



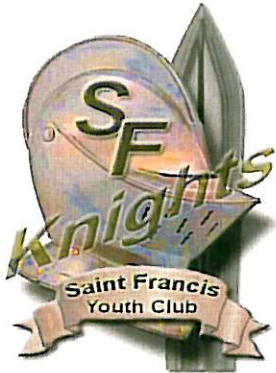
# Saint Francis of Assisi Youth Club

“Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders”

EST. 2004

Volume 1, Issue 3

Spring 2011



## 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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## Celebrating Christmas at the Club...

The past holiday season was a very special season for all of the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club members and their extended families. SFAYC has had overwhelming support from surrounding communities and organizations that made the holiday season possible for our kids.

Many of our families experience financial problems especially during the holidays, and they are unable to provide a gift for their children. St. Bartholomew’s Church in San Mateo made the season of giving possible for all of our families. St. Barts fulfilled two gifts per child and a family need this holiday season. Friends of the SFAYC also donated winter jackets and game consoles to the Club to make the holiday season special for the kids. Menlo Park

Presbyterian Church has been a continuing donor to the Youth Club making possible many of the daily activities that happen at the Club.

The holiday season is a great opportunity for SFAYC families, staff and board to come together as one big family and be thankful for the year’s blessings and yearly accomplishments. This season was definitely one to remember for many of our SFAYC parents who were unable to buy gifts for their children and obtained a jolly season from one of the many donors that made the season possible for them. Our end-of-the year cele-

bration included a family style potluck with many traditional dishes, present/toy giving to families most in need, photo session with Santa Claus, a traditional “posada” and Christmas Carols performances by our Club members. On behalf of the SFAYC families and staff we would like to thank all our special donors that made a joyful season possible for our families.



Christmas with all the trimmings was once again celebrated at the Club. From top left, Bianca, Michael, Jesus, Chuy, Santa, Lupe and Eduardo all enjoying the Holiday Celebration.



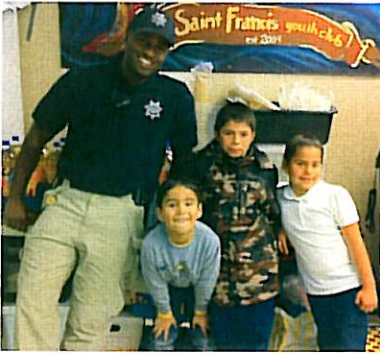
Officer Barries & Youth Club Members.

## Making New Friends

For various reasons, kids growing up in East Palo Alto often have confused ideas about the police department and those in uniform. Luckily the local PD understands this and has begun a School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Last fall the Club contacted the PD and

very quickly Officer Richard Barries was named our SRO. An East Menlo/Palo Alto native, he was introduced to parents and Club members at the annual Thanksgiving pot-luck.

Officer Barries says his goals are to bridge the gap between police and students; (page 2)



Officer Barries, spending hanging out with Orlando (left), Brandon (middle) and Marisol (right).

## Making New Friends (cont.)

increase positive attitudes towards law enforcement; reduce juvenile crime by helping students formulate an awareness of rules, authority, and justice; all the while being a positive role model for EPA youth. He comes by once a week and spends quality time with the kids, staff and par-

ents. Between games of pool, there are discussions about life in general, including community violence and drug use.

He says, "It is great working with the Club. I hope I can serve as a positive influence and bridge the gap between the police and youth here in East

Palo Alto."

So far so good. The kids love to see Officer Barries drive up for his weekly visit and one said, "It's nice having him around, he's friendly and he seems like a really caring person...and he drives a super cool COP CAR!"

## On the Way to College!



BE THE FIRST! Group Visiting Stanford University.

Our newest program must be good. Anything that gets 15 kids out of bed on Saturday to think about their future must be on the right track. Welcome to BE THE FIRST!

BE THE FIRST! is the Club's Saturday enrichment program that helps junior high and high school kids fulfill a commitment to be the first in their family to graduate high school and enter into higher education. Mixed in with a strong academic focus are a number of field trips, which included a recent tour of the University of San Francisco.

Fifteen Club members toured USF's dormitories,

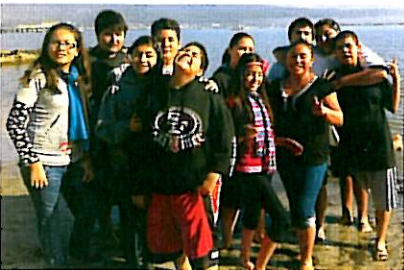
classrooms, cafeteria and St. Ignatius Church and heard from a great student tour leader about what college life is like, about scholarship aid and dormitory life. Later Guadalupe, a seventh grader at Cesar Chavez told us, "USF is a beautiful campus and I could really see myself here!"

So then its back to the Club's classrooms, where the focus is on reading and comprehension skills; writing skills including essay organization, topic and transition sentences; organizing and then writing ideas using "mind-mapping" techniques; presentation and debating skills and overall team-work and leadership skills.

BE THE FIRST! currently

meets every other Saturday and all Club-time is academically focused. Participants commit to be on time to all meetings and must keep a written journal. Our results from last semester are encouraging, with many of our kids showing improvement in their writing skills and English grades. Jesus brags about his writing progress at his school and proudly teases the staff, "I may look like I'm fooling around during our meetings but I'm paying attention and learning here."

BE THE FIRST! is a new program but over time, we're sure the key outcome will be a significant number of our members graduating from high school and going to college.



BE THE FIRST! Group Visiting Half-Moon Bay, Dungeness Crab Lesson.

## WANTED: After-School Tutors



Tutor & Club Supporter, Mrs. Laura Pitchford with Carmen (left) and Rose (right).

The backbone of the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club is our weekday after-school program. We provide a safe, supervised place for the kids to work on their homework and get a little play-ground time in

as well. And our volunteer tutors are a vital part of the success of this program.

Into 2011 the after-school program has grown by 50% over the previous year and we now have 45 young people coming every day for help after school.

This past year, with strong input from the professionals on our Board, we've strengthened the academic program and enlisted a small group of

volunteer tutors to assist kids with their homework and any other school issues they may have. And because of our growth, we need more tutors.

On a daily basis each young person shares with their academic tutor how the school day went and talks about what they enjoy at school and about any problems. Tutors help the kids focus on their homework,

(page 3)

## WANTED (cont.)

study for upcoming tests, or play academic games.

Together they set bi-weekly goals, which we know will encourage positive change in their school life. Tutors log-in homework and results everyday, enabling our Academic Director to analyze patterns and track progress. And this year we will be getting out into the kids' schools to meet their teachers and open-up that communication channel so we

can further help them after school.

Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the help we can give their kids. One parent confessed feeling helpless about assisting with school-work, "but at least we can bring them to the Club for help."

This spring we have volunteer tutors from St. Patrick's Seminary and our Board but we really do need more to keep up

with the personal attention our kids need. A particular need this spring is for Wednesdays when the kids get out of school early. If you are interested please contact Club director Mar Y Sol Alvarado at [mysalvarado@gmail.com](mailto:mysalvarado@gmail.com).



Youth Club kids enjoying recreational time, after completing their homework.



Gerardo (left), Alexis (middle) and Damara (right), having fun with each other.

## Club's Growth Plan Back on Track

After years of imagining what it would be like for our kids to have a huge multipurpose playing field outside our door, a major step has been taken to make this happen!

Last November the East Palo Alto (EPA) planning commission approved the project and the City Council agreed to take it up. And on February 8, with the hearing room jammed with youth supporters, Club parents and staff, the council approved the project to move forward.

This ends one phase for the Richard May Foundation and

begins the next. Five years ago the foundation began the long process of working within the community and city to create a memorial field for East Palo Alto youth in honor of Rich May, an EPA police officer killed in the line of duty in January 2006 not far from the Youth Club. With the major public policy issues settled, the Foundation's fund-raising efforts will now be ramped up.

The athletic complex is planned on approximately 60,000 sq. ft. next to the present Youth Club and will in-

clude a synthetic turf athletic field, volleyball courts, storage areas and other supporting facilities.

Rich's family and friends formed the Foundation with the intent of building a field complex that could help area youth avoid the gang-life and violence that was responsible for Rich's murder. The connection with the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club began then and continues today. We can't wait!



Les (left), Father Goode (middle) & Frank (right) holding a photo of the Proposed Rich May Field Project.

## An Artist Among Us!

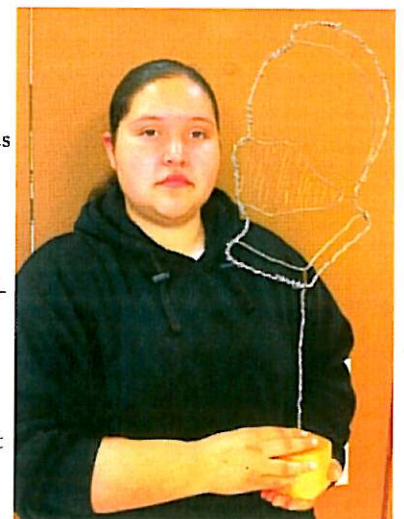
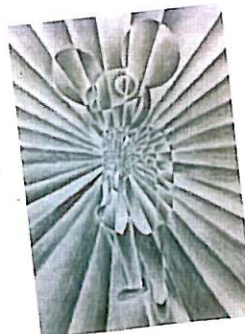
Bianca has contributed much during her two years with the Club – including a lot of her art work.

Bianca has quickly become a youth leader and a great role model for younger members. And during this, her first year at Woodside High School she has also discovered a real passion for art. She signed up for an art class and pretty soon was bringing samples of her work to the Club. She comes to the Club daily and is also an

active member of *Be the First* (see story on p. 2.) The walls of the Club have become Bianca's personal art gallery.

She willingly shares her work with friends and staff at the Club and is proud of the skills she is learning and the grades she is receiving. Her next goal is to put together an art portfolio to enable her to share her work more broadly and to preserve it. And next year at Woodside she hopes to take a studio design class.

Art is more than pretty pictures for Bianca. She explains that she channels her emotions through her art and finds this relaxing and meditative. And she says, "I like art because it takes my mind off of things."



Bianca, with some of her art work.

# St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club

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## Our Mission:

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

**"Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders"**

**"Dream, Believe, Achieve"**

## Board of Directors

Fr. Lawrence Goode, Pastor  
Les DeWitt, Board Chair  
Steve Britschgi  
Mike Brown  
Don Carroll  
Chloe Kamprath  
Melody McLaughlin  
Sandy McNamara  
Dr. Frank Merrill  
Barbara Pavis  
Gary Prioste  
Doyle Rundell

## Club Director

Mar Y Sol Alvarado

## Youth Club Staff

Jesse Luna  
Jose Martinez  
Mel Rivers  
Jesus Yanez

## Volunteers

Cameron Faller  
Sue Kayton  
Gene Lopez  
Verity Powell  
Earl Powell

## Memo from Mar Y Sol...

Our after-school homework support has been doing extremely well. Most of our participating members hold good academic standing at their school; many of them have been recognized for their California Testing and English Proficiency Scores as well as being named Student of the Month by their corresponding schools.

The help we are able to offer the SFAYC Club Members would not be possible if we did not have support from our volunteer tutors. The work they do with the kids is exceptional; they serve not only as tutors but as mentors too. The Club provides consistency, structure, expectations for behavior, school work and a place to belong. Steve Britschgi

a Youth Club Board member for the past 2 years, has been a devoted tutor since last fall. Steve a busy person, involved in his own non-profit Advocates for Athletes, a coaching/consulting business created to help educate and guide student athletes and their families through the college recruiting process with the end goal of obtaining a college scholarship. He has made a commitment to

be part of our tutoring staff at least one day a week working with our youngest members one-on-one. He has learned to work with our kids and has a charisma the kids love. He understands the need they each have and the kids are always eager to work with him. Steve says, "I

look forward to every Tuesday tutoring the kids, I come here and I know I will leave with a smile on my face; the kids help me be better. It's a great experience". He is an admirable human being and it is people like him that make SFAYC a great environment for all participating members. With the Summer Program coming up we need more tutors like him. Thanks Steve!



Steve (left), Derron (middle) and Bianca (right) getting their homework assignments completed.

## SAVE THE DATE:

Spring BBQ Friends & Family Potluck Fest!

May 13, 2011 4-7 p.m.

For information & details call!