



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Gwynedd   
Mercy Academy  
High School

**Gianna Leflar, 2014**

**Social Media Manager/ Influencer/ Entrepreneur,  
Philadelphia, PA**

Gianna went to Gwynedd Elementary and then continued her mercy education at Gwynedd Highschool starting in 2010. During her time at Gwynedd she played field hockey and lacrosse and was very involved in the arts. She was an art major and won awards at the art show her senior year. She also was involved in Ministry and Service and took guitar classes. During the summer between highschool and college she launched her food instagram, @

swagfoodphilly. She started it as a creative outlet since she loved photography and cooking. By October of her freshman year it grew to 10,000 followers; now she has 107,000 followers and has turned the account into a profitable business.



After her time at Gwynedd she attended Drexel University as a Design and Merchandising Major. The art classes at Gwynedd helped her get into this program which was number 4 in the country when she attended. During her time at Drexel she wanted to stay connected with her Gwynedd sisters so she joined a sorority that was heavily populated with Gwynedd girls in her grade and grades above. It was tough for her to join many other clubs since she was a full time student and also was running her business on the side. She did have time to complete a full time 6-month co-op at Philadelphia Magazine. She was a social media and marketing intern, her connections from @swafoodphilly helped her land this internship. During her junior year of college she was honored by Forbes as a 30 under 30 recipient for her work at @swagfoodphilly.

When Gianna graduated college she started working as a Social Media Specialist at Pond Lehocky, a law firm in center city. Although it wasn't the most glamorous, she learned a lot since the Chief Marketing Officer was the previous Creative Director at Pinterest. Now Gianna has three streams of income, she is the Social Marketing Manager for all locations of Iron Hill Brewery (20 restaurants in total), she also runs two of her own companies; @swagfoodphilly and her own freelance business. She has a variety of social media clients that range from healthcare to beauty all the way to food. Swagfoodphilly has allowed Gianna to work with many worldwide and nationwide brands over the past few years. She loves creating content to share with her followers and is excited to continue sharing her love of food with the world.

**Laura Lutes, Class of 2015**  
**Water Resources Engineer, Philadelphia, PA**

Laura attended Buckingham Elementary and Holicong Middle School. At Gwynedd, she dedicated a lot of her time outside of the classroom to athletics, as she was on the soccer, basketball, and softball teams all four years. Besides that, she was an active member of the spirit club, language culture club, mathletes, and book club. She participated in as many community service events as her schedule allowed, including project Mercy, women of hope, and face to face. Gwynedd taught her the importance of having an impact, no matter how small, on your community. She has carried this with her through college and beyond. Her interest in physics and science and the encouragement of her teachers at Gwynedd like Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Waltrich led her to major in engineering in college.



Laura received her Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from Penn State University. She minored in environmental engineering and watersheds and water resources. She completed a research internship monitoring the effects of slow release fertilizers on water quality. She also interned at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as a dam safety intern. She was the president of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers her senior year. Outside of academics, she was a member of a National Service Sorority, and an avid participant in Penn State THON.

Upon graduation from PSU in 2019, Laura started her career as a water resource engineer for Duffield Associates out of their office in Philadelphia. At Duffield, she designs green stormwater infrastructure to aid in the Philadelphia water department's Green City, Clean Waters initiative. Every project she helps with has a huge community impact, improving water quality in Philadelphia and adding green spaces in typically underserved areas of the city.

**Dr. Maria Mick, GMA HS Class of 2012**  
**Associate Veterinarian, Philadelphia, PA**

Dr. Mick knew she wanted to be a veterinarian when attending grade school at Gwynedd Mercy Academy Elementary. While at GMA HS, she was President of the Environmental Club, as well as involved with Science Club, Respect Life Club, retreat leading, many service opportunities, and the National Honors Society. Dr. Mick was also a diocesan scholar which allowed her to take courses at Gwynedd Mercy University during the mornings of her senior year. In her spare time, she was a volunteer at Last Chance Ranch Animal Rescue which she continued throughout college.



For college, Dr. Mick attended Drexel University where she earned her bachelor of science degree in biology. She carried the Gwynedd spirit with her by joining the Newman Center (Drexel's Catholic group on campus) and continuing to lead small groups, service opportunities, and a retreat. She became President of the Drexel Pre-Veterinary Medical Association and joined the Biology Honors Society. Dr. Mick completed a co-op at the Academy of Natural Sciences in the Live Animal Center where she worked with many reptiles, raptors, and mammals, including animals such as snakes, armadillos, and owls. On weekends, in addition to adventuring in Philadelphia, she worked as a veterinary assistant.

After graduation from Drexel in 2016, Dr. Mick attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine where she obtained her Veterinariae Medicinae Doctoris (VMD) in 2020. Currently, she works as an associate veterinarian for small and exotic animals at Dublin Veterinary Hospital in Perkasi, PA. Her areas of professional interest include exotics, behavior, hospice and palliative care. Being a veterinarian allows her to combine all three of her passions: a strong interest in medicine, a passion for animals, and a love for helping people.

Dr. Mick currently lives in Philadelphia, PA with her rescue pets, including a cat, turtles, axolotl, iguana, and hermit crabs. When she is not practicing veterinary medicine, she enjoys exploring Philly, trying new restaurants, playing piano, and going to zoos and aquariums.

### **Rebecca Roque, 2016**

**Neuroscience biomedical research technician working at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania**

Rebecca graduated from Mary Mother of the Redeemer grade school in June of 2012. She then continued her journey at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School the following fall. It was there she took part in Latin Club, Mathletes, Glee Club, Art Club, majored in Art, took part in the school play from her freshman year until junior year, a track and field sprinter and pole vaulter, and was founder and first president of the Ski Club in 2016. While she enjoyed indulging in many after school activities, she found her true passion in her senior year honors anatomy and honors psychology courses. This helped propel her into a career of neuroscience.



In the fall of 2016, Rebecca continued her journey at Saint Joseph's University. There she majored in Psychology and double minored in English and Behavioral Neuroscience, while additionally taking a pre-medical track. As she excelled in her neuroscience courses she was recruited to work as a biomedical research assistant at the Granato Lab, a neuroscience lab at the University of Pennsylvania. With the help of her mentors she was able to begin the process of co-authoring an axon development research paper, which is currently under review. At Saint Joe's, Rebecca was a member of the Adventure club and a guest writer for the school newspaper, The Hawk. She also had the privilege to become a primary caregiver to a cancer patient with comorbidities. This experience helped solidify her resolve to earn an MD PhD. She is now currently enrolled in ACHS pre-medical post baccalaureate program at Temple University.

During her neuroscience-capstone at Saint Joe's, she developed a research project testing the eating habits of rats by lesioning their lateral hypothalamus via stereotactic neurosurgery. Designing her own research project presented a myriad of challenges that forced her to become an adaptive and resilient scientist.

Since graduating in May 2020, she has been continuing her role working full time as a biomedical research technician in the Granato Lab at Penn. Broadly, in the Granato Lab, they study mechanisms of axon guidance during development and regeneration, using larval zebrafish as a model system. Rebecca and her colleague discovered large swellings, later identified as neuromuscular junctions, in the motor innervation pattern of Lrp4 and agrin mutant larval zebrafish pectoral fins, likely caused by the over expression of musk. She will be second author for this work, currently in preparation (Walker, Roque, et al).

**Ava Scarpato, GMA Class of 2017**  
**Graduate Student at the University of Pittsburgh**  
**Located in North Wales, PA**

Ava started her academic career at Mary, Mother of the Redeemer grade school and later attended the wonderful Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School, where she was involved in ministry and service, art club, photography club, health club and track and field. All of those activities inspired her passion for nutrition as they fostered a sense of creativity, while emphasizing the importance of helping others achieve better health.



Ava later attended the University of Pittsburgh studying in their Dietitian Nutritionist Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's 5-year program, where she graduated in 2021 with a degree in Nutrition Science. Ava was involved in Greek life as a sister of Kappa Delta Xi Chapter sorority and stood as the volunteer chair for the Student Dietetic Association. During her time in college, she worked and interned for Rejuvenan Global Health, Grow by Nutrition by Stephanie Lauri, RDN, Taylor Booher, RDN, Case Specific Nutrition, Pediatric Alliance, and the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Pediatric Eating Disorders.

Now, Ava is preparing for her last year in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh where she will be spending her time in nutrition-focused clinical and community rotations within the realm of maternal and pediatric nutrition at Magee Women's Hospital and The Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Recently, Ava was named student liaison for the National Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Women's Dietetic Practice Group. What she loves about the field of nutrition is the ability to help people discover a healthier and more enjoyable lifestyle that involves a physical and mental approach to food.

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## NOTES

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **Monday, August 2:** Application Portal Launch
  - **Sunday, October 3:** Open House
  - **Saturday and Sunday, October 9 & 10:** Entrance-Scholarship Exam  
*(Requires submission of application to register.)*
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### Mission Statement

Rooted in the Catholic faith and charism of Mercy, Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School educates, inspires, and empowers young women to be merciful in spirit, innovative in thought, and courageous in leadership.

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