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DE LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL WILL OPEN A NEW SCHOOL TO SERVE LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

**A new middle school called De La Salle Academy will open
for the 2014-2015 school year on Galaxy Way in Concord.**

Concord, CA – January 17, 2014 – De La Salle High School’s president Mark DeMarco today announced “an exciting new era for De La Salle,” a Catholic school for boys founded in Concord in 1965. DeMarco, an alumnus of the class of 1978, said, “We are pleased to announce a new initiative to serve local fifth- through eighth-graders. De La Salle Academy, a division of De La Salle High School, is a middle school that will provide high-quality, Catholic, Lasallian education to students from low-income families, and will prepare them at an early age to succeed in high school, college, and beyond. The school will open for the fall semester 2014.”

De La Salle Academy will have its own campus at 1380 Galaxy Way in Concord. The projected first-year enrollment is 15 students in a fifth-grade class and 15 in a sixth-grade class, with an eventual enrollment of sixty students in grades five through eight. The school will be structured on the distinctive middle-school model called the “Nativity Miguel model,” of which more than fifty are currently in operation in low-income neighborhoods throughout the country.

Named as the Academy’s first principal is Marilyn Paquette, an alumna of Saint Mary’s College in Moraga with a fifteen-year history of service in Lasallian education. She has taught in a very successful Nativity Miguel model school in Providence, Rhode Island, and has also served as a faculty member at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory in San Francisco and as the Director of Lasallian Student Programs for the Christian Brothers’ western province. She is currently Dean of Women at Justin-Siena High School in Napa. She will begin her service as Principal of De La Salle Academy on July 1. She said, “The opportunity to serve and lead in this expansion of De La Salle High School’s Lasallian ministry is something I feel called to. I believe that my

knowledge of, and experience in, a San Miguel school, my experience as a Lasallian Volunteer, and the network of Lasallian educators I have relationships with will all be invaluable in forming this new ministry.”

Mark DeMarco paid tribute to the vision and generosity of the donor who has made De La Salle Academy possible. “This project was developed in discussions with Mr. Kenneth H. Hofmann, who understands that if we want to break the cycle of poverty, it is essential to provide a quality education in which students are loved, instructed, and guided, so that they gain the knowledge and skills to live productive and successful lives. The Community Youth Center in Concord and now his role as the founding donor of De La Salle Academy are just two of the many examples of Ken Hofmann’s concern for the children of our community.”

Education for Low-Income Families: a De La Salle Christian Brothers Mission

There are more than fifty schools of the Nativity Miguel type in the United States, including De Marillac Academy in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district, founded in 2001, which is also sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. DeMarco explained: “This well-tested model brings effective education to low-income families, engaging them as partners and fulfilling their children’s genuine needs. Key characteristics are very low student-to-teacher ratios, extended school days and longer school years, an emphasis on core skills, careful guidance and consistent support of students, and intensive partnering with their motivated families.” He said, “It is our mission as a Christian Brothers’ school to bring excellent Catholic education to all who need it and to keep it accessible to all who want it, regardless of their ability to pay. To that end, De La Salle High School not only grants more than \$2.2 million dollars in financial aid each year, but also maintains a special scholarship program for families whose income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level. This program, the Bishop John S. Cummins Scholarship Program, serves about 5 percent of our high school’s student body.”

Admission to the new middle school will also be only for children whose families live at less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level, said DeMarco. Parents will pay some portion of their student’s costs, on a sliding scale, as part of the “parental buy-in” that is a crucial component of the Nativity Miguel model, but the school will not be tuition-driven.

“No Catholic school that I know of is fully funded by the tuition that its families are able to pay,” he said. “Our own high school has a tuition gap that averages \$1,700 per student per year. Needless to say, a new middle school that will bring this high-quality education to families who lack significant disposable income needs the support of visionary donors such as Ken Hofmann. I am thrilled to be able to say that the new De La Salle Academy is unique among schools of its type, in that its operating budget has already been funded for the first five years of its operation. This security about funding will free the staff of De La Salle Academy to concentrate on education rather than on fundraising. And because the Academy will be a division of De La Salle High School, our colleagues at the Academy can draw on our institutional strength and administrative know-how to lighten many of the corporate burdens that every school must shoulder.”

“This exciting project is in the tradition of educational outreach to the poor that has been the mission of the De La Salle Christian Brothers since their founding more than 330 years ago,” DeMarco said. “The need for this outreach endures. As Pope Francis wrote just last month in his first Apostolic Exhortation, “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.”

About De La Salle High School, Concord, California

De La Salle High School, founded in 1965, is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Oakland. Its 20-acre campus in Contra Costa County is some twenty-five miles from San Francisco and accommodates a student body of just over one thousand male students. A member of the Lasallian family of educational institutions sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers, it is a college-preparatory school where boys develop into young men of faith, integrity, and scholarship. The web site is www.dlshs.org.

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