



Proud Preuss grad: Gery Alexander smiles at family and friends after receiving his diploma.

## The Class of 2011 Looks Forward to a Bright Future

They arrived daily at The Preuss School for the past seven years from 41 different zip codes in San Diego County. Their backgrounds and their neighborhoods are as varied as the languages spoken in their homes. Many traveled hours on trolleys and buses to make the trip to school. Their achievements inside and outside of their classrooms helped Preuss earn numerous distinctions, including 2010 National Blue Ribbon School and 2011 No. 1 transformative high school in the country. And on June 30, all 97 seniors received their high school diplomas, all on their way to a higher education. Congratulations to The Preuss School UCSD class of 2011!

## The Preuss School UCSD Is Named the No. 1 Transformative High School in the Nation by Newsweek

The Preuss School UCSD has been named the top transformative school in the country in the annual *Newsweek* magazine “America’s Best High Schools” list. Called a “Miracle School,” Preuss was lauded for producing high-achieving graduates despite limited resources. Preuss is ranked at the top of all San Diego County high schools, third in California and 34th in the nation. The magazine incorporated six components—including graduation rate, college matriculation rate and AP tests taken—to determine placement on the list.

The Preuss School’s unique approach to education, including longer school days and a longer school year, recently caught the attention of *The New York Times* as well. While there is virtually no argument among educators that American students need more instruction time, state and local budget cuts continue to plague our educational systems. Preuss was recognized by the newspaper for “bucking the national trend” of program and class time cuts.

“Preuss graduates are remarkable young people who rise above countless obstacles to become the first generation in their families who will receive a college education,” said Principal Scott Barton. “Our students participate in a rigorous, single-track college preparatory curriculum, as well as a wealth of extracurricular activities, and can take advantage of an array of academic supports from tutoring to mentoring and counseling.”

Ninety-five percent of the members of the class of 2011 were accepted to four-year colleges or universities, and all 97 seniors in the class will attend either college or community college. Eighty-one percent were accepted to at least one UC campus, and six seniors will attend UC San Diego. Preuss will be represented at all nine of the undergraduate UC campuses by 30 seniors. Other top universities such as Harvard, Georgetown, Duke and Johns Hopkins are also among the choices for this year’s Preuss grads.





## BULLETIN BOARD

- Our **First Day of Classes Welcome Celebration** kicked off the school year Monday, August 22. Faculty, staff, board members and friends joined Principal Scott Barton and Preuss student leaders to hear about recent accolades before welcoming new and returning students to campus.



Patricia Weil, a member of The Preuss School board of directors, welcomes a student.

- Preuss ecology club students** discussed conservation and ecology with a sister school in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, this past school year. The students communicated via Skype and Facebook to share recycling tips and composting methods. The program, which was created under an amendment to an existing sister city agreement, was funded by the U.S. State Department.
- We are happy to report that our **Academic Performance Index (API) score has risen from 886 to 899**, making us the third ranked high school in San Diego County.
- Mark your calendars!** The next Preuss School benefit celebration will take place Saturday, April 12, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla at 6:30 p.m. For more information, please contact Maryann Laphorn at (858) 534-1404.



Preuss theatre students perform during the 2011 benefit.

**Stay Connected!** If you would like to receive email communications, including important announcements, videos and more from The Preuss School, please send your email address to [mlaphorn@ucsd.edu](mailto:mlaphorn@ucsd.edu).

## Benefit Opens up a World of Possibilities

"A World of Possibilities" was the theme of this year's benefit celebration for The Preuss School, and record-breaking net proceeds of \$375,000 will open the door to that world a little wider for Preuss students.

The event showcased exhibits from a variety of Preuss programs, including a working robot that has competed successfully in national tournaments, and entertainment was provided by chamber-music students and the Preuss theatre department. Preuss graduates Marco Murillo '04 and Jackie Nguyen '06 served as keynote speakers who inspired the audience with the message that hard work and perseverance pay off.

## Gates Millennium Scholars Named

Four Preuss seniors have won scholarships from the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholars Program, a national competition that annually awards "good-through-graduation" scholarships to 1,000 talented students nationwide for use at any college or university of their choice from undergraduate through graduate school. This year's winners are Erick Hernandez (Duke University), Miriam Million (Johns Hopkins University), Karina Santellano (Duke University) and Alexander Tesfamicael (Harvard University).

The students were judged on their academic achievement, community service and leadership potential. Over the past five years, 21 Preuss School seniors have won scholarships through the program.



(From left to right) Miriam Million, Alexander Tesfamicael, Erick Hernandez and Karina Santellano

## PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

**The Preuss School UCSD has just completed its 12th year** and we are proud to report that the accolades continue to accumulate. In 2010–11, Preuss was named



the top transformative high school in the nation by *Newsweek* and ranked one of the top schools in the country for the fifth year in a row. We were also named a National Blue Ribbon

School and recognized as a California Distinguished School. Our API of 899 continues to be one of the top scores in San Diego County. Sixty-eight percent of our students who took Advanced Placement Exams received a score of 3 or higher on these exams, which compares favorably to the California and global averages. The 2011 graduating class has also achieved some outstanding accomplishments, including

95 percent being admitted to a four-year college. Eighty-one percent of our graduates were accepted to a University of California school, and 31 percent will attend a UC school. Our graduates were also awarded \$2.1 million in scholarships and grants for their first year in college. Four students won scholarships from the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholars Program (we've had 21 winners over the last five years) and three were QuestBridge Scholars.

During the school year, many students participated in enrichment programs, and this summer more than 100 students participated in enrichment and internship programs with UC San Diego and our community partners. These students worked with engineers, doctors, scientists, professors and teachers from UC San Diego, UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute and many other local organizations. We are always looking for more opportunities for our students to gain experience in the workplace. Please

contact me if you would like to learn how you can become more involved with our school.

I would like to recognize the work of our exemplary faculty, staff, parents, mentors, tutors and community members who are so dedicated to the mission of our school. Collaborating with all stakeholders has been one of the keys to our success.

In closing, I would like to send out a special thank you to all of our donors and friends who continue to support our students and our school through scholarships, grants and gifts.

Best regards,

Scott Barton  
Principal

## SPOTLIGHT Lisa Hawk—Teacher/Athletic Director

Lisa Hawk wears many hats at The Preuss School UCSD as teacher, coach and administrator. Her overall goal is to make sure that by the time Preuss seniors graduate and go on to college, they have the skills and confidence to make healthy, productive choices in the classroom and in their lives.

“The cornerstone of my teaching philosophy is that the mind and body are integrally connected,” said Hawk, who chairs the Exercise and Health Science Department and also serves as Preuss’ athletic director. “Exercise and eating right lead to mental and emotional well-being, as well as to a readiness to learn,” she said.

Hawk has a master’s degree from the University of Maryland, where she began her career as a swim coach and the assistant to the athletic director. “My thesis was based on the book *Psycho-Cybernetics*

by Maxwell Maltz,” she said. “This was one of the first books to define the mind/body experience. In essence, how we view ourselves correlates to how successful we will be.”

Hawk came to Preuss in 2003 after teaching for five years at the R. Roger Rowe School in Rancho Santa Fe. She was inspired by Preuss’ mission to reach underserved and motivated secondary school students in San Diego. “Since a good self-image is crucial to positive achievement, I show our students how to balance all the components in their lives, so that when family problems or social conflicts present themselves, they can make good and wise decisions,” she said.

Hawk believes strongly that middle and high school students who practice healthy physical and emotional habits are more



Lisa Hawk

likely to be successful college students. “For that reason, I would love to see the universities include a health component as part of the A-G requirements,” she said.

## FOCUS ON The Preuss School Robotics

Like so many things at Preuss, the school's robotics program began with a dream: To build a working robot that could compete in FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics, a national league with a mission to inspire students to pursue education and careers in math, science and technology while promoting gracious professionalism.

"There were just five students on that first team," says Daniel Rupert, who became the Preuss robotics coach seven years ago. "They struggled to build a robot that could withstand the rigors of the

competition. But with hard work and the generous support of our partners, Preuss succeeded."

Fast forward 10 years and the Preuss team, better known as the Midnight Mechanics, has continued applying that can-do spirit and enthusiasm to the competition every year. They were the first FIRST team in San Diego County, but their tireless enthusiasm and community outreach efforts have led to the creation of more than 20 FIRST robotics teams in the county. For more information, visit [www.midnightmechanics.org](http://www.midnightmechanics.org).



Dan Rupert (left) with Midnight Mechanics team mentor, Scott Briscoe, and team president, Linda Lam, at the 2011 First Robotics Competition, San Diego Regional

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