

## **Saint Joe's is a Winner - Get on Board!**

At our 50th Reunion gathering, John Nolan, President, delivered a wonderful overview of the good things happening at Saint Joe's: Enrollment increasing – bucking a negative national trend for Catholic schools; Scholarships earned increasing – our graduates received almost \$37 million versus \$23 million 3 years ago, with the value of the average scholarship received being greater than Saint Joe's tuition; College placement is 100%; Sports teams are doing well – Volleyball and Bowling took State Championships in Winter/Spring of 2023; facilities are dramatically improved since we left campus in 1973.

Those of us on the board look at two key metrics to judge the health of the school - Enrollment (kids in the school) and Development (money raised). Both are going in the right direction, but fundraising got a late start and then suffered a setback. It's back on track now, let me explain...

Saint Joe's was late to the Development game relative to competitive schools. An organized fundraising effort started only in the 1990's though SJ's first lay class graduated in 1965. CBA was founded in 1958 by laymen who made fundraising a priority from the get go. Delbarton was founded in 1939, Don Bosco in 1915, St Peter's just after the Civil War (1872) and Seton Hall BEFORE the Civil War (1856!).

Finally in the 1990's, Saint Joseph High School hired David Bixel '66, who we remember as a teacher, and his firm, to implement the School's first capital campaign. The campaign raised the several million that built the new Maglio Gym, four state of the art science labs, a new library and made several other changes.

Tragically, Dave "Ace" Bixel, was killed by a drunk driver who crossed lanes on I-287. Between losing Dave and other management turnover, development was impacted quite negatively.

But I am very happy to report that (a) the school now has a very strong management team in place and (b) fundraising is back on track. President John Nolan, P'09 has over 40 years' experience as a professional fundraiser. Principal Anne Rivera, appointed from the administrative ranks ("Partners in Mission" in Brothers of the Sacred Heart-speak), has been remarkably strong in this leadership role. And we now have a full time Advancement office, led by Nancy Alfano (take her call please!) and an alumni relations function. The critical alumni network is growing daily.

Actual money raised is growing rapidly – total has increased from \$550 thousand to between \$1.4-1.5 million annually. All fundraising cylinders are firing: Saint Joseph Giving Day exploded from \$29K in 2019 to \$220K net this year; Green Tie Gala has more than doubled this year to \$132K net from \$54 thousand in 2019; Giving Tuesday has grown from \$12K in our launch year of 2019 to over \$63K in 2023; the Falcon Golf Classic is rebuilding support but growing participation from less than 100 golfers in 2020 to 144 in 2023 and moving back to Forsgate Country Club in 2023; Individual gifts from Alumni are increasing in both participation and dollar amount through straight donations and planned giving options.

The Saint Joseph High School Charitable Foundation, the investment holdings for endowed scholarships, is relatively small but growing nicely from \$852K in 2015 to \$2.8 million most recently. The Foundation supports scholarships for students who need financial assistance to attend or stay at (tragedy strikes families too often) Saint Joe's.

So in summary, Saint Joe's is doing very well. It's in the best shape by far that I've seen in my decades of involvement. Enrollment is growing to the point where the School is at capacity and is becoming more selective. Results are impressive - our graduates all go to college and are great Saint Joe's Men. Development is growing rapidly.

I strongly encourage you to get on board if you haven't already. And if you have, stay on board. Because it's fun to back a winner...and Saint Joe's is a winner.

Stephen Balog '73