

Casa Pacifica Outreach

In March the middle and high school OSBs joined forces to host a spring party for the kids at Casa Pacifica near Camarillo. It was an amazing day of fun for all the students as they moved from station to station to explore a variety of activities that OPIS students had planned. Our middle school students sponsored two booths - Dream Catchers, where children decorated hoops with yarn, and "Dirt and Worms" where kids concocted chocolate pudding and Oreo treats. The high school OSB offered Pot of Gold for the students to decorate clay pots, Rock Painting, and Cookie Decorating. The photo booth was a big hit with Casa Pacifica residents as they posed for pictures with our students, many of whom they recognized from popular TV shows. Our own Nathan Arenas, who stars on Disney Channel's *Bunk'd*, wowed the crowd with a memorizing magic show, assisted by Sophie Reynoldson who appears on *Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything*. See additional pictures on page 2.



OPIS Student Body

Casa Pacifica Spring Party

Kudos to the faculty advisors of the OSB groups!
Kate Thompson and Lori Glazer, high school
Amy Kobayashi and Samantha Lyons, middle school



1. Veronika, Molly, and Joseph are ready to help residents create dream catchers, 2. Ryan, Bradley, Jason from Good Luck Charlie, and Shane prepare for planting at the Dirt and Worms activity, 3. Veronika, Kaia, Bella, Jasmine, and Cameron from Descendants, are ready to help kids decorate pots, 4. Nathan from Bunk'd entertained the crowd with magic tricks, 5. Matthew, Zach, Chip, and Kaia help out with the rock decorating booth.



Principal's Message

The end of the year is quickly approaching and I would like to let you all know how proud I am of all of you. To the senior class of 2017, I wish you all the best in your future. You have truly made a lasting mark on OPIS and on our community. We look forward to seeing what you all accomplish in your lives. Our staff has done an amazing job this year and it was so nice to see them interact with all of the students during our Open House and Information Night. I saw some amazing projects!!! One of my favorites was the magnetic slime science project.

Our staff was recently given a beautiful week full of teacher appreciation gifts. It is always heartwarming to see ALL of our parents come together to make this special week happen for our teachers. I would especially like to thank all of our Parent Faculty Club parents, who played a key part in making this happen, and to Jacque Mills for taking the lead.

I also want to take the time to recognize all of our parents and students who speak so nicely about our program. Mrs. Meskis and I are constantly getting phone calls about how a particular family has referred our program to them. Our school's growth is particularly dependent on word of mouth. Your support in making that happen goes a long way and it means so much to us. We are a very big independent school, but we do not have a feeder program into our school. Therefore, we rely on our parents to speak highly of our program and to refer other families to us. Thank you all for being so supportive and for helping our school continue to serve so many deserving students.

I hope you all enjoy a well deserved summer break and some time in the sun and with family.

Stewart McGugan



Rain and Shine

Thanks to teacher Danny O'Brien who captured the two pictures above. He was on campus on February 17 to watch "Lake OPIS" overflow its banks and cover the first steps to the classrooms.



We would also like to thank parents and students for finding alternative parking as our parking lot has been under construction since April 28. Workers are making great progress every day installing a covered structure which will support energy-saving solar panels.

Field Trips

Mission Produce

Located in Oxnard, this state of the art avocado packing plant gave our families a good understanding of what is involved in getting avocados from the trees to the table. First we saw a video showing how the avocados are harvested by the growers and trucked to the packing plant. Here they enter a huge refrigeration unit that chills the fruit before it enters a very cold packing plant where it can be stored for a few weeks. Then we entered the assembly line area where the fruit is cleaned, sized, checked for imperfections, sorted, labeled, and boxed. Finally, we saw where the boxed fruit is taken away in big semi trucks.

Mission Produce's state of the art facility is equipped with four acres of solar panels on the roof. The lighting is provided by energy efficient LED lights.

The staff members we met were all young and enthusiastic about their jobs. Most had worked their way up in the company and seemed to really enjoy their work and each other.

In our informative tour we learned how Mission avocados are shipped worldwide. The most perfect ones are generally sent overseas. The next best ones are sold in local markets. Those with visual imperfections are sold to restaurants while imperfect ones are used for oil or beauty products.

In the picture at the top, we see each avocado being photographed from 20 angles to spot imperfections. Based on the results, the avocados are automatically channeled into the appropriate quality-graded category.

In the second photo, we see the stickers that are applied to each avocado.



Each student received a special squishy avocado as a souvenir of our trip to Mission Produce.



Watershed Resource Center, Santa Barbara

A drizzly morning in Santa Barbara did not dampen the spirits or enjoyment of the few families that attended the Watershed Resource Center in Santa Barbara on March 21, 2017. The center is strategically located alongside a beautiful estuary just steps from Arroyo Burro Beach.

Our guide led us on a short walk and showed us beautiful murals that had been made of debris that had washed up on the beach. In the Center she explained just how little fresh water there is on the Earth. We gained an appreciation for the need to conserve this precious natural resource. We viewed a very powerful video that described the devastating effects plastics are having on ocean life. These micro plastics are inadvertently consumed by sea life, making them feel full but offering no nutritional value. The plastics can also be passed along to humans when we eat the affected fish.



In the picture below, Molly and Maddie are demonstrating what happens when pollutants such as soap, chemicals, and dog waste wash into the ocean after a rain. We learned the importance of using car washes where water and detergents are recycled, reducing the use of harmful chemicals, and picking up after our pets.

Our visit ended with an experiment where we tested the estuary water for different chemicals, and safe levels of acids and bases. Jiselle and Molly are showing their test results.

Thanks to the staff at Explore Ecology for offering this fun and insightful trip which has made our students much better caretakers of the Earth.



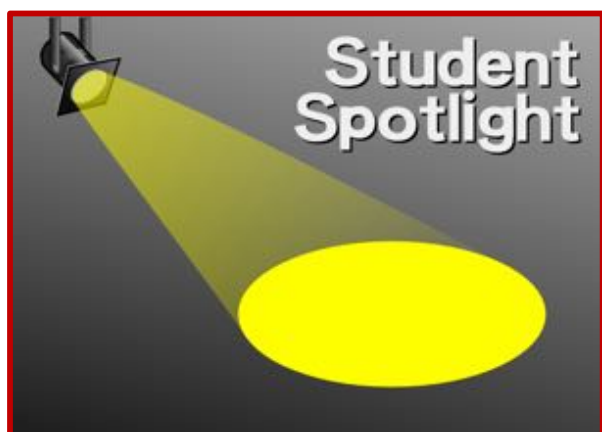


The Renaissance Pleasure Faire at the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area in Irwindale was our April 21st field trip. Costumed entertainers, jugglers, dancers, musicians, magicians, aerialists, glass blowers, jousters, and jesters treated us to a glimpse of jolly Elizabethan England. A falconry demonstration with four types of birds thrilled the audience.

At the Queen's Cottage, students could experience a variety of arts and crafts activities from making chain mail to making fairy dolls and houses, leather tooling and stitching, paper marbling, apothecary, candle making, felt stitching, needle arts and mask painting. The Queen and her court promenaded throughout the faire and even participated in the May pole dance. There were jousting lessons, fencing lessons, and games of skill and chance.

Students enjoyed feasting on turkey legs and other scrumptious fare. There were numerous venders selling jewelry, leather goods, blown glass creations, hats, and masks. Shakespearian actors entertained the crowds along with a whip artist, magicians, country garden dancers and middle Eastern dancers.





Joshua Rush



Joshua Rush's new show *Andi Mack* premiered on Disney Channel April 7th and will run for 13 episodes, every Friday night at 8:30 P.M. He shot episodes in Salt Lake City during first semester and loved it.

Andi Mack is Disney's first serialized show and Josh is enjoying being a part of such a great cast and crew, and seeing fans getting involved in the characters and the storylines!

According to Joshua on his website, "I was super proud to work on *Andi Mack* in the winter of 2016 as Cyrus, who is Andi's best friend. He's quirky, not athletic, and generally just a little awkward. He's got a sense of humor that can make just about anyone laugh. Cyrus doesn't fit in with anyone, but Andi and Buffy...and he wouldn't want to anyway. I can't wait for you to see it!"

Joshua is a freshman at OPIS. Check out his website at <http://www.joshuarush.com/>.



Kaylena Mann

Kudos to Coach Kaylena who is prominently featured in a wonderful article by Naomi Cahill in an April 3rd publication from the Special Olympics of Southern California. Kaylena is an accomplished athlete, having participated in synchronized swimming, track, bicycling, distance swimming, soccer, aerial, stilts, and triathlons.

For the second year Kaylena is coaching the Tri-Valley track and soccer teams comprised of special athletes of all ages. She is also working with Alina and Lilia Ford, pictured with Kaylena in the photo above. Every Saturday Kaylena meets with the sisters to help them practice riding a bike. They have made tremendous progress according to Kaylena and aspire to become triathletes just like their coach.

Her coaching experience has benefitted Kaylena as much as it has the athletes she trains. She is amazed to see their progress and has come to realize that "anyone is capable of doing what they want to do. Everyone has the potential to be amazing," she said.

Kaylena has recently qualified for the Olympic-distance race at the 2017 USA Triathlon Age Group National Championships on Aug. 12 in Omaha, Nebraska, after finishing in the top 10 percent in her age group at the Los Angeles Championship & Tri Express Triathlon Series Event #1.

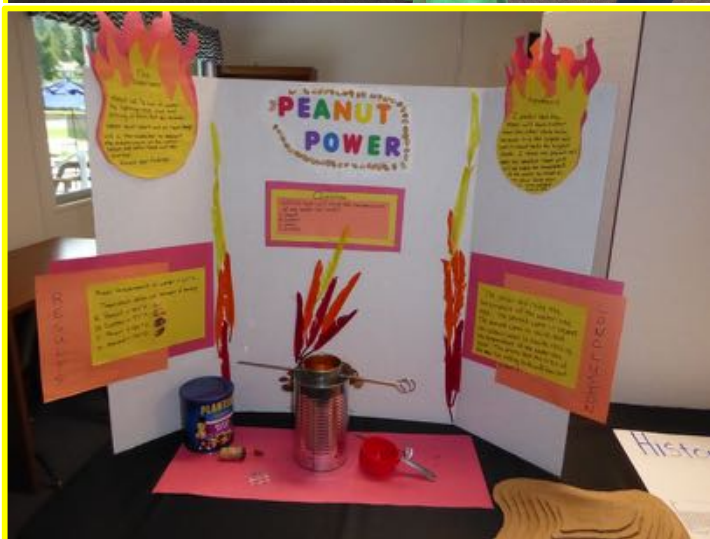
We salute this talented student who has discovered the joy and rewards that come with helping others. To read the full article go to

<https://wearesosc.org/2017/04/03/kaylena-mann-coach-on-and-off-the-field/>

Open House and Orientation Night

On April 27 OPIS held its annual Open House and New Family Orientation Night. Prospective families met to learn about the program, speak to teachers, and tour the classrooms. A special thank you to students, **Karan Brar and Sophie Reynolds**, who shared their perspectives about the school.

Science project of all kinds were on display in R-2. Students explored such topics as mold growth, plastic milk, popcorn quality, nut combustion, bubble gum blowing, soda sweetness, water composition, horse whiskers, effects of different drinks on teeth, and slime making to name a few. Have a look at some of the displays.



As promised, here is the recipe for Kaia's famous **magnetic slime**:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Elmer's glue

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid starch (shaken)

2 TBL black iron oxide powder (available at Amazon.com)

Put glue and starch in a baggie and mix. Add 1 TBL liquid starch at a time and mix. Keep adding starch until the mixture is no longer sticky.

Alternately you can add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water to the glue and iron oxide and then add starch. This makes a slime that flows better but is messier.

My Life With Dogs by Kayla O'Connell



I have always loved dogs, but now my life revolves around them. I volunteer with four organizations, Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs Inc., The Peacock Foundation, Animal Rescue Volunteers, and Canine Support Teams. The first organization I got involved with was Animal Rescue Volunteers. I have been working with them for seven years. We rescue abused, neglected, and abandoned dogs, rehabilitate them if needed, and find them loving forever homes. I foster rescue dogs for this organization and volunteer at our adoption events every Saturday. To date I have saved 109 dogs.

The second organization I am involved with is Canine Support Teams. With this group I raise service dogs for disabled children, adults, and veterans. I get the dog when he is eight weeks old, socialize and train him until he is eighteen months old, and then return him to the organization. The dog then goes through six more months of training before being paired with a disabled person. I am currently raising my fourth service dog - a black lab named Chief.

The third organization I am involved with is Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc. Through them my dog, Tahoe, is certified as a therapy dog so he can visit people in hospitals and nursing homes. Currently I visit the pediatrics wing, pediatrics ICU wing, and the rest of the hospital with him.

The fourth organization I am involved with is The Peacock Foundation. Contrary to what many people think, it actually has nothing to do with peacocks. Peacock is the last name of the founder of the organization. Through this organization I visit 'at risk' youth with my therapy dog, Tahoe. We sit in on group therapy sessions to help the kids relax and talk about what is going on in their lives.

All of these things keep my life hectic and busy, but it is so worth it to make the world a better place. For every dog whose life we save, for every service dog I raise, for every child that feels happy because they pet Tahoe, the world gets just a little bit better. What is the purpose of life if not to make the world around you a better place?

Teacher Appreciation Week

What a week it was for the OPIS teachers! Thanks go to all the families who contributed to the occasion and especially to **Jacque Mills** and her team of helpers who put together a fabulous week of special events to make all of the teachers feel appreciated. The festivities began on Monday with a beautiful breakfast. During the week all the teachers were given a card reading "You're the balm" with lip balm attached. The highlights on Wednesday were 30 minute chair massages courtesy of **Theresa Russillo**. On Thursday Jacque Mills and Jennifer Vrooman served us a fabulous Mexican lunch, complete with beautiful decorations, and presented us with very generous Amazon gift cards from all of the OPIS families. A very big THANK YOU to all of the OPIS family for treating us so incredibly well!



Rotary Essay Contest

For the past several years, OPIS students have submitted essays to the Rotary Club's "The Four-Way Test and Me" writing contest. Our students have had great success in explaining practical applications to the tenants of the Rotary's Four Way Test. These include answering the questions:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it beneficial to all?
3. Will it build good will and better friendships?
4. Is it fair to all concerned?

This year OPIS is proud to announce the winners – **Ava Greenwaldt** 3rd place in elementary school, **Kaia Mann** -3rd place in middle school, and **Garrett Wareing**, 1st place in high school. Each winner received a generous cash reward at a very nice luncheon and awards ceremony held on May 17 at the North Ranch Country Club.



*First place winner in the high school division, **Garrett Wareing***

***Kaia Mann and Ava Greenwaldt**, 3rd place winners in the middle and elementary school divisions*



Don't forget the end-of-the-year beach party on Monday, May 22. We will meet at Zuma Beach lifeguard station #12 from 11:30 – 2:30. Bring lunch, sunscreen, blankets, towels, and beach toys. Free parking is available on PCH or in the lot for a fee. Celebrate the beginning of summer vacation!

Congratulations to the class of 2021



Save the Date!

OPIS registration for the 2017-2018 school year is Wednesday, August 2. At this time books will be issued, 1st week assignments given, and ID photos taken. The first day of school is August 8, however individual teacher meetings will not begin until the following week.