

NEWSLETTER

Community Partnerships Academy
Berkeley High School



October 2007

website: <http://www.bhscpa.org>

Meet Jared Prolo

CP Academy has a new math teacher this year. Jared Prolo received his Bachelors of Music Education with a double major in



Mathematics from Loyola University of New Orleans and was working on a Math PhD at UCSC when he decided that he wanted to teach. This year is his first at Berkeley High. Previously he taught math at Branham High

School in San Jose and at San Lorenzo Valley High School in Felton in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Jared doesn't want students to be bored so he strives to establish a classroom where students are challenged appropriately, work on meaningful problems, and are responsible and proud of their work. "Mathematics is a unique subject in high school," he says. "It is the only chance students have to work on a pure and abstract science which is part of what makes math challenging for many, but also what makes it interesting and exciting." Jared hopes to impart his enthusiasm for math to his students.

Parent Council Update

The Parent Council had its first meeting of the year on Thursday, September 20th. The good news is that the people who came were eager to get started and work together. Most of our major volunteer positions were filled. For the Leadership Council, which provides input on how to implement our program, including allocating resources, we needed four parents to work with four students and four teachers/administrators. Five parents volunteered: Janis Berson, Tory Jenner, Katy Culley, Rinda Bartley, and Veronica Wallace. Tory Jenner said she

would take over Rich Hemphill's job as Parent Facilitator and Bo Orloff will begin working on the website. Chris Byrne will continue to represent the CP Academy on the Berkeley High School Development Group, the group that collects and allocates funds for BHS.

We still need a volunteer to chair the Community Building committee which makes it possible to hold social gatherings like last year's Holiday Party and End-of-Year Barbecue. We also need a chairperson for the fundraising committee which raises much-needed funds. Many people are willing to help, but we need someone to coordinate their efforts. Interested? Send an email to admin@bhscpa.org. Or better yet, come to the next Parent Council meeting and experience our gratitude in person.

The bad news about the Parent Council meeting is that, out of 240 households that make up the school, only 15 parents came to the meeting. Also, almost all of our representatives on the Leadership Council are parents of ninth graders. We need to broaden our representation to include families of all grades and all ethnicities.

Why should you leave your house after a long day and come to Berkeley High for a meeting? The short answer is that the Parent Council Meeting is the place where you can express what you need for your student and work with other parents to meet those needs. For example, at the September meeting, parents expressed concern that the IMP math curriculum used by CP Academy might not prepare students for standardized tests in general and the SATs in particular. To address that concern, we invited our math teacher, Matt Bremer to speak to us at the October meeting. Some parents thought that the IMP2 class for ninth graders might be too easy. We invited our other math teacher Jared Prolo to the same meeting to talk about that issue. Parents also wanted to know how block scheduling will work next year in CP Academy so we asked Wyn Skeels, CP Academy Co-coordinator, to speak about that issue.

Another example: Progress reports are out. If your student has a bad progress report, you are not alone and you are not the first. Many parents have experience dealing with bad progress reports and are willing to share their problem-

solving strategies. In the past when grades have been low overall in a particular class, we have been able to work on the problem as a group and turn the situation around.

Come to Parent Council meetings, add your concerns to the list and we will find a way to address them. The next meeting is Thursday, October 18th from 7 pm to 9 pm in the College and Career Center on the 2nd floor of the “D” Building. See you there.

Other News

■ Seniors should apply to UCs and Cal States now. The UC and the Cal State applications are both available online. The first day to submit applications is November 1st. Start working on your application now and save it as you go along so that it will be ready to submit on November 1st.

Go to <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions> for the UC application. For the Cal State application, go to <http://www.csumentor.edu>. Application workshops where you can get one-on-one help with both applications will be held in the BHS library. Sign up now for one of the following dates:

- Thurs., 10/18, 7:30 am
- Tues., 10/23, 3:30 pm
- Fri., 10/26, 7:30 am
- Mon., 10/29, 3:30 pm
- Tues., 10/30, 7:30 am

Seniors can also work on their applications during sixth period with Mr. Dopman and Mr. Skeels.

■ Annie Johnston and Flora Russ are currently working on placing all the juniors into internships and they need some help. Four students are interested in mechanical and/or engineering types of placements. Two other students are interested in law and need good places to gain experience in the legal field. Internships would take place Mondays and Wednesdays, mostly, from 2:30 to 4:30.

If you have a workplace that would be appropriate or connections or ideas that Annie and Flora should pursue, please send an email to annie@igc.org.

■ If you don't have access to the Internet at home, you can use the Internet at any Berkeley Public Library to check your child's homework for the week at <http://www.BHSCPA.org>. You can also get a free email account at the library so that you can communicate with your child's teachers. Ask any librarian to help you set it up.

■ Soon parents will be able to use a new system called Edline, which will, among other things, show us our students' current grades. Information about using Edline will be mailed out soon.

■ We still need writer coaches. It is not too late to volunteer. Send an email to annie@igc.org.

Counselor's Corner



Caren Ohlson is the counselor for all CP Academy families. You can always contact her at 644-8987 or caren_ohlson@berkeley.k12.ca.us.

Hello everyone. I hope the year has gotten off to a good start for you. I appreciate the opportunities I've had to speak with many of you since school began. Please keep in touch. Here is some helpful information from our College and Career Center:

Exit Exam Classes: If you have a Senior who has not yet passed the Exit Exam, they are enrolled in a preparation class that they MUST attend at least 85% of the time. When they receive passing results, they can drop the class. The next Exit Exam is November 5th for English and November 6th for Math. Please mark your calendars.

Workshops for Families: The Gooden Family Scholarship Fund is holding the following workshops:

Writing a Winning Essay for 11th and 12th grade families will be held on two Sundays, October 14th and 21st, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at St. Peter CME Church, 5324 Cypress Ave. in El Cerrito. Reservations are required.

College 101 in Spanish for 10th and 11th grade families will be held Sunday, October 28th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at Iglesia Catolica de San Pablo, 1825 Church St. in San Pablo and again on Sunday, November 4th at Easter Hill United Methodist Church, 3911 Cutting Blvd. in Richmond.

For more information, contact Joann Steck-Bayat at 510-524-9464 or at jsbayat@comcast.net.

Free SAT/ACT Preparation: For free test prep, go to <http://www.number2.com>. This site offers free prep for both the SAT and the ACT.

How to Use Your School Counselor

(Advice from the American School Counseling Association)

- Counselors are trained in both educating and counseling, allowing them to function as facilitators between parents, teachers, and the student in matters concerning the student's goals, abilities, and any areas needing improvement.
- Meet or contact your child's Counselor at least three times per school year.
- Discuss your child's challenges and concerns with the School Counselor.
- Learn about your child's school and social connections from the School Counselor.
- Work with the School Counselor to identify resources and find solutions to problems.