

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo • Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey • Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

# Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

## Author Paul Feig Visits Saklan Valley School

Submitted by Debbie Parish (edited by Jean Follmer)



Back Row – Kevin Rice, Griffin Dey, Ariana Bovoso, Daphne Williams, Gabriella Barattolo, Ari Frankel, Isabelle Forlin, Nick Barendregt, Ben Griswold  
Front Row – Walker Franklin, Mac Goldman, Jack Brahney, Miles Deane-Grundman, James Rokas, Sarah Dey, Lauren Quittman, Isabelle Thimesch, Danielle Sitzman, Spencer Martin, Christine Quinones and Paul Feig

During his recent book promotion tour, author Paul Feig visited with Saklan Valley School's 5th, 6th and 7th graders. His visit with the students was both informative and highly entertaining. The students were swept away into the real life of a Hollywood actor, writer, director, comedian and now, children's book author. Mr. Feig has published his first book in a new series entitled, "Ignatius MacFarland: Frequent!"

Saklan students were quickly drawn into Mr. Feig's childhood stories which were, in part, inspiration for the main character, Ignatius MacFarland. The story revolves around Ignatius, or Iggy, who after being teased one too many times, decides to build a rocket. Maybe extraterrestrials are nicer than his

classmates? When his rocket takes an explosive wrong turn, Ignatius ends up in another frequency run by former English-teacher-turned-dictator, Chester Arthur. Mr. Arthur has taken the art, culture, and advancements of our world, shared them with this new frequency, and convinced the creatures around him that he's a genius. It's up to Iggy and Karen, another trapped frequent, to expose Mr. Arthur for the fraud that he is — and to hopefully make

it home alive. Ignatius MacFarland: Frequent! is part comedy, part science fiction, and part fantasy, and as Mr. Feig told the Saklan students, "this debut novel makes being a geek, well, kind of cool."

Mr. Feig read one of the opening chapters and discussed the steps involved in creating a storyline. He also shared details of the writing process and the discipline that every writer must have in his/her writing schedule to success-

fully publish a book. He graciously answered student questions and inspired all of the students to dream big. Mr. Feig directs the popular TV series, The Office and 30 Rock but is best known for creating the NBC television series Freaky and Geeks, a semi-autobiographical comedy-drama set in a Michigan high school in 1980-1981, and for playing Mr. Eugene Pool during the first season of the sitcom Sabrina, The Teenage Witch.

## Local Schools Make Honor Roll

By Jean Follmer

The Orinda Union School District recently announced that all five of its schools have been selected by California Business for Education Excellence and Just for the Kids-California as some of the public schools in California to receive the title of "2008 Honor Roll School." Del Rey Elementary, Glorietta Elementary, Orinda Intermediate, Sleepy Hollow Elementary and Wagener Ranch Elementary were all recognized as "2008 Honor Roll Schools." "The Orinda School District is proud of our continued recognition by the business community honoring the outstanding academic achievement of all five of our schools," said Dr. Joe Jaconette, superintendent. "Our school board, faculty, and staff are working diligently to preserve our programs in an era of extreme financial uncertainty."

Moraga's four schools (Camino Pablo, Rheem and Los Perales Elementary schools; Joaquin Moraga Intermediate) also made the list, as did the four elementary schools in Lafayette (Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Springhill and Lafayette Elementary) and Lamorinda's high schools (Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte).

The CBEE/JFTK-CA offers two Honor Roll categories: Star Schools and Scholar Schools. According to CBEE/JFTK-CA, Star Schools "are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students that have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency and achievement gap reduction over four years." Scholar Schools, like those in Lamorinda, "are schools that are showing significant aca-

ademic achievement levels, but do not have a significant socio-economically disadvantaged student population." This year, 214 schools received the Star Schools Award and 697 schools received the Scholar Schools Award.

"We know from the success of these schools that it's possible for all schools and all students in California to reach high levels of academic achievement, to close achievement gaps and to reach 100 percent grade-level proficiency on the California Standards Test," said Jim Lanic, Ph.D., President of CBEE. "Honor Roll schools are on track to do it. By highlighting these schools, recognizing their achievement and giving them a voice we hope other schools can learn from these schools' proven best practices and achieve the same results." For more information, visit [www.cbefoundation.org](http://www.cbefoundation.org).



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The Los Perales Elementary School Chorus, featuring 32 4th and 5th grade students under the direction of Carol St. Claire, offered up its Winter Choral Program on Wednesday, Dec 3. Proud parents and other spectators enjoyed an array of seasonal music and some Swing dancing to Rockin' On Top of the World  
Photo Kris Dunning

## Moraga Dad Gets Jefferson Award for Spearheading High School for Children with Learning Differences

By Sophie Braccini

Ken Dreyfuss is just a normal dad who wants the best for his children. His dedication led him to start a new school and for this achievement he received the Jefferson Award for Public Service in September of this year. The Jefferson Awards are administered by the American Institute for Public Service. The national foundation was founded by Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis in 1972 to encourage and honor people for their contributions through community service.

Dreyfuss's daughter was diagnosed with ADD at an early age and the family saw her struggling. "My daughter went to Rheem but was getting lost in the structure and her self esteem was really poor," said Dreyfuss.

The family decided to register her with a private school in Oakland, Raskob Day School, a very old institution that specializes in children that have language-based learning difficulties such as dyslexia, ADHD auditory processing disorder, non-verbal learning disorders or Asperger's syndrome, and they were pleased with it. But when the Holy Name University, that was managing the high school, reclaimed that space there was nowhere for the kids to continue their education.

With a group of parents, Dreyfuss led the creation of a brand new school, Bayhill High School, a unique private institution in the East Bay that serves students in grades 9-12, providing very small class size and teaching that focuses on individual needs

and students' potential for success.

"The difference for my son has been immense," says Lafayette resident Rick Eggerth, whose son was diagnosed with a variety of learning differences in 2nd grade, "He is now at the top of his class, loves school, and feels like things are working, none of which were true in middle school." Eggerth believes that the learning model Bayhill uses — small classes (10 or less), a high degree of teacher and teaching assistant involvement with each of the kids, and lots of multi-media and hands-on teaching modes — works very well for his son. "And being in a small school, where everyone has learning differences, means he doesn't feel isolated from the rest of the kids that don't have such issues, because everyone has similar issues," Eggerth adds.

This uniqueness is what motivated Dreyfuss to jump-start the project. "We were 10 to 12 people on the steering committee," he said, "the school opened in September 2007 after a year of work with parents and educators."

Dreyfuss believes the group was so successful because the old high school closed, so they had the students ready to enroll, and the trained staff was eager to start in the new structure. The fund raising effort was crucial to their success and the group managed to raise \$400,000 in that first year.

"Since we opened the school, (our) population has grown faster than we anticipated," Dreyfuss was pleased to acknowledge, "Our pub-

licity, through our web site, works and as soon as the word got out, we received registrations." Children are coming from as far as Marin County and San Francisco, Bayhill being the only available option in the East Bay.

"I was not involved in the creation of Bayhill," says Eggerth, "but I did become a board member at the beginning of my son's sophomore year (he's a junior now). I'm very involved now, and it is very fulfilling and gratifying work, because the school is so needed and so important to the people involved with it."

Dreyfuss believes that there is a large demand out there in spite of the tuition that's close to \$21,000 a year. "We hope to create a scholarship endowment," says Dreyfuss, who doesn't want the school to be just for rich kids. Bayhill is in the process of becoming a certified non-public school, so students with special needs who are referred by their public school district will be able to attend while the district pays the tuition.

Eggerth and his son are starting to research colleges. "We don't know where he'll be going, but it will be something with a good LD (learning differences) program," he says, "There are more schools that offer strong LD programs than there were in the past, and the awareness of LD needs is growing."

"In college they are much more accommodating of differences," says Dreyfuss, "the worst time is K-12."

For more information go to <http://www.jeffersonawards.org/> and <http://www.bayhillhs.org/>

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