

VERB features

From the Desk of Paul W. Hosch

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VERBUM DEI
HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Friend,

On March 11th, Verbum Dei hosted its first-ever virtual President's Gala in support of our Resilience Fund—funds for the CWSP revenue lost because of the pandemic, for required PPE's, and for additional scholarship support for our families. We had a great turnout—over 200 logins with many of those having multiple guests watching from each device, adding-up to over 600 individuals! These supporters came from LA, OC and all over the country. However, we missed our matching goal of \$75K for the evening, but we were please to have raised \$530K—we needed \$45K more to meet the matching gift.

Our most important honoree—our senior class—was a big part of our Gala, and we made sure to feature them this year. We gave them virtual etiquette and networking workshops on the “dos” and “don'ts” of livestreaming. They were eager to learn, and we answered many questions to alleviate their anxieties about socializing in a virtual environment.

The highlight of the night was Board member Dr. Frank Luntz's live Q&A with a few seniors and alumni, where they spoke about the challenges of living through a pandemic. The students most appreciated the support they received from teachers, staff and board members through these difficult times. Dr. Luntz pointed out that 50% of our student body has been directly impacted by COVID-19. Their resilience increased as they continued to work through illness, household income loss, missing key senior year moments, and the lack of direct social interaction with classmates. The students talked about how attending Verbum Dei has changed their lives and brightened their futures, as they now have dreams they never thought of before Verbum Dei. They mentioned the brotherhood they've experienced and how those friendships are for a lifetime. Finally, they talked about how they will all give back to Verbum Dei, like you have.

During the breakout sessions after the event, seniors were able to talk directly with donors, Corporate Work Study Partners, and Adopt-A-Student Parents. This led to great conversations. “As a teacher of our current seniors last year, I was impressed by the poise, candor, and personable nature of my former students in my post-gala breakout room,” said John Stradley, an English teacher, who moderated a discussion. “The easy conversation allowed students a chance to share both their college acceptances and their thoughts about the potential of leaving the familiarity of home for their college education.”



Verb Students and Dr. Frank Luntz during the Q&A session

over, please...

Honorees, Michael Feeley/Latham & Watkins and Jack and Judy Perry, were very gracious and supportive of the Resilience Fund and brought new individuals to Verbum Dei. It was the perfect time to honor them because only they could accomplish so much for Verbum Dei during a time of a pandemic.

For the first time, we honored two individuals who recently passed away and for whom Scholarship Funds have been established to honor their memories. These two were giants among giants. The outpouring of love for Gary Phillips and Jack Lasater was astonishing and far more than we expected, as their family, friends and colleagues reflected on two lives that exemplified the ideal of “Men for Others” we all aspire to be. They gave wholeheartedly to Verbum Dei and will remain in heart of the Verbum Dei community far into the future.

The Gala received reviews that ranged from “It was the best virtual gala I’ve seen” to “You all tried to do too much.” Well, if you know me, the Mission Advancement Team, our Mission Advancement Committees, and the Verbum Dei community-at-large, you’d know we push the envelope—it’s what we require of our students...why would staff and faculty do any less? We will do it again next year! ...Push the envelope. We made our production company do things they’ve never done before; for that we are exceedingly proud. Next year, expect more out-of-the-box thinking that will give you many opportunities to show your support for our students and to make a significant impact on their lives, their families, this community, city, state, country, and the world. You honored us with your presence and support. Thank you for consistently being there for our young gentlemen—you model who they will become. Their success is fueled by your support. Thank You!