



San Pasqual Academy

Home of the Mighty Dragons!

Bulletin

March 2008

Facts-At-A-Glance

As of this writing...

- 135 youth are living at the Academy.
- Over 20 students are working on- and off-campus in internships and paid employment.
- 14 graduates are residing in the on- and off-campus Alumni Housing Program.
- 13 grandparents are part of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program.

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Services Abound in the New Counseling Center

Room 302 has a new purpose these days! It is now the official site of the Academy's Counseling Center and home to Juan Orozco, Counselor, and Francisco Romero, Student Support Specialist.

The Counseling Center serves as a multi-purpose area, with access to computers and the Internet. Students can come to the Counseling Center for

information on colleges, help with financial aid forms, and questions about required aptitude testing. Workshops and elective classes focusing on issues such as personal development take place in the Counseling Center.

Student Success Team meetings, consisting of school, residential, clinical, and child welfare staff, as well as court-appointed

special advocates and/or mentors, are conducted in the Counseling Center. These meetings support students whose learning, behavior or emotional needs are not being met under existing circumstances.

This is a just a glimpse of the comprehensive services available in the new Counseling Center!

Build-Out of Student Residences Begins

Beautiful weather on February 6th provided the perfect backdrop for the Academy's Ground-breaking Ceremony to kick-off the construction of new campus housing for 48 more students. Supervisors Greg Cox and Ron Roberts were joined by former State Senator Dede Alpert and the Honorable James R. Milliken to acknowledge the generous donors making the build-out possible.

The project, supported by private donors and HomeAid, a national non-profit organization dedicated to providing housing and support services for the homeless, will be

built by Fairfield Residential, LLC.

Supervisor Roberts noted that the six new residences will be the "first buildings on campus to be designed from the ground up." The homes are being modeled after the existing homes, which can accommodate up to 8 students per home.

Jerry Brand with Fairfield Residential stated that he



Photo courtesy of Leslie Ridgeway, OMPA

was pleased to be part of a project that would allow youth "to realize their dreams and reach their potential."

Currently, the Academy has a licensed capacity of 136. The expansion, which will create 48 more beds to increase the program's total capacity to 184, marks "the next step in the evolution of San Pasqual Academy," according to Supervisor Cox.

The residences are expected to be completed by Fall 2009, just in time for a new school year.



School News...



The beginning of 2008 was filled with a flurry of school activities! Take a look...

- The Academy Open House was held on January 8th. Campus staff, including houseparents, resident grandparents, clinical social workers, HHSA social workers, work readiness case managers, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and Foster Youth Mentors, were invited to learn about how their students are doing in school. Teachers were available to share information on the students' grades, behavior and effort in school. The Open House was well attended and very helpful to those who attended.
- To wrap-up the second quarter of the school year, students completed finals on Friday, January 25th. American Government students closed out the quarter with a presidential campaign project. Students worked in teams representing one of the presidential candidates and learned about election financing, advertising, campaigning and polling. Debates were held in the Cyber Café and the project culminated in a mock election on January 24th!
- Stedman Graham, a businessman, educator and best-selling author, spoke to Academy students on February 21st, courtesy of the Friends of San Pasqual Academy. As part of his interactive dialogue, Mr. Graham encouraged students to think about what defines each of them as an individual and how they will achieve personal and professional success. Each student received Mr. Graham's book, "Who Are You? A Success Process For Building Your Life's Foundation."



Second Quarter Awards Ceremony

On February 27th, Academy students were recognized for their academic, citizenship and attendance efforts during the second quarter of the school year. Twenty-two students received a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0—3.4, ten received a GPA of 3.5—3.9, and four received a perfect GPA of 4.0!

Thirteen students were recognized as "Most Improved" in their class by their teachers and one student recorded a perfect attendance. Two students, Belinda D. and Hector R., were honored as "Students of the Quarter."

Three students also received the UROK Freedom Reader Award., which includes a gift card to Barnes & Noble Bookstore. This honor is given out by UROK teacher, Sarah Martzke, to the students reading the most pages in a quarter. UROK supplies the books for this incentive program, and the students are able to keep the books they read for their own personal library. UROK has helped many students become more interested in reading!



Way to go, Dragons! Keep up the outstanding work!

Sports Wrap-Up

Basketball

The Dragons and Lady Dragons Basketball teams had a good season and made it to the league playoffs! Unfortunately, both teams recorded losses against their opponents in the second round of play.



Baseball

The Academy Dragons have kicked off their first season of baseball. Though the team does not have a baseball field on campus, the athletes have demonstrated great flexibility practicing on the football field and traveling to other schools for both home and away games. Since few of the young men have played organized baseball before, this year will be dedicated to learning the fundamentals of the game and sportsmanship.



Softball

The Lady Dragons are also on the diamond. In their fourth season of competition, the girls have improved their skills through practice and dedication.



For current baseball and softball schedules, please visit: www.sanpasqualacademy.org.

Academy Loses a Dedicated Leader



To many of the students at San Pasqual Academy, Barbara Berry-Waldon was more than a Program Director, she was their “mom.” Tough when necessary, she was equally loving and had plenty of hugs to share with each of the students (and alumni) at the end of the day. Barbara passed away on February 1, 2008 at the age of 59. A memorial service, held on February 11th at the Academy, was well attended by family, friends, and the campus community.

Barbara joined the Academy’s residential staff in 2001, after five years in other New Alternatives, Inc. programs. Adept at program management, Barbara helped develop the culture of this unique residential education campus. Nothing transpired at the Academy without Barbara’s knowledge...good or bad, Barbara knew about it! The Academy was more than a job to Barbara, it was her passion.

As the Honorable James R. Milliken shared at the Groundbreaking Ceremony, “Barbara Berry-Waldon gave unconditional love to every child on campus, regardless of how unhappy she might be with their behavior.” Barbara loved the Academy students like her own children. She was their advocate, encouraging them to be confident, caring and self-sufficient individuals, and she inspired them to pursue their education.

Barbara had a tremendous presence on campus, and is missed by Academy students, alumni, grandparents and staff. Her spirit will live on at San Pasqual Academy!

Did You Know...

Part of the Academy vision is to keep sibling groups together whenever possible. Currently, the Academy is home to twenty-two sibling groups, made up of forty-seven youth. Though the siblings may not live in the same home, they have ample opportunities to visit and maintain their family ties!

Tech Center News

Sempra Energy, the largest Fortune 500 company headquartered in San Diego, has invited Academy students to develop a Virtual Job Fair for their company.

With funds and equipment donated by Sempra Energy, four students are designing story boards, interviewing Sempra staff and editing video footage for the Virtual Job Fair. To guide the students in the process, staff from Sempra Energy, San Diego Workforce Partnership, and the YES Program are offering up their expertise. Grandpa Jeff of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program is also lending a helping hand.

Alumni Housing Program

The Alumni Housing Program, part of the Transitional Housing Program-Plus supported by the State Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund, has faced its share of challenges over the past six months. As you may know, most of the alumni homes and the program’s administrative office on campus were destroyed in the October 2007 Witch Creek fire.

However, the Academy alumni and program staff have demonstrated remarkable resiliency during this transition period and quickly re-grouped to focus on the daily tasks of school, employment and independent living. A few of the alumni continue to live on campus, while the majority have re-located to apartments in neighboring communities such as Escondido, San Marcos, and Vista.

All of the alumni, whether on-campus or off, continue to receive supportive case management services to make progress towards their life goals. And, despite the distance, those living off-campus find a way to remain connected with the Academy staff, grandparents and residents!

A New Home for Thor and Athena...

While most folks know that the Academy has a flourishing agriculture program, not many are aware of the pigs, Thor and Athena, that call the Academy home. That’s right...the Academy received two Red Wattle pigs, a heritage breed from the early 1900’s, from the “Ark of Taste” Project. Part of the Slow Food USA Program, Ark of Taste works to preserve “an economic, social and cultural heritage—a universe of animal breeds, fruit and vegetables, cured meats, cheese, cereals, pastas, cakes and confectionery.” When Thor and Athena breed, two pairs of offspring will be donated to other farms as part of the preservation breeding program.

The pigs, no more than 30 pounds when they first arrived on campus as piglets, now weigh-in at 300 and 375 pounds. To accommodate their growth, Slow Food San Diego donated funds to build a new home for Thor and Athena. The new home includes a common area, more than twice the size of the original enclosure, and two private cages to accommodate Athena when she has piglets. Thor and Athena are enjoying their new home, and particularly enjoy visits from the Academy students and staff who provide for their daily care.



For more information about how you can help the Academy with donations or volunteer opportunities, please call Debby Syverson at (619) 435-4557.

San Pasqual Academy

A Bridge to Knowledge, Support and Hope

Check out the Academy website at:

www.sanpasqualacademy.org

San Pasqual Academy Neighbors (SPAN)

Time and time again, the grandparents of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program demonstrate their on-going commitment to the students. The death of Program Director Barbara Berry-Waldon had a significant impact on the students, alumni, campus staff and grandparents. All the grandparents attended Ms. Berry-Waldon's memorial service and, though grieving themselves, the grandparents were readily available to support the campus community, helping them through the range of emotions created by loss. In comforting and connecting with the students during this time of sorrow, the grandparents demonstrated how to handle loss and grief in a healthy way. The grandparents also helped students draw on memories to celebrate Ms. Berry-Waldon's life.

Since the transitions brought on by the October wildfires and the recent death of Ms. Berry-Waldon, the grandparents have been instrumental in helping the students stay focused on school and other day-to-day activities. The grandparents have maintained their normal routines of cooking with the students, celebrating their birthdays, working in the Tech Center, cheering on the basketball teams, and spending time together in the recreation rooms. These activities have been a benefit to both the students **and** grandparents! On more than one occasion, the grandparents have commented that it's their interactions with the students that keep them going.

On a positive note, the grandparents have a new, double-wide trailer on campus to provide them extra space for daily chores and gathering. The trailer, or "playhouse" as it is also affectionately called, has a full kitchen with a large stove and full freezer, a conference room, two bathrooms including full size showers, two washers and dryers, a lounge area with a T.V., computer room and space for the SPAN Program Director.

Upcoming Fundraisers and Events

Tee it Up for Foster Youth



The "Tee It Up for Foster Teens" golf tournament, dinner, and auction, hosted by the Friends of San Pasqual Academy, is coming up on Monday, April 21st, at the Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club. Golf registration begins at 10 a.m. and the tournament kicks off at noon. A hosted reception and silent auction will take place at 5 p.m. with dinner, awards and a live auction following at 6 p.m.

Proceeds from this event support Academy scholarships, athletic programs, academic enrichment activities, music programs, and much more!

For more information about "Tee It Up for Foster Teens," contact the Friends of San Pasqual Academy at (858) 759-3298.



Rotary Volunteer Work Day

On April 26th from 8 a.m. to noon, Rotarians will be working in the Academy's Community Garden as part of the annual Rotary Volunteer Day.

In past years, the Rotarians have refurbished alumni homes on campus. However, the October wild fires destroyed most of the alumni homes so time this year will be dedicated to spring planting in the garden.



Volunteers will spend the morning working in the fields—raking, seeding, and planting. Some may help set-up the new shed, green house and shade cloth provided by Rotary funds and matching donations.

Anyone interested in participating in the Rotary Volunteer Work Day should contact [Debby Syverson](mailto:Debby.Syverson@sanpasqualacademy.org) at (619) 435-4557. **Please note** that volunteers are required to bring work gloves and wear a hat, sunscreen and closed-toe shoes.

If you are interested in donating to a scholarship for graduating Academy seniors, please contact [Debby Syverson](mailto:Debby.Syverson@sanpasqualacademy.org) at (619) 435-4557.