

## Regina Alumnae at Our Lady of Tepeyac

Just when you think the thirty-five years after graduating from Regina are ancient history, your life is reconnected to the past. That is what happened when **Joni Campbell Thompson '73** and **Nicolette (Nikki) Galante Conway '72**, met in late summer 2007.

Our Lady of Tepeyac is an 81 year old, all girls college prep Catholic high school operated by the Archdiocese in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago. Joni Thompson, the principal of OLT, has been at the school since 1990. She has been instrumental in bringing a college preparatory curriculum to the school. She has also been able to increase the school's availability to all young women who want to attend, regardless of the families' ability to pay.

Joni has also involved her former Regina classmates, **Tricia Gutekanst '73**, and **Alice Dolan '73**, to assist her in Our Lady of Tepeyac's development and fundraising efforts. Both serve on Tepeyac's Board of Directors and help out with the annual fundraiser and some Regina alumnae attend the event.

Meanwhile, Nikki found her way to the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corp, a Jesuit organization that places volunteers at various agencies, hospitals, schools, hospitals or community centers. George Sullivan, Head of IVC, Chicago, and Regina Dominican graduate parent, suggested Nikki consider Our Lady of Tepeyac as a potential spot where her skills and experience could be utilized.

George described to Nikki Joni's efforts at Tepeyac, highlighting the fact that Joni had also attended Regina. He explained that the Ignatian volunteer, who was doing the college counseling at Tepeyac, had to take a year off. He thought Nikki would be a "good fit." Nikki was open to finding out more about the position. In August of 2007, George, Nikki and Joni met to discuss the 2008-2009 school year.

With her second year almost completed, Nikki has been working closely with the school's Director of College Readiness. The two have accomplished some amazing things. Nikki developed a group of contacts at colleges and universities the girls would be likely to attend and began setting up opportunities for them to visit the OLT seniors. The students were encouraged to apply to more "reach" colleges, and some were accepted to schools they never dreamed possible. This year, the seniors took part in a two-week "College Boot Camp" where they learned the ins and outs of the college application process. Twenty-five colleges visited the school, and the girls also took a tour of three area colleges to experience different types of campuses. By Christmas vacation, every senior had filed at least two college applications. In all, over 180 applications were sent to more than 60 colleges and universities, and the students have been offered close to \$1,000,000 in scholarships and grants. Over 90% of the seniors will attend college next year, 48% of whom are the first in their families to graduate high school, while 78% are the first to attend college.

Charles D. McIver, famous educator once said, "When you educate a man, you educate an individual. When you educate a woman, you educate a family." That influence extends for generations. This the basis for Our Lady of Tepeyac's philosophy: *Strengthening Faith and Academics Through Community*. By encouraging these students to pursue their dreams and continue their education, Regina graduates are changing the world one woman at a time. For further information on Ignatian Volunteers contact George P. Sullivan at [gsullivan@ivcusa.org](mailto:gsullivan@ivcusa.org). (article submitted by Nikki Galante Conway '72)



From Right: Nancy Kelly Gibson '73, Joni Campbell Thompson '73, Tricia Gutekanst '73, Nikki Galante Conway '72, Alice Dolan '73

## Down The Aisle

Courtney Dempsey '93 to Gary Courtney



### Going Green

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