

# Generations

A newsletter connecting past, present, and future students of St. Anselm School

## Sound Minds in Sound Bodies

by Danielle Machotka-Farley

Just before the 7th-grade CYO girls' volleyball practice starts there is ball mayhem. Serves are being attempted in every direction, sometimes over the net, sometimes—accidentally—straight at unsuspecting onlookers. There is nowhere safe to stand. But it looks like a lot of fun.

Coach Rachelle Larson calls the girls together and gives them encouraging words about last weekend's game and gets their feedback on it. It turns out much of what they have to say is good information about how they can improve for the next game, and Mrs. Larson incorporates it into her coaching that evening: calling the ball and owning it; knowing what to do when the ball drops between two rows; calling for help if they don't actually have a shot.

She outlines what they will do in practice that evening and sends the girls out to practice serves (it's not nearly as easy as the Olympians make it look) and passing the ball, and then has a scrimmage with the two halves of the group where they can put together all the things they've talked about and practiced that night. In the end, Mrs. Larson gives them a lot of encouragement and asks them to go home and write down one thing they'd like to work on for the next practice.

And so another season of Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sports begins at St. Anselm. With volleyball in the fall, basketball in winter, and track & field and golf in the spring, there are several sports to choose from, designed for both the highly competitive and also those who just enjoy the game.

CYO began in Chicago during the 1930s, when a prison chaplain named Bernard J. Sheil wanted to help keep kids busy and away from joining criminal elements. Activities vary from diocese to diocese, but can include charity, social gatherings, prayer, visiting the sick, and much more. In St. Anselm's case, that much more includes sports.

Tom Vogelheim began his involvement in CYO as a coach in 2001, subsequently joining the board and becoming the athletic director, a position he handed over to Patrick Stallone last year. He credits the efforts of past and current athletic directors with keeping a good balance of athletics,

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# New Faces On Campus

by Danielle Machotka-Farley

It's a new year with new faces in the classroom, both student and teacher. Our four new faculty members come to St. Anselm with a genuine love for kids and teaching—our students are bound to benefit!



## Stephanie Bull | 6TH GRADE

Teaching the first year of middle school, Ms. Bull knows that the students are going through a lot of transitions, academically and personally. She strives to communicate a positive attitude and connect the students with the curriculum, in the hopes that they will look back and say that they really liked middle school. “The students often make me laugh and remind me what is important in life—we should never sweat the small stuff and always try to make the most out of what we have.”



## Cally Cooper | MIDDLE-SCHOOL AIDE

With her two children being St. Anselm graduates, Mrs. Cooper knows St. Anselm well, and now she is experiencing it from a different perspective. Our new middle-school aide loves watching the teachers' passion for their students' learning translate into classrooms full of enthusiastically engaged kids. “My children have greatly benefited from teachers that keep them curious and interested in exploring the world around them. My hope is that I can be helpful to the teachers so they are able to focus on educating their students.”



## Xochilt Pasos | 4TH GRADE

The inspiration she draws from her students makes the work of coming up with fun and engaging lessons easy for Ms. Pasos. Clearly one who cares about kids and their learning, she particularly enjoys getting to know her students as individuals, especially during small-group or one-on-one time. “At the end of the day, I just want to know that my kids felt challenged, happy, and loved when they leave my classroom.”



## Laura Roach | 2ND GRADE

Mrs. Roach enjoys seeing students take risks and not take mistakes too seriously. Her inspiration comes from watching children's sense-of-self blossom, and witnessing the joy with which kids face the world. Her hope is to help her students and families grow closer in their faith, and to combine best teaching practices and results of educational research in a way that helps students learn while having fun. She says the best thing a teacher can do for a student is to “love them and know that they are a gift to us each and every day.”

# Life is fast-paced, even for us kids, teens, and young adults.

# Alumni Corner

by Peter A. Jankowski

We take, we use, we complain, but we don't often make time to reflect. This moment, while enjoying my gap year between high school and college, is the perfect chance for me to truly reflect on my life so far, the great opportunities given to me, the wonderful schools that I was fortunate enough to attend, and the safe and beautiful environment where I grew up. What else could a young person ever dream of? With this come honest questions about gratitude, being humble, and giving back. How often do we take the time to think about the gifts in our lives, and what does it mean to be grateful?

My goal with these questions is to inspire the kids of St. Anselm School. I really wish that the students would take a moment and appreciate what is in front of them: a manicured school with wonderful architecture in a beautiful location, situated in one of the best neighborhoods in the United States. Furthermore, St. Anselm provides an excellent primary education to its students, with enriching foreign language, art, and music programs, solidifying a concrete academic foundation and strong work habits for the future. It also gives students a spiritual exploration and deepening of Catholic faith, teaches the importance of community, and ensures a safe and accepting place for young minds to flourish.

Not only can we find reasons to be grateful in our surroundings, but also when we look to our global community in comparison. I am fortunate enough to have travelled quite extensively in my 18 years, which has really opened my eyes to the rest of the world. My experience with a three-year Christian service program, which brought me to three countries in Latin America, was especially humbling: kids running around without shoes whose main worry is having enough to eat, and children receiving lackluster educations in rundown facilities only to stop learning at 8th grade because they need to work to support their families. These common occurrences around the globe and our acknowledgment of them should make us feel extremely privileged, humbled, and eager to give back to the less fortunate in our own communities and the world.

I truly believe that being grateful can affect all aspects of our lives for the better. Positivity and gratitude are what get me up every morning. They are what allow me to put 100% into my passions and goals and to value every second I have with family and friends. They are what make me think selflessly about what I can do to help others. Gratitude gives us strength, opens our hearts and minds, and naturally leads us to give back.

My hope is that kids will take their job of being students seriously, that they will learn as much as they can and live to their fullest potential so that all of us can be helpful to society with our talents and passion in a meaningful way. We are able to make the world a better place for our global community, especially for future generations of kids spanning every country, ethnicity, and culture—and it all begins with gratitude.



# Opening Doors to The WORLD

by Danielle Machotka-Farley

**Señor Ware's 8th-grade Spanish class settles into an early September lesson, summer truly behind them, ready to tackle their last year at St. Anselm. Señor starts the class with a call-and-response related to homework. When several different versions tumble out of 35 mouths, he asks if anyone individually knows the correct response. One person tries, almost gets it. Another's accent triggers a round of giggles. Everyone is nervous about putting themselves out there. One more person tries.**

When it's clear that it's the verbs *gustar* and *encantar* that are tripping people up, Señor starts a grammar review of conjugating verbs and indirect object pronouns. Slowly the students recall their 7th-grade instruction on this topic, and soon someone demonstrates singing the response correctly.

Meanwhile, Señora Geler is teaching 5th-grade Spanish, starting class with the Lord's Prayer in Spanish, and moving on to a project to celebrate Spanish Heritage Month. In four groups, the class will research Hispanic athletes from America who won medals in the recent summer Olympics, athletes from Spanish-speaking countries who did the same, and Hispanic athletes in the NBA and MLB.

They will find facts on the school iPads and make posters of what they learn.

These are typical scenes in St. Anselm's Spanish program, which starts in kindergarten and runs through 8th grade. The program is designed to take advantage of the fact that children have a deep ability to develop foreign language skills, and those language skills will help them in numerous areas of their lives.

"We are one of the few Catholic schools in Marin County to offer nine years of a foreign language. Often our middle-school students leave our school and are able to test into level 2 Spanish in high school," says Principal Kim Orendorff.

Redwood High School freshmen Ella Crabtree and Anya Cutter bear this out. "We went straight to sophomore Spanish and feel very prepared for it," they say one afternoon while dropping in to say hello to Señor Ware. "We have the grammar figured out, and can figure out vocabulary we don't know through context clues."

*4th grade taking over the school kitchen to make empanadas*

As with all subjects, students at St. Anselm learn Spanish through grade-appropriate progression and repetition, as well as hands-on activities. Kindergartners through 2nd-graders study colors, numbers, family members, animals, body parts, fruits, and vegetables. In kindergarten they make maracas. First grade does a paper-cutting project, and 2nd grade works with the art teacher in making art comparing Halloween and Día de los Muertos.

Second-grader Gipsy Gregor loves this method. "It's REALLY fun because it is a different language. You can learn about the Spanish countries and once you learn about Spanish countries you can get really good at understanding the language."

And current 1st-grader Chiara Machotka-Farley wasn't fazed by starting Spanish in her kindergarten year. "I really liked it and I was really interested to find out that I would learn a new language."

Third grade moves into vocabulary related to community, professions, and the classroom, as well as starting on adjectives and articles, gender, and number for nouns. In 4th grade, the students study Hispanic cultures, including capitols, flags, currency, and typical foods, reviewing articles and learning pronouns and the two verbs for *to be*. Fifth grade is a preparatory year for middle school, with review of everything they've learned previously, as well as time, days of the week, seasons, holidays, and writing in Spanish. These three grades enjoy culinary events at the end of the year, with 3rd grade making guacamole, 4th grade taking over the school kitchen to make empanadas, and 5th grade taking a field trip to a restaurant in the Canal and ordering and asking all questions in Spanish.

"I want students to love Spanish," Señora Geler says. "Learning a foreign language opens students' minds in all ways, not just to the language."

If all this sounds like a healthy mix of lessons and fun, that's by design. Señora Geler mixes books, the Internet, going to the school garden, drawing, singing, even doing a rap to help students connect the use of Spanish

to everyday life. Señor Ware last year had students read a book about a Guatemalan family that sought political asylum in the United States. The students learned about indirect object pronouns for the first time by seeing them in the context of the book, as well as learning about social justice issues. He was overwhelmed by the quality of what the students wrote in the final exam.

Señor Ware designs the middle-school curriculum to be loosely equivalent to a first-year high school program. "I try to give every project a real-world application," he explains. "For example, pretend a 7th-grade boy from Spain is moving here and coming to this class. Students prepare a presentation to send to Spain about what he will find here, what they are doing, who their teachers are, and more. It's a type of communication that could easily happen.

"My goal is to expose them to Spanish and get them comfortable with the structure of the language. Although passion comes from within, I would like to try to instill a passion for language in them. Learning a foreign language can foster a respect for others and their cultures, promoting community and understanding."

With all the different ways Señor Ware and Señora Geler are teaching the language, students are bound to respond. Whether they go on to study Spanish in high school, decide to learn other languages, or simply realize that there are many ways to communicate in the world and numerous cultures outside ours that are worth exploring, St. Anselm's Spanish program is setting the stage for a richer life.



*"Learning a foreign language can foster a respect for others and their cultures, promoting community and understanding"*

# A Commitment To Service

AT ST. ANSELM SCHOOL

by Elise Brinck

**St. Anselm School is committed to the growth and development of the whole child. To further this goal, the school provides opportunities at every grade level for students to serve others in our local community and abroad. This commitment to service is an important part of our faith-based education.**

The myriad service projects undertaken by students and overseen by our dedicated teachers give students the chance to learn about the lives and needs of others, who are often less fortunate. Fourth-grader Louisa Brinck says, "It's fun to do service projects at school. I like helping people and learning about what they need."

The message the school gives the students is that it is never too early to serve others and no act of service is too small. The 2nd-grade class makes and sells rosaries to purchase goats for an impoverished village abroad

through the Give-a-Goat Program, while the 3rd-graders collect new and gently used coats in the fall for their annual coat-drive for the needy. In 4th grade, students participate in the Pennies for Patients program by collecting change to benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

In the 7th grade, homeroom teacher Mrs. Pisciotta leads the after-school Service Club that meets once a month. The students work at the Marin Food Bank; collect baby necessities for new mothers in need at the Marin Pregnancy Center; participate in a local creek clean up; host a school-wide shoe

drive; and make and mail out Christmas boxes for needy children around the world. Our 8th-graders help prepare, serve, and enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with local seniors at the Martinelli House. They also visit, play games, and do crafts with developmentally challenged adults at a local facility.

The school "families," which include a representative from each grade and are headed by the family's 8th-grader(s), support many local organizations in their monthly activities. They make cards for our troops overseas and Valentines for parish shut-ins, as well as preparing brown-bag lunches for the homeless cared for by the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room. Finally, each month, one class—kindergarten through 8th grade—walks across Mariposa Avenue to the assisted-living facility Bello Gardens for a special activity with the seniors that live there.

Former 2nd-grade teacher Patty Pryor has taken on a new role at the school this year--Religion, Diversity, and Service



*Seventh Grade Service Club at the Marin Food Bank*

Coordinator—and also teaches 7th and 8th grade religion. In her role as service coordinator Mrs. Pryor has many exciting service projects in the works. She and Spanish teacher Señor Ware kicked off the year with the middle school students' sale of *pulseras*, handmade bracelets by Nicaraguan artisans. Other new projects include 1st-graders coloring and selling bookmarks for the organization "Milk and Bookies," which gives books to children in underserved communities in order to promote literacy, as well as a new 8th-grade service project that will bring toiletries to the homeless. Mrs. Pryor says, "I am looking forward to working with the faculty to bring new opportunities for service to St. Anselm students."

Teaching our children about the gifts of service offers them deep lessons in life, and is one of the things that makes St. Anselm School unique and fosters the strong sense of community we enjoy.

*First-graders coloring bookmarks*

## Sound Minds in Sound Bodies | cont.

competitiveness, and fun in the mix at St. Anselm. "It always was and remains a hugely positive experience for the kids and the whole family. The kids, win or lose, are typically giggling fools after the game."

Coaches for our CYO teams are recruited from the parental ranks. Their goal is to teach the sport in a positive way (not everyone joins with all the skills they'll need), keep every player engaged, and build team spirit among the players. Team members all come from the same grade, and if there is room, the teams are open to anyone living within the parish, even if they don't attend St. Anselm School.

"Every kid is taught to support the other teammates, offering encouragement and positive feedback. This sense of belonging to a supportive group of peers has the ability to greatly help a kid enjoy the experience, gain confidence, and develop a fearless attitude about joining groups and participating in sporting events," says Mr. Vogelheim.

Participants agree. Basketball player, three-year veteran of CYO, and 7th-grader Spencer Wheels says, "I love CYO because all of the coaches are extremely nice, funny, and have all the kids play equal time. I also love it because once you start playing the other teams more often you get to know everyone and you can make new friends."

Sixth-grader Maggie Slane, who is in her fourth year of basketball and volleyball, says, "I like how it is organized. The refs are really nice and they help us learn the game."

Seventh-grader and volleyball player Chloe Kariotis likes that "CYO has amazing coaches who always want the players on the team to play to the best of their ability."

CYO at St. Anselm officially starts in 4th grade—although an unofficial 3rd-grade league gets the kids ready—and includes an A league that is more intense and a B league that requires the same commitment but can be a bit more casual (this depends on the students who play for the B league each season). Volleyball and basketball take the best teams in the league at the end of the season and have a playoff ending with a Marin County champion. If you pop into the St. Anselm gym, you can see the numerous banners and trophies that our teams have won since the late 1960s.

While people tend to think of St. Anselm in terms of its rigorous academic program, CYO provides a physical balance to the cerebral work students do between 8:15 and 3:15, giving them an outlet for their energy, helping them improve their skills, and expanding their community beyond the walls of the school.



## HOW DID THEY GROW UP SO FAST?

The St. Anselm class of 2012 headed off to college this fall, ready to tackle life without daily parental influence.

Here is a partial list of the places they'll call home for the next four years.

- |                                   |                                  |               |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Chapman                           | Oregon State                     |               |
| Colgate                           | Rose-Hulman                      |               |
| College of Marin                  | Institute of Technology          |               |
| Cornell                           | Santa Clara University           |               |
| Cornish College                   | San Diego State                  |               |
| Fairfield                         | TCU (Texas Christian University) |               |
| Georgetown                        | Tufts                            |               |
| George Washington University      | University of Hawaii             | UC Davis      |
| Gonzaga                           | University of Montana            | UC Santa Cruz |
| Harvard                           | University of Michigan           | USC           |
| LMU (Loyola Marymount University) | University of Virginia           | USD           |
|                                   | University of Wisconsin Madison  | Villanova     |



PASTOR | Rev. Jose Shaji  
 PRINCIPAL | Kim Orendorff  
**GENERATIONS**  
 EDITOR | Danielle Machotka-Farley  
 DESIGN | Blend Branding | Rob Mesarchik  
 CONTRIBUTORS | Elise Brinck, Peter A. Jankowski

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St. Anselm School  
40 Belle Avenue  
San Anselmo, CA 94960-2892



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