

Friends of St. Lawrence Watts Youth Center

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Father Peter Banks,
Founder
- Lincoln Stone, Esq.,
President
- Cindy Byrne, Esq.,
Vice-President
- Michelle D. Plunkett, CPA
Treasurer
- Robert Stenson, Esq.
Secretary
- Charles Steinmetz,
Past President
- Eleanor Allen
- Phil Battaglia, Esq.,
- Molly Baumer
- John Cameron, CPA
- Antonia Carpenter
- John Conway, CPA
- John Coughlin
- Ken Gilbert
- Adriana Lopez
- James McMahon, Esq.
- Richard Meehan
- Rosa Meza
- Lilliam Paetzold
- Teresa Perez
- Albert Pichardo
- John Utley
- Scott Wood, Esq.,
- Alma Reeves Woods

STAFF

- Linda Northup,
Director
- Kimberly Brooke,
Associate Director

Inside

Feature Story	1
Financial Snap Shot	3
Letter From Our Founder	3
Mardi Gras 2008	4

Dedicated

Friends of St. Lawrence - Watts Youth Center depends a great deal on the support of our dedicated volunteers. Friends would never be able to help the hundreds of families in need on such a limited budget without their dedication. Nearly 100 volunteers donate a total of approximately 2800 hours each year. We simply could not begin to thank them enough.

Friends recently conducted a survey of our volunteers. After hearing from so many of these dedicated people, we wanted to share these inspirational stories with you.

Literacy Center

The Literacy Center, in this its 7th year of existence, has just concluded tutoring 80 students in our after-school reading program.

All the children in the Literacy Center program start out in the bottom quarter of their class. The children work one-on-one with their own trained tutor; thus developing a level of trust between the tutor and student. In addition, this one-on-one format reduces competition between students, which reduces the frustration of not being able to keep up and feeling inadequate, which in turn allows them to feel successful as they progress.

In addition to the Center's 25 paid



local teen tutors, the center utilizes high school volunteers aiming to fulfill their required service hour commitment. Many of the students continue their volunteer work even after their service commitment has been fulfilled.

ESL (English as a Second Language)

ESL Classes are held Monday through Thursday mornings and are taught by teachers and assistants from American Martyrs and St. Lawrence parishes. When the program started in 1993 it was the first program of its kind in the over 85% Hispanic Watts neighborhood.

Antonia, of Manhattan Beach, has a very personal reason for wanting to become a volunteer, "I became a volunteer because I wanted to give back to my culture. My parents were born in Mexico and they came to the U.S. to provide a better life for their children. They taught us to be proud of our culture and made sure Spanish was our first language. As an adult, I have the opportunity to help fellow Hispanics learn English so they can get a better job and provide the American dream that my

Dedicated - Continued To Page 2

Dedicated - Continued From Page 1
parents provided for us. When they see how much I've accomplished in only a generation they can have hope



for themselves and their children.”

When asked to share a success story she stated, “the [ESL] class would always dwindle down to 5-8 students by January. This year however is a different story. Our classes are staying at a steady 15-20 students per class and it is mid April. The students are learning and they enjoy coming, [that’s] success at its best!”

Two of this year’s students have passed their citizenship test and were sworn in on the 4th of July.

The 19 students in the English as a Second Language classes ended the year on May 25th with a day at the beach hosted by the American Martyrs MOM ministry.

Information Center

Friends manages an Information Center every Wednesday. The Information Center volunteers provide advocacy and referral help to families dealing with legal and social problems. The Center has served about 200 families a year since 1995.

Every Wednesday and Saturday, from early February until mid-April Jack and Bob, of Manhattan Beach, set up and work the Information Center’s tax service. Each year since 1998, volunteers have provided free tax preparation to over 100 families a year.

Volunteers come from all over the Los Angeles area. Lizeth of Watts works as a translator for the families and the accountants. She is one of many volunteers from the Watts Community who takes pleasure in helping out families in her own neighborhood.

Stephani, of Chino Hills, is an accountant for an engineering firm who donates her time because she appreciates the chance to do something she is passionate about, while at the same time, giving back and helping out within the community.

The volunteers all tell stories of seeing families who were very excited and grateful after finding out they were entitled to a refund. Even those who were receiving just a small refund were all smiles and a few even went around the room hugging the volunteers.

Law Days

On March 3rd, 9 attorneys volunteered their time along with 5 volunteer interpreters to help 100 Watts residents with advice on their legal problems. People began lining up at 8:00am for the 9:00am start time. The volunteers helped with issues of immigration, tenant disputes, business licensing and other legal advice. Most situations were handled on site while others were referred to various



organizations and individuals for additional follow up.

John, an attorney from San Pedro, volunteers because he values the people that he works with and the chance to make a difference. His favorite success story is how he helped a mother avoid a custody challenge which allowed her to move and start a new life.

CompuTeen

Melissa is a St. Lawrence Brindisi graduate and is starting her junior year at Notre Dame Academy in the fall. She started volunteering for the CompuTeen program two years ago. As an 8th grader at St. Lawrence she was in the very first section of the program. She enjoyed it so much

“It’s a good feeling to know that I’ve made a difference in someone’s life.”
- Melissa

that she wanted to help her fellow classmates the following section.

Her favorite part is helping the Teens learn Photoshop. She takes their pictures with a digital camera and then shows them how to make personalized business cards.

“It’s a good feeling to know that I’ve made a difference in someone’s life.” Melissa explains.

Last year, 21 students completed the CompuTeen program. The 7th and 8th graders love the class and are very proud to say they are CompuTeens. The program not only teaches valuable computer skills but it builds self esteem since they realize that they have a unique talent and interest in computers and may be discovering a possible career path.

The skills the students learned in CompuTeen are helping keep them

Dedicated - Continued To Page 4

A Letter From Our Founder



May 1, 2008

My Dear Friends,

I was invited to breakfast in Nickerson Gardens. It is the biggest housing project west of the Mississippi. Martha is a single mother. When I walked in the door of her humble apartment I could not believe what I saw. It was a banquet fit for a king. Her little special child stood on the stairs "who is he", I asked. She said "That's Ralph, my son; he is all I have got in this life." I thought to myself "In this life" - Martha you will have more than you ever dreamed of in the next.

It was an incredible spiritual experience for me. At the end she gave me her envelopes for church. There were four and in each was \$10.00. Then she gave me \$20.00 to help a poor child get an education. Martha knows that I dream of every child in the inner city getting a good education. Martha will never realize the inspiration she is to me, and the effect she has on my life as a priest.

Because of wonderful people like you, Martha will put her child in Saint Lawrence school and we will get special help for Ralph. I thank God for the Marthas and Lindas of the world. I thank God for you who help so many inner city children get a good education. Gratitude and generosity are two of the great virtues.

I found this marvelous quote of Martin Luther King. "The rich help the poor in this life and the poor help the rich in the next."

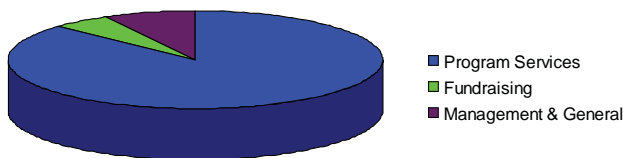
God bless you now and forever. Your friend whose heart is full of gratitude,

Fr. Peter

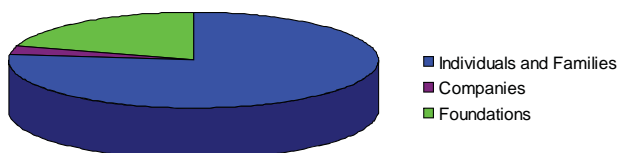
2006-2007 Financial Snap Shot

Friends of St. Lawrence - Watts Youth Center considers every donation an investment in the future of the Watts Community. Our use of dedicated volunteers keeps salary expenses extremely low and over 87% of every dollar goes directly toward our Programs. We do not receive any funding from Government Grants and we receive 77% of our donations from individuals and families. In the 2006-2007 fiscal year 393 generous donors gave to Friends for the very first time.

2006 - 2007 Expenses



2006-2007 Total Donations



St. Lawrence Brindisi Church Centennial Celebration

Save the Dates!

Street fair

Family fun, food, & Live Entertainment

Saturday, September 27, 2008

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Sunday Mass

The Archbishop, Cardinal Roger Mahony

Sunday, September 28, 2008 1:00 PM

Followed by a reception in the new hall!

2008 Mardi Gras Party

Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler! More than 300 revelers “let the good times roll” during the Friends’ annual Fat



Pictured front row from left: Chris Conway; and Albert Pichardo; middle row: Father Tony Marti; Mollie Baumer; Ann Miller; Father Peter Banks; Antonia Carpenter; Lincoln Stone; Kim Brooke; and Lilliam Paetzold; back row: Linda Northup; Charlie Steinmetz; Cindy Bryne; Robert Stenson; Jim McMahan; John Utley; and John Coughlin.

Tuesday celebration held at American Martyrs’ O’Donnell Hall on Tuesday night, February 5th. As usual, conversation, cocktails and donations flowed freely – all for the good of the kids (as Eric Daroca, auctioneer extraordinaire is fond of reminding party-goers).

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of our sponsors and individual donors, this year’s event raised more than \$110,000. Proceeds go directly to the Watts Community – either through scholarships that are vital in allowing them to attend St. Lawrence Brindisi school or as support for the Friends’ programs including the Literacy Center, which provides after school, one-on-one tutoring for kids reading below their grade level.

“It’s a life-giving experience for me,” says Kelly DelMonte, a professional photographer who developed a slide presentation showcasing the St. Lawrence campus and individual portraits of the children. We have the greatest appreciation for the many volunteers who donated countless hours to the success of this event and to our generous sponsors Phil &

Lorraine Battaglia, Dave & Antonia Carpenter, Charlie & Ellen Steinmetz, Lincoln & Amy Stone, Brigante Cameron Watters & Strong LLP, Byrne & Nixon, LLP, Crystal Property Management, Inc., kelly delmonte photography, American Martyrs Church, Patrick & Mikelyn Dooley, Arlyne Ingold, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, John & Andrea Utley, and Mark & Sharon Wood.

Dedicated - Continued From Page 2
competitive with children outside their inner-city neighborhood. This is the first step for some of the CompuTeen graduates in becoming technicians for computer repair and maintenance jobs or exploring careers in photography, video work or graphic design.

All graduates will use their new skill for high school and college projects and reports.

After-school Tutoring

High school students, teachers, parents and retirees make up the pool of volunteers that devote their free time to tutoring the grade-schoolers in reading and math. This year’s volunteer tutors not only help students learn their lessons but show the students that somebody cares about them and their academic career.

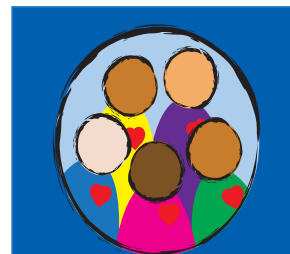
Edna, of Manhattan Beach, is a retired math teacher who shares her knowledge with girls struggling with math. She finds that being able to

help individual students with math very rewarding. Edna tells of how she once tutored an eighth grade girl who was at a 4th grade level in math. “After a few sessions of tutoring she was doing 8th grade level math and actually laughing and smiling during the sessions.” Edna explains, “The students that I have worked with express such appreciation and gratitude.”

Tony, of Redondo Beach, tutored Abraham for two years. Without Tony’s help Abraham wouldn’t have graduated from St. Lawrence. Tony sees volunteering as a way to form a kinship with many people working and living in the Watts Community.

We could not begin to thank our volunteers enough. Friends would not be able to accomplish their mission without the dedication and hard work of so many volunteers. The leadership provided by our board of directors; the creativity and handiness of our Mardi

Gras Planning Committee; the understanding and patience of our tutors; the knowledge and expertise of the Information Center/ Law Days staff; the hard work and kindness of our ESL teachers; and the support of so many unsung heroes help make the dreams of the children and families of Watts come true.



Friends of St. Lawrence-
Watts Youth Center
10122 Compton Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90002
Phone: 323-567-1439
Fax: 323-564-3051

email@friendsofwatts.org

www.friendsofwatts.org