

## Who Are These Men Called De La Salle Christian Brothers?

by Brother Thomas Lackey, FSC



On October 29, 2001, Br. Thomas Lackey, FSC visited La Salle School to present the contract for The Lasallian Ministry Team to a joint meeting of La Salle School's Board of Trustees and Foundation Board of Directors. Brother Thomas and his fellow ministry team members are charged with helping to keep alive the Lasallian spirit in The New York District. In addition to his ministry team responsibilities, Br. Thomas also serves as president of St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute in Buffalo, New York. What follows is a portion of his presentation.

On a Sunday morning before a St. Joe's class Mass, one of the Brothers was asked, "Are you saying Mass this morning?"

On hearing this, I realized the Brothers had not done a very good job telling their story.

It began with our Founder, John Baptist de La Salle, who was born in 1651 in Reims, France. At this time France was stratified into classes. Louis XIV, the Sun King ruled. The vast majority of the population, however, enjoyed little of the wealth of the upper classes and lived on the edge of poverty.

De La Salle was born into a wealthy family, received his Master's Degree in Reims, and traveled to Paris to study for the priesthood. While there, his mother and father died and he was required to return home as guardian for his four brothers and two sisters. He did so, became a priest, and settled into what he thought would be a comfortable life, lacking nothing, with generosity to the poor, but always from a distance.

### De La Salle's Commitment

Then God intervened and willed De La Salle to commit to the development of schools. At first he supported only three poverty schools. Then he saw how poorly trained the "teachers" were. In fact, most of the teachers were barely literate themselves, and were uncouth, unkempt, and unclean. De La Salle said they were "lower than my own valet." So in 1680 he did the unthinkable – he invited these men into his home to live and learn with him. You can imagine the reaction of his family and friends when he brought the lower class into his upper class home!

De La Salle eventually moved out and into a much less comfortable surrounding with his teachers, whom he trained in faith and pedagogy. And his schools, Christian schools, were successful. They educated poor, urban boys, whose only influence was from fellow street urchins. And the schools were free.

Although De La Salle was being led by the will of God, his fellow teachers were not as motivated. They questioned his wealth

and the security it provided. If the schools failed, he had something to fall back on. They did not. And so in 1683, after prayer and struggle, De La Salle gave up his assets. Now he was committed as his teachers were to educating the poor.

### Formation of the Brothers

His was not an easy task. It seems that De La Salle had to confront every entrenched belief of the time. First he chose a form of clothing for his "Brothers," something to distinguish them from laymen, but also from the clergy who wore silk and ermine. People laughed at the Brothers and even Voltaire mocked them in his poem "The Brothers with Big Hats." We now call this clothing "the habit." No, it is neither a dress nor a bathrobe!

Bishops wanted control of the Brothers in their individual dioceses. De La Salle fought them so that the Brothers would be free to work for the poor where the poor were found and where the Brothers were needed.

The teachers' groups took De La Salle to court and even ransacked the schools. They claimed he was not educating only the "certified" poor. They might have had a point. These Christian schools were so good that even merchants sent their sons to them.

De La Salle challenged the education of the day. He insisted on a Christian, practical education. And so he combined religion with reading, writing and numbers, but in French, not Latin. What practical value would Latin have to the sons of the poor and the working class?

Lastly, De La Salle struggled with the question of who should lead his Brothers when he was not in charge. Since his Brothers were vowed laymen, tradition dictated that a priest should be in charge. De La Salle did send a Brother to the seminary to become

**"De La Salle challenged the education of the day . . . insisting on a Christian, practical education."**

a priest, but the Brother died and De La Salle took this as a sign. From this point on, a Brother would lead his fellow Brothers.

John Baptist de La Salle died on Good Friday in 1719. His Brothers numbered over 100 and taught in schools in over 21 French cities from Calais to Marseilles. Order and discipline characterized their schools. They educated the sons of the poor and working classes. They provided a "human and Christian education."

### The Brothers in the 21st Century

Today, there are 7,000 Brothers working with 65,000 lay Lasallian partners and educating nearly one million young people in 86 countries.

In 1725, Rome formally recognized the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In 1900, De La Salle was canonized a saint, and in 1950, he was proclaimed the "Patron of Teachers."

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**  
to attend the

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Through a dedicated and capable community of staff and associates, inspired by the faith and vision of St. John Baptist de La Salle, La Salle School provides therapeutic, educational and supportive services designed to accomplish positive, personal growth and lasting change in the lives of youth and families in need.

### LA SALLE SCHOOL

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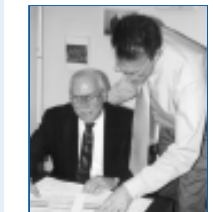
# LA SALLE SCHOOL

## NEWSLETTER

### La Salle participates in leading edge research

La Salle School is currently in the midst of a joint research project with The Saint Anne Institute and The Hindelang Research Center of the University at Albany.

**On the leading edge**  
"The Continual Improvement Project is a performance-based management system on the leading edge of a large national movement to study the impact of treatment process on outcomes," said University Project Director David Duffee, Ph.D.



La Salle Project Staff – Br. Vincent Reese, FSC, (seated) and Mark Silverbush review project materials.

Despite several studies focusing on results only, this most recent study is one of the few to statistically measure whether or not programs and services make a difference in how a child behaves upon his or her release from agency care. This project will not end with the final chapter of this particular study, but will provide agency staff with a basis for examining current practices, creating pragmatic tools, and making more effective policy decisions in their treatment of individual children and families. Practitioners may use this research daily revisiting treatment strategies and modifying them, if necessary.

**Logic model**  
The Logic Model forms the foundation for the concepts to be measured and analyzed during the project. From January to June 2001, Duffee, doctoral students from the University's School of Criminal Justice and representatives from La Salle and Saint Anne worked to develop a Logic Model for the residential program.

A series of meetings between the full project committee and smaller working groups were held to describe the treatment process and outcomes used in both agencies and summarized in the Logic Model.

The Logic Model is a blueprint of how to study a particular program. In this case, agency staff

specified a number factors about youth and their families, treatment processes, agency environments, and youth and family outcomes, both during and after treatment. The Logic Model suggests how staff think these factors are linked together. Data is then gathered and analyzed to examine the accuracy of their expectations. By incrementally revising the logic model, adjusting practice, and reviewing changes in outcomes achieved, the agency can gradually improve benefits to its clients by determining what works best for which clients in what circumstances.

**County consents**  
In June 2001, work began to develop a process to acquire permission from counties with agency contracts to allow their clients to participate in this research. Five counties providing the bulk of research subjects are Albany, Dutchess, Monroe, Onondaga, and Rensselaer. An additional 11 counties were also identified for inclusion. These 16 counties comprised 95 percent of LaSalle's residential population and 84 percent of St. Anne's residents.

**Measurement model and instruments**  
The following month, staff started devising ways to measure the concepts in the Logic Model. In total, nine instruments will be constructed for the study. Together, the instruments will collect data on 75 separate variables. Most measures were adapted from prior research, but some had to be constructed specifically for this study. In some cases, it was necessary to create new measures or extensively modify existing ones. Instruments for the first youth and parent interviews are complete, and the seven remaining instruments will be ready in the next six months.

Eventually, a measurement manual will be produced for all the treatment process and client concepts that appear to be important, based on the analysis of St. Anne and LaSalle clients.

**Data collection**  
A procedure has been employed to obtain voluntary, informed consent from participating children and parents, arrange convenient interview times, and respond to any emergencies that arise.

Data will be collected from parents and their children in various stages of residential placement. Children will be interviewed two to four weeks after admission, in the middle of their stay, just before leaving placement, and three months after returning

(See "Research" on page 3)

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**COMMENT**

by Bill Wolff, Executive Director



How do we know, for certain, that we're helping? This can be a nagging question for those of us who work with young people and their families. We want to know our services will really improve their lives, in a lasting way.

This issue of the La Salle School Newsletter draws attention to a few of the projects underway, and our desire to better understand the long-term affects of our work.

Two of these activities were briefly announced in our last newsletter - our joint research project with The University at Albany and The Saint Anne Institute, and our new LIFE Fund (La Salle Initiative for Education). Now, as you can see, we have much to report.

Both of these activities speak volumes to La Salle's commitment to helping kids improve their lives. Of the many corporations and foundations that have helped breath new life into La Salle, the generosity of one highly respected local business has recently fueled our LIFE Fund with needed dollars. The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation visited La Salle on January 14 to deliver a \$50,000 donation (half of which will be used for The LIFE Fund).

To the kids at La Salle today, this visit demonstrates that in addition to the La Salle staff, there are many more individuals who believe in them, and are willing to invest in their futures. To the kids for whom this fund may make all the difference in the years ahead, the generosity of Troy Savings and others will not only provide a terrific opportunity, but also hopefully instill in them kindness and charity.

La Salle continues to be a very exciting place to be, to live, and to work. While we take pride in our reputation as a quiet provider of programs and services for young people and families, we take similar pride in the creative, innovative noise in which we are so fortunate to participate with outstanding community groups such as The University at Albany, The Saint Anne Institute and The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, and oh, by the way . . . enjoy the read!

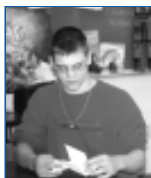
**Troy Charitable Foundation visits La Salle**



Representatives from The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation visited La Salle School on January 14, 2002 to present a gift in the amount of \$50,000. One-half of this amount will satisfy Troy's campaign pledge, the other half will be deposited into the La Salle Initiative for Education (LIFE) Fund for former students who are in need assistance. On hand for the check presentation were, from left to right, Troy Savings President and La Salle Trustee Daniel J. Hogarty, Jr., and a host of La Salle staff and students including Nancy Baker-Crellin, Mark Silverbush, Roy H., Kelly Young, Joe H., Don Card, Christine Kempkes, Brother Vincent Reese, FSC, and Bill Wolff.

**LA SALLE SCHOOL FEATURE STORY**

**Healing wings, learning to fly at La Salle School**



Student Brian K., folds a dove.

It's about everyone coming together to find a way to heal," said La Salle Student Brian K., when describing the benefits of The Healing Wings Project.

Healing Wings is a collaborative activity in which Capital Region school children create paper doves to demonstrate their feelings about themselves and others. The project's goal is to help youth address difficult issues in a healthy, healing way.

For the boys at La Salle, who often find it difficult to express emotions peacefully due to the internal wars confronting them, the activity is especially meaningful. It is a soothing, calming reminder of each one's choice to make peace, even in the midst of war.

In October 2001, La Salle School contacted project organizers, and was one of the first local organizations to do so. Art Teacher Eileen Glasheen incorporated the project into her daily art class helping students make some 300 doves.

Rather than engage students individually, Healing Wings is a group activity. "Peace, unity, one power, one nation, and being together as one," is how Student Philip E. described the collaborative aspect and poignancy of the project. The students at La Salle have really embraced The Healing Wings Project and will continue it until the end of the school year.

Proceeds from staff-sponsored doves were donated to *The Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund*, a pool of money used to support those who lost loved ones in the September 11 attack on the United States. Only these are on display with other doves at various locations throughout the Capital District. Most, however, remain unsponsored and make up an on-campus display. Every Tuesday from 2:45 to 3:00 p.m., guests may visit the school's two education buildings to view the display and meditate on the work.

The display is academically significant and will continue to reflect seasonal changes. The delicacy and peace demonstrated by La Salle's flock of doves is a metaphor for all those boys who come to the school to heal broken wings and learn how to fly again.

**Research cont.**

home. Ideally, these 45-minute interviews will be conducted during a normal school day. Some student intake interviews have already begun.

Parents will be interviewed a short time after their child's admission and three months after they have returned home. Agency staff members and student files will also be sources of data.

Information acquired about characteristics of all participants and services they receive will be used to analyze the treatment provided by both child care agencies. Both agencies are indebted to participating clients for willingly offering project information that will benefit future clients.

**Confidentiality**

The confidentiality so important to a child and family during the healing process will not be compromised as a result of their participation in this research project.

Work relating to procedures for human subjects protection began in November 2000 and continued through the summer of 2001. As part of the process, a memorandum of agreement among La Salle School, The Saint Anne Institute and The University was developed and submitted. In addition, a privacy certificate was obtained from the United States Department of Justice certifying research procedures would protect confidentiality and the privacy of records and would comply with federal laws and regulations. These procedures were also approved by the University Institutional Review Board.

**Funding**

At the project's inception, funding (\$80,000) was provided by a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for 2001. In November 2001, the significance of this research project prompted DCJS to increase the 2002 award to \$130,000. Data collection and analysis will continue through mid 2004, a period longer than DCJS can support. Consequently, additional fundraising for this effort is necessary.

**Making a Difference**

The results of this study will help La Salle and Saint Anne to strengthen and enhance existing programs and services.

"We are now constructing a new behavior model to help our girls develop acceptable social skills and appropriate behaviors," said Saint Anne Executive Director Rick Riccio. This project will help make a difference in how we redirect our efforts."

La Salle is expecting to enjoy similar outcomes. "It is not often our staff has time to devote to researching outcomes," said La Salle Executive Director Bill Wolff. This project makes it possible to not only let us give our full attention to the kids and families we serve, but it allows us to develop terrific, lasting partnerships with community organizations."

**Project Committee**

In addition to Professor Duffee, the project committee is comprised of La Salle's Quality Assurance Coordinator Brother Vincent Reese, FSC and Mark Silverbush, director of Service Management for Clinical Services Development; Terry Gabriel, Saint Anne's director of Continuous Quality Improvement, multidisciplinary personnel from both agencies, and University research team.

**Future research**

In January 2002, the project will add studies of preventive service programs now in place at La Salle School and The Saint Anne Institute to the current study of residential treatment.

The pilot and demonstration phase of the project should be completed in 2004. At that time, simplified, streamlined data collection procedures will be developed for ongoing use by both agencies. The long-term goal is for this research to continuously support treatment provisions at La Salle School and The Saint Anne Institute and become part of normal operating procedures.

**LA SALLE SCHOOL HAPPENINGS**

**La Salle boys serve community**

One hundred fifteen youngsters from La Salle School spent 589 hours working to support several community service activities from June 1, 2001 to December 15, 2001. Beneficiaries of their work included Adopt-A-Highway, The American Cancer Association, Catholic Charities, Columbia Land Conservation, The Department of Transportation, Habitat for Humanity, The Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region, and The Salvation Army. The boys who participated comprised 75 percent of La Salle's residential population.

**AREA ORGANIZATIONS HELP FUND RENOVATIONS, STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

*Wright Family Foundation* – Their \$25,000 gift will help renovate The Tower Building - La Salle's residential facility.

*Citigroup Foundation* – A gift of \$5,000 will fund residential needs and support academic program attendance.

*Ronald McDonald House Charities* – see below.



Staff and students from La Salle School visited The Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region on December 11 to accept \$5,302 in RMHC grant monies. Standing, from left to right, are RMHC's Patrick Trefflietti, La Salle Staff Members Sarah Martinez, Sarah Davies, Ken Valentine, Marita Jadloos and Colleen Courtney, Student Dwan S., and RMHC's Patricia Arnott. Kneeling are La Salle Student Josh S. (left) and Staff Member Rob Ward. Trefflietti and Arnott are both McDonald's owner/operators and members of the RMHC Grants Committee.

Timeless were the basic techniques and approaches which constantly reinforce the inherent goodness of the children."

— Prevention Counselor Paul Macey on The 12 Lasallian Virtues discussed at The 2001 Lasallian Leadership Institute summer assembly.



**LA SALLE AIDS 911 RELIEF EFFORT**

In October 2001, La Salle Staff Members Tom Doyle and Irene Cronin joined La Salle School Students Mark B. and Stephen D. (not pictured) to deliver a check in the amount of \$664 to the Albany office of the The American Red Cross. La Salle staff and students collected these funds for the September 11 relief effort.

**La Salle and Lights in the Park**

La Salle student volunteers helped to direct cars and guide visitors through The Fifth Annual Capital Holiday Lights in the Park held in Albany's Washington Park from November 23 to December 31, 2001. Approximately 22,000 vehicles passed through this display sponsored by The Albany Police Athletic League.

**LA SALLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER**

The **LA SALLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER** is published quarterly by the Development Office of La Salle School, Inc., Albany, NY 12203. The Newsletter serves as a means of communication between La Salle School and its constituents: friends, professional associates, and all in the La Salle School family.

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