



## *The Bergamo Center for Lifelong Learning*

### *November 2024*



*The 2024-25 team of Bergamo Spiritus retreat facilitators.*

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# **The Bergamo Break**

*Pause, pray, and stay connected with the latest news at Bergamo*

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## **Bergamo Retreats Inspire High School Students**

A hallmark of the Bergamo Center in recent decades has been its two-day retreats for high school juniors. These retreats, officially called "Spiritus" retreats (meaning "Divine breath"), help students to know they are loved by God and to connect more deeply with their classmates and themselves.

Kevin Kozlowski (pictured in the below photograph), Bergamo's Youth Services Coordinator, has been involved with Spiritus retreats at Bergamo for over 30 years in multiple capacities. He currently oversees the program and directs a dedicated team of facilitators, most of whom are college students or recent graduates (meet a few of them below!). The facilitators lead small group discussions, give witness talks, and provide creative prayer experiences. "I do not want to share too many details and spoil the mystery and surprise students might have on retreat, but we take each school's preference into account," explained Kozlowski. "Some schools might prioritize community or the brotherhood, while others emphasize self-respect. Regardless, we help students to open their hearts to faith and make it their own. We never force faith on them, but strive in the spirit of the Marianist charism to create an environment where students feel loved and

receptive to the Holy Spirit."

At least 9 high schools participate in these retreats year after year and for good reason. 1,208 students attended Bergamo Spiritus retreats last year and an astounding 95% rated their retreat experience as "excellent," the highest possible rating (and no one rated it lower than "good")! This figure is particularly impressive considering that students from some schools do not necessarily choose to attend the retreat but are *required* to do so. "I loved the retreat, I came in not wanting to be here, I left not wanting to leave!" wrote one retreatant on a feedback form. Thanks to Kevin and the facilitators, we know that many feel the same way! Check out more about what retreatants had to say about Bergamo Spiritus retreats below.



  
"...you guys made me feel closer to God."  
- Alter student

  
"The best experience in my life, I feel like I learned... that I'm not the only one."  
- Moeller student

  
"...this really helped me feel connected to my peers."  
- Carroll student

  
"The most comforting and supportive group of people I've ever met...I will remember this <retreat> until the day I die."  
- Seton student

  
"I am totally ready to be more like Christ..."  
- Moeller student

## ***Faces of Bergamo: Meet a Few of Our Junior (Spiritus) Retreat Facilitators!***



### **Jahla Wilson**

Please tell us about yourself. *I attend the University of Louisville and study communications and sociology. I have an internship with the football team.*

What is a fun fact about you? *I love Taylor Swift and knitting - particularly hats and scarves!*

How long have you been involved with Bergamo? *3 years !*

What is a favorite memory you have at Bergamo? *I had a particularly powerful experience while leading a retreat for Purcell Marian High School when one student took what we said to heart*



*and expressed unconditional love.*

**What do you hope students take away from Bergamo Spiritus retreats?** *I hope they realize that they are not alone and that everyone is more similar than they might think.*

## Johnny Pellegrino

**Please tell us about yourself.** *I attended Carroll High School and currently work at Hospice of Dayton.*

**What is a fun fact about you?** *I am a Lonzo Ball superfan!*

**How long have you been involved with Bergamo?** *I have been a facilitator for 2 months and attended a Spiritus retreat here in high school.*

**What is a favorite memory you have at Bergamo?** *Leading a retreat with Moeller High School. I loved helping people open up. One retreatant shook our hands and thanked us. He said he would not have opened up otherwise, and now he wants to be a leader.*

**What do you hope students take away from Bergamo Spiritus retreats?** *I hope they come away with a strong relationship with God and find peace. I hope they experience community and realize that they can rely on one another.*



## Caroline Hafner

**Please tell us about yourself.** *I am from Cincinnati, and I work at the Madisonville Recreation Center.*

**What is a fun fact about you?** *I coach 4th grade basketball!*

**How long have you been involved with Bergamo?** *I am in my second year as a facilitator and attended World's Greatest Retreat in high school.*

**What is a favorite memory you have at Bergamo?** *When I came in for a junior (Spiritus) retreat, I learned how much of a second home this place would become.*

**What do you hope students take away from Bergamo Spiritus retreats?** *I hope they grow closer to God, themselves, and their peers. I hope they can reach out and know they are not alone.*



**"The multiplication of Christians is brought about less by the use of certain pedagogic procedures than by the presence of a religious atmosphere..."**

**-Blessed William Joseph Chaminade**

## **December 3 is Giving Tuesday.**

*Please consider making a gift to be a part of Bergamo's mission of helping teens and adults build community and know God's love.*



*Please see the link at the bottom of this newsletter.*

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## **October Highlights**

In October, while the grounds of Mt. St. John were full of beautiful fall colors, our retreat center was full of wonderful guests! In one weekend alone we were blessed to be able to comfortably host 5 different groups at the same time!

We were also thrilled to be able to host many Marianist events, including the Marianist Encounters Conference. This event attracted guests from all over the country who came to learn more about sustainability and care for the earth - something we strive to live out here at Bergamo. Other members of the Marianist family held events this past month including two Lay Marianist groups - Visitation State Community and L'Esperance Community - as well as the Marianist Leadership Scholars from the University of Dayton. We also welcomed back the Seton Teaching Fellows for a second consecutive year. These young Catholic educators were here for a spiritual retreat as they continue through their year of volunteerism.



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**Fair Trade Coffee at Bergamo!**





In our continued efforts to offer more responsibly-sourced products and to continue our commitment to sustainability, Bergamo is proud to announce that we now serve fair trade coffee. And when you fill up on your cup o' joe at our new coffee machine, you can also enjoy a splash of your favorite flavored coffee syrup! Who needs expensive coffee shops when you have the Bergamo coffee bar?!



## You are invited!

# Advent Sunday Gathering





**Please join us for  
a prayer service  
followed by  
crafts, crèches,  
homemade  
Advent treats and  
Mexican hot chocolate**

**Hosted by Neomi De Anda  
and Martin Rosenau**

**When:** Sunday, December 1, 2024  
**Where:** Bergamo Center for Life Long Learning  
 4400 Shakertown Rd, Beavercreek, OH 45430  
**Time:** 3 – 5 PM  
**Free and open to the public.**

Donations to the Bergamo Center may be made the day of the event.

**R.S.V.P.** <https://forms.gle/i63RYBEC9MV2wZIF9> or through the QRC



**University of Dayton**



## Plan Your Organization's Christmas Party at Bergamo!

Planning your parish, school, or company Christmas gathering? Bergamo's cozy facilities and upgraded dining services would be a perfect fit! While Bergamo is busy much of the year, **dates are still open in December.** While the weather outside might be frightful, our Fireplace Lounge is so delightful! See below for contact information.

## 3 Minute Retreat

**Pause.** Breathe deeply. Slowly read the following passage three times.

*Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

*(Philippians 4: 6-7)*

**Pray** the following prayer or one of your own. *Lord, fill my heart with gratitude for your presence.*

*Amen.*

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## Connect with Us

Spend the day with Bergamo! Attend an upcoming Day of Rest and Healing: *November 25, December 9, January 28*

Find more information on our website: [www.bergamocenter.org](http://www.bergamocenter.org) ( under "Adult Programs")

Interested in booking a group? Contact us at (937) 426-2363 or [info@bergamocenter.org](mailto:info@bergamocenter.org)

Check out photos from your group's visit to Bergamo and other updates on our Facebook and Instagram pages!



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## Join Our Cause

Please consider supporting Bergamo's mission of providing excellent programming and facilities.

**Donate**

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*The Bergamo Center 4400 Shakertown Rd., Dayton, OH 45430*

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