



San Pasqual Academy

Home of the Mighty Dragons!

Bulletin

April 2009

Facts-At-A-Glance

As of this writing...

• 136 youth are living at the Academy.

• Over 45 students are participating in on- and off-campus paid internships and employment. Internships on campus include the Agriculture Program and Cyber Café, while off-campus internships and employment include Palomar Hospital, Foot-locker, Lady Footlocker and Target.

• 14 grandparents are part of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program.

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New Academy Homes Make Debut

On January 27th, six new homes and a community recreation room made their debut before a crowd gathered to celebrate the expansion of San Pasqual Academy! The additional homes increases the Academy's capacity to serve adolescent foster youth from 136 to 184.

The homes were built through the collaborative effort of HomeAid (a national non-profit organization dedicated to providing housing and support services for the homeless), Fairfield Residential, and private donors. All of whom were recognized at the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony.

Supervisors Greg Cox and Ron Roberts were joined by former State Senator Dede Alpert, the Honorable James R. Milliken and Health and Human Services Agency Director Nick Macchione to acknowledge the generous donors making the expansion possible.

Supervisor Roberts thanked the donors "for creating brighter futures for our kids" and Supervisor Cox noted that the Academy's success is "not possible without a true public and private partnership." Nick Macchione spoke of the achievements of past Academy youth and was "proud to celebrate [the Academy's success to date.]

Student leaders were on hand to greet guests and to lead tours of the homes, and the Friends of San Pasqual Academy hosted the reception following the ribbon cutting.



The new homes were licensed by the State effective February 24th, and are ready for youth to move in. Now, more foster youth can call the Academy "home" and benefit from the support services offered!

Got Referrals?

Here's a quick look at the Academy's referral process for foster youth, 12-18 years old, who are not likely to return to their birth families or find legal/emotional permanency with a specific family:

- The Child Welfare Services (CWS) social worker: submits a completed San Pasqual Academy Assessment Form (04-304; CWS/CMS Template) to Tim Farley, New Alternatives, Inc. (NAI) Academy Screener, AND Michael Halloran, HHSA Academy Office Assistant, via FAX.
- Once the referral is reviewed by New Alternatives, Inc., an interview with the Academy Director and a campus tour are coordinated for the youth.
- Following the youth's interview and tour, the CWS social worker is notified of the referral status.

Placement at the Academy is voluntary and the youth may decline the invitation to be placed at the campus.

For more info on the referral process, please contact HHSA Academy Screener, Eric Warner, at (760) 233-6283.

Dragon Spirit

Show your Dragon spirit and support the Academy's Associated Student Body (ASB) by purchasing your Dragon Blue here. T-shirts are \$10.00 each and available in Large (L), Extra Large (XL) and Extra Extra Large (XXL)

To order your T-shirt, contact San Pasqual Academy Project Policy Analyst, Esther Broers, at esther.broers@sdcounty.ca.gov or (858) 694-5209.



The Scoop on College

College Connection Days are often a foster youth's first glance at a community college or four-year college or university. Academy youth have taken full advantage of College Connection Days to learn more about college entrance requirements, selecting a community college versus a four-year college, how to choose a major, what financial aid packages are available, and the supportive services offered at each individual college.

Academy youth recently attended the College Connection Days at Palomar College (January 23rd), Mesa College (February 27th) and Mira Costa College (March 12th)! The events which are just over a half day in length, include a continental breakfast, campus tour, lunch as well as workshops and presentations.

College Connection Days are made possible by San Diego County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services College Connection Advisory Council, Casey Family Programs, individual colleges and universities, and other community agencies. Through such collaboration, foster youth can visualize and realize what **IS** possible for their future!

Kudos to our 1st Four-Year College Grad!

In March 2009, our first Academy alumni (Class of 2007) received his Bachelor's Degree from Platt College in San Diego. This young man worked hard to earn his media arts degree, and is putting his knowledge and skills to use as a freelance web designer and graphic artist. Way to go!

Dragon's Lounge Back in Business

The Dragon's Lounge, a student-run snack bar located in the Academy's Cyber Café, is once again open for business!

Following a brief hiatus for minor repairs and a new sink, the Lounge boasts a fresh menu of fruit smoothies and nourishing snacks to coincide with the healthy initiative charge led by the campus' Health and Wellness Center (see related story on page 3). The Dragon's Lounge will incorporate organic-certified produce such as strawberries and tomatoes from the campus farm whenever possible.



A California State University, San Marcos intern provided assistance with the re-opening of the snack bar, which benefits the school's Associated Student Body (ASB). In addition to supporting ASB activities, students operating the Dragon's Lounge are able to gain valuable work readiness skills and certifications that may spark career interests in business, culinary arts, etc. Currently, eight students are enrolling in a food handler's course, which may offer just the edge over the next person in finding employment in this tough economy.

The Dragon's Lounge is open for business in the afternoons, Monday through Friday.

Dragons' Sports Wrap-Up

Basketball



The Lady Dragons wrapped up basketball season on March 3rd with a 38-27 loss to Christian Life in the 2009 CIF Division V semi-finals. They entered the championship series with an overall record of 20-4 and a league record of 8-2, which earned them second place in the Citrus West League. What a great season!

The Boys Basketball team also fared well in 2009, making it to the quarterfinals in post-season play. With an overall record of 15-8 and a league record of 6-4, the Dragons lost, 70-60, to Maranatha Christian on February 28th.

Baseball

One of five teams in the CIF Division IV Frontier League, the Dragons have yet to post a win this season. However, in just their second season of playing baseball, the young men are learning the fundamentals of the game and gaining valuable experience of being part of a developing team.



Softball



The Lady Dragons have are off to a pretty good start this season with a 2-2 Citrus West league record. Overall, they are 5-3, and seem to be holding their own against their opponents. The Lady Dragons have been playing softball since 2004.

Check out the 2009 Boys Baseball and Girls Softball schedule at www.sanpasqualacademy.org and support the Dragons on the field.

Go Dragons!

Here Comes the Class of 2009!

It's that time of year when excitement starts to build for the seniors preparing to graduate from the Academy! Within the next 2-1/2 months, Academy seniors will be focused on completing their senior projects, making sure they hit the mark in their final high school courses, receiving college acceptance letters, calculating whether financial aid and scholarship monies will cover their education costs, finding housing, and so much more.

While there is much anticipated joy about wrapping up their high school journey, students, particularly foster youth who may have experienced frequent transitions in their lives, may find spring filled with anxiety, uncertainty and sadness. For youth who have called San Pasqual Academy home and were able to stay in one placement for their entire four years of high school, it may be a bit scary to venture into the unknown.

Fortunately, there are several resources available to foster youth as they transition to adulthood. There's the County Independent Living Skills (ILS) Info Line, regional ILS contracted services, Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus), Just in Time, and Casey Family Programs to name a few. And, for Academy youth, the Alumni Program is always a place they can turn to for guidance and support.

The next time you run into a potential Academy graduate, be sure to wish them well, but reassure them too, that a helping hand is never too far away as they begin the next leg of their life journey!

Career Day

The 8th Annual San Pasqual Academy Career Day took center stage on Wednesday, March 25th, in the campus auditorium.

All Academy high school students had an opportunity to rotate through the all-day event, which included representatives from the San Pasqual Volunteer Fire Department, Bellus Academy of Hair Design, the U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy, and the Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (YANO). Also represented were Grossmont, Mesa, Mira Costa and Palomar Community Colleges.

Through this annual event and other career-focused events held during the year, Academy students are able to learn more about their career options and the different academic paths available to reach those goals.

2009 San Pasqual Academy Graduation June 18, 2009; 10:00 a.m.



Health and Wellness Center—It's All Happening Here

The Health and Wellness Center on campus is a hub of activity when it comes to the Academy youth's overall well-being. It is the site for pediatrician Dr. Holecek to provide annual physicals and tend to the youth's other medical needs, and the safe setting for psychiatrists Dr. Carillo and Dr. Putnam to meet with and assess youth's mental health needs. The campus Licensed Vocational Nurse, Anita Bridges, and Medical Assistant, Patti Elliot, work together in the Center to ensure the youth's physical health needs are met. Quarterly Life Plan meetings with the youth, HHSA social worker, NAI social worker, and house parents take place in the Center to discuss the youth's progress and needs in the program. And, then there is all the planning and coordination by Katie McHugh, Wellness Center Coordinator, and Frank LaForest, Health Educator, to move forward the Healthy Leadership Initiatives on campus.

The Healthy Leadership Initiative is a two-year project funded by a \$200,000 grant from the California Endowment. Moving into its second year, the project continues to focus on the goal of healthy eating and physical activity as key standards of care within the foster care system by advocating for changes in organizational practices in residential programs in San Diego. To accomplish the goals of the project, the focus is on: 1) Youth Leadership and Development—training foster youth to advocate for changes in their physical environment to support health eating and physical activity; 2) Policy and Advocacy—coordinating with the County's CWS and Childhood Obesity Initiative to promote healthy eating and physical activity in group homes; 3) Organizational Practices—enhancing NAI's capacity to support an environment that promotes health and wellness; and 4) Dissemination—increasing nutrition and fitness awareness among those serving and responsible for youth placed in residential settings.

Thus far, the Healthy Leadership Initiative has led to Student Health Leaders taking an active role on campus in obesity prevention through research, advocacy and dissemination of health information. Their activities have included surveys, health pledges, learning about nutrition and fitness, Gift of Health Raffles, Health Wealth Raffle, Teen Topics presentations, Monthly Health Leader meetings, Bike Buddies, Healthy Hydration campaign, Rock Hounds, and Smoothies and a Movie. Naomi Butler, Public Health Nutrition Manager with the County, has provided basic nutrition training to CWS social workers and residential and clinical staff on campus to further the Healthy Leadership Initiatives movement.

Much is happening at the Academy to promote overall wellness for the foster youth calling the campus home!

For more information about how you can support the Academy with donations, scholarships for graduating seniors or volunteer activities, please contact 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

Black History Month Campus Celebration

In celebration of Black History Month, the Academy's clinical staff and grandparents hosted an assembly for the entire campus on February 27th. Five Academy youth helped organize the assembly and participate in the show.

In addition to campus staff, over 100 youth attended the celebration! The event featured youth reading their own poetry as well as



passages from the writings of Malcolm X, a choir performance and a guest speaker reciting a sermon by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Grandma Jean, the Academy's resident artist, created a special display in the cafeteria featuring photographs and information about black history in the United States and racial equality.

A one-year memorial for Dr. Barbara Berry-Waldon was also part of the day's activities. Dr. Berry-Waldon served as the Academy's Program Director from 2001 through February 1, 2008 when she passed away. Many Academy youth thought of Dr. Berry-Waldon as their "mom" and together, they remembered a woman who had a tremendous presence in their lives!



Legacy Corps

An Intergenerational Mix

Academy youth are no strangers to intergenerational relationships since 14 surrogate grandparents live on campus and interact with the youth on a daily basis through the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors (SPAN) Program, an intergenerational mentoring program overseen by NAI. It was no surprise that over 30 Academy youth expressed interest in volunteering in NAI's expansion of Legacy Corps in North County.

Legacy Corps is an intergenerational respite care program that pairs at-risk youth with senior mentors who as a team provide free respite services (10-12 hours per week) to caregivers of homebound older adults. The volunteer team provides care (such as light housekeeping or meal preparation) and companionship (such as sharing stories and taking walks) to the older adult. The senior mentors provide transportation to and from the respite site, as well as supervise the youth's interaction with the older adult.

To serve as volunteers in Legacy Corps, both the youth and senior mentors must complete a 20-hour training course, including CPR and first aid certification, pass a Department of Justice background check and make a one-year commitment to the program. Academy youth graduated from the training program on January 31st, and were ready to begin volunteering with their senior mentor. All participants receive a stipend of \$200 per month.

SPAN participants got into the Legacy Corps act too, by assisting with the Pre-Service Training activities such sign-ins and photography for name badges and group photos.

Intergenerational activities are a win-win situation all around!

Did You Know...

San Diego County operates two Mobile Libraries which provide library services to residents of unincorporated areas of the County. One of the North County Mobile Library's stops is San Pasqual Academy, where campus youth, staff, and grandparents utilize the service to check out books, magazines, audio books and DVDs or videotapes.



For an added convenience, items can be requested via the Library's web catalog for delivery at the Academy's scheduled stop. The Mobile Library visits the Academy twice a month in the afternoon, and is a wonderful addition to the school library on campus.