



The HeartBeat

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

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Faith Based & Quality Education a Reality at St. John Eudes; Back-to-School Night Highlights Focus of Catholic Education



Parents filled Grill Hall on Back-to-School Night to get the latest information about what's coming up for the new school year.

As the new school year got underway, parents joined St. John Eudes School faculty and staff at the school's annual *Back-to-School Night*. The meeting, held in Grill Hall last month, was packed with parents enthusiastically waiting to hear about the school's focus for the coming year and get the latest information on school plans and events for the coming year.

Pastor Fr. Gérard Lecomte, CJM, welcomed and greeted the parents, praying for a successful and inspired school year. PTSO and School Board members were introduced, as well as new and returning staff and teachers. Mrs. Danowitz gave a presentation that provided important insights into the status of the school.

In her presentation, Mrs. Danowitz made the following points:

- The school is future focused to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.
- Digital resources are being increased to take advantage of new technologies.

- *Curriculum Mapping* is being employed to improve instruction and promote achievement and provide a further integrated curriculum.
- There will be an added emphasis on instructional strategies to further develop the excellence of the school.
- A preschool curriculum has been developed to facilitate the implementation of the preschool that will be located in the former priests' residence adjacent to the parish campus.

• Further improvements will be made to school facilities with additional capital investments planned to improve the learning environment and promote a safe and welcoming campus.

Mrs. Danowitz also provided a detailed presentation on the financial status of the school. She noted the important efforts made at the school to maximize tuition dollars and the vital role donations and fundraising play in providing financial support.

She further highlighted the fact that through careful financial stewardship, combined with parental and donor support, St. John Eudes School provides a great value in Catholic education without a need to choose between a faith-based education and an excellent academic program.

After conclusion of the meeting, parents were hosted with refreshments and then had the opportunity to visit with the teachers in the classrooms and get a preview of what the kids would be doing for the coming school year.

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Highlights:

- **Back-to-School Night Gives Parents Preview of Year to Come**
- **Author Booked to Inspire Students**
- **Students Celebrate "Character Counts Week"; Pillars of Character Support Foundation of Ethics & Morality**
- **PTSO Officers and School Board Presented to Parents**
- **Jog-A-Thon Shows There's No Lapse of Support for School**
- **Happy Birthday Mrs. Bertain!**
- **Alumnus Brings Comfort to NICU Families**
- **Sr. Guadalupe & Sr. Georgina Receive SJE Medal; Examples of Dedication and Love**
- **New Director Takes Up Baton of School, Parish Music Programs**
- **Alumna Scores Hole-In-One with Golf Scholarship; Shows Putting Around Can Bring Benefits**

Quick Beats . . .

With a focus on bringing students closer to Jesus in a safe environment, the school theme this year is *Jesus is our shepherd and protector*. A secure environment is essential to allowing students to thrive and develop an understanding of Catholic worship – which is promoted through their participation in a variety of liturgies and prayer services. Students also learn to put their faith into action when they engage in service projects throughout the year as a school, class, and individuals.

Congratulations to our new Student Council members who were commissioned at the Student Body Mass in September. The Student Council provides the opportunity for its members to learn leadership skills and become involved in special service projects. Among its members for 2014-2015 are **Thayer**



The 2014-2015 PTSO Executive Council (above) and Parish School Board (below) were introduced to parents at the recent Back-to-School Night. The Executive Council is comprised completely of parents, while at least two-thirds of the School Board are non-parent members derived from the parish and local community. Each plays important and significant roles in advising the pastor and principal regarding the school, as well as providing important support when needed to assure our school maintains its commitment to providing an exceptional Catholic education. More about the PTSO and the School Board is available on the school website at www.sjeschool.net.



Loomis, President; **Jessica Gullette**, Vice President; **Jennifer Uyanga**, Secretary; **Natalia Campos**, Social Secretary; and **Nathan Valtairo**, Religious Affairs Secretary.

Focus on the importance of literature and writing continues to be a hallmark of an SJE education

as the school hosts its yearly *Author Day*. This event brings students in direct contact with well known authors and provides them the opportunity to meet directly with someone who has a working knowledge of the literary field. In November students will be treated to a presentation by Mike Graf, author and illustrator. Mr. Graf has been writing stories ever since he was in elementary school. His first stories combined his love of writing with his fascination of the weather. Now years later, he has written several books on weather for children – both fiction and non-fiction. He is sure to inspire another generation of writers at SJE!

SJE Students participated in the Great California Shake

Out joining millions of other students around the state on Oct. 16. Mindful that we live in “earthquake country”, the safety of students during an earthquake is a top priority. During the drill, students were taught how to react to an earthquake scenario and avoid injury to themselves and others. It’s an important part of keeping our children safe.

Character Counts Week was recently celebrated by our



The annual “Halloween Hop” sponsored by the PTSO, continues to be a great way for students, parents, teachers and staff to celebrate the season together and have a lot of fun. In addition, other SJE October celebrations also include Character Counts Week and the Harvest Mass, which is followed by Trunk or Treat.

students during the week of October 20-24. This celebration is an integral component of a Catholic moral education. Students learned the importance of the six “Pillars of Character”, which are *Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship*. Each day during the week, students focused on one or two of the pillars and learn about their ethical and moral responsibility to maintain their behavior to these standards – and particularly which behaviors are supportive of the standards. The program has received national recognition and was developed by a former professor at Loyola Law School.

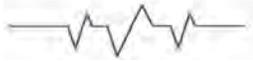
Students will be participating in the Adopt-A-Family Food Drive

during the first two weeks in November. Each class at the school will be collecting baskets of food. These baskets will be provided to needy families for their Thanksgiving meals.

It was another beautiful autumn day for the Jog-A-Thon as students

raced around the field to raise money for the school. There was a lot of enthusiasm this year and students were treated to a great lunch and fabulous drawing prizes. Alumni might remember that they bought their raffle tickets with actual money in the old days, but the Jog-A-Thon took a technological leap forward this year as parents were able to use their credit cards for the first time to buy tickets for their kids. Congratulations to **Michael Grijalva** who was the top lap runner this

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The Pulse: News About SJE Alumni & Friends



We welcome **Dr. Dana Howell** as our new parish and school choir director. Dr. Howell is a composer, conductor and performer. He attended high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University (B.F.A., Composition and Performance), the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (M.M., Composition) and the University of California,

Los Angeles (Ph.D., Music), and studied with a number of notable teachers. He has written a wide range of works for choirs, orchestras, films and stage productions, directed choirs at St. Timothy Church in Los Angeles, and is a faculty member at the Brevard Music Center Summer Festival in North Carolina. The baton is being passed by **Jaelyn Beardsley**

(Suttley) '02 who has been our school's music teacher since 2011 but is now teaching at Notre Dame High School. She plans to be a little more busy on the home front as she is expecting her first child soon and will be focusing on being a new mother!



Make sure to visit the school's Facebook page at SJE365.com and like us!

An article by **Giaconda Zoller '04** was featured in the Chaminade semi-annual newsletter *Chaminade Now*. Giaconda writes extensively about her experiences as a community health volunteer with the Peace Corps in Peru. In the article she notes that in high school "... I knew that God was calling me to do His work, but I could have never have imagined it would lead me to Peru as a health Peace Corps volunteer. I work with the locals and give educational sessions about washing hands and boiling water to prevent parasites and diarrhea. ... Even though Peace Corps is

In a Lighter Vein . . .

One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of "Chicken Little" to her class. She came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tried to warn the farmer. She read, "... and so Chicken Little went up to the farmer and said, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!"

The teacher paused then asked the class, "And what do you think that farmer said?"

One little girl raised her hand and said, "I think he said: 'Holy Cow! A talking chicken!'"

*More amazing than a talking chicken (and perhaps a little more satisfying) is the great feeling you'll get by making a donation to St. John Eudes School. 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!*



Our best wishes to **Mrs. Mary Bertain** who recently celebrated her 80th birthday. Mrs. Bertain taught 2nd Grade at SJE for nearly 20 years (until 1990). Many alumni and alumni families are sure to have fond memories of her and her classes. A posting on the school's Facebook page (link available through the school website) is available for you to contact her and send her your own birthday wishes. We're sure she'd like to hear from you!



John Francis '13, who is currently attending Notre Dame High School, recently completed his Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project which included making 200 "Comfort Kits". The kits are for the parents of babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Northridge Hospital Medical Center and are composed of necessities and small comforts while they stay with their babies in the NICU. John collected donations from a number of sources including parishioners after Masses at St. John Eudes and compiled the kits. Great project John!

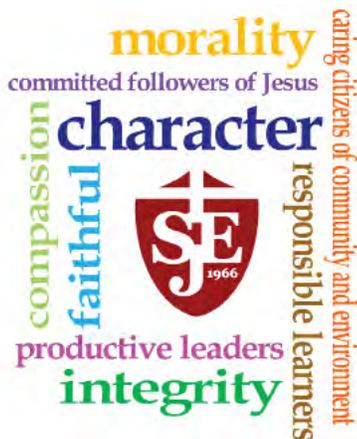
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Quick Beats . . .

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year, with a total of 57 laps recorded. Thanks to everyone who helped make this Jog-A-Thon such a success!

Right now we're in the middle of swim team season

and many of our students, with the support of their families, are members of the St. John Eudes Parish Swim Team. The swim team has been a great way to build competitive spirit at our school and in our parish. The team competes in the San Fernando Valley Catholic Swim League and will be hosting its 36th Annual Meet at the San Fernando Regional Pool on November 9. And you're invited to come and cheer them on! Details are available on the team's website at

www.sjeswimteam.net, which is also accessible through the parish's homepage.

Save the Date for the upcoming annual PTSO Spring Fundraiser

which will be held on Valentine's Day, February 14, and appropriately themed the *Open Heart Gala*. There will be a sumptuous dinner, thrilling casino style games,



The St. John Eudes Medal is awarded each year on the feast day of St. John Eudes to a person, persons, or group in the parish in recognition of their outstanding service and volunteerism. This year the award was given to **Sr. Guadalupe Gonzales, Sch. P.**, and **Sr. Georgina Gutierrez, Sch. P.** (second and third from left, respectively), as well **Dorothy and Jim Gergen** (first and second from right, respectively), who are great supporters of the school. **Fr. Gérard** (flanked by the recipients) presented the awards at a Sunday Mass, joined by **Alice Spratley** (left), wife of **Mel Spratley**, who was last year's awardee. Special recognition was also awarded to the **SJE Men's Council** and the **SJE Adult Choir**. Congratulations to all the recipients. Your dedication and support is an inspiration to us all!

a fabulous silent auction, great prizes, dancing and more! It'll be a great night to spend with your valentine and a great way to show your love for the school! Keep your eyes open for information and details that will be posted on the school and parish websites. But make sure not to disappoint cupid and mark your calendar now to celebrate Valentine's Day at the Spring Gala!

The Pulse . . .

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not religious and we're not supposed to talk about politics (we are "neutral ambassadors of the United States"), I would be lying if I said God wasn't a huge part of what's keeping me here. . . . I have come to the decision to apply to medical school when I finish the Peace Corps. As a doctor, I can take care of others the way I've always wanted to." We're proud of Gioconda and her great spirit of selflessness as she works to serve others!



Gioconda Zoller '04 poses with some of the new friends she made in Peru. She worked in Peru as part of the Peace Corps to educate families about preventing diseases and avoiding parasites. Her goal is to become a doctor and continue to care for others.

Madison Lomas '08 has been awarded a full golf scholarship to Cleveland State University. She will complete her college junior and senior years there. She previously attended Chatsworth High School and College of the Canyons, where she honed her duffing skills while playing for both schools on their golf teams.

Nomination Forms for the 2015 SJE Alumnus of the Year Are Now Available

to recognize an SJE alumnus 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. And alumni, parents, and friends are invited to submit a nomination for an alumnus who has inspired them as a life-long learner who has lived their faith. Forms (and more information about the *Alumnus of the Year*) are available at www.sjeschool.net. Nominations must be submitted to the School Office by Tuesday, Jan. 7. The recipient will be announced during Catholic Schools Week (Jan. 25 - Jan. 31). Give an alumnus the recognition they deserve – send in your nomination today!