

THE PREUSS SCHOOL UC SAN DIEGO

# Insight Newsletter

Winter Edition  
(Jan-Feb 2025)  
VOLUME 2

**Dear Preuss Scholars, Families, and Educators!**

I am excited to share our latest updates as we transition from winter to spring. This time is filled with reflection on our recent successes and anticipation of the opportunities ahead.

Our winter sports season has concluded on a high note. I am incredibly proud of our boys' and girls' soccer and basketball teams, all of whom have advanced to the CIF playoffs. Their dedication, teamwork, and relentless spirit have set a shining example for our school. Congratulations to every athlete and coach who contributed to this remarkable achievement!

We warmly welcome our spring sports programs as we bid farewell to winter. We are excited to see our lacrosse and track and field teams take the field this season. Their hard work and perseverance will undoubtedly carry the same spirit of excellence that has become synonymous with Preuss School. Let us cheer them on as they embark on a new journey of athletic excellence.

Mark your calendars: Spring Break will be observed from March 31 through April 4, a well-deserved pause for rest and rejuvenation. In addition, AP testing begins in May. It's the perfect time to start organizing study sessions and prepare for these critical exams. I encourage scholars to take advantage of the many academic resources available and to support each other during this period.

I am delighted to announce that our college admissions process is already bearing fruit. We have received four early acceptances to Berkeley—a testament to the hard work and academic excellence of our scholars. This achievement reflects the high standards and supportive environment we cultivate here at The Preuss School.

For more in-depth updates and stories, please visit our Preuss Insider website. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our scholars, faculty, and families for making Preuss School a community defined by excellence and resilience.

Wishing you all a successful and inspiring spring season.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Matthew Steitz  
Principal, The Preuss School  
UC San Diego





CELEBRATING  
**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
 PREUSS BLACK EXCELLENCE



**BLACK COLLEGE EXPO**  
 STUDENTS WERE AWARDED ON-THE-SPOT ACCEPTANCES TO SEVERAL PRESTIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, LANGSTON UNIVERSITY, HARRIS-STOWE STATE UNIVERSITY, BENEDICT COLLEGE, TALLADEGA UNIVERSITY, AND TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, TO NAME A FEW. ADDITIONALLY, THEY RECEIVED NEARLY \$75,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND VARIOUS HBCUS.



**BLACK FUTURES CAREER PANEL @ LJCDS**  
 PREUSS STUDENTS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITH LA JOLLA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL'S BSU BY ATTENDING THEIR BLACK HISTORY MONTH CAREER PANEL. STUDENTS NETWORKED WITH PROFESSIONALS AND BSU MEMBERS, FORGING VALUABLE CONNECTIONS FOR THEIR FUTURE CAREERS.



**BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION @ PREUSS**  
 YESTERDAY MARKED THE INAUGURAL BSU BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT AT PREUSS, AND IT WAS AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE. STUDENTS WERE TREATED TO A VARIETY OF CULTURAL FOODS FROM ETHIOPIA, ERITREA, SOMALIA, AND SOUL FOOD. THEY SHARED MEMORIES, TOOK PHOTOS, AND ENJOYED AN INCREDIBLE COLLECTION OF BLACK HISTORY ARTWORK CREATED BY STUDENTS AND ALUMNI.





# Attendance Notices

**Dear Parents and Guardians of our Esteemed Scholars,**

There are a few changes from that we are making to our attendance processes in order to both reward and address some of our attendance items.

In response to the growing amount of unexcused tardies, we have implemented lunch duty for students that earn 5 tardy points. This entails that they use their lunch time to help our custodial staff with trash pickup. Students that are assigned lunch detention are sent home with a referral slip to be signed by their parent/guardian, and the advisory teacher is also made aware.

Additionally, the PTA is sponsoring two attendance reward systems for Perfect Monthly Attendance and Highest Monthly Attendance by Advisory class. The Advisory class that wins their challenge is awarded with a pizza party, and the student that is randomly chosen from the list of Perfect Attendees is awarded with a grocery gift card for their family.

We hope that our efforts to reward good attendance and encourage improved attendance will serve our student body well. Please contact the Attendance office for any attendance questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Allie Lee  
*Attendance and Transportation Coordinator*

## ADVISORY MONTHLY ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE WINNERS!

**We congratulated Mr. Smith's 8th grade advisory class in December and Ms. Brown's class in February!**



**Mr. Smith's 8th grade Advisory,  
98.67% attendance**



**Ms. Brown's 11th grade Advisory,  
98.73% attendance**

### **CONTACT US:**

**(858) 822-0311 (attendance), (858) 822-3000 (main line); [attendance@preuss.ucsd.edu](mailto:attendance@preuss.ucsd.edu)**



# Student Services and Counseling Department

Dear Preuss Families,

We are about half way through the 2nd semester! Please encourage your student to continue to work hard on their academics but to also incorporate self-care. During finals week the student services team provided hot chocolate before school. We have done this the past two years and it has been a great way for them to calm down and focus during a stressful time!



## FAFSA for our Seniors

Our Seniors are beginning to hear from their CSU and UC schools about acceptance! Students have completed their financial aid application and applied to scholarships through the San Diego Foundation. We are so proud of our students and their commitment to success.

## Academic Support

If your student is in high school and has received a D or F on their report cards they may need to attend summer school. On February 22 the Counselors presented to the parents about ways for their scholars to be academically supported, including attending tutoring, SEA and meeting with your counselor. Summer school dates this year will be June 23-27, June 30-July 3, July 7-11. If your student needs to attend we will send you a notification at the end of the year.

## Black College Expo

Our counselors took a group of students to the Black College Expo. This event helps students learn about Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other postsecondary options. The expo also helps students find scholarships and admissions information. Many students were accepted on the spot at the event!



These two Seniors were both accepted to Benedict College, in South Carolina!

## Substance Use Education Workshop

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and SAY San Diego presented to all high school students regarding substances (opioids and fentanyl), the impact drugs have on the brain, signs of an overdose, information on naloxone and resources to support individuals who need help.







**Jon Host,**  
**Chief Administrative Officer**

Hello Preuss Community! My name is Jon Host (he/his) and I am the incoming Chief Administrative Officer for the Preuss School UC San Diego. I am so excited to return to working in K-12 education after spending the past six years in higher education at UC San Diego, where I served as the Business Officer for the department of Enrollment Management.

My career has been dedicated to serving low-income, underrepresented students in college preparatory settings. My passion in this area was first sparked while working as an undergraduate research assistant for a professor of public policy at UCLA. She was conducting a series of in-depth case studies of students who were first in their families attending college, trying to understand the types of challenges they were facing, and how to overcome them. My job was to listen to her (cassette) taped interviews and transcribe them into written form. (Does that carbon date me?!)

As I listened to my fellow students share their stories, I gained such insight and appreciation into how much persistence was required for them to make it to and through college. While not easy, it is possible with the right mindset and support systems.

I've been fortunate to make a career out of working in school settings like the Preuss School that prepare high-potential students to step into their greatness, and am overjoyed to join this school at this time.

### **Hello Preuss Families,**

We have a lot of exciting events coming up for the rest of the school year! We hope you find these sessions helpful and are looking forward to spending time with the Preuss community.

#### **Community Health Fair - March 22, 2025 (10am-12pm)**

After a quick Parent General Meeting from 9:30am-10am, Preuss will be hosting an on-campus health fair open to anyone in the community. Folks from UC San Diego will be hosting activities, exercises, and presentations on a variety of health topics.

If you would like to attend, please fill out the form via this link:

<https://forms.gle/HtxkzYoW53V4MfPW6>

This will let us know what you are interested in learning about regarding your family's health, including hands-on/upfront medicine such as a vaccination or flu clinic.

#### **Know Your Rights - March 22, 2025 (9:45am-10am Presentation)**

The Preuss School Student Services team and the Undocumented Students and Allies Club will have a professional visitor who will give a short presentation on immigration rights. After 10am, she will have a table to answer additional questions. You are still welcome to ask her questions even if you are planning to attend the Community Health Fair.

#### **Stress Management with the San Diego County of Education - April 19, 2025 (10am-11am Presentation)**

During March's Parent General Meeting, the San Diego County of Education will give parents a presentation on how they can support their children with managing stress. As usual, Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation is provided.

#### **Multicultural Fair - April 19, 2025 (11:30am-1:30pm)**

This yearly tradition is tentatively programmed to take place after the Parent General Meeting. Students, families, and community members are welcome to attend and watch student performances while enjoying a variety of dishes. The PTA will have this event as one of their major fundraisers of the year. Families are welcome to donate traditional and cultural dishes for the PTA to sell during the event. Additional specific details and a donation sign-up list will be shared on ParentSquare in March.

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# ARC NEWS



To start off 2025, the Arc students have engaged in all kinds of different activities to develop new skills. The morning program had students focus their talents on artistic classes like graphic design and photography. In these classes, the students created flyers, posters and collages to showcase their design abilities. The afternoon program had classes that taught students the fundamentals of sports and piano. The Arc students are looking forward to showcasing some of their new skills for the Preuss community in the coming weeks.



# Whispers From the Library

We held our Annual Bookmark Contest! The theme this year was your favorite Marvel or DC character. We had an amazing turnout. Congratulations to our winners:

- HS 1st place – Thi Luong 10th grade
- HS 2nd place – Vianeth Montano 12th grade
- HS 3rd place – Di Ho 10th grade
- HS 3rd place – Andrea Isabella Sanchez Vargas 10th grade
- HS Honorable Mention – – Kaelyn Wang 11th grade
- MS 1st place – Aiden Ho 7th grade
- MS 2nd place – Sophia Guzman 8th grade
- MS 3rd place – Brianna Escalera 8th grade
- MS Honorable Mention – Aniylecia 7th grade
- MS Honorable Mention – Isaac Martinez 6th grade

All bookmarks entered are on display at the UCSD Geisel library through March. UCSD Library offered to display them to celebrate World Bookmark Day in February. The winning bookmarks are printed and ready for distribution to the student body. The winners received a certificate and a new book of their choice. Stop by the library to pick up a bookmark.

**Eighth Graders will not be able to participate in “A Celebration of Learning” and Seniors will not be able to receive their cap and gown unless their library account is completely cleared.** Notices regarding ‘How to clear accounts’ to participate in the end of the year ceremony and to make sure Seniors receive their cap and gown will be sent home with all 8th and 12th grade students after spring break. Parents/guardians will be required to sign the notice.

No need to wait. Now is the time to take care of any outstanding fines or lost books. Ask your student to see if they received an email from librarians@preuss.ucsd.edu or call the library to check on your student’s library account. If you need to replace lost textbooks, please call to discuss. Our phone number is 858-822-2150.

Library notices are sent via students’ @preuss.ucsd.edu email at the beginning of each month. Notices inform the students what library materials and textbooks are late, and what fines to be paid or waived by volunteering. Every half hour in the library waives \$5.00 off their fines. Students may volunteer in the mornings before school or during their lunch.

Online library information is on the Preuss School website. A great feature is Brainfuse, 24/7 access to live tutoring in most core subjects and many electives. Tutors have degrees in their subjects and all conversations are monitored. We have links to our databases, Sora by Overdrive (our ebook collection site) and many other resources. Sora is also accessible by downloading the SORA APP on their phone, finding the Preuss School and using their student ID number to login.

**Keep Reading,  
Ms. Nance and Ms. Gonzalez  
librarians@preuss.ucsd.edu**



# Announcing New Partnership with OpSam Health!

OpSam Health started as a small group of volunteer doctors and nurses with a shared goal to provide culturally and linguistically competent health services to families, and has expanded since then to include 7 different clinics across the San Diego region. Now, OpSam Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), and continues to provide healthcare services to members of the community across San Diego regardless of a person's ability to pay. OpSam Health offers services including primary care for adults and children, dental, mental health, specialty services, and more.

OpSam Health has recently partnered with the Preuss School at UCSD to offer a public health prevention curriculum called the Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP-A) to 7th grade students. Through this initiative, 7th graders will learn and practice new skills to manage stress, solve problems, recognize their own strengths and abilities, and connect with peers and other people in their community. As the program's goal is prevention, this curriculum does not treat mental health issues but instead works to prevent issues such as depression or anxiety from happening in the first place. In addition to providing the Resourceful Adolescent Program, OpSam Health also provides mental health services to Preuss students of any grade in need of additional support. Whether a parent/guardian wants guidance in navigating challenges in areas such as healthcare, education, or social services or a student needs support with developing healthy friendships or dealing with academic stress, OpSam Health is here to help.

**RACHEL CAIRES**



Hello! My name is Rachael Caires, and I am a Behavioral Health Clinician with OpSam Health working at the Preuss School. I grew up in a small town in Alaska, and later lived in Arizona and Colorado before coming to San Diego where winters no longer exist and shorts are worn year-round. I earned my Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Northern Arizona University in 2013, and began working with children, youth, and families in community mental health settings right after graduation. I enjoyed helping kids and teens figure out their everyday lives so much that I went on to earn my Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of San Diego in 2018 to become a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in California. Since then, I've had the wonderful opportunity to continue supporting kids, teens, and parents/guardians in residential, in-home, outpatient, and school-based settings providing both prevention services as well as mental health treatment. I'm particularly passionate about prevention services for youth as I believe one of the best ways to deal with problems is to stop them before they happen and empowering youth to face life with confidence. I greatly value including humor, creativity, and play into all my sessions and therapeutic interactions with youth and their families as they are often the key ingredients to growth and a healthier self. Working with families over the last 10 years has shown me that kids and teens have so many strengths, interests, and abilities, and supporting them is often a matter of learning to use those strengths and abilities to handle challenges. Whether we're talking about feeling lonely or Pokémon, I'll be working to help students become their best selves.

**WENDY GARCIA**



Hello! My name is Wendy Garcia. I grew up in Mexico and spent my early career as a professional singer, even living and performing in Bahrain. Music allowed me to connect with people worldwide, but life took an unexpected turn when I became a mother. Navigating the challenges of raising a child with mental health and developmental needs opened my eyes to the struggles many families face. At first, I felt lost, searching for answers and support, but that journey led me to something even greater—a passion for helping others. Determined to better understand child development and mental health, I turned to education. I earned my Bachelor's in Social Psychology in 2022 and am now in my second year of my Master's in Social Work. Recently, I became a Certified Peer Support Specialist. Through this path, I discovered hope, purpose, and the power of advocacy. Today, as a Parent Partner at Preuss, I use my lived experience to walk alongside families, offering guidance and encouragement. I know firsthand how overwhelming the system can be, and I believe that hope is the first step to healing. Healing is possible, peace is possible, and you are not alone. And I am honored to walk this journey with you.