



Rosalie Rendu Center ... where seeds are planted
1760 Bay Road, #24, East Palo Alto, CA 94303
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Spring 2012

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Greetings from the RRC

Dear Friends, Donors and Volunteers,

Spring is here. The flowers are in full bloom and the Carriage Manor Courtyard looks like the front page of a Good Housekeeping magazine. Please come by. I will be happy to show you around. Our place is small but the spirit is great.

As the flowers are growing, so are the children. Many of our ESL students have children graduating from high school, who have been accepted in Universities throughout California: California State Colleges in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sonoma and Santa Barbara and UC Merced. Our parents are happy because they tend to be fearful of sending their first child out of state. For most families this is the first child to graduate from high school and move on to higher education. Without the support and motivation of their parents, they would not be on this road to higher education.

You also have much to do with changing their lives by your continued support. Without a safe place for our families to express their fears and joys, while at the same time learning the American way, these young adults could have taken a much different road. I appreciate your support because I, personally, never feel alone walking through our flower filled patio. Please notice that in this newsletter we have listed the many kind donors to the RRC. We are very grateful for their interest in the Center and all that is done here through the many volunteers.

God bless each of you and your families; enjoy a peaceful and restful summer.

Sincerely,

Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C., Executive Director



Sponsored by the
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Mission Moment

Conversation Club Volunteer Seeks Community

When longtime Stanford University English professor David Riggs retired from teaching a few years ago, he had a plan. He would write a book about the life of Shakespeare, and give yearly conference presentations to keep connected to the academic community. After all, he had written several books in his 40 years at Stanford, including definitive biographies of Shakespeare's literary contemporaries, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson. David started his research, but after a year or so, decided that there wasn't too much more to say on the life of Shakespeare. Hence, he embarked on a completely different retirement plan.

David and his family (including his wife Sue, a current volunteer at St. Elizabeth Seton School) lived a very good life in the "bubble" of Stanford. David lived on Stanford campus, he biked to work, his daughter went to Stanford, his son had worked there in information technology, and most of his friends had a Stanford connection. When he retired, David discovered that he never realized how much of his social life was invested in teaching at Stanford. As David says "Work was my fun." Now, as a retiree, he felt the need to connect with other people outside of the Stanford community. He decided to do two things—first, take his religion seriously, and second, find some worthwhile volunteer opportunities where he would interact with people.

David went back to church, and with the help of a spiritual director, is leading a weekly adult Sunday school class at his parish church in Portola Valley. He also meets weekly for Bible study with a group of men and women (including four



Barbara Gelpi hosts a Mardi Gras party for the Conversation Club at her home, complete with special King Cake.

priests and three Ph.D.'s with expertise in Bible studies!) —they have been studying the book of Genesis for the past year.

On the volunteer front—he started by volunteering every Friday at St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room in Menlo Park, sorting donated baked goods. He was inspired to do so by a verse from Matthew (Chapter 25, verse 40, about when you fed the hungry, even to the least of them, you fed me). But David was looking for more direct human interaction. His next door neighbor, Barbara Gelpi, a fellow Stanford English Professor Emerita, told him about her volunteer experience at the Rosalie Rendu Center Conversation Club, practicing speaking English with our English language learners. So about a year ago, David accompanied Barbara to his first session.

So what has David discovered and learned since he started volunteering at the Conversation Club? He has made new friends and is enjoying creating a

Sister T Honored With Local Heroes Award

In March, Sister Trinitas was awarded one of the 2012 Local Heroes Awards presented at the Sixth Annual event by the Midpeninsula Community Media Center in Palo Alto. The award was formally presented during a reception and public screening that kicked off a week-long celebration with a nightly screening of a video featuring each of the honorees.

In Sister T's video, she talks about the fear associated with coming to a new country and the intimidation involved with not speaking the language. She says, "The training at the Rosalie Rendu Center not only teaches students English, but helps to raise the self esteem of our students, to help them excel in their lives."

View Sister's video on our website at http://www.rosalie-rendu-center.org/?page_id=65.

community of support for the students. He says that he has learned from our students to be better at the "art of small talk"—conversations whose main purpose is human interaction. He has found that the students are very interested in his life and what he has to say. He says that he has gotten more out of this experience than he puts in and has realized that the more that he gives, the more he is able to "get." He has memorized the names of each student's spouses and children and regularly asks for updates. David appreciates the laughter of the group and has enjoyed getting to know the other Conversation Club volunteers.

David is "on leave" from St. Anthony's while he teaches a course in the Stanford Master of Liberal Arts program, where he is happy to put some of his research about the life of Shakespeare to good use. We are very happy that David did not take a leave from the Conversation Club, and we are very glad to be his friend!



A Deeply Appreciated Friendship

Families who attend classes at the Rosalie Rendu Center often have many needs in addition to their education. Back to school supplies and clothes, including new shoes for growing feet, are expensive. Christmas can be a lean time, too. Families from the Center are very fortunate that some long-time friends from the Daughters of Charity Health System (DCHS) have helped meet these needs.

The Center's relationship with DCHS Caritas Business Services (CBS) and DCHS System Offices began when the Daughters of Charity purchased the Carriage Manor Apartments, where the Rosalie Rendu Center is located. Sister Arthur Gordon introduced Marian Graney from the DCHS to Sister T and the Center. Inspired, Marian asked Sr. T, "What do you need?" and Sr. T replied that the new building manager was getting ready to repaint the building and was asking for volunteers. Marian enlisted the help of many of her DCHS associates in this rather daunting first-time volunteer effort. (Carriage Manor is a BIG, two-story building!) Since that time, DCHS associates have provided much support and help, including providing back to school backpacks equipped with the requisite supplies (solicited from the DCHS vendor partners), new shoes for the children heading back-to-school, and Christmas gifts for the children garnered through a Giving Tree at CBS and DCHS System Offices in Redwood Shores, Los Altos Hills, and Pasadena.

Families from the Rosalie Rendu Center benefit greatly in many ways from the generosity and interest of these friends of the Center, but the benefits flow two ways. Marian wanted to increase awareness of healthcare associates from DCHS who are serving the ill to other DOC missions committed to serving the poor. She and her associates find great joy in hearing their friendship with the Rosalie Rendu Center helps its families.

School Shoes

for Rosalie Rendu Center Children

By Sister Fran, D.C.

As a child waits for the new school year to begin he/she hopes for new school supplies, a new backpack, new school clothing, and NEW SHOES! Shoes are expensive and are usually the last purchased. I recall an experience when I took a child shopping for school shoes. When the child tried on a pair that was one size larger than the shoes he wore to the store, the child responded with a big smile, "This fits perfect." Upon checking the shoes for proper sizing, they appeared tight. "Let's try another pair." A larger size was given to the child. Once again the child responded, "This fits perfect, even better than the other ones!" I realized the child was wearing shoes that were two sizes too small for his feet. But there was no complaining. He wanted the first pair so badly that he said they were perfect. New shoes are what he wanted, and it did not matter if they were too tight. He would proudly show up for school the first day with new shoes on his feet!

As the new school year begins in the fall, parents are busy buying school supplies, school clothes, and shoes to ready their children for school. In the past Sister Trinitas has responded by helping parents with this task. The RRC has an ice cream social before school begins to distribute school supplies and backpacks. Sister is also aware of the importance of children having new shoes. She is inviting others to help her with providing shoes for a child. You can assist by sending her a gift card to Footlocker or sending a donation for her use. Parents will be given gift cards to take their children shopping for shoes. Sister will take families that need assistance. Please consider putting new shoes on a child as he/she begins the new school year in August.



**ROSALIE RENDU
C E N T E R**

A Special Thanks to Our Generous Donors

Donations received from April 16, 2011 to May 1, 2012. We do our best to include all donors in our list and apologize if we've inadvertently missed your name. Please send omissions to rosalierendu@yahoo.com.



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Rosalie Rendu Friends Luncheon

On Wednesday, April 25th, Sister T and her Advisory Board welcomed over eighty friends to a luncheon at St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces. The highlight of the event was guest speaker Chris Bischof, Founder and Principal of Eastside College Preparatory School in East Palo Alto. He shared with all of us the many successes that the students have accomplished and how attending the school has impacted their families. The theme of the luncheon was "Growing through Education". The education can be Eastside Prep, Public Schools or the rewarding classes that are taught at the Rosalie Rendu Center. All of these have great influence on the students and families.



Guest speaker
Chris Bischof



Growing through Education