

De la Salle TODAY

A magazine for the Lasallian Community in the
United States and Toronto Region

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SANCTUARY FOR ALL IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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Cover photo: Jalin, a client at Tides Family Services. Photo by Sheila K. Lawrence.

Dear Lasallian Reader,

If there is one word that distinguishes the Lasallian Educational Mission, it is *sanctuary*. When John Baptist de La Salle founded a community of Brothers in the 17th century the purpose was to provide a place of refuge for the young where they can be educated in order to be successfully employed and to gain eternal salvation. A place where those who have been deprived and neglected by society can be given protection and cared for by those who have vowed to live their lives for the glory of God. *Sanctuary* calls on us to protect and care for those who are poor, those who are in need, those who are in crisis.

This issue features Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría's opening address at the Huether 2009 Conference.

Speaking about our Lasallian mission and sanctuary, he said: "Today, the entity we call La Salle must be a sanctuary for all. The Founder made a clear option for poor children and, therefore, faithful to his spirit, we should be open and willing to lend a hand against any type of poverty, wherever persons are suffering, where they experience poverty or abandonment, or where their lives have lost meaning. No one should stay on the outside, all can find a welcoming place—families in crisis, victims of alcohol and drugs, the mentally challenged, immigrants."

Also featured in this issue are some of the ministries in our Region that actively provide sanctuary to those in crisis: the San Miguel Schools, Martin de Porres, the Rights of the Child Advocacy, Lewis University and Tides Family Services.

Live Jesus in our hearts...forever!

Celine
Editor

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DENA IS OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

The approval by the Institute's General Council of the creation of the District of Eastern North America (DENA) on September 9, 2009, marked the official establishment of the new District in the USAT Region. At the same time, the structures in the Districts of Baltimore, Long Island-New England and New York ceased operations and their members, partners and ministries have come together to build a firm foundation for DENA.



Reverend Father Joseph Farrell '65 delivers the homily as Most Reverend John M. Smith, Bishop of Trenton, who presided at the Mass, listens.

CBA LINCROFT CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Christian Brothers Academy (CBA) in Lincroft, New Jersey, celebrated its 50th anniversary on November 8, 2009 with a Mass presided over by the Most Reverend John M. Smith, Bishop of Trenton, and the homily delivered by CBA alumni, Reverend Father Joseph Farrell '65. The year-long recognition of tradition and education began with Brother James Butler's welcome address to the freshmen class this fall, compelling them to be stewards of faith and brotherhood to each other and in the community, followed by the September 14th Mass commemorating the exact day the school opened 50 years ago, then the euphoria of the CBA Cross Country Team winning its 300th consecutive dual meet victory.—*Philip de Rita (DENA)*

CAUSE FOR CANONIZATION OF BRO. JAMES MILLER BEGINS

Brother James Miller (Midwest), who was murdered in Guatemala in 1982 at the age of 37, received the title "Servant of God" on September 2, 2009, with the signing by the Bishop of Huehuetenango, Most Reverend Rodolfo Francisco Bobadilla Mata, CM, of the letter

introducing the inquiry into his cause for canonization as a martyr. The Institute's Brother Postulator General, Rodolfo Meoli, and the head of the Tribunal in Huehuetenango, Father Jose David Lopez Silvestre, have interviewed persons who knew Bro. James and worked with him.

LA SALLE PREP MILWAUKIE SENIOR AWARDED MIT-iGEM GOLD MEDAL



Yuan Xue, a senior student at La Salle Catholic College Preparatory in Milwaukie, Oregon, and his research team earned a gold medal for their work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology International Genetically Engineered Machine (MIT-iGEM)

competition in November 2009. At MIT-iGEM, student teams are given a kit of biological parts at the beginning of the summer from the Registry of Standard Biological Parts. Working at their own schools over the summer, they use these parts and new parts of their own design to build biological systems and operate them in living cells.

"In a world of non-invasive medical procedures, nanorobots show great promise in surgical instrumentation and drug delivery," explains Yuan. "However, many of these nanorobots lack a reliable propulsion power source to operate and this remains one of the biggest obstacles to their popularization in clinical practice. Our 'Bactomotor' aims to overcome these problems to bring about a foundational and pioneering advancement in the field."

SAN MIGUEL TUCSON—METLIFE BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOL

San Miguel High School in Tucson, Arizona, has been selected by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) as one of 10 MetLife Foundation Breakthrough Schools in 2010. The school will be awarded a \$5,000 grant from the MetLife Foundation and the principal, Brother Nick Gonzalez, will attend and participate in the NASSP Convention, March 11-14, 2010, in Phoenix, Arizona, where the accomplishments of the schools participating in this project will be recognized.

The project was initiated in 2007 for the purpose of identifying, recognizing, and showcasing middle level schools and high schools that serve large numbers of students living in poverty and are high achieving or dramatically improving student achievement.

REGIONAL PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

The US-Toronto Region was represented in two meetings at the Generalate in Rome, Italy, in October 2009. Greg Kopra (San Francisco) attended the annual meeting of the International Council of the Lasallian Family and Association, October 26-30, together with representatives from other Regions of the Institute as well as Lasallian groups such as UMAEL, Signum Fidei and Young Lasallians. The group discussed the results of the Institute survey on Association, the initial draft of the Institute Circular on Association, the Lasallian volunteer programs, the Young Lasallian's VEGA program and remote preparations for the 2013 Mission Assembly. Bro. Charles Kitson (DENA) is the Coordinating Secretary for the Council.

Celine A. Quinio, Director for Communications of the USAT Regional office, joined other Regional communicators and the Institute's Secretary of Communications Services, Bro. Jose Warletta, at the annual meeting of the International Council for Communications, October 28-31. The group assessed the progress made in implementing the communication outcomes of the 44th General Chapter and continued to work on the content of the Institute Communications Plan which includes a study on the Institute's corporate identity.

GENERAL COUNCIL-VISITORS MEETING



Superior General Bro. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría and the General Council met with the Visitors of the US-Toronto and Francophone Canada Regions in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 16-20. The Institute leadership was briefed on how the Lasallian Mission is being lived out in the Region today. Presentations included an overview of the Region and each of the Districts, the life of the Brothers and vocation, how the Mission is being served by Lasallian Volunteers and various communications projects, the Lasallian Educational Mission and Association.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Jeffrey Mancabelli has been appointed president of St. John's College High School in Washington, DC, effective July 1, 2010.

HONORS

Congratulations to the following state champions:

- **Cretin-Derham Hall** won the Class 5A Minnesota State Football Championship.
- **Totino-Grace High School** finished the 2009 season with a record of 14-0 and won the Class 4A Minnesota State Football Championship.
- **Christian Brothers College High School** (St. Louis) won the Missouri State Soccer Championship.
- **Bishop Kelley High School** won the Girls Class 5A Oklahoma State Volleyball Championship
- **Montini Catholic High School** won its second Illinois State Football Championship.

Calvert Hall's Carlo Crispino Stadium in Baltimore, MD, was selected the 2009 Field of the Year by the National High School Baseball Coaches Association on December 4, 2009. Calvert Hall was one of eight schools representing districts across the country eligible for the award.

NEW FSC AFFILIATES

The following were affiliated to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools:

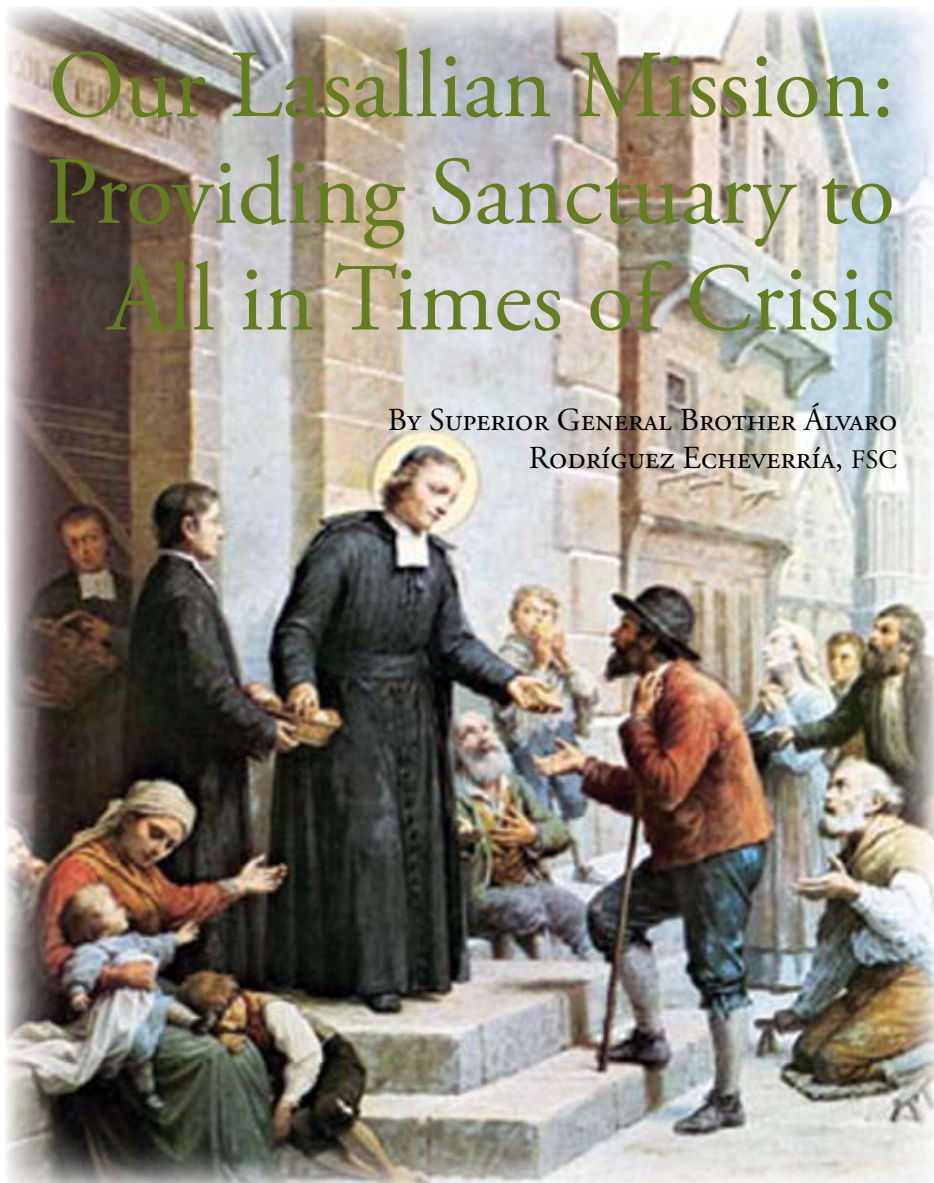
- **Mary and John O'Donnell**, Tides Family Services supporter, October 24, 2009.
- **Robert Stosser**, Tides Family Services supporter, October 24, 2009.
- **William Taylor (Billy) Canale**, Christian Brothers High School, Memphis, October 25, 2009.
- **Raymond Ricci**, La Salle University, Philadelphia, November 24, 2009.

JUBILARIAN

We congratulate **Brother Anthony Flynn, FSC**, of the District of Eastern North America, who celebrates in 2009 his 65th anniversary as a Brother of the Christian Schools. (We apologize for omitting his name in the list of Jubilarians, Spring 2009 issue of *De La Salle Today*.)

Our Lasallian Mission: Providing Sanctuary to All in Times of Crisis

BY SUPERIOR GENERAL BROTHER ÁLVARO
RODRÍGUEZ ECHEVERRÍA, FSC



The theme you have chosen for this Huether Conference is a highly current one.

Today we are going through a deep economic crisis which seems to be giving signs of ending, but which no doubt will continue to impact the lives of millions of persons. Paradoxically, times of crisis are moments of grace and discovery of new paths and new responses. As Einstein put it very well:

We cannot pretend that things will change if we do everything the same way. Crisis is the best blessing that can happen to people and nations, because crisis brings progress. Creativity is born from distress, like day from the dark night. It is in crisis where resourcefulness, discoveries, and great strategies are born...Without crisis there would be no challenges, without challenges life would be a routine, slow agony. Without crisis there would be no merit. It is in crisis where the best of each person surfaces, because without crisis every wind would be a caress.

Saint Augustine said that there is no bad or good time, we are all bad and good and we have the possibility to change.

But the theme is also a burning issue because it invites us to provide sanctuary to all. This reminds us of a reality that has been around for more than 3,500 years, what in western society has been called the *right of asylum*. The fugitive who sought refuge in certain cities at the altar of the Church was untouchable. As the United Nations puts it: *When all other protection fails, asylum is the final human right* (World Refugee Survey, 1993).

A personal experience I had in Guatemala made me understand very well what it means to provide sanctuary to all. In 1981, during the very violent years in Guatemala, a group of indigenous people from the town of Quiché peacefully took over the Spanish Embassy in order to assert their rights. The army attacked the Embassy and burned it, killing everyone. Family members who had accompanied this group to the capital took refuge at the National University and then they came to our house of formation in the suburb of San Cristóbal that evening to seek asylum. If the army had not respected the Embassy grounds, even less were they going to respect the National University, they thought. At that time I was the Director of the Scholasticate and I asked the Brother Visitor, who happened to be present with us, for advice about this situation. We acceded to their request with much fear on our part; for their part, those seeking refuge were very distressed. They spent the

*Opening address delivered at the 2009 Huether Lasallian Conference on November 19, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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OUR LASALLIAN MISSION

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night in our house and the next day they returned to their villages very discretely.

We know, unfortunately, that there are many people today who need to find a sanctuary for their lives. I am going to advance to you a citation that I will use in my next Pastoral Letter to the Brothers, because it seems to me that it is very appropriate to touch on it in some depth given the theme of your Conference. The citation is from Ernesto Olivero, the founder of the Armory of Peace in Turin, a military structure that has been transformed into a welcome and assistance center for young people and for the abandoned:

For many today the Church is synonymous with severity, boredom, prohibition. It would be nice, on the contrary, if people were to see the Church as having open arms, as Jesus thought it to be. When Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11: 28), he gives a specific face to his Church. If a person experiences unending anguish, where can he go? If unforeseen hatred bursts in on someone's life to the point of driving him crazy, who can lend a hand? If a person is divorced, what future does he or she have in the Church? If a kid is fighting against homosexuality, if his body is exploding with feelings, who can help him or liberate him? If a former prisoner who murdered someone, after having paid his debt, continues having sleepless nights due to his remorse, who can calm him down? If thousands of young people are attracted to self-destruction, who can look them in the eyes with tenderness and listen them? If men and women in the Church have a stick in their

hands, judgment on their lips, hardness of heart, and are very severe, to whom will these people go? Possibly to a fortune-teller, or a guru, or to some sect, but not to the Church.

One of the Lasallian sanctuaries which we should give more importance to is that of the defense of the rights of children and adolescents. Tomorrow we will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As we will remember, Brother John Johnston wanted to make this defense a banner for all Lasallians. Today we can consider this cause as one of our sanctuaries. Nevertheless as the Director of the food agency for the United Nations just declared, every six seconds a child dies from malnutrition and it is estimated that 85 percent of the children suffer some type of violence. In both Northern and Southern societies it is children who constitute the most fragile and vulnerable link.

Among others, the following seem to be the most concrete problems:

- An increasing problem in Third World countries is the phenomenon of *child workers*—using minors for industrial work, service and farming, exploiting them for work and depriving them of access to education. Instead of grabbing a toy to play with, they are grabbing hold of a work tool.
- The majority of *street children* come from unstructured, numerous families, normally under the direction of a mother and in general these children prefer to live on the street than in their home where they are victims of violence; they live in organized, hierarchical groups where glue sniffing is frequent for its calming effects and to diminish the need for sleep and nourishment.

- *Victims of armed conflicts.*

According to data provided by the United Nations at the end of the nineties, there were 25 million children who were displaced or who were refugees (five million of them living in refugee camps because of war) and another 12 million have lost their homes. On the other hand, it is estimated that three years ago at least 200,000 minors under the age of 15 were enrolled in armies.

- *Kidnapping and buying minors.* In Mexico they talk about 20,000 children who are kidnapped annually and sold to Northern countries (source: *El Día*). These events are reported in the majority of countries in Latin America. The main causes are illegal adoption, organ transplants and child prostitution.
- *Malnutrition.* According to the World Food Program more than 200 million children under the age of five are not growing adequately due to the lack of nutrition. Child mortality rates in each country can give us an idea of why this is so.

Today, the entity we call La Salle must be a sanctuary for all. The Founder made a clear option for poor children and, therefore, faithful to his spirit, we should be open and willing to lend a hand against any type of poverty, wherever persons are suffering, where they experience poverty or abandonment, or where their lives have lost meaning. No one should stay on the outside, all can find a welcoming place—families in crisis, victims of alcohol and drugs, the mentally challenged, immigrants.

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San Miguel Alums Defy the Odds

EDITED BY CELINE A. QUINIO



San Miguel School—Providence alumni, Johnny Kue, mentored Christian (right) since fifth grade. At graduation, Christian received the 12th Brother Eugene Vorburger Award which was presented by Johnny. In the photo to Johnny's left is Bro. Lawrence Goyette, Principal of San Miguel School.

Johnny Kue grew up in one of Providence, Rhode Island's poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods and overcame great odds to become the man he is today. A member of the first class to complete four years at San Miguel School—Providence, he was the recipient of the first three Brother Eugene Vorburger Awards for Academic Excellence. He received a full four-year scholarship to La Salle Center, Oakdale, New York, where he graduated high school with honors in 2001. While at La Salle, he was a member of the Lasallian Youth service program and worked as a tutor/mentor at local schools and youth centers.

At college in Stonehill, Massachusetts, Johnny took a course in mentoring and served as a mentor for an adolescent boy for two years. Upon graduation in 2005 with a degree in criminology, he spent most of the summer volunteering at Camp Miguel and Camp Readiness.

In September 2006, Johnny was hired as a Counselor at Ocean Tides where he continues to be of service in the Lasallian world.



When Esteban Parra graduated from San Miguel High School in Tucson, Arizona, last year, he was the first member of his family to go on to college. Esteban was accepted at six colleges but finally enrolled at Boston College, where he was awarded a full scholarship towards a nursing degree.

Like his classmates at San Miguel, a Cristo Rey Network school that utilizes the corporate internship model, Esteban took a full course of studies while working in entry level positions in local businesses, earning over half of his school tuition. During his freshman and sophomore years, Esteban worked in the General Distribution Division of the Supply and Delivery Department at St. Joseph's Hospital. He repeated the rotation in his senior year, where he was promoted to the Sterilization Division for the operation and emergency rooms. This internship experience led Esteban to pursue a nursing career. Eventually, he hopes to become a traveling nurse and envisions going "around the world to help...people who are suffering in different ways."



When Manuel Ortiz enrolled at San Miguel School—Providence, he feared speaking in front of others because he struggled with the English language. These days, however, he's doing a lot of talking, and much of it is on behalf of his middle school alma mater in the West End of Providence, Rhode Island.

Together with other students at Providence College, Manuel was instrumental in establishing the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS), a mentoring program aimed to ease the transition of low-income middle school Latino students to high school.

"Just because they're a minority or don't have the privileges of other people," Manuel said, "doesn't mean they are less. I was in their shoes and look at me; all your dreams and aspirations can come true if you are willing to work for them."

This year, Manuel was awarded the Providence College 2009 Equity Award for his visionary creation of the Step-Up Program at the San Miguel School. The ongoing weekend project brings middle school students to Providence College's campus to engage in college preparatory discussions.

Martin de Porres—A Story of Partnership and Dedication

BY BROTHER RAYMOND BLIXT, FSC

In the late 1960's, when the Brothers of the Christian Schools were teaching at Mater Christi Diocesan High School in Astoria, starting a school like Martin de Porres (MDP) or working with emotionally disturbed children were not pieces of their "life plan." They were comfortable teaching subjects like Religion, English and Physics. Eventually, the Brothers moved on to become assistant principals, deans and moderators of athletic teams. What appeared to be a simple request to assist poor students would lead them on an unexpected path. Over a few years time, the Brothers and their colleagues would make one commitment after another that would lead them into the vanguard of special education in New York City.

In the 1969-1970 school year, the Brothers were asked by the pastor of St. Rita's parish to assist some of his poorer parishioners, mostly from city housing projects, in attending Mater Christi. The SPRONS (Special Program for Needy Students) program was born. The students attended Mater Christi free of charge and thus benefited from a Catholic school education.

In 1970, Bill Jesinkey, a graduate of Manhattan College, was a guidance

counselor at P.S. 4, a "600" school run by the Board of Education. He was surprised to learn that one of his former students was attending Mater Christi (as part of SPRONS). This was a few years before Federal Legislation for Special Education and "special" students did not have many options open to them. Bill saw an opportunity for a better educational plan for some of his students. After conferring with the Brothers in charge of SPRONS, Bill was able to have 10 of his "600" students admitted to Mater Christi in 1971-72. It was also one of the first schools in the city to secure funds from the State Education Department for this Special Education Program.

By the Spring of 1972, it was apparent to the Brothers that some of the changes they were bringing about in Mater Christi were not well received by the entire school community. Parents complained that they had enrolled their children in the school to keep them away from some of the same students who were now being accepted into Mater Christi, the dress code was too relaxed, some Brothers wore their hair too long, etc. Finally, Bro. David Detje was fired as the principal. In response to this decision, a majority of the Brothers decided to terminate their relationship with the school.



Betty Williams, now Director of Admissions, and Thomas Darnowski, Quality Assurance Coordinator, at Martin de Porres. Photo taken during the early days of the school.

Brothers David, Raymond, Tom, Paul and Phil were forced to move to a new home. The move was an educational experience in itself. Their new quarters did not come with a housekeeper or a cook and the Brothers soon learned to really "live" in the community. Without prospects for employment in the fall, they decided to go ahead with a previously planned vacation.

Their old friend Bill Jesinkey found out about the Brothers' lack of jobs and the wheels began to turn in his head. He offered them an opportunity to start a school for students with special needs who were not being serviced in their local school districts. The Brothers were at the Motherhouse in Rome when word came that Bill had gotten a grant from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and secured

*Bro. Raymond Blixt is executive director of Martin de Porres.



Teacher Wilson Williams (far left) with the Martin de Porres High School class of 1984.

the basement of a Dutch reform Church in Astoria to house the fledgling program.

The ASFEC (Alternative Solutions for Exceptional Children) School as the new program was called, soon moved into the MDP Community Center in the Astoria Housing Projects. The school then took the name of the center because of its well-known reputation and its recognition factor. As the program grew from a handful of students, Bill was more than a little worried about how these men, who were used to teaching and administering a school with more than a thousand students, would deal with a small unique program of 40 disturbed students.

It seemed as if fate helped to resolve the talent overload. The executive director of the MDP Center left to take another job and Bro. David Derje was selected to take his place. The nature of the grant required that Bill develop a child advocacy service. Therefore, Bro. Raymond became principal. Tom Darnowski would handle intake, which was complicated because of the need to file a petition in Family Court on each child. Bill was even kind enough to loan Tom his wonderful pink vehicle

to round up children in the early days when transportation was difficult. Brothers Phil and Paul became the heart of the teaching staff with help from some of their former students (Harry Jackson and Chet Tolbert) at Mater Christi.

There always seemed to be a need to reach out and seek help, ranging from a psychiatrist to a cook. The school had a diversified, well-rounded, caring staff even if they were not quite sure how to handle some of these “special” children.

By 1975, having endured robberies, floods and other natural and unnatural disasters, Martin de Porres School was ready to expand. Bro. Phil opened the MDP Group Home in December 1974. It was decided that some children were traveling too far to get to Astoria, so there would be two sites—Northern and Southeastern Queens. A new federally funded development was being built across the street from the present school and they were mandated to offer space to a community program. The school applied and won the space. Thus the MDP North was established. The South school found space in an old convent building in Christ the King parish in Springfield Gardens. Former students and colleagues at Mater Christi and relatives of the staff were hired to fill the need for additional personnel.

The schools continued to grow and in 1977, they were consolidated into one school at the site of the former Mary Magdalene School. The two teaching staffs were combined and Bro.

Kevin Finn left St. Gabriel’s school to join Martin de Porres.

Today, Martin de Porres has grown into a comprehensive Lasallian Ministry. Four hundred eighty children and young men and women attend the Martin de Porres educational programs in Queens (elementary and middle schools), Rosedale (high school) and Elmont (career academy). Other MDP programs include:

- Casa De La Salle Group Residence, Ozone Park = 24 male residents
- Elmhurst and Springfield Gardens Group Homes = 14 young men ages 14-21
- MDP Youth Hospitality and Enrichment Center in Queens and in Elmont (daily after school and evening programs) = 200 youth, ages 6-14.
- Lasallian Formation and Retreat Center in Elmont

The success of Martin de Porres is attributable to the commitment and dedication of the Brothers and their Associates and Partners. “Together and by Association” they have sustained, energized, and creatively renewed the mission of “touching the hearts and minds of troubled youth” over the last 37 years. ■



Martin de Porres High School class of 2008.

The Rights of the Child

Responding to the Call of the Gospel and the Institute

BY BROTHER ERNEST J. MILLER, FSC



Giving glory and honor to almighty God.

November 20, 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the mother of all human rights treaties regarding persons 18 and younger. It represents a major milestone in the historic effort to achieve a world it for children.

We join numerous organizations around North America and around the world that are commemorating this occasion. This evening we officially recognize the launch of

our Region's attempt to respond to the call of the Institute and the Bice (International Catholic Child Bureau which helped draft the CRC) World Appeal for a renewed action for children's rights launched in June 2009 in Geneva.

From Brazil to Finland, we find numerous examples of the Convention's impact on law and practice. While it has created a new culture for childhood and led to a clearer comprehension of child realities, the global landscape continues showing millions of children deprived of their dignity and their basic human rights. Too often, children are viewed as objects of assistance, or as beneficiaries of certain rights that they receive as charity.

Probing the inert response to the CRC, the 43rd General Chapter more than nine years ago, in May 2000, offered this candid critique: "Although the Convention was recommended by the 42nd General Chapter and again in (Brother Superior's 1999 Pastoral Letter), its contents are little known and understood by Brothers and Partners."

Listening to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the Chapter delegates directed that the protection and promotion of the rights of children be "a major focus of concern" for the Lasallian educational mission.

Both the International Mission Assembly and the 44th General Chapter, convened in 2006 and 2007 respectively, reaffirm the 43rd Chapter's mandate on the rights of the child. Echoing Superior General Bro. Álvaro, it is the "flagship cause" of our mission.

Thus, sisters and brothers, I believe we are summoned here. Proverbs inquires of us: who will speak up for those who have no voice? For what and for whom will we stand publicly?

At this very conference in 2001, Bro. John Johnston, in an address entitled "Jesus Was Indignant...Are We?" observed that few other organizations have our numerical power to take maximum advantage of the possibilities for significant educational service.

Hence, an enduring challenge for us Lasallians is to *actualize* (Bro. John's word) our numerical power in the Region of 67,000 students and 9,000 teachers, administrators and other professional staff.

To move beyond rhetoric and exert real influence on behalf of children everywhere, we need to be educated, self-critical, and imaginative about what it means to enact laws and practices that protects the rights of children. As one theologian puts it, We do not achieve social justice simply by bestowing gifts but by the marginal-

*Address delivered at the Huether Lasallian Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 19, 2009.

ized developing their own agency. Put another way, children have a right to be protagonist of their own lives.

Becoming a credible and vocal advocate for children's rights in a "consistent ethic of life" is an opportunity for us to demonstrate the concern for making the world fit for children. To that end, I offer three points:

- Lasallian education must assiduously embrace new ways to provide our students a wider, more critical pedagogy for evangelization and catechesis—learning and formation—in the practice of faith-justice for society. We must balance our strong commitment to charitable service with justice-oriented action for the common good. Let us remember that justice and freedom are the end, not charity. Such an educational and catechetical approach imagines a faith-justice education across the curriculum. More, an approach that leads students and educators alike to ask questions that are unsettling, unnerving and perhaps unhousing, to wrestle with the structures—John Paul II called them "structures of sin"—that demands charitable service.
- The Lasallian community must build a stronger interconnection between our mission and visible advocacy in the public square. This idea, in turn, underscores the need to enter into active collaborative relationships with other organizations that share our goals.
- The Lasallian community must strive to create a compelling vision and ethic that unleashes the potential for justice-oriented action our numerical power suggest and the Institute desires. Advocacy does not often lead to immediate results. Hours are not

required, but patience for social change is a prerequisite. The Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations is a visible, concrete witness of that most catholic ethic and vision. This Convocation seeks to inform, educate and inspire the way we think, the way we judge, the way we decide, and the way act as individuals within community.

- The Planning Team for our Convocation invites you and your school community to dig deep to make this event not merely successful but also significant—that demands participants. The Convocation is the first regional gathering that aims to bring together secondary and undergraduate students plus educators. This Regional initiative aims to integrate the educational, formational, and transformational aspects of Lasallian evangelization and catechesis.

How is this global Lasallian cause, this Regional Convocation prioritized in your ministry? Even in these economic times, the institutions where we minister still make choices. Taking up this cause, this initiative requires choices and imagination. For sure, it is an opportunity to take a prophetic stance of solidarity and action for social change.

A group of fellow Catholics gives this witness: "The way to faith and the way to justice are inseparable ways.

It is up this undivided road, this steep road, that the pilgrim Church must travel and toil. Faith and justice are undivided in the Gospel which teaches that 'faith makes its power felt through love.' They cannot therefore be divided in our purpose, our action, our life" (GC 32).

The road we must travel to achieving a *culture of action on behalf of the rights of children* is long, but this cause is the joyful task for us to attend to in our time.

Inspired by the Gospel values of love, justice, nonviolence, mercy and the living legacy of De La Salle and the first Brothers bequeathed to us, we are called to—in the paraphrased words of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement—change the social order by not simply ministering to the "[enslaved]" but by "doing away with slavery" altogether.

Envisioning new possibilities for the common good with hope, Cornel West counsels: "... the world is incomplete—that history is unfinished, that the future is open-ended, [but] what we think and what we do does make a difference."

For those who love mercy and do justice, say Amen. Amen. Amen. ■

For more information about the Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations, visit www.lasallian.info/index.cfm/lasallian-student-convocation-at-the-un-

We must balance our strong commitment to charitable service with justice-oriented action for the common good. Let us remember that justice and freedom are the end, not charity.

Lewis University Hosts Iraqi Student

By KATHRYNNE SKONICKI



Iraqi student Shay is a Computer Science major at Lewis University in Romeoville, IL. The university has awarded him a full scholarship.

The term “Brothers of the Christian Schools” was something that Shay thought he had heard at some point in his life, but it really did not mean much to the Iraqi student. (Shay is a nickname his American classmates gave him upon his arrival on the Lewis University campus. He requested that his real name not be disclosed due to safety concerns for his family in Iraq.) Over the last few months, the 18-year-old student from Baghdad has acquired a new definition for the Brothers. “They’re

the best people I have ever known,” he said, “treating me like one of their own. I can’t express how thankful I am for them.”

Shay is the first student to enroll at Lewis University under the Iraqi Student Project (ISP). Lewis University is one of 30 institutions in the United States participating in the project. ISP is a grassroots effort that expects the students will return to their country and become contributing members of Iraqi society.

Shay’s first encounter with the Brothers has been at Lewis University. He has discovered that the Brothers are among those who are helping him pursue his education, become a better Iraqi citizen, and strengthen his faith in God. Shay might not be perfectly acquainted with the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle. He is not necessarily aware that 5,000 Brothers teach more than 800,000 students in 82 countries. However, he is especially appreciative of the blessings the Brothers and their lay partners have brought into his life by supporting his education at Lewis University.

“We are grateful and privileged that this project has enabled us to extend a helping hand to an Iraqi student,” stated Brother James Gaffney, President of Lewis University. “This is a natural extension of our Lasallian tradition of assisting well-

deserving but needy students, who otherwise would lack an opportunity for a high quality Catholic and Lasallian education. We feel truly blessed that Shay is now part of our Lewis University Community.”

Jane Pitz, ISP executive director in the US, commented, “The exceptional, standout thing about Lewis is that the support for Shay is coming from the school itself. This is most unusual. Usually a support group forms from outside the university. Faculty, administration and staff have gathered with Shay for this support.”

Months before Shay’s arrival, a support group formed at Lewis University to plan for his success at the Midwestern Lasallian institution. About 40 faculty, staff members and students rallied efforts behind fundraising and logistical support. The support group extended a helping hand in many ways; donating items for the student’s room, scheduling time for hosting Shay during academic breaks, and arranging fundraising events on campus to assist in meeting the student’s expenses.

Brother Joseph Martin, Assistant to the President, and Michael Fekete, Director of International Student Services, co-chair the committee. Brother Joseph said, “At first, it seemed like we were overwhelmed with all of the details necessary for planning for his arrival. Now that

*The author is Director of Media Relations at Lewis University.

"The exceptional, standout thing about Lewis is that the support for Shay is coming from the school itself." —

Jane Pitz, ISP-US executive director

he's here, it is more than worth the effort. We are honored to have such a wonderful student on our campus."

Shay is grateful for the opportunity to sit among the dozens of students laughing during conversation, studying for upcoming exams, and enjoying a bite to eat in the Courtyard Café at Lewis University in Romeoville. With his brown hair and olive complexion, the 18-year-old sits wearing a wide smile without fear of violence or persecution.

This scene is very different from what Shay was experiencing six months ago as a student in his home country of Iraq. The Syriac Catholic is from Baghdad, where he has led a challenged life as part

of the minority. Two years ago, he spent about six months studying in northern Iraq since the situation became too dangerous in Baghdad. The war and fighting among Iraqi factions had reached an unbearable point for his parents. Some of Shay's family members and friends were kidnapped for ransom. Meanwhile, Shay and his classmates would walk outside of their school doors and see dead bodies left in the street.

Today, Shay is studying Computer Science at Lewis University with plans on returning to Iraq with his bachelor's degree. "America is the best place to get an education," he said. He wants to make a difference in Baghdad, and believes technology is essential. "It's the generation of computers."

Social networking sites and video conferencing on the Internet currently provide Shay an opportunity to keep in touch with his family and friends at home while he pursues his education in America. He ultimately wants to share his good fortune with his loved ones at home. He feels blessed to have received such great opportunities through the Iraqi Student Project and Lewis University. "It makes me feel like I have to do the same thing—share my blessings," Shay said. ■

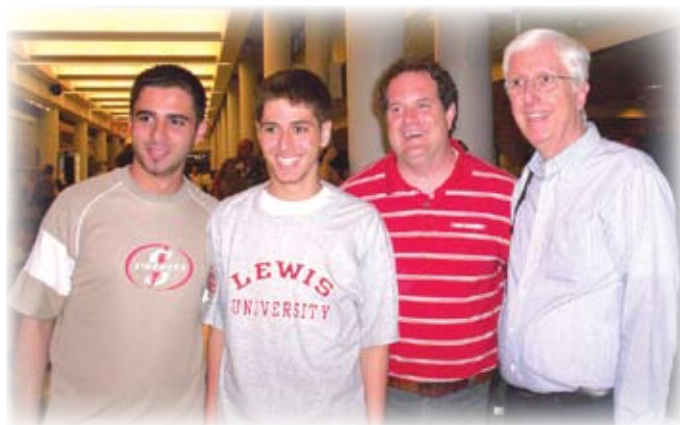
OUR LASALLIAN MISSION

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There is a meditation from the Founder that can strongly motivate us to live what I said in the previous statement by broadening our horizons not only to children, but also to all those today who need a sanctuary. In speaking about these children the Founder has in mind, as we can see especially in the first two *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, families of the artisans and the poor, working families with uncertain employment, not much of a possibility for advancement and threatened by poverty, children without jobs or discipline to work, with no aspirations, without decorum or civility and are therefore very rude and offensive.

You should look upon the children whom you are charged to teach as poor, abandoned orphans. In fact, though the majority of them do have a father here on earth, they are still as if they had none and are abandoned to themselves for the salvation of their souls. This is the reason God places them under your guardianship. He looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support and their father, and it is to you that he entrusts this care. This God of goodness places them in your hands, and undertakes to give them everything you ask of him for them (Meditation 37.3).

So I say to you, dear participants in the Huether Lasallian Conference, as members of the Lasallian Family, the call that was made to us at our last General Chapter is directed also to you: *To be Lasallians with open eyes and burning hearts*. This means opening our eyes to see the needs of our neighbors, and burning our hearts to offer a sanctuary to all those who feel alone and aimless. ■



Welcome Shay! At O'Hare International Airport (l-r) Elias Mukarkera, a Lewis University graduate student and a graduate of Bethlehem University, Shay from Iraq, Michael Fekete—Lewis University Director of International Student Services, and Brother Joseph Martin—Assistant to the President.

Being Lasallian in the 21st Century

BY RICHARD GRAY



(l-r) Richard Gray with La Salle High School, Pasadena alumni, Rev. Greg Apparcel '70, Pastor of Santa Susanna Church in Rome, and Tina Bonacci '94, Director of Formation and Accompaniment in the Midwest District.

In January 25-February 20, 2009, I participated in the CIL (International Lasallian Center) special session marking the 40th anniversary of the publication of *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration*, at the Generalate in Rome, Italy. A few days after the culmination of the CIL session, Brother Thomas Johnson, Vicar General of the Institute, spoke on "The Catholic Identity of the Lasallian School" at the annual gathering of the Lasallian Association of Secondary School Chief Administrators (LASSCA). When I read his address in the summer issue of *De La Salle Today*, I was

struck by the harmony between the themes of his presentation and the content of the CIL session on the *Declaration*. Then, I opened the fall issue of NCEA's *Momentum* to discover that Jeff Mancabelli, Principal of Saint John's College High School in DC and fellow delegate at CIL, had penned a commentary on how the Lasallian value of *Association* had permeated the experience of everyone who had participated in this special session of CIL. In the same issue was a story on the immersion experience of Calvert Hall students at De La Salle Blackfeet School. Its title, in part, read "Discover a Larger Lasallian World."

Reading these three articles, which highlight critical elements of Lasallian spirituality, made me proud to call myself a Lasallian. I realized that my experience in Rome had fundamentally (albeit subtly) transformed my understanding of what it means to be a Lasallian in the 21st Century.

In his LASSCA address, the Vicar General identified a major source of my transformation:

"...it is important to gather the whole community... in Lasallian formation from time to time so that everyone can identify with the mission."

It was only near the end of the CIL session that I had even an inchoate sense of what I would later come to appreciate when I read those words. They echo Matthew 17:4, where we learn of Peter's own stumbling

efforts to understand the significance of the Transfiguration: *It is good, Lord, that we are here*. While I do not want to burden the significance of the CIL experience with that of the Transfiguration, I do want to suggest that we all experience minor and major epiphanies in our lives, only some of which get noticed; and, it is in those moments that we come to realize that it is good that we are here. Reading the *De La Salle Today* and *Momentum* articles helped me to see that my time in Rome was a major epiphany in my 20-year journey within the Lasallian world.

While at CIL, I wrote the following blog (largely to persuade my colleagues in Pasadena that I was not on holiday):

I can say that the month here has made me even more convinced of the power and the promise of Lasallian education. It has also established, for me, a recognition that the world we occupy in La Salle, Pasadena cannot be divorced from the larger, Lasallian world that exists in 83 different countries. Moreover, I now understand—in ways that were only intellectual prior to my participation in this experience—that the gift of Lasallian education gets articulated in a vast number of highly differentiated ways, many of which don't even look like the traditional school we have come to know and appreciate in Pasadena. Most importantly, it has been a privilege for me to encounter Lasallians—Brothers and lay people—from around the

*The author is president of La Salle High School, Pasadena, California.

world who give me renewed hope that what we do in Pasadena matters.

Brother Thomas reinforced this dynamic for me when he said to the Chief Administrators: "There is more linking *us* worldwide than you may think." He chose to use the word "us". At CIL, I found the choice of that word to be extraordinarily significant. The personal and inclusive word "us"...meaning **you** and **me**. That resonated with me because one of the major "take aways" from CIL was to learn about the journey of the Institute from the noble articulation of the message of the *Declaration* (1967) which was to call for the *involvement* of lay people at *all* levels in the school to the 44th General Chapter, 40 years later in 2007, which called for vowed and lay Lasallians to be "*responsible* for a mission (which) is carried forth by *all* those associated for the mission." In other words, over the course of 40 years, the Brothers have moved from including lay people to welcoming us as full partners in sharing the Mission of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

The use of the personal pronoun "us" by Brother Thomas echoes De La Salle's expectation that his teachers function as older brothers of the students entrusted to their care. "Us" embraces lay and vowed Lasallians alike. I saw this dynamic in action during my time in Rome. For the 70 Lasallians gathered at CIL, the sense of responsibility for the Mission was palpable and indistinguishable on the basis of canonical status. I was particularly struck by the sense of shared Mission that characterized Brothers and partners facing enormous challenges in Third World countries such as Congo. And this sense of shared Mission was not limited to the Third World. Lay and vowed Lasallians are liv-

ing and working together in Spain, New Zealand and here in the US-Toronto Region. While these forms of living arrangements highlight the profound commitment of Brothers and partners to their ministry together, it is the shared responsibility for the Mission that explains these arrangements.

Of course, shared community is not for everyone and CIL helped me to better appreciate the variety of formation for Mission opportunities such as the Huether Conference, Buttimer Institute, LASSCA, LLI and LSJI available to Lasallians in our Region. Small group conversations with Lasallians from across the Institute made clear to me that these Regional formation opportunities are fairly unique. The use of the word "us" by Brother Thomas reminded me that my experience in several of the formation opportunities sponsored by the Christian Brothers Conference were not intended to target lay vs. vowed Lasallians, but to open up the rich history of the Institute to anyone who is willing to shoulder the responsibility for delivering its Mission.

I was privileged to witness first hand this rich history in action at the CIL session. Lay and vowed Lasallians serving in distressed areas of the world—Congo, Palestine, Egypt and Malaysia—reinforced for me the amazing role faith and zeal play in the life of the Institute. Again, Brother Thomas drove this point home in his address:

Therefore the local ministry and your individual ministry give rise to the

identity of the mission, carrying with it a way of life, spirituality, a type of relating, and concrete identity of who we are.

When Lasallians in the Third World described the nature of their ministry, they spoke with confidence that their work matters, in spite of the overwhelming obstacles that stood in their way; and their faces radiated the joy that emanated from that confidence. It was tempting to view the work we do in Pasadena through the lens of the efforts of these admirable people. Comparisons of this type inevitably lead to disappointment, so I took comfort in the words of Brother Thomas who reminds us of the central challenge facing suburban schools like La Salle High School:

The challenge of our age bears the fruit of over-consumption and self-absorption...We need Lasallian education for the poor and for those who are not poor so that they can see their personal responsibility for society...We are Lasallian so that the young can have a future.

The transformative nature of my CIL experience was captured by this message from Brother Thomas in his address: "When we are mission-focused, the mission is bigger than our individual ministry or task."

Since then I have come to see the work we do in Pasadena as intimately connected to the work of Lasallians in Madagascar, Spain and Mexico. Our triumphs and challenges may be different, but they are united in the one mission bequeathed to us by Saint John Baptist de La Salle. It is good that we are here. ■

We are Lasallian so that the young can have a future. — Brother Thomas Johnson, Vicar General

Tides Family Services is All About Kids...and Their Families

By SHEILA K. LAWRENCE

Tides Family Services (TFS) is dedicated to the mission of saving kids by keeping them in their communities through programs that inspire, educate, rehabilitate and preserve the family network.

Outreach and tracking are at the root of the TFS programs—following kids throughout their day, around the clock, 365 days a year.

Showing kids and their families that somebody cares, somebody listens, somebody is reaching out with a helping hand—that is what TFS is all about.

PRESERVING FAMILIES NETWORK CHANGES FAMILIES' LIVES

It is 5 p.m. in the city. Alicia Caellan, Preserving Families Network (PFN) caseworker, is still on the job. This evening she will visit two clients and pick up another to bring him home from a break dancing class at AS220.

Shayla

Julissa and her daughter, Shayla, 15, greet Alicia at the front door of



Alicia Caellan (left), a caseworker at Preserving Families Network, and Shayla (right).

their home. A flat screen television, with the sound turned low, flashes cartoon images in the background as Julissa describes her experiences with Tides:

“Tides has changed my family’s life. I think that Tides is the best program there is. Shayla’s grades have improved. She and I talk together now, instead of arguing. I would tell any mother if your kids need help, go to Tides. They care about kids. they want to help them, instead of just locking them up.”

Accusations of fighting in school could have had Shayla traveling on a different road if the court had not referred her to Tides.

“They made me calm down,” Shayla says of her caseworkers. “I know that if I stay out of trouble, it will be so much better for me and I like having people take an interest in me.”

Jalin

Alicia’s next appointment is with 16-year-old Jalin. Pregnant at 14, and with a history of violent behavior, Jalin was referred to Tides through the court system.

Where once she sporadically attended school with a record of 88 recorded absences in one year—she now boards a RIPTA bus with her two-year-old son, and has a near spotless attendance record.

* The author is a freelance writer and photographer. All photos in this article are courtesy of Sheila K. Lawrence of SKL Communications.

"Jalin is so motivated to find work," says Alicia. "She's got her head on straight and knows that school is a priority."

Preserving Families Network is a broad based program providing community-centered support. Currently serving 158 families, PFN has successfully diverted 94 percent of referrals from residential placement to community-based services. Young people are reunited with their families, fractured relationships are healed and kids are getting the education they need to make their way in the world.

BONDING THROUGH HEALTHY EATING AND EXERCISE

Tides Family Services' Girls Group in West Warwick was formed a few months ago in response to a need for teen girls to learn about healthy life styles and to explore self-esteem issues.

The small group of teens, ages 14-17, meets twice weekly at the West Warwick office and at the Kent County YMCA. The group quickly formed tight bonds over discussions that range from good nutrition to self-discovery.

"We learn about nutrition, but the group isn't about losing weight," says 16-year-old Brittany. "It's about getting healthy."

The girls record their food intake and express their feelings in journals. Activities that promote a healthy life-style are encouraged.

"We have fun and what I like is that everything we talk about is confidential," says Whitney, 15.

At the core of the group is caseworker Casey Wilson. Not only does she facilitate the meetings, but

she transports the girls to and from each session.

"Sometimes the girls are not ready," Casey says, "or they forget I'm coming, but I will wait at their house until I get them in the car. I want these girls to understand the importance of being accountable to the group and be responsible to their commitment."

Sixteen-year-old Evonna, who had been missing in action for several weeks is proof of Casey's tenacity. "Casey brought me back into the group," Evonna says.

Speaking for the group, who smiled in agreement, Brittany adds, "Casey doesn't ask, she drags us."

CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION PROGRAM

One of the best ways to get a teenage boy to open up, advises Mike Schmitt, Tides Family Services Outreach Program director, is to provide activity and feed them.

"The program works because we are always there," adds Mike. "Transportation is often a problem, but at Tides, if a kid can't get to us, we'll go get him."

The group is comprised of 10 boys, ages 14-18. They meet once a week at the Pawtucket/Central Falls site, but as with all Tides programs, it goes far beyond a meeting room setting. Kids are tracked daily. Caseworkers advocate for their clients in the schools and courts, and they provide therapeutic counseling for families.

"What makes us different from other agencies," says Mike, "is that we bring the program into the community because the issues they face

in the streets are what got them in trouble in the first place."

Charles Gibb, Youth New Futures supervisor, coordinates the program, which, he says, is ever evolving. "We are constantly reinforcing and reinventing ourselves," he says. "We keep the program fresh by making sure it relates to the kids' lives."

A fast-paced workout on the basketball court helps the kids reduce the stress that is often a motivator for violent behavior. Homework assignments teach the youngsters how to handle life's sticky situations without resorting to violence.

And there is always pizza to help get the conversation started.

"The kids know they can depend on us to always be there," Charles says, "And when we can connect with them, they begin to open up." ■



Ariel Castillo, a caseworker with the Pawtucket Youth New Futures Program, works with kids at the gym to reduce stress.



The 2009 Distinguished Lasallian Educators (front row, l-r): Brother Colman Coogan (DENA), Ms. Irene Cronin (DENA), Brother Philip Rofrano (DENA), Dr. Ann Marie Wranovix (Midwest), Ms. Margaret Hodapp (Midwest), Brother Laurence Konersmann (NO-SF), and Ms. Mary Hesser (San Francisco). District representatives (back row, l-r): Mr. Alan Weyland (DENA), Brother Kevin Convey (Midwest), Brother David Sinitiere (NO-SF), and Mr. Gery Short (San Francisco).

**BROTHER COLMAN COOGAN, FSC
(DENA)**

*Social Worker and Family Visitor,
Central Catholic High School,
Pittsburgh, PA*

Bro. Colman has ministered as the social worker and family visitor at Central Catholic High School since 1994. In his role, he works tirelessly with students and families in crisis as he counsels students with physical, emotional, social, and learning difficulties.

As a role model to students and the faculty, Bro. Colman is always there to spread the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle within the school community. Whether it is in after school talks he holds for faculty and staff, the writings he sends all of us, or the displays he creates throughout the school, he has made others see and experience the Lasallian heritage. He shares his faith willingly and joyously with others and

in doing so makes them richer. He invites others to share their own faith and find the joy in sharing it with everyone in their lives.

Bro. Colman's true gift is his ability to make each person he comes into contact with feel as if they are the most important person on the planet.

MS. IRENE "RENIE" CRONIN (DENA)
Teacher, La Salle School, Albany, NY

Renie has taught at La Salle School in Albany for 26 years and has consistently demonstrated her dedication and commitment to providing effective and compassionate service to the students. For two and a half decades she has worked to excel as a teacher, investing her time and energy into professional development activities. She has readily shared her talent and knowledge with her colleagues on our faculty,

allowing them to benefit from her experience and insights.

Renie embraces every aspect of La Salle School's Mission, and embodies the qualities of a Lasallian teacher. Her participation in the Lasallian Leadership Institute has deepened her knowledge of the Lasallian charism and allowed her to inspire others to explore the larger world of Lasallian service and find their place within it.

MS. MARY HESSER (SAN FRANCISCO)
*Director of Guidance, Christian
Brothers High School, Sacramento, CA*

Mary Hesser is in her 13th year at Christian Brothers High School and has been Director of Guidance since 2001. Mary personifies the true Lasallian educator in many ways in her daily work and as director of the Guidance Department. In addition to helping students select a college and career path, she also helps them

to self-reflect and uncover their vocation.

Mary has also taken the lead in grief counseling, both at Christian Brothers High School and as a resource for other schools dealing with loss. Mary and her team of counselors provided support to the school community after a series of tragic losses in 2003-2005.

Mary participated in several Lasallian formation programs and gatherings such as the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies and the Lasallian Leadership Institute, as well as the District Assembly on Mission.

**MS. MARGARET "PEG" M. HODAPP
(MIDWEST)**

*Vice President for Lasallian Mission,
DeLaSalle High School, Minneapolis,
MN*

Peg exemplifies the ideals of St. John Baptist De La Salle in her outreach to students who otherwise would be marginalized and/or disenfranchised in their education. Through her creative programming, she helps to establish a culture within the school where students grow in their appreciation of others. Those efforts go well beyond the realization of "difference" and what that means to each person. It teaches the benefits of learning for each other.

Under Peg's leadership, the single largest student activity at her school is the Lasallian Youth Ministry. This activity prepares the school liturgies, sponsors the school's diversity week, conducts a social justice week, sponsors a prom for students with disabilities, and conducts hundreds of service projects. Many of the service projects performed by DeLaSalle students have generated anonymous

donations toward financial aid for needy students totalling more than \$100,000 last school year.

**BROTHER LAURENCE KONERSMANN,
FSC (NEW ORLEANS-SANTA FE)**
*Seventh Grade Teacher, Christian
Brothers School, New Orleans, LA*

After professing his final vows with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Bro. Laurence took his station at Christian Brothers School (CBS) in New Orleans, where he has dedicated himself to the middle school male student body since 1967. During his career at CBS, Bro. Laurence has successfully created methods to draw students' interest to the many worlds of science, with a sincere admiration for astronomy. He has also brought his talents for math, religion and computer into the classroom.

Bro. Laurence heads the annual seventh-grade science fair and the CBS Academic Games teams, which have placed among the top teams in the country on numerous occasions. This past year, the Academic Games team won the National Championship.

Bro. Laurence also organizes the school's annual Math-a-thon for the benefit of St. Jude Hospital patients and the Christian Brothers School collections for the local Toys-for-Tots Christmas program.

Bro. Laurence's constant care and concern for his Brothers earned for him the appointment of Director of the Christian Brothers School Community in 2009.

**BROTHER PHILIP ROFRANO, FSC
(DENA)**

*Executive Director, Martin de Porres
Group Homes, Springfield Gardens,
NY*

In 1972, Bro. Phil joined in the founding of Martin de Porres School and became a classroom teacher. Together with two lay partners, he accepted the challenge of dealing with the oldest and most aggressive of the students who were sent to the school. During the two years he spent in the classroom, he often visited families and counseled the youth outside the classroom.

Recognizing that many of the students needed a more stable living environment to survive the risks of social pressures, neighborhood violence, and negative family and peer pressures, Bro. Phil took the initiative of founding the Martin de Porres Group Homes in 1974.

Like John Baptist De La Salle, Bro. Phil never realized how circumstances of his life would be influenced by the needs of youth who were neglected, abandoned and left to themselves. For 35 years since the founding of Martin de Porres Group Homes, Bro. Phil has remained faithful to his calling as he continues to discover creative ways to respond to the needs of the youth.

**DR. ANN MARIE WRANOVIX
(MIDWEST)**

*Professor of English, Christian
Brothers University, Memphis, TN*

Ann Marie Wranovix has been a demanding, loving, challenging and inspiring presence for the thousands of students on the campus of Christian Brothers University whom she has taught since 1985. The sim-

Continued on Page 18

plicity and clarity in Ann Marie's presentations makes her accessible to all her students.

Ann Marie exemplifies what De La Salle wanted to achieve in his schools—faith and zeal in the development of students who mature in their spiritual life and contribute to the good of society.

She has served in the university's School of Arts and the English Department as department chair and a member of several committees: Admissions, Faculty Review, Student Handbook, Compensation, and Sigma Tau Delta English Club.

Ann Marie's name is the first to appear when a position calls for a colleague who is deliberate, thoughtful and rational, well spoken and whom others look for guidance.

Contacting a Brother or a Lasallian Partner is just 3 clicks away:

1. Go to www.lasallian.info.
2. Scroll down the left bar and click on Regional Directory.
3. On the right bar, you will be asked for a Username, enter the word "region"; and a Password, enter the response to the phrase "Live Jesus in Our Hearts..." then click the Login button.
3. You are now in the Regional Directory Page. Click on the category you want to search in and enter the name in the appropriate box.

For questions, e-mail contact@lasallian.info

The Brother John Johnston, FSG Award

The award is presented to those whose leadership, teaching, evangelization, or scholarly research and writing have borne witness to an abiding faith and zeal, and whose efforts have had a transformative impact on the Founding Story as lived today. Sponsored by the Regional Education Board (REB) of the Regional Conference of Christian Brothers (RCCB), the inaugural recipients of the award are Bro. Miguel Campos, FSC and Bro. Luke Salm, FSC (posthumously), who were honored on November 21, 2009 at the Distinguished Lasallian Educators banquet.



In 1959, Bro. Miguel Campos entered the novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in his native country, Cuba. The political situation in Cuba compelled

Bro. Miguel to complete his novitiate in Panama in 1961. Then he went on to the Lateran Pontifical University in Rome, Italy to pursue his undergraduate and graduate courses in religious studies and also a doctorate in Theology.

For the last 51 years, Bro. Miguel has distinguished himself as an excellent teacher, an outstanding retreat master, and an international scholar. The deepening knowledge of and appreciation for Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy in the USAT Region are due in no small measure to Bro. Miguel's extensive research and writings. His role in the insightful design of both the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies and the Lasallian Leadership Institute have substantially contributed to the growth of Association for the Lasallian Educational Mission.

Bro. Miguel is currently a distinguished professor of Lasallian Mission at La Salle University in Philadelphia, a position he assumed after serving in Rome for seven years as a member of the General Council.



After graduating from the Christian Brothers Academy in New York in 1938, Bro. Luke Salm joined the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In

1945, he graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Catholic University of America (CUA) with a Bachelor of Arts in Latin and later became the first Brother and first non-cleric to graduate from CUA with a doctoral degree in theology, serving as a model and opening the door for generations of Brothers and other Lasallian scholars.

Bro. Luke has contributed significantly to the international Institute. He was elected to three General Chapters, the important histories of which he documented skillfully. His drafting and translation work on the *Declaration of the Christian Brother in the Modern World* in the wake of the Second Vatican Council has become the foundation for Lasallian identity, formation and renewal, particularly in the world today.

For over 50 years, Bro. Luke served as a distinguished professor at Manhattan College until his passing in August 2009. He was also active in the development of the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies as a faculty member.

Lessons Learned While Teaching Others

BY KEVIN MAGAS



Kevin Magas with kids at a child care center.

Earlier this year (my sophomore year at Lewis University), I participated in a teaching program that drastically altered my world view and deeply enriched my Catholic faith—the Lasallian Teacher Immersion Program (LTIP). The program was created to address the critical shortage of male teachers in private and public schools. Freshmen and sophomore men at Lasallian universities interested in the vocation of teaching take the risk of leaving the traditional college setting to immerse themselves in a variety of educational environments. A core emphasis of the program is to create a pool of male teachers with a strong spiritual foundation and sensitivity to the plight of the poor.

*This article is reprinted with the permission of *Christ is our Hope* magazine, a publication of the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois.

To accomplish these ends, five classmates and I lived, studied and worked among the poor at a homeless shelter in Kansas City, Missouri. A typical day consisted of serving meals and providing companionship to guests in the shelter, as well as exposure to a variety of ministries in the Kansas City area that addressed the needs of the impoverished. In addition my classmates and I took formal classes in theology, learning about the Church's response to poverty through Catholic social teaching.

Living for three weeks among the poor helped me to become a compassionate Catholic with an acute social conscience. After becoming grounded in the life of the poor, I was better equipped for immersion into Lasallian schools, which have a preferential option for education of the poor. Lasallian schools serve a wide spectrum of students with diverse socioeconomic, intellectual and spiritual needs. The Lasallian mission of providing a quality education to all students includes a high school in St. Louis, which is one of the most technologically advanced schools in the nation, as well as an inner-city elementary school in an area with one of the highest crime rates in Memphis, Tennessee. I had the opportunity to observe, tutor and perform apprentice-like activities in both the elementary and secondary levels of these diverse Lasallian schools. At the same time, I earned college credit by taking education

classes, allowing me to gain theoretical knowledge and concrete, practical experience at the same time.

Above all, the experiences at the different immersion sites convinced me of the crucial need for male role models in education. The fact that more than 40 percent of children are growing up without a biological father and only 19 percent of all Catholic school teachers are men create a substantial need for masculine examples. During my experiences, male students flocked to me and desperately craved my attention and praise. In lower socioeconomic areas where manhood is defined by the wealth and prestige of the gangster, I was able to present a counter-cultural example inspired by faith, hope and love. This experience has firmly convinced me that the Church needs dedicated men of faith willing to sacrifice a larger salary to provide an irreplaceable service to a world desperately in need.

Throughout the course of the semester, I was blessed to grow in self-knowledge through living in community with my classmates and the Brothers. The experience provided me with a great feeling of brotherhood and camaraderie that I have never felt before in my life. Having the company of like-minded men with similar spiritual values and concern for students is an immense gift. However, living in such close

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Lessons Learned

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quarters often leads to a conflict of personalities and requires a dedicated spirit of self-sacrifice. Even so, living in community taught me more about who I am as a person and clarified my likes, dislikes, and gifts in relation to those with whom I lived.

The nature and depth of my experiences throughout the semester profoundly impacted my Catholic faith. I was plucked from my comfort zone and thrust into contact with people and situations that challenged my faith. While I was initially idealistic about serving the poor and touching the hearts of students, those naïve hopes were quickly shattered. I thought I would be easy to see Jesus in those whom I served, but I often found myself feeling simply angry and confused at the injustice and coldness in the world. The depths of human misery presented an enticing temptation to despair; however, I now believe that every temptation to doubt is also an invitation for hope to blossom in the soul. Even though my faith was tested, I found that the



Kevin working with a student.

inner strength of Christianity spoke directly to the situations with which I was presented. I have discovered that our Catholic faith becomes more real and alive when we believe—even when we have lost all feeling and desire to believe—and continue to persevere in trust when all the harsh realities of the world beckon us to lose hope. This semester has been both a trial and a blessing to my faith by confronting me with the deeper questions of existence that each of us must face as adult believers.

Having returned from my travels, I realize that I learned much more

than I could have thought possible. While I have been able to articulate many of the ways in which I have learned and grown as a person, I intuitively feel that most of it still remains deep

in the recesses of my heart. I know that, as time goes on, this semester's experience will take on new meaning as I explore new avenues of thought and continue to develop as a reflective person.

I began to realize this as everything reached a culmination in the closing prayer service. Accompanied by the Brothers, my classmates and I gathered to pray at a grotto in a cemetery where more than 200 Brothers are buried. As we sat listening to a song called "On Holy Ground," events, people and feelings from the semester overwhelmed my consciousness. I remember telling God that everything was too immense to process and too meaningful to possibly express to another human being. Even as I sat, with a tide of emotion rushing over me, I felt the hand of God's providence and knew that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. A peace that surpassed understanding came over me and assured me that the experience would continue to bear fruit throughout the rest of my life.

As I return to my daily life, I know that God's grace has indelibly touched my life and that he has prepared me for great things in the future. ■



Kevin does his share of chores at the community kitchen.

IN MEMORIAM



"Those who teach others unto justice shall shine like stars for all eternity." —Book of Daniel, 12:3

- **Brother Virgil Evers, FSC,** (San Francisco) passed away on November 13, 2009
 - **Brother Michael Farrell, FSC,** (DENA) passed away on September 20, 2009
 - **Brother Kevin Hargadon, FSC,** (DENA) passed away on November 19, 2009
 - **Brother Alfred Longnecker, FSC,** (NO-SF) passed away on October 5, 2009
 - **Brother Cyril F. Pahl, FSC,** (Midwest) passed away on November 27, 2009
 - **Brother Luke Salm, FSC,** (DENA) passed away on August 31, 2009
 - **Brother Matthew Smith, FSC,** (Midwest) passed away on November 27, 2009
 - **Brother William Sullivan, FSC,** (DENA) passed away on December 12, 2009
 - **Brother Raphael Philip Thez, FSC,** (San Francisco) passed away on October 12, 2009
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



JANUARY 2010

12-15 RCCB Meeting
Memphis, TN

FEBRUARY 2010

21-24 Lasallian Secondary
Schools Chief Administra-
tors Association Conference
New Orleans, LA

MARCH 2010

11-13 Lasallian Leadership Insti-
tute - Midwest
Belleville, IL

12-13 Sangre de Cristo Center
Advisory Board Meeting
Santa Fe, NM

25-27 Lasallian Leadership Insti-
tute - East Coast
Mt. Pocono, PA

APRIL 2010

22-24 Regional Vocation Forma-
tion Board Meeting
Santa Fe, NM

23 Regional Finance Board
Meeting
Beltsville, MD

25-28 Lasallian Student Convo-
cation at the United Nations
New York City, NY

MAY 2010

9-23 New Visitors Meeting

JUNE 2010

20-26 Young Lasallians Assembly
Memphis, TN

27-29 RCCB Meeting
Baltimore, MD

OCTOBER 2010

19 Regional Finance Board
Meeting
Lombard, IL

NOVEMBER 2010

1-4 RCCB Meeting
Cleveland, OH

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