



San Pasqual Academy

Home of the Mighty Dragons!

Bulletin

September 2010

Facts-At-A-Glance

As of this writing...

- 137 youth are living at the Academy.
- Just over 60 youth participated in on- and off-campus paid internships and employment over the summer.
- 9 grandparents are part of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program.

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Visit the Academy website at:
www.sanpasqualacademy.org

Through the Eyes of a Youth

The photographic talents of San Pasqual Academy youth have been highlighted throughout the County during the past several months. Their amazing photographs have been featured at the Academy's Class of 2010 Graduation, at the San Diego County Fair, on the County's Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) [Facebook page](#), at the Public Administrator/Public Guardian (PA/PG) County Auction, and in HHSA Child Welfare Services offices.

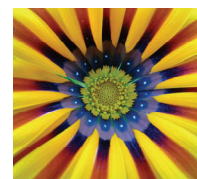
The Academy Photography Program, which consists of an elective course offered at the on-site high school, a therapeutic photography group and a photography club, is designed to empower youth by giving them a tool to express themselves, enhance their self-esteem, be creative, experience the rewards of artistic accomplishments and learn independent living skills. Photography inspires them with something positive. It also allows the viewer a glimpse into the youth's lives—to see the work through their eyes, as it were—and it provides the youth an avenue to connect with others and their peers.

At the Academy's 2010 Commencement Exercises, a photo exhibit was on display in the campus Auditorium. Graduation guests, including the HHSA Executive Team, caught

a glimpse of the Academy youth's artistic talents and the varied opportunities available to youth at this one-of-a-kind residential education program. This display sparked the idea to include Academy photographs in the County's PA/PG Auction on August 21st.

Fifteen 8 x 10 matted photographs taken by Academy youth were included in the recent County auction. All fifteen photographs were sold, and the proceeds returned to the Academy Photography Program. Two of the youth photographers attended the auction and spoke to the attendees about the benefits of being part of program. One youth was shocked that her photograph drew a bid of \$50. The Photography Program was featured in the August 19th edition of the North County Times' local news section ([San Pasqual Academy student work will be included in auction](#)).

The photography exhibit at graduation was so well received, it is now traveling through HHSA's Child Welfare Services regional offices to highlight the services and opportunities available to Academy youth and to showcase their incredible talent! Contact your Program Manager or Regional Academy Liaison for the dates the photo exhibit will be in your office!



Talent on Display at the San Diego County Fair

Academy youth submitted their finest photos into the San Diego County Fair's Student Showcase, a tradition for the past several years. And, the ribbon goes to . . . two 1st Place, twenty-three 2nd Place, thirty 3rd Place and two 4th Place ribbons were awarded.

Nineteen youth also submitted entries in the Digital Composite category of multi-media arts. These youth rounded up three 1st Place (including one Best of Show), nine 2nd Place, six 3rd Place and six 4th Place ribbons.

Back-to-School

Academy youth are once again hitting the books, as the 2010—2011 school year is underway! High school students attended the two-day Academy Orientation on August 2nd and 3rd, with regular classes beginning on August 4th. No time was wasted to meet with potential Class of 2011 graduates, as Senior Meetings took place from September 7th—15th. At these meetings, campus staff reviewed with the students where they are academically, what needs to be completed for graduation and the resources available to support them in earning a high school diploma. Juniors will have their turn too when they meet with staff in October to ensure their academic road map is on track.

In celebration of a new year, the seniors hosted a Welcome Back dance for all the students on August 20th and youth had a chance to select school supplies in the Friends of San Pasqual Academy's annual "Shop 'til You Drop" event on September 21st. Open House was held in the Tech Center on September 22nd, allowing social workers and house-parents to meet with teachers regarding the students' 1st quarter progress.

The Academy's middle school youth began their academic year on August 23rd at San Pasqual Union. Youth were able to check out their class schedules on August 20th, and new students were invited to participate in a campus tour with Superintendent/Principal Garry Wilson. Back-to-School Night took place on September 15th for grades 6-8.



Dragons Sports Center



Fall sports are here!

Although both the Academy's Volleyball and Football team have yet to post a win, they are playing hard and keeping their spirits up as the season progresses. Take a look at the [Lady Dragons Volleyball](#) and [Dragons Football](#) game schedules and come out to cheer them on!

To jumpstart the season, the entire Dragons Football team attended the San Diego Chargers training camp on August 12th. Accompanied by the Academy's new Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, Rashiid Burgo, the players spent the afternoon watching the Chargers practice. This opportunity was coordinated by Debby Syverson, Academy Development Liaison.

Since moving up to 11-Man football, the Dragons have had to take their "home" games on the road since the campus field only supports 8-Man football. However, the receipt of a \$200K from the San Diego Chargers through the National Football League Grassroots Program along with other fundraising efforts have paved the way to build a new sports field, which is part of the Academy's Master Plan. Construction is already under way, and the Dragons will be thrilled to play on their OWN 11-Man field in the very near future!

To keep the football fever going, San Diego Charger Quentin Jammer has once again donated home game tickets to Academy youth. What a treat to watch the pros play live at the Q!

Got Work?

Academy youth sure do! They continue to gain valuable work experience through a variety of programs on—and off-campus!

- Ten youth, 12-14 years old, completed the Pre-Employment Traineeship (PET) Program this summer. The PET Program provides incentives for demonstrating five basic work skills: 1) dressing appropriately, 2) being punctual; 3) being productive; 4) being honest; and 5) having a good attitude. Youth worked in the Cyber Café, campus farm, Tech Center and Dragons' Lounge during this six-week program.
- Fifteen Academy youth were enrolled in the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), working at Palomar College, Foot Locker, YMCA, Kaplan College, and various departments on campus.
- Approximately fifteen former Academy youth were able to secure employment both on- and off-campus through the Summer Hire-A-Youth Program. ACCESS, Inc. (part of the YES Program on campus) coordinated the screening and placement process for the Academy, and it is hoped that some of the youth will be able to continue their jobs directly with the employer upon program completion.
- Academy youth in high school are enrolling in the YES Program's Career Academy, which exposes them to different career paths based on their interests and aptitudes. The program kicked off July 1st and includes job shadowing and up to 120 internship hours in the areas of Multi-Media, Travel, Agriculture, Entrepreneurship and Health.

Inspiring Words Propel Youth into Action

On August 5th, Dr. Nick Yphantides, Medical Consultant with HHSA, spoke to Academy youth for an hour during a campus assembly. Dr. Nick, as he is known, discussed his personal journey of weight loss and the importance of taking care of one's body. The Academy youth, several who struggle with weight issues and unhealthy behaviors, were captivated by Dr. Nick's presentation. Dr. Nick made himself available after the presentation to speak one-on-one with the youth.

With several health and wellness activities already in place on campus, Dr. Nick's presentation further propelled Academy youth to take control of their lives. The Academy Medical Assistant and one of the grandparent volunteers have started a support group similar to "Weight Watchers" in which participants meet regularly, exercise together, and talk about healthy eating habits. Approximately two dozen youth participate in this group. Youth have also been joining Academy Director, Tia Moore, and other campus staff, Monday through Friday at 7:15 a.m., for a walk around campus. Each morning, different youth (initially 60 youth signed up) start their day off with a positive choice for their future. Bike riding is another activity of choice for the youth. For those who don't have their own bike, five mountain bikes are available in the Health and Wellness Center. With some of the hills on campus, bicycling certainly offers quite a work out!

On September 4th, Academy youth combined fitness with a great cause by participating in the first annual Phillip Rivers 5K Celebrity Walk and Fun Run at Liberty Station' NTC Park in Point Loma. The Dragons Football team, along with Academy youth and staff, took to the pavement in support of Rivers of Hope, a foundation which helps children in foster care find forever families through adoption. After the run, Academy youth had an opportunity to sample the delicious food provided by the event sponsors and visit with Academy supporters, Quentin and Alicia Jammer. Take a look at some of the photos snapped by the Academy's Photography Instructor.



Dragons Football Team



Dragons Football team celebrate 5K finish with Alicia Jammer



Go Josh!



After the race with SD Charger Quentin Jammer and HHSA's Nick Macchione and Debra Zanders-Wills.

Academy's Agriculture Program Takes Off

The Academy's Agriculture Program has been growing since 2004. However, in the past year, the program has really sprouted! The program continues to sell its certified, organic produce to local vendors such as Whole Foods and Stone Brewing Company under the name Dragon Organics. It has also entered the farmer's market arena, with recent sales at the Scripps Ranch, San Marcos and Escondido markets. Currently, you can find Dragon Organics at the Carlsbad Farmer's Market on Saturday's from 1 - 4 p.m.

Not only does the Academy Agriculture Program provide fresh produce to the campus and community, it also provides an avenue for Academy students to gain academic, work readiness and independent living skills. Youth can take classes regarding the farm management, participate in internships harvesting and packaging the produce, work at the local farmer's markets, and educate their peers on campus about the benefits of eating fresh produce.

Dragon Organics has steadily developed its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program too. The CSA Program offers individuals a subscription to receive a fresh box of produce weekly or every other week for \$20 per box. Earlier this month, the produce boxes featured cucumbers, two varieties of tomatoes, squash, bell peppers, yellow wax beans, purple dragon beans, and melons. Dragon Organics recently received the green light from the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency to offer the their CSA Program at two County sites, the CWS office in Linda Vista and the Family Resource Center in Escondido. This pilot project goes hand-in-hand with the County's 3-4-50 Health Strategy, which addresses three behaviors (poor nutrition, lack of physical activity and tobacco use) that contribute to four diseases (heart disease/stroke, cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and respiratory conditions) resulting in over 50% of the deaths in San Diego. Innovative collaboration between Dragon Organics and the County is helping foster youth prepare for independence and San Diegans become healthier!



A Look Back at Spring and Summer...

Class of Dimes

The Class of 2010 graduates had a memorable spring term! It was filled with traditional senior activities including Prom at the Grand Del Mar on April 29th, dinner with the Friends of San Pasqual Academy at BJ's Pizzeria in Escondido on May 17th, dinner with San Diego Charger Quentin Jammer and his wife, Alicia, at Benihana's in Mission Valley on May 25th, Senior Brunch hosted by the Friends of San Pasqual Academy in the campus Auditorium on June 1st, and Grad Night at Disneyland on June 3rd.

But the B-I-G Day was June 2nd when eighteen young adults received their high school diploma from San Pasqual Academy in the campus gymnasium. Six of the graduates addressed the audience, which included Supervisors Greg Cox and Ron Roberts, HHSA Director Nick Macchione and his Executive Team, Juvenile Court Judges and other County dignitaries. The graduates shared the obstacles they faced to reach this milestone and honored family, friends and campus staff who stood by them during their most difficult times. One graduate stated to her former caregiver, "I was raised in foster care but I grew up with you." The Salutatorian thanked the basketball coach for "taking me under your wing when I couldn't fly and now look, I can soar."

Private donors awarded individual and Class of 2010 scholarships throughout the ceremony, and two graduates received outstanding citizenship awards for achieving academic excellence, demonstrating leadership and giving back to their community. Following the graduation ceremony, the Friends of San Pasqual Academy hosted a reception in the Cyber Café while student photography exhibit was on display in the campus auditorium.

Of the eighteen graduates, thirteen plan to attend a two-year community college and five plan to attend four-year universities (California State University (CSU) - San Marcos, CSU - Fullerton, and CSU - Los Angeles).



~ Summer School ~

Two three-and-a-half week summer school sessions were offered from June 7th through July 23rd at the Academy. Youth had a chance to catch up on credits, as well as take elective courses of interest to them.

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Family Time

Youth placed at the Academy are encouraged to visit with their siblings as allowed by Juvenile Court. Special events throughout the year make those visits even more memorable.

On May 15th, the Academy held its annual Family Day event, in which family members and other significant individuals (former foster parents, CASAs, and mentors,) joined

the youth for a Talent Show, family photo ops, face-painting, sports tournaments, and dinner in the Cyber Café. Fun for everyone!

Camp Connect events at Legoland's newest water park, Knott's Berry Farm and a four-day rustic camp also offer Academy youth a time to create lasting memories with their siblings!

Middle School Students Celebrate Too!

Three Academy youth completed eighth grade at San Pasqual Union Middle School, "The Little School in the Valley," on June 8th. The "Saints" and their guests enjoyed refreshments following the graduation ceremony held that evening.

The middle school graduates traded in their green and white Saints' colors for Dragon blue when they enrolled in the new summer study skills course for incoming freshman at the Academy. The course was designed to prepare the freshman for their four-year high school journey at the Academy.

Here comes the Class of 2014!



CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

On August 5th, the Academy welcomed sixteen Iraqi students and their eight chaperones to the campus. The Iraqi students, as part of the International Diplomacy Council, were in the United States completing leadership and community service activities. The International Diplomacy Council has brought other international visitors to the Academy in the past, lending to a mutually beneficial experience for all.

During this particular visit, the Iraqi students had lunch in the Cyber Café and then met with Key Club members for an informal, youth-focused tour of the Academy.

Re-Building the Academy

The Academy will be the site of much activity over the next year, as the homes and buildings lost in the 2007 Witch Creek Fire are re-built implementing the vision of the Master Plan with extra measures for added fire safety.

The Board of Supervisors approved moving forward with the award of a design-build contract for the reconstruction of non-student housing units, administrative buildings and respective infrastructure on campus at the end of 2009. Following a competitive procurement, Legacy Builders and Roesling Nakamura Terada (RNT) Architects were awarded the contract in June 2010. The target for construction completion is Fall 2011.

The homes destroyed by the Witch Creek Fire affected campus staff and grandparents living on campus; they were re-located to undamaged homes or modular homes brought in after the fires. Their commitment to the Academy and the kids kept them on campus despite options to move to off-site housing. It's such dedication that is at the heart of the Academy and keeps it going!

Referrals...Easy as 1 - 2 - 3

Do you have a youth, 12 - 18 years old, on your caseload who is:

- not likely to return to his/her birth family,
- not likely to find legal/emotional permanency with a specific family,
- experiencing a Change of Placement,
- being considered for an FFA placement OR
- stepping-down from a level 12 group home placement?

Then consider referring the youth to San Pasqual Academy, which offers a stable, long-term placement, an individualized academic plan and intensive independent living skills training. The referral process is easy—just three simple steps:

1. The Child Welfare Services (CWS) social worker submits a completed San Pasqual Academy Assessment Form (04-304; CWS/CMS Template) via **FAX** to Tim Farley, New Alternatives, Inc. (NAI) Academy Screener, at (619) 543-9401 **and** Michael Halloran, HHSA Academy Office Assistant, at (760) 233-6280. *Be sure to provide detailed information on the Assessment Form, and if the youth has an IEP, please submit it along with the Assessment Form to expedite the review process.*
2. Once the referral is reviewed by NAI, an interview with the Academy Director and a campus tour are coordinated for the youth.
3. Following the youth's interview and tour, the CWS social worker is notified of the referral status.

The Academy has a licensed capacity for 184 youth, and spots are currently available for appropriate youth.

For more information on the referral process, please contact your Regional Academy Liaison or the HHSA Academy Screener at (760) 233-6283.

Academy Grandparents—100% Involved

The San Pasqual Academy Neighbors (SPAN) Program allows intergenerational relationships to naturally evolve between Academy youth and resident "grandparents" on campus. Over the past several months, some grandparents have transitioned on to other activities in their life journey and one grandparent, Grandpa Bob, passed away on August 21st from health complications. Plans are underway to dedicate the Boys' Recreation Room on campus to Grandpa Bob; who spent many hours playing video and board games with the youth as well as engaging them in conversation. Grandpa Bob also cheered on the Dragons' teams and snapped photos of youth at sporting events, prom and graduation.

The remaining nine Grandparents continue to be 100% involved with the youth. Grandma Linda's specialty is sewing, and making personalized pillowcases is a favorite activity among the youth. Great Grandma Kellie's birthday brownies are always in demand. When she isn't cooking up something sweet, she is found working side-by-side with the youth in the farm or engaging the middle school students in an activity. Surrounded by youth in the kitchen is where you will find Grandma Joan, as she works with the youth to develop their cooking skills. Grandpa Jeff and Grandpa Robert have been teaching the youth to play chess, a great game to sharpen their thinking skills. When Grandma Jean is not at a local lake fishing with the youth, she concentrates her energies on the arts - hosting poetry slams, encouraging youth to paint, sharing different music genres and viewing culturally significant movies. Choir and culinary arts are among Grandpa LeRoy's youth-focused activities.

Through the variety of talents and the commitment that the Grandparents bring to the program, it is no wonder that Academy youth find a connection with them!

Friends of San Pasqual Academy

Friends of San Pasqual Academy, a non-profit organization, provides quality services and programs through resources that improve, empower and enrich the lives and hopeful futures of Academy youth. Recent events coordinated by the Friends include:

- **2010 Teens, Jeans and Dreams Team Penning Event** in Del Mar on September 11th.
- **Shop 'til You Drop** on September 21st, in which Academy youth "shop" for backpacks and school supplies in the campus auditorium.