



2003-2008 Term Report

March 2009



Acknowledgment from the Outgoing President

The 2003-2008 period was as challenging as it was exciting for our Alumni Association. A lot has been done, learnt, and discovered. This report will never do justice to the efforts of all the women and men who dedicated time, talent, and money to further strengthen the Saint Joseph School spirit.

Allow me to say thank you to the Archbishop, the rectors and their respective administrations, the executive committee members, the volunteers, the donors, the SJS and the Lebanese communities at large.

While this document does not grab the joyous moments we all experienced during our gatherings or when we found a long lost friend online, it should serve as a memory to the main activities your Association has facilitated during that period.

Respectfully,

Tony Feghali

About the Saint Joseph School Alumni Association

The SJS Alumni Association was formed to:

- develop and nurture strong relations among SJS alumni
- support the school in its educational mission

Two executive committees served during the two consecutive terms during the 2003-2008 period.

First Term Committee:

Elie AbouJaoude
Jad AbouJaoude
Elias AbouRahal
Elias AbouSamra
Hanna Chrabieh
Tony Feghali (President)
Farid Haykal
Johnny Khoury
Rami Labaki
Jenny Nasr
Charbel Rizk (Secretary)
Alfred Sawaya (Vice President)
Roger Zaccar (Treasurer)



Second Term Committee:

Tarek Abboud
Elias AbouSamra
Hala Attie (Treasurer)
Jupiter Bouzerdan
Gaelle BouSleiman-Lahad
Tony Feghali (President)
Johnny Khoury
Joe Moujaes
Charbel Rizk (Secretary)
Alfred Sawaya (Vice President)
Roger Zaccar

School and Country Outlook

During the 2003-2008 period, the whole school community was extremely supportive, nurturing, and ready to open new territories with its alumni. Under the guidance of Archbishop Youssef Bechara, the Association collaborated closely with three rectors starting with Fr. Simon Faddoul, Monsignor Camille Zeidan, and Fr. Richard Abou Moussa.

The country's outlook was relatively calm until Feb 2005, giving the Association the opportunity to mobilize its community into participating in various events and taking the initiative to promote and fund the alumni activities in Lebanon and abroad. Seventeen months after the first executive committee took office, the situation deteriorated affecting activities and gatherings. Nonetheless, the Committee managed to progress and deliver results as described below.

Membership

Alumni membership was redefined during this period by introducing the alumni's www.sjsalumni.org. Through this virtual network, the Executive Committee managed to reach out to a large number of alumni through emails and SMS messages.

As per the Lebanese government law for associations, only paid members can actually vote in elections. While the virtual international network grew substantially over the past 5 years, the challenge of transforming these memberships into paid dues was more difficult due to the lack of adequate resources for billing and collection. An online subscription service with electronic payment was provided at one time.

Communication

The Association adopted three official channels of communication to correspond with its members and friends: the website www.sjsalumni.org, SMS messaging and occasional printed newsletters.



Website (www.sjsalumni.org)

The site has over 1600 registered members from 42 countries. It is divided into several sections: Home, World Wide Network, Archives, Newsletter, Guestbook, the Committee, Tell a Friend, About, and Contact us. Articles are posted under several categories: News, Celebrations, Obituaries, Alumnus of the week, Company of the week, People who helped, Projects, From the president's desk, and Graduation speeches. At one point the Committee was able to accept membership dues and donations online. However, due to very low activity, it was discontinued. Registering on the website is an easy process allowing members to receive SJS Alumni communications.

SMS Messaging

Members registered on the website were regularly reminded of events using SMS messaging. On average around 500 messages were sent to members in Lebanon. This was done over 50 times during the period Aug'03-June'08.

In Print

Occasionally, leaflets and newsletters were printed and distributed during events.

Initiating New Alumni Projects

The Committee has strived to establish long-term projects that would support its mission and strengthen the foundation for securing continuity by successive committees. We list below the projects that were initiated.

SJS Alumni Association Scholarship Fund

The Association set the foundations for establishing the Saint Joseph School Alumni Association Scholarship Fund with objectives to raise and invest funds in support of students at the School who are in financial need or who deserve a merit reward.

Annual International Fundraising Dinner

On February 8, 2008, the Association held its First Annual International Fundraising dinner in Dubai. Under the auspices of Archbishop Youssef Bechara and in collaboration with the School, over 350 people from the Association and the Lebanese community in Dubai attended the dinner.

The event raised \$150,540 for the SJS Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. \$136,040 was immediately applied to the Financial Aid program at the school benefitting 508 SJS students from 245 families with scholarships ranging from 10% to 25% tuition assistance (academic year 2008-2009). The remaining balance is kept in the fund as seed money for future fundraising.



Alumni House

In a meeting early 2006 with Archbishop Youssef Bechara and Monsignor Camille Zaidan, the Committee requested support to build an Alumni House. Six days later, the Archdiocese responds with a pledge of a lot of land (#1151, approximate area of 4,000 sq. m).

The Committee called for interested architects to work on the design of the House. Two individuals responded positively: Dr. Hashim Sarkis and Mr. Georges Hakim. It was agreed that Hashim would lead the work with the support of Georges. Since then, a conceptual design was presented to the Archbishop; comments were taken and further work on the design continued.

On different occasions, the Association received several verbal financial pledges towards building the Alumni House.

Gatherings

The Association implemented several types of gatherings.

Yearly Gatherings

The SJS alumni held Gala dinners during the past years. The occasion was usually to celebrate Christmas or to honor an alumnus who addressed the graduating class at the school during graduation ceremonies. Some of these gatherings took place on Monot Street, Broumana, and downtown Beirut.

Happy Hours

On a more regular basis from August 2003 until June 2008, the Association held around 20 happy hours at local eateries in Greater Beirut area to provide accessibility to most alumni. Even though the plan was to hold them on a monthly basis, the schedule was interrupted by other Association events and local security mishaps. We usually chose affordable and fun places, and ones that would give us a special discounted menu for the event. Some venues included Applebee's (Dbayeh), Link (Antelias), Casper & Gambini's (Jal El Dib), and Schtroumpf (Achrafieh). The attendance varied from 40 to 100 alumni at the happy hours. Those events were intended for social networking and to encourage distant members to become more involved in the alumni. We always took photos and featured them on the website.

Under the Oak Tree "Sindiani"

As part of starting a new tradition, the Association launched its "Under the Sindiani" summer gathering in 2005. It is intended to bring Alumni back to Saint Joseph School and gather them for dinner under the Oak Tree -- a sentimental symbol for all SJS community members. The Oak Tree gatherings were more formal than the Happy Hours and were held around the end of summer gathering a crowd ranging between 80 to 200 alumni, family, and friends.

Informal Class Reunions

We know that SJS old friends had several gatherings over the years. Some of which the Association knew about and others not. Any activity that brings alumni together is always encouraged. The only request we had was to share with us pictures and news to post for all to enjoy. The website often received pictures of some spontaneous class reunions (ex: Class of the 70's and class of 1995).



International Gatherings

SJS Alumni are scattered all over the world. The website helped alumni in foreign countries find each other and connect. For example and on a trip to the USA, the Association's president met with SJS alumni in Southern California, and with another group in Boston. Northern American groups held other gatherings.

Sports

The SJS Alumni created its own make-shift team to participate in local tournaments. Our team won some and lost some. The Association coached the Saint Joseph School team during 2007/2008. A yearly tradition of an SJS Students -- SJS Alumni game was created. The young team won the first game!

School Outreach

The Association recognizes the benefit of strengthening its ties with the School community in general, and graduating students in particular. To this end, the Association launched a set of projects that have successfully bonded the Alumni with the students. The results are apparent in the active participation of graduating classes and the establishment of SJS Alumni clubs in certain universities.

Senior Class Time Capsule

The Association introduced the time capsule tradition to the school in 2005. Students of the graduating class would put class photos, notes, and memorable items into a box, and bury it in the ground under the Sindiani. Each box will be dug out after 15 years from its burial during a reunion of the graduating class. This tradition has been going on, and the latest class to take part of it was in 2008. First reunion will be in 2020.

Graduating Keynote Addresses by Alumni

Over the years, the school invited prominent individuals to address the students during the graduation ceremony. Two of whom were alumni. It was only until 2004 that the school adopted the policy of inviting an alumnus to address the Saint Joseph School community. Since then, the Association assisted the School in that process.

Vintage Festival

The Association contributed to two of the last four Vintage festivals. The 2004 and 2005 were the most involved. The 2006 one was cancelled due to the situation in Lebanon. The Association only contributed in planning with the School's committee, for the 2007 and 2008 Vintage festivals. In 2007/2008 and with the School's invitation, a tradition was initiated to have an alumnus be the first torch bearer during the opening ceremony of the festival.

School Publications

The Association contributed to the Alumni section of the school's publications such as:

- the yearbook "Dimensions",
- the periodical "Vision",
- and the end of year Vintage festival's yearly magazine.



Career Orientation

The Association, through the involvement of its members, contributed to the efforts that the school puts in giving university career guidance to students. On several occasions, alumni would address students in their morning assembly and meet up in smaller groups to share their professional experiences.

Football Field

Through direct and indirect support, the Association contributed funds to rehabilitate the football field at the School. Financial figures are not disclosed, but anecdotal stories support that.

The School's Fundraising Dinner

The Association regularly supports the school in its annual fundraising dinner. We advertise the event on www.sjsalumni.org, send an announcement by email, and send SMS messages. On average, our efforts drive between 20-30 people to the event.

Collaborating with Other Organizations

The SJS Alumni Association is part of the Federation des Anciens des Ecoles Catholiques (FAEC). The Association has been a regular member on the board of the FAEC, attending meetings, paying dues, and contributing to FAEC's yearly meeting and its annual mass.

Administrative and Financial

Secretarial and Legal

Minutes of meetings have been rigorously documented and are available in the secretariat of the Association. All our official papers are in order vis-à-vis the Lebanese Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance.



Financials

Account Statements (LL)				
Description	Date	In	Out	Balance
Opening balance 2003	2003			324,033
Year Ending 2003	2003			2,927,333
Year Ending 2004	2004			1,330,000
Fiscal increase	2005	24,000		
Time capsule	2005		150,000	
Gift	2005		38,000	
Election expenses	2005		1,150,000	
Annual membership dues	2005	1,160,000		
Year Ending 2005	2005			1,176,000
Time capsule	2006		150,000	
Penalties (overdue submission of official reports)	2006		150,000	
Topographic survey (Alumni house plot of land)	2006		750,000	
Annual membership dues	2006	200,000		
Year Ending 2006	2006			326,000
Time capsule	2007		150,000	
Athletic programs	2007		360,000	
Sponsoring	2007	600,000		
Annual membership dues	2007	240,000		
Year Ending 2007	2007			656,000
Annual membership dues	2008	720,000		
Overdue subscription and official papers	2008		600,000	
Rubber stamps	2008		30,959	
Closing balance (LL) before transition to new Executive Committee	July 2008			745,041

Account Statements (USD)				
Description	Date	In	Out	Balance
Net profit from Dubai dinner	2008	150,540		
Bank commission and fees	2008		12	
Contribution to the School's	2008		136,040	
Closing balance (USD) before transition to new Executive Committee (July 2008)	2008			14,488



Concluding Statement

The Executive Committees have strived to deliver the best service to all alumni during both terms. While we succeeded on several objectives as described above, we fell short on numerous aspirations. There is plenty of room for direct improvement on the following areas: Alumni House, Alumni Scholarship Fund and Paid Membership Collection. We are confident that the new Executive Committee will excel where we did not perform as expected.