

The Explorer

FALL 2007



OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



Hasain Rasheed © 2007



Hasain Rasheed © 2007

Principal's Note

A little over one year ago I was offered the job to plan a new high school, Oakland International High. Our challenge was to design a school that would target a population of students, newly arrived immigrants, who have historically been underserved nationally, in California, and in Oakland. Our ongoing mission is to provide quality education for recently arrived immigrant students in preparation for college and becoming active citizens globally and in an American democratic society.

Today, four months after opening, we have the first glimpse of the results of all our hard work. Our students represent 21 countries and 23 languages. These students came to Oakland as refugees from war, to escape poverty, to obtain a better education, and most came to be reunited with a parent who immigrated months if not years before them.

Support our students

Donations may be made online or by mail:
OSSF/ OIHS Fund,
PO Box 20238 Oakland, CA 94620
For more information,
please contact us by phone:
(510) 534-7613
or online (please designate OIHS):
<http://www.smallschoolsfoundation.org>

Learning English is a priority for our students, but it is most certainly only one of their many needs that OIHS is trying to meet.

OIHS is our district's first attempt to dramatically transform the educational opportunities for immigrants. By bringing the Internationals Network approach from New York city to Oakland we have made a radical departure in the way we teach English Language Learners. We teach English through the content classes of Math, Science, History and PE. Our students work in heterogeneous groups of mixed languages and mixed ability levels. All of our instructors are teachers of language.

As we come to the close of our very first semester, we have already made a real impact for many of our students. One student, a Burmese refugee, tells her story on the following page. We have also hosted several events, and look forward to many more, with continued support from our community, local businesses, school partners, funders, the district, our teachers, volunteers, and our students and their families.

To schedule a visit, join our mailing list or find out more about supporting our school, please contact us at 510-879-2142.

-Carmelita Reyes, Principal

About our students:

- We serve 98 students who speak 23 languages.
- They come from 21 countries: China, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Philippines, Russia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Morocco, Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Ghana, Gabon, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala.
- We serve 19 refugee students who escaped from ethnic conflicts in Liberia, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Burma.
- We offer our students after-school programming in Hip Hop Dance, Capoeira, Bicycling, Gardening, and Soccer. In addition, tutoring with UC Berkeley students is available for all students daily in the library.

[Click here to donate now, and help us reach our goal of \\$30,000](#)



What's happening at OIHS

Oakland International High School Opening Ceremony

On October 16, students, staff, friends, community organizations, and volunteers gathered to celebrate OIHS—the first school of its kind in California, a college preparatory program serving recent immigrant English Language Learners.



Honored speakers included Claire Sylvan (Executive Director of Internationals Network for Public Schools, the organization that partnered with Oakland Unified to open OIHS), Interim OUSD State Administrator Vincent C. Matthews, Mayor's Education Director Kitty Epstein, Matthew Kelemen from the James Irvine Foundation, and Aída Walqui (Internationals Board member and Director of the WestEd Teacher Professional Development Program).

Karen refugee student Bebe San and Edward Ankomahne from Ghana had opening and closing words for our guests. After the ceremony, students gave tours of the school. The warmth and support that were felt by all gave us a tremendous start to our exciting school year ahead.

Contact Us

4521 Webster St.
Oakland, CA 94609
phone: 510-879-2142
<http://oihs.blogspot.com>
Principal Carmelita Reyes
Carmelita.Reyes@ousd.k12.ca.us

Welcoming Families: Back-To School Night

On November 14, Oakland International High School held its first Back-To-School Night where families, mentors, volunteers, and friends gathered to honor and be part of an audience to each ninth grader who presented work in math, history, science, and English.

This was the first opportunity for parents to see their child at school, speaking English and showing off their dream house math project, how to use a microscope, and their home country PowerPoint presentations, among other things.

Parents brought food from all parts of the world, and the whole community enjoyed a delicious dinner celebration together.

Many parents and guardians expressed interest in becoming part of a Parent Leader Group at our school. We will hold our first meeting in December!

Book Drive Builds Library

In October, neighborhood private school students from Park Day elementary school, visited OIHS classrooms. Park Day school was looking for a way that their students could connect with the community. They decided to help OIHS build our school, creating a partnership between the two school communities.

For the past several weeks, Park Day School students collected and sorted more than 1,500 books to help build the OIHS library. The donation greatly expanded the number of books that our students, who read at low levels in English, are able to enjoy.

Student Spotlight: Wah Moe San (Bebe)



Hasain Rasheed © 2007

Bebe was born in a refugee camp in Thailand, setup by the United Nations to house refugees from Burma.

Bebe's family and other ethnic Karen refugees came from villages along the

Burmese/Thai boarder. For many years the Burmese military has persecuted Karen villagers in this region. For more than a decade, Karen refugees have remained in the camps waiting for the conflict to end.

Bebe explained, "First the army shoot. Then burn my parent's house, and killed the animals. Now there are no more Karen people in the village—Maw Poe Ga. UN people heard about us and made refugee camps, I was born in the refugee camp Mae La. I took English classes in a school there. We could not leave the camp with out a Thai ID card. We don't have one. My parents left camp. It was a secret. They earn money to send me to school."

"In 2006 we put our name in the UN to go to another country. We had an interview, and had to wait a long time. We did not know where to go. They made a big paper on the wall, and we had to find our name and what country we go to. It said we go to California. The UN people spell my name wrong on the paper so now I have new name. I came to the United States July 19, 2007. The US is very wonderful. We don't have to pay money for school. The teachers are very nice. They help the student. They are not scary. They are not hitting us. We have a computer that is good for us. My English is very better now."

Appreciations

We would like to take this opportunity to thank some special people and organizations that have made it possible for this school to open.

Internationals Network
For Public Schools
Bill and Melinda Gates
Foundation
Irvine Foundation
BayCES

Y&H Soda Foundation
Open Circle Foundation
Bay Area Sports Hall of
Fame
International Rescue
Committee

Refugee Transitions
Park Day School
Oakland Small Schools
Foundation
The Volunteers, Family,
and Friends of OIHS
Staff