

Cardinals Interact

Program Overview and Impact Report

August 2020

In partnership with



PRICE
PHILANTHROPIES



"I had eagerly anticipated becoming a part of Cardinals Interact since I was ten years old. When I applied in 2017, I felt wary about it, I was simply one student in their pool of three-hundred applicants. This program focuses **on teaching students preparedness and leadership to achieve lifelong success while giving back to the community.** I wished and hoped I would be accepted, and accomplishing that goal after all the hard work I put into my application felt like I had gotten first place in a sprinting marathon."

Cardinals Interact Alum

"This experience definitely is a two-way street that "benefits all concerned." **Students stretch, grow, and blossom right before our eyes** as they tackle a daunting challenge, learn valuable skills, overcome fears, gain confidence, and achieve a goal. It's a privilege to observe the students lifting and encouraging each other in the supportive environment and safe space that is created through Cardinals Interact – that is part of the magic. I'm enlightened and inspired by the personal stories shared in their speeches. Rotarians are leaders across many facets of our region's business, economic and civic life – and if we truly are listening, these students and their real life stories will help inform how we choose to positively impact San Diego for the future."

Stephanie Saathoff – San Diego Rotary Club

Overview

The San Diego Rotary Club and Price Philanthropies teamed to create this report to share our experience and best practices with other Rotary Clubs. The scale of the Cardinals Interact program is unique, but we are hopeful that other Clubs will be able to leverage their own community resources to make a positive impact.

Background

The City Heights community of San Diego is notable as a home to refugees and immigrants, with significant communities of Vietnamese, Somali, Cambodian, Laotian and Latino residents. It is the most ethnically diverse community of San Diego. Hoover High School is one of two high schools that serve the community. The Hoover Cardinals student body of 2,100 students reflect the diversity of the community. 90% of the students who attend are eligible for the free or reduced meal program. In 2013 when the school enacted a program in which teachers learn to recognize signs of trauma in students, suspensions from school were reduced by 80%.

The Rotary Interact program is for 12-18 year olds to foster leadership and community giving. There are over 20,000 Interacts Clubs in 159 countries worldwide comprising nearly 500,000 members. Recognizing the need to assist the students, Price Philanthropies teamed with the San Diego Rotary Club and Hoover High School to create the Cardinals Interact Program. The program started small and has grown to include a wide range of students from Hoover reflecting the diversity of the school. This paper will explore the impact that the program has had on the students, and the Rotarians that support them. The goal is to encourage other Rotary and Interact Clubs to reach their potential through sharing best practices.

“Before Cardinals Interact I felt very lost and wasn't sure about anything I wanted to do for my future. **Shortly after being in the program everything changed and I had a completely different mindset.** I was determined of what I wanted to do in my future and Cardinals Interact was there to help me reach my goals.”

Cardinals Interact Alum

“Working with the Hoover Cardinal students has been the most rewarding experience I have had in Rotary. I may go so far as to say, one of the most nourishing and personally worthwhile experiences ever. I have witnessed, year to year, **transformational changes in the personal confidence, poise and presentation skills, displayed by our students** stepping up to this challenge and making the most of their work with Rotarians. Overcoming major obstacles, as these students have, clearly demonstrates their desire and commitment to succeed. Witnessing this for me, is unlike anything I have ever been associated with. I am fortunate to have this privilege!”

Jack Berkman - San Diego Rotary Club

Mission

The Mission of the Cardinals Interact program is to support students to achieve lifelong success through:

- Assisting students in successfully completing graduation requirements and be college ready.
- Helping students create a community of mentors and positive role models.
- Educating students about the world they live in thereby encouraging them to positively impact their community.
- Developing strong leaders who make positive choices.

The Cardinals Interactors are ethnically and academically diverse group of students. Selected students have between a 1.0 - 4.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). Our goal is to select 50 students per year at the end of freshman year comprised of the following:

- 1/3 of students with a 3.0 to 4.0 GPA
- 1/3 of students with a 2.0 to 3.0 GPA
- 1/3 of students with a 1.0 to 2.0 GPA

There are currently a total of 146 students: 49 seniors; 47 juniors; 50 sophomores.



“When I joined Cardinals Interact, I was in a tough situation in my life, not only was I facing my father's deportation but I was also facing depression. For the longest time I had always had negative thoughts towards myself from “You are not good enough” to “Why even try if you know you will fail.” Cardinals Interact always went against these thoughts of mine. **They always encouraged me to try my best and never settle for less than I am worth.**”

Cardinals Interact Alum

Programs

EDUCATIONAL OUTINGS Students are introduced to businesses in their community. They receive behind the scene tours and meet with panels of professionals who share their academic paths and professional experience. During the outing's students are able to ask questions and broaden their knowledge of the opportunities that exist within such organization.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT Students are supported academically at the Cardinals Interact Program offices in City Heights. Students are able to receive academic support in any subject Monday through Thursday. In addition, students are able to receive college and scholarship support. During the summer the rising sophomores and juniors participate in a summer enrichment day camp to work on English and Math.

ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING Students receive interpersonal meetings with the staff to review their academic progress and help them set goals for the semester. The meetings are mentoring sessions to ensure the students set the right goals to graduate and be ready for college.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING The development of student leadership skills is integrated throughout all the Cardinals Interact programs. Students attend a yearly camp where the focus is on strengthening self-esteem, decision-making skills, communication skills, and building community leaders.

COMMUNITY SERVICE Students begin to make an impact by participating in community service projects and taking ownership of their community. The service projects take place on Hoover's campus and the greater community of City Heights.

ROTARY OPPORTUNITIES As part of our partnership with San Diego Rotary, students have opportunities to apply to outside activities hosted by Rotary. Selected students are able to participate in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program to visit Europe for two weeks, Rotary Camp Enterprise business camp, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) leadership camp, Rotary Model UN Conference, and the Rotary 4 Way Test Speech Contest. The students who participate in the speech contest learn about the value of public speaking by working with various Rotarians who help coach them over the course of six months.

"I feel incredibly honored and humbled to be a Coach and Mentor to the students of Cardinals Interact. Being able to listen to these students stories, see them have extreme vulnerability, and watch them grow is an extreme privilege and **I hope that they know they have made a huge impact on my life, an impact that will stay with me forever.**"

Brianna Ruloma – Rotaract

"My favorite events that I attended because of Cardinals Interact were; the summer camps, several Rotary opportunities such as RYLA, visiting and helping the homeless shelter and shadowing the Higgs Fletcher and Mack law firm. **All of these events have motivated me to be a better person, to be resilient and to not give up.** Cardinals Interact has been one of the best things in my high school career."

Cardinals Interact Alum

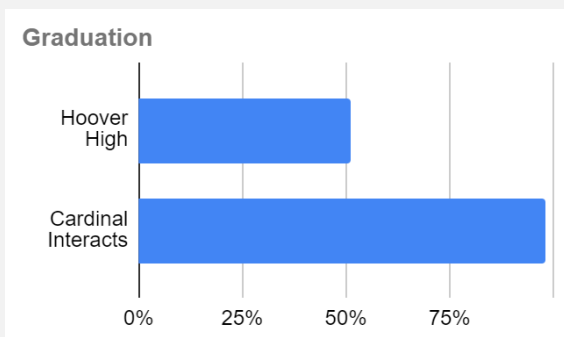
Program Results

As of June, 2020, the 485 alumni of the Cardinals Interact program are making an impact in the community, and many are continuing their education:

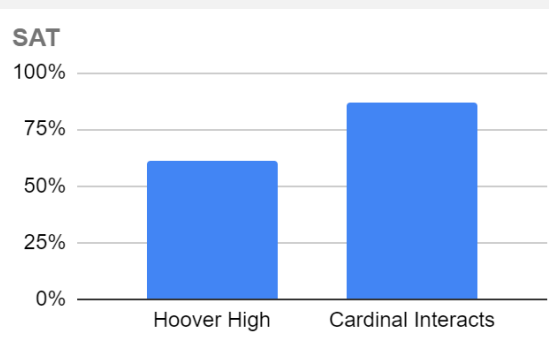
- 42% of alums are enrolled in college either full or part time
- 30% of alums have earned a degree (Technical, Associates, Bachelors, Masters, PhD)

A 2019 study by the University of California, San Diego found that program participants fared better than their peers at Hoover High School:

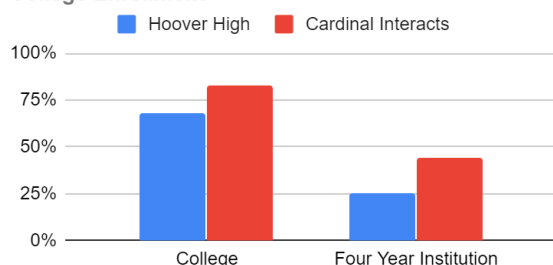
Cardinals Interact 98% graduation rate compared to **Hoover students** 51% overall



87% of **Cardinal Interact** took the SAT compared to 61% of other **Hoover students**



College Enrollment



Cardinals Interact Graduates - 83% enrolled in college with 44% enrolled in a 4-year institution

Hoover High Graduates - 68% enrolled in college with 25% enrolled in a 4-year institution

“My work with the Cardinals Interact students who participate in the 4-Way Speech Contest has been **some of the most rewarding work I have ever done**. Each year, I watch these students start as shy, uncomfortable teens who are reluctant to stand and speak yet, over two months’ time, they grow into confident, critical thinkers who find their voice. It is nothing less than awe-inspiring. Their commitment to doing the hard work along with a little bit of coaching affirms for me that we (all of us) will be just fine when these students take their place as leaders in our communities.”

Bridget Meckley - San Diego Rotary Club

Skeleton Timeline

Year-Round Services: Mentoring, Programming, Community Service, Rotary Opportunities, College Support Services

Academic Year (Sept. - June): Tutoring (Monday-Thursday after school)

January-March: Recruitment season, Rotary 4 Way Test Speech Contest

April: Interviews, Transitions Camp

May: Parent Orientation, Good Bye Rotary Luncheon, Graduation

June: 1st year camp, Transitioning from High School Support Services

July: Junior Readiness Program, Rotary Luncheon, 3rd year camp

August: 2nd year camp; Summer Enrichment Program, College Applications support



“Cardinals Interact **introduced me to a world of education that school alone couldn't have.** I participated in speech contests, planned and hosted community events, was a Model United Nations delegate, represented Hoover High School in Rotary Club activities, and received a \$10,000 scholarship for my hard work and efforts as a junior! I also met lifelong friends who have helped me build a supportive and healthy CI family. These enriching experiences of independence, self-advocacy, college visits, and summer math and science programs aided my need to perform at the college level. The support system made it mentally available for me to feel backed up for success or failure at every opportunity. Nothing else in my high school experience has been more of a catalyst to get me this far into the undergraduate process. Cardinals Interact has allowed me to expand beyond my comfort zone to create a fierce and brave woman who is eager to continue growing.”

Cardinal Interact Alum

Best Practices

- Understand the needs of the community where the Interact Club is being implemented (i.e. asset map, with parents, community members, school staff and other individuals invested in the success of the students)
- Leadership needs to come from consistent caring adults, who create a sense of community for the students and are committed to create bridges between the different invested community sectors.
- Adults must be willing to drive the projects to completion with the student input.
- Strong communication with all partner organizations (i.e. San Diego Rotary Club; Hoover High School, Price Philanthropies.)
- Have well trained staff who are willing to listen and support students with their individual needs.
- Annual training to ensure proper knowledge on how to support the students personally and academically.
- Gather ongoing feedback from participants in regards to providing high quality and relevant programming.
- Have a strong committee of Rotarians with clearly defined roles to help engage them within the Interacts
- Find different areas where other members of the Rotary Club can engage with the Interact Club (Rotarians at Work Day; Don't Wait Vaccinate; 4 Way Speech Contest; Camp Enterprise; RYLA; Rotary Youth Exchange.)
- Give additional spaces to the Interact Clubs you are working with to ensure that you have a strong participation (i.e. Camp Enterprise limits to two students per school, but Cardinals Interact usually gets six students and place students on a waitlist for last minute opportunities)
- Provide short term events and long-term events for Rotarians so that they can contribute based on their time availability (i.e. Rotarians at Work Day and interviews are one day events whereas the 4 Way Speech contest is a six-month commitment)
- Begin with a couple of projects and build on their success over time. (i.e. 4 Way Speech Contest began with one student and one Rotarian who was invested. Currently there are 30 students engaged with 30 Rotarians.)
- Ensure the larger Rotary club is aware of which committees are engaged throughout the year.
- Have consistent leaders within the Rotary Committees who actively work with other members to take on interact leadership roles at a future time.
- Have past participants who can share the success they experience with the Interact Clubs

Best Practices, cont.

School Partnership

- Develop a strong school partnership with the administration and counseling staff.
- Become a part of the school culture by finding areas to support what is currently happening on campus.
- Educate the teachers about the Interact Club and how they can support the club throughout the year.
- Communicate with the school consistently not just when recruitment is happening.

Interact

- Have students apply for opportunities offered within the Rotary Club to ensure students have buy in and are committed to the experience.
- Communicate with the Interact students consistently regarding the different opportunities, ensuring the families are informed of the commitment.
- Staff/ Advisors should alternate experiences to ensure different students have a chance to experience what Rotary opportunities have to offer.
- Create a sense of pride amongst the students in being part of a larger impact of Rotary and its motto of "Service Above Self."

"Working with these amazing students is a gift. To get to know them as individuals and watch them grow with confidence in speaking in public, in the few short months we work with them on their speeches, is a "Wow" moment. The 4 Way Speech program is a winner for all participants and I appreciate being involved in the small way that I am."

Duke Sobek – San Diego Rotary

A Cardinal Interact Success Story

Luis, a graduate of the Cardinals Interact program, is the youngest of a family of five. He had one brother who graduated high school and joined the military. His other siblings dropped out of high school and were incarcerated. When Luis tells his story, he states that he did not have any role models and he made some poor choices through the end of 9th grade, when he was expelled from Hoover High School. The disappointment he saw in his father eyes inspired him to make a change. He joined Cardinals Interact and participated in all the activities he could, including the 4 Way Test Speech contest. He became a role model and tutor for the other Interact students. He made the decision that he wanted a different outcome than that of his siblings.

That dream came true. Luis's hard work and perseverance paid off. Luis started his high school career with a 1.0 GPA, and ended up graduating 4th in his class with a 4.1 GPA. It earned him acceptance into multiple University of California, Cal State University schools, as well as a number of private colleges. He elected to attend the University of California, Los Angeles studying Mathematics. He is not done dreaming. His goal is to return to Hoover High School and teach math.

Cardinals Interact Partners

Price Philanthropies

The Price Philanthropies Foundation (formerly Price Family Charitable Fund) was founded by retail entrepreneur and philanthropist Sol Price and his wife Helen in 1982. Today, Sol and Helen Price's son and daughter in law, Robert and Allison Price, continue the family's legacy through their leadership of the foundation. Throughout his lifetime, Sol Price pioneered creative practices in retail, real estate, and philanthropy. He achieved exceptional success through his business ventures, including Fed Mart, Price Club (which ultimately merged with Costco) and PriceSmart. He was a man of great integrity and known for the care and dignity with which he treated employees. Sol Price embarked on a multi-decade initiative in City Heights, an urban community in San Diego. His vision was to develop a comprehensive approach to revitalize the community and provide better opportunities for the 74,000 residents, who are primarily refugees and immigrants from Latin America, Asia and East Africa. Contact Beatriz Valencia bvalencia@pricephilanthropies.org

San Diego Rotary Club

Of the 33,000 clubs worldwide, San Diego Rotary is the 4th largest. Boasting with over 500 local members as the longest standing Rotary in San Diego County, our club includes some of the city's well known civic, business and community leaders who meet weekly for fellowship and service. Since 1911, San Diego Rotary has been providing San Diego's leadership with an opportunity to connect with others toward the common goal of improving the community in which we work and live, as well as the world beyond. This work is channeled through our San Diego Rotary Club Foundation and 60 committees. Contact: Paul Devermann paul@rotary33.org

Hoover High School

Hoover High School is located in an ethnically diverse neighborhood of San Diego serving students primarily from City Heights. Hoover's student body of approximately 2,200 students is rich in cultural diversity with a majority of Hispanic students, 40 percent English Learners, and about two-thirds of our students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Many students and/or their family members are newcomers to the United States as well as first generation college students.

Hoover High offers a wide variety of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) focused small learning communities. This Linked Learning approach exposes students to college and career opportunities while simulating workforce within the classroom.