



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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Study. Reflect. Act.

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Getting to Know New High School Division Head Alyce Brownridge

By Alessandra Jurick '12, Aeqvitas Editor

San Domenico High School is pleased to welcome the new High School Division Head, Alyce Brownridge, to our community. Brownridge grew up in San Francisco where she attended Galileo High School. She later went on to study at UC Santa Barbara and

completed a Master's Degree in Science at the University of Arizona. For the past twenty-four years she had been working at the Orme School in Arizona, a coeducational boarding and day school for grades six through twelve. Brownridge worked in administration and the boarding program, taught Chemistry and various math class, and coached the school's tennis team.

Brownridge has decided to return to the Bay Area and continue to work in school administration and live on campus here at San Domenico. What strikes her the most about San Domenico are the school's sense of community and beauty of its location. She commented on the



New High School Division Head Alyce Brownridge shares a laugh with juniors Lynn Falesoga (left) and Vanessa Luna.

vibrancy of the campus and recognized the openness, compassion, and achievements of both the student body and the hardworking faculty.

In addition, she is excited about working with an all girls school, which is a new experience for her. Already having much experience in educating boarding and day students, she is, in her own words, "passionate about the integration of the student body." She is eager to bring together the unique San Domenico community of both international and domestic students. When asked about what makes San Domenico stand out to her, Brownridge mentioned the passionate students, the combination of many talents and interests at San

Domenico, and that most of all, she felt at home. Brownridge is also excited about the sense of activism and service in San Domenico's curriculum. "Every school has a place for students to be involved in charity work, but I don't know of another school that has such a great and progressive

program," said Brownridge. "The Social Justice Club is a natural fit for San Domenico."

Student Body President Libby Reyff thinks the new Division Head's enthusiasm will have a positive effect on the students. "Mrs. Brownridge is a great addition to our school's community," said Reyff. "Her lively spirit and positive attitude have helped the beginning of the year go quite smoothly."

Brownridge jumped right in—assisting the tennis coach everyday at practice and joining the seniors on their overnight retreat in Point Reyes.

Helping “Children in Need” on the Roof of the World

By Cameron Mine '14

More than two billion children inhabit our earth, and more than half of these children live in poverty. The list continues to develop as another child is added every second. For almost two years, San Domenico senior Caitlin Gowdy and a few fellow musicians have begun to fight the grasp of poverty with their student-run program, Children in Need. This past summer, Gowdy was awarded one of four Julie Davis Butler memorial scholarships, which enabled her to join junior Peggy Cui in China, where the two travelled to the region of



Senior Caitlin Gowdy and junior Peggy Cui with the family of a girl who received surgery.

to raise money to for charities working to assist impoverished children in disaster areas around the globe. The outfit has raised nearly \$10,000 so far.

This past summer the group decided to focus on children affected by congenital heart disease, a problem with the heart's structure and function due to abnormal heart development before the child's

birth. Treatment is different depending on the condition; some can be treated with medication, however others require surgery—often several.

After discovering the Bay Area-based Touching Hearts program coordinated by the Southeast Asian Prayer Center (SEAPC), which provides treatment for Tibetan children afflicted with the disease, Children in Need hosted a fundraising concert.

The charity offered to take Gowdy and Cui to Tibet, a region rarely open to outsiders, where they visited two orphanages and two schools for the blind in Lhasa, the capital. But receiving the rare invitation—and the financing to cover the trip—just might have been easier than actually getting there. Before Gowdy's arrival, Chinese authorities, wary of political unrest in Tibet, increased security and denied access to Tibet for almost all international travelers. The director of SEAPC was able to use his connections to negotiate entry.

Gowdy performed at each these orphanages and schools. “These children had never seen or heard a violin before, and they were amazed at the sound it makes,” recalled Gowdy. “After I played, the children usually sang or played a song on traditional Tibetan instruments for us.”

“It was a great experience,” said Gowdy, “Meeting these children and seeing how different their lives are from ours.”



Senior Caitlin Gowdy performs at a school for the blind in Shigatse, Tibet.

Tibet to work directly with these children.

Since January 2010, Gowdy and Cui have coordinated Children in Need, an organization of high school musicians who perform benefit concerts

Senior Belinda Cheng Joins SPCA for Animal Rescues in Asia

By Portia Henry-Warren '12

Last year, at a school in Malaysia, a group of teenagers kicked a dog “like a soccer ball” until it lay on the ground, dead. Horror stories of violence against animals like this are common, which is why senior Belinda Cheng chose to work with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in east Asia for her Real Opportunities for Service in Education (ROSE) project. Some of her responsibilities included rescuing dogs, cleaning up animal carcasses, administrative work, and documenting illegal breeders who often kept a hundred dogs stacked in cages without food.

Cheng helped fundraising efforts by selling shirts, hosting bake sales, putting on performances, and running races.



Senior Belinda Cheng with a puppy rescued during one operation.

She had wanted to work for the SPCA for years, but couldn't until she turned sixteen last December, which lined up perfectly with Julie Davis Butler applications. “I had always wanted to apply there,” Cheng reflected, “But I couldn't, until the Julie Davis Butler fellowship made it possible.”

Early in the summer, when Cheng started volunteering in her



One of several illegal dog-breeding facilities photographed by Cheng for documentation by the SPCA (which subsequently rescued the animals).

native city of Hong Kong, her days were difficult. She often started at 7am and worked until 11pm. But as she adjusted to the long days, she began to enjoy it more and more, and she wanted to become more involved. Although she began her project in Hong Kong, she soon decided to extend her service to elsewhere in the region, including Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan.

Cheng recalls one rescue operation in China that showed her firsthand how challenging this work can be. “We found one illegal dog breeding facility and tried to take pictures, but the police prevented us from doing so,” Cheng explained. “We were detained for two days; we were only given water to drink and no bathroom breaks.” In the end, the police confiscated the cameras and released Cheng and the rest of the team.

“I used to believe that the police stood for justice and equality, but after my experience it changed my view completely,” Cheng reflected on the incident. “This showed me the

unfairness and the brutality of the authorities,” she said, noting that organizations like SPCA face challenges.

Cheng was inspired by those who work at the SPCA fulltime. “Before I thought that just working there was a big contribution, but after spending



SPCA staffers removing rescued dogs from an illegal breeding facility.

a summer there I realized that what I did was trivial by comparison,” Cheng remarked. “You can't even compare it to what they do with their whole lives”.



As a means of personalizing the events of 9/11, members of the Social Justice Club read biographical profiles of individual victims. They included Joon Koo Kim, Bernard Curtis Brown II, Todd Beamer, Betty Ong, Leobardo Lopez Pascual, Deora Bodley, and Mohammed Salman Hamdani.

“Taking Time Out of Our Lives to Remember”: 9/11 Ten Years Later

By Erica Lee '12

On the afternoon of Friday, September 9, the students, teachers, and other members of the San Domenico community gathered in the chapel to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The ceremony, which was conducted by the Social Justice Club and Dominican Delegate senior Veronica Farley, was focused on honoring the victims who died in the tragedy.

Farley later explained that even though ten years have passed since the tragedy, this generation feels a sense of connection. “A lot of us remember it happening, so in that way, we lived through it,” said Farley. “But even today, we still see news about Afghanistan or security issues—we may not feel a personal connection, but it is a part of our everyday lives.”

Seven students stood to somberly read seven individual biographies—selected from among the nearly 3,000 who perished—ranging from Bernard Curtis Brown II, an eleven-year-old boy on a school trip to Betty Ong, a San Francisco-raised Chinese-American flight attendant. The biographies showed that 9/11 was not only attack on the United States but also on the world.

Farley noted that this perspective tied in with last spring’s campus visit by director Valarie Kaur, whose work focused on identifying and defying stereotypes, as well as reflected San Domenico’s part in a global community.

Junior Olivia Ayanruoh read the profile of Leobardo Lopez Pascual, a Mexican migrant who worked as a cook in the restaurant atop the World Trade Center. “It was nice that the biographies were about people from different backgrounds because sometimes we forget that everyone has a story and a reason for being in the United States at that time,” said Ayanruoh. “I wanted to read a biography because I felt that the least we could do is take time out of our lives to remember those stories.”

After the readings and prayers, students lit candles in memoriam.

Reflecting on the event, Head of School David Behrs saw the service as an expression of San Domenico’s values.

“I was very proud of our Social Justice Club and the compassionate 9/11 commemoration held at the chapel last week,” said Behrs. “Our students truly live and breathe our Dominican ideals of Study,

Reflection, Service, and Community by engaging in co-curricular activities that support our mission. Our vision is to prepare graduates who confidently go forth to shape a better world.”

For American History teacher Amanda Tredinnick, the occasion had multiple meanings. “This year’s 9/11 prayer service helped students identify and connect American events to the global society,” said Tredinnick. “It is critical for students studying American history to understand these conflicts from a personal perspective but also as a historically relevant event.”

For many students, this event was an opportunity to understand more about the nature of the events. “I knew that Bin Laden was responsible for the attack on the United States,” said junior Seraphina Song. “But after the memorial service, I realized that many people from all around the world died.”

“Hopefully throughout the year, students will look to this prayer service as a way to personalize human tragedies throughout history,” Tredinnick added.”

Aeqvitas is published by the student members of San Domenico’s Social Justice Club, which meets weekly on Mondays @ 3:15 in Room #23. **Aeqvitas Editor:** Alessandra Jurick **Contributors to this Issue:** Portia Henry-Warren, Alessandra Jurick, Erica Lee, and Cameron Mine **Student Coordinators:** Alessandra Jurick and Erica Lee **Faculty Moderators:** Kristen Levine and Ian Sethre **Contact:** isethre@sandomenico.org

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.