

THE SCHOOL WATCH

OPUSD Community Newsletter

Spring 2018 Edition

Oak Park
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



OAK HILLS ELEMENTARY

OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

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Outstanding Students

Exemplary District Recognition and California Distinguished School

The California Department of Education has named **Oak Hills Elementary School** as a 2018 **California Distinguished School**, one of only three schools in Ventura County to receive the honor. Additionally, the **Oak Park Unified School District** has been recognized as an 2018 **Exemplary District**, one of only 22 in California out of nearly 1000 school districts. The process for the state awards program this year was highly stringent and was based on student performance and progress on the state indicators described on the California School Dashboard. Indicators include student achievement as measured by the standards-based CAASPP tests, suspension rates, and English learner progress.

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2018 Grad Stats

Graduating Students: **363**
College Applications: **2687**
Applications per Student: **7.4**

Average GPA: **3.375**
Average SAT: **1340**
Average ACT: **29.1**

Graduating with a GPA of 3.5 or higher: **46%**
Attending 4 Yr College: **62%**
Attending 2 Yr College: **32.2%**
Total Attending College: **94.2%**

Exemplary Districts were evaluated based on having a Positive School Culture and Climate with an emphasis on Student and Family Engagement.

State Superintendent Tom Torlakson states: *"These schools implement outstanding educational programs and practices that help California students realize their potential, and put them on the path to achieve their dreams,"* Torlakson said. *"Every day at these schools, teachers, administrators and classified employees, working with parents, apply their dedication, creativity, and talents toward providing a great education for all their students."*

Congratulations to Oak Hills and to everyone in Oak Park USD. We all have something to celebrate thanks to our remarkable students, engaged parents, caring staff, thoughtful school leaders, and tremendous support and hard work by everyone in our learning community!

National Green Schools Recognition

The United States Green Building Council and the Green Schools National Network has named Oak Park USD as the Best of Schools 2018 - Best District in the U.S.

Here is a statement from these organizations about this award: *Across the U.S. and around the world, individuals and communities, non-profit organizations and corporations are showing their commitments to healthy, safe and sustainable schools. Your contributions to this effort stand out among the very best, and it is thanks to work such as yours that we are moving ever closer to ensuring that every student is in a green school within this generation.*

This award was presented to the District at the Green Schools National Conference in Denver on May 4. Oak Park has integrated environmental practices and education into a seamless program that is truly part of our Climate of Care. Care for our children, our families, our staff, and nature. The extensive efforts and investment into green building projects save us money that compounds year after year. School districts do not have money to spare. This year our new solar panels will save us \$350,000 in electrical costs - money that would come from our general fund and is instead available to support classrooms.

Children are learning about the majesty of nature through regular classroom experiences, especially on integrated field trips to places such as Santa Cruz Island in the Channel Islands National Park. Students in the AP English class at OPHS went on a special whale watch charter last fall where they were able to view humpback whales. This helped make their study of *Moby Dick* more authentic, even though our boat was not struck by a great white whale!

Brookside 50th Anniversary Celebration

Brookside students, staff members, and special guests celebrated the school's 50th Anniversary on March 8, 2018. In addition to all of the nearly 600 current Brookside students and current staff, the celebration was attended by many of the teachers, staff, principals, and PTA presidents from Brookside's past, including the school's very first PTA president, Lois Spencer, who served during the school's opening year in 1968.



During the event, student representatives from each class recited their contributions to "50 Reasons to Love Brookside". Superintendent, Dr. Tony Knight, presented the colorful history of the school from its inception to present time. The Brookside Senior Chorus led the crowd in the Brookside Cheer, and our student body honored those who have contributed to the school's great success throughout the years. Following the program, refreshments were served in the Multipurpose Room while teachers and guests mingled and reminisced about the past. Brookside has a great deal to celebrate and has been fortunate to have exceptional staff, families, and community members supporting our programs over the years!



History Day at Medea

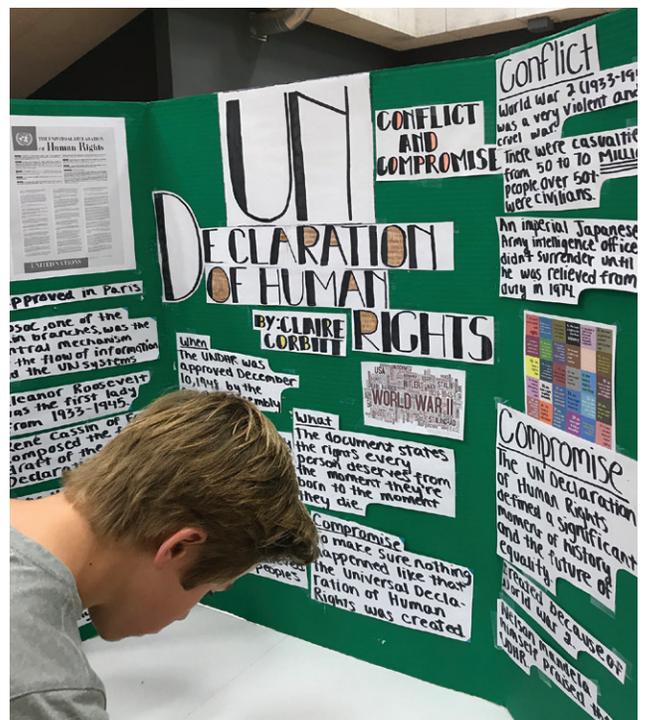
The annual History Day Challenge at Medea Creek Middle School provides opportunities for 6th to 8th grade students to create exhibits or documentary presentations on a nationally designated theme in history. Additionally, participating eighth graders are able to earn the History with Honors designation upon graduation. Participation in this event enables students to enhance academic achievement and develop important 21st century skills to prepare for high school, career, and civic life.

Women in History

During one week in March, a different woman from history comes into each classroom at Oak Hills Elementary School. Clad in costumes designed by presenters, these characters step forth ready to impart information about the strength and importance of "Her Story" in history. Fifth graders have the opportunity to participate in this program from November to March of each school year, making decisions about who to present, what to wear, props to use, class give-aways, and how to deliver the scripts. Giving up their lunch for meetings, these students bring these women to life in the classrooms. Endorsed by the American Association of University Women and funded by the PTA, this program has impacted Oak Hills students for decades.



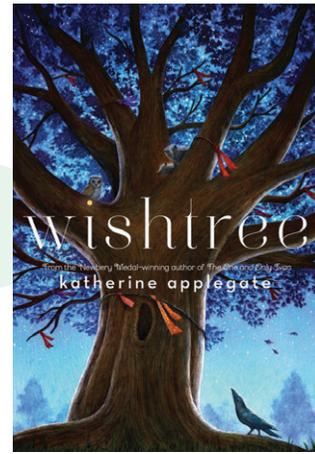
This year's theme was Conflict and Compromise in History. Thirty-one groups, comprising approximately one hundred thirty-five students, participated this year.





Big Sunday 2018

On Big Sunday, May 6th, Oak Park Unified School District schools took part in the national community service event. 275 people donated their time by taking on many projects to help their schools and community. The hiking trail portion of Medea Creek that runs behind Oak Park High School was cleared of trash and debris. The individual school sites were cleaned inside and out. On a couple of the campuses the handball courts were repainted. One of the schools planted flowers, re-mulched their fairy garden, and built a gaga pit (gaga is a fun game popular in the summer camp world); another repainted a map of all fifty states! It was a fun morning of making our community even better!



Community Read

Each year, the Oak Park USD Environmental Education and Awareness Committee selects an environmental topic for the school year. The theme selected for next year is *TREES*. To start off our year of trees, the Community Engagement Committee and the EEAC have selected the book, *Wishtree* as our book for the summer. Everyone in the community is invited to read it. There will be an evening event in the fall where we will analyze the book and explore deeper meanings. *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate has a reading level appropriate for children in grades 5 and up but can be read aloud as a family. Everyone will find the book engaging. For adults and high school students we recommend *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben in addition to *Wishtree*.

Emergency Preparedness In Oak Park

Ventura County is reeling from historic wildfires and floods. The Ventura County Fire Department reports that fire season is now 365 days a year. Dealing with the effects of drought, fires, water shortages, and the ever-present threat of earthquakes is the 'new norm'. Local, State, and Federal emergency response agencies will be looking at ways to make our communities more prepared and resilient to natural disasters.

The challenge to be prepared is directed to all of us. Every citizen has the responsibility to be an asset to his or her community and when trained, are far more equipped to deal with the circumstances.



FEMA Cert Training Program

Many Oak Park Unified School District staff and community members are already trained in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Emergency Response Team Training (CERT) program. In addition, Oak Park High School has had eight years of great success with their Teen CERT Training Program utilizing the same adult CERT curriculum.

This free six-week community preparedness course is a nationwide program taught by our County Fire Fighters. Participants learn disaster preparedness, light search and rescue techniques, fire suppression, utility management, and disaster first aid. Oak Park hosts this free training to any resident 18 and older every fall. Help our Oak Park Community by joining the next Oak Park CERT Training in October 2018. To register or for more information, email Di Starzak, Oak Park CERT Coordinator at dstarzak@sbcglobal.net.

Amateur Radio

When all else fails, HAM or Amateur radio will be what our community relies on for accurate information and assistance. Several Oak Park Unified School District staff members as well as residents are FCC licensed radio operators who train monthly in mock communication drills with Ventura County Sheriff's emergency radio network, Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS).

Amateur Radio Training

We are looking for more licensed operators to staff radio sites within Oak Park. Training and licensing is simple. One-day FCC Amateur Technician classes with *licensing exam* will be offered at the Agoura Hills/Calabasas Community Center on July 22 and October 21. If interested, please go to <http://HamClass.goodkin.net>.

Thank You To Our Parent Volunteers

One of the biggest strengths of our Oak Park schools is the involvement of our parents in the education of their children. There is a measurable benefit of this involvement in the academic success of every child. Parents who are involved value education and this message is transferred to the student. Parents who become involved do so not only for the benefit of their own children but for all the children participating. They know that we as a school and as a community must look out for each other and the assistance provided for the common good helps everyone in our whole society. Being involved doesn't have to mean devoting hours during the regular workday to assisting in the classroom. Yes, we have many parents that help out in this manner, but there are other ways too. We accept many different kinds of offers of assistance. Parents can work on school projects from home, attend field trips or provide traffic assistance, to name a few. We know that our parents have many talents and have been generous in sharing them with our students. Parent and community involvement makes our schools strong so be involved and play a part in helping our children to succeed.

The Cat In The Hat Visits Red Oak Elementary

Red Oak Parent, Trevor Julian as Cat-in-the-Hat on Dr. Seuss Day reading to kindergarten classes on March 2, 2018.





1-to-1 Chromebook Pilot Program

Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity skills, the "21st Century Four C's," are core elements of Oak Park Unified School District's instructional program. To support these innovative teaching and learning practices, the OPUSD Governing Board has approved the pilot of a Take Home 1-to-1 Chromebook program to take place at MCMS 6th grade this Fall. Beginning in August 2018, every incoming 6th-grade student will be required to have a district-managed Chromebook for use at school and at home.

Parents of incoming 6th graders will be given the opportunity to participate in a heavily discounted Lease-To-Own program through which they will be able to purchase a district-managed, state of the art touch-enabled flip screen Chromebook for a heavily discounted \$300 instead of the \$750 it would cost them through retail channels (including active pen/stylus, 3-year extended warranty, 3 years of accidental damage protection, licenses, taxes, and fees). A high parent Lease-To-Own participation rate will make such a Take Home 1-to-1 program financially sustainable and the district plans to expand this program to all secondary grades (6-12) the following year if all goes well during the pilot. Parents who are unable to participate in the Lease-To-Own program will be able to check a Chromebook out (like a textbook) from the District at no charge, but the district hopes that most parents will see the value in the program and choose to participate in order to make the 1 to 1 program sustainable in the long term.

Those seeking more information about the District's 1 to 1 Chromebook initiative and Lease To Own program can go to www.opusd.org/chromebooks.

Earthweek

This year's theme was Caring for our Oceans. Students at our elementary schools learned about plastic pollution and the other threats to the world's oceans. There were assemblies, special books and lessons, and interesting age-appropriate videos about the problem. A special project was formed with the Friends of Midway Island who are working to protect the Laysan Albatross, an endangered bird due to plastic pollution that the birds ingest and feed their young. Students were able to see and touch actual debris removed from deceased albatross stomachs. We held a 'Social Change' drive and raised over \$4000 to support the work of this organization on Midway Island. Midway Island is famous from the battle in WWII and is now part of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands National Marine Monument.

Students also learned about the many wonders of the sea and how ocean can be explored through SCUBA. Demonstrations of equipment were offered at lunch at all three schools by our certified diver administrators, Tony Knight, Jay Greenlinger, Enoch Kwok, and Erik Warren.





Junior Rangers Discovery Program

Students traveled to the Channel Islands National Park museum in Ventura. They participated in the Junior Rangers Discovery program where they learned about the Channel Islands and their native plants and animals. Students also learned about how the environment of the islands has changed over time. During the visit, students had the unique opportunity to speak with a diver off the coast of Anacapa Island. The diver taught students about the kelp forest and its inhabitants. A sea lion even popped in for a visit during the live chat! What a wonderful experience for the fourth graders! Students pledged to help protect and preserve our amazing national parks. Each student received a ranger badge and a pass that allows them free access to all national parks through the month of August. This learning experience also gave students background information for their fifth-grade field trip to Santa Cruz Island.

Spelling Supremacy

Rahul Naveen, an 8th grader at Medea Creek Middle School has come in 1st place in the Ventura County Spelling Bee and will now compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. later in May. This is a first for us and we are excited for Rahul. He won by spelling E-F-F-E-R-V-E-S-C-E-N-C-E.



Odyssey of the Mind

The Oak Park High School Odyssey of the Mind team has qualified for the World Finals and will be competing May 23-26 at Iowa State University. Many thanks to the Oak Park Education Foundation for sponsoring the OoTM program in Oak Park and congratulations to the following students on the OPHS team: **Jake Brumby, Rithwik Adicherla, Rida Shaik, Vinay Pillai, Sriram Sridhar, Michael Goldberg, and Kaitlyn Lee.**



Women of STEM

Riley deVarenes' an Oak Park High School Senior Architecture student has been awarded 2nd place at the NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction) contest. Riley will receive a certificate and an award of \$500.

Sabrina Stone 2018 Los Angeles and Orange County Metropolitan Affiliate Winner of the NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing is starting a Summer Coding Course for middle school girls at Medea Creek Middle School this summer.

Outstanding Band Seniors from OPHS

Peter Ye

Principal Percussionist: Wind Ensemble, Ventura County Honor Band Principal Percussion 3 years, Vibraphone: Jazz Band, Assistant Jazz Director, Drum Major: Marching Band

Jessica Conway

Clarinet: Wind Ensemble, Saxophone: Jazz Band, Drum Major: Marching Band

Ray Zhang

Principal Clarinet: Wind Ensemble, Principal Clarinet: VCHB 3 years, All State Band 3 years, All National Concert Band as Sophomore

Alex Trux

Principal French Horn: Wind Ensemble, Principal Trombone: Jazz Band, Section Leader: Horns Marching Band

Justin Cole

Percussion: Wind Ensemble, Drum Set: Jazz Band



OPHS Debate Team

Oak Park High School Debate had a terrific year! Starting with just 11 freshmen in January 2016, the team now has 35 members across all four grades, and relies on students teaching students in a supportive and nurturing environment. OPHS Debate prides itself on taking the shyest and most reserved students and turning them into confident public speakers with a strong understanding of the world around them.



Oak Park High School Debate Team

OPHS Debate attended 11 tournaments this year and won over 60 awards, including a Debate Sweepstakes award from the Tri-County Forensic League Spring Open at which 15 out of 25 debaters won awards. Last year, 2 OPHS Debaters qualified for and placed 4th and 15th at the State Championship in Lincoln Douglas debate. Again this year, 2 OPHS debaters have qualified for their State Championship and are competing for their State ranking at the end of April 2018.

OPHS Debate does not exist without the dedication of parents who serve as debate judges at both practice debates and tournaments, drive carpool, and chaperone on overnight trips.



OPHS Rocket Team Makes it to The National Finals

The Oak Park High School Rocket Team has 24 members. One of the activities they are involved in is competing in the Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC). There are 4 TARC teams and one of the teams made it into the National Finals this year! The students will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to display their rocket at a Congressional Reception held at the Capitol on May 11 and then will be flying it in the National Finals on Saturday, May 12 at a venue in Northern Virginia. There were 800 teams participating from all over the U.S. and only 101 teams made it to the finals. The program is sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association, NASA, the U.S. Department of Defense and most of the major aerospace companies in the U.S.

The competition involves designing a rocket that will fly to an altitude of 800' exactly on a mission that lasts from 41-43 seconds. Flights are scored through adding points -1 point per foot of altitude deviation and 4 points per second of flight time. Our team had a qualifying flight with a remarkable score of only 5 points. In the final competition all 101 teams will make flights and will be ranked based on flight performance to the same criteria. A final round will then be held where the altitude and time will be slightly different. The first place team will compete at the 2018 International Air Show in London in June. This is the 3rd time the OPHS Rocket Team has made it to the National Finals.

The Oak Park High School Rocket Team is proudly sponsored by The Boeing Company, Aerojet-Rocketdyne, and the Oak Park Education Foundation. OPEF is helping fund the trip to the National Finals. Special thanks also go out to Underwood Family Farms in Moorpark for allowing the team to use their fields for launching. THANK YOU to all of the sponsors.

Congratulations to the following students on the team: Captain - **Andrew Wells**, Members - **Matthew Jarecky**, **Rithwik Adicherla**, **Jennifer Esmay**, **Cameron Sloan**, and **Utsav Anantbhat**.

We would like to offer a special recognition to the Captain of the entire 24-member group, **Aviv Maish** who is graduating this year. Aviv has been a member for 4 years and has served as a thoughtful leader helping everyone grow their engineering skills. Aviv will attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in the fall and major in Aerospace Engineering.

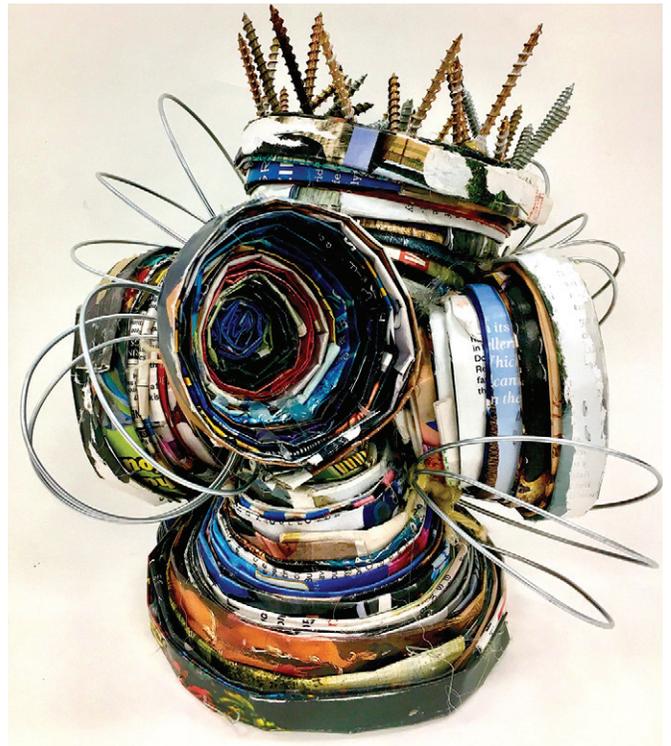
Something exciting is that Calvin Earp (OPHS Graduate 2013), the student who formed the team, first at MCMS and then at OPHS as a freshman in 2010 graduated with a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering from Boston University and is now a propulsion engineer for Pratt and Whitney.

Award Winning Artwork

Oak Park High Junior and Senior art students presented award-winning artwork at the Conejo Valley Juried Art Show.



Reyna Yang
Won the Agoura Mayor's Choice Award (\$200)



Alissa Abrams
Won 1st Place in 3D Design

OPHS Outstanding Athletes of 2018

Hunter Lee - Football - All CIF junior year, All Ventura County Lineman of the Year, All State Small Schools Division. Senior year - All Ventura Lineman of the Year, All CIF, National Football Hall of Fame Scholar Athlete, All State Medium Schools, Scholarship to Cornell

Riley Battin - Basketball - MVP Coastal Canyon League Player of the Year last 3 seasons; All Ventura County Player of the Year last 2 years; set Scoring and Rebounding records for Ventura County; All CIF last 2 years; All State; and on many All American Teams; Full Athletic Scholarship to University of Utah; All USA Team California top 5 players

Ezekiel Richards - Basketball - Varsity starter last 2 seasons; All CCL 2nd Team, Scholarship offers from many schools; accepted full Athletic Scholarship to University of Santa Clara



Riley Battin

OPHS Outstanding Athletes of 2018



Ezekiel Richards, who will play basketball at Santa Clara University; Mallory McCormick, named to the cheerleading team at the University of Delaware; Jonah Scott, who will play baseball at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Gavin Haimovitz, who will play baseball at Cal State Bakersfield; Alexis Robinson, who will play lacrosse at Albion College; Gordon Richardson, who will play baseball at California Lutheran University; Garrett Shapiro, who will play baseball at Trinity University

Wes Slajchert - Basketball - All CCL 2 years; All Ventura County 2 years; set County Record for Assists; All CIF 2nd Team Division 1; Full Scholarship to Dartmouth

Allyson Hawkins - Volleyball - All Coastal Canyon last 2 seasons Outside Hitter; Scholar Athlete; full Athletic Scholarship Bowdoin College

Tim Baldwin - Volleyball - 6 foot 6 inch Senior outside hitter who will be playing for Brigham Young University in Utah. Tim helped lead his team to the CIF-SS Division I semifinals last season

Lauren Herrera - Volleyball - 3 year starter as Setter; All Coastal Canyon; Scholar Athlete; full Athletic Scholarship to Franklin Pierce University

Sylvia Cruz-Albrecht - Cross Country and Track; holds school records in the 1600 and 3200 and just broke the County record, running a 4:50.83; and at Mt.SAC she ran the 3200 in 10:18.74 [7th all time county]. Sylvia is only a Junior and expecting a great senior year and a college scholarship at the completion of next year's seasons, in either Cross Country &/or Track



Wes Slajchert



Lauren Herrera

Marie Panec Awardees 2018



The *Marie Panec Educating Compassionate and Creative Global Citizens Awards* are based on the District motto and in honor and memory of Marie Panec, a Board Member who passed away suddenly in 2010, who embodied these values. The criteria include any of the following:

- Exemplary service to the schools, community, or beyond
- Demonstration of compassion, empathy, creativity, and selflessness in their service
- Demonstration of ethical, moral behavior – integrity, honesty, and sound moral values
- Demonstration of anti-bullying efforts
- Demonstration of social and environmental responsibility

This year the following students were chosen from the culminating class who embody these values

Elementary School 5th Graders

Jayden Bellemeur	Red Oak Elementary
Noor Elmikawy	Red Oak Elementary
Makenna Miller	Red Oak Elementary
Kiefer Leong	Brookside Elementary
Malia Snyder	Brookside Elementary
Charlotte Getz	Brookside Elementary
Kaila Ord	Oak Hills Elementary
Shadvi Aravindh	Oak Hills Elementary
Emma Coulter	Oak Hills Elementary

Middle School 8th Graders

SaiSidharth Senthilnathan	Medea Creek Middle School
Amaan Nabeel	Medea Creek Middle School
Rebecca Paiotti Da Silva	Medea Creek Middle School
Anthony Gonzalez	Oak Park Independent School

High School Seniors

Michael Fuller	Oak View High School
Kaylena Mann	Oak Park Independent School
Itay Dvir	Oak Park High School
Riti Hegde	Oak Park High School
Vaishnavi Tipireddy	Oak Park High School
Olivia Winck	Oak Park High School

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