



Saint Francis of Assisi Youth Club

“Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders”

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SFAYC Takes a Big Step Forward

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 took a big step forward this summer. East Palo Alto youth were offered a full program of sports, academic enrichment and field trips at no cost, lunch and daily snacks included. And did they ever respond!

From June 21 through August 14, 2010 kids from ages six (junior Knights) through 15 (Knights) built learning skills, stronger bodies and went on some great trips.

The learning component was developed with help by new youth club board member and former Mid-Peninsula School head, Chloe Kamprath. Chloe learned from experience that kids do better in school if they don’t take the whole summer off from learning. So she worked with club director Mar Y Sol Alvarado to develop “school craft” activities that

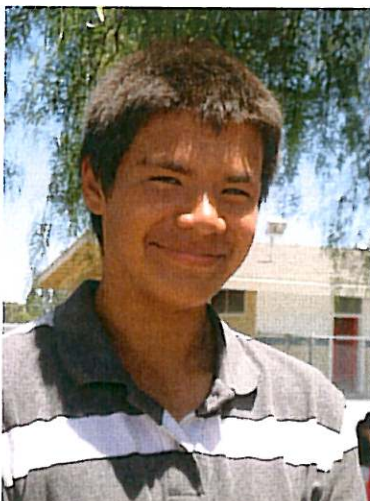
promote organization, listening skills and working together, among other skills.

They recruited academic coaches and together created weekly themes to shape the activities – My Family, My Wishes and Dreams and others. The junior Knights kept journals, worked on reading comprehension and math skills, with lots of arts and crafts. The Knights also worked hard on writing skills and composition. Chloe built pre- and post-assessment into the program and these comparisons clearly show the positive learning impact the summer program had for the kids.

They spent plenty of

time outside the classroom and club recreational director Mel Rivers enlisted coaches to manage a full summer of activities, athletics and drills. Members of the youth club board and the staff also squeezed in multiple field trips, including days at the San Francisco Zoo and Marine World.

This edition of the Club newsletter features stories about a few of the people who made the program happen. And some images of the East Palo Alto youth that enriched our lives this summer.



Eduardo Alvarado, Summer 2010.

Youth Club Grad Stays Close

Developing leaders is the club’s mission. Often real success with this mission occurs when one of the club members show the others what real leadership looks like.

In his short time at the club, Eduardo Alvarado has become one of those role models.

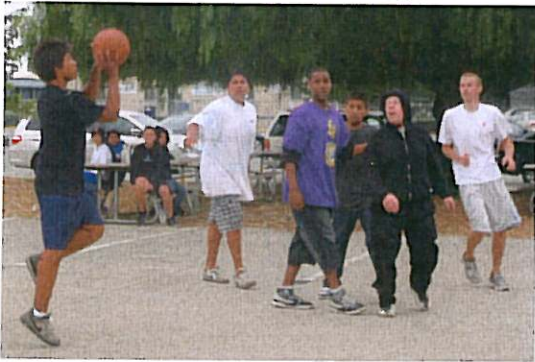
Three years ago, Eduardo had no where to go after school and nothing to engage his time at home. His cousin Diego introduced him to St. Francis and he immediately saw the youth club as a fun place he could hang out, do his homework and have fun with his

friends. He had always been a great student and he enjoyed helping the older kids with their homework assignments. This began his leadership role at the club.

This summer, Eduardo really stepped forward as a role model (cont. p. 2)



Eduardo (right) and Jesse Luna taking a break at the SF Zoo field trip, Summer 2010.



Eduardo (left) took a pass from Fr. Goode and gets off a shot, Summer 2010.

Eduardo (cont.)

for the rest of the kids. After a long bus commute from his Redwood City home to the club in East Palo Alto he still arrived early enough to set up equipment every morning and then helped to close every evening before heading home on the bus. He helped the kids all day and they looked up to him for his behavior and work attitude.

Its clear Eduardo learned leadership before he got to the club. He lives at home in Redwood City with his mother and his two sisters, the youngest in his family. His

mom works two jobs to support the family. His oldest sister is 20 and works for a retail store in Redwood City and his youngest sister is 17 and a senior in East Palo Alto High School. His uncle Manuel is his role model and after Eduardo's father was killed in Mexico, Manuel made it clear that he will always be there for Eduardo.

His mother realizes the opportunities the club provides Eduardo and she trusts him to make the right choices. She sees the club as a great place where her son can learn, develop and be safe. Eduardo works hard in and out of school because he wants to be able to care for his family when he grows up. He is proud of standing up to peer pressure and of living a drug free life. He says, "At some point, they

just stop asking."

He loves sports and plays football, basketball and soccer in school. He will be leaving daily contact with the club soon when he enters Sequoia High School this fall. Down the road he hopes to attend a northern California university and would like to study botany and work in that field. He loves the outdoors and would like to discover new medical benefits of plants. As Eduardo gets ready to begin a new life as a high school student, his best club memory is being able to finish his homework there and then play football with his friends until the club closed. Even during high school he hopes to come back to the club and stay involved. It's important to him to help other youth and be able to set a good example for them to follow.

Fun & Games with Coach Padilla

Coach Adrian Padilla was another new face in the summer program.

Coach Padilla grew up in San Francisco but spent a lot of time in East Palo Alto, where most of his family resides. He went to Serra High School and played soccer there. At age

16 Adrian became an assistant coach, and by age 18 was already working as a coach, counselor at a teen center and after-school teacher.

Coach Padilla is definitely a

busy guy and he loves sports. He currently works as a P.E. Teacher for Footsteps, a day care and after-school program. At the same time he holds down similar work at a middle school, 3 elementary schools, 2 pre-schools, and 1 Spanish immersion program.

He recently graduated from Cal State East Bay University with a Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Physical Education, and is currently in the process of obtaining his credential to become a teacher. With all this experience working with young people, it is no wonder that the Jr. Knights and Knights had great times training with Coach Padilla.

Every Monday, Tuesday and Friday, all the kids anxiously waited for him to arrive and ran to greet him as he unloaded athletic equipment. He always had new activities and athletic drills, and practiced different sports with the Jr. Knights and Knights and kept them engaged and excited about exercising. His routines helped kids stay active during the summer, and his enthusiasm and approach quickly made him into the most popular coach at the program.

For these reasons, Coach Padilla won the "Coach of Coaches" award, for being the most popular coach in the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club Summer Program.



Coach Padilla wrapping up a training session with the Young Knights. He was definitely the most popular person around the Club this Summer 2010!

Connecting Youth Across the World

When Cameron Faller came to the club this summer as a volunteer seminarian from St. Patrick's, he quickly saw an opportunity to teach a big-time geography lesson to the older kids.

"We began mainly working on improving their writing abilities," Cameron said. Then it occurred to him to begin a pen-pal program to work on writing and to learn about other cultures.

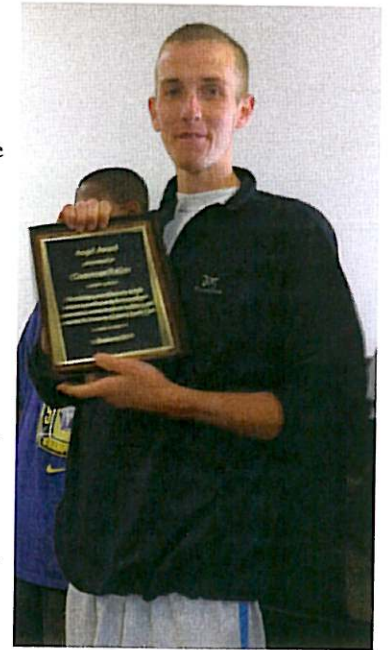
Earlier this year Cameron had been a short-term volunteer in Liberia and made friends with many of the young people at

the Catholic mission school there. Back in East Palo Alto he told the Knights about his experience in Africa. "Then we scanned letters and sent them by e-mail to the boys and girls in Africa that I knew. This has been an exciting project because it has allowed our kids to improve on their writing while communicating with kids half way around the world.

"We have been mainly working on improving their writing abilities in preparation for the new school year," he says. "Our main focus has been to emphasize to the children that

their pursuit of a college degree does not start several years from now, but rather it starts today! I truly believe the kids have made great progress this summer."

Like others who worked at the club this summer, Cameron feels he received more than he gave. "Like my African experience, I believe God has once again blessed me with an opportunity to grow in maturity and my vocation by being at St. Francis Youth Club. The skills and lessons I have learned will hopefully help me to become a better priest. God Bless."



Cameron Faller was recognized for his dedicated work at the club this summer, Summer 2010.

Neighborhood Kid Comes Back Home

Jose Martinez is a role model and is also one of the guys from the neighborhood. He worked with Mar Y Sol Alvarado in the classroom during the summer and may have helped a couple of the kids to get on the road that he has traveled.

Jose came home to East Palo Alto from college not long ago. He has grown over the years from a very quiet, non-English speaking 6th grade student at Cesar E. Chavez School across the parking lot from the youth club, to become a youth leader and a positive role model.

Jose graduated in 2005 as an

honor student at nearby Eastside College Preparatory High School. He went to the University of California, Davis, and recently graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Chicano Studies with an emphasis in Communications.

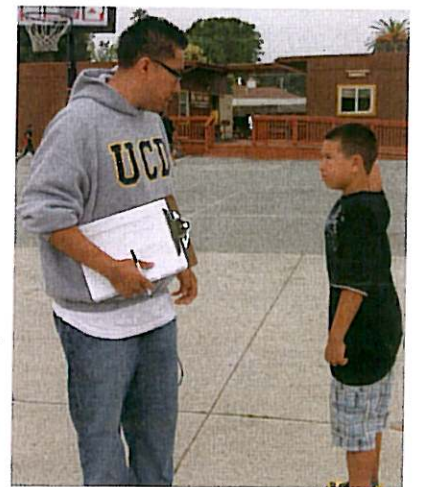
Throughout his school years, he has himself been an educator. He has worked as a child care-provider, teaching assistant at Belle Haven Elementary School in Menlo Park and as a tutor and mentor at Marguerite Montgomery Elementary School in Davis.

It is through this experience that he discovered the impor-

tance of education and his passion for working with kids. And this leads him to pursue a Master's degree in Education and a career path to become a teacher.

In the meantime, Jose gives back to his community what he has learned. He says proudly, "Without the help of teachers, counselors, mentors, sponsors, and other educators, I would not have been able to attend and graduate from college."

Maybe some of the summer kids at the youth club will be able to say the same thing in a couple of years.



Jose Martinez (left) encourages Alex on his way back to the classroom,, Summer 2010.

Save These Dates

These are some of the special events and fundraiser coming up, please mark your calendars:

- October 1-3, 2010: St. Francis of Assisi Parish Festival
- October 25, 2010: Stanford Golf Fundraiser Golf Event
- October 29, 2010: Youth Club Halloween Party
- November 15, 2010: Youth Club Fundraiser Open House
- November 22, 2010: Youth Club Family & Friends Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner
- December 22, 2010: Youth Club Family & Friends Christmas Potluck Dinner

For information and questions about how you can help or participate in these events, please call Mar at 650-319-5211...

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

Club Director

Mar Y Sol Alvarado

Youth Club Staff

Jesse Luna
Jose Martinez
Mel Rivers

Volunteers

Maricruz Alvarado
Sue Kayton
Gene Lopez
Laura Pitchford

Memo from Mar Y Sol...

After leading the youth club through its first six years, Roy Perez has decided to move on to his next challenge. I'm very happy to say that Fr. Goode and the Board have asked me to step up and fill Roy's shoes as Club Director of the Youth Club and I accept this challenge. I'm personally inspired by Father Goode's dedication to the community and the youth of East Palo Alto. And after seeing Father dunk on a couple of my most athletic Knights this summer, I admire him even more!

Roy leaves after helping the club take an important step this summer with a newly enriched academic program. We are all very grateful to him for his years of service to the young people of East Palo Alto, and wish him the best. As the new director I have a cou-

ple of immediate goals this year. I want to help take the newly implemented academic component to the next level. We can shoot high, for all of our kids to finish their academic year in good standing – our version of No Kid Left Behind!



I also see the importance of building relationships out in the community – with nearby schools, neighbors, police and county officials and other agencies that can

support our kids and the club. And of course, continue to build interest with the parents of the children in East Palo Alto who will most benefit from what we offer. I'm excited about the people I work with, including our newest staff member, Jose Martinez, who will lead the growing academic component of the program.

We have the best Board of Directors, who will also serve as mentors as I embark on this new challenge. And most importantly, the most interesting, caring, smart kids that deserve nothing less than to be able to call the Youth Club their home. This opportunity is a blessing and I will focus on making this a great and fun year for the kids of the St. Francis of Assisi Youth Club.

- M.A.