

The Explorer

WINTER 2008

OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



About our students:

- We serve 175 students who speak 22 languages.
- They come from 24 countries: China, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Philippines, Russia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Nepal, Bhutan, Eritrea, Morocco, Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Ghana, Gabon, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras.
- 20 percent of students are political refugees who escaped ethnic conflicts in Liberia, Russia, Uzbekistan, Nepal, and Burma.
- We offer our students after-school programs and enrichment activities in basketball, bicycling, Gardening, and Soccer. In addition, we provide academic interventions and tutoring daily.

OIHS Field Trips Expand Horizons, Deepen Learning

As the photo below of Vietnamese junior Lanh Nguyen demonstrates, OIHS students had hands-on farming experience last year at Slide Ranch, an environmental teaching farm in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Besides learning all about the animals, students studied tide pools, worked the garden, turned compost, and went on a hike - all in one action-packed day.

Field trips are essential for all students, but can be especially eye-opening for ours, given that so many are so new to the



United States. Being out of their element also helps them form deeper relationships with each other and their teachers. "They're really depending

on us, especially when we take them somewhere remote," explains Liza Richheimer, OIHS Coordinator of Student

Interventions. "And that seems to make them a bit more open. Something shifts." Coming back to the classroom, this new level of communication is a good foundation for expanding the student-teacher connection.

Another trip - to the San Jose Museum of Technology - had immediate payoffs in the classroom as well. Based on the exhibits toward which kids gravitated, teachers could tailor classroom learning to build on their interests. Some went straight for an exhibit on surgery, for example, while others keyed in on the solar system. "That was neat to see what they focused on, and we could reinforce that in the classroom," Richheimer says.

An experience like Slide Ranch is rewarding on another level, too, says Richheimer, since many OIHS students grew up on farms or have grandparents back home working as farmers. "They're constantly inundated here with things they aren't familiar with...so [a trip like Slide Ranch] is about going back to what's familiar to them and feeling like they have something to share." This is key, she says, in adding some balance and grounding to their situation as recent immigrants.

Help us
reach our goal of
\$15,000

Support our students

You can make a one-time or recurring tax-deductible donation online at: www.smallschoolsfoundation.org (choose "OIHS" in the Designation pull-down), or by sending a check to "OSSF/OIHS," P.O. Box 20238, Oakland, CA 94620

What's happening at OIHS

Student Spotlight

Kaykhon "Kay" Kamaluddin

18 years old, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Written by Rebecca Huang, Coordinator of Special Programs



Seated with her son Kay at the kick-off dinner for his summer internship with Novartis Corporation in Emeryville, Rumiya Kamaluddin let the experiences of the past eight months sink in. "This is the first time I really feel like I am in America!" she exclaimed.

Just months earlier, America and Oakland International High School were little more than an idea to Kay and his family. But in September of 2007, they immigrated from Tashkent, Uzbekistan and settled in Oakland.

With a year of high school under his belt, Kay landed a paid internship in the Diagnostics Quality Control department at Novartis, where he helped update computer systems and ran protein assays. "In our department, we test different samples in the lab and then the office people document it," explains Kay. "We test to make sure the medicines are usable. The documents are kept forever in the archive room, in case we need to prove what made the medicines."

Once a week, Kay and three other OIHS interns were invited to "Lunch and Learn," where employees gave presentations, and interns shared what they'd learned in their time at Novartis. In all, Kay found his internship very rewarding. Meeting other people, having his own computer, and working in the laboratory are among his favorite memories. At an Internship celebration luncheon, his supervisor told the crowd, "Kay has a smile all the time!" The experience, it seems, may have a lasting effect: Kay's favorite subject is now science, and he'd like to focus on it as his high school tenure continues to unfold.

Support Opportunities for Our Students: Field Trips, College Tours and more

As a public school, OIHS' budget covers only its most basic needs. We must rely on individual donations to provide "extra" resources and activities such as field trips. The staff hopes to continue expanding those trips this year to include an overnight to a national park and college trips.

Visiting local colleges is critical, particularly for students who may not come from countries where college is an option. We are planning to take students to a number of public universities and community colleges. The trips are specially tailored to our students. For example, we are excited about a special trip for our Latino boys to visit Cal State Monterey, an event co-planned by OIHS and a Latino fraternity. **Without school-sponsored college trips, most of these students would not otherwise have the opportunity to visit these campuses. Please consider making a donation to support these vital opportunities for our students!**

Park Day Reading Buddies

Kay's internship is just one example of OIHS engaging with community partners. Our kids are also connecting with students at other schools.

Locally, OIHS has forged a relationship with Park Day School, a progressive independent K-8 Oakland school. Last year, our students began a "reading buddies" program with the school.

"Preparing for reading buddy days



really gave our kids a sense of purpose," says Fitzgerald. Knowing they would be, in a sense, tutoring the younger Park Day students, there was extra meaning and responsibility behind their classroom preparation.

"It really lit a fire," says Fitzgerald. "They wanted to sound good for the kids." One of these eager readers was Naseem, an OIHS student from Yemen who'd only begun to speak English a few months prior.

OIHS outreach has extended even across state lines: Last spring, we hosted a group of middle school students from Silverton, Colorado. As part of a semester-long project on immigration, they visited OIHS to hear our kids' stories. "It was really nice to see them having an authentic audience for that purpose," says Fitzgerald. "It's nice that they get to be the experts," said Principal Carmelita Reyes in an Oakland Tribune article about this special visit.

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Principal's Notes

OIHS Staff Win

Expect Success Awards!

Please join us in congratulating Vilma Ortiz, winner of the Oakland Unified School District's "School Site Service Award" for her outstanding

clerk work, and math teacher Sailaja Suresh, who took home "Rookie Teacher of the Year"!

OIHS Awarded City Grant

OIHS succeeded in winning a \$81,000 grant from the City of Oakland to provide part-time therapeutic counseling services and

after school programming this school year. The grant will also support soccer, biking, and academic tutoring. In light of this award, OIHS was able to hire a specialized counselor one day a week to work on gang prevention with students.

School Improvements

Students were welcomed back to school this fall with a renovated campus! The district received government funding to paint the buildings, install a new gym floor, upgrade plumbing and new bathrooms, and install a phone, bell, and intercom system.