

# 'Orinda Idol' Soloist Leaps into National Spotlight

Submitted by Margaret Huang



Isabelle Johannessen (front center)

Photo provided

Orinda resident Isabelle Johannessen began singing when she was just a baby. "I would sit in my car seat and hold 'Ahhhh...' for as long as I could," the Oakland School for the Arts senior remembers. And she hasn't stopped singing since.

She made her first solo appearance on Orinda Idol, sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council, as a fourth grader and finally won first place in the Orinda Idol competition in 2012 with group, Urban Flare. She is now a member of Vocal Rush – OSA's prestigious national award-winning acapella group. She also works with Disney pop singer Zendaya, also a former OSA student, as a back-up singer on her "Shake It Up" tour. Johannessen was on tour with Zendaya and missed appearing with Vocal Rush when the group was a finalist on NBC TV's "The Sing Off" in December.

As a dancer and a performer in musicals at Orinda Youth Theater and Glorietta Elementary School, Johannessen found her commitment to the arts to be defining. Her broad range of talent coupled with an incredible work ethic landed her acceptance at OSA, where maintains a 4.04 GPA.

"The thing about being an artist is that you are learning to better yourself and your craft. That mentality of learning, because you want to improve and not just to get good grades, is how to succeed," says the 17-year-old. "In vocal music, if you don't want to pay attention, you don't really have to. But, when auditions come up and you are not picked for the group or for a solo, you know why. Going to a performing arts school helps you be motivated in all aspects of life."

Johannessen says she gets up at 5:45 every morning. "My mom and I leave the house at 7:30 to drive me to school. Some nights I get a ride home from my family, but most evenings I take BART home after school."

Johannessen recently toured LA with her family to visit colleges and has already received an acceptance from Loyola Marymount College.

For the second consecutive year, Johannessen will be a featured soloist in the OSA Vocal Department concert "Soundtrack," a night of Hollywood hits at the Fox Theater in Oakland on Friday, May 2. Tickets are available on <http://www.ticketmaster.com>, search for "Soundtrack."

# TEEN SCENE

## Healthy Choices to Avoid a Sedentary Lifestyle

By Henna Hundal

As teenagers, there's no doubt we want to keep our bodies looking great. And no matter how cliché it might sound, the best way to keep fit is to eat nutritiously and exercise appropriately. New survey results released in January by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that we aren't making exercise a priority. Junior Jessica N. reported, "I exercise maybe twice a month doing some push ups or sit-ups" while senior Kevin M. boldly stated, "exercise is just not my thing."

The survey results show that only 25 percent of American kids aged 12 to 15 are meeting the recommended daily exercise guidelines. This means that, on average, only one out of every four teens is doing at least one hour of vigorous physical activity each day. High school junior Hunter M. is one of the four who is getting enough exercise. "I do 25 sit-ups and 50 jumping jacks every morning, then I walk to and from school." Arezu K. chimed in, "I go to the gym three times a week for an hour because working out makes me look and feel healthier." On the opposite side of the spectrum, student Stephanie S. says

that exercise is "nonexistent" in her life while Jasmine M. remains only mildly active by walking half a mile a day.

Teens have become too sedentary. The report was based on the responses of 800 young people in the 2012 National Youth Fitness Survey, making it clear that we need to revive a national dialogue on the importance of vigorous physical activity in young people's lives. The average American spends 9.6 hours sitting down – more hours than they spend sleeping. Watching our diets and exercising 30 minutes a day will not be enough to offset the hours of sitting.

At a time when over 12.5 million American youth are dealing with obesity, and budget cuts are eliminating schools' physical education programs, we need to pause a moment to remember how crucial exercise really is. Getting the right amount of daily physical activity helps us in so many ways, including improving our mood, boosting energy, and increasing our overall wellness. We can celebrate our bodies by making healthy nutrition choices combined with strenuous

physical activity. Exercise isn't exclusively for athletes, it's critical for the longevity and happiness of every individual.

First Lady Michele Obama is on the right track with her Let's Move campaign. Walk, run, swim, bike, surf, skate, stretch, dance, tumble, play ball, or do yoga – everything counts towards a more healthy and beautiful you.



Henna Hundal

*Express Yourself!™ Teen Radio Reporter and Be the Star You Are!® volunteer; Henna Hundal, is an 11th grader on a mission to empower the younger generation to lead active, healthy lives.*

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, [Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com](mailto:Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com).

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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