

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

## Campo Student Makes Major Music

By Cathy Dausman



Inno Asuncion Photo Doug Dunderdale

To borrow a phrase from a Frank Sinatra song, Inno Asuncion has the world on a string. Make that four strings – four viola strings. The Campolindo High School senior is co-president of the Student Music Council, a member of the Campolindo Orchestra, plays in a string quartet and manages a music mentor program for Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. He is also assistant principal violist in the Berkeley based Young People's Symphony Orchestra. Asuncion, along with three other YPSO musicians, performed in December with the Berkeley Symphony. YPSO and other youth orchestras will play in Davies Symphony Hall in January.

A love for music performances began in third grade, when Asuncion's class took a field trip to hear the San Francisco Symphony. In sixth grade he began studying violin under Joaquin Moraga Middle

School's music teacher Adam Noel, but quickly switched to viola. It was, he says, "a very good decision."

Flash forward to high school, where Campolindo music director Harvey Benstein urged Asuncion to audition for YPSO. Asuncion was accepted, and has continued to rehearse and perform with their group of 100 musicians. This is his third year with the program.

As Asuncion's music contacts have broadened, so have his opportunities. He's played in a chamber ensemble, in Berkeley's Jr. Bach Festival, performed with the Pacific Mozart Ensemble choir, and for the Bay Area Youth Orchestra festival. Last June he traveled with YPSO to Alaska, performing in Fairbanks and Anchorage. He'd like to play in Campolindo's pit orchestra (their March musical will be "Fiddler on the Roof"), but right now he's focused on an April inter-

national field trip to Beijing, China. The Chinese Ministry of Culture and the International Fine Arts Institute invited Campolindo Orchestra to perform. He says nearly fifty Campolindo music students will make the trip. Fundraisers for travel expenses are ongoing, most famously the Rent-a-Student program (see related story in our December 8 issue.)

Bow in hand, Asuncion averages an hour or two daily of music practice. Right now it's more, as he prepares an audition for Stanford University. Admittedly, he spends more time on non music-related homework. But he likes music and says he finds that it "provides relief from academics," and teaches him "how to be a leader." Does he play any other instruments? "The ukulele," he laughs. In addition to his studies and music commitments Asuncion also plays varsity tennis.

Asuncion studies viola privately with Pamela Freund-Striplen. He credits the teachers he's had and his parents, Melinda and Albert Asuncion, for the support they've provided to his music career. Younger sister Gabriela, a Joaquin Moraga sixth grader, has taken up the cello after watching her brother's successes.

Music "might take me somewhere in college," he says thoughtfully. It seems it already has.

To learn more about the Campolindo Orchestra 2011 China Trip go online to <http://campomusic.org/china-trip-info/>

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

**Acalanes Union**  
High School District  
Board Room AUHSD Office  
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette  
Wednesday, January 12, 7:30pm

**Lafayette School District**  
LAFSD Office  
3477 School Street, Lafayette  
Wednesday, January 12, 7pm

**Orinda Union School District**  
OUSD Office  
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda  
Monday, January 10, 4pm

**Moraga School District**  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
Tuesday, January 11, at 7:30pm

**Lafayette Unified School District Kindergarten Registration**  
Registration for Lafayette students entering Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year will take place on Tuesday, January 25 and Wednesday, January 26, 2011, at the following times (please go to the school in your attendance area to register):

**Burton Valley Elementary,**  
9-11am and 1-3pm  
561 Merriewood Drive, 927-3550

**Springhill Elementary,**  
9-11am  
3301 Springhill Road, 927-3580

**Happy Valley Elementary,**  
8:30-11:30am and 1-3pm  
3855 Happy Valley Road, 927-3560

Information regarding registration requirements and attendance areas is available at [www.lafsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us).

**Lafayette Elementary,**  
9am-noon  
950 Moraga Road, 927-3570

## 'Tis the Season to Hurry Up and Wait

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

While there are still a few college application deadlines coming up in January, the majority of students have submitted their applications and are settling in for a long wait. The months between sending out college applications and waiting for admission decisions in the spring can seem like an eternity. The drama that accompanied writing essays and standardized testing is finally over and it seems that there is nothing left to do. This sudden drop in levels of activity and excitement can be a disappointing end to such a big build up. So, instead of just sitting around a waiting, be proactive! There are some constructive things seniors should still do to improve their chances of admission and get prepared for funding their college education.

- Continue to do your best academic work. Colleges review final transcripts to be certain no courses were dropped and grades did not plummet.
- Visit schools you have not been able to see. If visiting is impossible, continue to familiarize yourself with colleges in other ways in order to make informed decisions when the time comes. Demonstrated interest continues to be a factor in a school's admission decisions.
- Identify the undergraduate regional admissions officer who is responsible for your application. E-mail or call to let him or her check if your application has been received; do not do this, however, if you have already received confirmation of receipt. Instead ask if your application is complete and if there is anything else they will need.
- Stay engaged in researching your top colleges. Read blogs, examine course catalogues, review housing considerations, email faculty, students and prospective students through social networking sites and in discussions. Your regional admission officer may be a member or may just drop in to check who's there.

### Financial Aid Should Never be an Afterthought

Many colleges award federal and institutional aid on a first-come, first-served basis, so it is important to get your FAFSA filed within the first couple of weeks of January. The FAFSA or Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an application that you fill out and submit online. The government and college(s) use the information to determine what your family's financial aid award will be. The award is made up of one or more scholarships, grants, work-study and/or loans. The U.S. Department of Education administers the FAFSA and the 2011-2012 application becomes available at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) on January 1st. Every family should file a FAFSA, regardless of family income. Many colleges and universities, state and federal governments as well as private scholarship sponsors require the FAFSA in order for you to qualify for aid. At some colleges, students will not be eligible to receive merit aid unless a FAFSA is submitted. Merit aid awards are not need-based; they are tied to the student's achievement record rather than to family finances. Merit awards are incentives colleges use to encourage good students to accept an offer of admission by helping to reduce the costs of college.

Get started early on the FAFSA application process. Here are three important steps to add to your New Year's Resolutions:

1. Apply for a PIN (your electronic signature) for both you and your student (or retrieve an old one if you already filed a FAFSA. One parent and the student need to have a PIN to electronically sign the FAFSA.
2. Review the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet to understand what information you will need to complete FAFSA; gather that information so you have it all in one place.
3. Use income estimates (both the family and the student) for 2010; do not wait to have your

completed 2010 tax returns. Estimates are acceptable and you will need to update the FAFSA when your tax returns are prepared.

Beyond the first-come, first-served advantage, there are several other good reasons for starting early and staying on top of the FAFSA. First, beginning the FAFSA early in the season makes later updates easier to manage. The government has designed an easy to use website for this purpose. Second, information on the FAFSA can easily be transferred to the PROFILE, a second application for financial aid used by hundreds of private institutions.

Here's a bit of holiday inspiration to get you started!

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly.*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.  
'Tis the season to be jolly!  
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.*

*Write your FAFSA,  
Prep your PROFILE,  
Have your taxes done,  
Yesterday!*

*Just as the Yule season passes,  
Push 'submit' and pray for aid!*



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an educational consultant and certified college admissions advisor. Her goal is to help students and their families understand the admissions process, research college and career options, create a customized college list and submit a strong and cohesive application. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC, and HECA and earned a certification in College Admissions and Career Planning from University of California at Berkeley. Contact her at (925) 891-4491 or [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

## Lafayette Girl Broadens International Horizons

By Jean Follmer



ican branch. "I really wanted to go to Brazil," said Teichman. After completing five 250-word essays, sharing her hobbies, extra-curricular activities and school records, she won the opportunity to fulfill her desire. "The application process was pretty extensive. It was probably harder than college applications. We were asked to reflect on the past and answer questions about what you would do in certain situations," Teichman shared.

According to the *Youth for Understanding* website, the organization's mission is "preparing young people for their responsibilities and opportunities in a changing and interdependent world." YFU works with governments, corporations, foundations schools and educators worldwide to create global learning opportunities.

Teichman spent six weeks in Brazil as a *Youth for Understanding* exchange student last summer. She was placed with a family that has two daughters – ages 16 and 7. Teichman assimilated quickly. "After the first week, you're part of the family life," she said.

Since both parents worked and the daughters were in school most of the time, Teichman did most of her sightseeing on her

own. "It was pure integration. I was lucky because my host father was an English teacher. I actually picked up a lot of Portuguese by the end of my visit – many words sound alike between Portuguese and Spanish," she reflected.

And pure integration was the point of the trip. Students from throughout America met in Washington, D.C. to depart for Brazil. Unlike some exchange programs, the students were spread throughout Brazil. It was only by chance that Teichman was placed within walking distance of an American girl from the east coast.

Teichman feels it was a life-changing experience. "You have to take charge and be responsible for yourself; you have to do a lot of planning. I know it's hard to leave home for six weeks but it prepares you for life," she said.

There is little doubt Teichman will be prepared for life when she leaves home in a couple of years. As for the future, she loves both biology and languages and envisions continuing her involvement in those areas. And as for travel, "I really want to go to a Spanish-speaking country next," finished Teichman.

For more information on *Youth for Understanding*, visit <http://yfiusa.org/>.

## Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA

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