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St. Ignatius College Prep

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

November 2004 • St. Ignatius College Prep • Chicago, Illinois • www.ignatius.org



Fr. Brian G. Paulson, S.J.

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Dear Friends,

November is a month when our church calls us to remember in a special way those who have gone before us "marked with the sign of faith." At the same time, November is a time when our nation invites us to be especially mindful of giving thanks for the blessings God has bestowed upon us. From the all-school mass in Holy Family for the Feast of All Saints, to the Sophomore Christian Service Seminars, which reflected on world hunger, we have tried to honor both of these great November themes as a school community this past month.

We had a great autumn at St. Ignatius. The freshman class arrived some 364 strong because we had less attrition than we expected over the summer. That is a nice problem to have, since it means that folks who chose us in the spring stayed committed to their decision, even in the face of excellent, free public school options in very many cases. As is true in most of the classes in the building, there is a significant percentage of students (ca. 46%) who are sons and daughters of alumni and/or siblings of current or past St. Ignatius students. We give preference to these applicants in admissions provided we believe that they can succeed in our competitive and rigorous academic program.

The teachers and students managed to enter into the school year with a great sense of purpose, in spite of the beautiful September weather which we all really would have preferred to have back in August. You can imagine what 80 degree sunny days feel like on the 3rd and 4th floors of our 134 year old and 109 year old buildings which are filled with charm, but which lack air-conditioning. And there were many such sunny, warm days this past September.

While the fall weather was trying in the classroom, it was great for our athletes. The sports teams enjoyed terrific success this fall. Noteworthy accomplishments included: wonderful varsity and sophomore boys' soccer seasons (the sophomore boys were undefeated with no goals scored against them in the Catholic League!); added successes from the girls' varsity volleyball team and sophomore football; our boys' and girls' cross country teams and entire school were proud of Brendan Christian, who was ranked in the top 25 in the state in cross-country and was the first male Ignatius student in 24 years (since 1980) to be all-state in cross country; and girls' swimming continued to show us what hard work and teamwork can do. We are proud of all these student athletes.

For the first time ever, Ignatius Crew headed to Boston for the "40th Head of the Charles Regatta" back in October (cf. our website www.ignatius.org for TV footage courtesy of WGN). As is noted on our website, "The 2004 event featured more than 300 of the top youth, high school, college and senior regatta teams"—over 7,000 rowers in all—"from around the United States. The Ignatius Youth Fours Women placed eighth in a field of 34 that included a number of college crews. Their placing assured them of an automatic berth at next year's competition. Unfortunately, the Youth Fours Men received a 30 second penalty when they crossed over buoys avoiding a faster boat and placed 26th out of 37 teams. The women's team was comprised of seniors Elli Graybar, Leigh Kunkel, Maggie O'Donoghue and Robin Weber, with Benjamin Goodrum from the men's side serving as the coxswain. On the men's side, seniors Jack Dreniak and Stuart Wall were accompanied by juniors Bob Casey, Conor Grogan and Maggie Driscoll (coxswain). 'We're really proud of the kids. They did fantastic,' said Rich Sims, coach of both the men's and women's club teams of St. Ignatius students."

I echo the words of Coach Sims. The "Head of the Charles" was yet another new frontier which has been crossed by Ignatians through hard work, skill and determination.

As we move into the Advent and Christmas seasons, let us continue to be grateful for the myriad of ways in which God blesses each one of us through the community and the mission of St. Ignatius College Prep.

Sincerely,

Brian Paulson, S.J.
Rev. Brian Paulson, S.J., President

BELOW: John Buenz and John Chandler, Vice President of Development, find a place on campus to hang a watercolor that Buenz painted in honor of his deceased wife, Olga ("Oogie"). Buenz also established a scholarship at the school in his late wife's honor.



St. Ignatius Higher Achievement Program Growing Stronger and More Successful Every Year

THE PROGRAM

The St. Ignatius Higher Achievement Program (SIHAP) has become a vibrant and dynamic summer program at our school thanks to a talented staff, bright students, and the wonderful donors who have been supporting the program for the last four years. Specifically designed for striving low-income and mostly minority students in Chicago, SIHAP has steadily made a reality of two main goals: to enrich grade schoolers academically, socially and spiritually in the tradition of Jesuit secondary education, and to prepare them for a college preparatory education.

During this year's six-week summer program, students participated in morning classroom studies concentrated in reading, writing, math and study skills. Each afternoon, students enjoyed a speaker or group activity that focused on their classroom material. Program director Pat Bresnahan (SICP Librarian) designed the 2004 curriculum to educate students about culture and the world.

One week focused on Greek history in light of the recent Olympics. They hosted their own mini-Olympics, and were featured in a Chicago Tribune article after visiting the newly opened Hellenic Museum in Chicago. Students also learned Greek folk dancing and music from a Greek band and participated in a hike through Greek Town in conjunction with reading *The Hobbit*.

Another week brought students closer to faraway Egypt via a trip to the Field Museum. A museum educator taught SIHAP participants about mummies and how the social status of the deceased determined the kind of burial he/she would receive. During the week, the group also visited the "Stars of the Pharaoh" exhibit at Adler Planetarium and learned about how the system of determining dates and time was regulated by the stars and the universe in ancient Egypt.

A third week focused primarily on Jewish history. Students visited the Holocaust Museum and the Spertus Museum in Chicago. Shana Green '06 taught the group to make dreidels and a tournament

Students make dream catchers and "mummies."



was held afterwards. Students also met Sr. Ellen Coones and Rabbi Green from the Institute for Jewish and Catholic studies to learn about Jewish holidays/traditions and also learned Jewish folk dances and music with the M'chaya Klez band.

Native American culture was the focus of yet another week of SIHAP studies. Students made dream catchers and necklaces with beads, and some performed an operetta with a similar theme that they wrote themselves under the guidance of SICP music teacher Mary Ellen Schneider. Students also traveled to Evanston to visit a Native American museum there.

Finally, the curriculum gave students an opportunity to take a closer look at their hometown of Chicago. The group researched different ethnic neighborhoods in the city and their origins. They visited the Chicago Historical Society, Hull House and the Clark House in Chicago. For the Clark House visit, SICP science teacher John Balaban loaned students binoculars and Audubon Society guides and they walked to a nearby park to do some birdwatching and enjoy a beautiful birdhouse exhibit created by Chicago artists. Afterwards, SICP carpenters Earl Hamilton and Dave Wiczorek took time out of their schedules to help SIHAP students build their own birdhouses by making a wood kit for every student and explaining how to put the houses together.

Other activities that SIHAP participated in this summer were gardening (SIHAP has a large garden off Blue Island Ave. near the baseball field that Ignatius uses); babysitting certification; a lesson about entrepreneurial opportunities by Mario DiPaolo, owner of Mario's Italian Ice on Taylor Street; career day, where seven former Ignatians spoke about their work in business, teaching, firefighting, the FBI and other occupations; high school day, when area Catholic high schools talked to students about educational opportunities; sports and physical activities including tennis lessons by science teachers and SICP alumni Sean Byrne '93 and Kitty Hooper '87; creative and paper arts by alumnus Roy Mui '04; a poetry slam facilitated by Brian Lewis '04 and Jose Lagunas '04; simulated U.N. debates with Ms. Diane Haleas-Hines; and finally, "Taste of SIHAP" on the last day of classes, when parents were invited to bring their favorite ethnic dishes and contribute the recipe to a SIHAP cook book.

THE PEOPLE

With close to 50 seventh and eighth graders enrolled in SIHAP, the staff is so very important to the life of the program. The knowledge, guidance, and enthusiasm of the leaders is something equally as important as raising the funds to make the program possible in the first place.

Program director Pat Bresnahan has worked as a librarian at St. Ignatius for eight years. She has always put her heart and soul into her work, but SIHAP has given her a new opportunity to be passionate about education. She puts countless hours into planning throughout the year.

She had been assisted during the last few years by co-director Maria Eidietis, but because Maria was recently accepted into grad school, her involvement was limited this summer. "Maria is still a consultant and a very valuable asset to the program," said Bresnahan.

Bresnahan was also assisted by teachers Jared Ortiz

and Corey Watlington. However, they, too, moved on to grad school and were not able to continue with the program this past summer. Instead, Pat's son, Brian Bresnahan '93, taught seventh grade math while Heather Paquin, Michael Cobain and Ann David, all involved with the Inner City Teaching Corps, taught eighth grade math and both levels of English, respectively.

Wrote SIHAP student Marcelina Herrera in the 2004 SIHAP yearbook, "Thank you to Mr. Ortiz for his encouragement and for letting me know that there is a road ahead...he helped me find myself and understand that I am capable of becoming a good writer. In addition, I want to give thanks to Mr. Ortiz for helping me find the passion in literature."

The main teaching staff was assisted by five student interns. Rolando Garcia, Jose Gonzales, Carmen Fitzsimmons and Darrel Manuel spent a significant part of their summer on campus even though they had just graduated with the Class of '04. Siobhan Wright '05 was another hard-working student helper who continues to assist during monthly Saturday meetings and will be the senior intern for next summer.



Brian Bresnahan '93 with SIHAP students.

Finally, faculty outreach has always been and continues to be phenomenal. According to Bresnahan, "people are always offering to help" and their expertise is essential. In addition to giving lessons and chaperoning trips, some faculty and staff members have a more viable role in the program. For instance, Sharon Byrne, head of the school's guidance department and an At-Risk Counselor for students with unique needs, served as counselor to the students of the SIHAP program during the summer. She has been involved since the program's inception and her role is unbelievably important.

SIHAP student Lewis Hill reflected, "If one would take an adventure in SIHAP, one would come to realize that it is not SIHAP that makes a difference but the instructors—Mr. Ortiz, Mr. Watlington, Ms. Eidietis, Ms. Pacquin, Mrs. Byrne, Mrs. B [Bresnahan] and the student interns. Mr. Watlington helped me improve my vocabulary... Mr. Ortiz showed me what a wonderful Shakespearean actor I can be... I owe everything to the instructors of SIHAP who brought out the best in me."

THE PROMISE

Although summertime is over, the SIHAP program continues through the school year for eighth graders who were enrolled. They meet at Ignatius one Saturday per month to "keep the spirit of SIHAP alive" and to keep connected with the

possibilities of a college prep education. They typically begin by reading the first hour, then working on special group projects like the SIHAP garden. Some compete in chess tournaments or math games. Once during the year, they will meet with Ignatius counselors to find out more about the high school application process, scholarship opportunities and more. According to Bresnahan, this is very important because many students and families have no idea how to apply since they never dreamed they'd have the opportunity to attend a college prep school.

There are now 11 freshmen and 11 sophomores at St. Ignatius who were part of the very first SIHAP classes and were accepted for admission to the school following their graduation from the program. According to Bresnahan, they have adjusted exceptionally well. They meet once per month and pair up (one freshman to one sophomore) to share their experiences, their knowledge and just to be supportive of each other. Bresnahan hopes that they will serve as student interns upon their graduation from Ignatius.

Said Michelle Gonzalez from St. Ann School in Little Village, "I think that the SIHAP program has really prepared me for not only school, but also life. I am very grateful."

And St. Ignatius College Prep is also grateful... for the program, the people, and the promise that the St. Ignatius Higher Achievement Program brings to the wonderful City of Chicago.

PRESIDENT'S PHOTO GALLERY
Top to bottom: Ignatius golfers with Fr. Paulson in late September at IHSA sectionals; Fr. Paulson at Georgetown University in October with alums Mary Eileen Cunniff, Andrew Smith, Tom King and Clare Starshak; Fr. Paulson with Pat McGovern (Assistant Athletic Director), Jim Prunty (Athletic Director), and Dr. Catherine Karl (principal).



In Recognition of the Generous Supporters of SIHAP

The St. Ignatius Higher Achievement Program has existed for four years and is a fine example of a growing, thriving program at St. Ignatius College Prep. It is proof that once a small seed is planted, it can grow to unbelievable proportions with the right amount of nurturing.

The donors to SIHAP have cultivated the program to a point that there are now more than 20 SIHAP graduates currently enrolled at St. Ignatius. Pretty impressive, seeing as though many of them were "middle of the road" academically during grade school and never dreamed that they'd have an opportunity to receive a college prep education. SIHAP students are boys and girls from low-income environments who fall approximately into the 50th-75th percentile on national tests. They are hard-working and have the potential to do better with just a little guidance.

Thanks to the wonderful benefactors who have made SIHAP possible through their generous donations, those students are receiving that guidance and then some.

SIHAP, now in its fourth year, has been supported since day one by **Bob '66 and Marikay Herdman**. Bob, an involved and dedicated alumnus, lives with Marikay in Connecticut and Florida. He is a retired partner from Ernst & Young who served recently as Vice-Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Through one of his clients, he was exposed to a program called "Prep for Prep," which gives tutoring assistance to grade schoolers and ultimately prepares them to get into a wide variety of competitive schools in the New York area.

"SIHAP is a great analogue to the Prep for Prep program. It's taking bright kids and informing them about their opportunities, as well as teaching them to make a commitment to education," said Herdman.

By doing this, Herdman asserts that we are also helping to improve the quality of education for young people all over our country.

Another supporter of the SIHAP program, **WGN-TV Children's Charities**, is a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation and is a strong supporter of education for youth. Since the charity's inception, more than \$28 million has been donated to issues as they relate to children. St. Ignatius was connected with the charity through current parent **John Vitanovec**, Vice President and General Manager of WGN Television.

Said Vitanovec, "The SIHAP program gives disadvantaged kids from some tough neighborhoods a shot at getting into one of the premier college prep programs in Chicago."

It encourages students to consider college prep education across the board—whether it's St. Ignatius or another college prep institution in the city.

Added **Merri Dee**, WGN-TV's Community Relations Director, "It is just good business sense to support the St. Ignatius Higher Achievement Program, which prepares our most inventive and curious-aged youth for their future as outstanding contributors of society. These young students are our future leaders, and in a world that has changed so drastically and with such rapidity, it is imperative that we prepare them academically as well as wholesomely to participate in our global society."

The Jesuits from Taylor Street and Fr. Joe Brennan, S.J., rector of the community, have also chosen SIHAP as a source for their funding. According to Brennan, each Jesuit in the residence draws a salary and their resources are pooled together. They take what they need for basic living expenses and give the rest to charity.

Said Brennan, "Over the centuries, the Catholic church has always worked to serve the poor. The Bishop urges us to reach out, so each year, we look around for programs associated with our Jesuit apostolates that deal with disadvantaged youth. Fr. Paulson pointed out some different programs at the school and we came to a consensus to support SIHAP."

He continued, "The fact that half of the SIHAP graduates who are now sophomores at Ignatius made the honor roll is proof that the program is not only working, but a great success."

The Herdmans, WGN-TV Children's Charities and the Jesuit Community were recently joined by **Marsh '59 and Diane Collins** in supporting SIHAP.

Said Fr. Brian Paulson, president of St. Ignatius College Prep, "From the beginning, the Jesuit Community, the Herdmans and WGN were involved. When the program began to grow, I reached out to Marsh and Diane, who earlier had facilitated our addition of another At-Risk Counselor and who responded equally as generously to the needs of the SIHAP program."

"We spend about \$1,500 per SIHAP student per year and those costs will increase as the program grows," continued Fr. Paulson. "In addition, Pat Bresnahan, the program director, will be spending less time in the library to keep up with the growing number of students and more resources will also be necessary in that area."

SIHAP is just one of the many student programs that exist at St. Ignatius. But what makes it unique is that it reaches out from 1076 W. Roosevelt Road, into the surrounding community, and out into the futures of young people. Not all programs have such a far-reaching effect.

Concluded Dee, "We commend St. Ignatius on this initiative and encourage supporters of youth projects to consider this program."

For more information about funding SIHAP or supporting another St. Ignatius College Prep program, activity, or club that mirrors your unique interests, please contact Fr. Paulson at (312) 432-8344.