



Dominican Sisters
VISION OF HOPE



Winter 2022

Engaging Parents in Academics and Faith Formation

The year 2021 saw the successful start of two new programs for the families of our five schools in Los Angeles. Work has already begun to introduce similar programs with our three Bay Area schools.

In an effort to support academic success, Vision of Hope has identified parent leadership and family engagement as a key area of growth and programmatic expansion for our community of schools. By utilizing the best practices in parent, family and community engagement, Vision of Hope is supporting and empowering parents to play a more active role in their child's education and school community.

Our rationale is that when the school, family, parish, and community work together in a more holistic manner, children are more likely to succeed academically and beyond.

Thanks to backing from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, in November 2020, we hired Danny Diaz as Program Manager to implement a personalized and innovative Parent Leadership & Family Engagement Program. Over the past year, we strengthened our relationship with our schools, parishes, Dominican Sisters and parent community.

In the spring of 2021, Vision of Hope contracted with Families in Schools (FIS) to deliver a series of three weekly virtual workshops at each of the five schools. The workshop topics were



Students love Sister Georgette, an alum and former principal of St. Michael's School

To date, we have connected with more than 500 parents, who now make up our parent database, which opens opportunities we will continue to explore.

Danny Diaz

Growth Mindset, College Smarts, Parent Leadership, Importance of Attendance and Money Smarts. A total of 122 families registered, 95 in English and 27 in Spanish. One of our schools even started a waitlist.

In addition, VOH contracted with PowerMyLearning (PML) to introduce teachers to the *Family Playlists*, an innovative tool with fun learning assignments that empowers students to "learn by teaching" and engage families in deeper learning conversations as they assist their students with homework.

Twenty-four teachers from our five schools assigned a total of 29 *Family Playlists* -- 291 students were engaged, and 188 families responded with

feedback.

This past fall, we partnered with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) to offer an 8-week workshop, in English and Spanish, on *Social Emotional Learning* and *Digital Literacy*. At the conclusion, we hosted a virtual graduation ceremony for 166 parent graduates who had attended four or more sessions.

Sisters Volunteer for Outreach Team

In concert with these program partners, Vision of Hope created a Dominican Sisters Outreach Team (DSOT) to engage families in spiritual life and deepen parents' Catholic understanding and identity. Under the guidance of Sister Georgette Coulombe, O.P., our Los Angeles Liaison, Danny convened a team of nine Sisters who were paired with our five Los Angeles schools based on their experience and connections to each community.

S. Georgette notes, "As Danny and I met with

Continued on page 2

the pastors and principals, it was obvious that they were open and excited about our return. They gave us numerous suggestions about how we could assist and develop faith formation concepts and presentations."

The team's goal is to plan and lead one activity per semester for each parent community. These might include leading a prayer service to coincide with various holy days, attending school events, and reflections on the Dominican Charism and Four Pillars (Prayer, Study, Community, Service).

S. Jane Rudolph and S. Wanda Szymanko are doing lessons in faith formation with parents of St. Ignatius of Loyola School, where S. Wanda teaches second grade.

"We want to help parents get in touch with their own personal relationship with God so that they can help their children," says S. Jane. "They can do tiny little things as reminders of how to experience God today and recognize him in all circumstances. We urge parents to pray with their children, go to church, bless their children, and teach them to bless their parents."

On Sunday, October 17, Sisters Celeste, Johnellen and Georgette went to St. Frances X. Cabrini School for a Family Mass followed by an informal Q&A program with parents. They received an enthusiastic welcome, especially S. Celeste, a graduate and former principal of Cabrini.

"Parents have happy memories of the Sisters and they like having us around," says S. Johnellen. "We're like a favorite aunt coming home. It's all about connection and relationships. It's important for parents to know that the Dominicans want to stay connected. The relationship won't go away. The Charism is strong, and Vision of Hope is an important dynamic in that relationship."

S. Georgette and S. Elizabeth participated in two in-person events at St. Michael's. In observance of the Congregational Feastday in October, the school community recited the Rosary in the school yard. On Nov. 17, the two Sisters presented a program on how to observe Advent to 30-40 parents.

"What a way to start the school year!," says St. Michael's Principal Anabel Rodriguez. "The Sisters and Danny have brought a light to our school with parent workshops and the Sisters' participation in school activities such as *Monday Gospel*, prayer services, and *Coffee with Rodriguez*. Our Dominican Charism continues to be spread and reaches out into our community."

These nine Sisters have connected with all five principals and pastors and are re-establishing their presence in each community. More than 100 families have already participated in the in person activities hosted by the Dominican Sisters Outreach Team. Many more parents are eagerly awaiting our plans for spring 2022 and beyond.

The Dominican Sisters Outreach Team is redefining how sisters can connect with our Vision of Hope schools and their parent communities. We are grateful for their enthusiastic participation in this new and innovative program. Ann Magovern

Parent Leadership & Family Engagement Program - Participation Table				
School	Avg. Session Participation - Spring 2021	Avg. Session Participation - Fall 2021	Participation Growth Spring vs Fall	PL&FE Program Participants
Sacred Heart	10	26	174%	23
Santa Teresita	2	18	795%	18
St. Frances X. Cabrini	7	50	631%	43
St. Ignatius	6	27	398%	22
St. Michael's	18	66	271%	69
VOH LA Schools	8	37	350%	175

- 175 parents consistently participated in Vision of Hope's Fall 2021 workshops.
- Over 500 parents connected with Vision of Hope through one or more activities.



Above: S. Celeste visits with a family at St. Frances X. Cabrini School.
At left: S. Georgette and S. Elizabeth share with parents at St. Michael's School prayer resources to use during Advent.



Delivering on a Dream!

Ensuring the **Vision of Hope** Mission

In early 2020, we embarked on an ambitious campaign to honor and build upon Sister Johnnie's legacy and dream for our schools. Despite the many challenges we've all faced in the last two years, we are humbled and blessed by the generous support of faithful friends and new friends alike.

We are in the home stretch of reaching our campaign goal of \$5 million by July 2022!

Will you help us get there?

"The support we receive through Vision of Hope gives our students a level playing field that brings a sense of hope to ease the many challenges our families face. We are grateful to the Vision of Hope circle of supporters who help uplift our families one student, one generation, at a time."

- Alex Endo, Principal, St. James School



A heartfelt "Thank You" to all who have supported the campaign so far!

We are well on our way to fully funding our three key initiatives:



Visit our website to learn more: www.visionofhope.org/dream



Dominican Sisters
VISION OF HOPE

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Schools Adopt a Flexible Approach to Begin the New Year

After operating in person for the entire fall semester, the arrival of the Omicron variant forced some of our schools to move to distance learning in early January. Thankfully, all students had returned to their classrooms for in person learning by early February.

The good news? Experience with the pandemic since March 2020 has given our teachers and students the ability to seamlessly transition from in-person to remote instruction and learning.

St. Frances X. Cabrini School - Students were at home doing distance learning until returning to school in person on Jan. 31.

Sacred Heart School - Classes were conducted remotely on Zoom for one week in January. Students are now back in person.

Santa Teresita School - Students were in their classroom for five days before going to distance learning Jan. 11-Feb. 2.

St. Ignatius of Loyola School - School resumed in person after the holidays, but to be safe, moved to remote instruction for three weeks. Students came back to school on Jan. 31.

St. Michael's School - When too many tested positive for Covid after the holidays, the school moved to distance learning for two weeks. Students returned to the classroom on Jan. 24.

St. Anthony-Immaculate Conception School - Students have been in person since the holidays. Covid testing was initially done at the school, but now parents are asked to test their children.

St. James School - Instruction continued in person throughout January with students and staff receiving Covid PCR tests weekly.

St. Elizabeth School - The school went to distance learning Jan. 19-21, then returned to in person on Jan. 24.



GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, May 9, 2022

11:00 a.m. Shotgun Start

Richmond Country Club, 1 Markovich Lane, Richmond, CA

ONLINE AUCTION

May 6 – 10, 2022

Please mark your calendars for a wonderful day of golf and friendship. We are also bringing back our popular online auction! Online registration begins Monday, February 21