

## **NDSA Board News**

### **Just What Is NDSA?**

NDSA - Notre Dame Senior Alumni - was originally called "ND's FIRST" (Fighting Irish Retired Service Team). Over the last eight years NDSA has evolved from a community service group for mostly retired alumni to what it is today: a group having a broad focus on the interests of all alumni aged 55 and over (members of the Class of 1973 and earlier). NDSA is intended to both serve and engage seniors across all six "C's" of the club organization. These areas are Camaraderie, Community Service, Catholic/Christian Spirituality, Continuing Education, Current Students, and Communication.

On average, seniors typically make up over one-third of a club's constituency. It is important to note that NDSA is not a separate or exclusive element within alumni clubs. Rather, NDSA supplements club programming. All alumni and friends of Notre Dame – regardless of their age – are invited and encouraged to participate in any of NDSA's initiatives.

### **The Role of the NDSA Coordinator**

Every club is encouraged to appoint, as part of the club leadership, a NDSA Coordinator who is responsible for planning, implementing and coordinating programs that engage senior alumni constituents. Some clubs around the country have appointed Co-Coordinators of their senior program, especially in areas where senior alumni are part-year residents or might otherwise not be available at times throughout the year. Then too, alumni who are reluctant to accept sole responsibility for the NDSA Coordinator position are often quite willing to accept a shared responsibility. And finally, two heads are often better than one.

### **Getting Senior Alumni Involved**

A proven method for getting senior alumni involved is to **first socialize, then serve**. Notre Dame alumni like to get together informally and talk about Notre Dame – football, memories of student life on campus, professors, anything - as long as it's about Notre Dame. Getting seniors together for breakfast on some regular basis – perhaps monthly – has been a very successful and enjoyable vehicle in many clubs.

As relationships are formed and grow within a breakfast group, individuals begin to identify with the group. Often they will give the group a unique name – Golden Domers, Second Friday Breakfast Bunch, etc. One day a member of the group will talk about a 'need', and another person will say, "Let's do something about it." The group becomes stronger through their involvement together. They begin to seek out other opportunities to make a difference. After a few months the club will have a nucleus of involved seniors who know how to have fun working together.

### **For Our Beloved Notre Dame**

During their Fall meeting the NDSA Board voted unanimously to continue the continuous candlelight vigil at the Grotto until the Winter meeting in January. The vigil, which was begun after the Spring meeting of the NDSA board, is funded by contributions from members of the NDSA board. All alumni are invited to join in the vigil by saying a Hail Mary for the University of Notre Dame each day.

## **What's New?**

### **NDSA Website Introduced**

The new NDSA website has been rolled out, launched, and is now in cyberspace, ready for you to use. Visit <http://ndsenioralumni.org> to gain valuable news, information and ideas about how seniors may be a greater force within your club. The website includes explanations about major initiatives that NDSA has

developed, and has guidelines for their implementation. These initiatives include PACE (Prostate Awareness and Cancer Education), TAP (Tax Assistance Program), Student mentoring program, Corporate Volunteer Program, and the Hospital Support Program, NDSA's newest.

You'll also find a page where a person can listen to the music of Notre Dame, everything from our beloved Alma Mater to the Victory March. There are many other features, too. And more are continually being added and updated. Visit the NDSA website often . . . and encourage your club members to visit.

## ***Let's Take a Break***

### **Little Davies's Wisdom**

Little Davies's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw photos tacked to a bulletin board of the ten most wanted criminals. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture of a neatly dressed, clean-shaven young man and asked if he really was a wanted person.

"Yes," said the policeman. "He's very dangerous. The detectives want very badly to capture him."

"Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?" little Davie asked.

### **A Gardening Tip**

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to grip it tightly and pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it's a valuable plant.

## ***From Around the Country***

### **Two Birds With One Stone**

As part of their **Hospital Support** and **God, Country and Notre Dame** programs, each month members of the Ann Arbor (Michigan) club visit patients at Ann Arbor Veterans Affairs Medical Center. They spent a recent Sunday afternoon visiting veterans suffering from various forms of cancer who are hospitalized for chemotherapy treatments. The veterans were thankful for the visits, and expressed pride in the service they have given to our country.

There are hundreds of VA Healthcare Systems facilities located throughout the United States. Almost all have Volunteer Service Managers who are actively seeking volunteers. Additional information may be obtained from the VA Service website at [www.va.gov/volunteer](http://www.va.gov/volunteer).

### **Monthly Breakfasts All Seniors Can Attend**

Because not all seniors can get away for breakfast on a given day of the week, the Lake County (Illinois) club has a monthly breakfast for seniors that is held on the same day of the week for two successive months, and then moved to the next day of the week for two months, then to the next for two months, and so forth. About sixty seniors participate in the breakfast program that has an average attendance of fourteen. The Lake County club's senior breakfasts are strictly social events.

### **Focusing on Service**

The Houston (Texas) club has initiated the **Golden Dome Mentor Program** to aid students at Northbrook Middle School. Members of the club also volunteer on a rotating basis to perform various functions at the Galveston-Houston Diocese's Catholic Charities Food Bank. Recently, two alums donated \$2500 in Home Depot Gift Cards as members of the Houston club provided a day of service on various projects at Our Lady of Guadalupe School.

### **Keeping a Good Thing Going**

The Ann Arbor (Michigan) club has extended their **Summer Student Learning Project (SSLP)** into a year-round program by partnering with HOPE, a community organization with a number of facilities to serve the poor. During the summer the club sponsors a SSLP student from Notre Dame who helps out at HOPE's medical clinic. Throughout the year club members perform various fix-up projects, physicians volunteer their services at HOPE's medical clinic, and the club has fund raisers which benefit HOPE.

## **A Full Plate in Dallas**

The Dallas (Texas) club is helping the Santa Clara de Assisi Academy establish a new accounting system, submitting grant requests, and developing a marketing program for the school. The Dallas club is also guiding and encouraging the inner-city Catholic Schools in the Dallas Diocese, and is searching for other ways to collaborate with the schools. Additionally, St. Augustine Parish has asked the Dallas club to review their parish and school plans for this year and for future years.

## **Putting Business Skills – and More - to Work**

Assisting several not-for-profit organizations develop business plans is one of the ways the Detroit (Michigan) club is putting business skills to work for the good of the Church and the community. In addition to helping Our Lady of Guadalupe elementary school and Everest Academy in neighboring Clarkston, members of the club are meeting with Archdiocese officials to discuss potential projects where the Detroit club may be of service.

Not confining their efforts to business-related topics, the club will conduct a PACE program for Archdiocesan clergy at their Health and Well Being event.

## **Planning for Next Summer**

The Lansing (Michigan) club has raised the funds needed to permit a current student to work at Mother Theresa House for the terminally ill.

## **Transportation for the Needy**

The DuPage County (Illinois) Senior Group is helping the Naperville CARES Car Donation Program provide roadworthy cars to clients so they can have transportation to do essential travel, such as getting to and from work and taking children for medical care. In a 12-month period 78 cars were donated to Naperville CARES. After performing necessary repairs on a majority of the cars, they were given to families in need. (The remaining ones were not roadworthy and were scrapped.)

## **Enthusiasm Attracts**

The Milwaukee (Wisconsin) club initiated an Annual Fund Raiser for the Andean Health and Development Foundation, the not-for-profit organization that supports the work of Dr. David Gaus, MD with the rural poor in Ecuador. A 1984 ND graduate, Dr. Gaus, originally from Milwaukee, was the recipient of the 1999 Thomas A. Dooley Award, ND's highest honor that is bestowed for service to humanity. The Senior Alumni will be hosting a wine and cheese reception as part of the Milwaukee club's effort to raise \$20,000 each year to support Dr. Gaus' work. The enthusiasm of the alumni brought together by this project has motivated others in the Milwaukee area to contribute to the effort.

## ***Ponderisms***

Don't eat a lot of natural foods – most people die of natural causes.

In the 60's people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prpzac to make it normal.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

Have you noticed that since everyone has a camcorder or digital camera these days, nobody talks about seeing UFOs like they used to.

## ***On The Horizon***

Father Hesburgh, CSC will celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday during May 2007. The Alumni association will be initiating a **Month of Service** in recognition of Father's milestone birthday and his many contributions to the University and to mankind.

## ***A Final Thought***

Every best wish to you and your families and loved ones for a Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving, and for a Joyous and Peace-filled Christmas.