

Bentley School Students Among CSSSA 2014 California Arts Scholars

Submitted by Darwin Marable



Emily LaRoche, one of four Bentley School students selected for the California Arts Scholars 2014 summer session. Photo provided

Four Bentley School students, Emily LaRoche, Milo Narushchen, Margot Witte and Madison Lin, were among the approximately 500 young people selected for the California Arts Scholars 2014 summer session of the California Summer School for the Arts. Drawn from a pool of over 1,600 well-qualified applicants, they are considered to be some of the most outstanding students in the arts from all over the state.

Students hail from all 58 California counties, and demonstrated outstanding artistic excellence in one of the seven CSSSA disciplines: animation, creative writing, film, dance, music, theatre or the visual arts. They were honored by the County Board of Supervisors, along with the other 12 students representing Contra Costa County, at a reception June 3.

CSSSA is a four-week, intensive pre-college program for talented and motivated high school students in the arts, held on the campus of the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia July 12-Aug. 8. Participants are selected on the basis of their artistic promise, artistic potential, talent, and creativity as demonstrated through application/portfolio materials and teacher recommendations.

CSSSA offers a unique opportunity for students to spend one month immersed in a creative laboratory experiencing the inspiring and rigorous daily life of a professional artist. Collaboration across disciplines is emphasized and expanding the boundaries of artistic expression is key. As a bridge from high school to college, the program offers graduates three units of California State University course credit.

Lead support is provided by The Ovation Foundation, a charitable entity of Ovation, America's only arts network, inspiring the world through all forms of art and artistic expression. "It is no secret that arts education is under threat in America. With continuing cuts to arts programs and arts education, The Ovation Foundation is proud to extend opportunities to students across the country," said Sonia Tower, senior vice president, corporate relations for Ovation and president, The Ovation Foundation. "These young artists will receive guidance to reach their full creative potential in the hopes of bolstering the art world."

For more information about CSSSA Summer 2014 visit www.csssa.ca.gov and csssaf.org.

Saklan Teacher Selected in Nationwide Search for Science Teachers by FDA

Submitted by Christine Kuckuk



From left, Jacob Martin, Marcus Ferreira, and Vickie Obenchain. Photo provided

Science teacher Vickie Obenchain, affectionately known by her Saklan School students as Miss O, has been selected as one of only 30 educators from across the country to participate in the 2014 Food and Drug Administration Professional Development Program in Food Science to be held July 20 through July 27 in Washington, D.C.

The one-week program will provide hands-on activities that link food science and food safety to students' everyday lives. Participants will learn also about nutrition, food allergies, cosmetics safety, and color additives from FDA experts; and receive nutrition material to help teach their students how to use the Nutrition Facts Label to make better food choices. Another goal of the program is to educate about the critical food safety issues. Participants will tour

FDA laboratories and meet the scientists, explore food safety on the farm at government research sites, learn about the development and spread of food borne illnesses, and study the science associated with safe food handling, storage, and preparation. A follow-up conference is included in the program.

The FDA and the National Science Teachers Association has initiated this workshop to implement a professional development program in food science that is consistent with the National Science Education Standards. On the completion of the course, Obenchain will give professional development workshops to the Saklan faculty and will also give a talk to parents at one of the PA Parent Workshop programs in the fall which will be open to the Lamorinda community.

Love of Art and Literature

Lafayette School District's 2014-15 Teacher of the Year

By Diane Claytor



Springhill Elementary School teacher Olivia Vann with her students.

Photo Diane Claytor

Exuberant was the first word that came to mind when meeting Springhill Elementary School teacher and Lafayette School District's 2014-15 Teacher of the Year nominee Olivia Vann. Other adjectives were dynamic, personable and passionate. Nearing the end of the year, her second grade classroom was awash in colorful artwork, animal projects and written stories. Every possible space had something hanging from it, pinned to it or sitting on it. And considering it was the end of the week, the room was incredibly neat. The previous evening was Open House, Vann explained, the "last hurrah" for her 24 second graders. As the class was dismissed for the weekend, several kids stayed back to proudly show a visitor their work and give Vann a big hug. It was obvious that the students loved her as much as she loved them.

The Martinez native and daughter of immigrant parents received both her undergraduate degree and teaching credential at Saint Mary's College. She knew at an early age that she wanted to teach and her passion hasn't waned in 34 years. Springhill principal Heather Duncan said that Vann "is one of the most dedicated and passionate teachers I know."

Vann has spent her entire teaching career in Lafayette, beginning at Burton Valley Elementary School in 1980, teaching fifth and sixth graders and, since 1995, teaching third grade at Springhill; this was her first year teaching second grade and she loved it. It's a fun grade, she said, with kids who are trusting, loving and lovable. "They grow so much in this grade," Vann noted. "I was just looking at their work from September and got teary-eyed seeing how much they've grown. But they still believe in

magic."

Vann believes that learning should be magical and reports that she "throws her entire spirit and soul into teaching with creativity and abandon. In my classroom, learning is experienced in a variety of ways and every student is uniquely appreciated." She practices integrated learning where both sides of the brain — the intellectual side and creative side — are melded together. A good teacher, Vann said, continues to expand children's imaginations, and doesn't forget to include the creative, artistic side.

Principal Duncan noted that anytime you walk into Vann's classroom, "you will see children engaged in meaningful work. They master skills while hardly knowing they are doing so because of the creativity incorporated in each lesson ... children are inspired to achieve."

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Celebrations

Ryan Cherezian Wins Auto Tech Awards



Acalanes High School alum Ryan Cherezian graduated from Butte Community College Automotive Technology with an AA degree and his Auto Degree May 29. The former student of Grant Cusick's auto shop class at Acalanes, who received an AHS scholarship in Automotive Technology towards Butte College, received the Top Graduate Auto Technician 2014 scholarship at Butte, which included a Craftsman tool chest and scholarship money for tools. Butte College also sent Cherezian to Skills USA Competition Regionals where he won first place, then continued on to the Skills USA State Championships in San Diego where he won second.

Acalanes Grad Receives BA Degree from The College of Wooster

Brianna Tarpey, a graduate of Acalanes High School, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from The College of Wooster during commencement exercises on May 12. While at Wooster, Tarpey was an intern in the Office of Admissions, a Resident Assistant, and a member of Pi Kappa social club. She also was a member of the Shepherd Alliance Program and was named to the Dean's List. A sociology major with a minor in education who graduated cum laude, Tarpey is resident of Lafayette. The College of Wooster is America's

premier college for mentored undergraduate research. Every Wooster senior works one-on-one with a faculty adviser to create an original research project, written work, performance, or art exhibit. In the process, each develops independent judgment, analytical ability, creativity, project-management and time-management skills, and strong written- and oral-communication skills. Founded in 1866, the college enrolls approximately 2,000 students.

Ross Teichman accepts Stamps Leadership Scholarship to LSU



Acalanes High School grad Ross Travis Teichman has chosen to enroll at Louisiana State University as a Stamps Leadership Scholar. The value of the Stamps Leadership Scholarship for four years at LSU

is worth up to approximately \$173,000, including enrichment funds for international travel, research internships, and outdoor leadership experiences. Teichman was chosen for his leadership, scholarship, perseverance, service, and creativity.

Teichman, who is the son of Dan and Stephenie Teichman, is a nine-time scholar athlete, lettering in three varsity sports: basketball, volleyball and golf, and a trombonist with the Wind Ensemble Symphonic Band. Teichman also participated in the Acalanes Gifted and Talented Education Program. Outside of school, he was a youth leader with CISV, an international peace education organization focusing on experiential learning of cultural diversity, human rights, conflict resolution and sustainability. Teichman's recent activities and honors include admission

into the LSU Honor's College and receipt of an LSU Chancellor's Future Leaders in Research Job Award which will allow him to conduct research with professors in his field throughout his college career, and a Chevron Reach Scholarship for academic success. Teichman plans to study petroleum engineering.

The Stamps Family Charitable Foundation partners with 41 visionary colleges and universities to award multi-year scholarships that enable extraordinary educational experiences. Of approximately 600,000 applications reviewed for consideration, 188 were selected as Stamps Leadership Scholars — less than 0.033% of the applicant pool. The new recipients, whose combined Stamps awards are worth almost \$28 million, join nearly 550 Stamps Leadership Scholars and alumni as beneficiaries of these generous merit awards.