# DIVERSITY UPDATE

THE PARENTS' COUNCIL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE, ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL FEBRUARY 2012

ORLINDA NARANJO AND JIM EWBANK WILL HOST A

## DIVERSITY GET TOGETHER

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

5-8:30 PM

PLEASE LOOK FOR THE EVITE FOR DETAILS AND TO R.S.V.P.

### Parents' Council Diversity Committee Forming at the Upper School

Beginning next fall there will be a new Parents' Council Diversity Committee at the Upper School. Mary Beth Barnstone and Orlinda Naranjo have agreed to be the co-chairs. Since it's inception the PCDC has been made up mainly of lower and middle school parents. This new committee will assess needs at the upper school and figure out ways to bring parents together for social support and to celebrate and advocate for diversity. While the group will be separate from the lower/ middle school PCDC, we will work together to address issues of concern to the St. Andrew's community as a whole. (We will also need to figure out what to call the two groups!)

Upper school parents who are interested in participating should contact Mary Beth or Orlinda or speak with Diversity Director Philippa Strelitz.

**March is Women's History Month!**

**Parent Profile: Jennifer Ramos interviews**

# Kevin Witt

**1. You've been involved in diversity work at SAS since before the Parents' Council Diversity Committee formed. At the time you became involved, what changes were you hoping to see, or what issues did you want addressed**?

We moved back to Austin from New York City, and I immediately missed the diversity that we experienced in our everyday lives. Carson attended preschool in NYC (near Harlem), and his classroom was diverse in many ways: ethnicity, religion, country of origin, etc. Interacting with this cornucopia of backgrounds was a true education--an eye opener on many levels. I believe this is important. The world is flat and we have to learn to be more tolerant of differences, and to look at differences as the perfect opportunity to learn more about the world, more about ourselves. This is an integral part of a good education. I am hoping to see more diversity at St. Andrew's. I certainly applaud the efforts the school deploys in recruiting diversity, but I know we can do more. This is my hope…

**2. Where have you lived? I only know of New York and Lubbock, and those two places seem like polar opposites. How did you and Julie decide to settle down in Austin?**

It is a long list, a rather circuitous one at that. I attended Texas Tech in Lubbock then The University of Colorado-Boulder. When I landed in Boulder, I vowed never to move again--the mountains mesmerized me. However, my wife mesmerized me more, and I took a job in publishing that moved us to El Paso then back to Austin. Believe it or not, my job took us back to Colorado (Fort Collins). Once again we (not just me this time) vowed never to leave Colorado. I was offered a job in New York City, and couldn't pass it up. It was a great experience, but we needed to be closer to family and moved back to Austin. Here we are.

**3. SAS is full of community events, big and small, as well as opportunities for parent volunteer involvement. What are some of the ways you've engaged (yourself and your family) with the SAS community?**

We (all credit goes to Julie) ran the Halloween fun house for three years (2006-2009), I was a member of SEED last year (2011), we attend as many diversity potlucks as our schedules will permit, and we enjoy attending the diversity picnic. And of course we are involved in the sports programs that Carson participates in. Go Cru!

**4. I love watching you perform. Jazz drum solos blow me away. When did you start playing percussion (drums)? Have you been playing continuously since then?**
Thank you! I started playing drums in the 6th grade. I grew up with music in the house. My older brother is an accomplished musician (piano/guitar). Growing up, we played music every day and we played in numerous bands together over the years. I then caught the jazz bug, and dedicated myself to the pursuit of this music. I attended the Drummer's Collective and The Center for Jazz Studies in NYC, and I was fortunate to study privately with many greats, including Jimmy Cobb (Drummer for Miles Davis).

**5. I know you play pretty regularly at Whip-In. How can we keep up with your performance schedule, and where can we see you next?**
We do. I have my own group called 3jazz collective. We play every Friday night at Sao Paulo's Restaurant (7:30p), about once a month at the Whip-in, and about every fifth week at the Elephant room. We play at Whip-in again in April, and the Elephant Room in May. For anyone interested in getting on our email list, just email me (mr.kevinwitt@gmail.com).

**6. What keeps your family at St. Andrew's?**
This is a great question. I admire the dedication of the teachers and the staff. I don't know how they do it day in and day out. I don't care what Carson decides to do when he grows up, but I do care that he knows how to think. A good education is the great equalizer and intellectual curiosity should never end. We value the education he is getting at SAS. We value the sense of community—knowing that others are in the same boat as us, collectively watching our kids grow. (I have known a lot of these kids since 1st grade). We value the experience of meeting others with different backgrounds, yet with a common goal. I think SAS fosters all of this.

**7. Lastly, what are listening to right now?**
Ha!The Robert Glasper Trio (incredible pianist out of NYC), Ryan Adams, and The Modern English (my 80's fix).

**In the Community**

Jennifer Ramos writes: "I'm now on the Chula League Board of Directors. Chula is a non-profit that supports art and artful landscape in East Austin. I'm also working for Little Artist Big Artist (a Chula-funded program) as both the program's photographer and one of about 30 Big Artists. My little artist is a 5th grader who attends Harris Elementary."

**Here are the links**: http://www.chulaleague.org/ http://www.littleartistbigartist.org/