

To the Friends of the Brothers **November 2003**

National Public Radio had a story about the woman in Florida who had feeding tubes removed. The story detailed the efforts of the Florida legislature and governor Jeb Bush to have the feeding tubes placed back. It's a complicated case – one for the bioethicists to argue. But it made me think of the word sustenance – that which keeps a body alive and well.

Christian Brothers High School is the most diverse Catholic high school in Sacramento. The most obvious example of that diversity is, of course, the fact that we are the only Catholic, coeducational high school. Other diversities exist, but I want to focus on the story of one of our students. I'll call him James.

James, who is a member of a local parish, came to Christian Brothers from one of our Catholic feeder schools. He started out in the SAGES Program where the faculty instantly recognized his potential. (We take twenty students each year as SAGES, an acronym for Students Achieving Greater Educational Success. SAGES' students don't qualify through our normal acceptance procedure but display an extraordinary will to attend Brothers. They go to school for 12 months their first year in a specially designed program which aims to matriculate them into a full, college preparatory curriculum by their sophomore year.)

In James' interview for the SAGES Program, he tearfully explained that every night he looked at the two items on his bedroom wall – a crucifix and a Christian Brothers' poster. He said that he prayed every night for the opportunity to attend Brothers.

James lives at home with his mother who works as a housekeeper and earns less than \$10,000 per year. He has three other siblings under the age of 18 and two older siblings in college. James' mother receives no financial assistance from James' father. He is one of our students who receives full tuition assistance.

James, who has three cousins attending CB, got off to a rough start in his freshman year. While James struggled academically early on, by the end of his first year he made the honor roll, and earned a 4.0 GPA. As a junior, James takes some B Level courses and a few C Level classes, and he maintains a cumulative GPA of 3.29. Today, he speaks passionately about wanting to maintain his grades so he can attend college. James played frosh football and has participated in numerous clubs in his sophomore and junior years. I can only wonder where James would be if he did not have the opportunity to attend Christian Brothers.

We have students who are super bright. You know, those who will attend Stanford, Harvard and other top tier universities. We also have students who struggle early on but achieve academic success through hard work, discipline, and perseverance. This academic diversity provides sustenance for our particular brand of Catholic, secondary education.

James struggled both academically and financially.

Sustenance – noun meaning nourishment. *To sustain* – verb meaning to give support. My friends, it works both ways. Our Tuition Assistance Program allows Christian Brothers to sustain programs for students like James. James and many others like him provide the sustenance for that which is the body, the fabric, and the heritage of our Christian Brothers experience and Lasallian education.

God bless,

Mark L. Warren
President

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December 2003

Chuck and Sally Sylva
8850 River Rd
Sacramento, CA 95832

Dear Chuck and Sally,

The fall sports season is behind us and winter sports are solidly under way. I currently wear a huge ring that was given to me by last year's soccer team. Brothers' soccer won three consecutive Section Championships, and the athletes had these huge rings cast. It looks a bit like a Super Bowl Ring – huge. Even so, I wear it with pride because our kids earned it, and they gave me one.

We all have a handle on athletics. Sports are visible. Involvement in sports opens doors for some students. The win or the loss is immediate; sometimes the media create instant heroes. What dad or mom wouldn't welcome an athletic scholarship for their child? Witness the thousands of kids who play club soccer on the weekends. Yelling and screaming fans and proud parents abound.

Well, we have other things happening on our campus, and I want to share some of them with you.

The fine and performing arts have become very popular of late. The University of California and the CSU System require applicants to have had some exposure to the arts.

Five of our aspiring artists had entries displayed at the California State Fair this past August.

- '03 graduates Aljohn Taboin and Carrie Tsung (Carrie won two first place ribbons and one second place.)
- Senior, Megan Wong, had two first place honors
- Sophomore, Lizzy Evey, had three works chosen with one first place and one second place
- Sophomore Amanda Limeberger had one second place

Amanda, granddaughter of our own Ron Limeberger – coach, athletic director, teacher and friend – won first place in the 2003 Congressional Art Competition sponsored by Congressman Robert Matsui. Her charcoal drawing, "Parts Missing", currently is hanging in the halls of Congress and will remain there until May of 2004. As part of her award, she and her entire family were flown to Washington, D.C. for a reception. Amanda has also received a four year scholarship to the Savannah Arts Academy in Georgia.

Recently, graduate Carrie Tsang won first place in the Crocker Art Gallery's Youth Art Month competition. Seniors Joey Del Porto and Jim Arthur have sold multiple paintings at the 29th Street Gallery over the past year.

An average class load for a teacher is five periods, but the demand is so high, our band teacher, Mr. Herb, is teaching six classes this year – Beginning Band, Concert Band, Honors Band, String Ensemble, Beginning Jazz and Jazz Band. Mr. Ron Slabbinck, our choral director, started at Christian Brothers last year. He had 80 students signed up for choral. He now has 120 students involved. He conducts and teaches Jazz Choir, Women's Choir, Men's Choir, Honors Chorale, and Select Women's Ensemble.

Loretta Kinney, our Drama instructor, puts on two plays a year and also has students participating in the Lenaea Drama Festival sponsored by CSUS. In the last three years Christian Brothers students have won awards for playwriting (2), acting in one acts and in monologues (5), and in synergy (1) a special award for enthusiasm in the arts at the Lenaea Festival.

I am reminded of the old story.

"How will I ever get into the Metropolitan Museum of Art?" the aspiring young artist asked his teacher. "You can either take the Fifth Avenue bus to 81st Street," said the teacher, "or work hard, be inspired, wait 20 years and have them come to you."

We are dedicated to teaching these students to work hard and to be inspired. Arts ... athletics ... learning. It's all about opening doors.

God bless,

Mark L. Warren
President