagement Lab will continue to grow and thrive, offering valuable hands-on learning opportunities and strengthening our commitment to community outreach. We are deeply grateful for her support in helping us advance innovative education and care.



## Other Happenings

### Anatmage Training Enhances Healthcare Education

The Anatmage table is enhancing the education of students in our Health and Wellness and Occupational Therapy programs. This cutting-edge virtual dissection system allows users to explore photorealistic human cadavers and visualize physiological processes, like the heart pumping or muscles contracting. It also includes over 1,000 MRI and CT scans across various medical specialties to be utilized for class discussion.

To ensure faculty make the most of this technology, Dr. Christina Nevers, Health and Wellness Program Coordinator, organized a training session in August 2024. Nursing and occupational therapy faculty participated, ensuring students can fully benefit from this immersive learning experience. (Photo of Dr. Nevers using the Anatmage Table with her A&P students)



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## Westchester County Behavioral Health Workforce Pipeline Initiative

In response to the growing behavioral health needs in Westchester County, the Iona University Department of Social Work has joined a strategic working group at the invitation of Michael Orth '90, Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health (WCDCMH) and proud Iona social work alumnus.

This collaborative group, which includes select universities, nonprofit organizations, and WCDCMH, is dedicated to developing, piloting, and implementing a multi-faceted approach to strengthen the county's behavioral health workforce pipeline. Dr. Jeanne Matich-Maroney, Chair of the Department of Social Work, represents Iona in this initiative, while Dr. Chris John, Iona adjunct instructor, brings a unique dual perspective, bridging both the service delivery and academic sectors.

## NYPISHS Student Advisory Board: Amplifying the Student Voice

At the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences, we are committed to building a vibrant, student-centered community. To strengthen this connection, Dr. Dhanwada established the Dean's Student Advisory Board, bringing together students across our academic programs. This board serves as a direct link between students and the Dean's office, ensuring that all feedback—whether positive, constructive, or critical—is heard and acted upon to enhance the student experience.

While the board was initially formed last year, this fall we formalized the process with a set of action items to maintain momentum between our four meetings throughout the academic year. This year, board members served as a focus group for their program webpages, helping to improve online visibility and ensure that both current and prospective students can easily access the information they need.

A special thank you to this year's board members:

- **Zachary Rosenthal** (CSD) – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student
- **Devon Gabriel** (MFT) – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student
- **Kylee Morabito** (MHC) – 1<sup>st</sup> year student
- **Mary Cinguina** (NUR) – sophomore student
- **Jennifer Albert** (OT) – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student
- **Alyssa Perez** (SLPA) – senior student
- **Emily Loughran** (SOW) – senior student

We are grateful for their leadership and insights as they helped shape the future of NYPISHS!

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## Iona's Upcoming MSSW Program: Expanding Our Commitment to Social Work Excellence

After years of requests from Iona's undergraduate Social Work students, Iona University is excited to launch a Master of Science in Social Work program!

Having been approved by the New York State Education Department, the program is working on completing their accreditation process with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The program is recruiting for the first cohort for the two-year program; classes to begin in Fall 2026. The first advanced standing (students with a Bachelor's in Social Work from an accredited program) are eligible to start with a cohort in summer 2027.

Iona's MSSW program is unique in the New York metropolitan area by offering a specialization in trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and interprofessional collaborative practice. Graduates will be prepared for team-based practice excellence across schools, physical/behavioral/mental health, and co-occurring systems of care.

Key program highlights include:

- Small class sizes that foster a strong sense of community and peer collaboration.
- Innovative instructional technology, integrating virtual and live simulations for training and assessment.
- Full engagement in Iona's Interprofessional Practice and Education (IPE) curriculum
- Experiential learning opportunities with leading practicum partners, such as NewYork-Presbyterian Westchester Behavioral Health, providing students with rich, interprofessional field experiences.

Dr. Brittany Lynch is the MSSW program Director and she and the Department of Social Work are excited to embark on this new chapter and welcomes inquiries from prospective students, faculty, and community partners interested in joining this exciting venture!

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## NYPISHS in the News!

This fall, the New York-Presbyterian Iona School of Health Sciences was featured in two articles by the local news outlet *My Hometown Bronxville*.

### From the Mayor: Answers to Most Frequently Asked Questions About Iona University

On October 30th, My Hometown Bronxville featured a **Q&A with Bronxville Mayor Mary Marvin and Iona University President Dr. Seamus Carey**. The conversation covered a variety of topics, including the expansion of academic programming within NYPISHS, a highlight of the upcoming NYPISHS Symposium on Health and Well-Being (with an invitation to the community!), resources available to local residents, such as the Iona Family Therapy Center, and exciting plans for future campus enhancements.

You can read the full article here:

<https://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/government/9158-from-the-mayor-answers-to-most-frequently-asked-questions-about-iona-university>

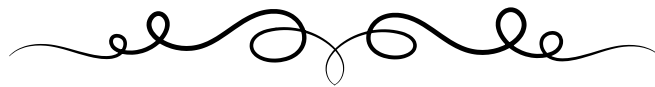


### Iona University Bronxville Campus is Doing Important Education in Critical Fields

On November 19th, My Hometown Bronxville published another article on NYPISHS, this time featuring our very own Dr. Kavita Dhanwada. The discussion centered on our academic programs and how our new home in Bronxville, including the state-of-the-art Kelly Center, is enhancing the student experience.

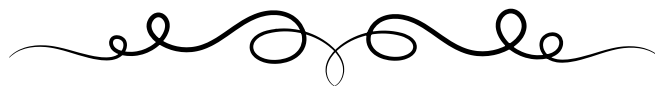
While the focus was on academic growth, Dr. Dhanwada also took the opportunity to highlight the valuable services provided by the Iona Family Therapy Center and extended an invitation to the entire Bronxville community to attend future lectures in our Symposium on Health and Well-Being. Read the full article here: <https://myhometownbronxville.com/index.php/health/9189-iona-university-bronxville-campus-is-doing-important-education-in-critical-fields>

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Thank you to every member of the NYPISHS community - faculty, staff, students, and friends - for helping shape our ever-growing School into something truly special. Whether through teaching, mentoring, storytelling, or personal growth, your contributions are the heart of who we are.

The Dean's Office wishes you all a restful, joyful summer!



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