

the

Oak Park Independent School

# Independent

Volume VII Number 1

Barbara Harrison, Editor



## School Year Starts Off with a Bang at Dodger Stadium



OPIS families celebrated the new school year in style with a field trip to

Dodger Stadium to see the

Dodgers play the Arizona Diamondbacks on August

31<sup>st</sup>. Our students ate their way through 11 long innings, sampling Dodger dogs, ice cream, pizza, cotton candy, peanuts, and pretzels. Unfortunately the home team lost 4-3 but the amazing fireworks display after the game was a winner!



## Mondays at OPIS

Monday is a day for OPIS students to come to school and enjoy the company of others while getting work done at the same time! High school students meet in D-51 for **Academic Lab** and **College Counseling** from 10:00 – 12:00. Middle school students meet with Ty DeLong in D-53 for **Math Lab** from 11:00 – 12:00 and then go to **Writers' Workshop** with Barbara Harrison in D-54 from 12:00 – 1:30.

## Fridays at OPIS

Primary students in grades K-3 are invited to an enrichment class every Friday from 11:00-12:00 in D-54 with Barbara. Join in the fun with art activities, science experiments, music, language arts, math and games of all kinds.

## Important Dates

### Picture Day November 7

OVHS Room 104  
9:00 - 11:00. Get your picture taken for an OPIS ID card!

### Cachuma Lake November 9

Sign up for this lake cruise, nature walk and visit to the nature center.

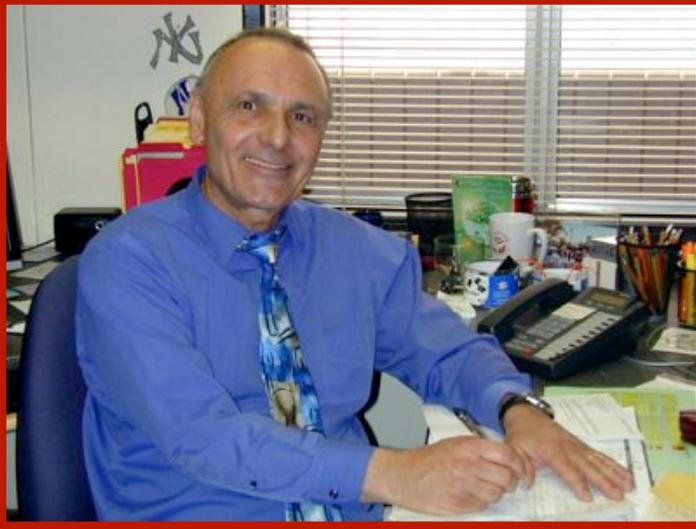
### Thanksgiving Break November 22-23

Winter Break  
December 22 –  
January 6

### Heal the Bay

#### December 13

Join us at the Santa Monica Aquarium for a hands-on interactive field trip.



### A Message from Principal Lou Tabone

Dear Families,

I am pleased to welcome our returning students and I am excited to welcome our new Independent School families! As I begin my eighth year as principal, I remain honored and grateful for the opportunity to work with outstanding students, families and staff. We are going to have another stellar year at Independent School- fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and certified by the NCAA.

Our faculty and staff are charged up and ready to provide outstanding educational experiences. Returning teachers include Ms. Kate Thompson, Ms. Barbara Harrison, Ms. Gillian Gamboa, and Mr. Ty DeLong. I am so pleased to announce three additional teachers joining OPIS: Ms. Carolyn Purkey, Ms. Kate Edwards and Mr. Daniel O'Brien. Additionally, Ms. Cristina Sanchez has joined Yoko Mimori to provide outstanding clerical support to our families and staff.

Once again, our program is enriched with educational and exciting field learning experiences. Additionally, on Mondays, our teachers provide valuable academic support opportunities in all subjects, especially math and writing skill development. I hope our students enjoy two of our newest resources: the home-friendly math

program, *Teaching Textbooks*, and the on line foreign language program, *Rosetta Stone*.

In March 2013 the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) will send in a team to review OPIS. The team will visit with teachers, staff, students and parents to assess our school goals and observe classroom activity. On Sunday evening, March 17, 2013, we are inviting all parents to a reception at OPIS to meet the team. Please mark your calendars and we will continue to update you on this very important process. The team will provide a written report with commendations about our program as well as areas to focus on in the next few years. We welcome the visit, as we continue to grow and learn how to provide the very best educational experience for all students.

I believe that *All* Independent School students can be successful, productive, well-educated citizens of character. Our vision and goal remains the same: To provide a quality alternative educational experience. Through partnerships with home and community, our students develop the skills, knowledge, insight and character required to make the successful transition from school to career and to a rewarding life.

*To our parents:* Thank you for your continued support, your involvement and your commitment to the education of your student. Thank you for your consideration of the voluntary cash contribution to support our school program.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you during the school year and learning about your OPIS experience. Please give me a call or an email anytime at 818.735.3219 and [Ltabone@oakparkusd.org](mailto:Ltabone@oakparkusd.org).

Sincerely,  
*Lou Tabone,*  
Principal



## OPIS Welcomes Three New Teachers



**Carolyn Purke**

OPIS is delighted to welcome Carolyn back as a permanent teacher on our staff. She has been a guest teacher at OPIS and at all the other schools in the district since 1995. Currently Carolyn is the acting Oak Park High School Cheer Coach.

After earning a degree in physical education and art, and completing her credential at CSUN, Carolyn taught at Columbus Junior High School for two years and at Canoga Park High School for thirteen years.

Carolyn is proud to be a part of OPIS and especially loves the one-on-one time with students.

Her hobbies are yoga, pilates, family vacations, and photography. Her goals are to become full time at OPIS, become a grandma and travel the world.



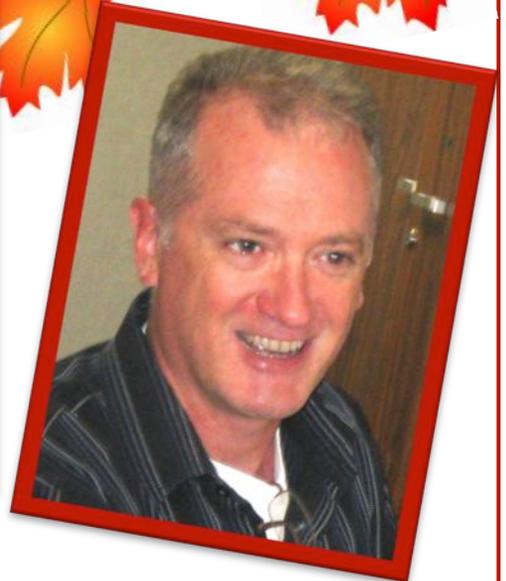
**Kate Edwards**

Kate brings a positive, energetic, and can-do attitude to OPIS. She is passionate about student success and is skilled at working with students and parents. She has over four years of independent study teaching experience in Los Angeles.

Kate is a graduate of Cal State, University, San Marcos where she graduated with a degree in Social Studies.

Kate is excited about being part of the OPIS team and looks forward to developing a high school leadership group that will organize and plan community service projects and social activities.

In her spare time, Kate participates in tennis and beach volleyball.

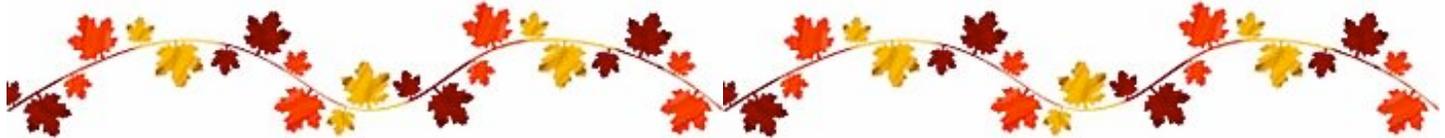


**Danny O'Brien**

Daniel has been an educator in the Conejo Valley area since 1997, teaching in both Moorpark and Oak Park. He really enjoys sharing his knowledge and experience with all his students. Prior to joining the teaching staff at OPIS, Daniel was the Director of Instrumental Music at Oak Park High School.

He graduated Magna Cum Laude from California State University, Northridge with a degree in Music Education. He also has an A.A. in Business from L.A. Pierce College.

Daniel lives in Moorpark with his wife. Together they enjoy camping, hiking and gourmet cooking. They just celebrated the birth of their first grandchild, Makayla Faith Harrison, born October 10, 2012.



## OPIS Welcomes Cristina Sanchez



OPIS is excited to welcome Cristina Sanchez to our student support staff. A graduate of UCLA, Cristina brings impressive business credentials and a warm, friendly personality to her job. She is the mother of twin boys who attend first grade at Brookside Elementary School in Oak Park.

Cristina is excited to be back in the work force part-time and working for OPUSD. "I am thankful and enthusiastic to have the opportunity to support students and families of Oak Park and its surrounding communities. It has been great learning more about the independent school and I'm so inspired by the collaboration of OPIS students, families and staff in their dedication to the success of each student. Thank you to everyone for their warm welcome!"

## New Club on Campus

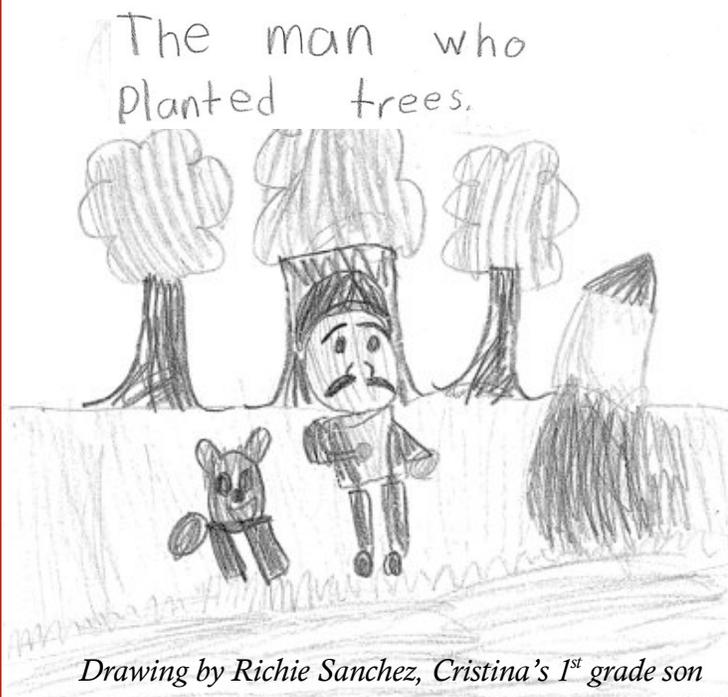
Hurray! The OPIS high school students now have a group to join on campus thanks to Kate Edwards, our new teacher. The first meeting was a huge success. Fifteen students showed up and brainstormed ideas that they want to see implemented during this school year.

A Thanksgiving food drive will be the first community service project undertaken by the Student Body. You may have seen the beautiful door posters on our classrooms advertising this event. Students are asking OPIS families to please bring non-perishable food and non-expired canned goods to school by November 15. The Student Body will deliver them to Manna so that deserving people in our community can have a bountiful Thanksgiving. Thank you in advance for your support of this worthwhile community service project.



## The Man Who Planted Trees

Young OPIS students and their moms were treated to a fantastic all-sensory performance of *The Man Who Planted Trees* at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza on October 19. The story of a shepherd who transformed the French landscape from a barren, uninhabited wasteland to a beautifully forested home was told by two endearing puppets and two human characters. The audience experienced the scent of lavender fields, the delight of real raindrops and the flight of a flock of birds as the forest came to life. One puppet named Dog had the audience in stitches. This was live theater at its best – funny, educational and extremely enjoyable.



## Senior Breakfast

Each June, our graduates look forward to the Annual Senior Breakfast hosted by Superintendent, Dr. Anthony Knight.

### 30 Seniors Honored

It was a festive and emotional morning in June at Agoura Deli when OPIS teachers individually acknowledged the accomplishments of their graduating seniors. This year in particular we had students who overcame extraordinary hardships in their lives to succeed.

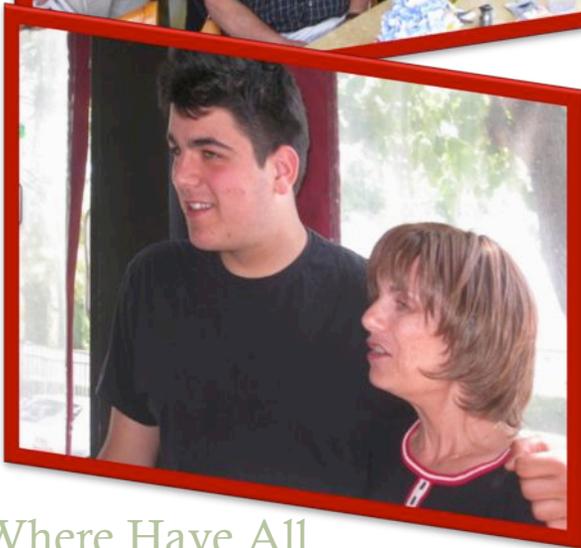
### Scholarships Awarded

**Giacomo Savoya**, pictured at left with Sheila Fitzer, was presented the Conejo Simi Moorpark Association of Realtors Scholarship. He is currently attending Santa Monica City College.

**Jay Warfel**, pictured below with principal, **Lou Tabone**, was awarded the first ever OPIS scholarship for community service and academic excellence. He is now studying music at Columbia.

### Where Have All the Seniors Gone?

Many prospective OPIS families raise the question, "What about college admission?" The answer is our students attend a variety of private and public colleges, universities and trade schools after graduation. Many pursue careers that they have started before graduation. For example, the National Hockey League drafted two of our students who are now playing in Texas. One of our students is dancing with a ballet company in New York City. Another is a plumber's apprentice. Yet another is a professional bike racer. Several are attending local community colleges and a few are at nearby California State Universities. We have students studying broadcasting in Arizona, music in Chicago and hospitality in Nevada. Since many of our students take college classes during their high school years, they enter college with a huge advantage!





Congratulations to the following students who qualified for the Honor Roll in June. Each student received at least a 3.75 grade point average to earn this award.

# FIDM

The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising

The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising was the destination of our second field trip of the year. Our students, many of whom were decked out in the latest and greatest fashions, were treated to a docent lead tour of the museum and a tour of the school classrooms.

The museum featured costumes of Emmy Award winning TV shows. Among the fashions on display were post WWI styles from *Boardwalk Empire* and costumes from *Game of Thrones* whose inspiration came from Mongols, Scots, Vikings, Bedouins and Native Americans. We saw sequined gowns from *Smash*, and Vogue and Vanity Fair inspired fashions from *Magic City*. Our students were thrilled to see the costumes from *Pretty Little Liars*, *New Girl* and *American Horror Story*. The parents enjoyed seeing the costumes from *Downton Abbey*.

Families who stayed for the school tour were quite impressed by the many courses of study offered at FIDM. Among them are merchandising, marketing, manufacturing, product development and many more. There is a lot more to FIDM than fashion design!

## Grade 6

Ava Yallouz

## Grade 7

Erin Greider  
Sangeet Sridhar  
Jacob Nygaard  
Jesslyn Fernandez

## Grade 8

Claire Follmer  
Rachel Kandel  
Jake Harari  
Gabrielle Reublin  
Melanie Selleck  
Yaseen Elhalafawy

## Grade 9

Zendaya Coleman  
James Romero  
Alexa Kernan  
Garett Palmer  
Elijah Young  
Vincent Fortunato

## Grade 10

Jacob Staitman  
Bronwyn Callero

## Grade 11

Lyrica Blankfein  
Emily Russell  
Sean Burch  
Lily Kobabe  
Mallory Culbertson



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Culmination

Congratulations to our 8<sup>th</sup> graders who celebrated their culmination with teachers, family and friends on June 12<sup>th</sup>. We wish them success as they continue their education in high school.



## Field Trip Fun

### Annual Beach Party at Zuma

OPIS students celebrated the end of the school year and the beginning of summer with the annual Zuma beach party. This year was particularly fun because we had so many students of all ages. It was wonderful to see the older and younger students interact with each other. The parents also had a great time relaxing and socializing with each other. For the third year, 8th grader, **Gaby Reublin**, organized games, relays and a treasure hunt for all the kids to enjoy. Thanks, Gaby!



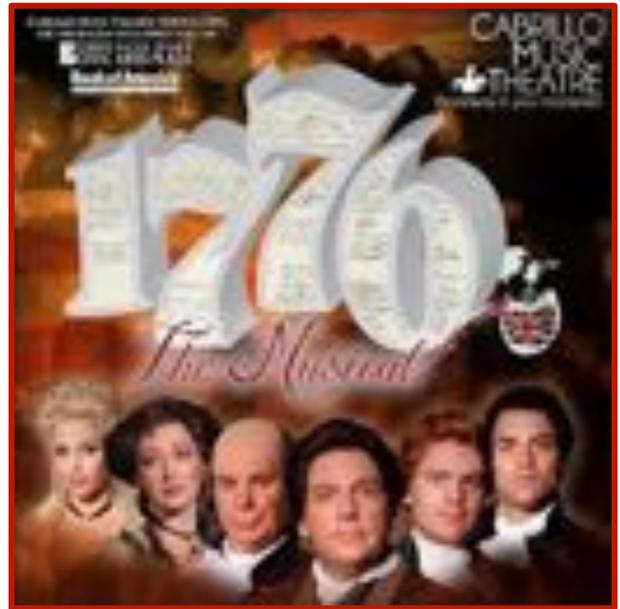
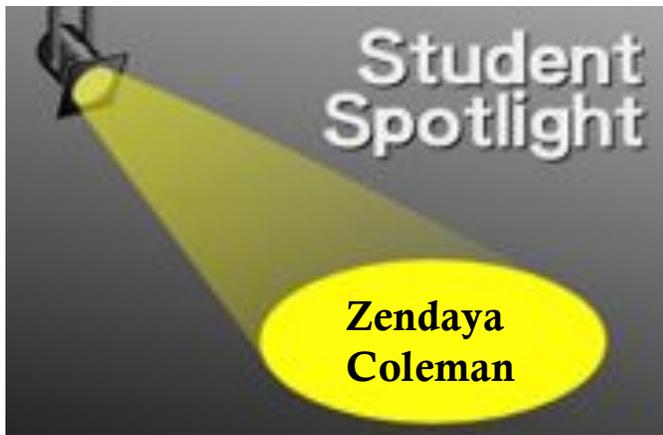
## Field Trip Schedule

November 9	Lake Cachuma*
December 13	Heal the Bay, Santa Monica*
January 15	Larrivee Guitar Factory, Oxnard*
February 13	Columbia Space Center, Downey*
February 28	Huck Finn, TO Civic Arts
March 7	Skirball Museum, LA*
April 18	Stagecoach Inn Museum, Newbury Park
May 17	Limoneira Ranch, Oxnard*
June 10	Zuma Beach Party

\*Indicates transportation is available

If you are interested in attending any of these trips, please contact Barbara Harrison at [bharrison@oakparkusd.org](mailto:bharrison@oakparkusd.org) to sign up. Space is limited for some trips so sign up early!





OPIS students of all grades attended Cabrillo Music Theatre's superb performance of the Tony Award winning musical, *1776*. They were treated to an inside look at the Continental Congress as it hotly debated the issue of independence. As George Washington was fighting with a straggling, grossly outnumbered army, the founding fathers argued heatedly over the issue of slavery. Through compromise, dedication, and perseverance, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert E. Lee, Thomas Jefferson and others gave birth to our new country by signing the Declaration of Independence. The rest is history!

Known to many as Rocky Blue in the Disney TV show, *Shake It Up*, **Zendaya Coleman** is currently an OPIS 10<sup>th</sup> grader. She was born in Oakland, California and was given the name Zendaya which means "to give thanks" in the language of Shona.

Children at Ann Street Elementary School in LA were giving thanks to Zendaya on October 1 as she visited the school, read to the children and distributed backpacks filled with school supplies, which she recently collected in lieu of gifts at her recent Sweet Sixteen birthday party. Zendaya tweeted "Thank u 2 my friends / family who contributed books, supplies & backpacks for my birthday this year...the kids at the school were so happy!!"



*Primary students compare size, weight and number of seeds in pumpkins at enrichment class.*