

# Aún Aprendo

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2010



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## Message from our Head of School

Several months ago I was asked to present at a conference on the arts in education and Besant Hill’s approach to creating a school that melds creativity with a college prep curriculum, and the hurdles and chasms we face to do it well. I was asked to write my philosophy on education and the folks here thought it would be a good idea to share this with all of you.

For all ages and backgrounds schools should be arranged as they were in kindergarten. Classrooms should have various learning areas, and be filled with laughter, creative arts, energy, action and there should be a desire from a teacher to find a way to challenge and support each student based on what they know and how they learn. Having worked with kindergartners, it amazes me how well planned out and organized an effective class of five and six year olds needs to be, and the reality that some students enter knowing how to tie their shoes while others end up leaving

with someone else’s shoes – untied! But in the end, most leave feeling astonished and amazed about what they have learned, they feel good about their success and look forward to coming back the next day. Fundamentally, I believe all students should feel that way about learning and all schools should teach students what they need to know. Being able to do so they become life long learners and positive change agents as citizens of the world.

For many students that is not their experience. Education for my generation was geared towards creating disciplined and diligent workers. High school learning was aimed at memorization of concepts and facts. Studying for exams, note taking, problem solving, and a competitive mindset of getting ahead have shaped learning outcomes that are assessed with traditional tests and measures. Proof that this type of education is successful is evident; however, as the world and our priorities change, education must

change too. Over the past two weeks I have been a keen observer of the daily agenda of the Besant Hill Faculty Institute. The research on professional development is unequivocal; teachers must continue to grow and evolve to create a universal design model approach to instruction, so that the learning process is equal to all and student-learning backgrounds are celebrated and integrated in the day-to-day life in the classroom.

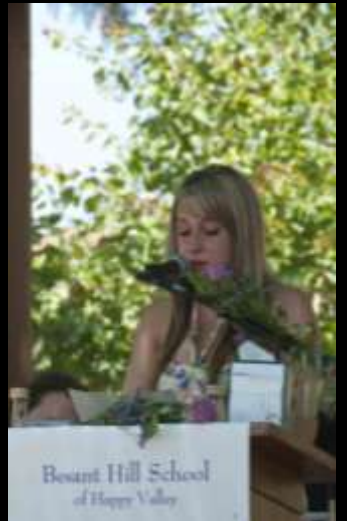
**I think that today’s educational leaders** must answer this call for change in education. I am ever mindful of Aldous Huxley’s criticism that conventional education creates “a hardening of the mental arteries.” I believe that schools today must be built around service to the education and development of young people that provides a framework for a vigorous college prep curriculum, melded with programs that explore risk, creativity, divergent thinking, sustainability and global thinking. I believe that leaders who can understand the complexity of human relationships, be empathetic, joyful and creative must shape the future. Schools must ensure that their programs offer these outcomes. If you have not already read the July 19<sup>th</sup> issue of *Newsweek*, and the article on creativity (or lack thereof) in America, I suggest you get a copy of it. The news is **bleak on today’s students** and their abilities of producing something original and useful. As we

*(Continued on page 5)*





# ***BHS Commencement***





# *May 29th, 2010*

Photos by Kurt Neher



## *Summer Birthdays*

### *June*

Nate Huang - June 3  
Ian Mullins - June 5  
Yuri Nzeusseu - June 6  
Mia Levy - June 10  
Zoe Zhou - June 17  
Blake Zhou - June 22  
Alexia Gerónimo-Anctil - June 24  
Nicholas Reilly - June 26  
Lukas Huberman - June 28  
Alice Zhang - June 29  
Skyler Furguiel - June 29

### *July*

Spencer Glazer - July 19  
Chandler Xu - July 23  
Brett Baxter - July 31

### *August*

Claude Lim - August 1  
Molly Calvo - August 5  
Vi Huynh - August 8  
Sam Park - August 9  
Roman Kompaniyets - August 12  
Jesse Huang - August 24  
Lynn Lin - August 31

## *Upcoming Birthdays*

### *September*

Jacie Littell - September 4  
Olivia Bernard-Feigenbaum - September 5  
Schuyler Wulfsberg-Gesmundo -  
September 15  
Liana Rogers - September 15  
Elyze Liu - September 20  
Evan Doornink - September 21  
Nandor Polk - September 21  
Isabelle Hong - September 22  
Holland Eads - September 27

### *October*

Natalie Cummings - October 6  
Benjamin Wise - October 7  
Sadie Pierson - October 12  
Ye Li - October 14  
Ashley Liu - October 18  
Elmo Zheng - October 18  
Angelica Lovesee - October 19  
Pil-Jae Choi - October 25



# *HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!*

*(Continued from page 1) Message from the Head of School*

have said for the past five years, at BHS we believe that creativity is not necessarily an innate skill we come with, but in fact, can be taught and developed through curricula and lesson plans. In the article, it is noted that in an IBM poll of 1500 C.E.O.'s, they identified creativity as the number one leadership competency of future leaders. But, in our schools, there is no concentrated effort to nurture the creativity of our students. So how do we reignite our imaginations? At BHS we have long subscribed to the fundamental belief that to be truly literate we must be creative. To be creative requires divergent thinking (generating many unique ideas) and then convergent thinking (combining those ideas into the best results). All experts in creativity say the same thing, that professional development of faculty is essential and that teachers must have the tools to create creative learning opportunities in the classroom on a daily basis. For our faculty we follow a number of best practice approaches to foster creativity, including the Socratic Method, Collaborative Learning and Problem and Project Based Learning opportunities. The research also shows that we are ART BIASED when we think about creativity. But the fact is, engineers and mathematicians are equally creative as musicians and artists. When tested, they all did the same thing in their brains. So school educators are often misguided, connecting the theater, music, and art classes as the places where creativity occurs. It should be alive in every classroom, each day. Carol Dweck's excellent new book, *Mindset*, offers research-based tools for teachers to enhance student achievement and success. In the book she makes clear that with the right mindset, we can motivate our students and help them improve in school. In fact, Carol's work at Stanford shows that when teachers don't perceive and stereotype student learning potential based on their past success but instead are non-judgmental and expect each student to be successful, students rise to it. If we have a growth mindset that lets students know that we know how they learn, believe in their abilities and talents then set the bar high, they will succeed.

Schools need to be shaped by individuals who believe in the mission. It is from the mission we gain a common language to guide and evolve our communities. School leaders (with input from a cross section of constituents) must at all times be driven by a strategic plan that articulates the short and long term activities to make the school true to its mission and take into account the market reality of applying students. Schools must be intentional places that exist beyond best intentions. Schools are not perfect places but they should be in the process of becoming that way.

I believe schools should be dedicated to helping young people grow intellectually, creatively, emotionally, morally and physically. I believe that developing personal and community values of decency and honesty are an unambiguous part of the day-to-day program - where caring and hard work are rewarded - where being a valuable member of the community is paramount. Since most of my professional service has been in boarding schools, I feel that residential environments offer the best opportunity to create intentional communities that honor individuals and develop skills to appreciate the opinions and beliefs of others. I am biased.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## The *Parents' Newsletter* is now “*Aún Aprendo!*”

Last year, we created our monthly *Parents' Newsletter* with the goal of keeping our BHS parents informed **about their kids' lives on campus**, providing them with stories and **pictures of the students' talent shows**, athletic games, off-campus field trips, and other activities, as well as news, dates and deadlines for future school events.

Our newsletter was very well received! We soon discovered that it appealed to the whole BHS community and that not only parents, but also students, alumni and other friends of the school were eager to receive it as well. So, starting with this issue, our monthly newsletter is now “*Aún Aprendo*” and it will combine the same types of articles we were featuring in our *Parents' Newsletter* with Alumni news, and Class Notes that our annual “*Aún Aprendo*” magazine used to feature.

In keeping with our commitment to sustainability and our efforts to reduce our use of paper and printing costs, “*Aún Aprendo*” will only be distributed via email, as a PDF. It will also be available on our website in the upcoming weeks, together with past issues of the *Parents' Newsletter*.

We hope you enjoy it and encourage you to send us your comments and suggestions for future issues.



*(Continued from page 5) Message from the Head of School*

My family and I have given most of our life to serving secondary age students. Working in a boarding school is not a job; it is a vocation. Those of us who find our way to residential life can see no greater enjoyment than living and working with adults and students who share a common mission. I want to be part of a team of professionals that grow and learn together through hard work, mutual understanding, respect and a belief that we can be healthy role models. In the end, schools should be happy places - comprised of people who care deeply about the art and practice of education and exemplify character, humor and grace. Our role as educational leaders is to engage and lead a diverse group of richly talented adults and children toward a common language and respectful partnership. There are wonderful, rich school environments in our country; I have had the good fortune to work closely with many of them from both the inside and outside. My philosophy is principled by a group of diverse learning environments that no matter how different, all share the following system of belief:

1. Schools should exist for teaching and learning. All of the activity of the school should be referenced to this assumption in a clear and demonstrable way.
2. Education is a true profession. True professions have bodies of professional knowledge and standards of practice. True professionals possess the knowledge of best practices in their field and can apply that knowledge.
3. Teachers should demand that learning occur. Learners should demand high expectations and curriculum and teaching practices that are adapted to their strengths and needs.
4. To be successful, schools must protect their missions and still look at the current and future landscape. Demographics, market research and the status of the needs of the world should navigate school programs. Schools must be able to demonstrate how their intentions become reality as defined by the growth of their students under these conditions.
5. Schools are places of creativity, fun and innovation. Schools must imbed the arts, experiential learning, and environmental sustainability into the core curriculum and possess the best of today's technology and resources, in the broadest possible sense.
6. Schools must create a balanced culture that honors individual voice and at the same time instills in its students a need to create true community by contributing and benefiting from different cultures, opinions and perspectives. There is no better place than a boarding school to demonstrate that.

My educational philosophy is simple: Schools must demonstrate that their core program allows all students to be successful and then to celebrate their success - not through assumptions, anecdote or test scores. Education should be inclusive and personalized to best challenge and meet the needs of the individual student and built around intentional communities that share a common respect and bond where the objective is to develop young people who can and will change the world.

Paul



## 2010 - 2011 Student Government

President: Ashley Liu

Senior Representative: Marja Ritchie

Junior Representative: Eric Olsen

Sophomore Representative: Skyler Furguiel

Day Student Representative: Noah Lashly

EOS Dorm Representatives: Francois Tchoyi & Tim Park

Phoenix Dorm Representatives: Charlie Wannagat & Elyze Liu

Member at Large: Meme Gottwald



# College Counseling

Parents and Students:

- The first volume of the College Counseling Newsletter will be distributed during Registration. It will also be posted on our website in the upcoming weeks.
- Check out the College Counseling Calendar on our website for test dates and deadlines, college visits, college nights and other important college related dates.

Go to: [www.besanthill.org](http://www.besanthill.org)  
 Click on the Calendar tab on the top right and then, from the “Online Calendars” tab, select “College Counseling.”

Mark your calendar:

## Senior College Night

Thursday  
September 23rd  
at  
7:00 p.m.

For more information contact:  
 Brook Masters  
 Director of College Counseling  
[bmasters@besanthill.org](mailto:bmasters@besanthill.org)  
 805 646 4343 ext. 121

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## SAT AND ACT TEST DATES AND DEADLINES FOR 2010 - 2011

### 2010-2011 SAT Calendar

TEST DATES		OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	MAR	MAY	JUN
		9	6	4	22	12	7	4
Registration Deadlines	Regular	SEP 10	OCT 8	NOV 5	DEC 23	FEB 11	APR 8	MAY 6
	Late	SEP 24	OCT 22	NOV 19	JAN 7	FEB 25	APR 22	MAY 20

The SAT now has a new and improved website!  
 To register for the SAT Test, go to [sat.collegeboard.com](http://sat.collegeboard.com).  
 Please remember to register early!  
 For residential students, we can only guarantee transportation to testing locations within the Ojai Valley.

### 2010-2011 ACT Calendar

TEST DATES		SEPT	OCT	DEC	FEB	APR	JUNE
		11	23	11	12	9	11
Registration Deadlines	Regular	AUG 6	SEP 17	NOV 5	JAN 7	MAR 4	MAY 6
	Late	AUG 20	OCT 1	NOV 19	JAN 21	MAR 18	MAY 20

To register for the ACT Test, go to [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).  
 Please remember to register early!  
 For residential students, we can only guarantee transportation to testing locations within the Ojai Valley.

# UNCOMMON DINING...

Walk into the Besant Hill Commons at lunchtime on any given day and, as you're greeted by the aromas of grilled vegetables with rosemary and roasted garlic, home-baked bread that just came out of the oven, and the scent of the sweetest tomatoes wafting from the salad bar, you may question for a moment whether you're still on the school campus or if you've just stepped into a gourmet restaurant. You make your way through the buffet stations scanning the selection of dishes. Your mouth begins to water and you realize that, at least for the next few minutes, your biggest problem is going to be how to narrow down your choice of what you're going to eat.

"Hmm, should I have the 'Southern California Fish Tacos topped with Gazpacho Salsa,' the 'Garlic Chicken with Pepper Sauce' or the 'Roasted Teriyaki Tofu Steak?' A side of 'Ratatouille,' 'Fresh Roasted Beet Salad' or 'Coleslaw with Lime and Cilantro?' Oh, but wait- there's Minestrone too... Or, maybe just a spring mix salad, with cucumbers, tomatoes, garbanzo beans, red peppers and balsamic vinaigrette... Yikes! Today is dessert day, and Mary has baked one of her homemade fruit tarts... The oranges over there look really juicy..."

A little dazed, you finally abandon the process of elimination and head back to your table with a plate stacked with... a bit of everything, knowing that the gastronomic delights Chef Juana and her crew will concoct later that afternoon will land you right back in the same dilemma at dinnertime.

Ok, so not every student will get this excited over their food selection, but the truth is that the meals served daily at BHS are not only a feast for the senses, they are healthy too - and the variety is endless.

In the kitchen, Chef Juana Juarez and her staff are committed to preparing meals from scratch, using only the freshest ingredients, and limiting the use of processed foods, high fructose syrup, white flour and sugar. While the choices she offers for even the most avid meat-eaters are ample, she focuses on vegetarian meals, taking full advantage of the produce grown in the organic farm and orchards on the school grounds.

"The kids obviously have to learn their Math, English, and Science..." says Juana. "What I also want them to learn while they are here, is how to live a healthy life, and I want to help them understand how the foods they choose to eat can benefit or harm them. All the veggies and fruits we serve come straight from our sustainable garden and orchards. We pick them in the morning and they're on the table by lunchtime. You can't get much fresher than that! We are so privileged to have such a variety of organic ingredients grown right on our campus; it is a great way to cut costs, and we are assured that the food we are offering

*(Continued on page 9)*



*Thank you, BHS Dining Staff!!!*

# ...AT THE BHS COMMONS

*A day's options at Besant Hill*

## Menu

### Breakfast

*Eggs Florentine  
Eggs Benedict  
Scrambled Eggs  
Biscuits with Sausage & Gravy  
Homemade Waffles  
Blueberry Muffins  
Oatmeal  
Cereals  
Bagels/Toast  
Fruit salad  
Whole fruit from our Orchard  
Salad Bar  
Yogurt  
Tofu*

### Lunch

*Minestrone  
Won Ton Soup  
Clam Chowder  
  
Eggplant Tacos  
Southern California Fish Tacos  
Sun-dried Tomato Quiche  
  
Coleslaw with Lime and cilantro  
Roasted Beet Salad  
Salad Bar  
Gazpacho Salsa  
  
Fruit Salad  
Fresh Apple Crisp*

### Dinner

*Minestrone  
Won Ton Soup  
Clam Chowder  
  
Garlic Chicken with  
Pepper Sauce  
Roasted Teriyaki Tofu Steak  
Ratatouille  
Fresh from the Grill Roasted  
Vegetables  
Home-baked Bread Rolls  
  
Salad Bar  
Fruit Salad  
Fresh Apple Crisp*

### Snack Bar

(Available until 9:00pm)

*Fresh Fruit Bar  
Granola Bars  
Cranberry Muffins  
Bread/Peanut butter  
Cereal  
Carrots*

### Beverages

*Orange/Apple/Cranberry Juice  
Lemonade  
Milk  
Coffee  
Black, Green & Herbal Teas*

*(Continued from page 8)*

to the kids is full of vitamins and free of pesticides.”

Juana also wants the students to learn to try different things - foods that perhaps they've never tasted before. And that is obvious when you see the menus she plans for an average week. With a lot of imagination and over 20 years of culinary experience, she finds countless ways to include tomatoes, onions, eggplant and the myriad of other vegetables and herbs from the garden, into her own versions of Greek Moussaka, Italian Lasagna, Cantonese and Thai Curry, Mexican Enchiladas, Korean Barbeque, Japanese Sushi, or an assortment of Spanish Tapas. Every day seems like “International Food Day” at BHS, and before the semester is over, while the students are still on campus, their taste-buds will have taken a complete tour around the world.

Desserts are not a staple on campus, but rather a semi-weekly treat. And they're definitely worth waiting for!! When Mary Mills (another asset of the BHS kitchen for the past 20 years) goes to work on her signature “Bread Pudding with Chocolate Chips and Coconut,” her “Light Cheesecake with Fresh Peaches,” her “Zucchini Bread” or any of her fresh fruit tarts, the results are invariably mouth-watering.

So, welcome to the Besant Hill School dining experience. Good luck trying to limit your selection and ... *Bon Appétit!*

Luisa Neher  
Communications



Photos by Marie Samson

This summer, fourteen international students arrived on campus ready to start an exciting experience, an adventure that was new for the students and for the school itself. Over the course of six weeks, during the Besant Hill School Summer Institute for American Language and Culture, the students embarked on a journey immersing themselves in speaking English, getting to know the BHS campus, and exploring Ojai and California. Thirteen of the fourteen students will be new to BHS in the 2010 school year, and the Institute provided them the opportunity to get a head start on the school year. When they arrive in September they will be familiar with the language, environment, and day-to-day activities that will make up their lives here at BHS.

The students had a schedule that mirrored many aspects of the school day at BHS. From academic and art classes in the morning to study hall and dorm crew jobs in the evening, they were able to get used to the duties they will have during the year. In addition, the Institute provided opportunities to have fun and learn about American culture. Outside of classes, students and faculty played games and traveled California - from Ojai to Santa Barbara to San Francisco, and many places in between.

As the summer wrapped up, the students compiled a newsletter highlighting their experiences. Over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, these articles will be presented in each monthly issue of *Aún Aprendo*. I hope you get as much enjoyment out of hearing from the students firsthand as we had throughout the summer.

Brian Walton  
*Director*  
*Besant Hill School*  
*Summer Institute for*  
*American Language and Culture*

# 夏天



## **BHS 2010 SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**



## Student Life at Besant Hill School

### April Zhou

Life became different on the day we arrived at Besant Hill School; it was exciting for me to get to know the teachers and the classmates who would be with us the following days. We usually have classes on weekdays, and we explore the nearby cities on weekends.

Our interesting classes start at eight thirty every morning, so when we wake up and walk to the dining hall to have breakfast, we often have one eye closed and the other one open because we are so sleepy. Food is very important, and breakfast is the most important meal, and every student walks out of the commons with a big smile on their face because the food is so delicious and makes them feel fresh.

Besides having classes during our regular school days, the part of a day which I love most is doing sports such as playing basketball and volleyball with the other students. The excitement of playing sports makes us happy and become closer. In addition, doing sports encourages us to keep healthy and slim. So every girl at camp is keen on playing volleyball because they wanted to be the most beautiful girl at the party.

Unlike in China, students have to pay to use the washing machines. That was very new for us and my roommate and I like to wash clothes very often and just for fun!

All of us enjoy life at Besant Hill School, because of the friendly teachers, helpful classmates, and beautiful environment. I believe that the more time I stay here, the more enjoyable it is.

## Summer Institute for American Language and Culture

### Student Essays

(Look for more international students' essays in upcoming issues of *Aún Aprendo*)



"I believe that the more time I stay here, the more enjoyable it is."

*April Zhou*

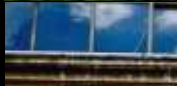
## BHS Campus

Matt Kwak

When I first interviewed at Besant Hill School, I was surprised, because it was bigger than my past school; dogs were running around the campus, it was surrounded by trees and all the students and teachers were gardening. Many other schools don't have these kinds of things. I thought that this campus was really environmental.

I was also surprised that there were only about 100 students in total on the campus. Students called their teachers by their first name, not like Mr. or Mrs. Every student knew each other and campus life seemed familiar. I learned that this school was trying to save our environment and was a member of the Green Schools Coalition. I also noticed that Besant Hill School had lots of sports and activities that students can enjoy. I have gone to schools with many students, but I was attracted to the small size of Besant Hill School. I also liked the dorm life. When I visited **Boys' Dorm on the school tour, I thought that the rooms were not too small, and the bathrooms were pretty good and especially, the view from the dorm was so beautiful.** So I think Besant Hill High School Campus is a great place for every student, because it has a great environment for students' entertainment, living and beautiful views.





# Umbr ia, Italy



## 2010 Experiential Education trip





### ITALY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

In June of 2010, eight Besant Hill School students and two faculty members traveled to the medieval hill town of Labro, Italy to explore the culture, language, food and history of this beautiful country, while engaging in a dynamic, arts-based, intergenerational empowerment camp led by Eric Mulholland, a facilitator for Power of Hope and The Global Partnership for Youth Empowerment (PYE). Our project was in partnership with the non-profit group The Art Monastery Project. The Art Monastery Project is a community of artists dedicated to applying the disciplined, contemplative, sustainable monastic way of living to the creative process.

We were housed in the current home of The Art Monastery Project at the Colle Di Costa San Antonio Monastery, a medieval convent that has been renovated and restored to a hotel, restaurant and community center. Our group interacted with the many Artist Interns and Visiting Guest Artists of The Art Monastery, participating in meals together, an evening of Compline Chant, and a night of Open Mic style sharing of artistic talents.

The group took time out of the workshop experience to explore the surrounding country. We visited the ancient Roman ruins of Carsulae; we hiked down the Marmore Falls, the highest waterfall in Europe; we walked along the St. Francis Trail to arrive at Lake Piediluco; we spent a day in Siena where we came together for dinner underground, in ancient Etruscan tombs; and we culminated the project with the "Rome in a Day" experience, visiting the Colosseum, the Vatican Museums, St. Peter's Basilica, the Trastevere neighborhood, and closing with the Lungo il Tevere Festival along the Tiber River, all in 12 hours!

Brook Masters  
*Director of Experiential Education*



Photos by Lily Brown and Molly Calvo



## “What's Been Going on with our Performing Artists this Summer...”

By Scott Campbell, *Director of Theatre*

### Film

Micah Van Hove, class of '07, wrote and directed SLEEPWALKING, a short film, starring Cornelia Livingston ('06), and fellow alums Kazdyn Nicholson ('07) and Sam Jones ('07) supporting on crew. The film had its premiere on August 20th in the Zalk Theater. [www.sleepwalkingfilm.com](http://www.sleepwalkingfilm.com)



Nate Kamiya, class of '06, collaborated with Kendall Storey ('08) who wrote the short film VOYEUR, starring Alexis Poole ('09), with Madeline Mikkelson ('10) as costume, hair and make-up designer. Other crew members included 1st AD Alex Neher ('10), Sound designer, Kazdyn Nicholson ('07), 2nd AD, Sam Jones ('07) and faculty members Richard Ellwood and Scott Campbell. The film will have its premiere in January 2011.

### Stage

After designing costumes for the last three main stage productions at the Zalk Theater, Madeline Mikkelson ('10), had time for one more assignment this summer before heading off to Carnegie Mellon University to major in Costume Design. For the second summer in a row, Madeline assisted in costume design in the Equity production at Theater 150. This summer's Shakespeare offering was THE WINTER'S TALE.

Guest Artist Betsy Randle (BOY MEETS WORLD) turned in a sublime performance as Amanda in last fall's production of THE GLASS MENAGERIE, at the Zalk Theater, co-starring Brett Baxter ('12), Dan Grosbach ('10), who is now attending the University of Delaware, and Alex Neher ('10), who is off to Emerson College in the fall to study acting and theater arts. Ms. Randle's performance was a rare treat, but not so rare that it can't be seen again. Ms. Randle has been asked to understudy the role for a production in September at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Dates to be announced soon. Don't miss this remarkable actress in the role of a lifetime.



## “What's Been Going on with our Performing Artists this Summer...”

By Scott Campbell, *Director of Theatre*

### Ojai Playwrights Conference



Every August, Besant Hill School hosts the Ojai Playwrights Conference, a nationally renowned workshop for playwrights. Besant Hill staff member Kim Maxwell has been heading up the conference's Youth Writing Program for a decade now, and has created a hotbed of young writing talent each year. This year the program included Besant Hill students Brett Baxter ('12), Lily Brown ('11), Noah Lashley ('13) and Tyler Mikkelson ('12). It was a treat to hear their words performed for the public. Look for an opportunity to join them and many other great talents from Los Angeles at next year's OPC.

### Cal Arts - California State Summer School Program

Many students at Besant Hill have had the good fortune to spend the summer at Cal Arts in the California State Summer School Program for the Arts (CSSSA), an intensive four week residential workshop for artists of all kinds. This year senior Lily Brown participated in the writing program and junior Tyler Mikkelson was selected for the acting program. Last year, BHS student Victoria Pollock ('10) attended the CSSSA film program and received a substantial college scholarship for her films. This is a great program for the summer for any and all artists interested in a passionate exploration of their chosen art form.



## Music

SOMA, the new rock band created by Eric Olsen ('12), bass guitar and vocals; Sadie Peterson ('13), vocals, together with friends Gabe Niles (age 15) on drums, and Olivia Niles (age 19), on lead guitar, played their first gig at *The Village Jester* in Ojai, this summer.

Eric met the Niles family when he was 11 years old when their father, Prescott Niles (the bass player for The Knack) came to his house to give Eric guitar lessons. The kids became friends over the years and began jamming together when Eric was 13. When Eric came to Besant Hill School, he was able to devote more time to his music and began practicing the bass guitar in every spare moment he had.

SOMA was formed after Olivia and Gabe joined Eric and Sadie to perform at the variety show at Besant Hill. They set a goal shortly thereafter to play a gig in Ojai. Eric and Gabe approached Nigel at *The Jester* to see if they could play. They practiced 3-4 times a week this summer at a rehearsal studio in Woodland Hills to get their band ready to perform. All the band members are fans of the groups Queens of the Stone Age, Them Crooked Vultures, The Strokes and Nirvana to name a few. A few of the songs played at *The Jester* were: “Juice Box” (The Strokes) and “Make It With You” (Queens of the Stone Age). They definitely plan to continue playing together as a band. They have been invited back to *The Jester* to play a 2 hour gig on a Friday night and look forward to making their first pay check as a band. The date is yet to be determined. They are working hard as a group to add more songs to their play list.

Carolyn Olsen



## Language/Dance

Ana Ming Bostwick-Singer ('12) had a fantastic time at the Middlebury Monterey Language Academy Chinese Immersion Program. She came home speaking Chinese and looking forward to studying Chinese again next Summer. She also spent time at Idyllwild Summer Arts Program studying with some great dance teachers and is excited to continue dancing in Brook's class this year.

# Staff / Faculty Highlights

## Richard Ellwood

### *Director of Technology*



*Where were you born?*

I was born in Los Angeles.

*Where were you before coming to BHS?*

Before coming to BHS, I was working for the Theosophical Society in Wheaton, IL, where I had lived for 4 years, doing mostly web site design and database programming.

*Where did you go to school?*

Well, I went to Happy Valley for the full four years, making me an alum of the school. For college, I attended University of Southern California for several years where I studied a number of different things including Computer Science, Fine Arts, and Film.

*How/when did you first hear about BHS?*

Well I don't remember, but I believe my Dad first discovered it, and helped me apply as a student when I was 13 years old or so.

*How long have you been teaching / working at BHS?*

I'm coming into my 8th year as an employee of the school.

*Tell us the ONE thing you like best about BHS.*

I love the freedom to be who I am, and the way the school encourages individual expression and development.

*Richard's advice to BHS students:*

**“Keep an open mind and try everything you possibly can that we offer. This is a wonderful place to discover who you are (and I should know). The more experience you have, the stronger a person you will be when you venture into the world.”**

*What do you want to accomplish at BHS? What is your mission?*

This changes every year, but my main goal for this year is to focus on accelerating the school's internet to a point where it never apparently slows down, even during peak times.

*Who is someone you admire? Why?*

I admire Richard M. Stallman. He is an advocate for intellectual freedom, founded the free software movement, and had a tremendous effect on the world of computers.

*What would you like to see the school accomplish in the future, short term or long term?*

I'd love to see all the buildings of the master plan completed, to have the room to truly be comfortable with all of the programming we offer here. Space, or lack thereof, seems to be an ongoing problem. I would also like to rebuild our wireless infrastructure, so that we have complete and permeating wireless throughout the campus.

*Is there anything else you would like to mention?*

Thank you for this opportunity to be highlighted in this issue!



# Staff / Faculty Highlights

## Tod Cossairt

### ***Director of Sustainability, Environmental and Earth Science Instructor***



#### *Where were you born?*

I was born in West Los Angeles, CA.

#### *Where were you before coming to BHS?*

I have lived and worked in Ojai since 1974.

#### *Where did you go to school? What was your major in college?*

I have attended a number of colleges primarily studying Life and Earth Sciences. My degree, however, is from Antioch University, in psychology with an emphasis in adolescent development.

#### *How/when did you first hear about Besant Hill School?*

That's a long story. I first developed a familiarity with the unique quality and mission of the school through my close friend Dennis Rice, who was the head of the school throughout the 80's and 90's, when it was known as Happy Valley School. My relationship with the school deepened when my son Ollie was accepted as a freshman in 1993, and I became a more active member of the school community as a Day Parent. All three of my children, Ollie, Ruby, and Will chose to attend and graduate from HVS/BHS.

#### *How long have you been teaching / working at BHS?*

I was invited to work and live at the school as part of a career change into education in 1998. At that time I was a part of the full-time Residential Life Team. I became a part of the Administrative Team of the school as the Dean of Students and Director of Residential Life in 2000, and enjoyed that role until 2006. During those years I also developed and taught a Mysteries Human Development curriculum and taught Earth Science. In 2006, Paul invited me to direct my administrative and teaching skills toward the integration of a sustainability strategic plan for BHS. Since then I have been honored to focus my attention toward cultivating a culture of sustainable practices and ecological literacy at our school.

#### *Tell me the ONE thing you like best about BHS.*

I truly appreciate being a part of an educational environment that values and supports the importance of honest and compassionate relationships, healthy community interaction and meaningful communication.

#### *What do you want to accomplish at BHS? What is your mission?*

My educational mission is to infuse my work with the spirit of our school motto, "Aún Aprendo." Education is foremost a life-long journey toward gaining wisdom, understanding, and meaning in our lives. It is my goal to be a collaborative part of a school community that inspires students to embrace their learning experiences joyfully and passionately.

#### *Who is someone you admire? Why?*

This is a difficult question because I have been deeply touched and inspired by the many people that I have developed relationships with in my life. From my work in the area of sustainability, however, I have come to admire the wisdom of the deep ecologist, Joanna Macy. At 80, Joanna Macy models an integrity and spiritual connection to the Earth that I find inspirational.



#### *What would you like to see the school accomplish in the future, short term or long term?*

It is my hope that we will move forward this year with our strategies to reduce the carbon footprint of our school by exploring our renewable energy options, energy efficiency improvements, water conservation measures, and rainwater catchment designs.

#### *Is there anything else you would like to mention?*

As you travel on your personal journey always keep in mind that *It's All Interconnected*.

#### *Tod's advice to students:*

The deep ocean ecologist, Sylvia Earle perhaps said it best:

**"See the world through  
the eyes of your  
grandchildren."**

# Registration and Orientation Schedule

## A Message from the Dean of Students

It has been much too quiet on the BHS campus lately! Thankfully, all that will quickly change with the arrival of students next week. While the start of every new school year brings anticipation and hope, it also ushers in a profusion of dates and activities to calendar and keep in mind. In an effort to ease into that process over the course of Registration and Orientation, I am providing the following schedule:

### Wednesday, September 1st

9:00 am-12:00 pm

All Student Registration

12:00 pm-1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm-2:30 pm

Parent Meeting, Zalk Theater

Student Government sponsored all student activity

3:00 pm

All Parents and Day Students Depart

### Thursday, September 2nd

8:00 am-4:00 pm

Student Orientation

5:30 pm

Dinner (Day Students are welcome to stay for dinner)

7:00 pm-9:00 pm

Opening of School Spirit Council (Mandatory for all students)

9:00 pm

Day Student Pick Up on EOS Drive

### Friday, September 3rd

8:00 am-4:00 pm

Student Orientation

5:30 pm

Dinner (Day Students are welcome to stay for dinner)

7:30 pm-9:30 pm

"Walk in Movie" & Traditional Movie Treats

10:00 pm

Day Student Pick Up on EOS Drive

### Saturday, September 4th

9:45 am-3:30 pm

All school beach day (Day students please meet on campus at EOS Drive at 9:30 am\*)

4:15 pm

Day Student Drop Off at Starr Market

*\* Day students may drive themselves to/ from the beach in Ventura if a parent or guardian has notified Megan, in writing, by Friday at 12:00pm.*

### Sunday, September 5th

6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Senior Dinner on the lawn of Besant House (Seniors and Faculty only)

Wow, by Sunday we will all need a day of rest before the first day of classes on Monday! I look forward to a great year and thank all of you for your commitment to the Besant Hill School community. *Aún Aprendo...*

Megan Walton

*Dean of Students*

## ATTENTION PARENTS:

The published deadline for submitting all Enrollment Forms, including the student Health Packet, was August 1st. As a reminder, any student who fails to return these forms by Registration Day will not be permitted to check-in to the dormitories or attend orientation.

# Summer Reading 2010

## A Message from the English Department

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students:

Since critical reading is a fundamental aspect of the college preparatory program at Besant Hill School, we consider it vital for kids to read at least one novel over the course of the summer. We have carefully chosen literature that is current and enjoyable, and many are Pulitzer Prize winning books. Please be aware that some of the selections contain adult themes. Additionally, we have asked the entire staff to read one of these books, so that when we reconvene, every member of the community will participate in group discussions. In so doing, we can create a community that values reading as edification and entertainment.

Students should be aware that since we will focus group discussion time during orientation week about their required reading selection, they should have completed the reading and written assignments *before* arrival for the 2010-2011 school year.

We hope that you enjoy the books, and if you have any questions feel free to contact the English Department at: [summerreading@besanthill.org](mailto:summerreading@besanthill.org).

All the best,

The English Department

### Reading Selections

#### Ninth Grade

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*  
by Mark Haddon

#### Tenth Grade:

*Welcome to the Monkey House* by Kurt Vonnegut

#### **Eleventh and Twelfth Graders' Options:**

*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

*Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson

*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz

In addition to the above, Honors and AP students will read:

#### Eleventh Grade Honors:

*Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson

#### Twelfth Grade AP:

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

### SUMMER READING 2010

For each book required for your upcoming course, choose two of the assignments below to complete. You may have two written components, but if you choose a visual the other choice must be a written option. Please bring hard copies of your assignments to the first day of orientation. All assignments should be two to three pages in length and be formatted in Times New Roman 12 point font, with one inch margins and double spacing.

#### **Written Components**

1. Write an epilogue and/or prologue to the book, describing events that could have taken place before and after the plot of the book.
2. Write 10 discussion questions for the book and provide complete answers.
3. Compose two articles for a newspaper published at the time of your book. Each article will relate to an event from the book.
4. Write a eulogy or an obituary for the main character.
5. Pretend you are the author and explain why you wrote the book and how you chose the title and setting and created the characters.
6. Write a different ending for the book.
7. Keep a journal as you read the book; include your reactions, thoughts, and feelings.
8. Interview one of the main characters.
9. Rewrite an important scene from the book from another **character's perspective**.
10. Write a short story using one of the main characters in a different setting.

#### **Visual Components**

11. Create a film version of an important scene from the book.
12. Draw a map of the main setting of the book, labeling important locations.
13. Take photographs and create a photo album that depicts the experiences of a character.
14. Create a visual for an important scene in the book.
15. Create a soundtrack for your book and explain your **choices in the CD's liner notes**.

# What to Bring...

## Recommended Clothing and Equipment List

### Clothing:

- A few pairs of jeans/pants and shorts
- Short and long-sleeved shirts
- Warm coat and sweaters
- Sweatshirts and sweatpants
- Rain gear
- Two pairs of shoes
- Athletic shoes and shorts
- Socks, underwear
- Slippers or sandals
- Pajamas, robe
- Swim wear
- Dress wear for special occasion dinners  
(Suit/tie for boys; dress for girls)
- One pair of dress shoes

### Bedding:

- Sheets (twin)
- Bed pad
- Pillow and case
- Blankets (2)
- Bedspread or comforter

### Toiletries:

- Towels (bath size)
- Wash cloths
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Shampoo

### These items are NOT allowed:

Incense  
Candles  
Lighters/Matches

### Miscellaneous:

- Study lamp
- Clock
- Beach towel
- Word processor or computer
- Small fan
- Laundry basket
- Laundry detergent
- Key chain
- Flashlight
- Six-socket power strip w/surge protection (required by fire law)

### Optional:

- Small dorm refrigerator\*
- Sports equipment
- Bicycle and lock
- Camera
- Musical instruments
- Stereo/Walkman
- Earphones
- Hobby materials

\*Must be energy star

Inappropriate posters  
Televisions  
Draping fabric that is not fireproof

Please note: Every item brought to the school should be permanently marked with **the owner's name. Similar items to those listed may be substituted.**

# Who Should I Call?

## List of Frequently Called Numbers

Besant Hill School Reception is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. If you call the school during non-business hours, please listen to the recording, which will prompt you to your party's extension.

If you have questions about any of the following, here are some key names and numbers for your reference. (Please note: All BHS email accounts are configured as first initial and last name followed by @besanthill.org.)

Besant Hill School Telephone Number:

(805) 646-4343

Absences	Nicole Nicoletti	Ext. 133
Academic Counseling	<b>Your child's advisor or Tina Leslie</b>	Ext. 128
Admissions	Randy Bertin	Ext. 450
Athletics/Fitness	Kevin Henschel	Ext. 344
Class Schedules	Tina Leslie	Ext. 133
College Counseling	Brook Masters	Ext. 121
Concerts	Lee Rollag	Ext. 335
Counseling Services	Megan Walton	Ext. 122
Departures	Megan Walton	Ext. 122
Detention	Megan Walton	Ext. 122
Faculty Questions	Tina Leslie	Ext. 133
Head of School	Paul Amadio /Asst: Julie Fox	Ext. 112
Health	Katrine Edwards, RN	Ext. 442
Instructional Support	Kelly Henschel	Ext. 139
Main Office	Zelda Marshall	Ext. 100
Outdoor Education	Amy McCann	Ext. 110
Residential Life	Megan Walton	Ext. 122
Student Life	Megan Walton	Ext. 122
Study Hall	Tina Leslie	Ext. 133
Sustainability	Tod Cossairt	Ext. 123
Theatre/Arts	Scott Campbell	Ext. 126
Transcripts	Nicole Nicoletti	Ext. 133
Tuition & Sundry	Alex Smith	Ext. 233
Weekend Activities	Megan Walton	Ext. 122

# Academic Update at BHS

## Message from the Dean of Academics

The summer was a busy one for everyone on campus. We concentrated on many improvements in the classrooms and on technological tools for students, teachers and parents. We painted many of the classrooms in preparation for the installation of *Smartboards* and their integration in all of the classes, thanks to a parent donation from Spring Arts Festival. Along with the *Smartboards* came upgrades to both computer and sound systems in each of the classrooms. In our Faculty Institute we are learning how to use these amazing new teaching tools.

Maintenance focused much of their time this summer

on the Science/Math wing, gutting two of the classrooms and painting then installing new flooring. The biology/chemistry room got a new fume hood, another very much appreciated parent donation. With the addition of Pasco software, students will now be able to dive head first into real-life science experiments. These investigations will directly relate to what they are experiencing in the world. We are proud to know that students will return to a state of the art science department.

In our need for more class space, we have transformed the former library stack area into a new classroom. Many of the books from our collection are being placed by subject into classrooms where they will be readily available to students. Out of date and duplicate books have been donated throughout the community or stored.



In the area of technology, we are opening the school year with *Questia*, an online research tool. We have also purchased a program called *Brain Pop*. Both of these programs have been made possible by donations last spring.

A very exciting addition to the school is *Edline*, a Learning Community Management System used for school and classroom organization. *Edline's* portals allow for teachers to post

homework, grades and other important information that can be accessed by students, parents, dorm parents and administration. It can also be used to send out bulletins, announcements and other documents. We will

be sending out more information on this as school begins.

At this writing the teachers are all active participants in the BHS Faculty Institute, where we are focusing on Universal Design strategies, core competencies and vertical and horizontal curriculum planning. The entire Faculty Institute is designed to give teachers direct classroom strategies and then integrate both subject and grade level curriculum.

As you can tell, we have been extremely busy over the summer working to improve all areas **of the students' academic day**. We are all looking forward to the students return in a few days to begin an exciting new year!

Tina Leslie  
Dean of Academics

# BHS Calendar of Events

## September / October 2010

### September 2010

Wednesday, September 1  
Student Registration  
9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Beato Atelier/The Commons/Zalk Theatre  
(See page 18 for schedule)

Thursday, Sept. 2 - Friday, Sept. 3  
Orientation and Assessments  
(See page 18 for schedule)

Friday, September 3  
TOEFL for all International Students  
The Commons

Saturday, September 4  
All School Beach Day  
9:30 am - 4:30 pm  
Ventura Beach  
(See page 18 for schedule)

Sunday, September 4  
Senior Dinner  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Side lawn of Besant House

Monday, September 6  
First Day of Classes

Saturday, September 11  
IBT (Internet-based TOEFL for all  
International Students  
7:15 am  
Santa Barbara

Monday, September 27  
Parent Gathering  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Beato Atelier

Wednesday, Sept. 29 - Saturday, Oct. 2  
Fall Trip  
Idyllwild, San Jacinto Mountains, CA

### October 2010

Friday, October 22  
Fall Variety Show  
7:00 pm  
Zalk Theatre

Saturday, October 23  
Family Weekend

Monday, October 25  
No Classes

Thursday, October 28  
Ojai Chamber of Commerce Mixer  
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm  
Beato Atelier

\*\*\*\*\*

For updated Calendar information,  
check our Calendar pages on our  
website.

Go to:

[www.besanthill.org](http://www.besanthill.org)

Click on: Calendar

From the drop-down menu, select  
from the following calendars to view  
events scheduled for these depart-  
ments:

Athletics  
Besant Hill Radio  
College Counseling  
Daily Schedule  
General  
Performing Arts

## *Aún Aprendo* Committee

Luisa Neher

[lneher@bak.rr.com](mailto:lneher@bak.rr.com)

Tel: (661) 332-2883

Brian Walton

[bwalton@besanthill.org](mailto:bwalton@besanthill.org)

Karen Bertin

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Look for the next  
issue of  
*Aún Aprendo*  
in October

Besant Hill School  
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P.O. Box 850  
Ojai, CA 93023  
Tel: (805) 643 4343  
Fax: (805) 646 4371

[www.besanthill.org](http://www.besanthill.org)

## Dear Besant Hill School Community:

We hope you enjoyed our first issue of *Aún Aprendo*, the new version of our monthly "Parents' Newsletter" which we began last fall. It will be distributed this year via email to our BHS community throughout the year, to keep you informed about upcoming events and provide you snippets of our students' lives at Besant Hill School, as well as news about our BHS Alumni and staff.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for this publication, and encourage you to send us your school-related news and photos for upcoming issues to:

Luisa Neher

Editor

[lneher@besanthill.org](mailto:lneher@besanthill.org)

Or, contact me at: (661) 332-2883 if you have any questions.

## Besant Hill School Website



Our school website [www.besanthill.org](http://www.besanthill.org) will be undergoing some changes in the upcoming months. Our revamped site will have several new sections, including a parent/teacher portal to access our new Edline program, a Learning Community Management System used for school and classroom organization. (We will provide you more information about this exciting new feature in our next issue of *Aún Aprendo*.)

## BHS Parent Coffee Hour at Ojai Coffee Roasters

Tuesday mornings at 8:15

at

Ojai Coffee Roasters on Main Street



Last year, a number of us BHS parents started gathering at Ojai Coffee Roasters on Tuesday mornings for informal get-togethers to get to know each other and have friendly conversations about our kids, our homes, our school, the weather or anything we wanted to share. It became a weekly event that we all looked forward to and we are planning to **continue our new 'tradition' this year.** Our next get-together will be Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 am.

We want to invite all new and returning parents, as well as alumni parents and BHS staff to join us this year! No need to RSVP. Just show up at Roasters after you drop off your kid at school, for a cup of coffee and a croissant, and we will pull up a chair for you.