

Village Christian High School

The 2008/09 High School Year in Review

New Student Orientation launched the school year on Tuesday, September 2, 2008. One hundred forty new students, including 128 freshmen, and 32 teachers, attended the event sponsored by the student leaders of ASB. Students were challenged to rise above the low expectations set for teenagers by today's society and culture, and to aim higher – to do hard things as described in the book, *Do Hard Things*, by Alex and Brett Harris. The encouragement to “do hard things” became our theme for the school year. On Wednesday, the high school opened its doors to 530 high school students to start the 2008/09 school year.

Throughout the school year, Dale Green, Spiritual Life Director, challenged students in *Awaken* to reflect on the biblical truths and principles that make freedom in Christ possible and meaningful. Students were encouraged to consider the ministry of Christ and the absolute truth of Scripture and its relevance to their lives. Guest speakers included students, mission teams, missionaries, teachers, youth pastors, Christian authors, and parents.

More than 100 high school students and 22 adult leaders put their faith into action over Easter vacation at *Mexicali 2009*. VCS high school students took the lead in such areas as sports ministry, Vacation Bible School, music ministry, kitchen management, base camp security, and church/school construction. Evangelism, worship and a healthy dose of service resulted in a lifetime of memories for our students and other members of the Village Christian family. This summer, our teachers and/or students served on short-term mission trips to Costa Rica and Africa.

The high school also supported our military men and women, various non-profit organizations and local churches through faithful and earnest participation. *For the Troops* (sent its 10,000th care package in April), *Operation Christmas Child* (VCS collected 13,779 gift/shoe boxes in December), and *Providence-St. Josephs' Blood Donor Center* (VCS students and faculty donated 87 pints) benefited from the compassion and donated time, talent and fund-raising efforts of our students, staff, teachers and parents.

In 2008/09, the high school launched the following new courses: Honors Geometry, Mandarin Chinese, AP Studio Art (3D and 2D) and Music Theory. The high school curriculum currently offers 14 Advanced Placement courses and five honors courses.

Action Research was added to the curriculum in 08/09. This class met once per cycle and students learned to develop the interdisciplinary skills needed to be successful in college and life. In February, learned content and communication skills culminated in the school's first annual academic symposium, *Better Health – Better Society*, where students demonstrated their research, knowledge, and presentation abilities across 23 different health-related issues impacting society.

Four members of the Class of 2009 were recognized with a *Letter of Commendation* from the prestigious *National Merit Scholarship Program* – ranking them in the top 3% nationally of college-bound high school seniors who took the National Merit Scholastic Qualifying Test (NSMQT) as a junior. They are Caylee Coffman, Sin Ah Kim, Robin Liston, and Jazmine Persing.

This past May, 239 AP exams were taken by 146 students in 13 subject areas. Prior to the test taking, AP teachers hosted 28 out-of-class study sessions to help students prepare for the exams. Vern Jones' students logged an amazing 13,805 total hours out of class preparing for the AP Government exam – an average of 230 hours per student! Their hard work paid off with a 90% pass rate – a new course record! Tim Ellis, AP 3D Art teacher, had a remarkable 100% pass rate (11 out of 11) in his first year as an AP instructor. Overall, students scored the highest pass rate ever at VCS, 71.8%, surpassing last year's school record of 69%. Thanks to all AP teachers for their hard work preparing the curriculum and instruction in these college level courses, and congratulations to all AP students for their exemplary commitment to the hard work needed to be successful on the grueling exams. Thirteen members of the Class of 2009 were recognized by the College Board as AP Scholars.

Associated Student Body (ASB) leaders, under the direction and leadership of first-year advisor and Senior English teacher, Karina Culbertson, attended a fall Leadership Conference sponsored by ACSI at Forest Home Christian Conference Center on October 4 - 6. ASB also sponsored numerous school activities and events that were fun, wholesome and memorable, including *Nonfire/Homecoming*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Winter Ball*, *Talent Show*, *Worship Night*, *Blood Drives*, and *Powder Puff*. Additionally, Senior Council sponsored several activities for the Class of 2009, including *Senior Beach Bonfire*, *Senior Late Nighter*, *Senior Chapel*, and *Grad Nite*.

Clubs were an integral part of high school life in 08/09. Membership in the *California Scholastic Federation* exceeded 150 students, and 33 seniors earned gold cords at graduation, signifying life membership in CSF. Each semester, one third of the student body earned a place on the Gold Honor Roll (3.75 GPA or higher).

The 20 students who were actively involved in the national math organization, *Mu Alpha Theta*, met regularly with Norma Wenkalman and Janine Kohut for *Math Club*. The 43 students in the *Math Tutor Club*, advised by Lisa Levoe, worked diligently for over 650 hours during the school year tutoring fellow classmates and middle school students. The *Politics Club*, under the direction of Vern Jones, met once a cycle to discuss and debate local, state and national political topics and current events, and *Inklings*, a club sponsored by John Barns, help develop young writers. The *Wreckin' Cru* (pep squad) supported and cheered our basketball and volleyball teams during the regular season and throughout the CIF playoffs!

Tim Ellis, Joanne Ferrilstone and Jack Hardgrave regularly held the *Christian Discussion Club* during lunch to discuss and consider the lessons taught in *Awaken* and other relevant topics of faith. Jessica Hoover advised the *Art Club* and Dandan Basilious led the *Chinese Club* – both clubs were new this year. Ryan Blanck stayed busy advising the *Film Club* and Dave Gardner launched the *Sound Club* to provide much-needed support to the school and its many events and activities. Nearly 60 students participated in the social or service activities of the *International Culture Club*, *Key Club* or *Video Game Club*.

During fourth quarter, Lisa Levoe and selected students represented VCS on the LAPD Foothill Division's *Youth Police Advisory Board*. At the monthly meetings, students met and learned from key local law enforcement leaders and officers about law enforcement in the East San Fernando Valley. Topics included community and school campus policing, gang activity, types of local crime problems, how to help law enforcement keep schools and neighborhoods safe, and how officers are trained in firearm use.

In January, Ilene Henry took a group of 21 students to the U.S. Presidential Inauguration Day. This once in a lifetime trip included an inaugural ball and a visit to the great museums in Washington, D.C.

The Fine and Performing Arts Department had another excellent year. Large and appreciative audiences enjoyed Tannis Hanson's direction and the students' fall performance of Celeste Raspanti's drama *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, and the spring musical, *Oliver*, based on Charles Dicken's classic novel. Choir director Lynda Romano scheduled a busy year for members of the high school choir, including performances at numerous chapels and seasonal concerts for the community and VCS family and friends. The choir completed the school year with the inspirational performances at Village Church in Burbank and Commencement in Pasadena. After graduation, the choir toured, performed, and served in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah.

The string orchestra, under the direction of Jean Wertz, held its seasonal concerts and events. In March, the strings class traveled to Anaheim to compete at the Heritage Music Festival. In April, the strings class closed its concert season with the 9th annual *Spring Concert & Tea*. Eric Stiles continues to grow and develop the high school band program through competitions, parades, concerts, extracurricular events, and community service. The band also traveled to Anaheim over the Memorial Day weekend to compete in the Heritage Music Festival. The drum line, under the direction of Dan Baker, added an enthusiastic and powerful dimension to varsity football and basketball games and several concerts this past year.

The 7th annual VCS Fine Arts Festival in March showcased the talents of the many gifted students in the school's Fine and Performing Arts Department and the Fine Arts Academy. *Around the World in 80*

Minutes featured the school's choirs, orchestra, band, strings, and art students. The evening included wonderful displays of student work from drawing, painting, photography, ceramics and sculpture classes. Drama students teased the audience with a colorful scene from *Oliver!*, and Dink O'Neal, VCS parent and television, film and stage actor, did a great job as Master of Ceremonies. Twelve students earned Fine Arts scholarships ranging from \$250 to \$500.

The MS/HS PTF raised more than \$23,000 this past year through membership fees and various fundraisers, including *Silver Wars*, a unique activity pitting boys against girls collecting loose change to raise funds to purchase Smart Boards for the middle and high schools. The members of the MS/HS PTF unselfishly served the students and faculty of each school throughout the year with creative ideas, fun activities, scrumptious luncheons, and their tireless dedication and support.

The Booster Club sponsored its Annual Crusader Golf Classic at Angeles National Golf Club. The tournament hosted 108 golfers and raised a profit of \$13,633 for the high school athletic department. In addition, the mid-year Booster Club Pancake Breakfast was a huge success. The teams that participated in the event earned a combined total of \$4,180. The sale of Booster Club memberships and VC athletic apparel also helped support the nearly 30 high school athletic teams that compete in 14 CIF-sanctioned sports.

During the fall season, the girls varsity volleyball team was ranked #1 in the CIF Division III-AA most of the season. Under second-year coach Bobby Blanken, the team won 31 games and an Olympic League title before bowing to league rival, Campbell Hall, in the CIF semi-finals. Seniors Rachel Taylor and Megan Wiechmann were named to the All-CIF first team a second time, and earned athletic scholarships to CSU-San Bernardino and James Madison University, respectively.

In football, senior Jacob Glaze was honored with membership in the National Football Hall of Fame as a scholar-athlete. The varsity football team, under the direction of Head Coach Jeff Cortez, won its third consecutive (and seven of eight) Bible Bowl against rival LAB.

First-year Head Coach, Tim Brown, led the girls varsity basketball team to a third place finish in the Alpha League and a second round appearance in the CIF Division IV-A playoffs.

The boys varsity basketball team, under the direction of first-year Head Coach, Reggie Richardson, enjoyed a great season because of its hard work and strategic use of the senior talents of 6'10" Bak Bol Bak, a McDonald's All American nominee; four-year starter, Jay Vaughn Nettles; and veteran shooting guard, Neil Hand. The team finished second in the tough Alpha League and then advanced to the second round of the CIF playoffs before losing a heartbreaker to Calvary Chapel of Santa Ana. Bak and Nettles will play for Cal Berkeley and Cal Lutheran, respectively, next year on athletic scholarships.

The boys soccer team, coached by first-year Head Coach Bill Schnobrich, enjoyed one of its best seasons in several years, finishing second in the Delphic League with a record of 8-1-1. The team won its first-round CIF playoff game, but then lost in the second round to Bonita High School, the #1 ranked team in the division.

In track and field, junior Michael Sower set a new school record in the 100M with a time of 10.85 seconds, and senior Daniel Rodriguez finished first in the Alpha League and 5th in the Division IV CIF finals in the 300M intermediate hurdles, earning All-CIF honors. Fred Largent completed his 25th year as VC's head track and field coach.

Senior pitcher Jenna Martin (Honorable Mention – Daily News All Area Team) led the Crusaders softball team to an Olympic League title and a #4 ranking in the CIF. The team entered the playoffs as the #4 seed and advanced to the semi-finals before losing to a tenacious San Dimas team. The girls finished with a school record 26 wins! Jenna and her teammate, Megan Merz, were honored with positions on the East Valley All Star Team, which was coached by VCS softball coaches Mike Delaney and Dave Stauffer. A school record was set by sophomore pitcher Emily Seidel (2nd Team – Daily News All Area Team) who

threw a no-hitter and struck out 29 batters in a game won by the Crusaders against Rosamond High School in the Desert Diamond Tournament.

Senior Neil Hand finished in third place in the Alpha League golf finals and then advanced to the CIF finals by virtue of a double-eagle in the qualifying round. Hand plans to play golf at a community college in the fall and then transfer to Cal Baptist in Riverside the following year.

On June 6, the 127 members of the Class of 2009 participated in the school's forty-third Commencement. The ceremony, held for the first time at the First Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena, was witnessed by nearly 1500 family members, friends, faculty, staff and guests. Faustin Uzabakiliho, beloved science teacher, valedictorian Sin Ah Kim, and salutatorian Rachel Taylor, challenged the graduates to build their lives on Christ the Rock, to pray and seek the Scriptures for answers to life's compelling questions, and to trust the Lord in difficult times. Alice Kahng, scholarship winner to the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, thrilled the audience with Beethoven's Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Opus 13, *Pathetique*, 3rd movement. UCLA-bound Caylee Coffman earned the Principal's Leadership Award.

Ninety-five percent of the Class of 2009 will attend college in the fall. Nearly three out of five graduates will attend four-year colleges and universities. Our top graduates earned scholarships to some of the nation's best schools, including UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, USC, James Madison University, Chapman University, University of the Pacific, George Washington University, California Polytechnic State University at Pomona, University of Rochester, Pepperdine University, California Lutheran University, California Baptist University, Biola University, Azusa Pacific University, The Master's College, CSU Northridge and CSU San Bernardino.

Our graduates also gained admission to a number of other prestigious colleges and universities, including California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Purdue University, Boston University, Arizona State University, Gonzaga University, Hofstra University, New York University, Occidental College, UC San Diego, UCLA, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, Washington State University, University of Colorado, University of Cincinnati, Long Beach State University, San Diego State University, Seattle Pacific University, Vanguard University and Westmont College.

In 2009/10, the Village Christian High School student body will be led by Richie Dulce (president), Evan Habbershaw (vice-president), Amy Adamson (treasurer) and Jessie Um (secretary). Class presidents Shannon Leonard (senior), Jessie Coblenz (junior), Jacob Kim (sophomore) and Joyce Cha (freshman) will serve and lead their respective classes.

Village Christian High School remains a forward-thinking school dedicated to the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Word of God with an outstanding faculty and staff that continues to recognize and fully develop the talents and abilities of its students, knowing that each student is wonderfully and uniquely created in the image of God. Please continue to faithfully pray for our school, its teachers and students as we commit to loving and serving God and others. Have a wonderful summer and may our Lord bless you all!

In His Service,
Barrett M. Luketic
High School Principal