



A **love** for God.
A desire to **learn**.
A commitment to
serve.

San Jose Christian School

Campbell, CA

Dan Meester, Administrator

Project Summary

San Jose Christian School is home to 280 students in preschool - 8th grade. Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, the 51-year-old school has an ethnically diverse student population, reflecting the San Francisco Bay Area's diversity. Although SJCS students come from 100 different church congregations, 3 churches officially support the school. Enrollment is historically tied to the success of the local technology companies, and the student population is down from a high of 350 five years ago.

SJCS has not made major fundraising a priority over the years, as evidenced by its historic pattern of leased campuses and small endowment. Donations were typically used solely to support the general budget. With exorbitant Bay Area rental rates, tuition has increased substantially each year, and about 25% of the school's expense is rent. This project was a means to think more strategically about fundraising and facilities needs in the years ahead.

The project involved 3 parts: revamping the school's annual campaign, preparing for a capital campaign, and planning for future facilities.



Project Results

Annual Financial Development Plan

- Analyzed historic giving patterns to identify major donors
- Created a case statement to use in making requests of major donor
- Created a donor appreciation event to recognize major gifts and highlight their use at the school
- Leveraged the current structure of the school's annual fund drive to continue raising funds
- Conducted an auction to raise funds for special projects

Preparing for a Capital Campaign

- Annual drive conversations provided a means of getting comfortable with soliciting funds in the same way as would be done in a capital campaign
- Engaged board of trustees in sharing the school's vision with prospective donors and soliciting contributions
- Conducted training activities with trustees using Van Lunen Center advisor and Calvin College advancement staff

Planning for Future Facilities

- Spent significant time visioning with board of trustees about future facilities needs
- Currently approaching 2 supporting churches about purchasing or building a joint facility
- Considering a smaller capital campaign that would cover campus renovations, a multipurpose building, and growing the endowment



What We Have Learned

Advice Based on Successes

- Personal contact with major donors leads to higher per capita giving. Soliciting funds face to face yielded 52% more money from our top 6 donors.
- Stories of success and vision motivates new givers. Our efforts netted 7 new "major donors."
- Trustees must help sell the vision of the school and solicit donations. The administrator should lead but can't be the sole fundraiser.

Advice Based on Challenges

- Some trustees feel ill equipped to seek donations, so harness their gifts in another part of the process.
- A school's first capital campaign feels daunting, so the administrator and key trustees must work to build consensus as to its value.
- Current school parents serving as trustees must continually be reminded of the importance of long-term thinking and planning in addition to dealing with the matters of the moment.