

Q&A with Brophy College Prep Vice President Adria Renke

Written by Claire Perkins

Thursday, 07 October 2010 11:02 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 October 2010 20:03



A can't-miss fall event and tremendously successful revenue generator for premier school Brophy College Prep, the annual Brophy Fashion Show Luncheon will be held November 3, 2010 at the Camelback Inn in Paradise Valley. The event draws up to 1,400 guests each year, who enjoy a beautiful lunch, Saks Fifth Avenue fashion show, raffle prizes and- the highlight- the presentation of the Brophy senior boys. We had the opportunity to talk with Brophy College Prep Vice President Adria Renke about her history at the school, the fantastic event and how the funds benefit the students.



Can you share any behind-the-scenes details about the Brophy College Prep Fashion Show and Luncheon?

This year the Brophy Fashion Show will include almost half of the senior class...that's a big change from the past. In chatting with the students, they are always very excited for this day because it is sheer fun to wear different clothes, be with their buddies and even ham it up a little bit on the runway. They add such a neat dimension to the show!

How many years has the fundraiser gone on?

I believe this is the 27th year of the show. The Brophy Fashion Show and the Brophy Auction are two mainstay traditions of Brophy; very different but always anticipated by the community. Both events give current Brophy parents and alum parents' time to reunite. We are a close-knit community and come from all over the valley so the Fashion Show is a great homecoming for all of us.

How have you seen the event grow over the years?

Gracious, this event has grown in leaps and bounds to the extent that it gets more and more difficult to find a venue to hold all of us! Clearly the Brophy seniors make it very special. Once you have attended you definitely want to come back the next year as you find yourself laughing and crying at the same time. The Show gives our community a chance to be together under the auspices of the institution we all love and support: Brophy!

Please tell us a story of how the scholarship fund or the financial aid has changed the life of a student.

The Brophy Financial Aid Fund is part of our mission....actually every Jesuit school in the world, be it a high school or university is founded on the premise that there is funding from the founding for those who qualify to attend our schools but may not have the ability to pay. Every Jesuit school world-wide works doggedly at increasing their financial aid budget and our students never forget their opportunity to attend.

What are a few things most people don't know about Brophy?

What most people don't know is that admission to Brophy is need-blind. Students are accepted by their qualifications alone and only AFTER they are accepted do they apply for financial aid. This is done to make certain every young man who is qualified to attend, will have an

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opportunity to do so.

One of the network news shows did an interview with a young man who was on financial aid a few years ago and when asked about his financial aid package he said, "In a million years I never would have been able to come to Brophy without aid; I feel badly for other guys in my neighborhood who didn't apply because they are very envious of me being involved as much as I am, loving my school the way I do."

Historically we have guestimated that this show has raised about \$5M over the years it has been done. Those monies add to our financial aid budget which this year is \$2.6M. We have been told we give out more financial aid than any school in the state and all our financial aid awards are based solely on verified need.



Who makes the financial aid grant decisions, and how are they made?

There is a financial aid committee who awards the monies. Families must apply to be awarded, fill out a standardized form, submit W-2 verification. The committee then meets to determine the awards. You often hear that Brophy is a "rich kids' school" and [we'd like to] debunk that myth. We have had students apply for aid whose address is their dad's car; families who make \$25,500/year apply for aid. It is the Jesuit mission for Brophy to serve the underserved and we take that mission very seriously.

Brophy is a totally financially independent school, completely self-supporting. Today, in 2010, we have a balanced budget, our teachers are the highest paid in the county, but many are unaware that Brophy was founded in 1928 and closed in 1932 for lack of funding.

How can readers participate in the event and other fundraising events for Brophy?

We re-opened in 1952 and almost closed again in the 1960's...proceeds from bingo kept our doors open. As a result, Brophy does a fair amount of fund-raising. The Brophy Fashion Show, Brophy Auction, Brophy Iron Chef, Brophy Golf Tournament and Power Breakfast are a few of our fundraising activities but more importantly, at all these activities you can feel the same excitement; we are a tight community and whether current or alum parents, we enjoy getting together for Brophy! Father Reese our President says to every freshman class of parents, "Once in, never out...we have you for life!"

Editor's Note: Information on all these events can be found on Brophyprep.org.

Tell us a little more about you and your history with Brophy.

I am the Vice President of the school. I am going into my 14th year at Brophy and still cannot believe that I am paid to do my job here! Every day is a new adventure (for sure with 1,250 boys), we expect the unexpected and most importantly, I have the privilege of watching young 13 year old boys turn into responsible, just leaders who are quite certain that they will do something to change the world when they graduate. What a gift for me, every day!

A retired Jesuit priest, Father Anton Renna, S.J. would always say, "If your son is not uncomfortable with the world around him when he graduates, we have not done our job." Brophy develops young leaders of conscience, competence and compassion who are developed to be Men for Others, men of action who will change the world.

Tickets for the Brophy Fashion Show & Luncheon can be purchased by contacting chair Cinda Turley-Stone at 602.999.4321 or stonecjt@cox.net.