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THE RIDGE

We, the editors and staff of The Ridge, commit ourselves to the highest level of professional journalistic ethics. We promote among our fellow students a love for noble ideals and a desire to overcome personal egotism.

We foster an awareness of social problems and encourage fraternity in keeping with the school’s family spirit. We love the truth thus we report with facts, without judging intentions, upholding the legitimate diversity of opinions in a calm way, without resorting to personal attacks. We seek the truth, love it and humbly tell it.

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UNITED FACTOR

By Lance Katigbak

C ompared to the other private schools at the level of Southridge, we’re considered by many to be a small school. I’ve heard “84 in your whole batch?” and “3 sections!” time and time again from students of some of the bigger private schools where one batch is about as big as the entire high school. Obstacle? Not at all. What Southridge lacks in number, it makes up for in unity.

In past years, school unity remained a mere ideal, taking a backseat to smaller factions of unity, such as class unity, batch unity, and team unity. Glimpses of school unity could be seen as small crowds would gather to watch the occasional home basketball or football game, and during Fathers’ Day, when both sides would cheer whenever their house would win a competition, without really caring much. In essence, it had become a rivalry only by name.

However, as a new school year was ushered in and a new student council took the helm, the entire Southridge community became a witness to a new form of leadership. Perhaps it was Gabs Castillo’s unorthodox way of leading his council, with his eccentric accents, unanswerable puns, and humor-filled yet inspiring speeches. You can question his sense of humor, but you can definitely not question the dedication and the passion by which he and the student council lead the school, setting a milestone in Southridge history just a couple of months into the school year with the launching of the Admiral as Southridge’s official moniker.

The Admiral, however, did more for the school than anyone ever imagined or expected. It gave Southridge students a sense of identity and belonging, giving students a banner under which to unite. Beyond the varsity games and the extra-curricular activities, the Admiral united the students in the one place that students should stand united in even when no outsiders are watching—in school. Classes remain united as classes, batches remain united as batches, teams remain united as teams, but in the larger scheme, one greater body has become united—the student body. I’ve seen high school students play basketball with grade school students, juniors hang out with seniors, and kids of all grade levels running around the courtyard or in the giant cement square beside the covered court.

Perhaps the biggest testament to the newly rejuvenated school unity was the unexpectedly large turnout in the finals of the Metro Manila Basketball League which pitted the Admirals against San Beda Mendiola (see related article). Members of the entire Southridge community, students, parents, teachers, alumni, and staff all came to rally behind the team, sticking with them through the entire 50 minutes of action. Never before had the team seen such a huge crowd in any of their games, all the more one that wasn’t held in Southridge. It was school unity at its zenith for it brought together all members of the Southridge community.

One question now begs to be answered: what caused the sudden increase in school unity and school pride? Was it the creation of the Admiral? Was it the leadership of the Student Council? Or is it something else entirely? We’ll leave that up to you to decide for yourself.
Acceptance Speech for the Search for Muntinlupa’s Outstanding Students 2011

By Lance Katigbak

When I was in grade six, Southridge’s candidate for MOST, a good friend of mine whose name was also Lance, asked me to write him a recommendation letter for his portfolio. I didn’t think much of it, and scrawled my letter on a half sheet of pad paper. A few months later, I heard that he won first place in the 2006 search. At that point five years ago, I told myself that, someday, I too wanted to represent Southridge in the search which it had been topping consistently over the years. Indeed, five years later, what was once just a feeble thought in the mind of an adolescent has blossomed into nothing less than full-grown reality.

The MOST journey has been nothing short of spectacular, and one which brought about new revelations and new adventures at every step of the way. If anything, it made me realize this: Foolish is he who believes that everything he has accomplished is by the working of his own hands. I would therefore like to extend my due and undying gratitude to all those who accompanied me on the most incredible voyage I’ve gone through in my seventeen years on this earth and who have helped me accomplish everything I have.

First and foremost, I give back the praise and the glory to Almighty God. He has showered blessings upon me in great abundance and I acknowledge that everything I do is not only of my own doing but of the work of the Lord within me. I am the clay, and he is the potter. To this day, the motto of my life remains, “When all else fails, God doesn’t.” And indeed, God has never failed me.

Second, I would like to thank my family for their undying love and support, never failing to motivate me and inspire me whenever problems seem to get the better of me. My parents and my siblings molded me and inspire me whenever problems seem to get the better of me. My parents and my siblings molded me

Third, I would like to extend my thanks to the Southridge community. To Mr. Andy Nisperos, our principal, Mr. Dino Peralta, my class adviser, and the other teachers who supported me on this journey and throughout my entire stay in Southridge, Messrs. Abesa, Regencia, Rentoy, Salazar, Barrientos, Salamat, Stumblong, Ong, and Escasa, and to all those who ever taught me anything, whether within the four walls of the classroom or outside of it. To the Management Committee, Messrs. Magalona, Crisostomo, and Calderon, thanks as well. And, of course, to my batch which came here to support me today, most especially my class, IV-C, thank you for all the support that you’ve given me, all the memories we shared, and the twelve years we spent together. You’ve all been nothing less than brothers to me, and I extremely appreciate it. This one’s for you.

I would also like to thank and congratulate my fellow MOST winners. Getting to know each one of you has made this trip all the more exciting and all the more worthwhile. Special mention goes to Tricia and Kat whom I spent a good number of car rides with as we carpooled to and from practices. It was great getting to know both of you a lot more, as well as everyone else. You are all amazing people and I’m glad to have met each one of you. I hope that you will all continue to serve as beacons of hope and inspiration not just for Muntinlupeños, but for all Filipinos, showing them that, indeed, the future of our country is in very good hands.

Lastly, I would like to thank the City Government of Muntinlupa, headed by Mayor Aldrin San Pedro and Vice Mayor Temmy Sumucud. Your continued patronage of the MOST program speaks volumes about the value you see in Education and in forwarding the intellectual wellbeing of all students. May you continue to uphold the ideals of Lakas, Talino, at Buhay as you continue to lead our city to greatness.

Thank you once again for choosing me as one of Muntinlupa’s Outstanding Students for 2011. This is not the end of my lifelong journey to make a difference in society. It is hardly even the beginning. This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication I’ve put into bettering myself as a Man of Integrity, and I do not intend to stop anytime soon.

However, my time is up, and I have but one thing left to say. To everyone who has ever believed in me, to everyone who has ever pushed me forward, and to everyone who has ever been with me in both good times and bad, thank you very much from the bottom of my heart. All good things come to an end, but the MOST experience will live on forever. Mabuhay ang Muntinlupa, at Mabuhay tayong lahat! Thank you very much!
for this school year, Southridge once again sent a group of seven Senior and three Junior students to represent Southridge in the annual Teenpreneur Challenge, a two-day marketing expo organized by Entrepreneur School of Asia for the benefit of product owners from Boni and Malabon. Members of the team included Senior students Aldo Manzano, Kevin Habaluyas, JO Pangilinan, Lance Karibbak, Jeggy Filart, and Troy Bautista, while the Juniors were Rafa Abaya, Santi Arnaiz, and Mark Lozano. Mr. JM Abesa acted as Moderator.

Southridge was among the twenty-something high schools in Metro Manila to participate in this year’s challenge. Although Southridge is only on its fourth year in the competition, we have steadily improved throughout the years as seen in the progress of our rankings and earnings in the Best Sales category. This year’s goal was to capture 1st Place.

Teams were tasked to select items ranging from baked goods to bags and household décor made by indigent product owners. They were to develop these to assist the entrepreneur jumpstart his business and increase the product’s marketability.

The challenge was officially launched last August 14, 2010 at the Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA) campus in Libis. When it was time to select their product, the team came together and unanimously selected an ordinary canvas pillow made by Mrs. Norma Arias of Boni, Mandaluyong City. We had to come up with the best possible product in order to help her earn a steady source of income even after the competition. At first, nobody seemed to have the right idea as to how we could innovate the ordinary pillow in order to effectively improve its sales. The team had to meet numerous times just so it could come up with the perfect innovation. Finally, after countless hours of brainstorming, the team finally came up with a brilliant product: The Fill-a-Pillow. From an ordinary pillow, the team transformed it into an all-in-one lapdesk, pillow, and bag, perfect for the Filipino on the go.

Each team member was given a certain task in order to help facilitate the tremendous job at hand. Some were asked to go room-to-room to get orders, others were tasked to make advertisements for the product, and the rest were asked to handle the inventory and finances. The whole team had to work nonstop to ensure a smooth operation in order to perform well in the competition. At first, we had no idea on how to work together because almost half of the team was made up of newcomers. We relied heavily on the more experienced members to do the work, which didn’t really translate to results. Thankfully, in the middle of all the uncertainty within the team, we all began to realize that we really weren’t going to get anywhere if we simply relied on a few individuals and let them do all the work. All we had to do was to come together as one team, contribute as much as you could and the rest would follow. We slowly began to coordinate with all our teammates and the team finally started cruising. Whenever someone needed help, we would leave our work momentarily in order to help out a teammate in need.

Even our juniors, who at first were reluctant to help out a team dominated with seniors eventually found their niche and we were able to set our differences aside and focused on the goal of the team. During the two-day expo, the Teenpreneur Admirals team worked relentlessly, not even taking a minute off to rest, in order to ensure victory. They worked tirelessly together patiently talking to each customer in an effort to sell the Fill-a-Pillow. The team had to come together as one in order to give Southridge a chance at the prize and they delivered.

Finally, the moment that we were all waiting for came. Although we didn’t make it to the top three for the Best Innovation, we didn’t really care as much because we had our sights set on one thing alone—Best Sales. The third place winner was announced and we breathed a sigh of relief as our school name was not announced. However, when second place was announced, we heard our school’s name. Once again, Southridge fell short and this year, it was St. Paul’s College of Pasig’s turn to win. We were shocked, but we knew we did everything we could. We may have gotten beaten by one school, but at least we all knew that when teamwork and unity are needed, we were able to deliver. At the end of the day, seeing how the Teenpreneur Challenge brought us all closer together and how it improved as men of integrity especially in defeat, and the unity that we showed everyone despite all the odds, we can all call ourselves winners.
If McKinley High has the Cheerios, then Southridge has the Admirals Step Crew (ASC). Like cheerleaders, the steppers rally the student body to school pride and school unity, except they don’t do it with miniskirts, ponytails, and pom-poms. They don’t just rally to the student body, they also spread the word outside of school that we are proud to be Admirals and that there is nothing that can bring us down. After all, it was about time that Southridge pride be heard once again.

Senior student Mac Valdez came up with the idea early in the school year because he wanted to give something different to the school, something unique. Therefore he brought stepping to the Southridge campus. Along with Mac and some other seniors, they bring the energy that’s needed to school events and the high school students follow their lead. Practice and performance has instilled a brotherhood of sorts among crew members. If the steppers do what they do best, so shall the rest of the student body. "School spirit is the fuel for school unity to grow around campus. It is impossible to have one without the other," says Mac.

Being a stepper is not all about getting the jackets and being known throughout the school. It’s also about stamina, hard work, perseverance, patience, and a good ear. Although there is no fixed schedule of practices, whenever Mac calls for a practice, everyone makes sure to come. Practice hours range from 30 minutes to 4 hours a day. The closer the performance, the longer the practices get to be and the more frequent the practice sessions. They use every free time, including lunch breaks and after class hours on schooldays, and even Saturdays.

For Mac, stepping takes a lot of creativity. As the head, it is his responsibility to choreograph their impressive routines. He started out from watching Stomp the Yard and basically copying every routine they had in the movie. Then he moved to the YouTube videos of other step crews. Now he crafts original performances that draw out the best moves from his fellow crew.

Bringing back school spirit is their forte, not only in Southridge but in other places as well. They joined the annual Teenvolution competition held in SM Megamall last November 13, 2010, where they bagged First Runner-Up and Most Creative Performance. More recently they were invited to perform at the Assumption College Fair on December 11, 2010 and once again at the Assumption Family Day on January 22, 2011. It’s something for a crew to achieve an honor that early on in their developing stages.

The founding seniors of the ASC may be graduating this year, but that doesn’t mean it’s the end of the brotherhood. The group held tryouts for sophomores and juniors and presented their new recruits during the February 2011 High School Student Assembly. With new blood joining this group, Southridge is bound to see newer and more imaginative routines.

The ASC has stepped up to the challenge of reviving school unity. As fellow Admirals, now it’s our turn.
Debating with the Podium

By JV Valerio

It’s one thing to know about an issue; it’s another thing to understand its entirety. It’s one thing to bicker with a classmate; it’s another thing to intellectually struggle against an opponent. It’s one thing to argue; it’s another thing to actually debate and debate with the passion and style that Podium members have shown in the past (a number of years).

Currently the club is moderated by Mr. Eugene Saladur and Mr. Reuben Torralba, and has a membership pool of around twenty students, as well as a training pool of ten more. Southridge alumni RJ Lim from the UP Manila Debate Society and Job De Leon of the Ateneo Debate Society help train the Podium as well.

You’ve probably seen these guys train twice a week after school hours, debating and arguing about topics ranging from international relations to environmental and social issues, social issues to media influence. They are testaments to the virtues of hard work, unity, and dedication. And, their efforts have not been in vain.

Last August 21, 2010, The Podium boasted its first ever Southridge vs. Southridge Finals as the two Southridge teams defeated the two teams from Ateneo High School in the semifinals of the Children’s Museum and Libraries Inc. Asian Schools Debate Tournament, marking the first time that two Southridge teams faced each others in the finals of a prestigious competition. Team A (Lance Katigbak, Pempen Chiang, and JV Valerio) brought home the bacon while Team B (Raffy Tanpho, Julian Ferrer, and Mark Lozano) settled for being runners-up.

The week after that, The Podium fielded three teams that reached the quarterfinals of the Interscholastic Debate Association Lite Tournament (IDEA Lite). These teams were composed of Raffy Tanpho and JV Valerio (SR A), Joaquin Escano and Miguel Adajar (SR C), and Meeko Rustia and Paolo Abalos (SR D).

The team of Katigbak, Chiang, and Valerio also made it to the semifinals of the highly acclaimed Asian Schools Debate Championship, an international competition with participants coming from all over South East Asia, held in De La Salle University from September 5 – 9, 2010. Lance was also awarded 5th Best Speaker of the Tournament.

A Tournament for the Ages

By Gio Gloria

For the past few years, Southridge has been known to have success in the field of debate. From being champions of Asia in the ASDC to being the CMLI champions last year, Southridge is no pushover when it comes to debate. So where does Southridge get its world-class debaters? Well, one can say that Southridge’s breeding ground is in its interclass debate tournament, Southridge High School Interclass Tournament.

From March 7-9, 2011, the Podium organized this year’s tournament, which was open to students from 1st to 4th year. The preliminary round consisted of four debates per team, with motions ranging from Education to “what if” motions, sets of ideas that mel ted the brains of the debaters! Some debates went down the wire while others seemed to have been decided from the opening bell. With as many upsets as March Madness, everyone was at the edge of their seats, itching to know the results of each debate. Eight teams made it to the next round, and in the finals, it was a matchup between the sophomores, represented by II - A (members: Enrico Grio, Josef Singoun, and Justin Bercasio) and the seniors, represented by IV - A (members: Derek Parrenas, Angelo Santiago, and Kevin Habaluyas). In what was according to some as a “messy” round, the underdogs II - A came out as the high school champion.

From the contestants’ perspectives, you could say that their experience in the tournament shattered the common stereotypes of debate. Some thought that debate was simply arguing in a formal manner. But, as they progressed through the competition, the drive to win each debate made it more enjoyable for them. Plus, the motions (This house would make it illegal to catch legendary Pokemon!) made the debates much more appealing to the debaters, a number of who were first-time debaters. In this sense the quote “You’ll never know until you try” would make sense.

This tournament became the perfect way to end the school year. As an added incentive, the Podium automatically awarded the top 10 speakers, mostly sophomores and juniors, free membership into the podium. There is no doubt that the future of the podium is secured with the younger batches moving up. Pempen Chiang, Lance Katigbak, and Anton Arguelles are leaving for college, so it’s great to know there will be new members who will continue to bring glory to Southridge!
Kaabay
Chairman: Alvaro Adizon
Vice-Chairman: Raj Chua
Secretary: Meeko Rustia
Moderator: Mr. Martin Quesada

Kaabay is a club set on sharing lessons and basic skills in Math, English, catechism and virtues talks to grade school students in the surrounding public schools. They also organize outreach activities for victims of typhoons and other calamities. Their Saturday activities are also spiced up with excursions, get-togethers and other gimmicks.

Peers Facilitator’s Group
Chairman: Justin Pleyto
Vice-Chairman: Miggy Cuevas
Secretary: Nevin Rafer
Treasurer: Cove Gaba
Members-at-Large: Gabby del Rosario and Jeggy Filart
Moderator: Mr. Rutch Regencia

Described as a secret committee, the Peers Facilitator’s Group (or the PFG) definitely deloads the Personal Formation and Guidance Office. Take the HS Student Assembly. They manage nearly every bit of it. They tally the gears for the Class Excellence Award, invite the speakers we learn so much from every month, make the PowerPoint presentations, assign student emcees to be the emcees, and so much more. They also assist the release of college entrance exam results. Without them, nobody would remind us to wear our gala uniform for the Student Assemblies. They’re also in charge of fixing the bulletin boards and printing out the calendars.

Southridge Vocal Ensemble
Tenor 1 Leader: Giko Gomez
Tenor 2 Leader: Matthew Abas
Bass 1 Leader: Johnason Wei
Bass 2 Leader: Ryan Enriquez
Moderator: Mr. Adrian Bagayaua

Music is the name of the Southridge Vocal Ensemble’s game. Holding practices every day, they sing for performances in and out of school. In 2010 the bulk of their efforts went to two interschool choral competitions and the Christmas caroling. Any student with a performance gene should sign up for this club.

Southridge Entrepreneurs Circle
Chairman: Kevin Habaluyas
Vice-Chairman: Troy Bautista
Secretary: Javier Puno
Treasurer: JO Pangilinan
P.R.O.: Jan Pereche
Third Year Representative: Coby Suarez
Second Year Representative: Martin Consing
First Year Representative: Titus Bautista
Moderator: Mr. JM Abesa

The PAREF Southridge Entrepreneurs Circle aims to develop responsible business and entrepreneurship skills. The Club’s members learn that profit should always go hand in hand with Integrity and corporate social responsibility.

Mathe-magicians
By Josef Sinson

Southridge proudly recognizes grade school students Rafael Santiago (6-A), Rocco De Castro (5-B), and Raphael Morallo (6-B) as math wizards. These three boys have been training with the Math Training Guild (MTG) and joining Mathematics Teachers Association of the Philippines (MTAP) competitions since the start of their Grade School lives. In exchange for their hard work, they’ve won numerous medals and trophies, proving their status as among the best math students in the country.

The road to the top hasn’t been easy and it’s a continuing effort. MTG training sessions are held on as they are one of the best in the Philippines. These three boys met during one of their very first MTG training sessions with Mr. Jess Dones roughly three years ago. Their training sessions are extremely difficult, tiring, sometimes boring and guess what? They’re on weekends! Upon being interviewed the boys unanimously agreed that these sessions are truly worth it and are of great importance because it serves as their training for nationwide competitions.

Some people may think investing one’s time in Mathematics is a waste of time; however, these boys beg to differ as they take pride in training to become the best in the country. According to them, nothing about MTAP is easy. The qualifying test itself is very difficult and requires both imagination and focus. As I asked the boys their motivation for going through hard work and achieving success, they all said that they offered it for their parents, friends, the School but most importantly, the Lord.

Perks for joining MTG training and MTAP competitions include bonus points for Math exams, getting to meet new people from all walks of life, and representing Southridge as Admirals and Men of Integrity. Mathematics, what may be a burden for some is a true passion for these this talented trio, may they continue training and joining MTAP competitions throughout their entire Southridge lives and may they continue to also strive for excellence and always take pride in being a Southridge Admiral.

The essence of mathematics is not to make simple things complicated, but to make complicated things simple.
-S. Gudder
Fathers’ Day has always been Southridge’s most-anticipated event, and this year was no exception. The Day of D’Admirals was set to make history on February 5, 2011 as the first Fathers’ Day with the school’s new moniker, the Admiral, in place. In fact, it was set to make history in many other areas.

In the future, students who look back at the Day of D’Admirals will fondly remember the two mascots, valiant Admiral Charles Bluebeard XVI representing the Vinta Crew, and dignified Admiral James Greenheart leading the Helm Crew. The two men, at times serious, and at others completely goofy, succeeded in pumping up both crews and restoring a forlorn rivalry between the two houses. The two Admirals, brought to life by seniors Raffy Rodas and Jandro Alonso, became instant celebrities among the grade school students who would approach them for autographs and photos after classes.

The Day of D’Admirals adventure began months before the big day as videos were released depicting Bluebeard and Greenheart preparing their crews in order to find the famed Southridge Treasure. The films became instant viral videos when they were launched in the Student Assemblies and posted on YouTube and Facebook to draw more attention to the big day.

Although Bluebeard and Greenheart were big hits among the younger children, what also stoked the excitement for Fathers’ Day were the mini-games the organizers had prepared for the primary school students after class hours. For three days, students were tasked to search for one object per day, a black lifesaver, a sack of gold coins, and an oar, within the school grounds. Those who found it gained points for their houses.

As exciting as the events leading to the Day of D’Admirals were, nothing could compare to the actual celebration, lauded by many as one of the best-organized and most-attended Fathers’ Day since the tradition started in 1979. After the celebration of the Holy Mass, students gathered in the covered courts to prepare for the morning parade. The organizers this year succeeded in rejuvenating a once perfunctory event by introducing the Southridge Drumline, a newly-formed group of high school students who played a beat as the Vinta and Helm Crews from all levels of the grade school and high school marched onto the field while saluting. After the opening remarks and the invocation, the Admiral Step Crew (ASC) brought down the house with a routine that drew praise and acclaim from the audience, most especially from the parents who watched it for the first time.

After the ASC performed, Bluebeard and Greenheart made their grand entrance as they dragged along a miniature ship, complete with Vinta and Helm logos on the sails. The Drumline led the students in three Southridge cheers, Spelling, Shots, and Admirals Fight, with the corresponding lively motions. The rivalry heated on further as the two Admirals led their houses in their respective house cheers.

The Day of D’Admirals fielded exciting theme games that had never been seen. Added to the traditional Tug-o’-War, students and fathers alike navigated Poseidon’s Challenge, a four-leg obstacle course, and the Sallabunda Race, a relay which involved the contestants wearing inner tubes. A first this year was the Tender Juicy Hotdog Eating Contest which pitted fathers against each other to see who could finish five hotdogs in the fastest time possible. The much-anticipated Alumni vs. Varsity Futsal and Basketball Games, the first to feature customized jerseys for the alumni, saw them edging out the Candidates Football Team and the Juniors Basketball Team to clinch both games.

While the sporting events were going on, kids and kids-at-heart alike were treated to a free showing of Toy Story 3, a Mad Science show, and a magic Show by Magic Boy Samson. Fathers’ Day would not be complete without bands rocking their heart and souls out for everyone. Student and alumni bands played in the afternoon, and popular reggae band Brownman Revival brought the whole house down with their smash hits.

Just like all other good things, the Day of D’Admirals came to an end eventually, but not without a bang. At 6:30 PM, the students entered the football field once again with the wooden lanterns illuminated in blue and green lights, the colors of the two houses. After prizes from generous sponsors were awarded to winners of competitions and the most active dads and sons, Student Council Chairman Gabs Castillo took the stage to proclaim the over-all winner and Finder of the Southridge Treasure, in keeping with the Admiral theme. It was a tension-filled moment as students from both houses began chanting the names of their crews, and even the names of their Admiral mascots. But in the end, Vinta emerged victorious, having defended its title. As Admiral Bluebeard raised the House Cup for Vinta, all eyes turned to the skies for the most elaborate and colorful firework display seen in ages.

Although the day is long gone, the memories still remain. Bluebeard and Greenheart may not come back anytime soon, but the characters they imbued in the hearts and minds of the students as all five thousand attendees think back to that glorious day shall continue to live on. The Day of D’Admirals may be over, but it will never cease to exist.
Many students would say that there is more to school than studying because they have experienced what is beyond school, within the school. Others would say otherwise, most probably because they haven’t experienced it yet.

But it’s not too late. One of those people who have experienced it is the Chairman of the Student Council, Gabs Castillo. Such a discovery is something that he finds very important, and with all the things that’s happened in the past months, it must be really important. It has to be realized.

Ever since the start of his campaign late last school year, he has been stressing the importance of having a united student body in making great things happen. Great goes beyond the school projects everyone works together to achieve; in the process of achieving students gain more things. It’s something that sounds hard to convey, but Gabs, having experienced it himself, is very familiar with it.

Love. This was Gabs’ main point all the way from the start, since the election campaign late last year. Many projects require students and batches to work with each other, and simply getting things done is just not enough. The lack of connection among many students creates a barrier that becomes a big obstacle in making a great output. As Gabs stressed, Southridge projects aren’t being created by a team; they are being created by a family.

Cliche? Yes, but not until it’s tried out. Gabs, along with the rest of the council, has been trying to interact with the student body as much as possible, emphasizing the fact that the interaction itself is very important. A simple ‘hello’ between batches already creates a special kind of connection; when it’s time to work, there’s more to working with a familiar face, with a person whose name is still unknown. The barrier slowly disappears, and things become easier to accomplish. Even the most complex of projects can be accomplished with love, with the genuine support of everyone.

All of this starts on a personal level, from a struggle within a student. Opening up to others is a big challenge to many, but once the battle is won, the rewards go a long way. It’s what motivated Gabs; who would have known two years ago that he would be talking about such sentimental things? He himself never invited the idea before, but once he tried it, things became more vivid. The feeling of opening up to a whole new world one has never experienced is so immense that it had to be shared.

And to think that everyone else can do the same thing and feel the same way; he knows it’s possible.

Take it from the chairman; he has experienced it, and he’s convinced. In sharing it with the student body everyone has to have faith in what he and the council has been stressing ever since that start of the school year, to explore love, and to believe in it.

Join the Southridge Family!

In February 2010, personal ambitions were made known to the public by emerging candidates and the campaign period went into full swing for the SY 2010-2011 Student Council Elections. Never before had there been so many qualified leaders running for office and this election promised to be an epic clash of the titans for all positions. After the smoke cleared, seven were left standing: Gabs Castillo, Mac Valdez, Aldo Manzano, Chucky Quemado, Rafa Abaya, Julian Ferrer and Faisal Tabusalla. At that time many doubted the Council’s viability because one couldn’t ask for a more diverse set of students. Diversity though proved to be the secret ingredient we shared made us realize we had more in common than we had thought.

To kick off the school year, we handed out pins to every student on the very first day of class. Catchy phrases and eye-catching graphics on those pins all proclaimed the theme that we set for the year: Southridge Pride. We wanted to put together a Fathers’ Day which would make everyone proud to be a part of Southridge pride was the new “cool” thing on campus.

The first major event that we organized as a council was the Pep Rally. This event finally pushed through on August 26, 2010, the day forever to be remembered as the birthday of The Admirals. We launched the school mascot in a school-wide assembly where we also launched the Admirals Step Crew and the Admirals Drumline. Varsity players led their respective teams in yells and the crowd responded in shouts that showed the players their support for the battles to be waged within the year.

The Pep Rally coincided with the launch of the Intramural Games which the Student Council brought back after a year’s hiatus. Each class was outfitted in jerseys of their own design; these displayed the logos of each class. Prowess in basketball and football were to determine which class deserved to be on top-dog of the high school.

The games would be held after class hours and allowed for both varsity and non varsity players to shine. The introduction of senior students as referees for the lower divisions served as the novelty for this year’s Intramural Games.

The 1st Southridge Run held on October 9, 2010 within the Filinvest Complex was one of the biggest challenges that the Council mounted and successfully pulled off. All proceeds of the run went to the purchase of books for public school students in the Muntinlupa. With the assistance of the Grade 3 parents, we organized the run in a month’s time and worked overtime in the days that led to it, preparing race kits, contacting sponsors, and drumming up interest for another historical event.

After a series of noteworthy minor projects, we were ready to take Fathers’ Day 2011 by the horns. A rigorous selection process selected the ten committee heads who were tasked with aspects essential to the success of Fathers’ Day. While preparations for the Day of D’Admirals were hardly smooth, mutual support and great communication helped us overcome the variety of challenges.

In the end, it all boiled down to the theme that we set for the year: Southridge Pride. We wanted to put together a Fathers’ Day which would make everyone proud to be a part of Southridge pride and we believe that we were successful in doing that. Through Fathers’ Day, we learned that together, we can achieve great things.

The pressure and the stress brought about by our council endeavors served to unite instead of breaking us apart. From acquaintances, our relationships have evolved to matured and timeless friendships. We have become each other’s confidants; this unlikely bunch morphed into something more than a group of friends – we became a family.
It was a match unlike any other. The Southridge Juniors Basketball Team was back in the finals of the Metro Manila Basketball League after emerging as the runners-up last year, and all fourteen members of the team were determined to bring home the gold. The last Finals was to be played in the De La Salle Zobel Sports Pavilion on January 23, 2011, Sunday, with the Admirals pitted against the San Beda Red Lions. Although the team expected a larger crowd this time around since the venue was within the Academia area, they certainly did not expect over three hundred people to come and cheer them on.

Southridge students, parents, alumni, teachers, and staff filled up one entire side of the sports pavilion in what was arguably the biggest attendance turnout in Southridge’s thirty-two year history. With the shouts and cheers of the crowd behind them, the Admirals knew that they couldn’t afford to play anything less than the greatest game of their lives.

And the greatest game of their lives they did play. The Admirals spurred on to a double-digit lead in the first quarter, led by point guard Jolo Dimayuga and swingman Kevin Habaluyas. Team captain Macky Valdez took over in the second quarter to end up on top at the half, 36-27. In the third quarter, the Red Lions threatened to close, knocking the game up at 47. The Admirals went on a scoring drought, unable to score from the three-minute mark in the third until the six-minute mark in the fourth. Coach Ricky Sales and Assistant Coach Yohann Telly called time out to bring the team back, but a solid testament and display of school unity unlike any other that the Admirals had ever displayed on the court. Victories and championships come by every so often, but a solid testament and display of school unity unlike any other that the Admirals had ever displayed on the court.

The game continued to fuel them as they went up by two, 81-77. A sweet drive and spin under the rim by swingman Habaluyas resulted in another two-point play for the valiant Admirals. For the second year in a row, they had been runners-up in the same tournament. However, not every story that doesn’t have a happy ending is a sad one. As the final buzzer sounded, the crowd stood up and gave the Admirals a much-deserved standing ovation. As sportswriter Grantland Rice once wrote, “It’s not whether you win or lose; it’s how you play the game.” And with the thrilling double OT game, the Admirals definitely played like true champions.

“If the Miami Heat called me up right now and offered me the starting point guard job, I’d turn it down because I wouldn’t trade my teammates for anything,” quipped starting forward Aldo Manzano. “The feeling… you just can’t describe it.”

As the lights were switched off in what was once a loud and energy-filled arena, the true victory that was won not necessarily the Lions’ championship, but the Admirals’ success in bringing together the Southridge community for what Dimayuga called “the greatest game I’ve ever played”.

“An Ali/Grey type of match was expected, but the Red Lion’s defense didn’t let us do it,” said Coach Ricky Sales. “I was happy with the way we played, but I was disappointed we didn’t win.

The love that our team brings to the game is what separates us from the others. On one occasion we had a game but only half of the team confirmed that they could play. We were surprised on game day not because of our depleted roster but because our team was complete! Everyone had cancelled their plans and we ended up competing—as a team. We’re at our best when we’re having fun because that feeds our team’s energy. We’re like a jigsaw puzzle because we complement each other well.

Gregg Yang (Center Midfield) – Candidates Football Team and (Small Forward) – Juniors Basketball Team

What makes the Candidates Football team united is the fact that everyone has the eagerness to win the championship. This is something we’ve been working hard for. We’ve trained for this all season, but this time it’s even more focused. We need to emphasize the importance of the game and the teammates. The Red Lions refused to be dismissed and fought back, tying the game with less than five seconds left on the clock. With no timeouts remaining, Co-Captain Bautista brought up the ball and drove for an awkward layup which clanked off the rim, sending the game into an unprecedented second overtime.

With the starters feeling the fatigue kicking in, what happened this time was a fifty-minute game, longer than a regular NBA game. The depth of the Red Lions started to fail as they went up by two, 61-7. A sweet drive and spin under the rim by swingman Habaluyas resulted in another two-point play for the valiant Admirals. For the second year in a row, they had been runners-up in the same tournament. However, not every story that doesn’t have a happy ending is a sad one. As the final buzzer sounded, the crowd stood up and gave the Admirals a much-deserved standing ovation. As sportswriter Grantland Rice once wrote, “It’s not whether you win or lose; it’s how you play the game.” And with the thrilling double OT game, the Admirals definitely played like true champions.

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IIA
Plautus – Nigsisa
Director: JP Medalla
Writer: Gino Guevara
Lead Actors: Dax Javellana, Paolo Gironella
Summary: Set in the Medieval Age, an incompe- tent prince is left to rule the Eudamia in the king’s stead. This leads to the defection of Alexander, the kingdom’s most famous knight, who joins the rebel forces. If the rebellion is to succeed, what will they have to do to unite the kingdom?

IIB
Plautus – Eudamia
Director: JP Medalla
Writer: Gino Guevara
Lead Actors: Dax Javellana, Paolo Gironella
Summary: Set in the Medieval Age, an incompetent prince is left to rule the Eudamia in the king’s stead. This leads to the defection of Alexander, the kingdom’s most famous knight, who joins the rebel forces. If the rebellion is to succeed, what will they have to do to unite the kingdom?

IIC
Plautus – Fraternity
Director: Josen Guerrero
Writer: Josen Guerrero
Lead Actors: Claudio Lopa, Mari Amores, Raffy Fermin, Rigo Joseph, Luigjo Miranda
Summary: Two of five brothers get stuck in hell. The remaining three go on a quest to save them and in the process meet a host of unusual characters along the way.

IID
Plautus – Asterius
Director: Sean Palomares
Writer: Sean Palomares
Lead Actors: Anton Navarro, Sean Palomares, Igi Vargas
Summary: Lord Asterius, a brutal dictator, takes over the universe, and abuses his power. He then appoints his unworthy son as their heir, which angers his generals. The generals then try to overthrow the king but fail, and after deep conflict, the father dies, and the son becomes the next ruler.

IIE
Plautus – Seraphim
Director: Jerome Baselines
Writer: Santy Arnaiz
Lead Actors: Jose Medalla, Diego Quezada
Summary: Set in ancient Rome, Aurelius is assigned to hunt down underground Christians, but is himself a Christian. Caught between conflicting loyalties he joins the Christians’ fight for survival, ends up killing Nero, and becomes the next Holy Roman Emperor.

IIB
Alex in Wonderland
Director: Rafa Abaya
Writer: Nicco Olivares, Mike Agoncillo
Lead Actors: Josselin Bolan, Mike Ongla
Summary: The son of Alice, Alex enters Wonderland on a journey of self-discovery. He discovers a prophecy which, at that time, could stop the Cold War. He faces the familiar Wonderland characters, as he learns the truth of his mother and her legacy to this kingdom.

IIC
Valor
Director: JV Valerio
Writer: Miguel Adajar
Lead Actors: Joaquin Escaño, Coby Suarez
Summary: Two best friends who have long wanted to become super heroes join rival factions. This pits them against each other which tests the bonds of friendship. As a result they find out what’s important – they should fight the common enemy, the Villains.

IIV
In Memoriam
Director: JO Pangilinan, Jeggy Filary
Writer: Miggy Marasegan
Lead Actors: Jandro Alonso, Edgar Tordesillas
Summary: Marcus Wright, a social outcast eventually finds a friend in William Cheney. Circumstances force William to leave and return a decade later. In that time Marcus has become a serial killer. Upon his return, William’s assignment is to cover a series of killings for his newspaper. The truth profoundly impacts their friendship.

IVB
Anarchy
Director: Mark Bellen
Writer: Derek Parreñas
Lead Actors: RJ Silverio, Anthony Sunico, Kevin Habalayas
Summary: The mysterious kidnapping of his father leads his own son to pursue all leads. To his great surprise, all evidence points to his own brother. The result is an explosive crime-drama.

IVC
Alive
Director: Gabs Castillo, Lance Katigbak
Writer: Lance Katigbak
Lead Actors: Raffy Rodas, Bief Santos, David Mendana
Short summary: Dr. Hanzel Calloway creates Frankensteins, a genre monster made of body parts coming from different people. Igor, Calloway’s assistant, brings Frankensteins back through the time stream to prove that the latter was an abomination. Frankensteins has to decide if what he is now is who he will be.

PLAUTUS SEASON 11
Awards Won:
- Best Breakthrough Play
- Best Sounds

PLAUTUS SEASON 11
Awards Won:
- Best Poster and Best Dance Choreography

IIB – Plautus – Eudamia
Awards Won:
- Best Breakthrough Play
- Best Sounds

IIV – Plautus – In Memoriam
Awards Won:
- Best Dance Choreography

IVB – Anarchy
Awards Won:
- Best Dance Choreography

IVC – Alive
Awards Won:
- Best Dance Adaptation
It was twenty-six years in the making. After years of start and stop planning, the biggest Southridge alumni homecoming was held in the covered courts last February 19, 2011. Hosted by Batch 85, what was originally planned to be a short, simple gathering ballooned into a grand event that featured marching bands and school courts last February 19, 2011. Hosted by Batch 85, what was originally planned to be a short, simple gathering ballooned into a grand event that featured marching bands and school assemblies.

According to Ivan Castaneda, the school’s alumni coordinator and himself a member of Batch 85, putting together this homecoming was nothing short of a miracle. After all, Batch 85 is the smallest graduating batch in the history of Southridge, with only 10 alumni! Smaller, but certainly not small-time. Among those ten after all are two congressmen, a high-powered lawyer, and some of the most prominent names in the film industry.

Whether by design or not, this year’s homecoming largely catered to the older alumni of the school. Quite fortuitous actually. Of the more than 140 alumni who attended, over eighty percent came from Batches 1999 and below, which in reality is still a young crowd compared to other institutions like Ateneo and Xavier. Southridge has just a little over a thousand alumni. This means over ten percent of the school’s graduates attended the homecoming! Let’s see Ateneo or Xavier come up with that kind of figure! The marketing of the event was largely done over Facebook, proving once more the miracles of social networking.

The alumni began streaming into the campus as early as 5:00 PM, with Congressman Anton Lagdameo of Batch 85 and the revered Mr. Toy Estrera among the very first to arrive. High School Student Council, serving as usher, that evening, watched with mouths agape as a parade of top-of-the-line luxury vehicles stopped in front of the lobby and from them alighted excited Southridge graduates, looking around with amazed faces at how much their old school has changed. They excitedly walked around, trying to find their bearings and attempting to figure out where old classrooms were located. They were looking for the old rotorunda, asking why it was torn down to make way for what appeared to them to be a funeral park. They eagerly talked about the old Multi Purpose Hall and how it’s been transformed into one of the most beautiful chapels in the country. For them, it was the 1980s all over again.

In true Southridge fashion, the event was kicked off by the celebration of the Holy Mass, offered especially for all alumni and students who have passed on – the first time. Among those ten after all are two congressmen, a high-powered lawyer, and some of the most prominent names in the film industry.

After the video, Batch 85 went on stage to announce the launching of the Dave Puayt Foundation and committed their support of the school by sponsoring four deserving students through four years of the Southridge Afternoon Session High School. The batch also called on stage Vito Puayt, Dave’s fourteen year old son, to induct him as an honorary member of Batch 85. From there the batch turned over the Alumni Helm to Batch 86 represented by Mitch Cuna, Tomas Lorenzo, Cidni Mapa, and Roque Tordesillas.

Another moving moment happened when all alumni present gathered for a photo-op, they spontaneously and boisterously broke into Gaudamus Igitur! That particular point in time brought together accomplished men from Batch 84 to college students from Batch 2010 into a unified body of graduates who shared the same vision and dreams. It was thirty two years of Southridge history, personified by Men of Integrity, all of them renewing in song their dedication to the school’s Vision.

The night was capped by the superhuman performance of the True Faith band, specially commissioned by Batch 85 to play for the gathered alumni. Everyone sang and danced, reminiscing the good old carefree days when the only thing to really worry about was passing Latin. It was a night of catching up with old friends. It was a night of meeting new ones. It was a night of fun, friendship, and renewed commitment to our beloved Southridge. Perhaps the night’s host, Dr. Paco Sandejas, the poster boy for all that is good in the school, put it best when he said, “Southridge is a brotherhood. Southridge is family.”

Great job, Batch 85! Batch 86 has big shoes to fill!

Mr. Joey Magalona, the school’s Executive Director, opened the program proper by welcoming the alumni back to their alma mater. He expressed pride in the way these men have grown and encouraged them to keep the Southridge spirit alive in their families and work because the products of Southridge are known by their integrity and mindfulness. A video of the alumni through the years followed Mr. Magalona’s address; everyone was transported to those years when the school uniform consisted of the cream colored short sleeved barong and brown pants to the great moments that were staged in the multipurpose hall/cafeteria and the unforgettable – too numerous to describe – moments with friends and teachers who seem not to have changed after so long a time.

The Ridge (R): How did Southridge help develop your leadership skills?

Nicky Lozano graduated from Southridge in 1999, and was the Student Council Chairman during his senior year. He studied Business Management in De La Salle University, and eventually worked for a number of companies including Unilever, Arala Corporation and VFC Optimum Capital Strategies Inc. He received his MBA in 2006 from HULT International Business School. He is currently a Commodities and Real Estate Broker at AB Strategies.

The Ridge (R): How did Southridge help develop your leadership skills?

Nicky: Southridge provided me with the right environment and gave me the opportunities to mould the leader within. When I was in Grade 4, Mr. Regesta encouraged me to join the Elocution Contest. Although I lost the time I joined, I won the next four years after, and it really boosted my confidence and gave me several realizations: Winning seems impossible at first. Hard work, perseverance, and the belief in oneself makes it possible. Later on, I realized that the end result of the whole contest was not to win, but to mould my character – humility in triumph and in defeat, self-confidence, and the ability to reach people through your words and emotions.

Eventually, I was elected as Student Council Chairman in my Senior year, and I had another set of realizations:

a. Choosing the right people for the job is important, entrusting them with responsibilities is more important – one man cannot run the entire show.

b. Leading means listening to others too.

c. Leading is doing what is right, and not always what is popular. These realisations I will hold true up to this day.

R: What makes a Southridge student better prepared and more distinct as a leader compared to students coming from other schools?

Nicky: I believe that personal formation has always been the strength of Southridge. Our school not only plants the seeds of virtue in our mind, but also gives us the opportunities to develop these virtues, and therefore develop our character.

R: How can you compare the challenges and hurdles you faced when you were a high school student in Southridge to the current challenges you face today?

Nicky: Challenges are challenges – they are trials, problems, setbacks, and hurdles. It all merely varies in scale and gravity. Do not be discouraged by challenges that seem to be unsurpassable because, like any other setback, there is always a solution. We just have to preserve and until we find it.

R: What is your formula for success for us high school students? What words of advice can you give us, especially for the seniors who are about to enter college?

Nicky: There is no secret formula for success. It just involves a lot of hard work and dedication to the things you put your mind to. For the seniors, make sure you follow your passion. Do something that interests you. Do something that makes you happy. It becomes easier to succeed in something you are more likely to be driven by what you like doing.

Another important thing is listening to criticism. Evaluate it, and then change if you think that the option presented is better. Never be defensive! Criticism allows us to develop and grow as people. It is a tool if we make it one, yet it can destroy us if we allow it to.
In the Spirit of Giving
Christmas Outreach Projects

BY IKEE LLORET

IC Christmas Outreach
Date: December 16, 2010
Location: St. Bernadette College
Beneficiaries: Grade 1 and Grade 2 students
What we did: We showcased our talents, danced, and sang for the children. We had a Christmas trivia game with them, and gave them gifts. We even had a Korean Santa Claus!
Donations given: Toys and Jollibee Lunch

Outreach – IIIB
Location: Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Date: December 16, 2010
Beneficiaries: thirty kids, aged two to ten years old
What we did in the outreach: This was originally a project of the Municipality of Carmona, and we helped out by playing games with the children, and we even sang to them. We fed the children lunch, and played basketball, and other games like ‘the boat is sinking’.
Donations given: Coloring materials, notebooks, books, candies, snacks, drinks

Outreach – IVA
Date: December 14, 2010
Location: Imus Cavite
Beneficiaries: Children aged six to twelve years old
What we did in the outreach: We made the children living there happier by playing games with them, and also making them forget their hardships in life, even if it was just for a brief moment. We also fed them, and bonded with them, hoping that we made an impact on their lives.
Donations given: Children’s books, canned goods

Outreach – IVC
Date: December 15, 2010
Location: Caramoan Cavit
Beneficiaries: Children with disabilities
What we did in the outreach: This was originally a project of the Municipality of Caramoan, and we helped out by playing games with the children, and we even sang to them. We fed the children lunch, and played basketball, and other games like ‘the boat is sinking’.
Donations given: Children’s books, canned goods

Outreach – IVB
Date: December 16, 2010
Location: Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Beneficiaries: thirty kids, aged two to ten years old
What we did in the outreach: Being a batch 2010, we felt that our classmates would also want to celebrate Christmas. So we contributed in our own way to make the children living there happier by playing games with them, and also making them forget their hardships in life, even if it was just for a brief moment. We also fed them, and bonded with them, hoping that we made an impact on their lives.
Donations given: toys, school supplies, food

The Ridge

Christmas Outreach

BY MICHAEL AGONCILLO

“I don't want a lot for Christmas There’s just one thing I need I don’t care about the presents Underneath the Christmas tree”

A s the Southridge High School Christmas program was coming to an end, you could hear the students filled with the Christmas spirit. Some were humming the songs their fellow Admirals had just performed, while some tapping their feet trying to imitate the dance moves of their peers. Others were satisfied after their performances and others were just excited for the beginning of the Christmas break. This was the image of a joyous Southridge family after a long day, a long year.

December 17, 2010 can be summed up in one word—celebration. On this festive day, the students celebrated the Christmas season. Whether it was a simple party in the classroom or just a small gathering of friends, the Admirals celebrated each other with other each other. They celebrated the coming of the Christmas break with food and drinks. They celebrated the year that was with memories and laughter. They celebrated the year that was to come with optimistic talk and even more laughter. And together, the school also celebrated the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ with love and joy.

But the day would not have been complete without the traditional Christmas program. The Christmas program was another display that proved Southridge Got Talent. With parents, classmates, teachers, and staff in attendance, the performers did not disappoint.

There were the dancers who moved as one and flowed with the beat. Freshmen students used a mash-up and pulled off entertaining hip-hop dances. Their sophomore counterparts treated the audience to an explosion of movements set to “Grenade” and “Teenage Dreams”. The juniors presentation harked a trip back to the tea parties of Wonderland. Even the seniors were just excited for the beginning of the Christmas break. This was the image of a joyous Southridge family after a long day, a long year.

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There were the dancers who moved as one and flowed with the beat. Freshmen students used a mash-up and pulled off entertaining hip-hop dances. Their sophomore counterparts treated the audience to an explosion of movements set to “Grenade” and “Teenage Dreams”. The juniors’ rendition of “The Prayer” showcased their vocal talent while the Southridge Choir, fresh from a competition, then delivered a set of crowd-pleasing performances. The freshmen followed with their own electric performance of “Firework.” The sophomores sang the jubilant “All I want for Christmas” before the seniors almost stole the show with “Brighter than Sunshine.”

The student council also had their own show. The students showcased their talents on the piano and violin showed artistry but our very own Mr. Flores tugged the crowd’s hearts as he bowed the crowd with his flute pieces.

Yet the celebration wouldn’t be complete without the Admirals Step Crew. Giving a Christmas twist to their routines, the ASC brought the crowd to their feet in a riveting display of their Bell Rock routine.

There’s really not much in the way of material things that the Southridge Admirals wanted for Christmas, in fact there was only one thing they needed. They wanted to celebrate as a Southridge family. This was truly an Admiral Christmas!
Well known speaker, Jason Evert came to the Philippines in the third week of February to join Filipinos in celebrating Pro-Life and Love. Junior and Senior HS students from Southridge joined their counterparts from Woodrose, Northfield, and International School of Manila for a great talk held at the Teatro Aguinaldo in Camp Aguinaldo on February 24, 2011. They witnessed Jason’s talent for getting the crowd’s attention while speaking clearly with examples that young people could connect. He talked about chastity with passion and clarified that passions by themselves weren’t good enough for true love. I believe I can attest for everyone at the Teatro Aguinaldo that afternoon by saying that no other speaker will ever be able to touch our hearts more that Mr. Jason Evert did.

The experience began at 9 AM when the students all boarded their respective buses. The mindset at that moment was merely to get comfortable—a long ride and a chasity talk didn’t really sound appealing. For my Southridge batch, the day started at exactly 9, when all three sections gathered in the main lobby. From there, all of us made our way to the dusty NPC parking lot and went into our respective buses. There, we all got comfortable in our plastic-covered seats, preparing ourselves for the ride, as well as for the lectures ahead.

To be perfectly honest, when one is told that they will be spending the day in a theater, listening to someone talk about chastity for five hours doesn’t sound very appealing to most. How wrong I was.

Seeing the Woodrose students upon our arrival increased our enthusiasm a little bit, and once inside the theatre, the excitement started to build up. A few Southridge students started cheering “Jason! Jason!”, and the theatre, the excitement started to build up. A few increased our enthusiasm a little bit, and once inside to most. How wrong I was.

The students from other schools to settle down, when finally our host guest exclaimed, “Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome, Mr. Jason Evert!” Suddenly, as Jason made his way onto the stage, the crowd erupted with enthusiastic applause.

For those who don’t already know, Jason Evert is the most sought-after catholic speaker in the world. He came to the Philippines to promote ideas such as “A Pure Mind, A Pure Heart,” which, coincidently, was the name of our lecture that day; and promote that he did. His ideas ranged from topics like “What’s wrong with porn (when you aren’t hurting anyone)” to “What do girls want” and even, “If he’s willing to do it, why is it still wrong?” Those aren’t easy to talk sensibly about even among friends, and on full display was his ability to give concise answers that encouraged us to do the right thing and turn our lives around.

He showed us that chaste lives proved truth and depth of love because you only want what’s best for them. He told us that forcing our beloved to do things that she would later regret is wrong and shows her that in fact, you just want part of her. Jason reinforced this idea by sharing his experiences as well as the stories told to him by others. This really helped him establish rapport with the audience connect at a very personal level. A very inspiring moment occurred he shared with us the story of how he stayed chaste for his wife, Crystallina, and how she did the same for him through many struggles and temptations, the very same problems and temptations we young people face today.

Jason also touched on the RH Bill and the many risks attached to a contraceptive mentality. He explained that contraceptives don't protect their users from many of the STDs. According to him, one of the worst is the Human Papilloma Virus, a skin-to-skin easily transmitted virus that's responsible for many types of cancers. Complications arise for the infected persons and their children.

Truly a special person, Jason Evert did a great job of challenging us to go against the cultural norm when it comes to sex. That day everyone in the audience left with a greater appreciation of who they wanted to be as a man or woman, and who was the man or woman that they wanted to love.

The emphasis that universities place on that “something else” is at times one of the most frustrating, at times the most satisfying, and without a doubt, the most unique part of the application process. Universities are searching for well-rounded individuals, not just those who are intelligent (although that helps), but also those who are involved in extra-curricular activities in the school and the community. That’s why it’s important to participate in as many clubs, organizations, contests, and seminars as possible. However, beyond extra-curriculars and academics, there is one other thing that can tell you to the admissions office instantly—the essay. I must have written over thirty different essays; some were short, others memorable, and a few quite difficult, but each required presentations of my life’s facets, one perspective at a time. I wrote essays on straightforward topics (Tell us about yourself.), thought-provoking questions (What don’t you know?), and downright mind-boggling subjects (Find x.). I wouldn't say that my essays were perfect; I don't think anyone else could hope for theirs to be. But I do know that for girls want” and even, “If she’s willing to do it, why is it still wrong?” Those aren’t easy to talk sensibly about even among friends, and on full display was his ability to give concise answers that encouraged us to do the right thing and turn our lives around.

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CHOOSING LIFE, REJECTING THE RH BILL

(A Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines)

Our Filipino Brothers and Sisters:

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As religious leaders we have deeply and prayerfully reflected on this issue and have now made the moral judgment – to reject the RH agenda and to choose life.

We call for a fundamental transformation of our attitudes and behavior towards all human life especially the most defenseless, namely, human life being formed or being conceived. The complexion with which many seem to consider human life is a great haste to our religious and cultural traditions.

We call upon our legislators to consider the RH bill in the light of the God-given dignity and worth of human life and, therefore, to shelve it completely as contrary to our ideals and aspirations as a people. We thank our legislators who have filed bills to defend human life from the moment of conception and call upon all other legislators to join their ranks.

We thank the great multitude of lay people all over the country, and particularly the dedicated groups who made their presence felt in the halls of Congress, to defend and promote our commonly shared ideals and aspirations.

We call on our government to address effectively the real causes of poverty such as corruption, lack of social and economic services, lack of access to education and the benefits of development, social inequities.

We call for the establishment of more hospitals and clinics in the rural areas, the deployment of more health personnel to provide more access to health services, the building of more schools, the provision of more aid to the poor for education, and the building of more and better infrastructures necessary for development.

We echo the challenge we prophetically uttered 25 years ago at EDSA I and call upon all people of good will who share our values that we as a people pray together, reason together, decide together, act together, always to the end that the truth prevail over the many threats to human life and to our shared human and cultural values.

We commend our efforts against the RH bill (or the Responsible Parenthood bill – in new name) to the blessing of our almighty and loving God, from whom all life comes and for whom it is destined.

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines.

*NEERO P. ODCHIMAR, D.D.*
Bishop of Tandag
President, CBCP
January 30, 2011

Our Filipino Brothers and Sisters:

The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights (Art. II, Section 11). The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as the basic and autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception (Art. III, Section 12).

**Background**

We begin by citing the Philippine Constitution. We do so because we intend to write you on the basis of the fundamental ideals and aspirations of the Filipino people and not on the basis of specifically Catholic religious teachings.

We are at a crossroads as a nation. Before us are several versions of a proposed bill, the Reproductive Health Bill or sanitized as a Responsible Parenthood bill. This proposed bill in all its versions calls us to make a moral choice: to choose life or to choose death.

At the outset we thank the government for affording us an opportunity to express our views in friendly dialogue. Sadly, our dialogue has simply revealed how far apart our respective positions are. The interminable writing of false hopes, we wish at the present time to draw up clearly what we object to and what we stand for.

**Moral Choices at the Crossroads – at EDSA I and Now**

Twenty-five years ago in 1986 we Catholic Bishops made a prophetic moral judgment on political leadership. With this prophetic declaration we have that we somehow significantly helped open the door for EDsa I and a window of political integrity.

Today we come to a new national crossroads, and we now have a new and different choice. Our President rallied the specific religious teachings.

We object to the non-consideration of moral principles, the bedrock of law, in legislative discussions of bills that are intended for the good of individuals and the common good.

Our position stands firmly on two of the core principles commonly shared by all who believe in God:

1. Human life is the sacred physical gift with which God, the author of life, endows a human being. Placing artificial obstacles to prevent human life from being formed and being born most certainly contradicts this fundamental truth of human life. In the light of the widespread influence of the post-modern spirit in our world, we consider this position as nothing less than prophetic. Religious leaders we must proclaim this truth fearlessly in season and out of season.

2. It is parents, cooperating with God, who bring children into the world. It is also they who have the primary indissoluble right and responsibility to nurture them, care for them, and educate them that they might grow as mature persons according to the will of the Creator.

**What We Specifically Object to in the RH Bill**

Advocates contend that the RH bill promotes reproductive health. The RH Bill certainly does not. It does not protect the health of the sacred human life that is being formed or born.

The very name “contraceptive” already reveals the anti-life nature of the means that the RH bill promotes. These artificial means are fatal to human life, either preventing it from fruition or actually destroying it. Moreover, scientists have known for a long time that contraceptives may cause cancer. Contraceptives are hazardous to a woman’s health.

Advocates also say that the RH bill will reduce abortion rates. But many scientists have analyzed others wonder why prevalent contraceptives sometimes increases the abortion rate.

In truth, contraceptives provide a false sense of security that takes away the inhibition to sexual activity. Scientists have noted numerous cases of contraceptive failure. Abortion is resorted to, an act that all religious traditions would judge as sinful. “Safe sex” to diminish abortion rate is false propaganda.

Advocates moreover say that the RH bill will prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. This goes against the grain of many available scientific data. In some countries where condom use is prevalent, HIV/AIDS continues to spread. Condoms provide a false security that strongly entices entities towards increased sexual activity, increasing likewise the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

“Safe sex” to prevent HIV/AIDS is false propaganda.

Advocates also assert that the RH bill empowers women with ownership of their own bodies. This is in line with the post-modern spirit declaring that women have power over their own bodies and in choosing the lack of cultural traditions regarding the fundamental dignity and worth of human life.

Advocates also say that the RH bill is necessary to stop overpopulation and to escape from poverty. Our own government statistics have concluded that there is no overpopulation in the Philippines but only the over-concentration of population in a number of urban centers. Despite other findings to the contrary, we must also consider the findings of a significant group of renowned economic scholars, including economic Nobel laureates, who have found no direct correlation between populations and poverty. In fact, many Filipino scholars have concluded that population is not the cause of the poverty. The causes of our poverty are: flawed philosophies of development, misguided economic policies, greed, corruption, social inequities, lack of access to education, poor economic and social services, poor infrastructures, etc.

World organizations estimate that in our country more than $100 billion pesos are lost yearly to corruption. The conclusion is unavoidable: for our poverty we have to address the real causes of poverty and not population.

In the light of the above, we express our clear objections:

1. We object to the non-consideration of moral principles, the bedrock of law, in legislative discussions of bills that are intended for the good of individuals and the common good.

2. We are against the anti-life, anti-natal and contraceptive mentality that is reflected in media and in some proposed legislative bills.

3. We object equally to efl ouring at railroading the passage of the RH bill.

4. We denounce the over-all trajectory of the RH bill towards population challenge and the social inequities.

5. We denounce the use of public funds for contraceptives and sterilization.

6. We condemn compulsory sex education that would effectively let our children, our primary moral role of educating our own children, especially in an area of life – sexuality – which is a sacred gift of God.

**What We Stand For**

On this matter of proposed RH bills, these are our firm convictions:

1. We are deeply concerned about the plight of the many poor, especially of suffering women, who are struggling for a better life and who must seek it outside of our country, or have recourse to a livelihood less than decent.

2. We are pro-life. We must defend human life from the moment of conception or fertilization up to its natural end.

3. We believe in the responsible and natural regulation of births through Natural Family Planning for which character building is necessary which involves sacrifice, discipline and respect for the dignity of the spouse.

4. We believe that we are only stewards of our own bodies. Responsibility over our own bodies must follow the will of God who speaks to us through conscience.

5. We hold on the choices related to the RH bill. Conscience must not only be informed but most of all rightly guided through the teachings of one’s faith.

6. We believe in the freedom of religion and the right of citizens to profess their own religious beliefs.

The sanctions and penalties embodied in the proposed RH bill are one more reason for us to denounce it.

Our Calls

We call for: for a fundamental transformation of our attitudes and behavior towards all human life especially the most defenseless, namely, human life being formed or being conceived. The complexion with which many seem to consider human life is a great haste to our religious and cultural traditions.

We call upon our legislators to consider the RH bill in the light of the God-given dignity and worth of human life and, therefore, to shelve it completely as contrary to our ideals and aspirations as a people. We thank our legislators who have filed bills to defend human life from the moment of conception and call upon all other legislators to join their ranks.

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