

# Welcome Dr. Rosati

Dean Gajria, School of Education, is pleased to announce that Dr. Sarah Rosati will join our academic community at St. Thomas Aquinas College as an Assistant Professor of Education. Dr. Rosati earned her Ph.D. in Special Education at the University of Connecticut and has collaborated on numerous publications and grants.



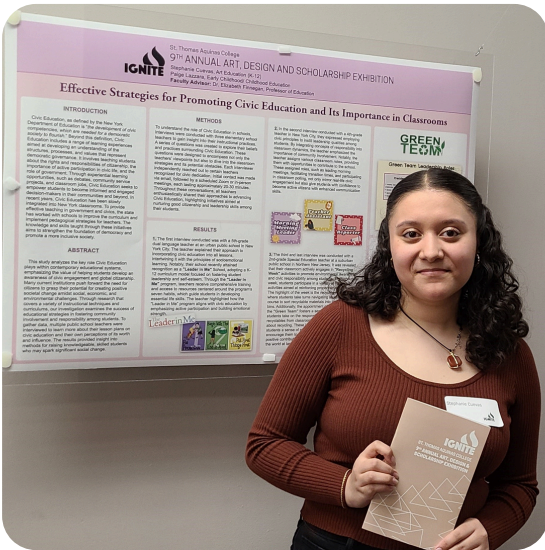
Before pursuing a doctoral degree, she taught for a decade in K-12 schools across New York City, San Diego, and San Francisco. Dr. Rosati was inspired to become an educator in order to disrupt macro-level systems that exclude and limit children from realizing their potentials and from achieving their goals. She cherished the opportunity to serve children and their families, taking great care to foster individual relationships with each student. As a classroom teacher, Dr. Rosati was committed to celebrating and centering the abilities, voices, and multiple identities of her students.

She recalls fondly a time when one of her first grade students read their first book to the class. "This student was from a Russian-speaking family that had emigrated from Kyiv to New York City on a diversity visa. The student had been labeled with the multiple disabilities of autism, speech and language impairment, and specific learning disability and had spent the previous two years repeating Kindergarten." Dr. Rosati recorded the read aloud so that she could play it for the student's parents, who had been told that their child would likely not be able to read, write, or produce spoken words. She recalls, "It was an emotional moment and a testament to the powers of opportunity, access, and individualized supports."

With a background in integrated multi-tiered systems of support, Dr. Rosati hopes to guide future teachers in connecting assessment results with research-based practices so that future generations are prepared to take on the world. She is looking forward to cultivating teachers as change agents here at STAC.



Ignite is a celebration of student research and creativity. In April, undergraduates from the School of Education presented their work at this annual exhibition. Drs. Finnegan and Lo mentored School of Education presenters. Additionally, Laura Lacker (BSEd Childhood and Special Education), Liliana Kramer and Thomas Kroll (both BS Educational Studies), and Kieran Keenan (MST Adolescent Education and Students with Disabilities) also presented students from the three other schools at the College.



Above: Stephanie Cuevas (BA Art Education) and Paige Lazzara (BSEd Childhood Education - not pictured) studied "Effective Strategies for Promoting Civic Education and Its Importance!"



Above: Shameka Richards (BS Educational Studies) and Alexandra Boyd (BS Educational Studies) discussed "The Impact of Diverse Books for Elementary School Students and Teachers of Color."



Left: Erin Leary (BSEd Childhood Education) and Trinity Cheatom (BS Psychology) researched "The Impact of Civic Education on Students' Knowledge."



# KAPPI

by McKayla Murphy



Our goals for this year are to increase participation and engagement in KDP. This is especially important since KDP's mission statement centers on future/new teachers thriving in their community as they provide a quality-filled and equitable education for all. We are planning to work towards this mission by sharing ideas and information on our Instagram account, @stac\_kdp, conduct acts of service that reinforce the purpose of being educators, and host various events in which students can enjoy and learn together. We would like to officially welcome you all to our first Fall event on October 21st, from 3:30 pm-5:30 pm, where we will be hosting a Halloween-themed bingo! All students are welcome and refreshments and snacks will be served. A brief meeting for current KDP members will follow the event. More details are to come as we get closer to the event. We look forward to seeing you there.

Meet the leadership team for Kappa Delta Pi for the academic year 2024-2025. President McKayla Murphy (BSEd Early Childhood/Childhood Education '24, MEd Literacy), also a first-year Kindergarten teacher! Vice President, Emma Hutta (BS Educational Studies), a senior in the Bridge to Teaching program. Secretary, Alexis Krause (BSEd Childhood Education '24, MEd Special Education) is also a captain for the Women's Track and Field team in which she competes in throwing events. Dr. Ciotoli serves as the faculty sponsor for Kappa Delta Pi.

Follow us @stac\_kdp!



"This summer I had the opportunity to intern at STAC's STEAM camp for middle schoolers. My coworkers and I engaged with young minds as we learned about electronics, architecture, and energy. This amazing hands-on experience allowed students to experiment and work on problem solving skills. We worked with robots, circuits boards, solar energy cars, blueprints and much more. I loved watching the students' eyes light up when they got to do something they loved. This camp has helped my understanding of effective communication and teaching strategies. Overall the STEAM camp was a great experience where I learned a lot from both the professors and the students."

by Fiorella Torres (BS Mathematics w/Adolescent Education) pictured second from left. Also pictured Ryan Grant (MST Childhood & Special Education), Nicole Gysin (MST Adolescent Education/Students with Disabilities) and Brianna Ryan (MST).

## Student Voice

# STUDENT TEACHING CELEBRATION

In May, members of the School of Education and the College joined together to celebrate the accomplishments of our student teachers as they are about to embark on their careers.



The celebration was attended by President Daly and Provost Dr. Murray. Sofia Echeverria (BA Spanish with Adolescence Education), pictured above left thanked her professors for all their support. She is a new Spanish teacher at Clarkstown High School North. Patty Pereira (BSEd Childhood Education) pictured with her supervisor Ms. Maryann Heaney, described her excitement about starting a leave replacement as a Kindergarten teacher. "If you are not prepared" shared Michael Malin (MST Adolescence Education and Students with Disabilities) pictured above right, "then the students will see right through you," Finally Jaren Scott, pictured below center with his friends in the MST Childhood and Special Education, spoke about his excitement when his students have that "aha" moment and learn something new.

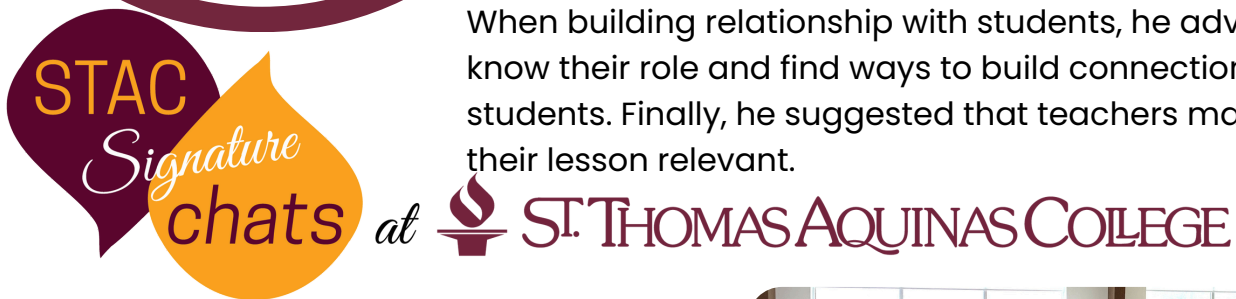






The School of Education was thrilled to host one of STAC's Signature Chats in April. In a discussion moderated by Dr. Cassandra Lo, Dr. Michael Gill, Executive Supervisor of Secondary Education at North Rockland Central School District, described how he started his career teaching elementary school in the Bronx. Recognizing that he had a natural ability to work with students with challenging behaviors, Dr. Gill pursued his education to become, first a high school principal and then a district level administrator. When asked what qualities successful teachers embody, Dr. Gill cited the values of "Rigor, Relationships and Relevance."

He urged teachers to be fully prepared in their lesson planning. When building relationship with students, he advised teachers to know their role and find ways to build connections with their students. Finally, he suggested that teachers make the content of their lesson relevant.



Dr. Gill's visit was part of a series of events for Education Career Week. In a discussion session, a panel of School of Education alumni shared their insights on classroom management, working with parents, and engaging students with teacher candidates. Current teacher candidates also attended the Education Career Fair (pictured right) to network with prospective employers from local schools.



In May, the School of Education celebrated the career contributions of three retirees. The Board of Trustees awarded former Assistant Dean, Suzanne Reynolds the title of Professor Emerita for her 17 years of services to the college and field of education. She continues to teach part-time at the college. Professor Ryan-Rodenbach, MST coordinator looks forward to spending more time with her family, and Professor Melanie Boyan looks forward to coffee mornings with her friends.



# Lauren Orta

Lauren Orta's love for children and education began at an early age when she experienced how the transformative power of teaching made a difference in her life. When she was in 4th grade, one of the resource room teachers would stay after school to tutor Lauren. Lauren describes how Ms. Solimano, would pack a dinner for them both and

reteach the content of the day's lessons. "She was the person who taught me that my disability may make learning hard . . . She taught me new strategies on how to learn." Lauren went on to say, "Learning more about myself as a student and how I learn best has gotten me to where I am today."

After graduating from St. Thomas Aquinas College with a BEd Childhood Education (2020) and an MEd Special Education (2021), Lauren took a series of leave replacement positions to hone the skills she developed in her education courses. Lauren recalls that her professors in the School of Education "truly show the real meaning of being an educator!" The administrators in the schools where she worked were impressed by how much she knew about child development, educational supports, and teaching strategies.

Lauren is a special education teacher in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Her ability to adapt to new situations allowed her administration to transfer her to different classrooms to ensure all students' needs were met. In one year, Lauren taught preschoolers, a K-2 autism class, and a 3rd-grade general education class. She is now a 3rd/4th grade inclusion teacher.

Lauren has three important pieces of advice for new teachers: "Don't take students' behaviors to heart! Be honored that students feel comfortable enough around you to express their needs." Second, "Volunteer and make connections with families and the community!" Third, "Set boundaries! Don't lose your identity in becoming an educator." Set time to do the things you love. When Lauren is not busy at work, she enjoys working out at the gym, journaling, and spending time with family and friends.





# EARTH DAY

In April, students from the Education Club and KDP participated in the college-wide Earth Day celebrations. Students in the School of Education made friendship bracelets in honor of Kayla Fitzpatrick, an education major who sadly passed away in September 2023. Kayla was a kind and energetic student who was passionate about becoming a teacher. The bracelets were sold to support a scholarship for future educators.

Students from the School of Education planted seeds for attendees to take home. For more information about the Education Club contact Alanna Donohue at [adonohoe22@stac.edu](mailto:adonohoe22@stac.edu)



## Student Voice

by Joseph Murphy  
(BS Social Science with  
Adolescent Education '24,  
MSEd Special Education)



"My traditional student teaching experience in which an aspiring teacher first takes control of a class under the guidance of someone with more experience was interrupted in March when I was called to the assistant principal's office. My students "oo'ed" and claimed that I was in trouble. Not knowing what to expect, I got to the office and was offered a leave replacement position. After seeking approval that the experience would meet my degree requirements, I accepted the position and started my long-term leave replacement two weeks later. For the rest of the school year, I would be teaching at Clarkstown's High School North (CHSN) in the SAIL program. SAIL is an alternative education program, created by our own Professor Rockwell during her time at CHSN that focuses on the education of non-classified students who are struggling in the general school setting. I had never sailed these uncharted waters before. I was not only teaching my content area of social studies but also English, an area I was unfamiliar with. It was a rocky transition, but as I pushed through, I learned how important it is for a young teacher to use the resources available. I talked to Professor Rockwell, who gave me pointers on how to work with the students of the SAIL program, and I got a lot of support from Dr. Lo, who provided me with a three-hour class every Thursday night that I dubbed therapy. I have to genuinely thank my professors in the School of Education who prepared me for this great opportunity. Without these support systems and resources I was provided I would not have successfully guided my students to completing their academic years."

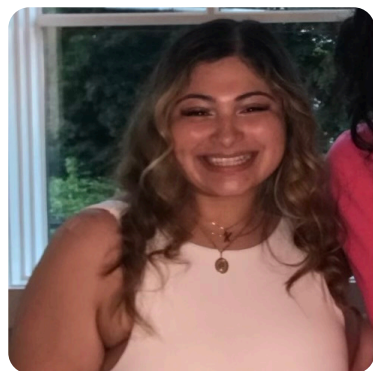
# Meet the Graduate Assistants



Kayla Lemus-Marroquin is a graduate from STAC, where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Educational Studies with a concentration in English. She is currently completing her MST in Childhood & Special Education (1-6). Her hobbies include spending time with her family, traveling and helping others.



Angelina Clarino is a graduate from STAC where she received a Bachelor's degree in English with Adolescent Education in 2024. She is currently completing her MEd in Literacy. Her hobbies include cooking, photography, and spending time with her dogs, Sophie and Capone.



Kayla Cordero is a graduate from STAC, where she received her bachelor's degree in Educational Studies with a concentration in English. She is currently completing her MST in Childhood & Special Education (1-6). Her hobbies include playing soccer and watching documentaries.

*Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day spent with a great teacher. (Japanese Proverb)*