

**ALMADEN COUNTRY SCHOOL
ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
2009-2010**

Q: Why does ACS need an Annual Giving Campaign? Why not just raise tuition to cover all costs?

A: Most independent schools, not just ACS, deliberately plan to set their tuition below the actual educational expenses for several reasons. A lower tuition allows a broader segment of the population to afford an ACS education. For families who could afford more tuition, they have the opportunity to make a substantial gift to the Annual Giving Campaign and get the benefit of the tax deduction for their donation. The Annual giving Campaign enables ACS to enrich the learning experience for all children at ACS, and supports all of our families either through lower tuition or through a significant tax deduction.

Q: What is the relationship between tuition increases and the Annual Giving Campaign?

A: Meeting the goals of the Annual Giving Campaign each year allows the Board of Trustees to keep tuition increases more moderate. Regular, predictable tuition increases allow ACS to keep up with inflation and to make progress toward the Board of Trustee's commitment to raising faculty salaries and benefits to levels that allow us to recruit and retain our excellent faculty. We are in year one of an expected five-year process to reach that goal. Retaining our faculty has consistently been one of the goals expressed by our parents.

Further, the combination of a successful Annual Giving Campaign and moderate tuition increases allows ACS to keep tuition affordable for a broad range of families all the while providing the enriched curriculum and special programming that draw families to ACS.

Q: How do you come up with the suggested amount?

A: When the budget is created each year, the amount needed to balance the budget is based on projected enrollment and other revenues (camps, facilities rentals, investment income) and projected expenses. By dividing the difference by the number of students, we provide families with a suggested amount. We do that to help families gauge an equitable donation.

We recognize that some families can give considerably more and some families can give much less. All gifts are valuable.

Q: Does my gift support financial aid?

A: Yes. Financial aid is part of each year's budget so budgeted revenues like tuition, camps and donations go toward all budgeted expenses. Financial aid is one way that Almaden Country School demonstrates that it is a private school with a public purpose.

Q: With enrollment up this year, why do we need the Annual Giving Campaign?

A: While enrollment was up this year, requests for financial aid exceeded budgeted amounts due to the effects of the economic recession and the normal growth expected when enrollment increases. The increased enrollment allowed us to keep most families at ACS. Until we know whether higher enrollment is a trend and not a one-year anomaly, the administration and Board intend to set aside any earnings at the end of the year to begin building a "rainy day" fund, for use should an unforeseen economic hardship impact the school. This is a planning strategy reflecting the best practices in successful independent schools nationwide. The ACS Board and administration are committed to the school's long-term sustainability. Lastly, depending on the success of the Annual Giving Campaign, there are also several school improvement projects that could move forward this year rather than being deferred to future years.

Q: What is the purpose of the Leadership Donor Thank You Reception and who is invited?

A: In the ACS tradition of thanking and recognizing volunteers and volunteer leadership, we have instituted the Leadership Donor Thank You Reception as both an opportunity to thank donors of \$1,000 and above for last year's gifts and to encourage them to once again take on the role of leadership donors in the 2009-2010 Annual Giving Campaign. The Reception compliments the Volunteer Appreciation Brunch provided by our staff each spring.

Q: Why does the Annual Giving Campaign have two goals, one financial and the other participation?

A: The dollar goal of \$175,000 is what is budgeted for Annual Giving Campaign revenue and is needed for this year's operating funds. It will be spent on teacher salaries, facilities, financial aid, supplies, equipment,

maintenance and technology. The second goal is to raise the participation rate from the total school population—parents, trustees, and faculty members. This metric is used when approaching corporations and foundations for support, as it indicates the commitment of our parents, teachers and Board members. Last year, 100% of our faculty, administrators, and trustees donated to the Annual Giving Campaign, which helped us attract donations from other entities.

Q: Why are gifts to ACS deductible?

A: ACS is a non-profit organization. Non-profit organizations can accept donations and issue receipts that are eligible as deductions on income tax filings. This effectively reduces the cost of the gift.