



San Pasqual Academy

Home of the Mighty Dragons!

Bulletin

September 2009

Facts-At-A-Glance

As of this writing...

- 124 youth are living at the Academy.
- Nearly 60 youth are participating in on- and off-campus paid internships and employment. Campus internships include the Agriculture Program, Cyber Café, Dragons Lounge and school counseling office while off-campus internships and employment include the Escondido Public Library, Footlocker, Lady Footlocker, Regal Cinemas, Hot Shots Coffee Shop and Hot Topics.
- 14 grandparents are part of the San Pasqual Academy Neighbors Program.

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College-Bound Youth—Not Alone

Most college-bound youth rely on their parents, a grandparent, an older sibling or even an aunt or uncle to help them transition to college, especially when it involves moving into on-campus housing. For foster youth who may not be as connected to their families, the move to college can be even more daunting with emotions of excitement, anxiety and uncertainty running high. Fortunately, for Academy graduates, they are not alone as they step into college life.

College-bound youth from San Pasqual Academy are supported by program staff from New Alternatives, Inc., the residential provider on campus. Recently, Sherry Brideau, Academy Volunteer Coordinator, accompanied two youth to Humboldt State University to start their college journey. The trio flew into San Francisco (the first plane ride for one of the youth) and then drove five-hours to the campus. While Ms. Brideau has helped other graduates move to Cal State University San Marcos and the Los Angeles area, "this was the biggest trip" for her to date.

Ms. Brideau assisted the youth (now roommates) with setting-up their dorm room and assessing other items they might need for the school year. Although each Academy graduate received a "dorm kit" filled with bedding, towels, pillows, hampers and toiletries, a shopping trip for college essentials such as a mini-fridge, Ethernet cords, lamps, and bikes was in order.

While the youth attended freshman ice-breakers, Ms. Brideau attended the parent/guest meeting before meeting up again for dinner. The youth would begin a week-long Bridge Program after Ms. Brideau headed back to San Diego. When Ms. Brideau checked on the youth a few days later, "they were doing good and getting through their Bridge Program."

Another individual who provides college-bound Dragons a lot of support is Taffe Newberg, Academy house-parent. It's not uncommon for Ms. Newberg to encourage the youth to attend College Connection events, take tours of local (and not-so-local) university campuses and fill out college and scholarship applications. She has taken Academy youth on the road to explore their college options, to make a decision on the program that best suits their interests, and to help them get situated in their new surroundings. Recently, eight of Ms. Newberg's Academy residents were accepted to college!

For Academy graduates headed to college, caring staff such as Ms. Brideau and Ms. Newberg can provide just the support and reassurance needed to make the transition from the foster care system to independent living in a college setting a smooth and successful one. Even after the Academy graduates are away at college, support and guidance are only a phone call away!

Summer Time

Academy youth have plenty of activities to keep them busy during the hot days of summer. The campus pool is open for splish-splash fun, and trips to local water parks are often on the calendar. While some youth participated in summer school, others worked on- and off-campus in internships and paid employment.

Volunteer opportunities with the Special Olympics, Big Animals for Little Kids and Feeding America were of interest to some, while others preferred cooking and sewing with the grandparents.

Trips to local parks, the mall, movies, Padres games and more round out the summer fun for Academy youth!

In the Principal's Office...

Ron Major joined the Academy family on June 26th, as the high school's new Principal. In no time at all, Mr. Major was meeting with the campus partners, overseeing the Dragons in summer school, and introducing an Academy youth as the Student Representative on the County Board of Education. He has stepped right into his new position!

Previously, Mr. Major served as Principal of Juvenile Court and Community Schools' Mesa Region. The Mesa Region provides a rigorous academic program for youth incarcerated in Juvenile Hall, Sierra Vista and East Mesa Detention Facilities. He has also been Principal at Polinsky Children's Center, a temporary emergency shelter for children who may have experienced abuse and neglect.

Mr. Major is known for being a team player, having creative energy and demonstrating an understanding of the foster care population. He is sure to be an asset to the Academy program!

A Day to Celebrate!

June 18th was certainly a day to celebrate for San Pasqual Academy's Class of 2009! Twenty-seven youth, beaming with excitement as commencement exercises took place in the campus gymnasium, received their high school diplomas.

Nine graduates spoke, reflecting on the challenges of growing up in the foster care system, thanking those who have made a difference in their lives and encouraging the underclassman to work hard and strive for their goals. Many thanked the campus partners for making a difference in their lives and the Friends of San Pasqual Academy for countless opportunities.

Class Valedictorian, Simone H-N., spoke of the loss she and her three siblings experienced prior to being placed at the Academy five years ago. "Through the challenges I endured, I never thought this day would come. I have received a better life than most." Simone thanked her house social worker and the Friends for "making life full and satisfying." She advised the younger students that "risk taking is free" as they pursue their hopes and dreams.

Jenny M., a first generation high school graduate, acknowledged that her Academy houseparents "made a big impact in [her] life." She also spoke of believing in oneself, "People always said I wouldn't graduate, but I did it. *WE* must create our futures." Another graduate, Dachuray D., heading to San Jose State University, emphasized the importance of using the tools you are given and moving forward, "SPA has done its job for me. SPA has helped me be successful, and now it is time to help myself."

Sherehe Yamaisha Roze Hollins, an educator, author, and visual/performing artist, spoke of such new beginnings in her poem ("Your Legacy Begins Today") inspired by and dedicated to the Academy graduates.

Guests applauding the Academy graduates' accomplishment included family, friends, campus staff and distinguished County officials. Community members and organizations were also on hand to present scholarships to both individual graduates and the Class of 2009. Four graduates, who demonstrated academic excellence, leadership and community service throughout their high school career, received the Outstanding Citizenship Award from New Alternatives, Inc., which included a car to help them in their transition to independence.

Following the graduation ceremony, a reception was hosted by the Friends of San Pasqual Academy in the Cyber Café.



Middle Schoolers Celebrate Too!

Eleven youth placed at the Academy were cheered on by campus staff on June 11th, as they graduated from eighth grade at San Pasqual Union School, "The Little School in the Valley." The "Saints" and their guests enjoyed refreshments following the ceremony. Congratulations!

On August 3rd, the graduates officially traded in their green and white Saints' colors for Dragon blue when they began their four-year high school journey at the Academy!

Class of 2013



Dragons' Sports Wrap-Up

Baseball As their second season came to a close this past spring, the Dragons baseball team demonstrated continued improvement on the diamond. Without a home field and only one returning player, Team Captain Julian M., the Dragons persevered and won two games for the season. MVP honors went to Marquise C. at the Sports Banquet. Perhaps with inspiration and support from San Diego Padres first baseman, Adrian Gonzalez, a fan of the Academy, the Dragons will be a bigger hit on the field in 2010.



Softball The Lady Dragons posted seven wins in the 2009 season and showcased a number of talented players on the field. Michelle K. was the team's top power hitter, with two homeruns and three triples for the season. Triple plays were the talk of the season as twins Karen L. at shortstop and Diana L. at second accomplished this first ever feat for the team! Leilani V. earned honors as the Lady Dragons' MVP.



All-Sports Banquet On May 20th, the Friends of San Pasqual Academy hosted the All-Sports Banquet in the campus auditorium. Dragon athletes who participated in football, girls volleyball, boys and girls basketball, baseball and softball were recognized for their contribution to the Academy sports program with a trophy and letterman jacket. Cheerleaders were also acknowledged for their enthusiastic support of the Dragons!

Check out the 2009 Volleyball and Football schedules at www.sanpasqualacademy.org and support the Dragons on the court and on the field.

End-of-the-Year Festivities

In the weeks leading up to their high school graduation, Academy seniors participated in a variety of year-end activities. On May 29th, seniors, along with fellow Academy students, enjoyed a magical evening at the Prom. Held at the Hotel del Coronado, the students dined on delicious cuisine and danced the night away.

Soon after their last high school class ended on June 11th, the graduates-to-be traveled to Anaheim and experienced Disneyland's Grad Night Extravaganza.

On June 15th, San Diego Charger Quentin Jammer, along with his wife, Alicia, treated the 2009 graduates to dinner at Benihana's in Mission Valley. Mr. Jammer provided transportation to and from the restaurant and invited fellow Chargers to celebrate this academic milestone with the youth.

And, the Friends of San Pasqual Academy hosted a Senior Luncheon on June 17th, where each graduate was presented with a laptop computer donated by Sony Corporation. The graduates also received scholarships, gift cards and a huge, rolling duffel bag from the Assistance League. The bag was filled with a myriad of supplies to set-up their new housing. There were lots of hugs, smiles and laughter as the graduates were wished well on their journey into adulthood.



Thank you, Mr. Allison!

After five years of leading the charge as the Academy's Principal, Tom Allison returned to his roots at Orange Glen High School at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Allison began his teaching career at Orange Glen fifteen years ago, and now serves as Principal for the high school with an enrollment of about 2,300 students.



Mr. Allison worked diligently and collaboratively with campus partners to ensure Academy students received the education necessary to succeed in college and the world of work. He supported students in and out of the classroom, and cheered for them on the side lines!

Child Welfare Services' Protective Services Supervisor, Ronda Edwards, who oversees the County social workers co-located on campus, states, "Tom Allison's dynamic, quick-witted personality is going to be missed around San Pasqual Academy. He brought tremendous energy and innovation to our partnership."

Mr. Allison's dedication to the Academy is appreciated, and the Dragons wish him well at Orange Glen High School.

Dragon Organics— Now Available

Dragon Organics, produce harvested and packaged by the Academy's Agriculture Program, is now available at Whole Foods in Hillcrest and La Jolla. Take a look at Dragon Organics in a segment of the County Television Network's [County Chronicles](#).



SD Athletes Cheer On Academy

Local athletes, San Diego Chargers' Quentin Jammer and San Diego Padres' Adrian Gonzalez, are familiar faces to Academy youth. Positive role models, these men have taken an interest in supporting the stability, mentoring and extra-curricular activities available to the foster teens living and learning at the Academy.

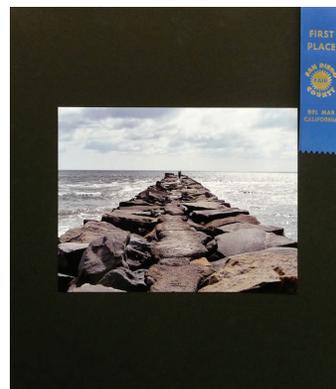
On August 14th, Quentin Jammer and his wife, Alicia, hosted a Back-to-School party on campus. The youth had a great time and were re-energized for the new school year. As part of *Jammer's Picks*, Academy youth will be invited to attend each Chargers' home game and receive concession vouchers. Several youth attended the August 15th pre-season game against the Seattle Seahawks, and supported their favorite cornerback and his teammates! Also underway is an art contest . . . Mr. Jammer will select the winning design to be printed on t-shirts for all the Academy youth, and the talented artist will receive an autographed football. Finally, Mr. Jammer is donating brand-new, Nike cleats to the entire Academy football team!

Invested in empowering underprivileged youth in education, athletics and health, Padres first baseman, Adrian Gonzalez, and his wife, Betsy, have recently become involved with the Academy. Their first visit to campus took place in April 2009 and soon after, Mr. Gonzalez sponsored a Celebrity Bowling Bash with proceeds benefiting the Academy. More recently, on August 3rd, Mr. Gonzalez hosted 50 Academy youth at Petco Park when the Padres beat the Atlanta Braves, 4-2. The youth enjoyed baseball fare, received souvenirs, met several Padres players and received autographs. Major League Baseball generously provided the transportation to and from the game for the youth.

Jammer + Gonzalez + Academy = A Winning Combination

2009 San Diego County Fair

Summer means the San Diego County Fair, and Academy youth are no stranger to the Fair! Fourteen Academy youth submitted entries in the Digital Arts category, earning four 1st place, five 2nd place and four 3rd place awards!



In the Student Showcase—Color Photography Division, twenty-eight Academy youth submitted a total of fifty-five entries. Wow! Of those entries, there was one 1st place ribbon, thirty-six 2nd place ribbons and eighteen 3rd place ribbons. The photos and ribbons are on display in the Academy's Tech Center.

In addition, four students performed a high-energy Hip Hop routine on June 27th at the Fair as part of a dance class they attend.

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

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,
- is being considered for an FFA placement OR
- is stepping-down from a higher level 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, HHS Academy Office Assistant, at (760) 233-6281.
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. Placement at the Academy is voluntary and the youth may decline the invitation to be placed at the campus.

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

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. Upcoming events include:

- **2009 Teens, Jeans and Dreams** (09/12/09; 6:00 p.m.) - Team-penning event at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Proceeds benefit San Pasqual Academy youth. For more information, call (858) 759-3298.
- **Shop 'Til You Drop** (09/22/09) - Academy youth "shop" for backpacks and school supplies in the auditorium.

Academy Grandparents

The San Pasqual Academy Neighbors (SPAN) Program allows intergenerational relations to naturally evolve between Academy youth and resident "grandparents" on campus. Currently, fourteen grandparents reside on campus and volunteer ten hours a week (often more), interacting with the youth in activities such as tutoring, gardening, sewing, household maintenance, cooking, poetry readings, photography, gemstone cutting and more.

The SPAN grandparents come from all walks of life: they are artists, educators, ministers, authors, nurses, etc.. Each shares their wisdom, insight, friendship and life experiences with the youth as a role model and mentor. It is the informal, daily interactions that the grandparents have with the youth that are often most significant.

Food seems to bring the two groups together in a way that lends itself to rapport-building. For instance, monthly birthday parties are held and each youth looks forward to Grandma Donna's home-made, birthday brownie delivered personally to celebrate their special day. Several of the grandparents work with the youth to prepare ILS meals in their homes, and the time spent shopping and cooking together provides a great avenue to talk about what's happening in the youth's life.

The grandparents' attendance at athletic events, school assemblies and graduation is also noticed by the youth, who thrive on the positive encouragement offered by the grandparents. The day-to-day interactions of the grandparents and the youth are a win-win situation for all!



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's CWS Policy Analyst, Esther Broers, at esther.broers@sdcounty.ca.gov or (858) 694-5209.

