



The HeartBeat

A Newsletter for Alumni & Friends of St. John Eudes School

School Spring Fundraiser to Feature Casino Cruise Theme, Fantastic Auctions & Trip to Hawaii Grand Prize!

Proceeds to Benefit New Science Lab; Fun to Benefit Cruise Passengers

"The best time I've had in a long time!"
"Surprisingly fun!" "You sure know how to have a good time at St. John Eudes!" "I was impressed with the entire event, I had a fantastic time!"

This is what they said about last year's Spring Fundraiser, *Casablanca*. Every year the PTSO at St. John Eudes School puts on a quality event that is fun for everyone. The main purpose of this event is to raise money for the school. Proudly, the money raised last year went towards the purchase of monitors and projectors for each classroom. This year the goal is to fund school educational

programs, as well as a new science lab.

So, how do they do it? The PTSO officers and a team of volunteers work for months organizing the event. The main fundraiser components are the Grand Prize Raffle, the Silent Auction and the Live Auction. But there is so much more to the event than that! There is a theme, music, dancing, casino games, bingo, great food, fantastic drinks and fellowship. These things make for an amazing experience year after year.

This year the theme is *Come Sail Away on the U.S.S. Danowitz*. We are honoring our

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School Celebrates 40th Anniversary with Gala Dinner Grill Hall Filled with Alumni, Friends & Happy Memories



Mrs. Danowitz and Msgr. Nugent pose with Dan Lien '74, first "SJE Alumnus of the Year". Dan has been active in the school and parish, and was chosen from a number of outstanding nominees for the award. The award was presented at the school's 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner.

On Feb. 3 our extended school community joined together to celebrate SJE School's 40th Anniversary. The celebration started with a special 40th Anniversary Mass with Bishop Wilkerson as presider and concelebrated by Msgr. Nugent and Fr. McNamara. The church was filled with parishioners, friends, faculty, and alumni, and beautifully adorned with red & white decorations and flowers – reflecting our school colors. Following the Mass, nearly 200 guests entered Grill Hall for the 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner.

The joyful decorations in the hall not only continued with the red & white color theme, but all the walls were full of student art work and presentations. Each class displayed its talents for the guests.

The festivities officially began when

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Highlights:

- ♦ **Spring Fundraiser Set for May 19; Will Feature Casino Cruise Theme & Hawaii Trip Grand Prize**
- ♦ **Member of "Pioneer Class of '74" Honored as First "Alumnus of the Year"**
- ♦ **Alumna "Top Young Catholic Leader" in U.S.; Appears on Cover of National "Catholic Digest", Featured in "The Tidings"**
- ♦ **Grill Hall Filled with Alumni & Friends in Celebration of 40th Anniversary**
- ♦ **Students to Perform in Hallmark Channel Movie; Applauded for Performance with LA Opera in the Cathedral**
- ♦ **10 Tons of Snow Fall on SJE Field; School Declares First "Snow Day"**
- ♦ **Alumnus Wins Verizon Writing Contest; Published in San Fernando Newspaper**
- ♦ **Sr. Rosemary Reminds SJE Family to Reflect on God's Love During Anniversary Year**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Endowment Collection during Catholic Schools Week. Nearly \$3,500 was raised to help support the Endowment Fund!

White Equals Green at St. Patrick's Snow Day

St. Patrick's Day, for many of us, brings visions of green rolling hills, sly leprechauns and shamrocks. This year, March 17th also brought SNOW to SJE, as PTSO president, Alan Lien, master-minded a fun family day on the field.

"I grew up in snow country . . . [We] had been talking about hosting a carnival of some sort and when the idea of combining it with a 'snow festival' materialized it seemed like a great match," Lien shared.

How did a sledding slope suddenly appear overnight on a green field of grass? Twenty-five hay bales were stacked to form an eight foot high "hill", then ten tons of "snow" (anonymously donated) was blown onto the twenty by forty foot area by North Hollywood Ice Co.

An estimated 400 people came by to enjoy the fun. An unseasonably warm winter day conquered all fear of frostbite. Indeed, snow cones were a hit at the room-parents' refreshment booth, along with funnel cakes and popcorn. The large turnout also meant that the event brought unexpected income for the school, with over \$3,000 collected in entry and food sales.

Said Lien, "It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying each other's fellowship, in future years we hope to expand with more things to do . . . we hope it becomes an annual event."

Spring Fundraiser

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Principal, Mrs. Barbara Danowitz. Why don't you join us? The big event takes place on Saturday, May 19, 2007, in our very own Fr. Grill Hall. The Silent Auction begins at 6:00 pm. The cost for all of this fun is only \$35 per person. Please call Melissa Reyes at 818-349-9580 to make a reservation. Grand Prize Raffle tickets will be sold after the Masses on April 28-29, May 5-6, and May 12-13. See you on the U.S.S. Danowitz Cruise! Bon voyage!

SJE Alumna Receives National Recognition Acknowledged As a "Top Young Catholic Leader" in the U.S.

Earlier this year, SJE alumna, Alejandra Rivera '06, appeared on the cover of the national issue of the Catholic Digest along with eleven other Catholic school students who exemplified the *Top Young Catholic Leaders* in the United States.

She had previously been chosen by the Catholic Digest as the finalist of the local Catholic Digest Leadership Scholarship based on a nomination by SJE Principal Barbara Danowitz. She was selected from several area wide applicants for exemplifying outstanding leadership, good character, a positive

attitude, outstanding class attendance and participation, and strong community involvement.



Alejandra Rivera '06 and her proud mother, Margarita Rodriguez-Rivera, pose outside Louisville High School. (Photograph courtesy of The Tidings)

Alejandra is currently attending Louisville High School and was featured in a *Tidings* article about her accomplishments (January 26, 2007, issue). *The Tidings* wrote, "Rivera's winning scholarship essay responding to the topic, 'How you practice courage through faith,' sums up her personal philosophy about life in

today's fast-paced, peer-pressure world. 'God always has a plan for us,' says Rivera, 'and we just have to trust in Him.' "

Science Lab Receives Substantial Anonymous Donation

Mrs. Danowitz recently announced that an anonymous donor has donated \$20,000 to the school. The money was donated for the new Science Lab. While discussions regarding the new Science Lab are still in the planning stages, the donation will go a long way to help fund the project and to start serious considerations about making the lab a reality.

SJE Students Join LA Opera in "Noah's Flood"; Leads to Performance in Hallmark Christmas Movie

Earlier this year St. John Eudes students, under the direction of Richard Medrano, joined members of the Los Angeles Opera in the performance of "Noah's Flood". Performances were held in the church, as well as in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. Our children did so well, that they were invited to perform in a Hallmark Channel movie for Christmas. Watch for them during the holidays!



It's almost time to board the casino ship soon to be docked in SJE harbor! Guests receive playing chips that can be used at a variety of casino games. At the end of the evening the chips are turned in for raffle tickets that are used to win fabulous prizes. The school wins and the players win — It's not a gamble to have fun at the Spring Fundraiser! SJE parents Will Levesque, Michele Altamirano, and Molly Gaines are ready to set sail on the U.S.S. Danowitz!



The Pulse: News About SJE Alumni & Friends

Robert Dickinson Jr. '79 graduated from Chaminade in 1983. He then attended the University of Arizona. He lives in Mesa, Arizona, with his wife, Alison, and his three girls, Raelyn (4), Carly (2), and Tawny (6 months). He is enjoying a career in real estate.

Victoria Dickinson (Alexander) '86 graduated from Chaminade in 1990. She then attended St. Mary's University in Northern California where she received her teaching credentials. She married her husband, Jack, at St. John Eudes in 1997. She has three children, Jack (6), Mia (4), Ella (11 months), and lives in Redondo Beach, where she is active at St. James Parish.

Monica Feraldo '87 attended California Lutheran University. She then joined the Army and has just completed her training. She serves in the Army as a Chaplain's assistant. Monica is stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Her family is excited and proud of her accomplishments.

Christine Cowan '02 attended Chatsworth High School where she was actively involved with the basketball program. She graduated in 2006 and has decided on a career in cosmetology, and is learning the trade at the Woodland Hills Occupational Center.

George Todorovic '03 is currently a senior at Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks. He has lettered in football and soccer, is the goalie on the Varsity soccer team, and has played the saxophone in Notre Dame's marching band all four years. George earned the "Most Improved Player" award while on Notre Dame's J.V. football team, then moved up to Varsity for two years. He is one of only twenty seniors selected to participate in a Christian Service project in which students assist needy families in Mexico. George plans to study Architecture in college.

Special congratulations to **Matthew Alvarez '06**. Matthew recently won a writing contest sponsored by Verizon. The theme was *Knowledge is Power*. His poem was published in *The Sun* newspaper of San Fernando.

Lauren Broussard '06 is currently attending Notre Dame High School where she is active in sports. Lauren's mother recently wrote a note to Mrs. Danowitz

crediting her success in high school to her education at SJE. The note read, "*Lauren [recently] received the Notre Dame Coach's Award in Freshman Volleyball. The Coach's Award is given by the coach to an individual athlete that personifies what a Notre Dame athlete should be. So many nice things were said by her coach before she was presented with the award – we were all filled with much joy. We were very proud of Lauren. We also have so much gratitude to Lauren's SJE teachers for helping instill that character does count. As parents, we hold onto one hand with our child and in school the teachers hold onto*

the other hand, in helping us raise wonderful children."

Veteran SJE teacher **Ron Allington** will be leaving St. John Eudes at the end of the school year. "Mr. A" will remain in the teaching field and pursue other career opportunities. We wish him all the best with his future plans!

If you have news about what you've been doing e-mail us at "theheartbeat@socal.rr.com" or send us a note to:

*Attn: The HeartBeat
St. John Eudes School
9925 Mason Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311*

Sr. Rosemary's Letter for the 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner

My dearest St. John Eudes Family,

As you gather to celebrate 40 historic years, educating children at St. John Eudes School, I send you my love and prayers through the first SJE secretary, "Miss Rita"! I am sure that she has many stories about the enthusiastic and cooperative spirit that rooted the school in your beautiful community spirit, and countless memories of the mischief and accomplishments of the "pioneer" students . . .

Some of you remained close to "home" and have become the pillars of the parish and the community, using your Christian education to form solid, loving families, living your faith day-by-day, "in season and out of season". Others have gone out to "all parts of the earth" and have witnessed to God's love, using your faith and knowledge in helping-professions, in dedicated service, in building solidarity. Others have gone before us, and now shine like the stars, leading us to seek and to find Jesus in the face of every child.

In a spirit of gratitude, I invite you to look back - to remember and to pray for our founding pastor, Fr. Grill, who wanted the best for all of the children of the parish. In 1966, we were the only school in the Archdiocese with air conditioning and instructional television!

Recall the first Sisters of the Pious Schools, led by Sr. Beatrice and assisted by Sr. Laura. They poured out their lives as they implanted the spirit of Mother Paula (now Saint Paula Montal) with the mission of "saving families by teaching children the love of God."

God has placed many special persons in our lives. Take a moment now to reflect on your experiences of God's love during your years at SJE . . . Ask yourselves: "Who are the persons who helped me to grow?" "What did they teach me?" "What values did I learn, thanks to them?" "What goodness, beauty, truth did they help me to discover within myself?"

Some sow the seed; others water and care for the tender plant; but it is GOD who gives the life . . .

Yes, this is the fruit of your education - the person you have become, the choices you have made, the love you have given and received! And this is wonderful to behold!

Watching the eagles soar overhead in the clear Indian sky, my heart rises up in prayer and gratitude for each and everyone of you at St. John Eudes who have helped me to know, to grow, to love!

United in Jesus' love, Sr. Rosemary, Sch. P

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Mrs. Barbara Danowitz
Principal

*A Community of Faith
is a community of learners
who recognize and nourish
God-given gifts.*



The HeartBeat

A publication of the
St. John Eudes School
Development Office

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40th Anniversary Gala Dinner

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Msgr. Nugent welcomed the guests and said grace before the catered dinner was served. During dinner the audience was treated to a choral presentation by school children (who had also sung at Mass), conducted by Richard Medrano. At the conclusion of dinner, Msgr. Nugent and Mrs. Danowitz gave their presentations as pastor and principal of the school, and introduced the guest speakers.

It was great to have Fr. McNamara and Bishop Wilkerson with us for the evening. Their words of congratulations and their insight into the mission and value of Catholic education, especially as provided by SJE School, were inspiring.

Paige (Huff) Hemmis '86, who had been

scheduled as the alumna guest speaker, was unable to attend the dinner – a last minute schedule change on the TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* prevented her from coming home that weekend (she was needed to film two episodes that week – one of which included the rebuilding of a home in Mississippi for a Hurricane Katrina victim). She did however send a video presentation.

In the video she compared the foundation of the house she was building to the foundation she received at St. John Eudes, saying, *“Yes, we’re pouring a concrete foundation [here] behind me. . . but you are my foundation – it’s the reason I feel this life has chosen this path for me. . . I just want to give my love and my gratitude to all of you who have made such a difference in my life and made me the person I am today.”*

The next guest speaker was a representative of the faculty, Mr. Allington. “Mr. A” delighted alumni and guests by recalling memories of the past school years – highlighting them in a month by month fashion – to the applause and acclaim of former students. His closing remarks filled the hall with a deep sense of emotions that truly showed the support and

from Sr. Rosemary (former SJE Principal who is currently assigned to a convent in India) to be read at the dinner. The message was read by Tom Walinski '72. Although Sr. Rosemary couldn't be with us in person, it was great to know she was with us in spirit! (See page 3 for the complete text of her message).

Then prior to Msgr. Nugent concluding the evening with his closing remarks and a prayer, Ernie Star, Development Director, presented the first “SJE Alumnus of the Year Award” to Dan Lien '74 – a member of the “SJE Pioneer Class” (the first class to have attended all eight years at SJE). The award was based on nominations received from SJE friends and alumni for an alumnus who has best applied the principles of “to Live, to Love, to Learn, and to Leave a Legacy” since attending SJE School. Dan was cited for the award since he *“truly has embraced the mission of St. Paula Montal to teach and inspire children and families to be life-long learners who live their faith. . . He is an example to [his family] and others of great faith and devotion. . .”*

In his presentation Ernie noted the importance of providing current students role models from our own alumni base, saying,

“It’s important that our students can see tangible results of a St. John Eudes education. And who better to show them what can be done than an alumnus who has applied the principles of our school beyond the playground and into adult life.”

A special thanks to the Celebration Committee that worked so hard to



Master of Ceremonies, Mike Garcia, introduces the SJE students who entertained guests during dinner and sang so beautifully at Mass.

love he and the faculty has for the school students and families. The audience rose in a standing ovation.

The audience was then treated to a slideshow. While students, teachers, uniforms, and hairstyles changed over the years, the sense of community and school spirit remained evident through the decades in the pictures.

A surprise presentation was made by Rita (Bochniarz) Costello, who is Sr. Rosemary's sister and was the school's first secretary. She had received an e-mail

make the SJE School 40th Anniversary Dinner such a memorable occasion: Dan '74 & Kathy Lien (Chairpersons), Ellen Abbene, Molly Gaines, Cathy Garcia, Bettina Levesque, Mary Milkovich, Kathy Reynolds, Ernie Star, Eva Star, and all the volunteer SJE Parents. Also a special thanks to Mike Garcia, who served as Master of Ceremonies, and to Sheryl Reyes for compiling the slideshow. *If you would like a copy of the “St. John Eudes School 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner Program” in pdf format, which includes a comprehensive 40th Anniversary History of St. John Eudes School (with pictures), as well as a list of former teachers, former associate pastors, and much, much, more - please e-mail to “theheartbeat@socal.rr.com”.*