



# BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

## Gym Meet is a rite of passage at NDP

Last weekend at the Notre Dame Preparatory School, more than 600 upper level students took part in a unique tradition that dates back nearly 90 years, Gym Meet.

An institution at the all-girls Towson school, Gym Meet is considered the most cherished, most anticipated and most reminisced memory of anyone who has ever attended Notre Dame Prep (NDP).

"It is a wonderful tradition," said Mary Bartel, a department chair in the NDP physical education department and Gym Meet faculty coordinator. "Their mothers have gone through it. Their sisters have gone through it. It is kind of nice and heartwarming that they will want their daughters to go through it someday."

The event is a five-month exercise of teamwork in which girls from each class test their talents in four events: march, song, aerobics and dance. The winning class is awarded the coveted silver cup.

"It isn't about aerobicizing in perfect unison or marching in a straight line," Gym Meet Manager Casey Lowe '15 said. "What makes Gym Meet so fun is that each class comes together as one. It is an opportunity for hard work to pay off and friendships to be made. Bonding is the most spectacular part of Gym Meet. That is why it is so hard to explain to anyone who asks."

For the 30th consecutive year, the senior class, this year led by captain Dana Caspari, took home the silver cup. The class of 2015 earned first place finishes in three of the four events. Since the school relocated from downtown Baltimore to Baltimore County in 1961, the senior class has been victorious 48 times with the juniors winning on five occasions (1963, 1969, 1979, 1981 and 1985). The sophomore class took home the silver cup in 1975 and 76.

The junior class, led by captain Celeste Misfud, were the runner-ups, winning the dance plaque. The sophomores, led by captain Luisa Mangione, finished third. The freshman, captained by Mary Kate Fitz-Patrick, placed fourth.



Seniors Casey Lowe and Dana Caspari take a victory lap around Notre Dame Prep's gymnasium after being announced the 2015 Gym Meet champions.

"It is nice to see the confidence grow each year and how much improvement is made from their freshman to senior years," added Bartel, who has worked 34 Gym Meets. "The first line of the rule book is that it is a student run activity. I moderate it and I think that is why they are so attached to it. It is their work. It is their creation and they get to enjoy it."

The seniors dedicated the victory to classmate Claire Wagonhurst, who died of melanoma in October.

"They feel like they have seen it all now," said Bartel, a former athletic director and lacrosse coach at NDP. "It is an awful way to have to become an adult when you have to endure that kind of thing, but they have handled it with grace. I do think Claire is their guardian angel."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.