



St. Serra Founding Family and Supporters, Pat and Jill Ortiz, Continue Legacy

On a gray, misty morning in October, parents drove their cars onto St. Junipero Serra Catholic School's inner campus, much as they have for many years, to drop off their kids at school. On this particular day, they may have witnessed a small group of people standing near the car lanes, and two men having their photo taken. The significance of this moment would not be known to most of them, but to Tim Tolzda, Senior Principal at St. Serra, it was a chance to personally thank the man who literally laid the groundwork for the school through his passion and commitment to Catholic education.

Patrick Ortiz (who goes by "Pat"), is the generous benefactor who donated his company's time, materials, costs and resources to grade the land where St. Serra now sits. He is the owner and founder of Ortiz Enterprises, an experienced and highly successful highway construction company that has partnered with Caltrans, various public agencies, and select private companies. His wife, Jill, who ran the company's office for ten years, was instrumental in helping to get the company off the ground. As stated on their website, if you travel on freeways in Southern California, chances are you have driven across many of the hundreds of projects that have been completed by Ortiz. Examples include the Oso Parkway State Bridge over the 241 toll road, and the widening of the I-5 freeway at Crown Valley. With an extensive track record of multi-million dollar projects such as these in their books, it's no surprise that Ortiz Enterprises has stacked up an impressive number of prestigious awards and accolades. Yet, Pat remains a humble, caring, and extremely giving man, who has instilled in his family and staff a culture of giving back to the community. He and Jill are especially passionate about Catholic education.



"It was a great opportunity to get to know Pat and learn more about the history and extent of the support his company has provided to our school," says Tim. "The fact that Pat, Jill, his company and employees continue to support St. Serra is an incredible blessing to our school community."

When Paul Navarro, Pat and Jill's son-in-law and a current St. Serra parent (also a Consultative School Board Committee Leader for Facilities and the Structures Superintendent for Ortiz Enterprises), decided to donate company time and resources to help improve the drop-off and pick-up traffic flow at St. Serra, it was considered business as usual for him and for numerous Ortiz

employees who willingly provided their assistance for the projects. They started with removing some concrete from the two lanes adjacent to the Primary Education Building (or, “PEB”) and re-shaping the entrance, allowing a wider area for cars to turn into and enter the lanes more smoothly. The next project came in Summer of 2022, when Paul astutely identified that the access lane from Banderas to the campus’ inner road was wide enough to be made into two lanes, thereby promoting a more efficient movement of cars in the mornings.

These projects represent just two of the numerous ways in which Ortiz Enterprises has supported St. Serra over the past 27 years. It started in 1995 when the company pitched in to help with the initial construction phases for the school. To help St. Serra prepare to have their first students on campus, Pat worked to acquire temporary building structures (previously referred to as “the portables”) from other contractors who donated them to the school; these were used to house the very first classrooms and administrative staff offices. At that time, Pat and Jill did not have any plans for their own children to attend St. Serra. Their gifts to the school were based purely on a desire to support the founding of a new Catholic school in the area. It was not until 2016, over 20 years later, that a direct descendant of Pat and Jill (a grandson), would start attending St. Serra as a Kindergarten student. Yet, the Ortiz Family’s support of Catholic education and St. Serra’s campus continued over the years, and has included donations to the school’s Tuition Assistance fund, and completion of one-off projects such as installing in-ground basketball hoops along the school’s inner road.



And so continues the Ortiz Family legacy of dedication to Catholic education and charities. Members of the Order of Malta for over 20 years, Pat and Jill have strived to demonstrate to their children and grandchildren that a life of “giving back” is a life truly worth living. Their family members take this to heart, and have dedicated their support over the years to Santa Margarita Catholic High School, JSerra High School, Rosary Academy and Servite High School, in addition to St. Serra. They attend and support fundraisers for Solano Catholic Church, and they volunteer at the food bank together at St. Norbert Catholic Church on the weekends. “Volunteering is in our blood,” says Pat’s youngest daughter, Leigh. “We’ve been taught that it’s a given that you give back to the community, whether it’s your time, talent and/or treasure. It’s just what we do.”