

# Currents

Thomas A. Edison High School Newsletter Spring 2011

## Our School's Father and Mother: A Tribute Long Overdue

Patrick Maguire, Director

Since Thomas Edison High School opened its doors as the "Tree of Learning" in 1973, many amazing people have helped the school survive and thrive. Among these fine folks, two figures loom larger than all of the rest in terms of their impact on the school: Fr. Jim Galluzzo and Mrs. Jocelyn Tuthill, the father and mother of Thomas A. Edison High School. Jim and Jocelyn are the twin pillars upon which our beloved school was built, and it is long past time to tell their stories.

When Edison's "founding father" Jim Galluzzo first started teaching students in the basement of a church in NE Portland, even he could not have imagined that someday a four-year school dedicated to empowering students with learning differences would stand on the Jesuit High School campus. Over 35 years ago, Jim and four friends realized that large schools with large classrooms weren't serving the needs of all students, and

they resolved to do something about it.

In 1973, the five friends started a free tutoring program, which quickly expanded to 25 students and outgrew the church basement. They moved to the attic of another church in SE Portland. The fantastic five worked second jobs at night to support themselves and their families while continuing the work in which they believed so strongly. Their monthly budget was \$25, which went entirely to pay the phone bill. By 1975, Jim was working at Jesuit High School, and the Tree of Learning was invited to move into a trailer on the Jesuit campus. After four years, the fledgling school expanded, adding a second trailer as the number of students increased to 35.

After serving as principal of Jesuit from 1975-79, Jim put his administrative and teaching skills to work as principal of St. Stephen's Catholic Elementary School. Around the same time, he became a priest, and thus our founding father became Father Jim Galluzzo. Thanks to his



Jocelyn Tuthill and Father Jim Galluzzo

boundless energy, he continues to pursue his many passions, including creating art in several media and working on behalf of people on the margins of society. You may run into Jim at one of our functions (like the art show!), because he still supports Edison, his "baby."

Starting a school takes a special person indeed; growing, improving, and managing a school like Edison takes a whole different set of skills. Fortunately, Jim was able to pass the baton to the "mother" of Edison, Jocelyn Tuthill. Jocelyn was hired at the Tree of Learning in 1977 as a reading specialist and English teacher. She immediately connected with the students and fell in love with the school.

*Continued on next page*



Left to right: Mary Hartrich, Edison staff '73-75, board '76-78; Jim Galluzzo, founder, staff '72-76, board '77-78; Jackie Holmes, staff '73-80; Dave Gallison, staff 1975; Joan Maiers, staff '75-76. Photo by Tõnu Sepp.

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# A Tribute Long Overdue (continued from page 1)

Jocelyn stepped up during a challenging time in Portland's economy and in the life of the school, becoming the interim director of the Tree in 1982. The following year, she became executive director. As a teacher during those years, I can tell you it is no exaggeration to say that Jocelyn saved the school. Over the next 16 years, under her inspired and inspiring leadership, the Tree of Learning grew, flourished, and became Thomas A. Edison High School.

Jocelyn's first order of business was to put the school on sound financial footing. I can recall one year when a board member told the staff, "We think we can pay you for the next month, but the month after that is doubtful!" As you can imagine, it was tough to maintain morale in such circumstances, but Jocelyn managed to pull it off. In addition, Jocelyn used her considerable charm and leadership skills to gain community support, raising over \$1 million to build the beautiful building we now call home.

Most importantly, Jocelyn led a remarkable staff who established Thomas Edison as a beacon for learning-different students in the Portland community, providing hope to hundreds of families. Jocelyn's efforts allowed us to triple our student body and fill a huge hole in Portland's educational system. Jocelyn accomplished all of this while teaching three classes, fundraising, and directing the school. I will never know how she was able to keep all the balls in the air while maintaining her ready smile and laugh.



*Left to right: Marjie Decker, Edison staff '93-00, board '97-99; Jocelyn Tuthill, staff '77-98, board '81-88; Joan Sheets, staff '89-96, board '93-94. Photo by Tõnu Sepp.*



*Left to right: Kitty Taylor; Tom Taylor, current board treasurer; Jocelyn Tuthill. Photo by Tõnu Sepp.*

Everyone who knows her—especially those of us fortunate enough to have worked with her—recognize that Jocelyn Tuthill possesses a rare magic. She was an excellent boss, but is an even better teacher, human being, and role model. Since retiring over a decade ago, Jocelyn has continued to be a staunch supporter and friend of Edison.

After introducing you to the "mother" of our school, I have the unhappy duty of sharing that Jocelyn has recently been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. In characteristic fashion, Jocelyn doesn't want anyone to feel sorry for her. She asked me to tell the Edison community that she is following doctor's orders and is doing relatively well. She continues to be a positive, loving, joyful individual. Please keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Words cannot adequately express the impact that Jim Galluzzo and Jocelyn Tuthill have had on Edison, and on hundreds and hundreds of Portland families. The seeds that Jim and Jocelyn planted and nurtured have borne much fruit and provided nourishment to countless young people, and will continue to do so for years to come.

Some people simply wish for change, while those like Jim and Jocelyn actually make that change happen. We could not have asked for a better "father and mother" for our school. We owe Jim and Jocelyn our eternal gratitude. ✦

# Brilliance Benefit Makes the Difference of a Lifetime

Over 300 guests gathered at the Nines Hotel on March 5 for our 2011 Brilliance Benefit. The gala dinner and auction generated over \$170,000 in funds to support financial aid, technology, and professional development at the school.

Thank you to Jim and Shelley Francesconi for serving as the benefit's honorary chairs, to all of our amazing volunteers who made the event happen, and to everyone who attended. Our staff and students are deeply grateful. ✦



All 2011 Brilliance Benefit photos courtesy of Andie Petkus Photography.



From left: Seniors David Cahana, Lee Barker, Jakob Daum, and Abby Musselman strike a pose.



Assistant Director David Pontious with Edison parent Michael Cahana during the silent auction.

## Thank You, 2011 Sponsors!

Becker Capital Management  
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Junior Keven Maldonado speaks to raise funds for financial aid during the paddle raise.



Director Patrick Maguire with the winner of the 2011 Hawaii raffle, Jodi Birenbaum and her daughter Jollet.



Director Patrick Maguire and faculty Craig Busic and Maureen Manning present Susan Ballentine with the 2011 Pat Karamanos Award for Distinguished Service.



From left: Edison parents Pat Becker and Chuck Britton chat at the silent auction.



Student volunteers applaud to cheer on the paddle raise for financial aid.

# The Transitions Program at Edison

Michael Cady Russell, Martha Callahan, and Sharon Dunne, Transitions Team

One of the most important things we do at Edison is to prepare our students for life after high school. Our graduates need to be ready to succeed in the real world—whether that means attending a post-secondary institution, working a job, or some combination of the two. The Transitions Program at Edison focuses on preparation for life after high school. Every Edison student receives career/vocational awareness and college guidance through this program.

In Transitions, our goal is that everyone who graduates from Thomas Edison High School has a written plan in place for the following year that addresses the four areas of transition: education, employment, community living, and daily living. A plan this detailed can't be created overnight during a student's senior year. Instead, it is gradually built throughout their four years at Edison.

## Freshman Year

During their first year, Edison students focus on identifying their own learning



Gabe Reyes '12 and Sarah Friedman '12 at Sequoia Gallery for Creative Arts Career Day.

differences, styles, and strategies during classes and Advisory. They also learn about self-advocacy and organization. Freshmen have four one-hour Transitions workshops, during which they become familiar with the Career Information System (CIS) and begin entering information into the system. They will continue to work with this system for the next four years.

## Sophomore Year

As sophomores, students continue to work on learning strategies, organization, and self-advocacy in all of their classes. Sophomores also have the option of taking the PSAT. Transitions staff interview both parents and students after student-led conferences in order to learn more about their areas of interest. During four one-hour Transitions workshops, sophomores start completing assessments and worksheets in the Career Information System (CIS), beginning to identify possible career paths and the educational needs necessary to pursue those paths.

## Junior Year

This year, Edison has added a quarter-long elective class called Junior Seminar. The earlier students can start their career exploration, the better! This seminar includes further career explorations through CIS, examination of post-secondary education options, writing resumes and cover letters, and an in-depth discussion of learning differences and how to get accommodations at school or on the job. Juniors also learn more about the documentation needed in order for them to receive accommodations for their LDs. Students have an individual interview with Transitions staff; parents of juniors also meet with Transitions staff. This allows students to begin the process of pulling together all of the information needed to write their final Transition Plan. Additional testing is offered: the PSAT in October; the ACT, SAT, and PCC Compass Placement test in the spring.

## Senior Year

Senior year is when the Transitions Program kicks into high gear for Edison



Daniel Hager '11 examines art at Sequoia Gallery for Creative Arts Career Day.



Charles Palmer '12 chops onions for salsa at Culinary Career Day.

students. Every senior takes Senior Seminar, a full-year course packed with important material. During this course, students continue with CIS explorations, complete college and financial aid applications, fill out job applications, practice mock interviews, learn personal finance and other living skills, and develop and finalize their Transition Plan. One-to-one assistance from Transitions staff is available whenever it's needed. Speakers and field trips address educational, career, and GAP year opportunities. Seniors are also required to take two classes at PCC: a one-quarter class called "College Survival Skills" and another one-quarter elective of their choice. Seniors often attend career related learning experiences and have the option of applying for internships through the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce's "School to Work" Program.

### "School to Work"

"School to Work" (STW) is a specific program offered by the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce. The program was established 17 years ago and offers a partnership between working professionals and the schools. The Hillsboro STW program offers career related learning experiences to students in the Hillsboro, Forest Grove, Beaverton, Banks, and



Ross Mortimer '12 and Jesse Merritt '12 view police vehicles during Law Enforcement Career Day.



During Law Enforcement Career Day, Ross Mortimer '12 and Jesse Merritt '12 enjoy lunch catered by the Washington County Jail.

Gaston school districts. Career related learning experiences can range from job shadows to internships to career days, and they are one of the career education graduation requirements by the State of Oregon.

The "School to Work" Program partners with nearly 2,500 local businesses in Washington County in order to provide opportunities for students to intern in careers of their choosing. The program's placement specialists are working closely with six Edison seniors this spring, placing them in internships for approximately 15 hours.

Resumes are required for participation in the STW internship program for seniors. The STW program coordinator was so impressed by the quality of our students' resumes that she started calling co-workers in to her office to brag about the amazing resumes submitted by the Thomas Edison students! She also contacted our Transitions staff to ask if she could use them as examples to be shared at the next STW educators meeting.

### Preparing for the Future

Through Edison's Transitions Program, we offer students the skills and tools

they need to pursue further education and employment. We want to give Edison graduates the best possible starting point. After that, it's up to them to reach for the stars. ✦

## A Sample of Career Related Learning Experiences, Spring 2011

Union Apprenticeship Career Day

Incight: Life After High School: Moving on to College and Employment

Culinary Career Day

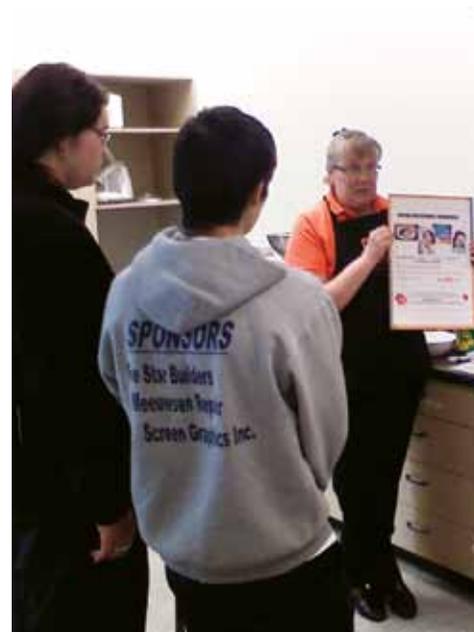
Creative Arts Career Day

Meet with a Professional: Cartoon Art

Washington County Sheriff Law Enforcement Career Day

Meet with a Professional: Video Game Design

Meet with a Professional: Architecture



Alex Wilson '11 reviews the rules of kitchen sanitation during Culinary Career Day.

# Thank You, Thomas Edison

Sherilyn Wilson, Counselor

Eleven years ago, I started my practicum for my master's program in art therapy here at Thomas Edison. I recognized immediately that I was part of something amazing. I felt blessed to begin a new journey here. I loved the staff, the students, and all that this community represented and supported. When I was able to officially join the Edison team as one of the art teachers, I remember feeling so humbled to continue to be a part of this place. I was challenged and grew as a person and as a teacher.

When the door opened for me to be more involved in counseling, I was blessed again. Being able to do counseling—specifically art therapy—with the students has been an incredible experience. I get to work with fantastic people. I learn as much from the students as I get to give to the students each day!

Early on, I was impressed with how Edison encourages the whole student and considers all aspects of a student's life as we help guide them to their future. I have also been impressed with how the staff, families, friends, alumni, board, and those involved in our community all play a special role in making this happen every day! I am so grateful for my years here. Grateful for everyone I have met—everyone I have worked with, sweated with, cried with, and laughed with.

In the fall of 2011, I will transition to full-time ministry and become the Senior Pastor at my church. My faith and my family are extremely important to me. I look forward to focusing more on these aspects during the next part of my life's journey.

Thank you, Thomas Edison, for all you

have been to me. You have been such an important part of my life and my family's life. I appreciate the support and care you have given me, the acceptance and attention you have shown to my daughters, and the opportunity to grow and learn. Now it is time to say goodbye, to embrace new challenges and growth, and to have the opportunity to touch people's lives in a new capacity. Many blessings to you, Thomas Edison community!

*We wish you all the best, Sherilyn. You will be greatly missed. We hope that you'll keep in touch and update us about your new adventures. ✦*



## Welcome Kristin Krueger, Our New Auction Coordinator

Kristin joined Edison as our Auction Coordinator in April 2011. She received her BBA in Organizational Development from Pacific Lutheran University. Kristin has a background in banking, project management, and volunteering with organizations that support academics and children. She ran the auction for Duniway Elementary for three years. On weekends free of baseball or soccer games (kids

play, parents cheer), Kristin and her family like to escape to Central Oregon for skiing, hiking and crisp mountain air. Dark chocolate, coffee, Pilates, and running are personal pastimes. Kristin is excited to work collaboratively with the Edison parents, board, and staff to create outstanding auction events. Save the date for the next Brilliance Benefit on March 17, 2012! ✦



# Surgical Mission to Kibagabaga Hospital, Rwanda

Diane Wustrack, Vice Chair of Edison Board

My husband, Karl, and I went to Kigali, Rwanda April 8-20 on a Surgical Mission. This was our second year traveling to Rwanda to perform surgery on cleft lip and palates, burn contractures, and skin grafts. Our team included four people: a surgeon (Karl), an anesthesiologist, a scrub nurse, and a record keeper and go-fer (me). Together, we performed 27 surgeries and 30 injections for keloids in one week at Kibagabaga Hospital.

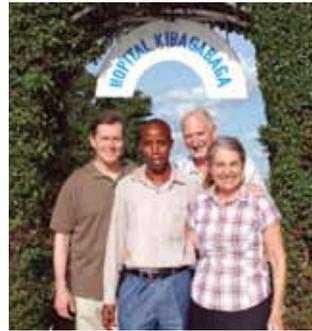
After our week working at the hospital, we set out to see the gorillas at Volcano National Park. There are eight separate gorilla families that can be observed by tourists. After two hours of hiking through a dense bamboo jungle, we found a gorilla family with twelve members. We saw ten of them. This family also has the oldest and biggest silverback in the park; he's called Gahunda. He was very impressive.

It was a wonderful experience going back to the same hospital for the second year in a row. We plan to return to Kibagabaga Hospital again next year to perform surgery and to launch a teaching initiative for the local surgeons at the hospital. Rwandans are working very hard to improve their country, and it was a great experience to participate in a small way in that effort!

*Diane Wustrack is Vice Chair of Edison's Board of Directors and will become Chair in June. She is a graduate of Stanford University and holds a Master's in Teaching. Diane's association with Edison started as a volunteer, and she became a firm believer in our program prior to joining the board in 2007. Diane currently serves on the Volunteers in Medicine Founders Clinic Board of Directors and Clackamas Community College Foundation. She is a past member of the Willamette Falls Hospital Foundation and West Linn/Wilsonville School Board. ✦*



The surgical team in action at Kibagabaga Hospital; Diane and Karl Wustrack at center of photo.



Karl and Diane (right) with colleagues in front of the hospital.



Karl and Diane with Gahunda the silverback gorilla at Volcano National Park.

## Tips For Transitioning into Summer

Summer is a much-needed break. But for a student with learning differences, a daily routine continues to be very important. During the school year, students are more likely to have regular bed, wake-up, and meal times; this is important during the summer, too. Involve your student in planning so that they take ownership of their schedule. The idea is to help your student develop a summer routine that is predictable but flexible, with plenty of time for both relaxation and activities.

### Vary Summer Activities

It's easy for students to get in the habit of watching television and playing video games for hours on end. But

it's important to set limits on media time, just like during the school year. Encourage students to get out and enjoy the good weather. There are so many fun things to do in Portland during the summer!

### Plan Ahead for Accommodations

Is your student going to be working this summer? Attending a summer camp? If so—what kind of accommodations might they need in order to have a positive experience? Helping your student talk with their employer or counselor about LDs ahead of time can relieve anxiety before the job or camp begins. It's also an excellent chance for students to practice their self-advocacy skills.

### Volunteer for Service Learning Hours

Just a few hours of volunteering can give some structure to your student's summer as well as helping out a worthy cause. It can also count toward your student's required service learning hours if they pick up a form and document the hours.

### Encourage Reading

Plan regular weekly trips to the library or bookstore to stock up on books and audiobooks. Are any of your student's favorite authors releasing a book over the summer? Look for book launch parties and book signings at bookstores and libraries; attending these events is a great way to generate excitement while also maintaining reading skills. ✦



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Parents: if this issue is addressed to your child and they no longer maintain a permanent address at your home, please update their mailing information by contacting our Development Associate, Rachel Tobie, at [rachel@taemail.org](mailto:rachel@taemail.org). Thank you!

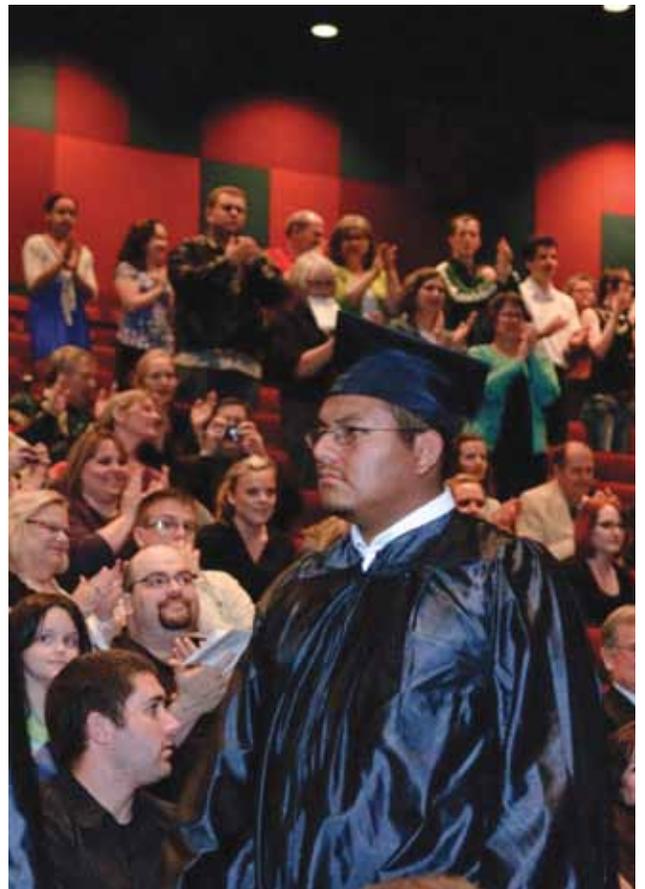
## Save the Date for Graduation: June 3, 2011, at 7:00 pm

Marilyn Moyer Theatre, Jesuit High School  
9000 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy, Portland

Reception following at Thomas A. Edison High School.



*Maria Sonntag, Britany Leigh, and Steve Hufschmid, Class of 2010.*



*Richard McDonough, Class of 2010. Photos courtesy of Andie Petkus.*