



# FIREBIRD GAZETTE

FIREBIRD NATION

AUG/SEPT 2022 • VOLUME 1

## WELCOME BACK

BY: LAUREN CORDERO

Welcome back Firebirds! As the summer comes to a close and back-to-school season commences, here are a few things to remember for the upcoming year:

For those who are new to the school, welcome to Doral Academy. While there is a lot to learn as far as the campus, programs, and policies, make sure to stay informed on the Doral Academy website and our pertaining social media accounts such as our Instagram @doralacademyprep.

Remember to abide by Doral Academy's uniform policies, wear your school-issued IDs at all times, and stay alert to the changing schedules every other day. Doral Academy is divided into "A" and "B" days with alternating schedules, but there are always resources to look to if clarity is needed. We are very excited to have everyone back for this new year and ensure a safe, and structured environment for the students. For our returning students, we hope this school year brings you all the success you are striving for. For the Class of 2023 Seniors, welcome back to your last year at Doral Academy. It has been an incredible journey, especially for those who have been in Doral since 6th grade or even freshman year. It is the beginning of the end and we could not be more excited for all that is to come this school year. Seniors, make sure to make this last year count. Stay informed on all that pertains to college admissions and testing if you are planning ahead for the future, and don't be afraid to seek help from our faculty and staff if needed. We are ready for what this year has in store, and we hope to make this year as memorable as the ones that came before.

## CALENDAR



**August 6**  
New Student  
Orientation

**August 17**  
First Day of School

**August 27**  
August SAT

**August 29**  
National Sports Day

**August 29**  
Girls Volleyball Game

**August 30**  
National Grief Awareness Day

**August 30**  
Rho Kappa Informational  
Meeting

**August 30- September 2**  
E-Sports Tryouts

**September 5**  
Labor Day

**September 1**  
Girls Basketball Interest  
Meeting

**September 12-16**  
FSPA

**September 20**  
Spanish National Honor  
Society Meeting

## CLUB APPLICATIONS/ACCEPTANCES

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BY MARIAN NAVARRO

Not wasting a moment of the new school year, Doral clubs are already gearing up to accept new students. This is great news for our high school students, especially those who are looking to play a valuable role in their community, and get volunteer hours in the process. There are countless clubs available at Doral Academy like Science National Honor Society (SNHS), Green Club, and Key Club.

Before applying to a club, however, it is important to be informed on what each club entails. For example, SNHS is, as the name implies,

a national honor society looking for students to perform scientific experiments and attend informational events. Green Club is a Doral-run group set on making the world a cleaner place, either through hands-on events or verbal advocacy. Key Club is an international organization in which high school students can develop leadership abilities and interpersonal relationships.

Clearly, there are a wide variety of clubs to choose from for students of all kinds. Applications for such clubs opened as early as August 16th, and have varying deadlines.

Here are just some of the many clubs available and their deadlines:

- Science National Honor Society: September 17th
- Green Club: September 15th
- Key Club: September 16th
- National English Honor Society: September 2nd
- Rho Kappa: September 3rd
- French Honor Society: October 23rd
- DA Law Society: September 30th

Clubs such as Green Club have already begun accepting members so all eyes are on emails for news of admission.

## A WELCOME TO DORAL: NEW YEAR, NEW TEACHERS, NEW LESSONS

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BY ISABELLA BELLO

Here at Doral, we have kicked off the brand-new 2022-2023 school year with a multitude of new teachers! Our recruits span from English to STEM departments, and their expertise is certainly something to boast about. We're lucky to have our new faculty members, and we're certainly excited to see how they shape the minds and futures of our Firebirds.

In order to capture the spirit

of a new teacher here at Doral, we've had some questions answered by one of our new recruits!

**Welcome to Doral! To start off, introduce yourselves! What is your name, background, favorite subject in school, and what classes are you teaching this year?**

"I'm Ms. Vargas, I have a bachelor's in biology, and I am currently pursuing my

master's in forensic science. My favorite subject in school would be science (biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, etc.). I am teaching all Marine Science this year."

**Is this your first year teaching? If so, how does it feel to start a new year, are you well-adjusted to the teaching climate? If it is not your first year, where did you teach at before, and how does it differ from the culture at Doral?**

## A WELCOME TO DORAL: NEW YEAR, NEW TEACHERS, NEW LESSONS CONTINUED...

BY ISABELLA BELLO

### **A Welcome to Doral: New Teachers, New Year, New Lessons!**

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### **Welcome to Doral! To start off, introduce yourselves! What is your name, background, favorite subject in school, and what classes are you teaching this year?**

"I'm Ms. Vargas, I have a bachelor's in biology, and I am currently pursuing my master's in forensic science. My favorite subject in school would be science (biology, chem, organic chem, etc). I am teaching all Marine Science this year."

"Hello! My name is Daniel Forsberg and I am super excited to join the Firebird family this

year. I am originally from Sacramento, CA, and I attended California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), where I received a B.A. in Spanish in 2012. Shortly after graduation, I enlisted in the United States Army from 2013-2017. At the end of my enlistment, I decided to come to Florida International University (FIU) and graduated with a B.A. in Mathematics

Education. When I was in high school and attending CSUS, my favorite subject was English and Spanish grammar. When I attended FIU, my favorite math subject was Calculus I and II. This year, I have the privilege of teaching regular Algebra II here at Doral Academy."

**Is this your first year teaching? If so, how does it feel to start a new year, are you well adjusted to the teaching climate? If it is not your first year, where did you teach at before and how does it differentiate with the culture at Doral?**

"This is my second-year teaching, but my first year at Doral. I taught at Ruben Dario, before coming to Doral. Doral is literally out of this world, the faculty, the students, they are very driven and hard-working. The students are genuinely curious and want to learn, and that is something important to me."

"This is my first year ever teaching. At times, being a new teacher can be overwhelming and downright exhausting. There are so many things to keep track of and remember! For instance, trying to remember nearly 180 names has been a challenge. On the other hand, I enjoy working with my students and seeing their progress and growth. Yes, the teaching climate can be hectic, but this is absolutely the most rewarding job I have ever had and I would not trade it for anything else. I look forward to getting more acquainted with the students here at Doral and doing all I can to help support each of them through their academic and personal endeavors."

### **What was your inspiration to start teaching?**

"What inspired me to begin teaching, was believe it or not,

## A WELCOME TO DORAL: NEW YEAR, NEW TEACHERS, NEW LESSONS CONTINUED...

BY ISABELLA BELLO

my teachers, I wanted to foster the fascination and curiosity that my teachers passed onto me."

"When I was a high school freshman, I started the year struggling with Spanish and did not have a good attitude. My Spanish teacher, Ms. Rocha, took extra time to help me at lunch and after school. When I had given up on myself, she refused to give up on me. By the end of the year, I earned an A in her class and learned how impactful a single teacher could be for a young life. I learned so much more than Spanish in her class; I learned that attitude is everything inside and outside of the classroom. Ever since my experience with Ms. Rocha, I have had a strong desire to become an educator."

### **Why did you pick your subject? (i.e, "I became an english teacher because...")**

"I wouldn't be anything else than a science teacher. Science is fascinating and exciting; it teaches you about the world and how it works. Especially Marine Science, the ocean has its

own beauty, and it is a whole universe right on our own planet. Nature has a way to teach us what we need to know if we look close enough, and the ocean is no different. There is so much beauty and wonder in our oceans that we should spend more time studying and helping them."

"I became a math teacher because I had a terrible experience in middle school math and, as a result, struggled all throughout the rest of middle and high school. I thought I would always be bad at math. When I went to college, however, I finally relearned everything I missed and even learned some things far beyond high school math. Nonetheless, I never really forgot what it felt like to struggle with math. Even to this day, I do not believe that there is such thing as a "math person". In retrospect, I chose to teach math because I want to show others that they can succeed in mathematics, too. I also chose to teach math because I am naturally inquisitive and was never willing to accept what others told me without proper justification. I enjoy explaining the "why"

and "how" with almost anything, so becoming a math teacher felt pretty natural later in life."

### **Why choose Doral Academy?**

"Doral Academy gave me the opportunity to teach a subject I really enjoy, and the students have been amazing. Teaching in an environment where students want to learn motivates one to continue teaching. Doral is a family, and that is what makes it work."

"I chose Doral Academy because I believe in high standards. After researching, I realized that there were not many other secondary educational institutions in Florida that perform like Doral Academy and I wanted to be a part of something so special. Moreover, I had the privilege of substitute teaching at Doral for a few months before I accepted a full-time faculty position. The amount of potential I saw in the hallways and classrooms was outstanding and motivated me to teach here at Doral Academy."

Finally, the culture here at Doral is also awesome. Other teachers, staff and administration have all been

## A WELCOME TO DORAL: NEW YEAR, NEW TEACHERS, NEW LESSONS CONTINUED...

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BY ISABELLA BELLO

beyond supportive and helpful. Overall, Doral Academy is an awesome school and I am grateful and humbled to be here."

**Are there any obstacles you have faced so far? If there are, what has made the jump into teaching "worth it" at the end of the day?**

"The obstacle that I have faced so far would be acquiring a class halfway through the school year. It was not an easy task, but at the end of the day the goal was to teach the students, to foster a deeper curiosity for science. What made it worth it was the compliments my students gave me at the end. I want my students to learn and enjoy themselves in my class, and as long as that is achieved, then it is worth it for me."

"The biggest obstacle I have faced so far is staying organized and on-top of everything. Between

posting assignments, maintaining the grade book, filing paperwork, answering emails and attending meetings, it gets to be a lot. Even though this is a lot to keep track of, seeing my students improve every day is worth it."

**Is there any advice you can give to those considering becoming teachers in the future?**

"The most important advice I can give someone that wants to be in the education field or any field in general is to do something you enjoy. To study and work in something that you're happy in, because it's somewhere you will be spending most of your time, so make it something worth your time. As long as you enjoy going to work, then it's not work anymore. Some careers do tend to burn

people out quicker than others, so it's important to take care of yourself and to remember why you chose this career, and find your motivation again."

"Understand that no amount of student teaching or teacher education classes will prepare you to actually be a teacher. Learn to be comfortable with controlled chaos. Be kind and patient with yourself. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself once in a while."

We are certainly very fortunate to welcome Ms. Vargas and Mr. Forsberg to our Firebird Family, here's to another successful school year!

## SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

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BY MIA RAMIREZ

There is an epidemic sweeping our nation. A tragic force with an eternal consequence, one that is, unfortunately, taking lives all too soon. Suicide.

Suicide is the leading cause of death in the United States, having claimed 46,000 lives in the year 2020 alone, with over 1.2 million attempts. But how can we prevent these drastic losses of lives? How can we help those who have reached such a dark, terrible place in their lives that they see no way out but out?

This September is Suicide Prevention Month. When someone is suicidal, their mind has usually reached a dark place to the point where they see no reason to live anymore. Reasons for this can be things such as mental illness, personal situations, substance abuse, or a culmination of things. There isn't just one reason for suicide.

Whereas most people go throughout their lives looking forward to something and continuously pushing themselves despite struggling, those who are suicidal have completely given up on life. What they are feeling- pain, turmoil, emptiness-

has gotten to such an extreme point that the only way to truly feel better and escape it all is to kill themselves, in search of anything but life.

Even if you don't do so, most people have contemplated suicide in their lives. With this comes a sense of shame- in the world we live in today, wanting to kill yourself is seen as being ungrateful for the life you have, and towards those in it. However, this viewpoint does nothing but shame those who are already in such a dark space and trivialize their feelings. While suicide is never the answer, it is not right to simply dismiss those who feel suicidal as "ungrateful" or "cowards." Chances are, they're dealing with more than you ever will, which takes a great deal of strength.

A good way to prevent suicide is to recognize the warning signs. These include suddenly acting very withdrawn socially and in other aspects of life, not having an interest in things that they previously enjoyed, talking about wanting to sleep and never wake up, saying that the world would remain unchanged if they were not in it, etcetera.

More immediate signs are said person suddenly becoming calm and positive, as if they have a sense of clarity and serenity after a long struggle, giving away their possessions, and saying things that resemble goodbyes. These are all good indications of someone who is dealing with suicidal thoughts, or is planning on committing suicide in the near future.

If you recognize any of these signs in someone you know, it is best to contact someone you trust, such as a parent, teacher, or counselor, or recommend them to get help from a therapist or psychiatrist. If you know of someone who has an immediate plan, take direct action and tell them to go to the emergency room, as this is considered a medical emergency. You can also contact a psychiatric mobile response team to help- unless urgent, calling the police generally isn't too helpful, as they are not trained to deal with mental health and can at times put the person at risk.

It is important to keep in mind that it is impossible to know what's going through someone's head.

## SGA SPOTLIGHT: THE INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW YEAR

BY LAUREN CORDERO

As the new school year begins, it is important for the student body to stay informed on what is to come this year. SGA, the Student Government Association, has been planning events to make sure all firebirds return to a thrilling and unforgettable year. When asked about how it felt officially being back, president Brandon Martin noted "although I feel a lot of pressure to do things a certain way, it feels amazing to be back with no Covid restrictions. I'm excited for a year full of school spirit." After Covid-19, it has not been easy to regain the school spirit firebirds had so much of years prior. Making it their mission to restore that firebird pride, SGA members have taken the roles very seriously. "To us, having this role and being able to represent the student body comes with great responsibility. We are able to guide younger generations and start new traditions this year that really strengthen the firebird pride in the school."

While being a part of SGA is an experience like no other, board members have a lot on their plate as well. Most, if not all, board members are involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities that take up a lot of their spare time. Whether it be sports or clubs, managing their time has proven to be a complex task.

"We've been managing our time mostly by setting boundaries for ourselves. We know with all the things we're involved in, we have to manage ourselves in accordance to the things we have committed to, meaning finding an efficient way of allocating our time to get things done correctly. With all the activities going on this year, it is important for each of us to make sure we're not falling behind," commented SGA Historian Corina Bullos. When asked what advice they could lend to others struggling with time management, they replied, "the best thing we can say is to set your priorities straight and know what things demand more of your time. Do what works for you and what helps you the most. For some of us, planning and using agendas works best, while for others, it is merely just setting reminders for each assignment/extracurricular." Everyone works differently and while time management may not be an easy challenge to overcome, it is definitely something that can be managed, and something numerous students go through.

With big school events right around the corner, SGA has had their hands full taking care of various aspects that go into the planning of these dates, making sure all firebirds are guaranteed a great time. Right now, the things

they have been most focused on consist of "... the student section, Homecoming, raising school spirit, and brainstorming events that bring in participation. We want to make sure the students enjoy this year and every event we host." After getting the chance to speak with each board member, there are countless things to be on the lookout for. When asked about one event the board thinks will really excite the firebirds this year, Vice President Brianna Paliz made sure to mention, "Students should be on the lookout for the upcoming games and opening seasons. We hope students are as excited as we are for the new student section - the flame - as we are and really go all out for the themes we have planned. We are highly encouraging more inclusion this year regarding the student enthusiasm and increased athletic support in all sports." Not only did they elaborate on whats coming soon in sports, but, as everyone knows, homecoming is a firebird favorite at Doral and with every ounce of eagerness, students are anticipating all the possibilities as far as Spirit Week and the reveal of the homecoming theme. But... as a gift to the senior class, Secretary Andrea Colon, along with the rest of the board, decided to release a small hint regarding what is to come for homecoming week.

## SGA SPOTLIGHT: THE INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW YEAR CONTINUED...

BY LAUREN CORDERO

"While we can't say much, something we can tell you guys is that although spirit week is only a four-day week, Wednesday being a Teacher Planning Day, expect the Firebird spirit to last all five days of the week."

To finish it off, just like everyone else, SGA hopes to leave Doral Academy with the pride of a job well done. "What is the one thing you guys want to accomplish before graduating? One goal we have to accomplish before graduation this year is reestablishing the meaning of "Firebird Pride".



Student Government Association (from left to right): President Brandon Martin, Vice President Brianna Paliz, Secretary Andrea Colon, Historian Corina Bullos, and Treasurer Grace Wong.

Without trying to sound like a broken record, we feel that Covid took a major toll on the school spirit we once had. Reestablishing that spirit before graduation would mean the absolute world to us, as it is our way of leaving our mark on the Firebirds".

For more information on where to stay informed on what is to come, make sure you are following us on all of our platforms @doralacademy Preparatory.

## REMEMBERING 9/11

BY MARIAN NAVARRO

"8:14 AM. September 11th, 2001. This was the day America was shaken to its core by the Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. 2,977 people were killed, 25,000 were injured, and 285 million were never the same. The question we hear most on its anniversary is "where were you when it happened?" We often forget that events like these happen when we least expect them, when we're at our most vulnerable; Adults starting their day at their 9 to 5 jobs, children settling into their desks preparing to learn their multiplication tables.

"Life can change in the blink of an eye. Adults rushing in their cars to pick up their kids, children watching their teachers draw the shades over the windows.

Our country will never fully recover from this day, which is why thousands visit New York's September 11th memorial, why 9/11 is taught to children of all ages. We must never forget the day our nation was under attack and thousands lost their lives. But a lot can be learned from a tragedy like this. While many recall the burning buildings and terror-stricken faces, they also recall the

feeling of community that surfaced that day. First responders putting their lives on the line to help those trapped in the towers, adults helping calm frightened children, people trying to regain control of the hijacked planes. In the time following the attack, people of all backgrounds united to help put their world back together again as best they could. Fear is a powerful emotion, but so is love. Love of your fellow man, love of your home. We remember September 11th to honor those who have been lost and to remind ourselves that we must stick together as Americans, as human beings.



## SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH CONTINUED...

BY MIA RAMIREZ

We never know the thoughts someone is having, what can be the one thing that sends them over the edge, the one thing that makes them check off another reason why not to live, the one thing that leads to a life lost. Nowadays, kindness is a rarity, but more importantly, understanding. Try seeing life from another's point of view, and you may find that their life is more difficult than you imagined.

If you yourself are having suicidal thoughts, do not be afraid to ask for help. Make

sure to reach out to someone you trust. If you don't have anyone to reach out to, you can call or text a hotline (numbers are listed below.) Suicidal thoughts tend to cloud judgment and make everything seem more heightened than it is. If you think you are an immediate harm to yourself, and that you cannot be alone, go to the emergency room or ask a friend or family member to keep you company until you get help. Keep yourself away from objects that may cause harm to you.

Suicide, unfortunately, isn't an issue that will go away anytime soon. But there are ways we can help prevent it from taking more and more lives- through compassion, understanding, and recognition, we can overcome this epidemic, and start to see the light.

**Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:**  
988

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 800-273-8255

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

BY LEONARDO GALINDEZ

Happy Hispanic Month Firebirds! As we celebrate from September 15th to October 15th, we recognize the impact of Hispanics on history and today. From their cultures and champions who've both rose and fallen, our Spanish, Mexican, and South American ancestors who've pushed forward despite all odds. Celebrate the occasion by enjoying some traditional



The 2022 theme for Hispanic Heritage Month:  
"Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation"

Latin American dish and supporting Latin/Hispanic-owned businesses! September 15th is the anniversary for the official independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence on September 15th and 18th.

## FINDING COMPANY IN SOLITUDE: A SPOTLIGHT ON NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

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BY ISABELLA BELLO

August 30 marks the annual National Grief Awareness Day, a day dedicated to giving support to those suffering through loss and shedding light on the different ways to cope.

Grief is a complicated emotion, a whirlwind of feelings that makes one think as though they're feeling everything in the middle of a wave of nothingness. It's an all-consuming sea of sadness, anger, guilt, and eventual acceptance. Many people who experience grief may feel as though they're misunderstood, as it's easy to sympathize with someone going through grief, but to empathize with them is notoriously difficult.

For any scenario in which anyone you know is experiencing grief, rather than flood them with countless "it's okay"'s, here are some ways to help.

### **Give them a space to talk**

A lot of people suffering through grief usually bottle their feelings up, which may inhibit them in the long run and only elongate the healing process. By giving them a safe space, it allows them to verbalize their

emotions and in turn process them more effectively. Be sure to not spring the conversation on them, ask first if they are comfortable with talking about it—some people don't feel comfortable talking about it with most people. Be sure to be patient when this happens, everyone grieves differently.

### **Try to refrain from saying "it's okay" and other potentially invalidating phrases**

Though many of us mean the best, saying "it's okay" or "At least you're not \_\_\_\_\_, some people have it worse," can make the person grieving feel badly about their feelings. Instead of feeling appreciative for having more than those less fortunate, they feel guilty about their emotions due to other people having it worse. The use of "it's okay" takes light away from the sentiment that, to them, it's not okay. So by acknowledging that their situation is not okay there is a safe space to let out all their negative feelings.

### **Be comfortable with not saying anything**

Sometimes people just need

someone to listen, it's hard to give advice on something you're not experiencing and can't imagine going through. In that case, just letting the other person vent and being comfortable with silence can be beneficial to them. You do not always have to have something to say, and sometimes it'll make the other person feel better by just saying, "You can talk and I'll listen if you'd like."

### **Offer support**

Be sure to offer to help them in any way you can, whether that be helping them focus on studying for their big test coming up or doing an errand they don't feel motivated enough to do. Helping out in these ways can help them keep up with their lives, and not make it so difficult for them once they start feeling better.

### **Be patient**

Progress is not linear, and it will take a while for them to feel okay again. The best thing you can do is be there for them in the meanwhile, whether it takes days, weeks, or months. Patience is key in these situations, keep in mind that grief is

## FINDING COMPANY IN SOLITUDE: A SPOTLIGHT ON NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

BY ISABELLA BELLO

processed in stages, and there is no specific time limit as to how long, or how many times, each stage will occur.

### Watch out for signs of depression

Be sure to stay vigilant for any signs of a depressive episode, as grief is a very common trigger of depression. Look out for signs of disassociation, neglect of usual passions, neglect of personal hygiene, inability to show emotions, and expressions of hopelessness.

### If the person who is grieving is a child

Help them understand what is going on and the complicated emotions they might not understand. Try to refrain from misleading comments like saying "Mommy went on vacation," an open and honest conversation about death will help them understand and not build up any hope that may make them feel worse later on. Be sure to provide a support system for them as they navigate this all too difficult subject at such a young age.

Source:  
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/helping-someone-who-is-grieving.htm>

If you or someone you know is struggling with grief and/or depression, do not hesitate to reach out to the resources below.

**Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741

**National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** 988

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline:** (800) 662-4357

**Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio:** (888) 628-9454

