

Friends of St. Lawrence Watts Youth Center



In Their Own Words



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Father Peter Banks,
Founder
- Robert Stenson, Esq.,
President
- John Utley
Vice-president
- Eileen Fiore
Treasurer
- Tom Hoffarth
Secretary
- Lincoln Stone, Esq.,
Past President
- Eleanor Allen
- Mollie Baumer
- Antonia Carpenter
- Ken Gilbert
- Doreen Harrington
- James McMahon, Esq.
- Richard Meehan
- Rosa Meza
- Teresa Perez
- Charles Steinmetz
- Fr. Jesus Vela, O.F.I. Cap.
- Alma Reeves Woods

STAFF

- Linda Northup,
Director
- Kimberly Brooke,
Associate Director

Friends has been supporting families and helping make dreams come true in the inner-city neighborhood of Watts for over ten years. The following are two examples of how with your support Friends is helping students dreams come true. Your continued investment in our community will insure many more success stories in the years to come.

Elena Gomez

The Friends of St. Lawrence have been a true blessing for so many families for years. My family was one of the many deserving families to receive the help of the Friends of St. Lawrence throughout my years at St. Lawrence. My name is Elena Gomez and I am one of the many success stories that St. Lawrence has to offer. I define my success like many other students who went off to graduate from a great high schools, and continued on to receive a higher education. Although these may be viewed as minor accomplishments, for children who grow up in Watts, this is everything. Being surrounded by gang violence and drugs, receiving an education is crucial. St. Lawrence not only provided my sister and me with an amazing education, but also with the foundation and tools needed to have a successful and fulfilling life. The philosophy of the St. Lawrence community

goes beyond what is taught in a classroom and teaches its students to build good moral character and a drive to succeed.

I can honestly say that without the help my family received from the Friends of St. Lawrence, I would not be where I am today. It was because I was given the amazing opportunity to receive an education from such a special school. The atmosphere I experienced throughout my years has not changed for the students in attendance today. Many years later, children still experience the warm welcome from their teachers, other faculty and fellow students. It was because of the skills and education I received at St. Lawrence, that gave me the drive to continue with my education and reach any goal I set for myself. After I left St. Lawrence, I knew I would have to find a way to give back. I volunteered at the Literacy Program as soon as I started High School. I worked at the center until I was a Senior and returned while I was a student in college. Working with Linda and the children has been one of the most rewarding experiences. I see myself in the children I tutor, and it warms my heart that after so many

Own Words - Continued on Page 2

years, the Friends of St. Lawrence continue to give these children the opportunity no one else will. I see their potential and I know they will go on to do great things. St. Lawrence has been such a big part of my life, and I know will continue to do so.

I am currently a Senior at California State University, Long Beach majoring in Human Development. Receiving my Bachelor's Degree is only the beginning of the many ambitions I have in life. I hope to go on and receive my Master's Degree in Marriage Family Therapy and somehow be able to give my service back to the school and parish that gave me so much. The combined help of my family's unconditional support and sacrifices, and the support provided by the Friends of St. Lawrence, have put me on the road to success. My future is very bright and I know that I owe a great deal of my success to the foundation I received at St. Lawrence Brindisi School. I am continually grateful to the Friends of St. Lawrence for giving me such amazing opportunities to live a life I may not have otherwise been given. My family and I are truly blessed to be part of the family at St.



Lawrence and I know many other families will be blessed in the same way for generations to come.

William Diaz

Hello, my name is William Diaz and I was one of the recipients of the Friends of St. Lawrence scholarship.

I didn't have the rough childhood filled with violence and gang affiliation that most kids from the ghetto have. I grew up in a household of nine people with a limited amount of space. I have three brothers and three sisters and I am the second youngest. My oldest brother whom I looked up to went to college but did not finish. I started off my elementary education at a public school. I received a good education, but my parents wanted something better. That is when I transferred to St. Lawrence of Brindisi in the 3rd grade. The transition was tough and my journey started off rocky. I was the "bad kid" in elementary school, but I never let my grades slip because I was determined. I was always one of the top students in my class, but had a poor attitude. In 7th grade after getting into some serious trouble, my mentor/principal treated me as an adult and sat me down to have a conversation. She pointed out that I had great potential and the only way to reach it was to shape up. From that point on, I became focused on my studies and began giving back and volunteering many of my hours to community service

with St. Lawrence of Brindisi church and school. At that point I decided to set my sights high and strive for one of the toughest and most competitive high



schools in Southern California.

One of the greatest moments in my life came when I finally got the letter. In the spring of 2007, high school acceptance letters were sent out. I applied to two schools in hopes that I would attend one. I received my first letter from St. John Bosco High School in Bellflower. I was excited to be accepted into a fine school, but it was not my first choice. Weeks began to pass and I was growing more and more anxious. My friends, Diego and Anthony, were also awaiting a letter. When they received the news, they immediately told me and I was happy for them. The entire day, I could not wait to get out of class so I could rush home and check the school's website and see where I would be attending high school. As I typed in my password I expected the worst. I clicked "enter" and watched as the screen loaded. Upon the page being loaded, there was a letter addressed to me. I was too nervous to read the letter

Achievements- Continued on Page 3

Mardi Gras 2010

Friends celebrated our 2011 Mardi Gras Fundraiser on Thursday, March 3, at the Comedy and Magic Club in Hermosa Beach. Over 230 guests enjoyed food, friendship and laughs while raising over \$130,000 to support children and families in Watts. More pictures are posted on our website - www.friendsofwatts.org.

Our **March Madness Celebration** will take place on March 1, 2012 at the Comedy and Magic Club. For information on donating an auction item, sponsorship opportunities or to volunteer, please contact Kim at 310-963-2407 or kimb@friendsofwatts.org.



With Many Thanks to...

Our 2011 Sponsors

Gold Beads

Pat and Rich Meehan

Rod Olea

Ellen and Charlie Steinmetz

John and Cindy Smet

Amy and Lincoln Stone

Tres Niños Winery

Silver Beads

Mollie and John Baumer

Brigante Cameron Watters & Strong

Purple Beads

kelly delmonte photography

LGraphico

Susan and Mike Revell

St. Lawrence Brindisi

Our 2011 Planning Committee

Mollie Baumer and Antonia Carpenter - Event Co-Chairs

Kristie Barron

Kelly DelMonte

Linda Northup

Kim Brooke

Gigi Harnden

Elisa Paetzold

Deb Charlton

Kelli McCabe

Kim Stillwell

that I only searched for one word, "Congratulations!" When I found the word I was searching for, my heart stopped. It was official and I would be a Cub at Loyola High School in Los Angeles. The feeling I received when I read the news was one I could never forget. I was going to end my middle school education on a high note.

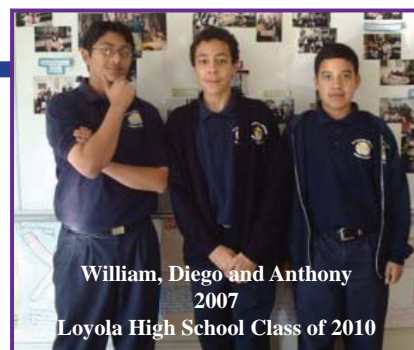
I quickly found that high school was completely different from middle school. It took me two years to stabilize myself but in the process I had not forgotten where I came from. In those two years I continued with my volunteering at the church and involving myself in their activities. I knew how important it was to have a mentor at these kids' age so I began helping in St. Lawrence's afterschool sports program. I wanted to give these kids an example of someone who has been in their situation and made it out. I did not want to limit myself to the kids in the sports program so at the beginning of my junior year I decided to not only continue helping these kids in the program but also explore another program St. Lawrence offers - the Literacy Program. During junior year, I began to balance school, a job, volunteering, and extra-curricular activities. A major club I was involved in was



JCL (Junior Classical League). This club combined my love for Latin with social activities. In this club we went to conventions where we competed and interacted with other schools. Also, I began photographing sports events for my school yearbook. I was so proud when my pictures appeared in the yearbook that I continued it into my senior year.

During my senior year, I took a step back from volunteering and committed myself to the Literacy Program. Along with me came three other young men from Loyola that I persuaded into lending a hand because I believed that they could benefit from the program like I had. I began teaching four kids which was double what I was teaching the year before. I grew a strong bond with the kids I taught and learned as much from them as they did from me, but I did not know it yet. It was working at the Literacy Program that has now shaped a new path for me. I am now a freshman at California State University Northridge. I did not know what career path to choose but it was my time at St. Lawrence that influenced my choice. Reminiscing on the memories that culminated from my time there, I decided to become a Liberal Studies major and pursue a career in teaching with a specialty in math. I have always had a passion for teaching. At the end of four years I plan to graduate with a B.A. in Liberal Studies with preliminary multiple subject teaching

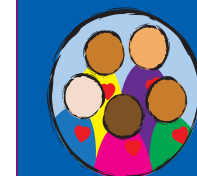
credential. I plan on enrolling in a master's program where I can focus on mathematics and teach



William, Diego and Anthony
2007
Loyola High School Class of 2010

secondary education. I hope that I can become the teacher that I always wanted as a kid and help kids who are like me.

The reason I decided to share my story with Friends of St. Lawrence was because I feel it wouldn't be possible without their scholarship. When I learned of my acceptance into Loyola High School, it first occurred to me that it was a very expensive school. I was afraid that I would not be able to attend because of financial matters. Being in a family of 9, money was really tough to come by. When it seemed that I would not be able to attend my dream school, the Friends of St. Lawrence scholarship appeared. I am extremely indebted to anyone who may have contributed. Without Friends of St. Lawrence, my story would not be possible. I thank everyone who has helped me.



Friends of St. Lawrence-
Watts Youth Center
10122 Compton Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90002
Phone: 323-567-1439

email@friendsofwatts.org

www.friendsofwatts.org