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MEd Student Secures Funds for Playground for Special Needs Students



Krystal DeJesus embracing two special needs children on the barrier-free playground she helped build she was required to research and report on a facet of her school's budget.

As education finance continues to command headlines, Krystal DeJesus, a University of St. Thomas Master in Education graduate student, found the funds to build a \$63,000 barrier-free playground for special needs children in Aldine ISD through the Be An Angel Foundation.

A Special Education teacher at Oleson Elementary, DeJesus said the motivation to begin such a large project came initially from UST professor Dr. Jim LeBuffe's

Ethical Leadership course where

DeJesus realized that the playground at Oleson Elementary was so dilapidated and inaccessible that many of the school's special needs students were spending recess sitting indoors or on a bench unable to play. The school serves more than 900 children and is located in a low-income area of north Houston.

"I found that usually the PTA or PTO buys playgrounds, and it's not budgeted," said DeJesus. "The one we had was 16 years old and falling apart. I went around to other schools that had installed playgrounds in the last few years and found that a couple other schools in Aldine got their playgrounds through an organization called Be An Angel."

Be An Angel, a non-profit organization, strives to improve the quality of life for children with multiple disabilities or profound deafness by providing services to individuals and institutions requiring supplemental funding.

"They had room in their budget for one more playground to be built," DeJesus said. "I wrote them a letter describing our situation and our campus funding. It was presented to the Be An Angel board and they accepted it. They verified that everything was true and agreed to build a playground for the school."

Over the course of the year, the Be An Angel Foundation raised money for a barrier-free playground, which can now accommodate students with medical aid

which can now accommodate students with medical aid devices such as wheelchairs or walkers.

DeJesus will graduate in December and said she hopes to work as an administrator for the Aldine ISD.

"For the past six years I have been an in-home trainer for parents of special needs children and worked with life skills students and students with autism," said DeJesus. "I hope that in my job as an administrator, I'll be able to reach out to more of our kids with special needs."



UST Hires Matt Luther as Golf Coach

The growing University of St. Thomas Athletic ■ Department will introduce two additional teams to its intercollegiate roster with men's and women's golf teams in fall 2011. Helping to tee-off the program is newly hired golf coach, Matt Luther, who has already begun recruiting students for the men's and women's golf teams.

"St. Thomas has a great deal of potential for student-athlete golfers," Luther said. "Houston is a hotbed for golf and South Texas is home to some great junior players. I look forward to drawing from that pool of talented junior golfers in the area to build the golf program at UST."

Luther has spent the last five years working in player development and golf operations at Royal Oaks Country Club since 2008 and The Woodlands Country Club from 2006 to 2008. Luther was also a volunteer coach for the Houston Baptist University men's and women's golf teams in the 2010-2011 season. He is a member of the Professional Golfers Association of America and is also Titleist Performance Institute Certified Golf Fitness Instructor.

"Matt is the perfect person to begin the rebirth of our golf program," said UST Athletic Director Todd Smith. "He has an extensive teaching background, college coaching experience and played golf at St. Edward's when they participated at the Division II level. We look forward to working with Matt as we offer young men and women the opportunity to earn a quality, private liberal arts education while they continue their golfing careers at UST."

Luther played collegiate golf at St. Edward's University and earned a degree in marketing in 2004. He continues to compete professionally in the Southern Texas Section of the PGA of America.

UST Students Plan Concert to Benefit Local Food Bank

upport local musicians and help fight hunger at The Concert in the Mall, a benefit concert for the Houston Food Bank from 4-8 p.m., Saturday, April 2 on the University of St. Thomas Campus Life Mall.

Several Houston area bands will perform including The Beans (with several current UST students), Reckless Endeavor, Finnegan, Tax the Wolf, and Fat Tony (former UST student).

Admission is \$1 or one canned food item, all of which will be donated to the Houston Food Bank.

The event is open to the public and is hosted by the Office of Residence Life and Student Government Association. Parking is available for \$2 in the Moran Center Parking Garage, 3807 Graustark, West Alabama at Graustark.

Find it on facebook by searching for Concert on the Mall, or call 713-525-3836 for more information.



Focus on Bu

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UST World Cup

The International Student Association I the UST World Cup soccer tournam between various UST community teams cheer for your friends and classmates an win some prizes. The elimination round held at 1 p.m., Sunday, March 27 at Ha For more information, contact isa@sttho



B.K. Smith r. Virginia E Witches in 1 B.K. Smith Lect held at 7:30 p.m. The event is free information, con

UST Jazz Ensemble

r. Malcolm Rector will direct the U Ensemble in a concert held at 7:30 Tuesday, April 5 in Cullen Hall. The Ja is known for its sophisticated sound and improvisation. The concert is free and o public. For more information, contact M Dupleich Stuart at 713-525-3159.



Senior Class

he UST Alui Alumni Rela Countdown to G April 8 in the O Students can pur graduation annot reserve a seal pla provided. RSVP

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will host ent . Come d maybe will be ckett Field. om.edu.



Lecture in History

ernhard will explore "Puritans and Bermuda, 1651-1655" at the annual are in History. The lecture will be, Thursday, **March 31** in Cullen Hall, and open to the public. For more tact Dr. Irving Kelter at du.

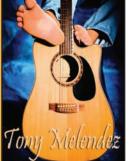
ST Jazz p.m., zz Ensemble I musical pen to the Ionique



Roar

nni Association and Office of tions will host the Roar Grad Finale: raduation at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, d Bookstore, Crooker Center. chase their cap and gown, order incements and class rings and iza brick. Lunch and prizes will be to alumni@stthom.edu by April 7.

Acclaimed Musician Plays Guitar with His Feet



The University of St. Thomas Catholic Outreach
Program will host a Lenten Renewal Concert
featuring internationally acclaimed guitarist Tony
Melendez. The concert will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday,
March 27 in the Jerabeck Athletic Center Gymnasium.

The concert will be coupled with Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation. A barbecue benefitting UST Campus Ministry will precede the concert. Serving begins at 4 p.m.

Born without arms, Tony Melendez taught himself to play guitar with his feet at a young age. He now brings his

message of hope and inspiration to youth and young adults through his music ministries. Most notably, he was selected to perform for Pope John Paul II during the Holy Father's visit to Los Angeles in 1987.

Tony Melendez Ministries seeks to serve youth and young adults, particularly those who are underprivileged. Melendez's visit to the University of St. Thomas is an incredible Lenten opportunity for young people and their families to grow in their faith and to praise God.

Tickets are \$3 in advance and \$5 at the door. To make reservations, call 713-525-3149 or e-mail elsie.biron@stthom.edu.

UST Performs Ideal Husband

Blackmail, intrigue, political corruption, public image versus personal honor and the triumph of love; all these ingredients come together in Oscar Wilde's delicious comedy, *An Ideal Husband*. The play will be performed at 8 p.m., **March 31**, **April 1-2**, **7-9** and **14-16** on the UST campus, Jones Hall.



Who is above temptation? Who hasn't taken a misstep? Set in 1895, this play is as timely today as it was during La Belle Époque. As Wilde himself noted, "Sooner or later, we shall all have to pay for what we do." But, "No one should be entirely judged by their past." Still, "to live the truth. Ah! That is the great thing in life, to live the truth."

The play is presented by the University of St. Thomas Fine Arts and Drama Department, Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Forum, the Houston Young Professionals Supporting Irish Studies and The Irish Society.

Admission is \$5 for UST students, faculty or staff; \$10 other students or seniors; \$15 general public.

To RSVP or for more details, please contact the Fine Arts and Drama Department at 713-525-3520. The University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Program is funded in part by a grant from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.

Lenten Lecture Series



The 22nd Annual
Lenten Lecture Series
will be held at 7:30 p.m.
on Wednesdays during
Lent, March 9 – April 13,
on the University of
St. Thomas campus.

The series has covered a wide range of

topics important to Catholic life. This year's theme, "Americans on the Road to Sainthood," follows a discussion of the canonization process with examinations of several Americans whose causes of sanctification are now being promoted.

• March 23, Scanlan Room
Dr. Louis and Mrs. Alice Varela

"Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen"

- March 30, Cullen Hall
 Fr. Jack Whitley, CSB
 "Founder of the Knight of Columbus:
 Fr. Michael McGivney"
- April 6, Cullen Hall
 Fr. Anthony Borrow, SJ, and Pepe Ruiz, SJ
 "Missionaries of the New World: Eusebio
 Kino and Miguel Pro"
- April 13, Scanlan Room
 Carlos Esparza, SJ, and Dr. Paul Hahn
 "Missionary of the Wider World: Fr. Walter
 Ciszek, SJ"

It is hoped that members of the community will be inspired by these heroes of the faith and experience personal growth in the Lord's Kingdom. These events are free and open to the public. For more information, call 713-525-3582.

Nursing Alumni Donate \$1 Million

Nursing at the University of St. Thomas grows from deep roots that continue to nurture future generations of nurses. The Associated Nursing Alumni, graduates of Dominican College,



St. Joseph's and the University of St. Thomas, have remained closely tied to UST and have celebrated a legacy of dedicated nurses who vigorously supported the resurgent nursing program.

The Associated Nursing Alumni have been waiting for UST to re-establish the School of Nursing since the school's closing in 1986. For the past 25 years, these dedicated alumni have collected donations, saved their pennies and invested wisely in hopes of creating an endowed chair in honor of former School of Nursing dean, the late Sister Mary Martina Casey, CCVI. The group achieved its long-standing goal, and presented a \$1 million check to establish the Sister Mary Martina Casey Endowed Chair in Nursing at the Nursing Alumni Mass on Saturday, Feb. 26. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza.

Vera Kuhn, a 1966 graduate of Dominican College, has been involved with the Associated Nursing Alumni since the organization's inception. Kuhn, chair of the organization's finance committee, was at the Nursing Alumni Mass to help present the \$1 million check.

"To establish a chair in honor Sr. Mary Martina is so meaningful to all of us in the Associated Nursing Alumni who have worked so hard to see this come to fruition. Our Catholic nursing education not only gave us the desire to be good nurses, we wanted to see our school continue to educate nurses in that same faithful tradition," Kuhn said.

For more information, visit www.stthom.edu/nursing or http://nursingust.wordpress.com.

Star View is published by the Office of Marketing Communications as a means of informing the UST community about University and campus news.

Call 713-525-3116 with questions and/or comments.

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