



# HUSKY HIGHLIGHTS

FALL 2009

## Why I Love St. James'

Why do I love St. James'? Apart from the wonderful experience of watching my sons racing into the school each morning, and returning home each evening bursting with news of their day? Apart from it being a warm, nurturing place where nonetheless a high value is placed on academic excellence? Apart from Mr. Z's welcoming grin in the drop-off line every morning? Apart from Mr. Casey's world-class counter-tenor voice leading our singing in Chapel?



*St. James' students play during Family Weekend.*

Yes, there's more to it than that. St. James' is a school where the spiritual well-being of a child, and thus of the whole community, really matters. There are not many schools like this.

As a church school, it has made its mission to welcome all people without regard to their race or economic or social circumstance. And what's really impressive is that, at St. James', this has never been just a pro forma exercise in political correctness. It is a starting point from which the School's philosophy and practice follow both naturally and obviously.

It is this commitment to its spiritual values that makes St. James' a one-of-a-kind school. Far from being exclusive, it is precisely the opposite. It is a genuinely diverse and inclusive community, accurately reflecting both the world I live in, and the world I would wish to live in.

When I see Stephen Bowers teaching religious studies to the Sixth Grade, I am grateful too that the School Board has found a man who takes the core spiritual values of the School to heart in his leadership. Under his guidance, the School has flourished academically with the most up-to-date teaching methods, but also remained true to its mission.

There can never be enough credit given for the great generosity and genuine faith of a community that makes this possible. I, for one, shall always be grateful for finding such a place for my children to go to school. I feel St. James himself

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would be delighted to see this living example of what faith with hard work can accomplish.

- David Norland, father of Jack and Tom

## Family Weekend Fun!

The first thing I did when I arrived at El Capitan Campground for Family Weekend, was unload my bike from the car while my parents were checking in. Then I headed straight to the camp to look for my friends on my own set of wheels.

The really great thing about Family Weekend is you can run around freely with your friends, do anything you want and nobody minds. The grown-ups don't breathe down your neck, like they do at home in the city. You can head down into the creek and no adults will get in your way.

The creek is the main place that children go because you can go on expeditions there and it's like being in the wilderness. You can kind of get lost down there, and once in a while you have to pop your head up above the sides of the creek to see where you are. You have to watch out for poison oak though,

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and also mountain lions, but other than that, it's completely safe.

At night-time, they give us glow sticks and there's a campfire sing-along led by some great musicians, along with marshmallows to toast in the fire. Then when you go to bed, if you're in a tent, you can hear all the noises of nature at night. It's wild!

- Tom Norland, Fifth Grade



Three-legged races and happy faces at Family Weekend.

## A Notable, Quotable Field Day

Saturday, September 26 was this year's Latin-American themed Field Day. Mrs. Brown and Mr. DiPasquale, along with Mrs. White and many parent volunteers, worked hard to make it a fun day for all. There were sack races, tug-of-war, and water balloon toss, and of course, tamales! Chasia Jeffries, Jay Park, Jr., and Tom Norland (all Fifth Graders) spent some time on the playground asking people about their favorite aspect of Field Day. They received the following replies:

"The balloon toss was great. It was fun to get wet."

- Sekai Beard Jordan, First Grade



St. James' students run the obstacle courses.

"I've enjoyed painting a t-shirt with my daughter and watching all the kids play."

- James Choi, parent of Alex Choi, First Grade



Volunteers at the SJS Boutique.

"I really like how a lot of people brought their pets. They were so cute."

- Chasia Jeffries, Fifth Grade

"My favorite activity was ice-skating on paper plates."

- Brian Duggan, Fourth Grade teacher

"The tug of war was really fun. I enjoyed it a lot."

- Ms. Payne, Second Grade teacher

"I liked hanging out with Daddy."

- Jack Norland, Kindergarten

"All of the parents can meet and talk in a casual environment."

- Teresa Taylor, parent of Jade Ashley Taylor, Fifth Grade

"I like Field Day because lots of relatives come."

- Sunwoo Lee, Sixth Grade

"I like to see children enjoying themselves."

- Mr. Bowers, Head of School



Estás tarde es una cosa, pero sin pantalones es otra. El quinto grado es difícil.

Cartoon by Soojean Han, Fifth Grade

## Reflections on Astrocamp

Every year, St. James' Sixth Grade class visits Astrocamp in Idyllwild, California. Astrocamp is a place that encourages us to step out of our comfort zone. We did three main activities this year at Astrocamp: Zipline, Initiatives, and Skycoaster.

When we arrived at Astrocamp our head-counselor Mike introduced himself, described Astrocamp a little bit, and told us what we were going to do for the next three days. My group had a separate counselor named Chris. He used to work for NASA. We got to ride the Zipline first. To ride the Zipline, you are buckled into a harness that is attached to a strong cord. You are about twenty-seven feet up and the ride is about seven hundred feet long. When you get up on the platform, you might be a little afraid to jump off but trust me, once you do, you have a lot of fun and will enjoy the beautiful view.

After the Zipline, my group did something called Initiatives, which meant we worked together as a group to accomplish missions that our counselor gave us. Our group finished this exercise quickly, so we got to have free time.

The next day, we went to ride the Skycoaster, which was very exciting. It was actually my favorite moment at Astrocamp. Everybody in my group pulled me up all the way to thirty-seven feet high! Then I pulled on a ripcord, which dangled right next to my shoulder. At first mine was stuck, so I had to pull as hard as I could. Then I heard a loud click. Before I knew it, I was swinging through the air.

Overall, I had a lot of fun doing the Zipline, Initiatives, and Skycoaster at Astrocamp. I would like to thank all of the chaperones, Mrs. Dummett, Ms. Yu, Ms. Cefaly, Father Neil, and Mr. DiPasquale for doing a wonderful job taking care of us.

– Bo Young Lee, Sixth Grade



*Sixth Grade at Astrocamp*

## The Space Hike at Astrocamp

The night grew dark and we were in our dorm rooms getting ready for the Space Hike. We had layers and layers of clothes on. It was so cold outside that we'd freeze if we weren't bundled up. Sumo Wrestlers, I'd call us. When we were all ready to go, we walked down the stairs and out the door. We separated into our groups and walked in the dark, creepy night to our meeting spots. It was hard to see where we were going because we couldn't use a flashlight. We had to allow our eyes to adjust to the dark.

When we got to our meeting spot with our group chaperones, our counselor arrived. We started walking in the cold night. Up a hill we went, surrounded by trees. We stopped at a gated area and the door opened. We walked inside and there were tons of telescopes and other equipment. Our counselor told us the names of a few stars. We saw the North Star. Jupiter was the brightest star and the only planet visible that night. Then, we were off on our own to look through the telescopes and binoculars. We lay on the concrete floor, stargazing. It was very peaceful. We could hear the individual crickets making loud chirping sounds.

The group stood up and it was time to hike back to the dorm rooms. We stopped during the walk back and made a circle to play a game. The counselor held out three markers. We had to pick a random one and write down what color it was. Even though our eyes were adjusted to the dark, we could not differentiate the colors. When we got back to the dorm, we checked to see if we had written down the right color. Most of us hadn't, including me. Back in our rooms we changed into our pajamas. By that time it was lights-out and quiet hours. I think we all slept well that night.

– Callie McConnell, Sixth Grade

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## The Leonetti/O'Connell Family Foundation Science Room Opening

It was an occasion worthy of royalty. Father Paul led prayers, a ribbon was cut, speeches were made, even the local press was there. The opening of The Leonetti/O'Connell Family Foundation Science Room was a special event that will be remembered as an auspicious day in the school's history for many years.



*St. James' students busy learning in the new Science Room.*

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But even more significant than the ribbon cutting ceremony, is what the Room represents. Fitted out with its digital microscopes and state of the art facilities, it is the best chance yet for our children to become involved in science and understand what can be achieved in the world through science. And for that, special thanks are in order to the parents who labored hard, both raising funds and overseeing the project. Gretchen Kasai, John Kaliski, Jeff Lane and Cathie White were tireless in their commitment to make it happen. Also science teacher, Michele Yu, whose

vision of what was required was essential. As she holds her classes in her new environment, you only have to hear her talk, to share her excitement. "Never in my dreams could I have ever imagined teaching in such a lab," she explains. "This is the best lab I have ever seen in an elementary school. And I researched a lot of them." Originally Ms. Yu was simply hopeful of getting some new computers for the old lab, which had only two sinks and no computers at all. "But then I was asked what would my dream room be. I never, in a million years, thought I'd get all of it." Thanks to the fundraising at the Bug Boogie

Bash, and a grant from the Leonetti/O'Connell Family Foundation, \$150,000 was raised. The result is spectacular with new flooring, cabinetry, sinks in every workstation, lab chairs, cameras, camcorders, motion and voltage sensors and first class technology. "I see children being inspired by what we can do in here," says Ms. Yu. "It's safer, better, and I see the Fifth and Sixth Grade students particularly pushing forward in new and exciting ways."

- Lucy Norland, mother of Jack and Tom

## Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

September 15th to October 15th was Hispanic Heritage Month, and here at St. James' we celebrated the Husky way! Every grade level, from Kindergarten to Fifth Grade, performed a song that exemplified what they had been learning in Spanish class. Some students even wowed us with their instrumental skills.

Sixth Grade kicked off the assembly with a Spanish poem *De ola en ola, Mariposa*. They also worked very hard on biographies of Hispanic celebrities to display in St. James' Hall for all to see. Both Kindergarten classes sang *Hola Hola* and *Chocolate*. They wore necklaces adorned with flags from all over Latin America. The First Grade sang *¿Cómo Te Llamas?*. The boys wore sombreros especially made for the occasion, while the girls wore tissue-paper flowers in their hair to jazz up their performance. The Second Grade performed *De Colores* while wearing very colorful petals in a flower-esque manner. Third Grade students belted out a farm themed tune, *El Rancho de Pancho*. Students were very animated, with animal noises and all!

The Fourth Grade showed us their Rock 'n' Roll side with *La Bamba*. They really impressed us with those dancing moves, too! The Fifth Grade students did a special rendition of *Guantanamera*, started off with a drum beating Donis Leonard and guitar strumming Max Zucker. Jay Park, Jr. closed the song with a beautiful cello solo.

This year's Hispanic Heritage Assembly was definitely a success! It would not have been possible without the hard work of Srta. Casas, Srta. Armendariz (myself), Stra. Lovelock, Sr. Chavez, and all the students and parent volunteers. I know we all had a great time preparing and we certainly can't wait until next year!

- Claudia Armendariz, First Grade Assistant/ Spanish Teacher



*First Graders with sombreros and flowers.*



*Fifth Grade students perform Guantanamera.*

## Meet Two New St. James' Teachers!

This fall, St. James' was excited to welcome two new teachers to campus. Mr. Nick DiPasquale, the new Physical Education and Health Teacher, and Ms./ Srta. Maria Casas, the new World Languages Coordinator, answer some questions for the Husky Highlights.

**Husky Highlights:** *Tell us a little about your educational background and where you're from.*

**Mr. DiPasquale:** I was born, raised, and have lived my entire life right here in Los Angeles. I attended the University of Southern California on an academic scholarship, and graduated with a degree in Political Science. Shortly following my graduation, I earned my national personal trainer certification from the American Council on Exercise (ACE). Over the course of the past ten years, I have worked with young children, adolescents, and adults in an exercise and fitness capacity, fulfilling roles as a Jr. High and High School head coach, Physical Education Instructor, athletic director, and personal trainer.



**Ms. Casas:** I am from Bogotá, Colombia. I am the second child out of four. I was in my third year of college when I got my first job as Coordinator for the Welfare and Development Department at Andes University in Bogotá, Colombia. Back then, I had to attend school at night and work hard during the day to earn my bachelors degree in Early Childhood and Family Education at Pontificia Javeriana University. Now I hold a Master in Education-Curriculum and Instruction from Trinity University, Washington, D.C. My major is in Democracy, Diversity, and Social Justice. I strongly believe in the importance of maintaining and increasing classroom diversity. I think this allows students to expand their intellectual knowledge, become positive leaders, and face surrounding social challenges by understanding their peers' background.

**H.H.:** *What are you most passionate about?*

**Mr. DiPasquale:** I am extremely passionate about athletics and fitness, both from a personal standpoint as well as how it

relates to the children I work with on an everyday basis. My goal always remains to instill in the students of St. James' some of my personal enthusiasm for exercise and sports. In fact, I experience no greater sense of joy and fulfillment than in those moments when a child discovers that even the most difficult physical feat is attainable.

**Ms. Casas:** Let me tell you a story. After having obtained my professional degree, I got a job in a small private school to work as a Second Grade Homeroom Teacher. This organization offered service to K-12 students who needed more personalized attention. I nostalgically remember my first day of teaching. I went to my classroom and I saw that it had only ten chairs, a bookshelf with very few textbooks, did not have a heater nor air conditioner, and its cement floors were unfinished. This job was very challenging for two reasons: the limited teaching materials and educational equipment, as well as the different learning abilities of my students. At that moment, I realized that love and faith, commitment, dedication, consistency, creativity, patience, teamwork with the administrators, colleagues, and parents were vital elements to succeed in teaching the second grade curriculum to those eight students who, every morning, were waiting for me at my classroom's door. Those kids truly inspired me to continue expanding my knowledge and passion for teaching.

**H.H.:** *Why did you come to St. James' School?*

**Mr. DiPasquale:** The reputation of St. James' School is second to none. My interview process with Mr. Bowers, Ms. Arrington, and Mrs. Haines only confirmed my original belief that St. James' is an outstanding academic institution and would be a perfect fit for me. In addition, I had worked with some St. James' students who attended my prior school's summer program, and I was extremely impressed with their behavior, work ethic, and general sense of compassion for others.

**Ms. Casas:** After fourteen years of teaching experience, I felt that it was time for me to coordinate a World Language Program. Also, I was looking for a caring and family-oriented school. I found that St. James' mission includes a commitment to enrich the Christian values and spirituality of each student. I applied, and the rest is history...

**H.H.:** *What do you consider to be your strengths?*

**Mr. DiPasquale:** I believe I possess an excellent rapport with children, and I pride myself on my ability to recognize the individual idiosyncrasies that make each student unique, apply that knowledge to my teaching style, and thus become a more effective communicator. I believe that my greatest

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strength is that I live and exemplify a healthy lifestyle myself. I think the students recognize this fact and find themselves inspired to work hard each class period and push themselves beyond their perceived physical limits. This helps me accomplish my ultimate goal of instilling in the children a lifelong passion for athletics and fitness.

**Ms. Casas:** Interacting with people from all different backgrounds. That is an important piece of my growth both personally and professionally.

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## **Drum Roll for St. James' at Anaheim Convention Center**

The Anaheim Convention Center was packed. Over ten thousand people gathered in the vast hall for Sunday worship on July 12. There were bishops, pastors, ministers, and religious leaders from around the world, not to mention the Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, and Britain's Archbishop of Canterbury.

All were silent. Then came a single voice singing from the back of the hall. Suddenly, the drums began — loud, powerful, and magnificent. Dressed in their colorful uniforms, the St. James' Korean Drumming Troupe marched down the aisle, leading the opening ceremony celebration for the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

It was a spectacular moment.

For nearly two months, St. James' students from all grades had been practicing in the basement of St. James' Parish Hall, taught by St. James' parent Yongsuk Choi. They learned the different types of Korean drums and the unique rhythms to make the sound so special.

"The students learned the *gukuri*, *samche*, and *humori* rhythms very quickly," explains parent volunteer Ji Hyun Kim, who brought the Troupe together and arranged for them to play at Anaheim.

"I felt very proud of the students. And I was also very happy that our School brings international cultures to life."

- Lucy Norland, mother of Jack and Tom



*The St. James' Korean Drumming Troupe.*

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## **Korean History, Culture and the Korean American Experience**

This summer two of St. James' dedicated teachers shared in a fulfilling learning experience. Mrs. Kammula and Mrs. Jeffries (myself) attended The Sixth Annual Korean History, Culture and the Korean-American Experience seminar. This week-long workshop was held in Los Angeles at the Korean Cultural Center.

Educators from all over the United States, including Alaska, attended the workshop. There were speakers from UCLA, Loyola Marymount, Stanford, and Brigham Young Universities. Attendees learned about Korean History and customs, folk art, Korean drumming, and even visited a Buddhist temple here in Los Angeles.

The seminar is organized and presented by The Korea Academy for Educators. This worthy organization provides opportunities for educators to learn about Korean history

and culture and the Korean American experience in order to promote cross-cultural understanding.

- Dessie Jeffries, Fifth Grade Teacher



*Visiting a Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles.*

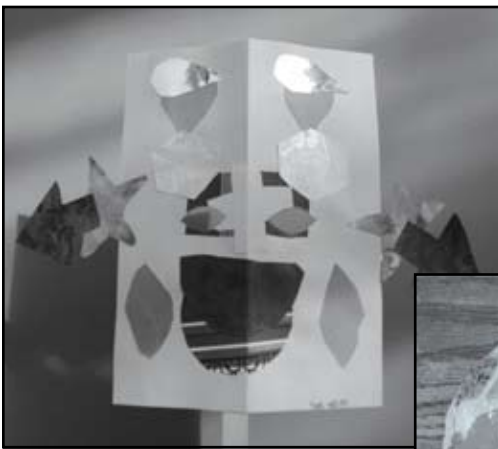
## Tips for a Picture Perfect Portrait

St. James' students were saying cheese during the first weeks of September. And their 2009 school photos looked fantastic.

But how easy is it to take a great photograph? We asked Rachel Sterlin and Eduardo Lainez of Luminary Photography, those responsible for the St. James' photos, for some tips so that we can all try our hand at taking the perfect shot.

- Choose a good camera. Canon and Nikon have some great digital cameras.
- Don't be afraid to joke around with your subject. We are sometimes very, very silly with the kids so that they relax and we get a nice smile.
- It's important to move in on your subject. Don't try to get everything into your photo – concentrate on your subject, and don't be afraid to move up close.
- Focus on the eyes.
- Be sure to choose a good background. You don't want people in the background or twigs coming out of people's heads.
- Shoot a lot. The more you shoot, the better your chances of that one great shot.

## Student Art from the Halloween Mask Parade



*Matisse-inspired Shapes  
Face Mask  
(Thea Davidson,  
Kindergarten)*



*Day of the Dead Skull Mask  
(Edwin Nah, Third Grade)*



*African Pattern Mask  
(Myles George-Ghobrial, First Grade)*



*Tiki Mask, made with recycled materials  
(Ariel Finch, Second Grade)*



## Jan Reynolds' Author Visit

Jan Reynolds is an author, world traveler, and certified adventurer best known for her books documenting her experiences living with and studying indigenous cultures across the globe. On September 28, St. James' Second through Sixth Graders were treated to an enlightening presentation from Ms. Reynolds on her many journeys. As the students settled into their seats in St. James' Hall, their attention was immediately grasped by the slideshow projected on the screen in front of them. Ms. Reynolds is a talented photographer as well, and she dazzled the students with brilliant images that she captured in regions such as the misty mountains of the Himalayas, and the scorching Sahara dessert.

Ms. Reynolds told fascinating stories about the wonderful people she met, such as a Sami family in the upper reaches of Scandinavia, who live off the land and are pulled in a sleigh by reindeer as their primary means of transportation. The students were especially delighted to hear about tribes in which the men wore the make-up to impress the women!

Students had many questions by the end of Ms. Reynolds' talk. Kiana in Fourth Grade wondered if the students were home schooled, and Ms. Reynolds explained the

similarities and differences in the education systems of indigenous peoples. The entire presentation lasted a full hour and a half, yet the children were captivated the whole way through. A couple of SJES Sixth Graders documented the Q&A session, and you can see it for yourself on the Media Center page at [sjsla.org](http://sjsla.org). Happy Travels!

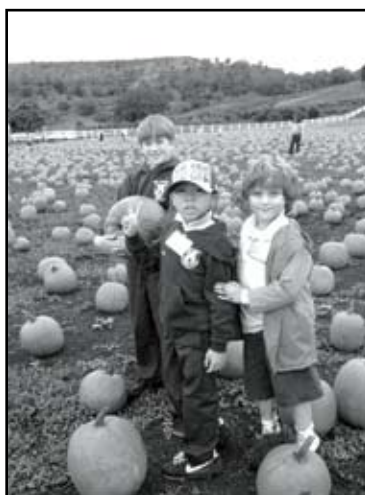
- Mark Shamoan, Media Assistant



*Jan Reynolds, author and artist, takes questions from students.*

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## Kindergarten and Fifth Grade Buddies' Trip to the Pumpkin Patch



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Husky Highlights is a St. James' School PSF Publication

Editors: Gregg Daniel, father of Kennedy, and Lucy Norland, mother of Jack and Tom.