



ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

Since 2007, the East Rochester Alumni Foundation has awarded more than 90 grants to support our school and students in many ways. Over the years we have helped with cultural arts programs, sound and lighting systems for the auditorium, field trips, supplies for the Science Olympiad teams, SAT preparation courses, scholarships for the summer FITS (Fun in the Sun) program, My Friend's Closet, and Junior Achievement in a Day.

We have also, however, given funds to programs to help our students develop good values and effectively deal with life's difficult choices. For example...

Positive Peers began in 2011 as a program for seventh- and eighth-graders, and has been expanded to include sixth grade this coming year. Students are nominated by the faculty based on their attendance, work ethic, and positive behavior. Teachers and selected students gather a few times a year for a pizza lunch in celebration of achieving these goals, and the Alumni Foundation is proud to provide the food and supplies.

ER Connect was founded last year through the Dignity for All Students Act awareness focus groups. Several students at the secondary level sought to create and foster a positive school climate by connecting students and staff members through various activities and programs. One such program, Staff of the Month, awards a mug to a staff member in appreciation of all he or she has done to help our school and students. Also, the seniors were treated to an ice cream social for having earned the most points in the students-vs-staff competitions at the inaugural ER Connect Activity Day, held Friday, April 11. (*Photos from the afternoon are at www.tinyurl.com/nzmdgz4.)* The mugs and supplies for the social were paid for by the Alumni Foundation.

The Student of the Month program recognizes students in grades 6-12 who have made positive contributions to the school community. It serves to especially honor those who are not often in the spotlight. The Students of the Month receive backpacks, courtesy of the Alumni Foundation, at a breakfast for them and their families.

Quarterly Recognition of Honor Roll Students began this past spring. Students in grades 7-12 who had made the honor roll at least one quarter last year were given ice cream sundaes at lunch time. The students were proud to receive this treat based on their academic achievement, and were excited to learn this recognition will continue this coming year.

– Anita M. Mance, Grants Chairperson

Save the date!

East Rochester Christmas Festival – Saturday, Dec. 13

Much more info to come as the date approaches!

Photos from the June 23 Baccalaureate ceremony, at which many ER alumni participated, are at www.tinyurl.com/q4tzqgj.

CELEBRATING OUR NEWEST ALUMNI: At the conclusion of graduation rehearsal on June 26, the members of the Class of 2014 were welcomed to the ranks of alumni. Katie Conners DeVito and Anita Mance (Alumni Foundation Board members) distributed brown and white ER mugs as gifts to the graduates.

Addressing the Class of '14, Miss Mance said, 'Many people have given of themselves to support you along the way. As you look back to your time in our school, please know you are part of our ER family, and even though you graduate, you remain part of us. In the future, perhaps you'll find a way to give back to our ER community.'

Congratulations and best of everything to our newest alumni!



ERAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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~ ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT ~

Lisa Battaglini Romach, ERHS '73: It's Gotta Be Fun!

As we began to look at East Rochester alumni to spotlight, we were amazed at the number who have been extremely successful in the field of music, and realized that ER has been home to many of the finest musicians locally, nationally, and internationally. These talented individuals remind us that it's possible to pursue even the greatest of dreams beginning in our own small hometown. With this in mind, we decided to focus on those talented graduates who have gone on to careers in music. Please feel free to write to eralumnispotlight@gmail.com if you have any suggestions of musical alumni we can profile in the future! While we know we'll never be able to highlight all of them, we'd like to feature Lisa Battaglini Romach in this edition, and continue in the issues to follow.

For more than 25 years, Lisa Romach has been yelling at kids. From the top of her lungs, at the back of the East Rochester School District auditorium, she yells at them to smile, project, sing out, and have fun. 'It's Gotta Be Fun' is Romach's motto, and she has shared it, lived it, breathed it each year as she produces Sing-Out, an annual musical revue that raises money for children's charities in the Rochester area.

An ERHS '73 alumna, the former Lisa Battaglini was an original cast member in the late '60s. In 1989, she teamed up with local musician Casey Filiaci, also a former cast member, to revive the production. Their efforts have created an annual tradition for residents of ER and beyond, who look forward to the two-night productions each May.

Romach's musical passion was sparked at an early age: she took piano lessons from Helen Thompson at the age of 4, and by the time she was 12, was serving as a student teacher. She quickly advanced to become a master teacher for Thompson, and worked with the instructor until her death in 1989. Romach then formed her own musical education venture, Romlen Studio of Music, which she co-owned for six years.

In 2000 Romach opened the Center for Musical Arts, on West Commercial Street, through which she continues to offer full-service musical and vocal lessons to budding young performers.

While her teaching career has grown over the years, behind the businesses is the steady drumbeat of Sing-Out. Under Romach's helm, the show has undergone many changes, including incorporating into a not-for-profit company in 1997. As a result, it has provided a means of community service for hundreds of high school students, many of them from ER's halls.

While the production attracts students who could rival the talent seen on 'American Idol,' it also draws those with two left feet or kids who couldn't hold a tune in a bucket. And yet, she inspires them to do one of the scariest, most nerve-racking things ever: get up on stage in front of hundreds of people and sing at the top of their lungs. Romach's encouraging words and support provide them with an opportunity to shine, and for some, it's the only experience like that they'll ever have. And though Sing-Out is open to students of any musical level, Romach encourages the cast and crew to adhere to the highest level of professionalism. Together with Filiaci (an Emmy-nominated musician), the team of directors – including established dance instructor Pamela Hin and Me & The Boyz singer Teena Pallini Guarnera – create musical and vocal arrangements and choreography that translates into a creative, exceptional show year after year. And all of the effort and hard work has put more than \$75,000 into the hands of local children's charities.

Romach's dedication to the community and her passion for fostering a love of music in Rochester's children have not gone unnoticed. In 2012, she was given an inaugural Inspiring Woman Award from Rochester's urban radio station, WDKX. Two years later, she was named Monroe County Child Advocate of the Year, and honored at a ceremony hosted by Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks.

A lifelong ER resident, Romach boasts continuously of her husband, Doug; three children, Mike, Tim, and Kimberly; her daughters-in-law, the former Katie Owens and Shannon Pizzingrilli; and the lights of her life – grandchildren Emma, Gianna, Domenic, Ella, and Hayden.

Sing-Out is about kids helping kids. And at its heart is Lisa Romach, who over a 20-year career has inspired a cast of hundreds to get involved and be engaged in the community.

– by *Melissa Greco Lopes '01*; submitted by *Helen Urzetta Tortorici*



Photos from the inaugural 6-8 Alumni Connection Day, held Friday, June 6, are at www.tinyurl.com/pqtdy2z.