



# Required Reading

Newsletter of the Children's Scholarship Fund

Volume II, Issue 8

giving  
parents  
a **choice**  
giving  
children  
a **chance**

Winter 2006

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## Orange County Donors Meet the CSF Families

**O**ur generous donors in Orange County, California recently got an opportunity to meet some of the families they are helping during a visit to St. Anthony Claret School in Anaheim.



Mayor Curt Pringle talks with scholarship recipients at St. Anthony Claret School in Anaheim.

The scholarships in Orange County were launched two years ago after David and Diane Steffy made a \$400,000 challenge grant, which was matched by local donors and again by the national Children's Scholarship Fund. Mr. Steffy toured St. Anthony Claret School along with Curt Pringle, the Mayor of Anaheim; Ms. Elva Rubalcava of the Luevano Foundation; Todd Hanson of the Orange County Community Foundation, and other interested donors and CSF staff.

Principal Marilyn Taylor introduced Mr. Steffy and Mayor Pringle to the student body and later the group was led on a school tour by 6th grader Lizbeth Lopez, one of 21 scholarship recipients at the school. After the tour, the children and their grateful parents chatted with the donors about what a difference the

scholarships have made for them.

In Orange County, the Southern California Children's Scholarship Fund (SCCSF) currently provides tuition support to more than 222 low-income children. SCCSF also serves 1,567 low-income children in Los Angeles and administers scholarships in San Diego and Seattle. Funds are raised locally and then matched by the national CSF organization, highly leveraging local support.

As with all CSF programs, families must pay a minimum of \$500 and scholarships are 25%, 50%, or 75% of tuition, depending upon family size and income, up to a maximum of \$1,950. The average scholarship amount in Orange County is \$1,387 and the families pay an average of \$2,090 towards their children's tuition. SCCSF scholarship recipients attend 44 private and parochial schools across the county, including Catholic, Christian, Muslim, and independent schools. ■



Mr. David Steffy (l) and Mayor Curt Pringle receive letters and gifts from CSF scholarship winners.

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In Memoriam

1946-2005

# CSF Spotlight: The Velez Family

**D**anny Velez works as a driver for a mobile soup kitchen operated by St. John the Baptist parish in Brooklyn. For the past three years, his son Edwin was having trouble at the local public school. Mr. Velez and his wife, Lillian, would be called to the office to pick up their son, sometimes just minutes after he had been dropped off. Administrators told Mr. and Mrs. Velez that Edwin had ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and was being evaluated for special services.

Edwin's sister, Emily, and younger brother, Jonathan, were also at the public school. Their grades were good, but Mr. Velez didn't believe they were being challenged enough.

So he went to talk to the staff at St. John the Baptist School, across the street from his office, where his older children had attended. There, he learned about the Bishop's Scholarship Program, and he applied for scholarships for the three children and his granddaughter, Amanda.

Mr. Velez was determined that his children would attend St. John the Baptist, but tuition payments for four children are not cheap. "Without the scholarship, it would have been tight," he said.

Since starting fourth grade at St. John the Baptist, Edwin's behavior is much improved. Mr. Velez said Edwin's teacher works well with him and he's "doing much better now." Emily, Jonathan, and Amanda are all doing well at their new school too.

On a recent Wednesday morning, the children were asked to compare their new school with the

old one. Emily said she likes the clean bathrooms and good teachers at St. John the Baptist school. Edwin added, "Yes, and we get to play outside in the yard at recess."

Mr. Velez is convinced he made the right

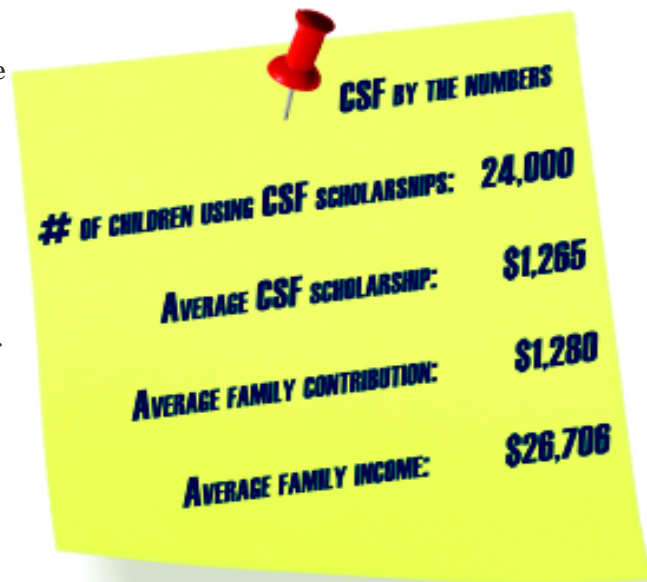


Emily, Edwin and Jonathan Velez pose with Assistant Principal Ioan Rivera (l) and Principal Cheryl Malcausu.

decision in applying for the scholarship and enrolling his children at St. John the Baptist.

"Last year was a horror story. This year is a complete turnaround," Mr. Velez said. "That alone is worth everything."

**THE CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND AIMS TO MAXIMIZE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY AT ALL INCOME LEVELS BY OFFERING TUITION ASSISTANCE IN GRADES K-8 FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.**





# Straight from the Schoolyard:

## Brooklyn School Blossoms

**A** large banner outside St. John the Baptist School in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn gives details of ongoing registration, although the school has such a good reputation that it hardly needs to advertise. Principal Cheryl Malcausu says the school, which has 483 students in grades K-8, added 150 new students this school year.

What attracts families - 90% of whom are poor enough to qualify for the federal free and reduced school lunch program - to pay \$3,300 to St. John the Baptist School in tuition? Principal Malcausu thinks it's the combination of a strong academic curriculum and a safe, disciplined, caring atmosphere.

Ms. Malcausu is most proud of the school's record in the Reading First program, a special reading curriculum for grades K-3 for all schools, both public and non-public, in a selected school district. Last year, St. John the Baptist students scored higher in reading tests than students attending nearby public schools. In fact, every Kindergarten tested at or above the benchmark reading level, a

feat unmatched at any of the other local schools. Another selling point for St. John the Baptist is its special relationship with St. John's University, which was originally housed directly across the street. All St. John the Baptist graduates are eligible for partial scholarships to the university, no matter where they attend high school. St. John's University also sends college students to tutor and mentor elementary students in the afterschool program. And 7th graders attend a special Saturday morning science and tech program at the university.

Many of the new students at St. John the Baptist would not be there without the Bishop's Scholarship Program (BSP), which provides tuition assistance to more than 400 children in Brooklyn and Queens through a new partnership between CSF and the Diocese of Brooklyn, along with many individual donors.

The parents of 107 children at St. John the Baptist receive help from CSF. CSF's impact is most visible in the Kindergarten class, where 23 out of 34 students (almost 68%) are scholarship recipients. ■



*Twenty-three children in the St. John the Baptist's kindergarten class are getting Children's Scholarship Fund awards.*

# The Last Word:

“Giving families choices in education raises the level of educational achievement for all schools — public, private, and parochial. Giving scholarships to individual children gives each one of them an equal opportunity to succeed.”

- **Ambassador Andrew Jackson Young, Jr.**



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