

SHS Atherton, Alumni Association Report 2006-2006

Event: Reunion 2005

- Objective:** To create a reunion weekend event to attract more alumni back to campus and incorporate a “homecoming theme” to include the current students in the experience. All classes will now attend reunion on the same weekend.
- Strategy:** The office organized several events over two days including an alumni soccer game, a homecoming football game, a mass in the chapel, a brunch and goûter. Sacred Heart Society members (seniors) were recruited to give tours on both days and faculty members were included in the event.
- Results:** While attendance numbers at the events were high and the event was considered a big success, we found that the combination homecoming football event paired with their reunion weekend was not a natural fit for several reasons. We decided the culture of the student body and the alumni were not ready for this experience. Maybe in a few years we will try it again. Also, while 200 plus alumni attended the mass/brunch and the goûter, we seemed to attract the same group of alumnae to both events.
- For 2006, the reunion schedule will be a one-day event so that we will have one day to concentrate all of the energy of our volunteer students, faculty and the development staff. In this way, we hope that SHS will shine this coming October 14th when the alumni return to campus.

Event: Gingerbread House Decorating

- Objective:** The Gingerbread House Decorating event has been popular ever since we borrowed the tradition from Broadway. In the past, we have purchased 60 houses and invited our alumni attend the party with their children or grandchildren. This year, we expanded this event and instead of losing money, we set a goal to make some. We wanted to increase participation and decided to invite all of the St. Joseph’s families. We also decided whatever money we made would be placed into the Alumni scholarship fund for our two alumni scholarships.
- Strategy:** In order to sell more houses, we invited all Bay Area alumni and their children and sent invitations and newsletter bulletins to the

pre-K and elementary school. The event would now entail two, two-hour seatings and would not include as many bells and whistles as it had before. We emphasized “supply is limited” and held the event in early December so that we would not compete with too many other Christmas offerings. We contacted SH Broadway to learn how to buy candy in bulk. The Alumni Board worked the event.

Results: We sold 148 houses and donated eight for an auction party. Our total profit for our scholarship fund was \$2,102. We were very happy with the turnout and heard back from many of the parents that they were glad to be included in the event for the first time. Next year we will open the event to all SHS families.

Event: Young Alumni Party

Objective: To build on our popular one-year old event that draws our young alumni ages 21-31 to a popular restaurant/bar nearby. In 2004, this event had attracted nearly 200 alumni and everyone had a great time. Our 2005 goal was to build on the success and continue to have an opportunity to communicate with them and spread goodwill from the school.

Strategy: We held the event at the same location and again held the event on a Thursday night. We sent out fun invites and booked the upstairs floor of the restaurant once again.

Results: This year we had 250 students drop by our party and everyone had a great time. We enjoyed the appetizers and gave everyone drink tickets and a one-time-use breathalyzer. We also brought the student newspaper and alumni magazine to share with them. We hope to continue this popular trend again in 2006 by holding the event once more at the same place.

Event: Collegiate Christmas Party

Objective: To increase attendance and build an event that would be similar to the Young Alumni party’s success. In order to do this, we set a goal to change the venue from previous years, to one closer to the school. We felt that if the location was more convenient than it had been in years past, more faculty, coaches and college students would attend. We wanted to create a popular event to connect with the college kids so that their connection to Sacred Heart remains strong immediately after graduation.

Strategy: We chose to hold the event on campus in the “Black Box” theater as it is a new space that had just opened on campus. We knew that the invitation would spark curiosity in the Alumni and hopefully they would return to campus and see the new theater and adjacent rooms. We also invited key faculty members, coaches and the current senior class. For entertainment, we asked the high school improv group to perform and rented an espresso cart. Then, we bought a lot of appetizers and junk food at Costco that we thought college kids would enjoy.

Results: We were happy to see the event grow this year. While we had a larger attendance of 100 plus kids, we also discovered that many felt uncomfortable without their clique there. This year we will try recruiting the coaches earlier, and will try to have the entire football team, or the entire tennis team, etc. return to meet up at the party. Also, we discovered that the week after finals, many faculty members are ready to travel to see their family. We will have to do a better job of finding a date so they will commit to attend the event. The students were thrilled with the one English teacher who did attend. She was swarmed by alumnae all evening.

Mailing: Valentine’s to College Freshman

Objective: This is the second year we are sending the college freshman a Valentine’s Day gift. There is a two-fold objective to this event. 1) to capture the college addresses and emails of our most recent alumni, 2) to send a warm, fuzzy reminder that they are an important constituency for Sacred Heart.

Strategy: In the fall we ask the parents for the college addresses for a “valentine surprise.” This information is gathered and entered into our database, especially the emails. Then in February, we send mesh laundry bags with the school logo to each college freshman.

Results: No discernable results but we feel GREAT doing it and the cost is reasonable. The bags cost \$8.50 each and they were \$1.56 each to mail. A total cost of \$1200 for a very important segment of our constituency.

Event: Senior Valentine’s Party

Objective: Create an opportunity to do something nice for the seniors around valentine’s that doesn’t have an “ask” attached.

Strategy: On the Friday before Valentine’s Day, we asked the seniors to come to one of the parlor rooms between 10 am and 12:30 for a special surprise from the Alumni Association. In the parlor, the Alumni Board members set up old school 35mm films and goody bags full of candy and individually wrapped cookies. We also set up glasses of lemonade and hung a “congratulations” banner welcoming them as soon-to-be alumni.

Results: We made 118 bags and about 100 were picked up that day. The students who dropped by seemed thrilled with the snack assortment and some got a kick out of the old film footage. The Alumni Boards members were also very glad to have a chance to meet a few students and put names together with faces. In the future, we would like to work with the students before they are seniors and are developing ways to facilitate this currently.

Event: Parents of Alumni “PALS” Luncheon

Objective: This is a multi-faceted two-year-old event that brings parents back to campus after their child has graduated from the lower school or the upper school. The event objective is to keep our past parents connected to our institution as potential fundraisers, volunteers and vital community members.

Strategy: We call this event the “Mad Hatter Luncheon” and through this event we hope to build our past parents group (PALS). It also provides a venue to hear from the past parents regarding what they would like to contribute to the school. We would like it to be a potential donor instrument and a tool that might increase or sustain their past gifts. It is also a way to hear about what our alumni are doing out in the world, as their parents are their best cheerleaders. The event was a sit down lunch in the library. Sister Costello (Class of 1935) said grace for us and two past parents warmly welcomed everyone back. The high school principal gave a state of the school talk and made sure to connect with each parent.

Results: In the past the event was held on our Conway Court but because of the rain this year, we moved it inside our main building. It was a little smaller than last year. Also, we have been inviting parents that have had children graduate in the past ten years. In the future we will have to decide if we want to open it up. After this year’s event, we have formed a committee that will take the organization and build a core group. They will volunteer at the Christmas boutique in “class year” shifts and help out at Oakwood to get

started.[It will be moved to Special Events and out of Alumni Relations.]

Event: Centennial for St. Joseph's

- Objective:** The principal of the school had one-goal for the centennial. She wanted a low-key event that included current faculty, families and alumni without having staff and faculty have to organize or staff the event. On Friday we were to hold a carnival conge and on Saturday, we would have the main centennial events.
- Strategy:** We decided to have minimal impact on the school itself as our Alumni Committee for set-up and clean-up was not very big. The class of reunions where to be held in classrooms, a carnival was set up on the soccer field, our school caterer set up a barbeque and the theater was used for a historical retrospective of the last 100 years in photos. Our closing ceremony, student performances and mass were also set up in the theater.
- Results:** We welcomed over 500 people back to campus. Many had tears in their eyes and found someone they knew from the past. We were able to find the time capsule from 25 years ago and opened it. We had an entry into the Congressional Record and a Proclamation from our town. Our mass included a 93 year old alumnus who is a priest alongside another alumnus who graduated in 1958 and is priest and serves on our Board of Trustees. The ceremony was wonderful and the entire day was relaxed and fun for all ages. We are still selling the DVD's and the t-shirts and will advertise them in our magazine for those who could not attend.

Alumni Board Nominations/New By-Laws

- Objective:** In May we set a goal to vote in our new By-laws and attract new members to the Alumni Board. We needed new By-laws because we had changed our organizational structure at our Board retreat. According to our new By-laws, we needed to enlarge our Board.
- Strategy:** Deirdre McHugh, our Vice President of Alumni Relations took over the job of Nominations Chair. We culled names from the Young Alumni party and alumni whose children currently attend the school.

Results: In May we added 6 new members to the Alumni Board. Deirdre continued to find interested people and we will vote the additional members into office in September.

The new By-laws passed with minor changes and we will begin using them immediately. The new By-laws more closely resemble what other Sacred Heart Schools are using as By-laws. We are thrilled to have the By-laws in place.

Event: SHP Alumni Pinning/SJSH Alumni Pinning

Objective: To create a dignified ceremony before graduation and to welcome new members of the alumni into the general alumni body. The ceremony is about six years old and has become a wonderful tradition that we hold in our chapel.

Strategy: Using the Alumni Board and various staff members, there are two ceremonies associated with our pinning. 1) At St. Joseph's it is the 8th grade class and some key faculty members together with the alumni members who attend and pin them. 2) For the seniors, many have siblings, favorite teachers and moms who are available to pin them. Through these two ceremonies, we hope to build alumni awareness and the vital ingredient of belonging to a Sacred Heart family as a whole.

Results: Each year we improve on the event from the year before. This year we shortened the senior pinning ceremony and hired a professional pianist that lent a huge degree of dignity to the event. The high school principal was thrilled at the number of young alumni (40+) who returned for the first time, to pin their sibling.

Event: Welcome New Member Luncheon

Objective: To have an event at the end of the year that is a gracious thank you for the returning Board Members and an ice-breaker for the incoming members of the new Board. There is no agenda other than relationship building and a goodwill gesture to hardworking volunteers.

Strategy: We selected a hip restaurant that had a covered patio that would attract Board Members. We emailed the Board and sent hand-addressed invitations to the new Board Members. The Board President said a few words of welcome and encouragement for the coming year. The appetizers were ordered in advance so that those needing to return to work early could slip out when necessary.

Results: We received many compliments on the luncheon and how nice it was. Everyone was very excited about the new members and they are going home for the summer feeling good about what the Board will look like in the fall. We will continue to budget money for this event every June as it was such a success.

Publications: Heart of the Matter Alumni Magazine

Objective: To produce 8 pages of strong alumni stories that are inspirational and moving to a broad base of our alumni population. We also want to focus on the St. Joseph's Centennial and include a stand alone historical piece.

Strategy: The strategy was to connect with alumni and discover success stories that had not been published previously in the magazine. We also sought alumni who could tell their own stories. We wanted to increase the profile of our young alumni as they make up such a large portion of our demographics. The alumni athlete is also considered to be more important to us now and we want to keep in touch with our athletes in their college successes. The centennial story was discovered with some help from Sister Nancy Morris who also produced an in-depth longer historical piece.

Results: The February Heart of the Matter was a great success. We heard from many people that they enjoyed the wide variety of stories and the high quality of the writing. The Centennial coverage was very successful and helped advertise the upcoming centennial event. Graphically the magazine just keeps getting better.

Publications: Harris Directory

Objective: To update the Harris Directory last updated in 2002, and to find many lost St. Joseph's alumni to invite to the reunion.

Strategy: This was two-fold: 1) the old school rosters were sent to Harris and a separate contract was made for them to find lost alumni. 2) The school directory would be updated through calling and mailing alumni. A page was added to our web site informing the alumni about the Harris directory and the fact that none of our databases would be sold or used for solicitation in any way.

Results: Our first import resulted in many duplications entering our database. We hope that the second round of imports due in August will be free of error and have gone to great lengths to make sure this will not happen again.

