



*Très Bien*  
to  
*Martha Key*  
*Altvater*

*Villa Duchesne Class of 1975*

Seven years ago, Martha walked into my kitchen with a goldfish...standard, carnival-grade, housed in a plastic baggie, life span: two days.

"Here, give it a home," she said. "My school has closed. I don't want to leave it behind. I have taken a position with De LaSalle Middle School."

"Where?"

"In North city."

"North of Delmar?"

"North of Martin Luther King Drive. It's my mission."

With that I rummaged under the kitchen sink, found a cast-off centerpiece bowl, and the goldfish had a new home.

Martha started her teaching and curricular advisory position with gusto: year round school, everyday arriving at 6:30am as the students come for breakfast, and staying well after 5:00 or 5:30 as the students stay for extended day. Quickly she had all of us engaged.

De LaSalle is a small, Catholic, nativity school. Its mission is to engage culturally at-risk middle school children and their families into embracing education: academically, socially and spiritually.

Martha's dedication has been tremendous. In addition to her daily teaching, she has challenged these students to grasp opportunities that most of us take for granted: speech meets, field trips to local attractions, and excursions to Washington, D.C. Last year, Martha celebrated her "golden" birthday. Most of us have celebrated similar events with parties in the comfort of our own homes; Martha chose to celebrate at De LaSalle. She gave her kids a party, complete with cake, soda and a live DJ for dancing. We were truly inspired.

The first year of students at De LaSalle are graduating from high school this year, and as a testament to their future, I'd like to say *Très Bien* to Martha for making it happen. The first class has a 100% high school graduation rate and, of this 100%, 50% are going on to college.

And...just like De LaSalle who has labored through a tough start only to establish itself on a firm foundation, my goldfish with its humble beginnings is thriving in its 10-gallon filtered tank.

*Ann Key Lucas*  
*Villa Duchesne Class of 1974*