



The HeartBeat

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

Visit us at www.sjeschool.net

Back-to-School Night Highlights “Unity of Spirit” of SJE School Community School Works to Maintain Vision of Catholic Education Even During Extended Economic Downturn

Back to School Night is the annual St. John Eudes tradition that signals to parents that school is really underway. And it was a packed house of new and returning parents that met on Sept. 8 to get the latest news on what was going on and what the plans for the new school year would be.

Msgr. Nugent addressed the parents noting that it is the spirit of unity of parents, teachers, alumni and supporters that makes a Catholic education possible at St. John Eudes. And he was thankful to all those who supported our students.

The parents were also addressed by Rick Crandall, chairperson of the SJE Parish School Board, who introduced the Board and presented the parents with information about the current year budget. He noted that the current economic environment has put an extraordinary burden on many families who are now seeking tuition assistance - and this in turn has impacted the school. He appealed to current and alumni families, who are able to provide assistance, to come to the aid of struggling families and donate to the school

through the *Adopt-a-Student Program*.

Fred Perez, SJE Parent-Teacher Organization president, also addressed the parents and echoed the commitment to support the school and provide fundraising efforts to maintain the educational vision of SJE School.

Before breaking into smaller class-level related groups, Mrs. Danowitz provided the parents some additional insights about the school:

- *The School is a Center for Its Students and Families* of faith formation, academic excellence, and moral and spiritual growth.
- *The Faculty is Highly Qualified and Credentialed* with annual professional development and assisted by trained classroom aides.
- *The Focus is on Student Learning*, particularly in respect to our Catholic identity, with effective and research based instruction, student achievement and assessment, and a number of additional important factors.
- *Teachers and Staff Work as Teams at All Grade Levels* to improve student learning,

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Highlights:

- "Unity of Spirit" Links Parents, Teachers, Alumni, & Supporters
- Technology Improvements Support Student Learning
- Tutors Help SJE Students Make Grade
- SJE 8th Graders Test at College Levels
- SJE Alumnus Testifies Before Congress; Credits 6th Grade Skills with Effective Presentation
- Celebration for Msgr. Nugent to be Gala Event
- Alumnus Sought for Recognition; Submittals Open for SJE Alumnus of the Year
- Class Banners Unfurl to Support Green Jog-A-Thon
- Students Have Blast at JPL; Look Over Rover
- Golf Tournament Makes Hole-in-One with Proceeds to Help Improve Campus Security



Refreshments before the meeting were hosted by the SJE Room Parents. The Room Parents, as alumni are sure to remember, are an important support organization for the school (and also for hungry parents!). They are also involved with a number of support activities, including the Jog-A-Thon and classroom assistance.



Parish School Board chairperson, Rick Crandall, presents important information to the parents at the meeting. The Board is a consultative parish organization which assists and advises the pastor and principal. It has been instrumental in supporting many special projects, including the Science Lab, budget development, and policy formation.

iMacs & Smart Boards Expand SJE Student Learning Skills & Opportunities

SJE students started off this school year with a totally revamped computer lab! The school has leased twenty 20" iMacs for our students, and one 21.5" iMac for the lab teacher.

In addition, the students are benefiting from *Smart Boards* that have been installed in the 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Grade classrooms. Smart Boards essentially provide a chalkboard size area that acts like a touch screen computer monitor. They allow teachers to present more interactive lessons and keep students actively engaged in the class. The Smart Boards already installed were the result of a generous donation from the Piekunka Family (alumni family), as well as proceeds from last year's Golf Tournament.

Mrs. Danowitz, whose vision for the school is supported by the School Board, sees additional improvements in technology ahead. Immediate needs are for four more Smart Boards to be placed in the Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 4th Grade classrooms. Mrs. Danowitz said, "The Smart Boards are an amazing tool for our teachers and students. Once students have had a Smart Board in the classroom, it is difficult for them to imagine a classroom without it. We hope to be able to equip all our classrooms as soon as possible, particularly for the 2nd Graders as they move into 3rd Grade so they can continue receiving the benefits from this technology." Also needed are document cameras, sound amplifiers, and a response system. In the future, the school envisions having a one-to-one laptop program for the middle school classes, a rolling computer cart for the Science Lab, and to be able to offer assistive technology for students with special needs. This future vision can be achieved, but only with the generous support from our alumni and friends! If you are able to contribute to the cause in any way, please contact the School



"Senior" tutors Mary Ann Walinski and Warren Lien help SJE students keep up with their studies. Some tutors, like Warren, have had children - and even grandchildren - attend and graduate from SJE School. It is through the dedication and help by groups such as the tutors that SJE students excel in their studies and faith formation. A "unity of spirit" is shown in so many ways by our school alumni, friends, and families.

Office. Let's keep SJE students in the forefront of technology!



Above - New Apple iMac computers grace the desks and counters of the Computer Lab used by the elementary level classes. The iMacs are self contained and provide students with additional skills as they are taught to use the iMac operating system.

Below - "Smart Boards" connect to the teacher's computer to be able to display software that supplements class instruction. The boards also act as touch screens and can receive input from students through at-desk input devices as well as record what's written on the board.



Back-to-School Night

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maintain and improve teaching methodologies, and grow as a professional learning community.

- *Graduating SJE 8th Graders Are Sought by Catholic High Schools* and receive numerous scholarships, honors, and awards. They go on to prestigious public and private universities around the country, and fill positions in many high end professions and trades.
- *The 2009-10 Parent Survey Rated the School "Good" or "Outstanding" in All Areas* particularly citing that parental participation is encouraged, the strong commitment to Catholic values, the comprehensive curriculum, high expectations for students, and the utilization of technology to support the learning process. Survey suggestions by parents related to student motivation, extracurricular activities, and improvement to the hot lunch program are being addressed as part of the school's commitment to continuous improvement.

Alumni and friends are invited to keep up with everything that's happening at St. John Eudes School during the year. Visit our website often for all the latest information.

Recent Standardized Tests Validate Excellence of SJE School Program

Recent standardized tests have shown how effective the SJE educational program is, particularly in respect to preparing students academically for high school and college.

ITBS tests that are administered nationally show that SJE students perform as a group in the high range of all tested schools.¹

Tests also show SJE middle school students do very well in 5th Grade subject matter testing with scores of 21.1% Proficient and 78.9% Advanced. But when they reach 8th Grade, they test at an *even more impressive* score of 5.3% Proficient and 94.7% Advanced!² This result is supported by a second set of tests that showed SJE 8th Grade students score at a high school level for mathematics and social studies – and score at a college level for language arts and science, with a comparable college level score overall!¹ **Great work students, teachers, and families!**

¹ ITBS - Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Fall 2009

² ACRE - Assessment of Catholic Religious Education Scores - 2010



The Pulse: News About SJE Alumni & Friends

Mark Gendernalik '84 attended Chatsworth High School (after transferring from Crespi) where he graduated in 1988. In high school he enjoyed playing on the volleyball team. He then attended California State University, Northridge, where he was active in student issues. He graduated CSUN in 1992 with a B.A. degree in Criminal Sociology. He later received his Master's Degree from CSUN in Education and is currently a 4th Grade teacher at Shirley Avenue Elementary. In 2003 Mark received the *NASA Explorer School Grant* for his school (being 1 of

only 48 awarded nationwide). Due to his experiences with insurance companies (related to a condition of his daughter) he was invited to testify before Congress during the recent healthcare debate. In preparing for his testimony Mark said he relied on the "outlining" method he was taught by his 6th Grade teacher, Mrs. Thies. Writing was not his favorite subject, and he says he found Mrs. Thies to be a demanding teacher, but the skills he learned from her, and his other SJE teachers, have served him well his whole life. He also recalls his college professors complimenting him on his writing abilities. Mark married his wife, Bertha (who works in a brokerage firm), in 1998. They have three children – Dean, and twins – Carter and Sidney.



Mark Gendernalik '84 testified in 2009 in a televised hearing before the House Oversight and Reform Committee. His testimony elicited extensive response in Congress and the news media (if you google his name you'll find numerous internet articles and reports). Mark attributes the effectiveness of his testimony to what he was taught at St. John Eudes School. He recently visited the school to thank Mrs. Thies (his 6th Grade teacher and current middle school teacher) for giving him skills that have benefited him in so many ways.

In a Lighter Vein . . .

A kindergartener opened the big and old family Bible with fascination, looking at the old pages as he turned them. Then something fell out of the Bible. He picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that has been pressed in between the pages.

"Mama, look what I found," the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice he answered, "I think it's Adam's suit!"

Is there something special that you maybe placed between the pages of your memory that is just waiting to be found? Could it be all those great memories you had of being part of the St. John Eudes School Family? Our school family needs you now more than ever. Today's economy has greatly affected many of our current families. More families than ever are seeking tuition assistance. We want to make sure that no student is denied a Catholic education because of financial need - and we need you to help.

Please open the pages of your heart and make a donation to help St. John Eudes School families. Donations are tax deductible and help the worthy cause of providing a quality Catholic education to deserving children. Your donation to the Annual Fund, Adopt-A-Student Program, Endowment, or other general or specific gift is greatly appreciated. To donate please contact the School Office (818) 341-1451 or visit our website at www.sjeschool.net. Thank you!

Save the Date for Msgr. Nugent's Gala Dinner!

A special Gala Dinner in honor of Msgr. Peter Nugent, SJE pastor, will be held at the Odyssey Restaurant on April 30, 2011. The dinner is being held to three-fold celebrate the beginning of Msgr. Nugent's 50th year of ministry, celebrate his 75th birthday, and to thank him for his guidance and service to our parish and school – and for all the years of exceptional service to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles – as he prepares to retire on July 1. Tickets to the gala will be available soon!

Nomination Forms for the 2011 SJE Alumnus of the Year Now Available

Is there an SJE alumnus you know who would be a good example to our students of someone who has best applied the principles of "to Live, to Love, to Learn, and to Leave a Legacy" since attending SJE School?

Alumni and friends are invited to submit a nomination for the *2011 St. John Eudes School Alumnus of the Year*. Forms (and more information) are now available at www.sjeschool.net. Nominations must be submitted to the School Office by Jan. 7. Give an alumnus the recognition they deserve – send in your nomination today!



*Sr. Rosemary, former SJE principal, (seated center) has been working in India teaching younger sisters English and living the mission of the Sisters of the Pious Schools. Their convent is in Kerala, which is the most Catholic of the states of India, but she recently had the opportunity of traveling to Assam, in northern India, to help "educate the poor and promote the dignity of woman." She was a guest there of the "Christ the King Mission", and as she wrote in an article for the *Piarist**

Japan Province Bulletin, ". . . Each day was filled with many blessings, including Holy Hour with the Sisters as they freely voiced their thanks to God recalling His recent gifts to their community. Spontaneously and humbly they shared their faith, simplicity, and prayerfulness, including vocations to the Piarist Sisters and fruitfulness in our mission. . . ." Her article gives wonderful insight into life in India, especially for Christian missionaries. The full text of her article can be found on the school website.

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



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A publication of the
St. John Eudes School
Development Office

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This year, after their unveiling at the Jog-A-Thon kick off assembly, the banners “hung around” for the week during raffle ticket sales. Spied congregating around the class monikers for a closer look were: *Jumpin Jellybeans* (K), *Lappin’ Lollipops* (1st), *Fit In Faith* (2nd), *Mrs. Balme’s Firecrackers* (3rd), *Faithful 4th Graders*, *5th Grade Patriots*, *6th Grade Soarers*, *7th Grade Islanders* and *8th Grade Guardians*.



SJE 7th and 8th Graders recently visited the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. Visiting a number of areas at JPL, the students take the opportunity to pose with a display version of a future Mars rover scheduled for blast-off in 2011. Interest in science is evident at SJE School with nationally administered tests showing SJE 8th Graders testing at college equivalent levels.



The 8th Grade proudly displays its Jog-A-Thon banner.

Banners Wave, Eagles Soar

The Jog-A-Thon Goes Green

WE’VE got SPIRIT – YES we DO . . .
WE’VE got SPIRIT – HOW ‘bout YOU?!
The spirit of our SJE school community shines on Jog-A-Thon Day, like at no other time or place. Three years ago, the school was looking for a better way to identify each class’ headquarters on the running course, while keeping a festive appearance on the field.

“We really wanted to stop using so many balloons for decorating. I guess you might say we were trying to *go green*,” explains Room Parent, Molly Gaines.

And so SJE Room Parents took on the task of creating a spirit banner for each class. The resulting masterpieces have brilliantly displayed imagination, creativity, beauty and craftsmanship. Some

incorporate the individual students using their photos or names, others portray a central theme for the class. Whether sewn or glued, embroidered or glittered, spunky or serious, SJE students seem to love them.

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On Jog-A-Thon Day the banners were in place, helping to generate class spirit and energy for the running. They will continue to be displayed through the year, in classrooms, at assemblies, and perhaps a school tradition has taken hold. *OUR spirit is SKY HIGH . . . OUR spirit is SKY HIGH . . . OUR spirit is SKY HIGH!*

SJE Fall Sports Season Gets Underway

The fall sports season is underway with the boy’s “A” football team being coached by Sergio Gonzales and John Olivas. The boys are fortunate to have several parent volunteers for football and it allows them the luxury of having two “B” teams – which is great because that team always has 25 players plus and it makes it hard for kids to get playing time. This year there is also a 5th Grade team and a 6th Grade team.

Girl’s volleyball once again has four teams. While there is a shortage of volleyball coaches this year, the current coaches are making it work. The girl’s “A” teams are participants in the Louisville Volleyball Tournament this month. There is also a 5th and 6th Grade “B” volleyball team.

We look forward to some great games and enjoying a great competitive season!

Golf Tournament 2010 to Provide Funding to Upgrade Campus and Parish Security



There’s still time to sign up for the St. John Eudes Golf Classic 2010 to be held at the Porter Valley Country Club on Monday, Nov. 1, with tee off at 12:00 noon. The

tournament has in the past has raised over \$100,000 to support the youth and school of St. John Eudes Parish. This year the tournament proceeds will be allocated to improve parish and school security.

Players, sponsors, volunteers and silent auction donations are needed. Your support of the tournament will help us continue our mission to provide excellence in education and to guide students to develop an inner strength of values and standards

Compete information, and entry and donation forms, are available on the parish website at www.stjohnneudes.org. Or contact tournament chairperson Bryan Suttles at (818) 438-8315 or by email to sjegolf@live.com.