

Tepeyac

FALL ■ 2011

T I M E S

STRENGTHENING FAITH AND ACADEMICS THROUGH COMMUNITY

Annual Fund for Scholarship Dollars

One trait separates great schools from those that are merely good: the ability to open doors and give students the power to walk into new worlds on their own. Tepeyac ignites potential, letting students make their own discoveries and helping them realize their dreams.

You can give our girls what they need to succeed. Your generosity allows us to continue our mission of meeting the financial needs of every qualifying student. Consider a gift to this year's Annual Fund. **Donate online, at www.JustGive.org, or send your check to the school today.** All donations are tax deductible.

We hope we can count on you; with your support, young women can continue on their journey toward college and a better future.



These recent grads are attending Hope College in Michigan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Study Near, Go Far trip to China, an unforgettable experience.

In June 2011, eight students from Our Lady of Tepeyac got the chance of a lifetime to visit and work in the Republic of China. Due to the generosity of an anonymous donor and Big Shoulders Fund of Chicago, four juniors and four seniors along with Mrs. Joni Thompson, Ms. Rebecca Noonan, and Ms. Kathy Ingram spent two weeks touring China and working at the Dandelion School in Beijing. Our teachers and students helped children of Chinese migrant workers with their English language studies. Senior Mariana Buzo, wrote the following reflection:

Usually when hearing this word we automatically think, The Great Wall, Chinese food, Chinese writing, and Martial Arts. These things raced through my head when I received the news that I was going to China. We had no idea what to expect, but once we arrived at the school, everything changed. As the bus pulled up to the school, I realized that this wasn't what I expected to see. The school wasn't in the best condition and everything around me was dull. Parts of the school were pretty rundown. Pieces of the walls in the bathrooms were coming off, some classrooms didn't have doors, and the worst part of it all was that this was a home for children.

The children's dorms were small and there were at least four bunk beds a room. The bunk beds were pretty simple; it was a piece of wood as a mattress, one sheet, and a really light pillow. Every kid had the same situation, including us. We were going to experience the same conditions as the kids in the school. Suddenly my excitement was gone and I was not looking forward to being there.

My whole entire attitude changed once I met the students from the school. I was surprised to see how energetic and full of joy each of them was. As I took a look at their faces, there was little trace of sadness that showed they didn't want to be there. The kids were happy with what they had, even though it wasn't much, and they never complained...being at the school was great. I really enjoyed being there, especially spending time



with the kids. Even after class I would hang around to talk to them and answer the questions they had for me. The time came when we had to leave. None of us wanted to go; we had such a great experience at the school and we had grown attached to the school and the kids.

China was a great trip. Not only did we get to see a lot of amazing sites like the Great Wall, The Summer Palace, and several temples, the time spent at the school made us better people. The kids taught us to value everything we have. They showed us that even with very little, we could accomplish a lot. Happiness doesn't come from the material things; it comes from the love of one another. The students were what made the trip a great experience. Now as I begin my senior year at Our Lady Of Tepeyac, I will start off the year right by being grateful for the education I've received and also thankful for all of the great opportunities. I will have an open mind towards everything that will cross my path, and I will value the people who make it possible for me to succeed.

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Buddies Across the Way

To kick off the new school year and celebrate the Pre-K through 12 collaborative school model, a Buddy Project joined high school girls with younger grade school students. The day began with an opening school mass followed by a "getting to know you" project and a picnic lunch.

The girls enjoyed their time listening to the younger kids describe their favorite hobbies and activities. The grade school students learned about the older girls' dreams for their futures. The buddy projects were proudly hung up around the classroom walls as a display of working together. A picnic lunch of hot dogs and chips, with cake for dessert, was a real treat for all.

Plans are underway throughout the year to continue the Buddy Project. The goal is to create a sharing opportunity for the older girls and a learning opportunity for the younger kids. The high school and the grade school will be sharing programs, facilities, and opportunities all year long in order to strengthen learning experiences for all students. The new collaborative school model will celebrate the strong faith, sense of family, and commitment to hard work in both schools.



Junior Andrea Marquez helping her buddy at the grade school



Freshwomen working on math projects in one of two new math labs.

"Math-tastic!"

"Math-tastic!" can be heard in the halls of Tepeyac as we move forward to improve students' math-problem solving and reasoning skills. As we gear up for another great year, we are pleased to announce a grant of \$30,000 given to Tepeyac through the generosity and recommendation of an anonymous donor-advised fund of the Chicago Community Trust. The funding was used this summer to transform both math classrooms into more interactive math lab environments. Trapezoid tables replaced desks, enabling students to work better in groups.

Through the acquisition of new iPads, document cameras, and manipulatives, students now have the chance to develop mathematical concepts (or critical thinking) through hands on exploration. Teachers are excited to incorporate a new piece of technology everyday into their lessons. The new math labs allow for more collaborative work amongst students. The math labs are open to all students for tutoring before or after school. Students are able to receive direct assistance from their teachers and peers. The math labs offer computer based tutorial programs for all students who wish to strengthen their mathematical abilities.

Joni Thompson

Recognized by St. Xavier University



Dr. Meg Carrol, Joni, and Dr. Eileen Quinn-Knight. Faculty and Staff with Joni Thompson at the reception.

Joni Thompson, President of Our Lady of Tepeyac Schools, was honored at St. Xavier University with the 2011 School of Education George K. McGuire Award on September 22nd. Recognized as a Distinguished Alumna, Joni received her Masters of Education from St. Xavier in 1992. Nominated by Dr. Meg Carroll, a Professor of Education at St. Xavier, the award recognized Joni's service to Tepeyac for the past 21 years.

Dr. George K. McGuire, a professor of education, was a caring and humane person. A thoughtful speaker himself, he encouraged his students to speak well. A focused listener, he encouraged his students to listen carefully and actively. A generous teacher, Dr. McGuire was a model for students in a teacher preparation program. The School of Education celebrates the contributions and traits of Dr. McGuire by selecting a recipient who represents those same qualities.

Dr. Beverly Gulley, Dean of the School of Education, presented the award. In her remarks, Dr. Gulley said, "Joni Thompson is dedicated beyond just teaching, devoting holistic service to students of need while inspiring teachers and benefactors to improve the educational and personal opportunities of these students."

Alumnae Spotlight Michelle Espinoza, Class of 2008

Michelle Espinoza, Class of 2012 Saint Louis University.

When Michelle Espinoza, Class of 2008, was a senior at Tepeyac, she had no idea where she wanted to go to college or what she wanted to study. And she certainly didn't envision leaving Chicago. Because of the encouragement of her teachers, however, she found the courage to apply to and attend Saint Louis University. "I really didn't know what to expect when I left Tepeyac," says Michelle. "I wasn't even sure what I wanted to major in. It's incredible to see where I am now compared to where I used to be. I would have never imagined going away to a place where there aren't a lot of Latinos or a Mexican restaurant within walking distance. However, I am very happy that I made the decision to go away for college... Chicago is an amazing city, but it's a great experience to go away, grow, and get to know other places!"

Now, as a senior at SLU, Michelle is close to finishing her degree in social work, is on the executive board of SLU's chapter of the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO), is a member of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, works in the development office, and interns with the Victim Services Department of the Saint Louis Circuit Attorney.

"My passion for helping people has blossomed as I learned about even more injustices and suffering," says Michelle. "I'm delighted that I have moved from learning theories to putting them into action."

Since SLU is a Jesuit university and its mission includes being men and women for others, it has been a great match for me."

Now that Michelle is finishing her bachelor's degree, she recognizes the impact her time at Tepeyac had on her life: "Tepeyac was a great place that really fostered my leadership. I felt confident enough to be a leader because of the support of my friends and teachers. The personal attention that I received from teachers and faculty really helped me recognize the passions and talents I never knew I had in me."

After Michelle graduates in May, she plans to move back to Chicago to get some social work experience. Within the next few years, Michelle will go back to school to earn her Masters in Social Work. According to Michelle, "I would like a master's degree with some sort of concentration in mental health, and I would really love to work in Little Village, since this neighborhood is close to my heart."

FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW,
100% of our graduating seniors
ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN COLLEGE.

St. Casimir, Class of 1961 celebrate 50-year anniversary reunion



After months of planning, researching, phone calling, and emailing each other, the St. Casimir High School class of 1961 finally reunited at Our Lady of Tepeyac High School this past June. In celebration of their

anniversary, the St. Casimir Alumnae excitedly gathered at Tepeyac ready to roam the building as they did 50 years ago. Thirteen alumnae graced our halls as they took a tour led by recent graduate Jackie Herrera, class of 2011.

For many of them, the cafeteria was in the basement while they were students, and our current bathrooms were what they referred to as "the dungeon." Cynthia M. Stec shares, "Many memories

came racing through my mind as we entered the biology room and what was once the sewing room. I could almost hear the Sisters telling us to "settle down, girls!" It was amazing to sit in one of the desks in a classroom that 50 years ago I sat in."

They all reminisced over the years gone by, sharing stories filled with laughter as they joked about how they would sneak away lifting their skirts, to make them shorter. Many of these women had not seen each other since graduation, 50 years ago. A few actually flew in from different cities across the nation to reconnect with their classmates and the great memories at St. Casimir. As a group they gave a generous contribution toward our scholarship fund. It was a great opportunity to have these Alumnae reconnect and remember the best time of their high school. It doesn't have to be 50 years before you and your classmates return. If you are celebrating 5, 10, 15 or beyond- just let us know. We can help connect your class with each other.

Alumna Reunion:
Classes from the 80's, 90's & 2000's
Thursday, December 1st, 6 p.m.
at the High School. Invitation to follow.