

Bachmann Applauds PISF Students' Commitment, Dedication

By **CHRISTINA HAMLETT**
The Outlook

A Chinese proverb relates that the best time to plant a tree was always 20 years ago. The second best time is always today.

So, too, can this philosophy be applied to the fact that if we hope to provide shelter to others in an uncertain world, the seeds of caring and compassion must be planted and nurtured at an early age by the next generation of Earth's caretakers.

It's an ongoing cycle of social responsibility that certainly wasn't lost on Peter Bachmann, Flintridge Prep's headmaster, when he was invited a year ago to participate along with fellow educators and community business leaders in an informational breakfast meeting focused on changing the future of Southern California philanthropy.

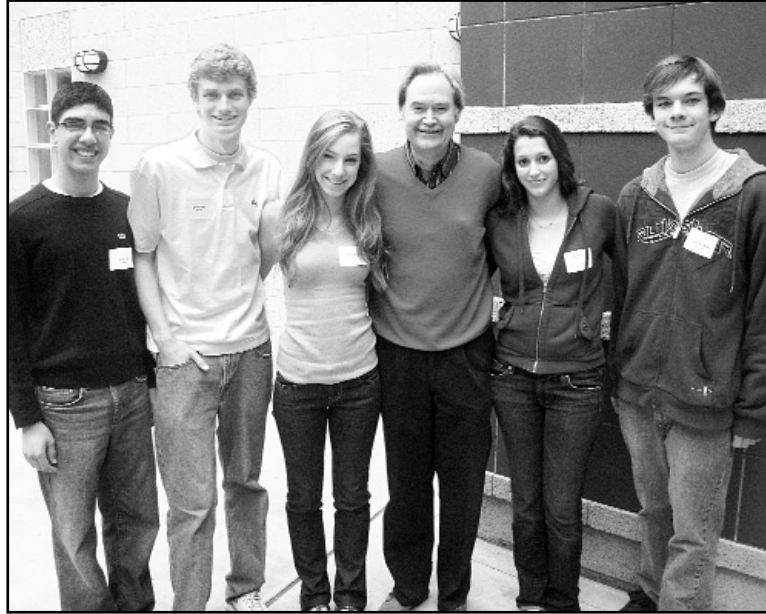
Says Bachmann, "We were called together by Jonathan Jaffrey, CEO of Springbanc Social Capital Advisors, to hear about his vision for an innovative program that would give area students some valuable first-hand experience on how grants are awarded and administered in the context of charitable organizations. I was very excited about what his proposal had to offer because at Flintridge Prep we have always emphasized leadership, mentorship and community service. From what we learned that morning, the framework and objectives of the Pasadena Independent Schools Foundation clearly represented an excellent fusion of corporate experience and sponsorship and the energy that young people could bring to the task

of research, planning, communications, and brainstorming solutions to the real-life funding challenges of local charities. As far as I was concerned, Flintridge Prep couldn't get on board fast enough."

Approximately 40 high school students from six independent schools participated in the pilot program, the sponsors of which have made \$48,000 available for 501(c)(3) distribution.

"Throughout the school year, the students have been supporting a combination of eight different charities to varying degrees based upon deliberations, grants analysis and site visits," Bachmann said. "Eleven of the participants are from Flintridge Prep, and I think it's a positive side benefit that you have such a wide range of students from different schools working with one another toward the accomplishment of common goals. Through the diversity of extracurricular activities associated with PISF, it means you have the opportunity to collaborate with the very same person you competed with the previous week out on the athletic field."

Students met twice a month on alternating Monday afternoons. As Bachmann explains, "Half of the meetings are here at Prep for classes in which they learn about foundation responsibilities and the other half are site visits to the selected charities where they can observe what's going on, see the clientele being served, and ask questions of the administrators to broaden their understanding. They also have an online discussion board in which they record their impressions,



Flintridge Prep Headmaster Peter Bachmann (third from right) poses with some of Flintridge Prep's participants in PISF. They are (from left) Justin Farshidi, Jason Bunn, Lauren Guarino, Evie Bettman and Jackson McHenry.

observations and analyses."

Flintridge Prep students do not get any academic credit for participating in the program; this decision was left up to the administrators of the selected schools.

Bachmann has been faculty advisor to the program for the entire year, a privilege that he doesn't take lightly.

"I've attended the classes, gone on site visits with the students and am also involved in their major deliberations," he said. "I don't have to rely on hearsay from others since I've been able to observe first-hand how the students are processing information, exploring different strategies, and learning how to put the needs of others ahead of

themselves.

"The kids are uniformly enthusiastic about this program. They also feel incredibly empowered with the responsibility of making intelligent and equitable decisions that are going to benefit the financial health and sustainability of the charities."

Bachmann continued, "From what I've seen, they pay incredibly close attention in the classes and take advantage of the discussion boards online to chat with one another. They're very shrewd observers on the site visits, too, and ask great questions. I also have to say that the level and intensity of their deliberations have been comparable to that of adults on founda-

tion boards. Even though the year isn't over yet, they're already looking forward to participating in the program next year insofar as mentoring and assisting students who are new to PISF."

Bachmann added: "I think the foundation is creating a valuable model and a curriculum that could easily be translated to public and private schools around the state and throughout the nation. Jonathan has been particularly enthusiastic and committed to communicating what the foundation is doing to the public schools districts, as well as through the California Association of Independent Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools."

In an earlier interview with The Outlook, Bachmann reflected that Flintridge Prep's moral barometer has always been to provide an arena of intellectual stimulation and human kindness that ensures its graduates are not only academically ready for college and lifelong learning, but that they are also sensitive and empathic to the needs of their fellow human beings.

"While I'm aware that there are schools around the country that strive to increase student awareness about philanthropy, I don't know of any that actually place the students in the role of distributing real money or engaging in this level of analysis and deliberations," he said. "My hat's off to everyone who got onboard this incredible pilot program because I think we're going to see tremendous benefit to the community."



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sponsors and charities
who participated
in the successful
inaugural year of the
Pasadena Independent
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