



Fall 2018

BOYS REPUBLIC & Report

Cutting-Edge Technology Modernizes Della Robbia Wreath Tradition

■ Dennis Kuhl: **Los Angeles Angels Club Chairman graciously promotes critical work experience program.**

This year, Boys Republic's wreath production is getting an update. Della Robbia Christmas wreaths have been fashioned by students since 1923 and, beginning in the 1950s, the teenagers have produced them in a formal factory setting. Yet, even in the aughts, elements of the production process are still manual. Frozen in time, these processes are time-consuming and labor-intensive, and are most often performed by adult staff who work alongside Boys Republic students.

A new generation of innovators are streamlining the operation so that Boys Republic students can continue to craft the same classic Della Robbia wreaths in a more efficient manner. Another group of students from Cal Poly Pomona formed "Project Ponderosa," the name of their senior Engineering project. Together, the Cal Poly students designed and created two new pieces of equipment for the project: semi-automated pod cutters and, in the near future, an automated painting system.

The two semi-automated pod cutters will replace the band saw adult employees use to manually cut the seed pods and pine cones that are strung together and affixed onto the fragrant evergreen boughs of Della Robbia wreaths. Now,



MR. DENNIS KUHL, above left, graciously offered to appear in literature promoting the annual Della Robbia campaign.

Historic Work Experience Program Enters 95th Year

the natural decorations that adorn the wreaths can be cut by the students who will have access to the machinery that is six times more efficient at cutting the materials than the band saw.

And in the future, an additional piece of machinery the Cal Poly team will engineer is an automated spray painting system. The spray painting system will replace another labor-intensive process used during wreath production: for years, one adult has manually glazed each individual wreath with emerald paint and clear lacquer to maintain freshness. This process will be significantly improved by the automated system, which will increase production rates, create a more uniform application, and help reduce the amount of paint waste.

With the new machinery, the Cal Poly Engineering students introduce an automated, tech-focused solution to the manual methods previously used in wreath production. Since the automated and semi-automated machines



MODERNIZING THE PROCESS: Wreath production supervisor John Lemieux shows two Boys Republic students how the new semi-automated pod cutter functions. The machine, designed by Cal Poly Pomona Engineering students, is six times more effective than the manual process of cutting lotus pods that adorn Della Robbia wreaths.



WORKING TOWARD A COMMON GOAL: During wreath production, students learn employable work habits as they assemble and package an average of 3,000 wreaths per day. The teenagers must cooperate with one another, maintain a steady work pace, and follow a supervisor's instructions.

will bring production up-to-date with modern technology, disadvantaged students working under adult supervision will be exposed to maintaining and servicing machinery similar to ones they would encounter in any real-world factory job.

And this is critical since realistic job training is the focus of the Della Robbia wreath program. Each year, hundreds of youth at-risk for failure in their communities develop the skills they need to work in a warehouse. Students train in both the assembly room and the shipping room in Boys Republic's pod barn. They diligently sort through the cones, pods, and seeds that are then cut and arranged into natural rings, then help affix each circle onto the fragrant evergreen wreaths. Winesap apples and bright lemons are added, and the adorned wreaths are sprayed and placed onto a conveyor belt that carries them to the shipping room. Here, students unhook the finished wreaths, carefully package and seal them into boxes, and slide them down a conveyor belt to other students

who load them into delivery trucks.

The buzzing activity on both sides of wreath production—assembly and shipping—means that teenagers who previously lacked formal warehouse work experience acquire the skills they need to be successfully employed in this environment. Even if the teenagers decide that this intensive work is not for them, they learn important work habits that they can apply in any workplace. Each Della Robbia created and shipped is an opportunity for troubled teenagers to learn these important habits. Reporting to work on time, attending to the task at-hand, cooperating with coworkers, and taking direction from a supervisor are all skills students need to be employable in the real world.

The critical work experience wreath production provides at-risk teenagers, of course, would not be possible without the support of friends of Boys Republic. For generations, families and companies nationwide and abroad and many new friends have been drawn to the Della Robbia wreath campaign due in part to prominent Americans who, by posing for publicity photos with the festive boughs, sponsor and promote wreath sales.



MEANINGFUL WORK: Girls Republic students polish the Winesap apples that adorn the wreaths.

This year, Dennis Kuhl is the latest to generously accept the role of Della Robbia wreath campaign National Chairman. Mr. Kuhl began his career with the Los Angeles Angels as president before his promotion to Club Chairman in 2009. As Club Chairman, Mr. Kuhl's central focus is on renewing the Major League Baseball team's efforts in community outreach and involvement in civic affairs. Under his leadership, the Angels have grown tremendously in advancing key business initiatives, such as sponsorship and marketing revenues, and the nationwide expansion and marketing of the Angels brand.

Mr. Kuhl is personally involved with several Southern California charities. He serves as president of the "Light the Night" event which supports the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and is a founding board member of The Pacific Club IMPACT Foundation/Lott Trophy. Mr. Kuhl works with Susan G. Komen for the Cure, acting as a member of their Orange County Affiliate's Board of Directors and as one of their "Pink Tie Guys," a select group of advocates speaking out to find a cure for breast cancer.

He is on the executive committee for Cycle & Walk for the Cures and on the board of directors for several nonprofits including The Children's Education Foundation of Orange County, the Los Angeles Sports Council, Boys and Girls Club of Anaheim, and the Literacy Project Foundation.



THE GIVING SEASON: Students and staff work together in the assembly room to produce Della Robbia wreaths. Each wreath is truly a gift within a gift: while wreath sales support Boys Republic's programs in guidance and education, the program provides at-risk teenagers with realistic work experience.

Teenagers Make It their Mission to Serve Homeless

“Okay, guys, I’d like you to pay attention now.” At the sound of their supervisor’s directions, the kids strapped in the van ceased their chatter. “Look over there and notice what you see,” Jessica Ruiz continued. “This is where these men and women live.” The teenagers peered out of the large windows to the street lined by modest tents and makeshift tarp dwellings as Mrs. Ruiz, the Monrovia Day Program supervisor, showed them downtown Los Angeles’ Skid Row.

The students were being shuttled down Sixth Street to the Midnight Mission. The Midnight Mission, a non-profit organization that provides the homeless with meals, shelter, drug treatment and rehabilitation, and education, relies on volunteers to accomplish some of its services. And today, Monrovia Day, Girls Republic, and Los Angeles Residence students will serve the men and women at the Midnight Mission.

At the Midnight Mission, the teenagers toured the facilities and then trained to serve lunch in the cafeteria. By noon, a steady stream of people began to trickle in for lunch, and the teenagers

were prepared to assist them. The majority of the girls and boys were stationed behind the serving line to dole out rice, salad, beans, burritos, and pastries to the people presenting their trays.

Other students brought full

trays to disabled diners and ensured they had silverware and napkins. These teenagers weaved throughout the cafeteria, busing trays and talking



LUNCH AT THE MIDNIGHT MISSION: At-risk students serve lunch in the Midnight Mission’s cafeteria. The students volunteer almost monthly at the organization that services the homeless population living on Los Angeles’ Skid Row.

with the diners. Scattered throughout the cafeteria, the students sat down with men and women and shared conversations about their experiences and daily life. Two students worked at the back of the cafeteria taking peoples’ trays, sorting plastic cups and used utensils, and stacking trays.

Of the experience, the student volunteers particularly enjoyed interacting with the people they served. “It was fun, and I enjoyed talking to people,” Monrovia student Andrew says. Michael agrees. He passed out beans to diners, and he found that everyone he served was “nice and cool.” Another student said that it was his first time visiting the Midnight Mission on a field trip: “I really learned a lot. I hope to do this again to experience more about the place and the people,” Andy explains.

As the students reflect on their time with the homeless, they ride back through Sixth Street. Again, Mrs. Ruiz prompts the students to pay attention. “These are the people that you just served lunch to,” she says. For the students, they’re not just leaving Skid Row; they are seeing the men and women they just connected with and where they live.



New Volunteer Brings Business Acumen to Boys Republic

It is with great pleasure that Boys Republic welcomes Mrs. Dana Steiner to its Board of Directors. Mrs. Steiner comes to Boys Republic through her role as President of the Pasadena Auxiliary, an all-volunteer organization that has provided support to Boys Republic students since their founding in 1911.

Her background in retail makes her especially well suited to a leadership role in the Pasadena Auxiliary's thrift shop in Altadena. A California native, Mrs. Steiner grew up working in a family-owned lumber business and has worked in retail ever since.

She and her husband Brian, a building contractor, moved to Pasadena three years ago from the Visalia area. "I was out antique shopping and discovered the Boys Republic Thrift Shop. I became a customer and then a volunteer." Both she and Mr. Steiner are active in the Auxiliary.



Dana Steiner



RISING AWARENESS: Brewer Cottage students and staff let go of their pink balloons in honor of victims of breast cancer on October 25.

Boys in Pink Raise Awareness

Something different was happening during the month of October. Light rose bows lined the hallways. In town hall, a cluster of boys sported bright pink shirts. Fuchsia ankle socks appeared in classrooms. Everywhere, pink popped up.

Pink is not typically seen on Boys Republic's campus. But the shade was prominent during the past month, which is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. To raise awareness of the disease, Brewer Cottage organized activities during October.

Brewer, one of six residential "cottages" or dormitories on the main campus, created posters, wore pink accessories and t-shirts, hosted a walkathon, and arranged a balloon release. Each event served as a visual reminder of the devastating disease, and allowed staff and students alike to share facts and personal experiences about the cancer that effects thousands. Their bright activities caught other boys' attention, which sparked new awareness of the social issue on campus.

At Annual Awards Ceremony, Students Reap Rich Harvest

The Annual Awards Ceremony marked its 111th anniversary, and with it, rewarded recent graduates with significant support. Scholarship recipients accepted their awards at the September 20 ceremony on Boys Republic's main campus. They were celebrated by current students, staff, parents, and community members gathered to acknowledge their achievements in the program.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER Lisa Campbell-Motton addressed congregates at the Awards Ceremony. Ms. Campbell-Motton serves as Director of Los Angeles County Probation Child Welfare's Placement Permanency and Quality Assurance, and she used her experience with placement youth to connect with the students. Acknowledging the trials and tribulations the teens have experienced, she encouraged them to remain steadfast in defining themselves, persist despite obstacles, and use the resources available to them to achieve their goals.

While traditional schools offer educational scholarships almost exclusively, Boys Republic recognizes the various needs of its at-risk students striving to earn their own way in their communities. Scholarship awards can become a deposit on an apartment for a graduate who does

not have a home to return to, be applied towards work tools, appropriate clothing, or training to help a teenager qualify for a job, or help support a student further her or his education.

Among the awards presented at the ceremony were:

- Fowler Merle-Smith Family Scholarship of \$1,000 to Sabrina Heisner;
- Frank and Marianne Graves Scholarship of \$1,000 to Abraham Ortiz;
- Delight Groves Scholarship of \$750 to Sarena Acuna;
- Max L. Scott Scholarship of \$1500 to Joshua Perez;
- Everett and Jane Houser Scholarship of \$1,000 to Alex Peraza;
- Steve McQueen Scholarship Award of \$1,000 to Tyler Smith;
- Neile McQueen Scholarship of \$1,000 to Jose Garcia;
- Terry McQueen Scholarship of \$1,000 to Julian Benitez;
- Carmen Combs Scholarship of \$1,500 to Angela Lara;
- Don and Carol Bremer Endowed Aftercare Assistance Award of \$1,750 each to Daniel Kreis and Edwin Bonilla;
- Ed Korbel Scholarship of \$1,000 to Gabriel Ortiz;
- Matthew Kimo Householder Memorial Scholarship of \$500 to Rosie Van Dyke;
- Klein Family Scholarship of \$1,000 to Christopher Fermin;
- Elizabeth Winkler Memorial Scholarship of \$1,000 to Danny Ruiz;
- Paul and Mary Ganobcik "Nothing Without Labor" Scholarship of \$1,000 to Oscar Ramirez;
- Alex Chisholm Scholarship of \$1,000 each to Elijah Dodson and Joshua Chavarria;
- Friends of Steve McQueen Car Show Scholarship/Bruce Oliver Memorial of \$1,000 to Jose Villacona;

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Memorials Honor Special People, Events Through the Lives of Children

A memorial contribution to Boys Republic and Girls Republic is a meaningful way to honor a special person, a special event or the memory of a friend or loved one. Your gift will reap a second benefit as well by contributing directly to the programs of Boys and Girls Republic. In this way, the honor paid the designee will live on perpetually in the lives of the deserving young people you have helped.

The following are memorial and commemorative contributions made from August 1, 2018 through October 26, 2018.

Donor / In Memory of:

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Boys Republic and Girls Republic are private, non-profit, non-sectarian agencies helping troubled children aged 13 to 18. Rules for acceptance and participation in these programs are the same for everyone without regard for race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap.

www.boysrepublic.org



Students Reap Rich Harvest at Annual Awards Ceremony

(Continued from page 6)



ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR Eddie Lara received the 2018 award. Mr. Lara owns Taco Dudes, a Chino restaurant. He started his business from scratch after he discovered his brother's catering equipment, unused, in the garage. Eddie's initiative helped him succeed at Boys Republic from '89-'90.

- Pasadena Auxiliary Past Presidents Scholarship of \$1,000 to Rosie Van Dyke;
- Boys Republic Staff Scholarship of \$2,200 each to Lemuel Campos and Daniel Enriquez;
- Virginia Pease Hunt Scholarship of \$2,500 to Alex Guerrero;
- Debbie Montano Memorial Scholarship of \$1,500 to Ronald Romero;
- Orange County Auxiliary/Garry Hodge Scholarship of \$1,000 to Isiah Romero;
- H. B. Bell Scholarship of \$1,000 to Cielo Ramos;
- Dick Reichelderfer and Frances Kurilich Scholarship of \$1,000 to James Cabrales;
- Jeff Goodman Invisible Hands Essay Contest Winners of \$1,000 to Isaac Ramirez, \$750 to Daniel Kreis, and \$500 to Samuel Sala;
- Rams Head Award was presented to employee Cornelius Lee.