

the

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Barbara Harrison, Editor



Welcome to the OPIS Family

An enthusiastic and somewhat giddy staff would like to welcome all new and returning families to our beautiful, brand new campus. Without exception, we all are passionate about our jobs and absolutely love working with our amazing students on OPIS's first permanent campus. It is so nice to have a place to call home. BIG THANKS to Principal McGugan and all the district employees who made it happen in time for the start of the school year.

Thank you OPIS Families for your generous contributions to our school. Your donations help purchase classroom materials, pay conference fees for our teachers, offer free and reduced cost field trips, offset transportation costs and significantly improve our school in countless ways. If you haven't done so, please consider making a donation. We appreciate it!





A Message From Principal McGugan

familiar with his name because he taught AP History, ASB, and coached baseball at OPHS. DJ is a young, fun-loving, and energetic teacher who changes the entire dynamic of our staff. We are extremely happy to have him and his energy. **Gayle Tribe** (School Psychologist) Part time – Gayle was an intern for us last year. She worked between OPIS, OVHS and OPHS with many students. She brings familiarity to the position and will be a necessary addition that we have been lacking for a long time.

Welcome to the New Year!!! We are extremely excited about the new school year and our new location of OPIS. By now I am sure you have all seen and enjoyed our new location. In this newsletter, I would like to discuss three major items to start the year at OPIS.

FACILITIES

The five new buildings are in place on campus and our staff could not be happier with the new location and setup. The District Office and their team have worked very hard to get our buildings up and running for the beginning of the school year. Our site is now on a beautiful setting with trees, rolling lawns, parks, and beautiful fields surrounding us. We will be having three new lunch tables and six fruit trees, which will provide shade for our students to enjoy while they eat a snack outside of the OPIS classrooms.

NEW TEACHERS

We welcome two new staff members to the OPIS family. They are a perfect fit!
DJ Cook (Teacher) – Several of you may be

ACADEMIC LABS

We have added more labs on top of our existing six labs for this upcoming year. These labs will begin the first week of October. I hope you all take the opportunity to enjoy our returning labs and new labs. We are adding a high school Science dry lab and a middle school OSB lab, to help supplement students who need extra help in specific areas and to give students more one-on-one time with our teachers. Additionally, we now have a new room that is dedicated solely to the academic labs. This allows teachers to work in their rooms without distractions while the labs are in session.

I am looking forward to a new year with all of your students. If I have not been able to connect with you yet, or if you would like to come introduce yourself, please stop by my office anytime. I welcome your visits.

Thank you,

Stewart McGugan



Attention Seniors

Now is the time to make an appointment for your senior portrait. Don't miss out! Book now at O'Connor Bros., 58 Moreland Rd. Suite B, Simi Valley, CA 93065
Tel: (805) 306-9542 Studio Hours: Closed Sundays & Mondays.
Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Saturday, 9:30 AM – 5 PM



OSB and Labs Begin in October

Middle School OSB – (Carolyn Purkey and DJ Cook) – Every other Tuesday 10:00 – 11:00 beginning October 7th in room R1. Welcome back to school OPIS Knights! Are you interested in being a student body representative for the 2014-1015 School year? Have you ever wanted to plan school functions, participate in making important OPIS decisions or simply want to make a difference in the community? If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes" and you are in 6th, 7th or 8th grade, please contact Carolyn Purkey and/or DJ Cook: cpurkey@oakparkusd.org or dcook@oakparkusd.org

Carolyn and DJ are the teacher representatives helping the middle school OSB throughout the year. Both look forward to an exciting and fun year with OSB and they are looking for energetic, organized and fun individuals to join their team!

Middle School Math Workshop – (Lori Glazer) Tuesdays 11:00 – 12:00 beginning October 7th in room R1. Each class will begin with a problem and a lesson, followed by a study hall where students will work on their daily math assignments. Lori will be available to answer questions and clarify concepts.

4th – 8th Grade Writer's Workshop – (Barbara Harrison) Tuesdays 12:30 – 1:30 beginning October 7th in room R1. Students will review grammar and punctuation and learn to write five paragraph essays, summaries, responses to literature, narratives, and poetry. Come have fun and improve your writing skills at the same time!

High School Writing Lab - (Ty DeLong) Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:00 AM beginning October 8th in room R-1. Students will have the opportunity to fine-tune their writing in this hands-on writing workshop.

Students will learn about the writing process, how to cite sources in essays as well as research papers, issues with plagiarism, research techniques, grammar and spelling tips, tips on answering English PSAT and SAT questions, the use of Google Tools, and the best practices for writing literary analyses. Join us—you will be challenged.

High School OSB (Kate Thompson, Kate Edwards) – Every Monday 11:00-12:00 beginning October 6 in room R-4. Come and join other high school students as we plan a year of social and philanthropic activities. We hope to plan the 2nd annual Oakchella concert, promote a fund raiser, learn leadership skills and encourage school and community pride. Please join us!



A home of our own!



Students in last year's Writers' Workshop



First Field Trip a Big Hit!

Over 50 OPIS students, parents, and grandparents traveled back in time to 79 AD at the special Pompeii exhibit at the California Science Center on September 19. When Mount Vesuvius erupted, the town was taken completely by surprise. There was not even a word for “volcano” in the language. The ash from the volcano buried the entire city for nearly 300 years before it was discovered in 1748. Among the artifacts on display were cooking utensils, sophisticated medical equipment, pottery jars for holding wine and olive oil, suits of armor, and casts of bodies that were preserved exactly as they had fallen.

Following the exhibit, our group was able to tour other parts of the museum including the Endeavor space shuttle, biome exhibits and aquarium,

earthquake simulator, and dozens of interactive exhibits. Many students enjoyed building virtual energy-saving cars, determining the best design for air resistant cars, and driving solar and wind powered vehicles.

At the adjacent IMAX Theater, “Forces of Nature” was our next stop. This movie gave us an eye-opening portrayal of the explosive nature of our dynamic earth, specifically the destructive forces of volcanoes, earthquakes and hurricanes and what scientists are doing to predict them and mitigate the damage they can cause.

Judging from the response, this was a very popular trip and a great way to begin the year!



DJ Cook



Welcome New Staff Members

“2014 Most Inspirational Teacher,” “Coach of the Year,” youngest AP teacher (with the highest success rate of 97%), ASB Director and Head Varsity Baseball Coach, are only some of the qualifications of our new teacher, **DJ Cook**. He has published articles in Huffington Post, notably “Living in a Converted Garage With a Masters Degree” and “The Case for a National Youth Corps.” Earning two Bachelors’ Degrees at UC Santa Barbara and Masters’ Degrees in Education and Social Science, DJ is highly qualified to join the team at OPIS. In addition to his teaching experience at Oak Park, La Puente, and Niwot High School (in Colorado), DJ has a strong technical and business background. He has been an executive assistant to a CEO, a production assistant and researcher at ESPN and a director, writer, producer and editor at Santa Barbara Public Access TV. At OPIS DJ will be heading up the middle school OSB and will serve as our web master. He will teach middle and high school students.



Before becoming a school psychologist, **Gayle Tribe** developed and managed corporate and consumer public relations plans for children’s educational software and online products. She conducted children’s focus groups, analyzed children’s software products, and oversaw the production process for children’s cd-rom titles. Following that, Gayle was an elementary school teacher in Lennox, Culver City, and Conejo Valley Unified School Districts. She studied in France, earned her Bachelor of Arts in English at Boston University, Master of Arts in Education at Pepperdine University, and Master of Arts in School Psychology from Phillips Graduate Institute in Northridge. Last year, Gayle did her internship in Oak Park so she was the perfect fit for our new school psychologist position. She shares office space with Cristina in R5 and will serve students from both OPIS and Oak View High School.

Gayle Tribe



Tom and Ray are all smiles as they show off their awesome OPIS water bottles. The bottles are available for sale in R5 for \$10. Please bring your own reusable water bottles to all labs. We provide water, but you need to bring your own bottle. Support your school by being green and get a special black and gold insulated bottle with the OPIS knight logo on it!



Meet These Amazing OPIS Students



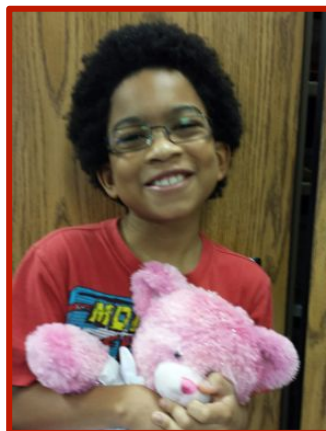
Garrison Cook

About a year and a half ago, I wanted to make some extra cash. I started taking Panel Polls, which are online surveys for kids. After doing this for about six months, I received an email from Nickelodeon asking to do a Skype interview. After the interview, I got another e-mail asking to join Nickelodeon's live action team. We are a small group of kids that come up with ideas for TV shows. Some shows we have created are Henry Danger and Nicky, Ricky, Dicky, and Dawn. I also have a dog walking business. I have run my business for over a year. I love and enjoy my jobs.



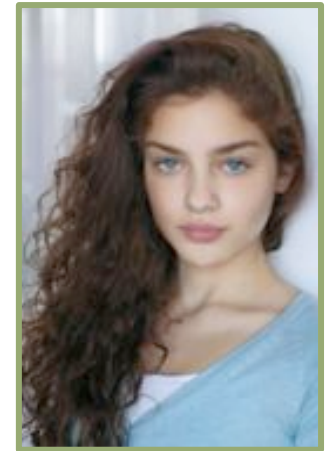
Veronica and Vanessa Merrell

Identical twins, singers, songwriters, musicians, comedians, and actresses, **Veronica and Vanessa** are seniors at OPIS. They came to LA from Missouri to work for Disney in 2013 and have now landed their first recurring role on a TV show that will premier October 13 on the CW channel. In "Jane the Virgin" Veronica and Vanessa play evil stepsisters. (That's hard to believe since they are about the nicest girls around.) They can also entertain you on their own YouTube channel where they post short comedy sketches and videos every Tuesday. Our best wishes to these talented girls as they pursue what is sure to be a successful career.



Andre Robinson III

Fourth grader Andre was the voice of the Meer cat in the movie Khumba. You can also hear his voice in The Best Man Holiday and Twelve Years A Slave. Currently Andre plays Donny in the Disney Jr. show, Doc Mc Stuffins!



Odeya Rush

Born in Isreal, **Odeya** has made her way to Los Angeles to pursue her acting career via Alabama and New York City. She has appeared in several commercials, short films and print jobs. More recently her acting skills have landed her movie and TV roles including appearances on *Law and Order*, and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. She costarred in the movie, *The Secret Life of Timothy Green*. This year she played the female role in *The Giver* opposite Meryl Streep and Jeff Bridges. Odeya's latest project is in the film adaptation of the *Goosebumps* book series. Odeya has six brothers including two sets of twins. Her name means "Thank God" in Hebrew.



Evan Somoza



California Titans Hockey Club's 18AAA forward **Evan Somoza** has been offered a tender to play junior hockey for the Fairbanks Ice Dogs of the North American Hockey League. Somoza will advance his hockey career to Fairbanks next season after spending 3 seasons with the 16AAA and 18AAA Titans teams. Evan Somoza is a 17-year-old forward from Simi Valley who has been attending OPIS for two years now and will be graduating from OPIS this spring. Evan hopes to attain a Division 1 Scholarship to play ice hockey after he graduates and has various schools that are interested in him. He plans to major in finance while in college. Somoza is considered a top prospect in the North American Prospects League. Evan will join his older brother, Ethan Somoza, in Fairbanks as Ethan currently plays for the Ice Dogs. Ethan is also a former OPIS student that is playing his junior hockey in Alaska and also has a Division 1 Scholarship to Bemidji State University (located in Northern Minnesota).
Way to go, Evan! Good luck to you in Alaska!

Field Trip Updates

Dates for the year's field trips have all been finalized. Be sure to sign up with Barb in room R2 well before the deadlines so that you are guaranteed a spot. Please note that it is often difficult or impossible to take last minute reservations because the venues require final payment well in advance of the trips. Thank you for your cooperation.

October 21 – USS Iowa, San Pedro

November 5 – Sub Zero Ice Cream Demo, at OPIS¹

December 15 – Boulderdash Rock Climbing, Westlake²

January 14 – Tall Ships, Ventura Harbor (limit 45)²

February 12 – Search & Rescue Dog Training, Ojai (limit 30)²

March 17 – Leonis Adobe, Calabasas³

April 22 – Riley's Farm, Civil War, Oak Glen⁴

May 1 – International Printing Museum, Carson⁴

June 8 – All School Beach Party, Zuma #12

¹Reserve by October 22

²Reserve by December 5

³Reserve by February 1

⁴Reserve by April 1



Success! Jubilant OPIS students methodically built two freestanding arches using techniques of ancient Roman architects at the California Science Center.