



The HeartBeat

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

Visit us at www.sjeschool.net

It's Almost Time for the . . .



Pentecost / Memorial Day Weekend
Come Celebrate the Spirit!

With summer just around the corner, our alumni and friends are invited to join in the celebration of this great season at the *St. John Eudes Summer Carnival!* There'll be fun rides, great food, bingo, the Grand Prize Drawing with a **\$5,000 Cash First Prize**, a silent auction, fabulous entertainment, enthralling games and much more – including the *Multi-Cultural Mass and Festival* on Pentecost Sunday (May 27). And if you're a sports fan, you can watch sporting events on the big screen in the Entertainment Tent. It's a great way to get together and celebrate the unofficial start of summer!

Admission to the carnival grounds, including the huge Entertainment Tent, is **free**. Pre-sale ride tickets, at over a 50% discount, are available until the day of the carnival through the parish or school offices. And if you'd like to volunteer to help at the carnival, you'll be eligible to purchase discount ride wristbands for the kids (or even yourself!). Please plan on attending this great parish celebration. Complete details and information can be found at www.sjecarnival.org.



SJE Summer Carnival goers enjoy great international food, exciting rides, top-notch entertainment, and much more!

SJE PTSO President Recognized as "PTA President of the Year"



Ricca Francis, SJE PTSO president, (center) poses with other PTSO members at a recent pancake breakfast.

Mrs. Francis has been a very active and supportive parent of the St. John Eudes school community and a strong believer in the school's values and educational goals. She has two boys in the school and is well respected by other parents for her work with the PTSO.

The Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce has selected St. John Eudes School PTSO president, Ricca Francis, as its 2012 "PTA President of the Year." Mrs. Francis was recognized at the Chamber's *12th Unforgettable Educator Recognition Dinner* on April 19 at the Odyssey Restaurant in Granada Hills.

The event "celebrates and honors local teachers and school administrators whose dedication and active role in the community inspire and motivate their students to grow, learn, excel and give back." The selection was based on nominations received by the Chamber. The award is sponsored by Facey Medical Group.

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Highlights:

- *Summer Carnival to Celebrate Spirit of Parish on Pentecost Weekend; Alumni & Friends Invited*
- *SJE PTSO President Honored by Chamber*
- *Jump-Roping Students Raise Heart Thumping Amount*
- *Mrs. Danowitz Inspired by Sisters; Appreciates Parent & Parish Support*
- *Alumna Saved by Donated Organ; Makes Plea for Others*
- *Academic Decathlon Awards Gold, Silver & Bronze Medals to Alumna; Scores Scholarships for Scores*
- *Basketball Teams Have Busy Season; Net Recognition at Tournaments*
- *2012 Alumnus of the Year Acknowledged for Spirit, Legacy, Service*
- *Students Learn to Build, Program Robots; Wired for Science*

Focus on the Faculty: Mrs. Barbara Danowitz Charged with the Desire to Teach and Lead

A human bundle of energy, she resolves that each day her work will further the purpose of nurturing a spectrum of minds, hearts and souls clad in SJE red, black and grey. "I have a huge responsibility, providing faith formation and moral development," shares St. John Eudes' principal Barbara Danowitz. A recent incident portrayed in her the brevity of this task. As she calmed students directly after a teacher's sudden illness, "I looked at those faces . . . and I always tell the children . . . if there is anything you are

afraid of, if you have worries . . . place them in God's hands."

Perhaps these were the same things her parents told her as she grew up in New York City, the fourth of five sisters. Devoted Catholics, mom – a homemaker (and later a restaurant hostess) – was president of the rosary club, and dad – a manager in the grocery business – found time in his busy six day workweek to rise early for morning adoration. Sundays and vacations during the summer "revolved around the family and extended family of 28 cousins .

. . . so many wonderful memories," she recalls.

This closeness to family made her move to California in 1975 "difficult" but the promise of her own family beckoned. Marriage to Carl Danowitz, whom she met while traveling in Europe, ended their three year cross country courtship. Soon enough, three children arrived – Eric, Ryan, and Meredith, and now she is mother-in-law to Danielle and soon-to-be-mother-in-law to Kristen. This success in marriage and family is her most satisfying achievement.

A powerhouse of administration, Mrs. Danowitz began her career as a teacher

and traces the ignition spark to her sister, Theresa, who at seventeen entered into the Sisters of St. Joseph, becoming a teacher and later a principal. "I was nine years old and this made a huge impact." She graduated from Msgr. Scanlon High School and Queens College in New York, and continued her education at CSU, Northridge, and the Institute of Catholic Leadership through the University of San Francisco.

In August of 2002, Sr. Rosemary Bochniarz, Sch.P., passed the SJE principal mantle to Mrs. Danowitz, and she traded time in the classroom for meetings, meetings, and more meetings. "Sometimes too many," she shares with a grin. Even so, the additions and improvements that have taken root during Mrs. Danowitz's tenure indicate positives in administrative circuitry. Improved security, the school library, a website, the science lab, Smart Boards, after school enrichment, track and field program, an iMac lab, a retreat program for K-8, an iPad program, are each the result of "working collaboratively with teachers, sisters, staff, school board, PTSO, room parents, pastor, alumni, and many supportive parishioners." The SJE School Board is highly appreciated "with expertise in business, law, finance, and education, they give excellent advice."

It is no secret that strong parish support is a path of survival for Catholic schools; Ernie Star, School Board vice chairperson and alumni parent, is "impressed that Mrs. Danowitz has a dedication to assuring that even families who have financial issues can find a way to send their kids to our school." And Mrs. Danowitz notes that her own childhood parish, St. Michael's, is in danger of closing. "It's so sad . . ." Formative memories flow out of her days there: "I knew in 4th grade helping Sr. Michelle set up the classroom I wanted to be a teacher." When asked about the future, Mrs. Danowitz's reply is, "I can't believe ten years has passed!" She will continue on, amazed and motivated by the generosity of the people of the parish, including past SJE administrators and pastor-emeritus Msgr. Nugent. She looks forward to continuing and growing the paradigm of St. Paula Montal and St. John Eudes with the special presence of our new pastor Fr. Gerard, who is a member the *Congregation of Jesus and Mary* (which was established by our own St. John Eudes). On the personal side, Mrs. Danowitz would like to travel more and she definitely wants grandchildren!!!



Mrs. Danowitz (center), her husband Carl (far left), and school board member Jan Boudreau (far right), mingle with Hollywood stars Lucille Ball and "The Fonz" at the recent PTSO "Golden Age of Hollywood" Spring Fundraiser held at the Woodland Hills Marriott. Mrs. Danowitz is a strong supporter of PTSO efforts that provide important financial resources to the school and support student achievement. The PTSO raised over \$50,000 at the event (and a special "thank you" to our alumni and friends who attended – and especially to school parent Nancy Hofmeister and her team of volunteers who did such a great job putting on the event!).

Jump Rope for Heart: It Takes Heart to be a Hero

The St. John Eudes School Student Council recently sponsored *Jump Rope for Heart*, an event dedicated to the memory of Diego Baza. Diego was a third-grader at SJE School who suffered from a rare heart condition, and passed away from complications associated with primary pulmonary hypertension. Jump Rope for Heart is a nationwide event that helps students learn about the benefits of regular physical activity and heart health, while raising money to fight heart disease and stroke. By jumping rope and securing sponsors, students raise money for the fight against heart disease and stroke while learning about the seriousness of heart

disease and stroke, the lifelong benefits of physical activity, and the importance of living a heart-healthy lifestyle.

SJE students raised an impressive \$5,312 during the event! The money raised

will help fund lifesaving research and education initiatives that save lives in our own community.



Congenital heart defects are the most common cause of infant death from birth defects. Many children are alive today as a result of treatments not available as recently as 10 years ago. Research and advancements funded by events such as Jump Rope for Heart have changed and saved lives. Special thanks to SJE teacher Lizette Strom for coordinating the event!



The Pulse: News About SJE Alumni & Friends

We recently received this message from **Amanda Setto '00**:

“My name is Amanda Setto and I graduated from St. John Eudes in 2000. I later went to Louisville High School and graduated in 2004. I then attended California Lutheran University and graduated in 2008 as a Biology major. I was accepted to Western University of Health Sciences’ College of Optometry. However, I had to defer my acceptance due to a rare autoimmune disease (Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis) which caused my liver to go into complete failure. I received a miracu-

lous, life-saving liver transplant on April 1, 2011, (April Fool’s Day) at UCLA’s Ronald Reagan Medical Center. I spent nine months as an in-patient there from Christmas Day, 2010, to early September, 2011. I will finally be attending optometry school this coming August. I ask for your prayers that I fully recover and regain my strength. I also ask that you pray for all those in need of an organ transplant and all those souls who have donated their organs. Most importantly, I ask that you all visit donatelife.net and register to become a donor. You could save so many people’s lives. After all, why take your organs to heaven? Heaven knows we need them here! Please consider donating life. Best wishes, Amanda Setto.”

[Editor’s Note: Amanda was a “glow buddy” of SJE student Diego Baza. He was in need of a heart and lung transplant but never got one. Diego is one of SJE School’s *special angels*.]

We ask God’s blessings for **Christopher Czaplá '06** as he begins his seminary studies. Christopher will be studying in Poland as he prepares for the religious life.

Julia Wall '08, who is currently attending Granada Hills Charter High School, competed in the regional Academic Decathlon and earned six gold, one silver, and three bronze medals. She was awarded a \$500 scholarship for having a perfect score in the *Super Quiz* and also a \$1,500 scholarship for being one of the top three scoring students in the competition. Way to go Julia!

Congratulations to **Ashlee Macalino '11** for being selected as one of the 6 finalists to qualify for the *California High*

In Memoriam

Our condolences to the family of **Tony Mellone**, an alumni grandfather and guardian of **Angel Mellone ('96)**, who died last month. Mr. Mellone was an active long-time supporter of the school and parish. Funeral services were held in the church and attended by many of his friends. He will be greatly missed.

Our condolences also to **Fr. Kenneth Chukwu**, who is a chaplain at the Providence Tarzana Medical Center and in residence at St. John Eudes. Fr. Ken recently lost his brother in a traffic accident in Africa. A memorial service was held for his brother in the church and Fr. Ken went home to Nigeria to attend services with his family.

School Speech Association State Championship to be held on April 26-29 in San Francisco. Ashlee is attending Chaminade College Preparatory and has already had her children’s book *Zack the Zebra* published (see the article in last month’s HeartBeat).

Quick Beats . . .

SJE Girls and Boys Basketball Teams and Players Have Been Having a Busy Season with the Boys 5th and 6th Grade Teams representing the school for the first time in the St. Joseph the Worker Annual Basketball Tournament, and the Girls and Boys A Teams

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In a Lighter Vein . . .

In the Computer Age:

RAM DISK is the name of a disk. RAM DISK is not a step in the installation procedure.

Parent: The only way I can communicate with my kids is by using Facebook.

Teacher: How’s that working out?

Parent: It’s like talking to a wall!

A woman met a man in a chat room and they talked for two hours — she never felt that way before about somebody she never met.

If the history of the automobile were like the history of the computer, a Rolls-Royce today would cost \$100, it would get a million miles to the gallon, and every few months, for no reason, it would run into a tree.

Have you ever noticed that when you buy a computer it’s guaranteed for 90 days, but in two weeks it’s obsolete?

*Whenever you make a donation to St. John Eudes School it never becomes obsolete - it’s guaranteed to keep its value for years to come! 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 gifts** is greatly appreciated. To donate please contact the School Office (818) 341-1451 or visit our website at www.sjeschool.net. Thank you!*



Kym Piekunka Raines '83 (posing with Mrs. Danowitz and Fr. Gérard) was recognized as the 2012 St. John Eudes School Alumnus of the Year at the recent SJE School Endowment Trustees’ Dinner. Mrs. Raines was selected as an excellent example to our students of someone who has been a life-long learner in the spirit of St. Paula Montal, and who has applied the principles of “to Live, to Love, to Learn, and to Leave a Legacy” since graduating from St. John Eudes School. Also in attendance were members of the SJE Parish School Board, special supporters of the school, and a number of Mrs. Raines’ family. More about Mrs. Raines and her accomplishments (along with other notable alumni) 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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Catholic Education**

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Quick Beats

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participating in the Chaminade Basketball Tournament – where they were awarded the sportsmanship trophy! Angelica Castro (Gr. 7) and Paolo Maniucu (Gr. 8) were also named *overall tournament players* at the Chaminade Tournament. Basketball players Hannah Banks-Thompson (Gr. 7) and Joshua Breard (Gr. 7) also won the free throw contests at recent *Knights of Columbus Free Throw Competitions*.

John Francis, a 7th Grader and a Life Scout, Will Receive the “Ad Altar Dei” (to the Altar of God) Medal during a special presentation Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels on May 20. The Ad Altar Dei emblem program (for boys in Gr. 7-12) assists Boy Scouts in developing a fully Christian way of life in their faith communities. The program is organized in steps based on the seven sacraments. These sacraments are a primary means toward spiritual growth. The purpose of the Ad Altar Dei program is to help equip the scout to take his place in the world as a maturing Catholic. The requirements for completion center on the Sacraments and concern themselves with action and knowledge. During the 6 month program, John attended a Catholic Scout retreat, witnessed several sacraments, completed a



couple of service projects, and attended a Board of Review.

Students, parents, families, and visitors had the chance to see all the great things happening at SJE School during our recent Open House held during Catholic Schools Week. A favorite was the iMac Computer Lab where students displayed their computer work and skills.

couple of service projects, and attended a Board of Review.

Katherine Wagner (Gr. 8), competed in the So. California Junior Olympics in February and was Awarded a Gold Medal

in swimming for the 50m Freestyle, a Silver medal for the 200m Freestyle and a Bronze for the 100m Freestyle. Just recently, she competed in the Southern California All Star Meet, and won first place for the 50m, 100m, 200m Freestyles. She now holds 3 new meet records for those events.

The SJE Sports Program Continues the Tradition of Excellence at the Knights of Columbus Track Meet which was held on Mar.

11. SJE received 2nd Place recognition for the efforts of our student athletes. Visit the school Facebook page (through the link on the school website) to see some great pictures of the meet!

Los Angeles Archbishop Gomez strongly urges our friends and alumni to support the Californians for Parental Rights Initiative which requires physicians to notify parents prior to performing an abortion on a minor. He also urges support of the **SAFE California Initiative** which replaces the death penalty with life imprisonment without parole. Archbishop Gomez's full message and more information can be found at www.la-archdiocese.org.



Students of the SJE Robotics Club pose with science teacher Angeline King. The students learn how to write robotics programs and then test them on Lego robots. Developing student interest in robotics is certainly a wonderful way to prepare our students for a science which has great future promise. The club is part of the After School Enrichment Program offered by the school. Other activities include a chess club, foreign language, art, dance, and choir.