



Cecilia Powers helps a group of students prepare for student elections.

“Wouldn’t it be great,” Sara said, “if students at Christian Brothers High School formed mentoring relationships with youngsters at [a neighboring elementary school] Immaculate Conception?” Ms. Powers not only thought it was a terrific idea, but she gave Sara the organizational support and self-confidence to make it happen. “No one else had really done that before,” Sara says. As a result, about 100 students participated in four joint programs last year, and the project, called *Brother’s Buddies*, will continue.

Some of Sara’s skills were developed in a student leadership class Ms. Powers developed three years ago. The high school was asking a great deal of elected and potential student leaders, Ms. Powers thought, “and, if we’re going to require that, we need to prepare them.” In her class, students learn leadership basics, from shaking hands and running meetings to giving speeches and dealing with group conflict.

Outside of class, Ms. Powers directs co-curricular activities – school assemblies, clubs, dances,

rallies – and still finds plenty of time to talk with students one-on-one. “I ask students a lot of questions. If the right questions are asked, I find that they can be a good tool for helping students to process information and come to conclusions on their own without necessarily having to be told,” she says.

Ms. Powers finds her reward in “seeing students do exciting things, helping them learn in a different arena, helping them step into being themselves.” She persuades them that, like Sara, “they are needed, and what they have to contribute is important to the school and important to the community.”

The Lasallian Difference

Lasallian schools are indeed different, and nowhere does that become more apparent than in the schools’ teachers themselves – teachers who have a true concern for the student as a whole person – teachers who take the approach of meeting students where they are right now, both intellectually and spiritually, and using that place as the starting point for their teaching – teachers who demonstrate that, after three centuries, the “twelve virtues” are alive and well. The students who shared their stories here have honored their teachers’ work by demonstrating, through their own words and deeds, that they are, in fact, learning much more than academic subjects: they are developing the ability to think and act independently within a context of Christian values. That ability will serve them well as they venture into the world where they will use their own unique gifts to serve others. 🌟