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## De La Salle North Catholic breaks ground at new school

05/10/2007

The 2007 graduating class from De La Salle North Catholic High School will be neither the first, nor the largest. But they will be the last to graduate from the former Queen of Peace Parish site.

Officials say they have been "fortunate and grateful" for the property owned by Holy Cross Parish. From there, the school will have sent on three groups of seniors, almost all of whom go to college. But the school had outgrown the site and development plans were scuttled over property litigation that was part of the Archdiocese of Portland bankruptcy.

In the fall, De La Salle will open the doors to a new building — the renovated former Kenton school on the North Portland MAX line. Leased from the Portland School District, the site is going through a \$6 million upgrade which will include the building of a new gymnasium.

There is need to expand. The incoming freshman class will be the largest in the school's history, and there will be openings in the sophomore and upper grades because of the additional space.

"It gives us a permanent home," says Jerry Bitz, chair of the De La Salle board. "It gives us more opportunity to serve our students and serve our community."

Fundraising is under way and though the \$10 million goal is lofty, Bitz is optimistic backers will come through.

He says parents already took a "huge risk" seven or so years ago when they sent their children to the new school. Now that De La Salle has proven itself, support is growing. Mary and Tim Boyle, of Columbia Sportswear fame, have already given \$1 million.

In the class of 2007, 98 percent have been accepted to college in the fall with a per-student average of about \$30,000 in scholarships. Like all classes, they have worked a day per week in corporate internships as a way to offset tuition. Part of the second high school in the nation to have such internships, students serve at law firms, tech companies, financial firms, apparel manufacturers and publishing houses.

"These are real jobs, done by real students and done very successfully," says Steve Spence, UBS financial services chief, longtime supporter and now chair of the school's fundraising campaign.

The new location, on the light rail, will be a boost because about half of the students work downtown.

Carson Hohnstein, a sophomore who had been accepted at Wilson High and chose De La Salle instead, is delighted about the school because the student-to-faculty ratio means lots of attention. She will welcome the new space, especially a gymnasium. She plays soccer and basketball.

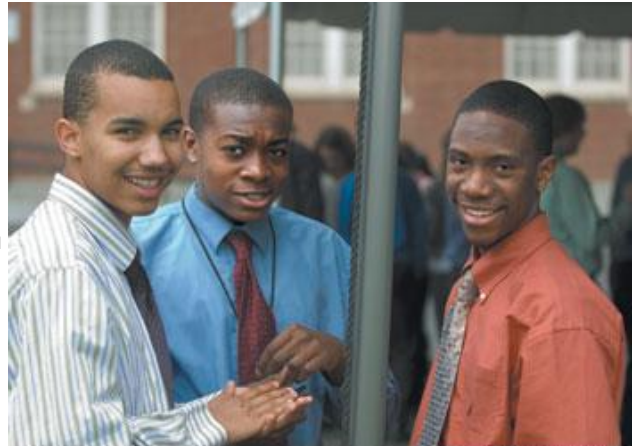
Michelle Juravic, a graduate of Archbishop Howard School and a member of Holy Rosary Parish, appreciates De La Salle's small size and the affordability for her parents. She has been impressed with scripture classes and the way teachers seem to give individual attention.

Edgar Navarro, who will graduate next month, looks somewhat longingly at the splendid 95-year-old building. He attended grade school at Kenton and knows it will be a good place for De La Salle.

But Navarro is delighted for younger students, both because of the building and because of the De La Salle experience ahead for them, which transcends location.

"The education has been fantastic," said the senior, who has done internships at Holy Redeemer School and Goodwill. He played soccer and baseball and was part of the faith and leadership program. He plans to study law, starting out at Portland Community College.

At last week's groundbreaking, students from all the classes and a graduate wielded shovels. A roaring hail storm slowed progress but made the day even more memorable for the students, teachers and supporters who came.



Students Diante Allen, Jacob Capua and Jonathan Hardy. Sentinel photo by Bob Kiems

"You not only want everyone to come to the knowledge of the truth, but you want all persons to be saved," said Christian Brother Jonathan Cord, giving a benediction at the ground breaking. He prayed for students, parents, faculty and neighbors.

Matt Powell, president of the school, lauded the unique private-public partnership between the Catholic school and the public school board. He also vowed that, despite the expansion, De La Salle would continue to offer "small, intimate relationship-based education" among neighbors.

The teacher-student ratio is 17 to 1 and 90 percent of the students come from within two miles of the school.

Workers are now busy converting a playroom into a science lab and increasing the size of other rooms.

The graduation ceremony for De La Salle North is set for 2 p.m. Saturday, June 16, at Emmanuel Temple in North Portland.

Valedictorians are Meagan Halski and Brian Walsh. Salutatorian is Megan Godwin.



Sentinel photo by Bob Kama

Ground is broken at the new De La Salle North Catholic building.

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