



Aeqvitas

The Voice of the San Domenico Social Justice Club, named in honor of the Roman goddess of justice & fair dealings.

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Back to School/Special Summer Service Issue 2010

Dedication: *The members of the Social Justice Club dedicate this issue, with its emphasis on community service, to the memory of Claire Davis, who passed away in August. Mrs. Davis was the mother of Julie Davis Butler and an avid supporter of young women's education, as well as service to community, both locally and globally. Her generosity and enthusiasm has inspired and enabled dozens of young women from San Domenico to contribute to the betterment of their communities and pursue their interests in justice, human rights, service, and learning.*

A Generous Jive: Senior Pair Shares Love of Dance with Area Children

By Kita Gayle '11

For the second consecutive summer, seniors Laruen Huff and Elle Koagedal organized and ran a dance camp—*El Campo de Baile*—for a dozen children living in Marin City and San Rafael's Canal neighborhood.

This program, which was created in 2008 by graduate Shanna Kohn '09, provides dance instruction for kids who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity.

Huff and Koagedal taught ballet, modern and jazz classes each day, and choreographed a performance for parents.

D'lynnnes, a local dancewear shop, provided leotards and ballet slippers for all the dancers and Roco Dance lent out their studio for use. Thanks to the Julie Davis Butler Award, Huff and Koagedal were able to pay for the dancewear and provide snacks. "Each girl got to wear a nice leotard and dance in a professional studio, so



Lauren Huff and Elle Koagedal with their troupe last summer.

they could feel important and special," Koagedal said.

"I know that being able to express yourself and let loose in dance has gotten me through a lot of stuff in my life," Huff said. "I wanted to bring that to these girls who don't have the means to pay for a bunch of activities."

Both years, the seniors worked with Felicia Gatson, founder of Marin Performing Stars Nonprofit organization, to spread word about the camp. During the year, Gatson picks up the kids from daycare and brings them to dance classes.

"I hope that the program continues and more children participate," Huff noted. "It is such a good outlet for their energy and greatly inspires them." Koagedal noted that the experience is inspirational to her as well. "It made me realize that something I sometimes take for granted was really a treat for those girls," Koagedal noted.

Bringing Social Justice Home: Crystal Shan Volunteers at Shanghai Orphanage

By Abby Costello '11

While at her home in China over the summer, Senior Crystal Shan volunteered at the Shanghai Children's Home, where she helped teach English to orphans. As Shanghai is Shan's hometown, she felt inspired to give back to her community. "I really wanted to help these children," said Shan, reflecting on her experience. "I wanted to share my experience and tell them more about the world outside".

Shan had spent two weeks volunteering at the center last summer and she volunteered for an entire month this year. She acted as a teacher's assistant, working with children between the ages of six and thirteen on range of summer activities, including teaching dance.

As a recipient of the Julie Davis Butler award, Shan was able to purchase much-needed classroom supplies for use by the children.

The Shanghai Children's Home, founded in 1911 by the Catholic Church, is now supported by the local government. The facility, which is the only social welfare institution of its kind in Shanghai, provides service to more than 1,700 children, 600 of whom actually live at the orphanage.

Some of the children have no connection to the outside world.

Shan was motivated in part by her experiences in Social Justice class during junior year which helped her recognize the "inequalities in society."



Shan with residents at the Shanghai Children's Home

Shan noted that while this line of work will not likely be her career path, she will continue volunteering. "I feel strongly that I should help people to the best of my own abilities," said Shan. "I enjoyed my work, and never thought of it as a burden".

Christina Crittenden Joins *Amigos* for Immersion and Service in Panama

By Alessandra Jurick '12, *Aeqvitas* Editor

While many teenagers spent their summer break lounging on the beach or shopping with friends, senior Christina Crittenden spent eight weeks volunteering in Panama with *Amigos*, an organization that facilitates service partnerships in Latin America. From early June to early August, Crittenden stayed in the province of Los Santos on the Azuero Peninsula with the Moreno family in the community Agua Beuna. Starting in the fall of 2009, Crittenden attended

bimonthly meetings to prepare for the trip. In order to cover some expenses, the group had a fundraiser and sold poinsettias and grapefruits.



Christina Crittenden placing tiles with Quito Moreno, father of her host family.

Upon their arrival in Panama, after meeting with community leaders, Crittenden, and her partnership of two other American teenagers, rebuilt the courtyard in front of a church. In order to fund the construction, they coordinated a

local “bingo” night. They raised \$238, enough to cover the cost of the entire project. “The community appreciated that we improved the courtyard, which is a central location for them,” shared Crittenden. She also organized and taught lessons on sustainability to eight three and four-year-olds. “I gained so much from this experience,” commented Crittenden, “and I highly recommend *Amigos*.”

Her days consisted of doing service work for the town of 1,500, improving her Spanish skills, and experiencing total cultural immersion. Each meal was held at a different community member’s household, which gave Crittenden and her two partners the opportunity to feel fully part of the neighborhood. “The Panamanian lifestyle is very relaxed,” mentioned Crittenden. “A large part of each day is dedicated to sharing quality time with the community

Nina Pak Finds a Voice on Library’s Teen Advisory Board

By Ashley Kim '11

This past summer, senior Nina Pak served as a member of the Rockridge Oakland Public Library’s Teen Advisory Board, which helps advise the library administration on catering to youth as well as engages in service project in the area. Witnessing firsthand the significant role of libraries in societies and especially in areas with higher percentages of low-income households, Pak and her peers sought to raise awareness about the positive impact of libraries on the community and garner support for increased funding and continuation of its services.

Pak and her peers, working in solidarity to keep the library alive, fundraised and held book drives, raising money for various programs at the library. In addition, Pak and the board provided valuable input with their teen perspectives on the type of books and DVDs for the library to purchase in efforts to encourage more of the youth to regularly visit the library and utilize the many resources it has to offer. “The library is a dependable source for them,” Pak noted. “And it’s free.”

Pak grew up near the library. “I saw the budget cuts, and the library started cutting the hours and staff,” she noted. As a recipient of the Julie Davis Butler award, Pak was able to contribute funds and energy in order to purchase books, art supplies, and recycling bins.



Nina Pak (center) at work with the Teen Advisory Board at St. Vincent de Paul’s kitchen.

“The library is more than a place to borrow books,” Pak asserted, noting the ease of access and the wide availability of the programs it offers including legal help and English tutoring. “Because it is so dependable and resourceful, it has been able to change people’s lives, especially for some residents of lower-income neighborhoods,” Pak said. Pak’s work with the Teen Advisory Board has continued, most recently with a service-oriented outing to volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul’s soup kitchen.

Aeqvitas is published by the student members of San Domenico’s Social Justice Club.

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The San Domenico Social Justice Club is committed to creating awareness among ourselves and our community concerning social injustices, both locally and globally. We act upon this knowledge in solidarity with the global community in order to positively impact the world. As a group of young women, we are dedicated to fostering respect and equality, and we strive to create equal opportunities for all.

Kita Gayle's "Wellspring" Initiative Invigorates Area Seniors

By Elle Koagedal '11

Last summer, senior and lifelong dancer Kita Gayle was able to put her passion for dance into a unique service project. It began when Hanna Takeshige, founder of Bridging Communities Through Movement came to the Marin Ballet to ask for a volunteer to help bring dance to elderly people. Gayle volunteered to help brainstorm ideas, and they ultimately decided to focus on people suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. "The goal of the project was to help these seniors use motion to connect with their memory and brain," Gayle explained.

After the kickoff of the newly named, "Wellspring Project" at the Redwoods Center, Gayle and Takeshige learned that if they have different colors, scents, and music, the experience would be even more enjoyable and powerful for the elderly people. Some of them began to connect with the movement, but others felt a strong sensation come over them when they heard their favorite song from their youth.

Gayle began to see a big difference between the people before and after the experience. "Before we began many of them would be wheeled into the room and look almost as if they were sleeping, their eyes would be glassed over, and they could barely talk," Gayle recalled. "But once we got them moving, they would clap their hands to the music, tap their feet, or even sing along to the songs."

Celebrating Twenty Years of the Julie Davis Butler Award

Editor's note: This article was originally published two years ago. As a tribute to the generosity and dedication of Mrs. Claire Davis, and in recognition of the ongoing importance of the Julie Davis Butler Award, it is published here again with updated figures.

By Leslie Flores '09

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the inception of the Julie Davis Butler Award, a student service grant to honor the 1959 graduate who dedicated her life to service, community and family before her untimely death in an airplane crash in 1987. "It is a very important year to celebrate and honor Julie's legacy," Sister Gervaise Valpey, President Emerita of San Domenico School, said of the scholarship, which is supported by Julie Davis Butler's family, friends and classmates.

As a student, Julie Davis was a strong leader from the start. Sister Gervaise remembers Julie as "quietly strong, determined, persevering, loving and selfless." She was class president for three consecutive years, and was selected by her classmates to represent Mary in the Christmas Tableaux. She loved the outdoors and was a friend to many.



The project has now been successful at WindChime of Marin and other assisted-living centers in the area, and Gayle believes there is a growing demand for programs like this because it "helps them feel young and alive again". Gayle hopes to continue her work with Takeshige in this project, and continue to bring it to various centers in Marin. The "Wellspring Project" has been an opportunity for Kita to look at dance and movement from a different perspective. She decided on pursuing the project in order to help patients find a connection between their mind and the movement of their bodies, and has found that it has been beyond successful and inspiring to many people.



Julie Davis in her 1959 Yearbook photo.

She became a single parent after her husband's plane was shot down and captured during the Vietnam War. She became an advocate for humane treatment of prisoners while her husband remained in a Vietnamese prison camp for five years. She regularly petitioned Congress to prioritize the release of POWs.

Over the last two decades, more than a total of \$67,000 has been awarded to 67 San Domenico juniors who have volunteered in many countries such as Bosnia, Chile, China, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, and elsewhere. This year the Julie Davis Butler Award sponsored seven girls to engage in service in various locales around the globe and right here in Marin—a fitting tribute to her legacy.

Every September, San Domenico holds an assembly, in which recipients of the award honor Davis Butler by presenting on their experiences. The Social Justice Club is proud to dedicate this issue of our newsletter to the memory of Julie Davis Butler, and to her mother, Claire Davis, who attended almost every one of those assemblies.

Leslie Flores received the Julie Davis Butler Award during the 2007-2008 academic year. After graduating from San Domenico in 2009 she enrolled at UC Santa Cruz.

Classes Head Outside for Service to Campus, Community, and Environment

By Cameron Mine '14

While the seniors were away on retreat earlier this month, the rest of the San Domenico High School students ventured outside for service, sun, and bonding in our community and environment. Freshman focused on the San Domenico campus by weeding the Garden of Hope and hiking along the Loma Alta trail, which provided bonding moments for all the girls.

The sophomores focused on the environment by removing invasive weeds from the Muir Beach Lagoons. Sophomore Juliette Bioche enjoyed working with park staff. "It was good to get outside," said Bioche. "I am interested in becoming a park ranger some day, so I enjoyed seeing what kind of work they do."

Juniors could be found dispersed throughout the community, volunteering at several locations, including Homeward Bound's Family Resource Center, the Human Society and the Marin Food Bank, which helped the participating students form a more complete perspective. "I learned that Homeward Bound and other organizations have such a large role in helping the homeless in our community," said junior Nicole Frias.



Members of the sophomore work crew show off the biggest "catch" of the day.

"And we can't function properly as a society without this help."

Through these opportunities, the San Domenico students were able to give back to the community, while at the same time connecting with one

another. "I loved it was beautiful to see the scenery," said freshman Crystal Jacobson. "I really was able to bond with everyone and got to know my classmates."

Students Explore Another Side of California History at Angel Island

By Sydney Cheng '13

During the second week of school, San Domenico juniors and sophomores experienced a part of California history that is often forgotten—the Angel Island

Immigration Center. While it has been referred to as "The Ellis Island of the West," the Angel Island Immigration Center was really more of a detention facility. Between 1910 and 1940, Angel Island, located in San Francisco Bay, was the registration site for immigrants coming from China, Japan, Korea, Russia, India, and elsewhere in Asia.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 demonstrated the hostile American public attitude towards Chinese immigrants, which severely restricted immigration from China for six decades. During this period approximately 200,000 Chinese were detained on Angel Island, some of them for as long as two years.



Rita Hu translates one of hundreds of poems carved into the immigration station's walls by Chinese detainees in the last century.

The visit was particularly poignant for sophomore Rita Hu, who, as a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, translated some of the poetry carved into the center's walls. "I know that

the people who wrote these poems were talented," Hu surmised. "Instead of mean words, they used the poetry to express their anger. A lot of Chinese came to the United States, striving for their dreams, but they were trapped there."

A small group of San Domenico students visited the center during a Spring Discovery outing, just before it reopened in 2009. This year, however, all sophomores and juniors toured the facility to understand this remarkable history of California and its ties to our curriculum, with

its emphasis on social justice and human rights. Likewise, it is meaningful for our student body, which comes from many countries to create this global community.