

# BACK TO BARRY

HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



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# Greetings

## End of Spring 2021 Reflection from HPSAB Co-Chair and Faculty Advisor

"Hello all! I hope this finds you well. It has been a tumultuous year and a half, to say the least. Many have suffered hardship and tragedy. My heartfelt sympathies go out to all those who have struggled amidst the upheaval of what seems to be our new reality. I would also like to thank all of you. Even more than the tragedy, this past year, and this past semester in particular, have shown me the strength we have as a community here at Barry and within the Honors Program. You have all worked tirelessly for the betterment of yourselves and your community and I could not be more proud to call you my friends and peers. This is what I will reflect on as the semester comes to a close and over the coming summer, and it will continue to inspire me. Thank you. Best,

Walter MacWaters, HPSAB Co-Chair



Emancipation Oak, Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Honors Program students came together to take part in this year's most unique virtual Scholarship Engagement (SE). In this May 21 newsletter issue, I hope you will enjoy reading about some highlighted SE activities and students' submission pieces. It is fair to say that this year's HP students took a collaborative journey to learn about migrant farm workers and essential workers in the United States, and how alliance building is an essential part of any successful community organizing campaign in transforming communities and bringing about social justice for all. Raising awareness on behalf of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), watching the movie Food Chains, attending a meeting with CIW members, writing a series of reflection papers, the students no longer stood on the sideline. At the request of CIW and guidance from BU Center for Service Community Initiative's (CCSI) Ms. Liz James and Ms. Courtney Berrien, HUM 199H students spearheaded the effort in writing a letter to the Adrian Dominican Sisters (see a copy of the letter on pg. 8). Together with HPSAB members, HUM 199H students held a meeting with Sister Kathy Nolan (Sister Pat Siemen's appointed representative to meet with the students) and Sister Linda Bevilacqua, Barry University's President Emerita (see a few screenshots and read about a reflection from a student about this meeting on pg. 7). At this meeting with the Adrian Dominican sisters, the students learned first-hand about several other projects that the Adrian Dominican Sisters work effortlessly to fight social injustice and demand the corporate America to operate their business with commitment to social responsibility. While I think the Honors Program students will look back and remember the pandemic as one of the worst times of their lives, they will also remember being a part of a social justice campaign, embracing an opportunity to fight for justice on behalf of CIW members, and being inspired to fight social injustice of all forms. As Sister Kathy shared with us, 'if we can imagine it, we can create it.' In the HUM 300H class, a group of devoted Barry faculty lecturers enlightened the students on what the students can do in response to the climate challenges in today's world and lessons they can draw from nature. The Emancipation Oak tree image that Dr. Pamela Hall shared with HUM 300H students captured this semester's collaborative journey to grow, learn, and reflect together (see the image above). HPSAB and the co-editors devoted this special issue to social justice, particularly on behalf of the migrant farm workers in Immokalee, Florida and across the United States. Collectively, the Honors Program students could not agree more with a statement from Mr. Philonise Floyd, brother of George Floyd: we are all one human race.

Have a wonderful and safe summer and see you back in the Fall!  
Dr. 'S' Pawena Sirimangkala, HPSAB Faculty Advisor

## MEET THE HPSAB MEMBERS



**Brianna Lopez**

Position: Co-Chair



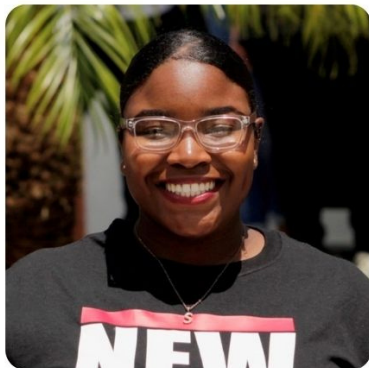
**Walter MacWaters**

Position: Co-Chair



**Jennie Iudice**

Position: Secretary



**Shanieya Harris**

Position: Co-Editor, Honors  
Program Newsletter



**Mia Tubbs**

Position: Co-Editor, Honors  
Program Newsletter



**Izabella Ruiz**

Position: Writer and  
Researcher



**Anna Galaktionov**

Position: Writer and  
Researcher





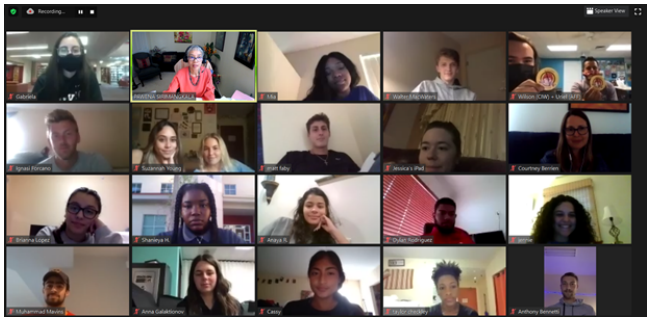
## COVID-19 IN CALIFORNIA

**By Heaven Laster-Torres**

Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has impacted every country in the world. In Modesto, California, where I live, COVID-19 is especially rampant in certain areas. The stay at home order has been in effect since March, and has certainly gotten more strict. In Southern California, for example, many young adults are not as cautious when it comes to contracting or spreading COVID-19. As a result, cities like Los Angeles have very strict COVID-19 regulations because the cases are significantly high. Hospitalizations and deaths are substantially high in California as well, and are only getting higher. In my county, Stanislaus, many people have been very cautious and following restrictions. As a result, Stanislaus county has a death toll of 739 as of January 17, 2021, which is significantly lower than many other counties in California. Fortunately, vaccines are currently being distributed. The qualifications to receive the vaccine is that residents must be 65 or older or essential workers. My grandma received her first COVID-19 vaccine shot this passed Friday, January 15th, which has significantly eased the anxiety among my family for my grandma's health. In Stanislaus County alone, 33,850 vaccine doses have been allocated as of January 17, 2021. However, vaccines are not easy to obtain. There are no links or public instructions for where to receive the vaccine. Even my aunt had to search online for hours to find locations for my grandma. Since many Californians are angry that these vaccines are impossible to find, they have been crowdsourcing it. Anyone can report on where shots are available for the elderly and post it for everyone else to see. This list is a great accomplishment for the citizens of California, but a fail for the national government, as their lack of coordination is creating a public health crisis. Sadly, the people that need the vaccine most immediately, the elderly, are the ones who are having the most difficult time finding it. A little over a week after vaccines were announced to be distributed in California, many counties have revealed that they are short in supply, partly because there are still many medical workers and first line responders who needed them as well. Some people 65 and older, including my grandma, did get vaccinated at retail stores and public health agencies, but many others could not find locations available for appointments. Amongst all this chaos, certain areas of California are refusing to wear masks or other PPE, and some businesses are refusing to enforce the mask mandate. Overall, Californians are in a current state of confusion and anger due to the absence of a concrete plan and a steady vaccine rollout. Thankfully, many health care workers and elderly citizens were able to receive the COVID-19 vaccines this past week, and hopefully there will be more to come over the next couple weeks.

### WORK CITED

**HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY. (N.D.). RETRIEVED JANUARY 18, 2021, FROM [HTTP://SCHSA.ORG/CORONAVIRUS/](http://schsa.org/coronavirus/) TEAM, S. (N.D.). COVID19.CA.GOV. RETRIEVED JANUARY 18, 2021, FROM [HTTPS://COVID19.CA.GOV/](https://covid19.ca.gov/)**



# GUEST LECTURE SERIES

By Nicole Lentz

This semester's Barry University Honors Program's Guest Lecture Series revolved around the work of the Coalition of Immokalee workers (CIW) and the Fair Food Program (FFP). Mr. Wilson and Mr. Uriel Zelaya-Perez presented to the members of the Honors Program an in-depth information on the history of FFP, FFP's development, growth, and future (see Mr. Wilson and Uriel's picture above). As presented in this lecture series, the Immokalee workers and the FFP started the boycott campaign with Taco Bell. The successful Taco Bell boycott campaign resulted in bringing awareness on the issue of farm labor exploitation, a change of farmworker conditions, especially to the Immokalee farm workers. Mr. Wilson and Uriel spoke on how their efforts to include U.S. colleges and universities and local community organizations effectively gave them new sources of power in order to influence food retailers to sign the Fair Food Agreements (see corporations that have joined FFP in the above image) . As more corporations signed the agreements, farmworkers in Immokalee, Florida and other farms across the U.S. have witnessed their farmworker rights protected and work conditions improved (see FFP and its Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Programs map above). Currently, the big corporation that is being boycotted is Wendy's. Many people, including the HP community, were not aware of the conditions of these Immokalee farmers. Uriel, who was born and raised in Miami, told us that he himself was unaware of these issues until he joined CIW. Coming from a large farming industry in South Dakota, I learn that much of our farms are family operated and sometimes immigrants and migrants are hired as help in the state. Close to my area though, almost all of the farms are family-run, where the parents, children, and sometimes cousins work on the family-run farms. Because of my exposure to family-run farms rather than large corporate-run farms, I was unaware of the abuse that is still prevalent in farms such as Immokalee farms. As CIW takes its campaign to college campuses, CIW has done an excellent job in reaching out to college students to educate them on how to end the exploitation. Since the start of the CIW's efforts, many corporations have joined the Fair Food program. We, as college students and customers of these corporations, are the ones who can influence corporations such as Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program "to give farmworkers a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, and to eliminate the longstanding abuses that have plagued agriculture for generations."

# Imitative Paper

IN DR. B. BOWERS' ENG 358H CLASS, STUDENTS WERE TASKED WITH WRITING AN IMITATIVE PAPER, THAT MIMICS THE STYLES OF GREAT WRITERS SUCH AS TONI MORRISON AND FRANZ KAFKA. ENJOY READING IZABELLA'S THE THIRD ASSISTANT.

## The Third Assistant

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By Izabella Ruiz

Kathryn Stevens woke up every morning at 5:00 to catch the 6:00 train to get to the city by 7:15—missing the morning rush by about half an hour—to have time to walk to a coffee shop and get a skinny white mocha with almond milk before she had to clock into the office at 8:00. She worked as Joseph Myers' third assistant out of ten, which was a pretty good accomplishment for her. All his other assistants had to call him Mr. Myers, never Joseph or Joe or J. The last girl who did that was fired on the spot; she didn't even have time to pick up her things from the broom closet where she and two other girls had their office space—they were eight, nine, and ten. Being the third, Kathryn had her very own broom closet to work in. It only took her 15 years to get there, but she did it because she never failed to impress Mr. Myers. When she started working there, she memorized his favorite coffee—skinny white mocha with almond milk—and made it her favorite. So, after she would finish her morning coffee, she would go back and get Mr. Myers the same drink and make sure it was piping hot when it got to him. That was only one of the many things she did to be on Mr. Myers' good side. Kathryn was never late and she was always dressed the best, which is why she thought eventually she would move up to the second assistant or even the first before she retired—if she retired.

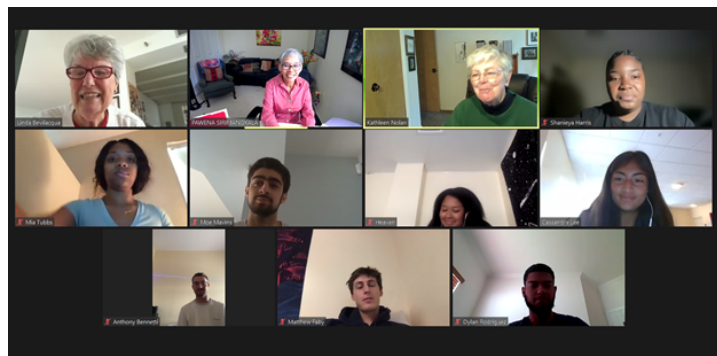
One warm morning in May, when Kathryn opened her eyes at 5:00 sharp, she could not see her cracked, cream-colored ceiling, she only saw darkness. Hundreds of thoughts raced through her mind, but she sat up quickly when she realized she had to catch the 6:00 train, but she could not even see the clock on the bedside table to tell if she was late. "I can do this with my eyes closed, I've been doing this for 15 years, this shouldn't be an issue," she thought to herself. She sat up, kicked her legs off one end of the bed, and stood up. She slowly began to walk toward the closet with her hands stretched out in front of her and searched for a blouse and a pair of pants to wear. Then she squatted down to find a pair of shoes to match the outfit she blindly chose. Kathryn thought it would be better to wear flats, but Mr. Myers prefers heels on all his assistants. So, she grabbed the highest heels she could find and began her walk to the train station. She kept twisting her ankles and running into the bushes on her way there and all the while, she didn't even know if she had missed the train. The station was like a desert, all Kathryn heard was the tapping of her heels as she walked across the platform. She never realized how narrow the platform truly was until she tripped over the edge and fell into the tracks. The ground began to shake, and she heard the train roaring towards her. "Well, at least I didn't miss the 6:00 train." She thought to herself before the sound overpowered her thoughts and she could no longer feel her body.

# Service Learning Project: What Has Been Going on in HUM199H Class?

By: Mia Tubbs and Shanieya Harris

This spring 21 term, the HUM199 class has been working closely with Uriel Zelaya-Perez, an advocate for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). The goal was to ask the Adrian Dominican Sisters, who play a large role in Barry's community, to publicly endorse the CIW's boycott of Wendy's. First, the students got together and wrote a letter to the head of the Adrian Dominican Sisters in hopes that they would be interested in talking more on a Zoom call. In the letter, the students explained the hardships of these workers and why the Adrian Dominican Sisters would not regret joining the boycott (see pg. 8). The students were ecstatic to learn that Sister Kathy Nolan and Sister Linda Bevilacqua wanted to meet with them. On April 20th, 2021, the students prepared a presentation for the Sisters that tied into their class reading of *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. Using analogies of the trees: the crown, the seeds, and the roots, students were able to effectively get their goals across to both Sister Kathy and Sister Linda.

Sister Kathy reassured the students that their efforts will be shared among the Adrian Dominican Sisters and Sister Kathy said that she would be happy to share what the students have done as well. The Sisters made a very impactful talk with the students to tell them boycott is not the end all be all. The Sisters encouraged the students to concern themselves with social responsibility investments (Sister Linda told the students about Barry's Student Managed Investment Fund or SMIF), serving in the CIW, and being a part of the overall CIW campaign.





March 30, 2021

Sister Patricia Sieman, OP, Prioress  
Adrian Dominican Sisters  
1257 East Siena Heights Drive  
Adrian, Michigan 49221

Dear Sister Sieman,

On behalf of the Barry University students, we would like to bring a topic to your attention. It is a topic that we learned about during our service-learning project in HUM 199H Dimensions of Culture I class. In collaboration with Barry's Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI), we have had the unique opportunity to work with the CIW, which stands for [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#). The CIW is a group of farm workers who first started their journey over twenty years ago. The mission of the CIW aims to change the exploitative work environment at farms through the Fair Food program. The [Fair Food program](#) ensures the equal rights, pay, and other longstanding abuses of farm workers. Although many major food companies have joined the Fair Food program, unfortunately, there are still some who have not. The CIW thus far has informed us of the harsh realities they have been going through for years. We were able to witness this firsthand from inside sources and had no idea that farmers were treated poorly, let alone having knowledge about where tomatoes came from. We often do not take the time to think about where our food comes from and how it was cultivated. Many communities today are still blind to the fact that farm workers are still often underpaid, overworked, and discriminated against.

At Barry University, one of the core commitments is social justice, and as Barry students, we find it imperative to hold true to this core belief. A phrase we use daily at Barry University is "Learn, Reflect, and Serve." We have not gone a day without seeing these three words, side by side. It is a current reminder of what we should be doing in terms of service. A few Adrian Dominican Sisters have already taken part and are aware of the CIW's work. Specifically, Sister Linda Bevilacqua and Sister Mary Frances Fleischaker. Many core values of the Adrian Dominican Sisters align with the mission of the CIW. In the vision statement of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, it is stated that exploitation is to be challenged, systems where women are denied equality are to be confronted, and structures that impoverish people are to be challenged. This vision aligns with the CIW's mission. We are simply here to bridge the gap by sharing with you stories we have learned in this process.

The first story that moved us to write to you is about Benito Garcia. Benito and his fellow farm workers work extensively to have pay checks that barely match minimum wage. In the movie, [Food Chains](#), we can see a day of one of the workers' lives. Benito Garcia works at one of the farms picking tomatoes. Benito lives in a trailer with another fifteen people, which is not abnormal for the farmworkers because of the rent being more than they can afford. Benito and his wife, Carmela, get their child ready to get dropped



off at the babysitter, at around 4:30am. As Benito hurries out of the door and prepares to walk with his son in the stroller, Benito's wife tells him to hurry so he does not miss the bus. This bus takes Benito and Carmela and other workers to the farm for their shift. They return at 8:00pm to pick up their son. These workers do not start getting paid for their work until their first bucket of tomatoes is filled. Compared to the luxury we have with being paid as soon as we clock in, whether we are working or not. For over fourteen hours of work, from 5:00am to 8:00pm, Benito gets a check for \$42.27.

Learning about the mistreatment of the farmers in the field disgusted us. While we independently wrote reflection papers on the Immokalee workers, we were all moved to find a solution and way to help, individually and collectively. These farm workers are working insanely long workdays, barely getting fed throughout the day, being bullied, and abused by their bosses, and then come home and do it all again the next day. On top of all that, they get paid virtually nothing. This needs to stop and we need to find a solution to these terrible wrongdoings.

We believe the CIW is in perfect alignment with Barry University's core commitments: knowledge and truth, social justice, inclusive community, and collaborative service. In taking part in the CIW's campaigns, a person can seek justice for those who are oppressed, educate those who are unaware, give a voice to those who speak a different language, and collaborate with other organizations who are also striving for change. Therefore, CIW's vision aligns with the Adrian Dominican Sisters' mission and vision. Within the Adrian Dominican Sisters' vision statement, there are lines that read, "We confront our racist attitudes and root out racist practices in our lives and systems. We confront systems where women are denied freedom, equality, and full personhood. We walk in solidarity with people who are poor and challenge structures that impoverish them." This vision statement shows the willingness of the Adrian Dominican Sisters to unite with other organizations that foster justice from oppression and promote global equality. CIW is one of those organizations.

Before closing this letter with the call for action, we want to say to the Adrian Dominican Sisters the reason many of us have chosen to come to Barry University is because of the University's core commitments. These core commitments are all things we find extremely important in improving society and making the world a better place. The CIW is a perfect organization to endorse because they meet all four core commitments of Barry. The CIW allows us to come together to help fight for equal rights in the fields of Immokalee.

Actions speak louder than words, and action means more than charity. We, therefore, urge the Adrian Dominican Sisters to join the [Wendy's Boycott](#), stand on the right side of history and take bold leadership on the issue of human rights in our country's food system by refusing to do business with Wendy's until the company has met the "gold standard" for protection of farmworkers' rights, already set by all its major competitors, and joined the [Fair Food Program](#). By doing so, Adrian Dominican Sisters will be committing to joining the [Wendy's Boycott with dignity](#).

Thank you Sister Pat for reading our letter, demonstrating our determination to help CIW gain more support for its Wendy's Boycott. As the current semester ends on April 30<sup>th</sup> (our final exam week is during the first week of May), we would like to e-mail you in about a week to 10 days, inviting you to visit our class and meet some of the Honors Program student leaders who have also been involved in this project (our class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am – 12:20 pm). If you'd like, we could also speak with you, at your convenience via a Zoom call and share more with you about our service-learning project. Please share our letter with the Sisters who can be a part of the decision-making process and contact us with any further questions or concerns. As we have done ourselves in sharing information about the CIW, Fair Food Program, and Wendy's boycott with our friends and families, we ask that you share information with the other Adrian Dominican Institutions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

HUM 199H and Honors Program Students:

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cc: [Sister Linda Bevilacqua](#)  
[Sister Mary Frances Fleischaker](#)

# Steps Toward Justice

By: Mia Tubbs

On Tuesday, April 21st, 2021, a verdict was reached in the case of the tragic murder of George Floyd that occurred on May 25th, 2020. Derek Chauvin was found guilty of all three of his charges and sent to jail. Outside of the courtroom many people rejoiced; finally a police officer will not go with just a slap on the wrist for taking away a life that they swore to protect, This is a big step forward for the America. After years of injustices and police brutality murders, the African Amer community especially George Floyd's family can rest a little easier. With that being said, there is still work to be done. These decades of injustice cannot be healed with even ten guilty verdicts. This is deep, this is systemic, and it must be ended. We all must work together towards the fight against injustice. This will not happen over night but it is not impossible.

Dear Barry University Community,

Tonight, after watching a jury doing its part to deliver justice for George Floyd, I am moved- like so many others- to point out that true justice cannot be achieved without true change.

Nearly a year ago, this horrific act of violence opened eyes, hearts, and minds to the realities of systemic racism and inequality in this nation. There is so much work to be done, and I reiterate our commitment at Barry University to make this work our responsibility.

I again call on our students, faculty, staff, and alumni to lead in peacefully dismantling systems that have perpetuated racial injustice in this country. To accept social responsibility, foster peace and nonviolence, and strive for true social justice.

Sincerely,



Mike Allen, PhD  
President



## Scholarship Engagement: Preflection Session with CCSI's Ms. Liz James By Anna Galaktionov

This year, the Honors Program Scholarship Engagement took on a significant and exciting endeavor to cooperate with the Fair Food Program and Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). To begin this journey, the honors students attended an informative preflection session with Ms. Liz James, from the Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI), on January 29 and February 5. Ms. Liz explained that the Fair Food Program and CIW are labor rights organizations, but before going any further, she asked the students to describe their favorite sandwich. Some responses were the Italian BMT from Subway, the Pub Sub from Publix, peanut butter and fluff sandwich, bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich from New York delis, the Salvadoran sandwich, and many others. Then, Ms. Liz had the students consider where do the ingredients in their favorite sandwich come from and how are they harvested. She reinforced the discussion with these three video clips. She explained that farmworkers, especially those who pick tomatoes in Immokalee, Florida, are being treated unfairly by the growers. They get paid below poverty level wages, live in packed trailers, and have limited access to essentials. In addition, the women are often times sexually abused in the fields by either the farm supervisors or the men coworkers. Donations could be a temporary help for the situation, but Ms. Liz emphasized justice as the ultimate solution. The Fair Food Program and CIW strive toward that justice by convincing large tomato buyers, such as Subway and Walmart, to sign an agreement that lists these three requirements: (1) The buyer must pay a penny more per pound of tomatoes, which will go directly to the farmworkers' paycheck; (2) Inspectors would regularly visit the farms and interview more than 50% of the workers to ensure that they are being treated fairly and are working in safe conditions;

(3) Education sessions for the workers would be held throughout the harvest season that would cover employee rights and steps to be taken if abuse is experienced. After each video, Ms. Liz asked for some feedback or questions from the students. Suzannah Young said, "I'm not necessarily surprised that forced labor is still happening because of the way that it's easy to do that, it's easy to take advantage of people." Lauren Hall stated, ". . . Want to text my mom and say 'Stop buying tomatoes at Publix' . . . When people listen to other people's stories in these situations, that makes them rethink their decisions." Jennie Ludice said, "I just thought it was interesting how even though when these [Publix and Wendy's] turn them down a lot, they [CIW] still call them their future partner." Ignasi Forcano stated, "After watching this video, for sure [you need] to really look at what you're buying and where you're buying it." Overall, the preflection was an engaging and preparatory experience for the following Scholarship Engagement sessions.



# Student Spotlight:

## Who is New to the Honors Program?

Hello everyone! My name is Moe Mavins, I am from Woodbridge VA, and I am a freshman here at Barry University majoring in Biology. I choose to attend Barry University not only for the fact that I was accepted into the Honors Program, but because I valued the small student to teacher ratio that Barry has. Since I went to a very large public high school, I never had close relationships with any of my teachers as classrooms typically had 25+ students.

So, I wanted to make sure that I have this close relationship with my teachers as I pursued into my undergraduate studies. Moreover, the diversity that Barry University has is unparalleled to other universities. Growing up in an area where diversity flourished, I wanted to continue to surround myself with people of different backgrounds when I attended university. I find it very important for myself and everyone else to surround themselves with people of different nationalities and cultures as it grants you the ability to learn about these new cultures and gives you a unique perspective of different lifestyles. Through being a part of the Honors program, I look forward to pushing myself to my limits and further developing my understanding of a variety of different subjects. As I am looking to apply to PA school during my senior year, I hope that being a part of the HP will also help me stand out amongst other applicants.

Last fall semester, I took the Judeo-Christian doctrine course taught by Dr. Erwin. Although the class was quite abstract and complex, Dr. Erwin made the class very interesting and his profound knowledge of the subject made these very difficult ideas much easier to comprehend. Also, since the class was only made up of other HP students, it felt really refreshing to work with other like-minded individuals who also share a passion for their studies. When I am not doing school work, I enjoy swimming and volunteering around my community. Back home, I have been volunteering at a local SPCA for the past 2 ½ years. At the SPCA, I help walk the adoptable dogs and help customers during the adoption process. In high school, I swam for the school team during my first 3 years, so whenever I get a chance I always like to take a dip in the community pool. I've had an incredible first semester here at BarryU and I am excited to see what next semester brings!



# Congrats Seniors!

Be on the look out for alumni news from these  
newly HP alumni inductees

## **Taylor Checkley**

*Bachelor of Science in Biology*

Honors Thesis: *Social Responsibility for  
the Prevalence of Obesity Among the Poor*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stephanie Bingham

## **Erica Cruz**

*Bachelor of Science in Biology*

Honors Thesis: *Effect of Humans on the Spread  
of Zoological Diseases*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Christoph Hengartner

## **Lauren Hall**

*Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology*

Honors Thesis: *The Effect of COVID-19 on  
Sedentary Behavior and Physical Activity Levels  
in College Students*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tal Amasay

## **Gabriela Jansen**

*Bachelor of Science in Biology*

Honors Thesis: *Analysis of the Synergistic Epidemics  
of Coronavirus and Arboviruses in Brazil*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Ana Jimenez