



Christina Cardinale
Distinguished Lasallian-Administrator
2012-2013

I met Christina in 1992 when we were both freshman commuter students at the College. At the time, I was a work-study student in the Controller's office and worked closely with her father, Richard Cardinale. One of the first things I learned about Christina is true to this day – early morning is not her favorite time of day. One year later, we were in the same Education course taught by Br. James, "Schools and Society" and it was comforting to have a friend in class, albeit a 9:05am class. As she walked into class each morning, I actually laughed privately at her different facial expressions, all resounding the same message, "I hate morning."

Later, when I worked for the Controller's office full-time, I'll admit it was very fun to hear Christina vent about Richard at home, and she listened to me vent about Richard at work. Later I worked as an Academic Advisor and Christina worked in SFS and we enjoyed teaming up in order to help students in need. In 2002, I joined SFS and Christina and I have been working together ever since as colleagues. After 20 years, it's safe to say I know my Jasper Buddy best. It hasn't been all smiles at 9am, but she has conquered mornings.

Her initial major in Education was very fitting for Christina; she loves children and children love her. Christina is a caretaker who is very giving of her time and quite generous. Anyone who knows Christina knows her to be an endearing aunt to Ryan, Kiera and Victoria, but those closest to Christina also know of the countless other children in her life who know Christina as 'Goonie' – their nickname for Christina as their fun-loving friend who brings joy to their lives. Christina is like a fairy godmother who treats the children of her friends like children of her own. I have been witness to children phoning Christina at all hours to find out if she'll visit them after work to read them stories, help with school projects, take them shopping or to the movies, help with fundraisers at their schools, and bake goodies together while watching cartoons.

Christina later changed her major to Marketing and this was also fitting. While a student, she worked as a manager at Toys 'R Us and taught us a lot about the world of toys and gave us a behind-the-scenes view of Toys 'R Us on occasion. In fact, many years ago, Christina once gave me a tip and helped me purchase a toy for my son who was a toddler at the time. Christina often used her connections at the store and made sure we all had the best and most-wanted toys under the tree for our children. Christina said this was a great toy and the cutest thing and it was sure to be a best-seller. I got this tip almost one year before the Tickle Me Elmo craze that left many who wanted that toy stranded at Christmas. With that early prediction, I still say Hasbro and Mattel might come calling one day and steal Christina away from the College. Christina is always proud when she gets a good shopping deal, and shop she does! She is the queen of coupons, shares them with all around her, and like her father, she beams with pride when she is able to save the College money. Her Marketing skills come in handy with her work on the College's Diversity Committee, where she is insightful and brings forth innovative ideas for speakers and events. Christina is a terrific event-planner, often taking care of catering and tedious details for Diversity events, office parties and the seasonal decorating of our office, farewell parties, and other social gatherings.

Christina's charity is most evident in the time she devotes to the College and to those in need. Christina

deserves accolades for her unwavering dedication to the planning and execution of St. LaSalle's Week. When she volunteered to chair the 2012 Planning Committee, I know many on the Lasallian Education Committee were relieved to rely on someone so competent, organized, and very hands-on. The result was a successful event! Christina helped organize the Supply Drive that allowed the College to donate much-needed supplies to school-aged children in underserved areas. Her dedication to our nation's veterans is outstanding when she collected letters students wrote to Veterans during a Founder's Day event. Her direct work today with Veterans returning to study at Manhattan on the GI Bill is vital to our College's connection with these students. Christina often volunteers her time to the Answer Desk at the start of each Fall term. She lends an ear when needed, is full of tips and advice, and is also willing to walk in someone's shoes as she did when, this past July, she participated in El Otro Lado, a Lasallian Social Justice Institute formation program where she walked the desert in Arizona picking up trash and tracing the issues of immigration and our borders.

Christina makes it her business to find solutions and to get answers and this is why her work in the world of Manhattan's business is important. Moving from an office manager role to the Assistant Bursar position, Christina accepted not only a heavy load of responsibility, but she accepted the challenge of her primary role as debt collector of past due balances. This is not an easy task and it is not very rewarding. In addition to that daunting task, she works with our current families and helps to lay out financing plans and constantly markets Manhattan as something worth sacrificing for. Christina serves as the SFS liaison to all special programming and third party contracts and she always finds time to assist her colleagues, mentor the staff, and keep us up-to-date on ever-changing legislation. Christina is well-known and well-connected in professional development organizations for Bursars. The job is not much fun, aside from the rare occasion she is successful at hunting down a past due debtor on Facebook. She serves as our radar and she always comes through.

In hindsight, the challenge she accepted by taking on the Asst. Bursar role reminded me about a debate over the existence of an ad. It is claimed that Sir Ernest Shackelton, a South Pole explorer, placed an ad in the Times of London in the early 1900s for men willing to accompany him on an exploration of the Pole. It read:

"Men wanted for hazardous journey.

Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful.

Honour and recognition in case of success."

This sounds like an ad Christina answered. Perhaps we were successful in placing her where the College needed her skills and talents most. I should go back now and modify our ad to read:

"Hard-working person needed for a job full of pitfalls. You must help those who will gripe about you, long hours, spend the whole year plumbing the depths of the young adult mind, the minds of those who claim to have not received your mail, face constant change and challenges, and wait endlessly on the promise of "the check is in the mail." Successes are small, and sometimes not seen. This job will change you, and your task is to find a way for your job to change the world."

5,000 men answered Shackelton's ad. I would dare to say no one would answer the ad for Christina's job. Christina, you have the courage and determination to transform whatever is negative and remain positive so that you can help others and encourage a life journey lived according to the principles of St. John Baptist De La Salle. You are relentless as you face and help carry the many difficulties of our students and families. We hope the darkness you face each day turns bright, but not the early-morning-type bright.

Christina, we are proud to present to you the Distinguished Lasallian Administrator Award for 2012.

Lisa Juncaj '99

Director, Student Accounts & Bursar Services