

Oak Views

Service In Our Community

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OVHS female students, led by Dianne Large, have taken on The Lighthouse, a shelter for women and children run by Rescue Mission, as a community service project. Their first visit involved all of the young women and involved them working to sort donated personal care products.

On Valentines Day, only seniors returned. They had created cards for each of the residents containing a spiritual message about love. After giving a presentation about the meaning of the day, students distrib-

uted goodies.

Jonie Astorga had made cupcakes and Hollie Lynch provided gorgeous and decadent chocolate dipped strawberries donated by her sister's company.

"The purpose of our trips is to help the girls know what it is like to get out of themselves and give back to the community," says Large.

In May, students will return to participate in a larger event to commemorate Mother's Day. Various

county organizations will provide a day of pampering for residents, and our students will be there to help. Donations of personal care items for the female residents are always welcome. More pictures on page 5.



Special points of interest:

- California law (AB 354) requires all students in 7th–12th grades to provide proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster shot (Tdap) before starting school in the fall.
- Look for an informational letter in the mail soon.

Kevin Ferman Takes Top Prize in Essay Contest

For the first time, OVHS students participated in CCEA's annual essay contest and took home the top prize. Kevin Ferman's essay was selected as the best of District 6 and will move on to competition at the state level. District 6 includes all continuation high schools in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties.

Students chose from among three topics, all having to do with their experience at Oak View. In English class,

they wrote, peer edited, polished, and finalized their essays.

Staff members read and scored the essays and five were selected to move on to district competition. Besides Kevin, **Eric Corleto, Jonie Astorga, Emily Gilchrist, and Jenna Hamilton** wrote essays that were selected from among the ones written by all students in English class.

These essays were taken to a reading which included

entries from 8 school districts. All of the essays did quite well, but Kevin's won the grand prize — \$200 and a chance to compete at the state level.

All five top essays will be included in a District 6 anthology which will be made available to all participating schools and students.

Kevin's essay is printed on page 7 of this newsletter.

Congratulations and great job to all participants.

Principal's Corner

Oak View students are like “diamonds in the rough,” with gifts and talents yet to be understood or acknowledged. Our teachers and staff have the special ability to reignite a love for learning in these gifted students attending our continuation high school. On March 11th, Ms. Susan Allen was honored as an Outstanding Teacher by the Tri County Gifted and Talented Association.

Ms. Allen begins her work with each student through a series of self-discovery experiences so that students know their learning style, thinking and personality styles, and their unique learning needs. Her classroom and the learning experiences are organized so that students develop responsibility for their behavior *and for their own learning*. Ms. Allen devotes much effort and love in developing natural and logical consequences for behavior and achievement.

Susan sets high standards for these gifted learners and fosters the attainment of rigorous goals for each one of them. Students can

At right, Principal Tabone congratulates Vicktoria Lundberg on her impending graduation from culinary school.

accelerate their learning and progress towards a diploma and can embark on fascinating self-directed learning experiences designed by Ms. Allen.

A special experience for each student is the careers and life skills senior class requirement. Through a series of rigorous assignments, essays, power point and oral presentations, our gifted students are challenged to stretch according to their individual potential and to develop a plan for post-secondary education and employment. Each student maintains and organizes a portfolio that demonstrates the depth of study as well as progress along the way.

Susan Allen is a very special, indeed gifted, teacher. I am a fortunate administrator to have Ms. Allen on our team at Oak View High School. The real winners are each of her students. Congratulations, Susan!!



Oak View students are like “diamonds in the rough.”

Alumni Roundup

Conrad Schroeder ('10) stopped by after having completed his basic training to become a United States Marine. He has inspired other students to look to a career in the military as well. At right, he shows off his new attire with Desi Dusablon, Jenny Kaidin, and Jenna Hamilton.

Daniel Paris (2005) shared some great news with us — after his graduation

with honors from USC, he will be attending graduate school at Harvard. He will complete an accelerated masters program, then spend another year obtaining certification in counseling troubled youth. It's great to hear of his progress over the years.

Vicktoria Lundberg ('10) will graduate April 3 from the Westlake Culinary Institute. She took classes during her time at Oak View and is well on her way to becoming an excellent chef.



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Two Budget Scenarios

I wrote last month about the two state budget scenarios that we are working under for next year's school district budget. One assumes that two measures are placed on the ballot in June extending current taxes that are about to expire are approved by the voters. This includes $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the Vehicle License Fee and $\frac{1}{4}\%$ on the state income tax as well as 1% on the state sales tax. These have been in place since 2009 but require voter approval for an extension. The second scenario that we are looking at assumes that these measures either do not make it to the ballot or make it to the ballot and fail. In this case, we are promised a cut of \$349 per student. If they pass, then the cut is \$19 per student.

For Oak Park USD, we are fortunate that we are not dealing with declining enrollment on top of these cuts. The funding model for schools in California is highly punitive for school districts in declining enrollment. The reason we are not facing huge reductions is due to the District of Choice program, which allows us to accept students from neighboring districts to fill available space in our schools. Next year, we expect to have approximately 211 more students in OPUSD for a total enrollment of 4250 students. We currently have 4039. We will be under our self-imposed cap of 35% DOC students. At their meeting in January, the Board of Education clarified the cap to exclude students in the percentage that are children of teachers and staff as well as students who attend Oak View High School (our continuation program) and the Oak Park Independent School (home school program). The growth will mean an additional \$700,000 in state revenue next year after the cost of additional teachers required is taken into consideration.

If this income is INCLUDED in the budget for next year the two scenarios look like this of OPUSD:

Under Scenario A – the state ballot measures PASS:

We will maintain our current programs, class sizes, full school year with no furlough days, NO CUTS and should end with a balance of \$452,993.

Under Scenario B – the state ballot measures DO NOT PASS:

We will have a *deficit* of \$909,577, which will require cuts that could include class size increases, a shortened school year, and cuts to programs.

Note that if we did not have the revenue from the additional students, the Scenario A (the best case scenario) would actually result in a *deficit* of \$237,087. Under Scenario B, the *deficit* would be \$1,517,487. So, there would be moderate cuts under Scenario A and drastic cuts under Scenario B.

Note also that these budget scenarios include carry-over of federal stimulus funds of over \$800,000 into the beginning balance for next year. This shows that we carry a 'structural deficit,' which means that we are not able to balance our budget solely based on the annual revenues and expenses. Unfortunately, this is how just about all school districts in California are remaining solvent. Those that have declining enrollment are in serious trouble.

We will be offering a series of budget information sessions throughout the District this spring so that we can explain these scenarios in greater detail and answer any questions. These will be emailed and included in PTO Email blasts at all of the schools.

I remain hopeful that the ballot measures will make it on the ballot and that they will pass for the sake of our children. Polling shows that the people of California are strongly supportive of them.

Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Oak View Acres

Begun as an Eagle Scout project, our garden is well on its way to first harvest! Superintendent Knight is a prime mover at establishing

gardens for all the district schools. Eagle Scout prospect Austen Thompson took on the creation of the garden as his community service project.

He built raised beds and installed snake and other fencing as well as an irrigation system. OVHS students and Principal Tabone have taken over and planted lettuce, celery, potatoes, and flowers. Pictured are Yuval Naor, Jack Sorfazian, Dillon Wallace and Mr. Tabone.



Marine Science Poetry

Ms. Cohen showed her skill at incorporating writing into the sciences when she had students write poetry about various sea life. Following are two examples of student work.

Bright Star

Sea stars long and wide

Bright red like a summer sky

Five legs to move around,

But no eyes to see around.

Moving freely on the ground.

By Tanner, Nico, and Anthony

Sand Dollars

Sand dollars are the best.

They live in an endoskeleton called a test.

Their poison can paralyze prey.

They stay in one place and can't swim away.

By Katie and Jenna

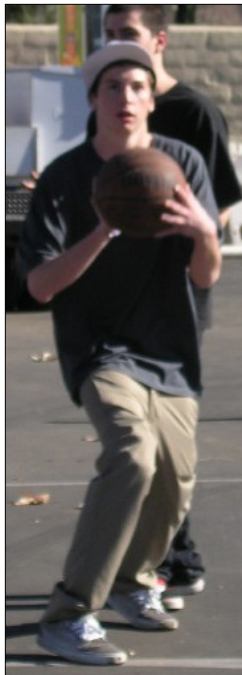
The Light House Project



Above, Ms. Large follows students into the work area where they will learn about the day's project — sorting through various toiletries donated to the Lighthouse shelter. At near right, all of the girls dig right in. At far right, Kayli Layton checks to see if the bins are sturdy enough for sorting. Below left, Jordan Feinberg looks on as Katie Rytterager-Nickel and others get down to business. Below middle, Alaina Rosenthal-Gullot gets in the thick of things. Below right, Ms. Liepman and Ashlea Sneed make sure all items are suitable for use before sorting them.



All Work and No Play Makes Jack a Dull Boy



It's good to blow off a little steam once in a while! Lately, Mr. Tabone has been taking some of the guys out period 6 for some hoop action. There was hope that we could arrange a game against Indian Hills, but they have decided they're too busy to get it organized for this year. They must have learned of the "mad skills" of some of our players. Frequent participants are pictured here: Evan Weerasooriya, Antonio Plascencia, Jack Sorfazian, Trent Beechum, Griffin Greenhut, and Tanner Klein.



Workability Works!

Coreen Herzog has been working diligently with a group of our students for the past two years to enhance their employability. She covers every aspect of job knowledge from the importance of punctuality to how to impress in a job interview. Part of her job involves direct instruction for the students, and part of her job entails making connections with businesses to actually employ the students. Several have had internships and all of the students have learned valuable skills. Her job is funded by the county office of education, and she certainly earns her salary! The students report feeling very prepared to enter the world of work.

At right, Ms. Herzog meets with Hayley Gravino and Dillon Wallace.



Kevin Ferman — Why Oak View Works For Me

I can honestly say that for the first fifteen years of my life, I consistently felt out of place. I never related to very many people and school was so stressful that it was physically painful. No matter how nice and sociable I tried to be, I was never accepted for who I was, and I never found a group of friends or family that I could really trust and associate with. By the time I got into high school at Oak Park High, I came to the conclusion that life was nothing but awkward and stressful situations. School was nothing but groups based upon popularity and self-confidence. The popular groups would shut me down, and I hated everyone else. My confidence lowered every day, and I never thought I would be able to accomplish anything in life. The anger and stress mixed with some of my life choices quickly affected my grades. Before I knew it, I was sitting in the counselor's office hearing about a small little place down the street called Oak View.

Once I started my sophomore year here, all hope in living a normal suburban kid life was lost. My mind was empty, and I had no hope or want for an education at a school that people call Smoke View. The bad reputation of the school gave me a negative attitude and I did not want to participate in

anything with these low-life losers that had it off even worse than I did at the time. So I sat. I sat there in my seat with my skateboard, the only friend I could rely on being there for me all the time. I did not listen or react to anything that was going on around me. I knew it would be easier here, so I did the bare minimum and barely passed for a little while.

Eventually, I realized my stupidity in not giving this school a chance. I started to relate to the students here and I finally joined the fun loving, dysfunctional family we have here at our school. I started paying more attention to what went on around me, and I began getting only A's in my classes. The teachers here started to respect me more, and I realized that I should start participating in more things that would help out my school. I got involved with the video yearbook, and now I try to set a good example for the rest of the students here. Once this all started to happen, I began to figure out who I really was and my confidence gained from it. For the first time in my life, I was set in the perfect environ-

ment where I was able to thrive and grow in any way I could imagine. The best part about it is the shortened hours and the no homework policy. I was finally given the time outside of school to work toward many of my career goals some of which I have already accomplished.

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our school.**

Oak View does not only "work" for me, it saved my life. It gave me the confidence and spare time I needed on top of giving me the best group of friends I could ask for. My parents and family are thrilled to see me keeping my grades up. And as I progress in my career, my opportunities are shooting through the roof. I am steadily becoming more and more happy with my life, and I plan on keeping up my grades and still setting a good example for the people around me. And it's all thanks to Oak View High School.

Oak View High School

5701 E. Conifer St.
Oak Park, CA 91377

Phone: (818)735-3217
Fax: (818)735-3290
E-mail: sallen@oakparkusd.org

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