



Dominican Sisters  
VISION OF HOPE



visionofhope.org

Summer 2020

*Together We Change Lives*

## Quick Transition to Telehealth Counseling Services Continue as Students Shelter at Home

The dedicated individuals on Vision of Hope's two advisory boards in Los Angeles and the Bay Area represent many personal backgrounds and professions. Their expertise and willingness to serve are invaluable to the organization and our eight schools.



For Therese Funk, an LA Advisory Board member, her personal and professional commitment to help children overlap. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of Counseling Partners of Los Angeles (CPLA), which provides individual and group mental

health counseling to students in 35 elementary and high schools in the Los Angeles area.

Three of those are Vision of Hope schools, St. Michael's, St. Frances X. Cabrini and Santa Teresita.

CPLA's team of counselors, all volunteers, are Master's degree level trainees and post-graduate associates who work under the close supervision of licensed therapists. They are coordinated by three paid Field Support Persons.

Counseling topics and concerns range from depression, anxiety, trauma, grief, divorce and immigration issues to crisis intervention.

Prior to the mid-March closure of schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, counselors met with students at their schools. In less than a week of the shutdown, CPLA transitioned to Zoom counseling sessions at home with students.

This became possible through the support of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, CPLA's strong partnership with its schools and an agility with technology by counselors and students.

In some ways, telehealth counseling is preferable, Funk says. Because a student is not pulled out of his or her classroom, there is no stigma and the sessions are private. Also, counselors can more easily stay in touch with parents and become more aware of family situations.

As related by one counselor, "One of my clients, a very sociable and outgoing middle school boy, always gave me the impression that while he enjoyed counseling, he could also totally live without it. Then to my surprise, when I sent out scheduling information for telehealth, not only was he the first one to write back, but he also booked the very first slot available, 8:00 a.m. on a Monday. These small actions showed me the real and raw power in the therapeutic relationship and the importance of continuing to connect with our clients via telehealth. I would have never guessed that this client would be the most proactive and enthusiastic about continuing services in this modality. This truly goes

*Continued on back page*

## Schools Shine with Grace and Strength

*"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for extraordinary destiny."*  
C.S. Lewis

In August, when six-year-old Elizabeth walked into St. Anthony-Immaculate Conception, she did not speak any English. For seven months, she and her classmates worked hard at school every day to learn their nouns, adjectives, and other parts of speech, along with math, science, and religion.

In March, COVID-19 changed everything. Elizabeth's teacher, Ms. Anne Marie Wozniack, had to move her entire first grade classroom to 100% online instruction in two days. How would she be sure her first graders would continue to learn while she taught them using Zoom from her home?

Everyone pressed on, and a few weeks later Mrs. Wozniack received a surprise. It was a video from Elizabeth. She was practicing a lesson in English from her home (with the help of her mom), demonstrating the use of prepositions with props from her playroom. This is resilience!



The transition to online learning has not been easy for our Vision of Hope schools, yet they have made the shift with grace and strength. In many cases, the changes that were forced upon them have made our schools and students stronger. The dedication, care, and flexibility demonstrated by our teachers, principals, students, and parents is humbling. Their fidelity to Catholic education inspires us to work even harder to secure the resources they need.

Currently, many families in our Vision of Hope schools are facing severe financial instability due to unemployment, reduced hours, economic uncertainty, and even illness from the novel coronavirus. As of this writing, several of our schools are already experiencing a 20% reduction in tuition payments, and we anticipate this to increase in the fall. Given this reality, Vision of Hope's tuition assistance is even more essential for our schools' ongoing sustainability.

To keep our schools thriving during this uncertain time, please consider donating to the Vision of Hope Resilience Fund to support the schools' efforts to:

- Keep teachers teaching
- Keep students learning
- Keep families enrolled

### Vision of Hope Resilience Fund

Help us raise \$500,000 by July 31, 2020

- Make a secure online donation at [visionofhope.org](http://visionofhope.org)
- Call our office and pay by credit card, (510) 533-5768
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# Meet the New Principal of Sacred Heart Elementary School

Adriana Bronzina was hired in March by Fr. Tesfaldet (Tes) to succeed Sister Maria Elena Gutierrez, the principal of Sacred Heart Elementary School, Los Angeles, for over 25 years. To ease the transition, Adriana and Sister Maria Elena have since collaborated and met with teachers and students on the virtual Zoom platform.



Born in Salt Lake City, UT, Adriana and her sister were raised by their mother, a single parent and immigrant from Argentina who worked full-time while earning a bachelor's degree and law degree. The family moved to Alamogordo, NM, when Adriana was in second grade and years later to El Monte, CA.

A 1993 graduate of Arroyo High School, Adriana attended Pasadena City College and in 2000 received her bachelor's degree from UCLA.

She taught first grade at St. Malachy Elementary School and at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish School. In 2006 she began teaching Religion and English at Bishop Mora Salesian High School, an all boys school in East Los Angeles. She served there for 11 years as teacher, curriculum coordinator, and eventually assistant principal of academics.

Adriana holds a master's degree from Mount Saint Mary's College in secondary education and a certificate in instructional leadership. Before entering the Onward Leaders program, an on-site training program for aspiring elementary school principals, she was the

*I'm very excited about being part of the initiative to bring Sacred Heart into the academically rich Dual Language Network of schools in the Archdiocese.*

Dean of Student Success at Pius Matthias Academy in Downey, an Archdiocesan coed Catholic High School, where she oversaw all of the academic counseling and student support programs for the school.

"It was during my last year there, that I felt a strong call towards leadership and a desire to return to my elementary roots," Adriana says. "My hope is that I can work to build bridges between our small community schools and our Catholic high schools to afford our students more opportunity to pursue higher education."

"I'm also very excited about being part of the initiative to bring Sacred Heart into the academically rich Dual Language Network of schools in the Archdiocese," she says. "I have seen first-hand how enriching and empowering dual language instruction can be for both native and non-native speakers of Spanish through my internship year as co-principal at St. Matthias Dual Language Elementary School in Huntington Park."

Speaking of her introduction to Sacred Heart since April, Adriana says, "I have been humbled and blessed with the warm welcome and support I have received from the pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Fr. Tes, and Sister Maria Elena. I'm confident that our weekly meetings and frequent conversations will serve to ensure a smooth transition for our students and families. Although we will enter this new school year with many unknowns, I am excited and hopeful, knowing that the heart of this great school community will continue to shine brightly."

# Ms. Grajeda Sees Bright Future for Santa Teresita School

Vernice Grajeda has completed her first year as principal of Santa Teresita School, Los Angeles.

Vernice has worked within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for the last six years in different capacities. She has taught all levels, from TK through high school and previously worked as a STEP and IEP Coordinator.

She earned a master's degree in Spanish literature and language from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. She is currently in her doctoral program in Hispanic Studies at the University of Birmingham. She has taught in the Spanish/Latin American Studies section in the Department of Language and Culture at Mount Saint Mary's University.

Vernice's research interests are in 19th-20th century Catalan



feminist literature as well as the effects of cultural identity and acculturation on Latina's academic achievement in higher education.

"My first year as principal at Santa Teresita School has undoubtedly been a unique experience, particularly given how we ended the school year due to COVID-19," Vernice says. "This year has seen many challenges that included financial hurdles we had to overcome, the continuing transition of a new administration, and technological issues that came to light when transitioning to distance learning. However, within these trials, there have been many great moments of innovation and renewal. Santa Teresita School has a bright future ahead with the help of our staff, teachers, parents, development board, Vision of Hope and its many generous donors. It is a true gift from God to be part of this journey."

# Retired UCLA Library Director, Joins LA Advisory Board

We welcome Keri Sullivan Botello as a new member of the Los Angeles Advisory Board. She fills the seat vacated by Bob Roginson, who has joined the Vision of Hope Board of Directors.

Keri is a native Californian who grew up in Sacramento. She attended UCLA where she met her husband, Mike Botello, and graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in English.

"When I married into the Botello family, I was graced with Sister Celeste Marie Botello, O.P. as my sister-in-law," Keri says.

Mike and Keri have three adult children. Michael, Jessica and Theresa attended St. Lawrence Martyr Elementary School in Redondo Beach. Michael graduated from Loyola High, and Jessica, and Theresa were resident students and graduated from Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy.

While serving as librarian at St. Lawrence Martyr School, Keri attended the UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science and in 1988 completed her master's degree in Library Science (MLS). She was an assistant librarian at Cal State Long Beach until 1992, when she was named director of the special library for the UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

Over the course of 25 years, Keri also directed the department's



internship program for library school students and taught an undergraduate course open to all UCLA students on library research. Colleagues elected her as Vice-President/President of the Librarian's Association of the University of California. She has also served on the board of the California Library Association and was active in the Catholic Library Association, where she worked with Sister Annunciata Auletta, O.P.

Since retirement from UCLA, Keri has been enjoying the Botello home and gardening, friends, music, reading and visiting their granddaughters.

"I have witnessed the legacy of commitment to teaching by the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose," Keri says. "Many years ago, I visited St. Frances

X. Cabrini School as part of a library school assignment. I visited a classroom for two periods and observed the commitment in action. This experience and other similar ones helped me identify the arena for my future — education. I believe the mission and beginnings of Vision of Hope were then in Sister John Martin's mind and she was making plans. I am honored to participate in the continuation of a truth-seeking legacy through the educational mission and work of Vision of Hope and the Dominican Sisters."

## Bragging Writes

### St. Frances X. Cabrini South Los Angeles



Through a generous grant from Shea Family Charities, the SFXC campus is undergoing a major renovation which includes a new electrical system and air conditioning, new classroom floors, windows and window coverings. The four student bathrooms have been renovated and repaired. Teachers will enjoy a remodeled faculty lounge. The younger students will have a new playground structure, and the school's exterior has been repainted. Students will be thrilled to use three new water fountains/water bottle fillers. The faculty and staff thank Shea Family Charities and all our generous donors.

### St. Ignatius of Loyola East Los Angeles

The Lady Falcons brought home the 2020 CYO Invitational Championship. It was an amazing 2019-2020 season. With eight wins and two losses, the girls entered the championship playoff against St. Mary Assumption. The evenly matched, exciting game saw the lead go back and forth. Regulation play ended in a tie, 25-25, sending the game into overtime. After winning the tipoff, the Lady Falcons were fouled and made both free throws. With only 10 seconds to go, the Lady Falcons got a steal and ran the clock out for the win. Everyone is so proud of the team's accomplishment — Falcons Soar!



### Sacred Heart Elementary East Los Angeles

On Friday, May 22nd, graduation gowns and lawn signs were delivered to 8th graders. Principal Sister Maria Elena and 8th grade teacher Rosemarie Pinal arrived at each student's home as some of the teachers and parents followed along. "It was overwhelming and a great experience to have teachers come and surprise me for graduation," said Juan Carlos Guerra, one of 24 graduating from 8th grade. "This is a wonderful memory for them," added Juan's mother, Guadalupe.



"When you take pride in what you do and accomplish your goals, you can be anything you want," was Sister Maria Elena's message to each of the graduates. "We are so proud of your hard work and perseverance these last few months!" Congratulations Class of 2020! You will always have a special place in our hearts!

### St. Michael's South Los Angeles

Students at St. Michael's reflect on what they learned this year:

I learned that I have the potential to become a music maker. ~Brad, 6th grade

I learned you can't procrastinate—it won't help you. ~Ashley, 8th grade

I learned that being quarantined makes me appreciate being outdoors and seeing my family and friends everyday. ~Daniel, 2nd grade

I learned about worms and how they help plants grow. ~Andres, kindergarten

I learned not to take things for granted. ~Allan, 7th grade

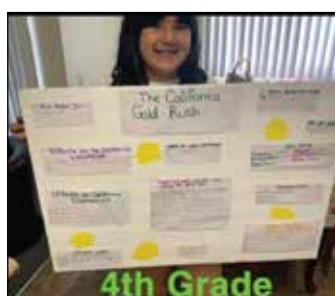
I learned that the community helps as much as they can. ~Johann, 5th grade

I learned about Martin Luther King, Jr. ~Hailie, transitional kindergarten



Daniel

### Santa Teresita East Los Angeles



Principal Vernice Grajeda writes: "We could not be prouder of all the efforts by our Santa Teresita School in shifting from the classroom to online learning in a matter of days. Thankfully, Vision of Hope donated 25 Chromebooks for us to lend out to students for distance learning, and our infrastructure was updated with a grant from the Archdiocese

of Los Angeles. Our teachers found ways to make online learning interactive by having students work on projects and present them to their class on Zoom. Fourth grade student, Sabrina Manzo, is shown presenting her project on the California Gold Rush."

### St. Elizabeth Oakland



"St. Elizabeth School has continued to nurture the academic, spiritual, and emotional development of our learners," says Principal Lynne Mullen, "including a celebration of Mary, May crowning, Pentecost prayer service, and a beautiful celebration of the eighth grade and kindergarten graduates. We also hosted a virtual spirit week."

During distance learning, fourth grade students completed a unit of study on different types of energy, including sound energy. "Sound energy has to do with the vibration of matter," said student Karina Herrera. As a culmination of their studies, the fourth graders designed their own musical instruments using materials they had at home, including guitars, rainmakers, maracas, kazoos and guitars. Students enjoyed playing their instruments for their classmates on Zoom.

### St. Anthony-Immaculate Conception San Francisco

People always want to know, "How are your enrollment numbers?" SAIC has been so blessed with a parent community that shares the good news about their school and invites other families to join them. SAIC has shown strong growth over five years, increasing enrollment 25% since the 2015-2016 school year!



Here are SAIC's enrollment numbers:

2015-2016: 113  
2016-2017: 131  
2017-2018: 154  
2018-2019: 162  
2019-2020: 188

### St. James San Francisco

Principal Alex Endo writes: "On March 12, St. James embarked on a once-in-a-century adventure. We received word on Tuesday, March 10th, from the Archdiocese of San Francisco that we would have one day to pack up our things and implement distance learning.

Teachers remained at school into the early hours of Wednesday preparing lesson plans and materials for their classes.

Fortunately, St. James, in partnership with Loyola Marymount University and supported by Vision of Hope, was prepared. The LMU coursework in blended learning begun 2017 has really paid off. Our transition from classroom to living room was seamless!"





## Dominican Sisters VISION OF HOPE

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## Staff Additions All Committed to Vision of Hope Mission

New to the Vision of Hope staff this year are Yvonne Yildirim, Office Manager and Gift Processor; Shannon McDonald of Los Angeles, Coordinator of Events and Donor Outreach; and Julie Dwyer of Los Angeles, Campaign Director.

Yvonne is a Bay Area native who attended Catholic middle, high school and university. She spent her early years working for an international employment management firm before finally converting to non-profit. When not being gently reminded of how little she may actually know by her two teenagers, she and her husband have owned and operated a Mediterranean restaurant in Alameda for 24 years. She says, "I'm very excited to be part of the Vision of Hope team, thrilled to have so many truly talented and committed co-workers, and deeply moved by the generosity of our donors, and the Good News that I'm witness to working with the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose and their amazing school communities."



Yvonne

Shannon grew up in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. Her professional experience spans positions in retail management, advertising and horse racing. Prior to joining Vision of Hope in a staff role, she served for many years on the Southern California Advisory Board and the Santa Anita Day at the Races Planning Committee.

Shannon recalls, "Over 20 years ago, my Grandmother Kay Tunney would proudly display handwritten cards of thanks and blessings

from Vision of Hope students. I am grateful for the opportunity to now be helping Vision of Hope serve its schools and students."

Shannon lives in the San Gabriel Valley with her husband and their two children. Their son is in college, and their daughter will be a senior at Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy, where Shannon serves in a board position on the Parent Guild.



Shannon

Julie is originally from Chicago and was educated by the Dominican Sisters in elementary and high school before graduating from Loyola University of Chicago.

She brings to Vision of Hope deep experience in the non-profit, philanthropic, and corporate sectors. Most

recently, Julie served as program manager with Specialty Family Foundation in Los Angeles. In that role, she supported the Foundation's capacity building initiative for the area's most vulnerable Catholic elementary schools. In 2010, Julie and the Foundation leadership had the opportunity to meet Sister Johnnie and begin a partnership with Vision of Hope. "I am gratified to join the Vision of Hope team," she says, "and am committed to the success and vibrancy of the schools and the students, families and communities they serve."



Julie

### Counseling Partners *From page 1*

to show that the power of connection, trust and continuity defies circumstantial obstacles."

"Counseling Partners of LA has been a great support to our students at St. Michael's School," says Principal Anabel Rodriguez. "Having someone to talk to during this difficult time is a blessing."

In 2012, Funk co-founded CPLA with this purpose: "The mission of Counseling Partners of Los Angeles is to serve at-risk and under-served students living in Los Angeles by providing a low-cost, school-based program that delivers the essential counseling and support services students need in order to grow toward their full potential emotionally, intellectually, morally and socially."

That statement closely aligns with the mission of our founder, Mother Pia, to serve the young, the poor and the vulnerable — it's no wonder that Therese continues to be a passionate, generous and faithful leader in the Vision of Hope family.

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to  
8:00 pm  
July 14

Proceeds benefit  
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