A Quarterly Newsletter for John Muir Charter School

John Muir Charter School—Greenwood CCC Awarded Energy Grant

John Muir Charter School at the Greenwood CCC Center received a $10,000 PG&E Bright Idea grant. Current grant applications are due March 20, 2012. 25 JMCS students participated in the recent PV project. PV is the acronym for Photovoltaics (Sun Energy) Solar Panels would be another name for PV panels.

Features

JMCS GREENWOOD
Awarded PG&E Grant
JMCS Grad recognized as National Corpsmember of the Year
Operation New Hope - JMCS giving young lives Hope
JMCS Events and Important Dates
Jessica Walker; Student Essay
Photos Around JMCS
Poetry of Holly Eng

Muir Review Staff
John Berge; Advisor
James Allen; Editor
Cynthia Borunda; Compilation
JMCS Teachers and Students Statewide

John Muir Charter School is a school like no other. We give young people the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while working with California Conservation Corps, Local Conservation Corps, YouthBuild, Job Corps and WIA sites around the state, doing exciting and valuable work for the community.

The PG&E Solar Schools Program will award up to $500,000 in grants to schools with Bright Ideas. The program is designed to support the understanding of renewable energy in public schools throughout northern and central California.

Who May Apply
Credentialed teachers/professors/instructors, principals/deans/department heads, and distinct administrators and facilities managers of K-12 public schools served by PG&E may all apply to receive a $1,000, $2,500, $5,000, or $10,000 grant to promote environmental stewardship in any of the five following categories.

Educational Solar Projects: Successful submissions will include innovative classroom and extracurricular programs/projects that explore the science of solar energy and the generation of electricity from solar.

Youth Energy and Environmental Programs: Successful submissions will include energy efficiency, recycling, composting, water reclamation and/or gardening programs and clubs that serve as learning and leadership opportunities for students, the faculty, and the community at large.

Renewable Energy or Science Related Field Trips: Successful submissions will include transportation, admission, or expenses associated with field trips that excite students about science, energy, careers in energy and the environment.

Green Your School Projects: Successful submissions will include energy efficiency upgrades, energy monitoring systems, and communication tools that will promote energy education and smart energy use at the school and in the community.

Professional Development/Service Learning Projects/Workforce Development Programs: Successful submissions will include projects that expand the teacher's knowledge about renewable energy, energy resources and/or the future of the energy industry.

Many thanks to JMCS Teacher Judy Williams at the Greenwood CCC Center for the information on this...
The following is the acceptance speech that Nicholas gave after receiving the honor in Washington DC - February 2012

“Good morning everyone-My name is Nicholas Jimenez, I am a Recycling Education Specialist, with the Sequoia Community Corps located in California’s central valley. For the last five years, I have been working in the Department of Recycling where as a Corpsmember I have learned many aspects of the Recycling industry. I was in charge of running several of buy-back centers throughout Tulare County and was then promoted to the Recycling Education Department where I currently educate the public about different ways to conserve our natural resources through presentations and community outreach events.

The Sequoia Community Corps has had a tremendous impact on my life. As a foster child, I had set many goals for myself. My main priorities were to find a stable place to live and to obtain my high school diploma. When I joined the Corps, I was able to earn a steady income which helped me get in to my own apartment for the first time in my life; I had a stable roof over my head. The Corps provided me with financial stability, through work, to maintain my household and live a placid life. I was able to save enough money to get Lasik surgery for my eyes which I had needed for many years. During my first year as a Corpsmember, I completed all the necessary requirements to obtain my High School Diploma. The attainment of my diploma encouraged me to discover a better future for myself, so I enrolled into the College of the Sequoias where I am currently a full time student taking night courses. My intention is to transfer to a University where I can major in Psychology. I feel that this is the best recourse for me because I want to make a difference in this world. I feel that my purpose in life is to help others that perhaps have no voice or have strayed from the right path, just as the Corps has helped me.

On behalf of the Sequoia Community Corps, sharing my story and accepting this award is a real honor.

Thank you very much.”
Nicholas Jimenez

Many thanks to Chantel Mediros; Education Director, Sequoia Conservation Corps for sharing this wonderful information

Since entering the Corps, Nick has been working as a Recycling Specialist, a position for which only a select few corpsmembers are chosen. Nick has also been promoted twice and is now a Crew Leader in his department. As a Specialist, he organizes events, which includes scheduling and all the logistics that go into an event, does public presentations, and educates his community on the importance of recycling.

Nick talks to his peers about his college experience and how education is making a difference in his life. He has inspired 3 others to enroll in college courses and has served as a mentor to help them go through the enrollment process.

Beyond these important contributions and accomplishments, Nick is a leader and often the voice of the corpsmembers in staff events and meetings. He has learned how to voice his opinion in situations that may be intimidating.
Operation New Hope has grown from a productive "mom and pop" community based organization into a stable and dependable evidence based program. Some have used the word organic when they have described the history of ONH:

ONH was founded in 1980 as a court ordered recovery program for teenagers in the California Youth Authority (CYA). In a series of discussions held by Founder Bill Degnan, troubled teens shared their feelings, wrote down their thoughts and created worksheets to help others. They called this program "New Hope" from the life change they experienced. The present program evolved from this beginning.

The passion of ONH staff has always been to reach out to those who are facing the same challenges each of us face daily. ONH began to see many success stories through Mr. Degnan's "New Hope" vision Mr. Degnan, a handful of staff, and wards of the state were on a mission and created ONH. They quickly began to organize and put together manuals, journals, worksheets, audios, and videos. Soon Bill and his youth copyrighted ('82) ONH along with publishing the 1st edition of their Lifestyle curriculum.

The work of ONH with parolees was evaluated in 1996, and that program is listed as an exemplary, or model, program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Bill has recently retired, however the program continues to post successes under the capable leadership of the founders son Russell Degnan.

OPERATION NEW HOPE is one of the many community-building organizations that partner with John Muir Charter School. With school sites in Rancho Cucamonga and San Bernardino, the collaboration offers an opportunity for young men and women to complete requirements for a high school diploma and gives life-affirming “New Hope” to those who commit to the program.

ONH Founder Bill Degnan teaching Key concepts to a group of participants

ONH is one of six WIA (Workforce Investment Act) programs, receiving direct funding from WIA.

JMCS teacher Josh Berge working with ONH students on Algebra
JMCS Events and Important Dates:
CAHSEE TEST DATES>>> March 13-14, 2012
CESAR CHAVEZ DAY Observed>>> March 30, 2012
REGIONAL IN-SERVICES>>> April 16, 2012
CAHSEE TEST DATES>>> May 8-9, 2012
MEMORIAL DAY Observed>>> May 28, 2012

Resources Relating to Cesar Chavez
California Dept. of Education provides resources, model curriculum, and links to information that are sure to engage students in this season of remembrance.
http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/ModelCurriculum/Intro.aspx
Direct link to Lesson Plans and DOE Standards.
http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/ModelCurriculum/Teachers/Lessons_10-12.aspx
Links on PBS relating to Cesar Chavez and the UFW.
http://www.pbs.org/itvs/fightfields/resources.html
The Cesar Chavez Foundation
http://www.chavezfoundation.org/

Celebrate a Season of Service and commitment because, as Cesar Chavez said, “we don’t need perfect political systems, we need perfect participation.”
"Make this a Day of Service... A Day On Instead of a Day Off"

Go YouthBotics!
By Lani Paalu, John Muir Charter School/Pre-YouthBuild Santa Rosa student
On December 18, 2011, YouthBuild Santa Rosa’s robotics team, YouthBotics, competed in their first robotics competition. Not knowing what lie ahead, the seven students, accompanied by mentors from YBSR’s mentoring program, drove to Fremont, CA, to participate in “Bowled Over”, a NorCal FTC qualifying tournament. Our YouthBotics team won 5th place out of 16 teams competing. Due to other circumstances, the team was bumped up to 4th place and was able to compete in the finals. YouthBotics and their robot, “Charlesbot” (named in honor of Santa Rosa YouthBuild Construction Manager, Charles Dedrick), also received a “Best Rookie Team” trophy.

You can meet the team and “Charlesbot” at the Maker Faire in San Mateo on May 19, 2012, where YouthBotics will be demonstrating just how far along they have come. The members of YouthBotics would like to give a special “Thank You” to Santa Rosa YouthBuild’s Mentor Coordinator, Patricia Vizgart, without whom there would not be a robotics team.
Jessica Walker, a JMCS student in at the Pomona CCC satellite, reflects on an inspirational teacher that encouraged her and believed in her. The essay is based on the monthly writing prompt—this for a biographical essay sent to all JMCS teachers by Betsy Nuttall, our JMCS Resource Director. The Muir Review would like to include an outstanding student essay with each quarterly newsletter. Please send submissions to: newsletter@johnmuircs.com

A Bit of Encouragement Goes a Long Way

My eighth grade science teacher, Mrs. Hyatt was one of the greatest, most remarkable teachers I’ve had. She always took the time out to get to know all of her students on an individual basis. One of the most memorable characteristics of Mrs. Hyatt was that she almost never got upset or raised her voice, no matter what the situation was. Her favorite thing to say was, “This is your education not mine - I already have one”. This basically meant, she’s not going to waste her time and breath, yelling at anyone” it’s your choice whether you want to finish this class or not.”

Science had always been one of my worst subjects in school until I entered Mrs. Hyatt’s class. She made third period something to look forward to every day. When before becoming her student, I was always trying to find ways to get out of class. Mrs. Hyatt always told me, “Jessica, I see something in you. I know you can do well, you just have to see it for yourself”. That really stuck in my head for a long time. You see, other teachers I’ve had, either put me down or told me I was going to be one of those kids that they were going to have to see next year because I was a failure.

I entered Mrs. Hyatt’s class with the mindset that I was being forced to learn something that I really didn’t care about. Because of my negative mentality I started off that year badly. Mrs. Hyatt told me once I change my mindset and found out the real reason for me having to take science class I’d be on a better start towards completing her class with a better grade. So instead of forcing science on me she made me realize that everything I did had a little science in it, whether it was playing basketball, riding a bike, or even flying a kite. After I realized this, science had become one of my favorite classes. I started to look at everything in a different perspective. I kind of drove myself crazy trying to figure out how science applied to everything I did. That helped me a lot because I could finally get it out of my head that science was irrelevant to my everyday life, and there was actually a reason why we had to learn it.

I really admire Mrs. Hyatt for that. Most of the other teachers I had just gave me some work and said, “do it” or “you need to take history because I get paid to teach it, and you come to school to learn it” Which was kind of obvious, but never told us the real reasons we needed to take the class.

Mrs. Hyatt probably doesn’t know this but those few words made a difference in my life, and as I’ve gotten older I’ve realized that you may not know it but the little things you do or say to a person can make a big difference in their lives.

Jessica Walker

JMCS/Camarillo CCC hosted a graduation event for 12 students in December 2011.

Many thanks to JMCS Teacher; Cristina Vanderlaan, Teachers Aide; Kate Kelly, and CAHSEE Tutor; Gerrard Gillespie for the photos
Thanks to Camarillo CCC/JMCS Teacher; Cristina Vanderlaan for this graduation photo

Holly Eng; JMCS student Long Beach Conservation Corps

How did poetry start for me?
When I was younger I had been through a lot of obstacles in my life. I had to deal with the death of my grandfather which affected me very much because he was the one who took care of me when I was an infant. There was no way for me to express myself but through the nature of poetry. I started writing poems when I was in fifth grade and from there on it carried on with me. Poetry is an easy way for me to express my feelings because it’s easier to write down my feelings than to have it spoken.

My Life; Holly Eng
As days goes by I wonder to myself
Is this what suppose to be
Why do I go through so much pain and drama?
Is this what meant for me?
My life is hard, my life is difficult
Why does it happen to me?
I wish I can change what it is
Cause I don’t want this to be
All I want is happiness, than the drama that goes
My life is crazy and life is crazy
And dang it’s easily shown
It takes time in life to heal the pain
Although each day I go insane
Time feels like its running out
I ache inside and want to shout
But I cant it take control of me
Because in my eyes, I’m the only one that sees
The future that’s ahead of me