

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



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We are a
CHRIST-CENTERED
CATHOLIC FAITH community
that **celebrates diversity**
and fosters **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**,
inspiring ALL to REACH
their **FULL potential** in
MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

ENCOUNTERING SOULS
AND OPENING MINDS
SO
that **all students**
SUCCEED

SECOND NIAGARA CATHOLIC STUDENT IS HARVARD BOUND IN SEPTEMBER

Niagara Catholic is thrilled to share the exciting news that a second member of the Class of 2024 is bound for the Ivy Leagues.

Myla Novak, a Grade 12 student at Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School, has also chosen Harvard for her undergraduate program in biomedical engineering.

It was a tossup for the student, who finished in the top .8% on her ACT (an alternative standardized testing method used for US college and university admissions). She was accepted by Harvard University on their acceptance day March 28, and was also accepted to Brown University, another Ivy League institution, based in Providence, Rhode Island.

In the end, Myla was swayed by Harvard's flexibility in her program of choice and its sense of community, particularly the commitment to placing students in housing throughout their four years on campus.

Myla said she first started to think about going to a US university when she was in Grade 6, and her family took a trip to Boston, which included touring Harvard. Last spring, she committed to the long process of applying to US schools, including writing her ACT (an alternate pre-admission test to the SATs), essays, and preparing a long list of documents. On her list of US schools were Brown, Dartmouth College (Hanover, New Hampshire), Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), and Yale (Connecticut) in the Ivy League, as well as Duke University (Raleigh, NC) and Stanford University (in California's Silicon Valley), ultimately gaining acceptance to Harvard and Brown.

Myla has an impressive list of extracurricular activities, including playing travel basketball before being sidelined by chronic pain that lasted a year. She returned to basketball for one year, playing on the Blessed Trinity Varsity Girls' team before turning her attention to other school-based involvement, including joining student council.

Myla has served as the Faith Formation Representative on the Blessed Trinity Student Council and is currently the Student Senate representative on the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee. She is also the Social Media and Communications Officer for the BT Student Council.

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Myla's "life-changing" illness, from which she is thankfully recovered, confirmed her desire to work in medicine. She completed an internship at McMaster University last summer where she studied the link between obesity, sepsis, and arterial endothelial activation, and is the Co-Chair of McMaster Children's Hospital's Youth Advisory Council, which included a role as Youth Advisor on the McMaster Children's Hospital Patient and Family Partnership Steering Committee.

She was also a Patient Advisor on a pain management study.

Outside of school, Myla is a regular fixture at a local retirement home where she plays piano. She has also created a pen pal program for residents and volunteered as a tutor and book buddy at the Grimsby Public Library.

Blessed Trinity Principal Jim Whittard has high praise for Myla.

"Myla is an outstanding student and exemplifies everything we expect in a Catholic high school graduate," he says. "She is kind, caring, and empathetic, she is determined and committed to her own academic excellence and making this school and her community a better place for everyone. Myla has engaged herself in every aspect of Blessed Trinity. She has represented the Thunder in mind, body, and spirit as an academic, athlete, and leader in faith. I feel the archetype of Myla can be encapsulated in the most significant mission and work we do, our paramount passion for social justice."

Director of Education Camillo Cipriano notes having two Niagara Catholic students once again bound for the Ivy Leagues affirms the board's commitment to supporting students as they reach for their goals.

"I am thrilled to hear the news that a second Niagara Catholic student achieved their dream to attend the Ivy Leagues," he says. "Our teachers and principals encourage students to look past what they know to be possible and to be fearless in their dreams. They guide students on their path throughout their formal education, support them as they look toward life beyond their high school years, and they support them as they develop new interests and enrich the lives of others in their communities.

"Congratulations to Myla on her outstanding accomplishment. While she had the support of her school community to help her achieve her goals, Myla clearly has the commitment and dedication to nurture her dream over five years and make it a reality. I wish Myla, and all graduating students, the best as they move on to their next adventure."

DATE ISSUED: May 14, 2024