



St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club

“Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders”

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Youth Club Enters Sixth Year

Our Mission:

Helping youth grow into responsible adults by providing activities that foster character development, academic achievement, physical fitness and community stewardship.

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The St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club (SFAYC) has been providing a structured, comprehensive after-school program for the youth of East Palo Alto (EPA) for the past 5 years. Established in November 2004 as a Boy's Club, SFAYC has grown significantly in numbers and has evolved into a youth club serving both boys and girls.

The Club's core values are *safety, academics, mental/physical health and recreation and exposure*. SFAYC's vision is that all EPA youth have the opportunity to participate in high-quality, comprehensive, structured, supervised and enriching after-school activities, while in a safe environment.

The SFAYC started the '09-'10 school year focusing on the academic achievement of its youth. With more parent involvement, academic tracking and an enhanced integration of services with Cesar Chavez and Green Oaks Academies, SFAYC's fall academic assistance program has had great results!

In collaboration with Stanford University, SFAYC incorporated a speech program, "*Speak Up, Speak Out*", which is being offered to them from

Cesar Chavez Academy. Designed to help them voice their opinions on topics they consider important in a public arena, the speech program's initial run proved to be a success! The program will continue to run throughout the year. SFAYC will continually pursue avenues to expand and to academically support the youth of EPA.



Jesse Luna – A Great Leader Among Us!

Jesse Luna has persevered and evolved into an incredible leader among his peers. This has not been easy in an area that is sometimes viewed negatively by community outsiders due to crime, violence and low

academic scores. Born and raised in the Midtown area of EPA Jesse began participating at SFAYC when it originally opened its doors to at-risk boys in 2004. From the beginning Jesse showed all the char-

acteristics of a leader. Never feeding into the negativity of other students he assisted staff in supervising youth and proved as a great role model for the program's participants... (p. 2)



Jesse Luna, receiving the first Father Coleman Leadership Plaque, 2009

Luna cont's...

earning their respect at the same time. In retrospect Jesse says, "I found the Boy's Club to be a safe place where school projects could get accomplished instead of being in gangs like other kids". This sound frame of mind laid a foundation that contributes to Jesse's leadership capabilities to supervise other youth in leadership roles. He is a great mentor for the kids, always offering them a helping hand

and demonstrating an incredible amount of compassion, sincerity, and commitment to bettering youth. Jesse's resiliency and leadership skills warranted a staff position, his freshman year, where he continues to excel as a leader. Jesse will be graduating from

Carlmont High School this Spring 2010 and looks forward to going to college to become an architect.



"Our kids would come home from the SFAYC Summer Program, eat dinner and go to sleep!"
-SFAYC Summer 2009 Parents

Summer 2009: A Total Success!

The Club successfully completed a second year of all-day summer programming. Students were able to continue receiving academic support, while participating in enriching athletic activities and exposure to various field trips during the summer school break.

SFAYC's '09 Summer Program began on June 22 with an influx of younger students. The daily attendance reached 80+ at times, which may be attrib-

uted to the budgetary cuts affecting the neighborhood school districts and community organizations. Thanks to community support SFAYC was able to provide breakfast and lunch to keep the youth energized for summer days filled with academic and athletic activities. An athletic coach, James Fitch, was hired to specifically run athletic activities for the youth ranging from ages 7 thru 17. Thanks to the

benevolence of a grant from The Olympic Club Foundation, SFAYC will be able to hire two more coaches for the '10 Summer Program. Even with the high number of attendees, SFAYC was able to achieve a fine balance between academics, athletics and recreational activities (bowling, swimming, archery, and various field trips throughout the Bay Area).



Summer Girls Basketball Program.

SFAYC's first annual girls B-Ball Program kicked off with an overwhelming response of over 30 girls that signed up. There were two basketball groups created. Our basketball coach, Adrian Perkins, who is now the Cesar Chavez Academy basketball coach, led the older girls group. The SFAYC

Board Chair, Les DeWitt, led the junior group. Coach Perkins designed a very competitive basketball summer seminar to teach the girls basketball techniques and sportsmanship. The junior girls program focused more on team development and understanding the game. Both groups were a

total success! Coach Perkins currently coaches the same group of girls at Cesar Chavez Academy and expects a great season for the team. SFAYC will continue to provide an athletic arena for girls to display their athletic talents.

Meet our Staff...

SFAYC is comprised of paid staff and volunteers with a variety of cultural backgrounds and educational/work experience that come together to provide a cohesive and committed unit to guide the EPA youth.

Roy Perez, a mental health therapist who has been working with at-risk youth for 10+ years in various capacities and settings. Roy is the executive director. He obtained his education at The University of Texas where he received a B.A. degree in Criminology and Sociology and an M.A. in Counseling Psychology.

Mel Rivers has been in the recreational field for over 20 years. He has worked for the department of parks and recreation for the Cities of San Mateo and Sunnyvale, before moving into a position with the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula. Mel also serves as the Scout Master for the SFAYC's very

own Boy Scout troop 600, through The Boy Scouts of America.

Mar Y Sol Alvarado joined the youth club staff in March of '09 and currently serves as the academic consultant at the club. Mar Y Sol previously served as a mentor for Build to Last and working as an instructional associate for Menlo-Atherton High School. She is currently working on a Master's degree in Sociology at San Jose State with an emphasis in Criminology. Mar Y Sol manages the after-school homework assistance program and is responsible for the youth's independent academic achievement.

Jesse Luna joined the Youth Club staff at the end of 2006 after transitioning from being part of the Club. Jesse serves as the Club Leader and is responsible for the supervision of 8 youth club leaders. He sets the example and offers great mentorship to the kids.



(Above) Roy Perez and Mel Rivers at the Club's 1st Annual Summer BBQ.
(Below) Mar Y Sol Alvarado with some of the SFAYC's young members: Elizabeth James, Orlando Hernandez & Dulce Barbosa.



Special Thanks to our Community Friends...

Providing resources for a disenfranchised community is a daunting task for organizations when the economy limits funding and resources. SFAYC continues to provide services to EPA youth only because of the collaborations established with other EPA Community friends.

- St. Francis of Assisi Church
- Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (MPPC)
- Cesar Chavez Academy
- Palo Alto Bowl
- Ecumenical Hunger Program
- Catholic Charities CYO
- The Boy Scouts of America
- Community Access Ticketing Found. (CATS)
- Marine Corps Toy's for Tots Program
- Our Common Ground
- Kids Bowl Free Summer Bowling Program
- EPA McDonald's
- Stanford Men's Basketball Program
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- One East Palo Alto
- CYO Bus Transportation

"It takes a community to raise a child!"
-St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club



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Executive Directors Message...

The St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club has undergone various incremental transformations since November 2004. Emerging from Fr. Goode's vision to provide a safe place for youth to spend their time after school, the club has grown and now provides various activities for the kids on a daily basis. The "vision" is being accomplished.

The SFAYC strives to expand on the vision by continually seeking new opportunities for participants. A major success for SFAYC is the community's acceptance of the program. SFAYC collaborations with community partners have increased over the years, improving our ability to provide services to our youth. Participat-

ing families have embraced SFAYC and enjoy participating in our celebrations. Most importantly, SFAYC continues to serve more and more youth!

As the executive director, I have been fortunate and honored to lead Fr. Goode's vision throughout the years. I have seen many youth daily for a period of five years, reinforcing the program's effectiveness. I would like to extend an offer to anyone reading this newsletter to come to the SFAYC and speak with a young person who has been here since the program's inception and personally experience the SFAYC's rewards. More than likely, you will see the vision behind this great program. Fr. Goode not only is the vision-

ary, but he participates in all the activities and celebrations from playing basketball with the youth, to sitting on Santa's lap, Fr. Goode is inspiring!



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Helping youth grow into responsible adults by providing activities that foster character development, academic achievement, physical fitness and community stewardship.

Our Motto:

"Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders"
"Dream, Believe, Achieve"