

The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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Lead Levels Raise Health Concerns

By Julissa Delgado
Staff Writer

Can you get brain damage from the water you drink? Joel Grover of KNBC recently investigated drinking water in LAUSD schools. Grover's team discovered that several school sites had water fountains containing up to 10 times the amount of lead for what the Environmental Protection Agency calls "safe". Some elementary schools named with high levels of lead were Woodlake, Pacoima, and Saticoy Elementaries.

Negligence of custodial services in certain LAUSD schools in the valley has exposed the situation, causing parents to worry.

The LAUSD Office of Environmental Health and Safety guidebook for Lead Management state "Flush drinking fountains each morning for a minimum period of 30 seconds to minimize potential exposure to lead."

What is being done to protect Poly students?

"Each one of the bubblers (drinking fountains) is drained every morning for thirty seconds," said Poly Building & Grounds worker Stephen Mares. "It takes about an hour, to drain all the bubblers around [Water on Page 3]



Photo by Michael Obando

SAFE WATER?: Lead levels were found too high at some LAUSD schools.

Waiting on a Miracle

By Christian Bañuelos &
Jocelyn Portales
Staff Writers

Poly's text book coordinator Christine Avila is in a life threatening position suffering for over sixteen years with Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD).

Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) is a genetic disorder in which the kidneys slowly fail to function.

Avila is hopeful that a donor with an O-Positive blood type will volunteer to donate a kidney to her.

"I am waiting for a miracle or a kidney transplant," said Avila. "I know God is in control, He has the final word."

Avila was diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease in January 1992.

"I was sad and surprised I had it," said Avila.

The kidneys are two vital organs within the internal system, each about the size of an average human fist. Located in the upper part of the person's abdomen, toward the back, the kidneys filter out wastes and any remaining fluid from the blood to create urine. The kidneys also regulate the



Photo by Michael Obando

HOPE: Christine Avila (right) and daughter Priscilla Ramirez (left) both serve the Poly community. Avila was diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease. Avila is waiting on a donor.

amounts of particular crucial substances within the body.

PKD cysts can greatly enlarge the kidneys while taking place of the majority of the normal structure, resulting in minimal kidney function leading to potential kidney

failure. Once diagnosed, Avila began an immediate search for an O-Positive kidney donor. Her primary choice and hope was a kidney from her children. Unfortunately, Avila discovered that PKD is

hereditary.

Avila's daughter, Priscilla Ramirez, Poly's counseling office employee is saddened about the news of Avila's kidney condition.

"This disease is always on [Avila on Page 2]

Reach For Your Dreams

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

Summer fun is here and most high school students are looking forward to lazy days at the beach and no homework.

But Razi Haq and Steve Huynh have been accepted to summer programs at two of the nation's most prestigious universities, Stanford University and Massachusetts' Institute of Technology (MIT), respectively.

"Stanford is my dream school," said Haq.

Stanford University offers an eight week High School Summer College Program where high school students can have an opportunity to experience the life of a college student on Stanford's campus.

Haq said, "I will be living for two months like a college

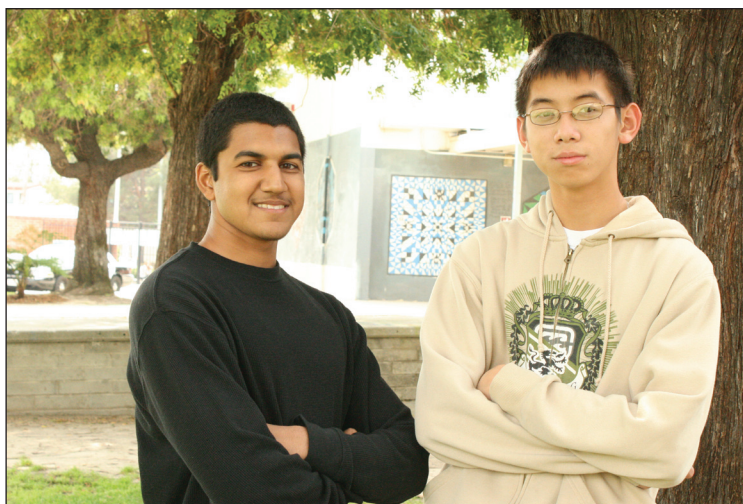


Photo by Michael Obando

SUMMER: (left to right) Magnet Jr.'s. Razi Haq and Steven Huynh will spend their breaks at Stanford and MIT, respectively.

student, and I will also have full access to Stanford's athletic facilities, and libraries. I will also be taking college classes like Physics and Calculus."

In addition, Haq was given a \$3,000 scholarship for the program because Stanford was

amazed with Haq's grades and extracurricular activities like being on Poly's varsity basketball team, Science Bowl, Interact club, National Honors Society, and California Scholarship Federation.

Huynh was accepted to [Summer on Page 2]

Telemundo Televises Track Stars

By Armando Figueroa
Staff Writer

The spotlight is on Poly's track with recent visits from Telemundo, and interviews with Univision.

Telemundo and Univision are both television networks that broadcasts popular Spanish shows.

Poly Track Coach and Biology teacher Mario Rivera said that Telemundo approached Poly to talk about the school as a role model to other schools in the state and local district.

"They chose Poly because we are very athletic here and we wanted to show them that ethnicity could also achieve great things," said Rivera.

Telemundo reporter Mau- [Telemundo on pg. 3]

How To Save A Life Letters to the Editor

[Avila from Page 1]

my mind. I put myself on the list for her. I am willing to do anything for my mother, but I can't; if there was a possibility, I would," said Ramirez.

Avila inherited PKD from her mother with blood type O- Positive who also suffered from the same kidney condition for over eleven years.

In June 2006, Avila began dialysis treatments required by the doctor to purify her blood and system.

"I go to dialysis sessions about three times a week and this treatment helps me purify my blood. However, it sucks up the majority of my energy and makes me weak."

There are 56,598 people waiting for kidney donor and transplants. Michelle Feliciano, a senior at Poly watches her dad suffer with this disease. Feliciano said, "It's hard knowing my dad has to go the hospital 3 days a week. I've gone a couple times, and every single time I've gone out crying. But, I have to be strong for my dad, just like he's keeping it strong for our family He doesn't let it ruin his life, at least he doesn't show it."

Dialysis is a procedure through which a machine purifies blood, filters, and disposes of any waste.

"It affects my life in many ways," Avila said. "I have no freedom Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I

have appointments at 2:45 in the afternoon at the Dialysis Center. I'm there for four hours which I could have spent cleaning my house!"

Avila's physician and nurse regularly communicate with her to update Avila on any current information on her condition.

Although PKD is a devastating illness, Avila stays positive and attempts to live a normal and fulfilling life.

As many students and staff drop off or pick up textbooks at the book room, they will notice a quote posted on the wall that gives Avila strength and hope.

"The will of God will never take you where the grace of God will not protect you."

Avila remains energetic and strong to fight PKD by exercising and following a diet regimen that excludes potassium.

"I try to walk at least an hour every day. I also follow a diet regimen that excludes anything with potassium such as bananas," said Avila.

Avila stresses the need for as many people as possible to be organ donors.

"I plead to as many people as possible, especially students who are about to receive their drivers license to indicate on the back they are willing to be organ donors. You will save many lives," said Avila.

Anyone interested in helping Avila contact the textbook room.

Dear Editor,

Although we are grateful to the Poly Optimist for acknowledging our college accomplishments in its last issue, our accomplishments were not achieved by our efforts alone. If anything, it was a joint effort between us, our teachers and the counselors of the Math and Science Magnet that allowed us to be where we

are today. We would like to take this time to recognize just some of the many people who have aided us these four years at Polytechnic. Among them are Mischa Martin, Juan Morillo, Ron Lehavi, Jeff Berkeley, Michelle Mitchell, Ramon Gomez, Jim Schwagle, Karen Bobrow, Devon Richter, Neva Bryan, and Jayne Couchois. Among many others, they have been an integral part of

our education and success within the Math and Science Magnet here at Poly and we are extremely grateful to them for their dedication towards our futures.

Sincerely,

Jonas Calderon, Oscar Flores, Perry Nga, Cindy Velasquez, Michelle Aguila, and Juan Fuentes



Michelle Aguila, Cindy Velasquez, Juan Fuentes, and Oscar Flores with Magnet staff.



Lillian Bonar



Jeff Berkeley



Michelle Martin

[Summer from Page 1]

MIT's Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science (MITES) Program, which is an enrichment program for high school juniors of different racial backgrounds who are planning to have careers in business, sciences, engineering, and technology.

"I'd never thought I would be able to attend my dream school, MIT. The program will last for six and a half weeks," said Huynh. "We will have to take college classes like Calculus, Physics, a choice between Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and there are also electives like Computer, Engineering, Genealogy, and Humanities."

MITES is free for all participating students. Students only have to pay for the transportation to and from MIT.

Students in MITES will also get the chance to relax their minds from all the challenging work and have fun on beaches during Saturdays.

Huynh was involved in

numerous extra curricular activities, such as Science bowl, Interact club, and a member of Poly's varsity tennis team.

"On their own they looked up summer programs in their desired schools. After they decided which summer program they want to be in they filled out the applications, which

included essays and letters of recommendations from their teachers," said Magnet Counselor Neva Bryan. "Overall, they are very competitive, which means that they begun taking rigorous classes and extra curricular since their 9th grade".

Stressed Out by Raymond Carillo



THE OPTIMIST

JOHN H. FRANCIS POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL
12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CA, 91352
URL: [HTTP://WWW.POLYHIGH.ORG/OPT.JSP?RN=8388297](http://www.polyhigh.org/opt.jsp?rn=8388297)

Editor-In-Chief
Fernando Marquez

Layout Editor
Jason Castro

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Optimist Adviser
Ethel Matlen

EDITORIAL POLICY

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LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be typed or neatly printed in ink and include the writer's signature. The Optimist reserves the right to edit submissions. Send letters to Rm.11 or Ms. Matlen's box.

[Water from Page 1]

school.”

Mares agreed that something must be done, whether placing filters in the water fountains or getting new pipes.

“New pipes would eliminate the problem,” said Mares.

Old pipes contain lead and when water passes through them, the lead contaminates the water.

“We are aware of LAUSD’s policy of flushing out the drinking fountains,” said Interim Principal Gerardo Loera “It’s safe as anywhere else in the

city. The plant manager Derrick Taylor is in charge of draining the drinking fountains.”

California’s current state of drought has also become a statewide concern. Hundreds of gallons of water are going down the drain every morning as every school in the second largest school district in the country, drains their fountains, causing tremendous waste of water.

On Poly’s fountains, Mares said, “By the time students get to school the fountains have been cleared, so feel free to drink, at any fountain”.



Photo by Michael Obando

ON THE SET: Track struts their stuff for Telemundo’s camera reporter Mauricio Cardenas.

Lights, Camera, Action

[Telemundo from Page 1]

ricio Cardenas paid a visit to Poly’s track runners to learn a thing or two.

“We are going to inform the reporter on three events,” said Rivera “and after we demonstrate them he’s going to try them out for himself.”

The three events the local reporter observed was the 100-meter dash, hurdles, and long jump.

“I’m doing a show here called El Reto Extremo (The Olympic Challenge)” said Cardenas “It’s an interesting news piece to get my viewers informed on Olympic events.”

Univision has also taken interest in preparing for the Olympics.

Track coaches Pedro Valencia, Mario Rivera, Rudy Cuevas and 13 track runners went to the Univision Studios to be interviewed on live network

television.

“Univision interviewed us because they wanted to talk about our track team and the upcoming summer Olympics,” said track coach Pedro Valencia, “The interviews were shown May 6 at 7am on the news show Premedo Univision.”

The questions varied from inspirations for running to plans after high school.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

JAZZING IT UP: Senior Delfred Gamboa on the saxophone.

Glory to Poly

By Maciel Luna
Staff Writer

Poly’s Jazz band under the direction of music teacher Steven Isaacs brought a second place award from San Francisco.

Forty-three Poly students including seniors Janeth Ocampo and Delfred Gamboa who have been in Mr. Isaac’s jazz band since ninth grade, once again had an opportunity to compete at this San Francisco Heritage Festival

“We were all nervous, but at the same time we were excited to be here once again,” said Poly senior Janeth Ocampo.

The musicians were evaluated on performance, and said that the scores not only determined how well the pupils performed, but also informed them how they can improve.

Ocampo said, “Mr. Isaac provided private music lessons to members of the band which improved their final score.”

“It was great to see improvement,” said Poly senior Delfred Gamboa.

For these musicians, staying after school and practicing hour after hour isn’t just an obligation, but a way of life.

“There’s always room for improvement, and it was proven by the silver plaque this year,” said Ocampo.

The Poly Jazz band played a total of three songs including “Barnum and Bailey’s Favorite” by Karl L. King, “Agua Whelm” by Cory J. McBride and “Ancient Aries and Dances” by Ottorino Respighi.

Next year’s jazz band can benefit from what the musicians learned from this year’s competition.

Cooking Club Caters to CLAWS

By Daisy De La Cruz
Staff Writer

Steaming hot syrup over pancakes, fresh cut fruit, savory sausages and delicious coffee cake; these are some of the delicious entrees that were part of the menu Bob Higgins’ Cooking Club catered to the Coaches of Los Angeles Women’s Sports (CLAWS) breakfast.

Poly’s culinary instructor Higgins has been managing one of the latest clubs that has joined the Poly school community.

The Cooking Club, whose goal is to fundraise for the benefit of the culinary arts program, decided to take on the challenge of catering a breakfast for over 200 people.

Preparation for this event took a lot of organization by the club officers. The Clubs’ president Jackie Rosales said, “it was time consuming and stressful but the end result was worth while.”



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

COOKING IT UP: Parrots prepared breakfast.

The teamwork of The Cooking Club members, ensured breakfast was hot and ready to serve as soon as the coaches arrived. The cafeteria was filled with the fine aroma of fresh coffee and hash browns.

“Everyone was tired after everything was done, but I felt very proud of the great job everyone had done as we enjoyed



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

breakfast together after,” said Higgins.

Bulldogs Eliminate Parrots, Poly Credited For Long Run

Parrots run out of steam and lose in three sets to hard hitting Bulldogs in invitational finals at CSUN.

By Daniel Jimenez
Sports Editor

All was definitely not lost when the Poly Boys Volleyball team dropped their first play-off game to Narbonne High School. The loss would send them to the Invitational tournament, where they had dominated up to the final round.

Poly faced Jordan High School, an athletic and good defensive team from LA who knocked off Bravo HS on their way to the finals.

Poly had not been this far into the playoffs in seven years, but this season's squad has made the best of their opportunity.

"It's win or go home for a lot of us that are seniors. This is our last season and we want to come away with something," said Setter Jonathan De Paz.

Unfortunately for De Paz



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

INVITATION ONLY: The boys volleyball varsity team made it to the CIF invitational finals. Their last opponents were the Jordan High School Bulldogs, to which they lost.

and the rest of the seniors, Jordan had the same mentality, and they put it to work as they handled the Parrots in three sets. (25-18, 25-18, and 25-17).

The Parrots' relatively short

stature had not been used to their disadvantage so far in the playoffs, but the Bulldogs, led by Devan Robinson, exploited Poly's weakness in the middle, and was unstoppable.

"When they have a hitter

that can get over your tallest blocker, it penetrates your back row," said De Paz, "we lost a lot of points that way."

The loss should not take away from a great season, in which this volleyball team

achieved something no other had in seven years: A bid in the Finals at CSUN.

"It's pretty big, we made it this far, but it would've been better to come away winners," said De Paz after the game.

De Paz and Hut Hitter Allen Rapisura both agree that the success for the Poly team started during the regular season versus Van Nuys. "Beating them was huge for us, we were the only team that beat them," said Rapisura.

"It put us in an all time high, and made us think that we should play at this level against any opponent," added De Paz.

The boys plan on making Poly a team to be reckoned with for years to come.

"We're not just playing for us, we're setting an example to our JV. They know that Poly can make it far, they just need to put in the work and the effort," said De Paz.

There are 11 seniors on varsity, so JV players will take their place and look to repeat the success next year.

Poly Tops NoHo Track Ends Up on Top In Season Finale

By Erick Mendoza
Staff Writer

Poly Parrots Varsity Girls Softball team beat North Hollywood High in their final home game of the season with a final score of 17 to 3.

With the defeat of NH, the Lady Parrots tied for first place with The Verdugo Dons.

For senior softball players Emily Argueta, Nataly Nuno, Angelica Hernandez, Carol Hernandez, and Diana Preciado, this was their last home game.

The game opened with Poly scoring the first point by a quick sprint from third base to home. In the second inning, North Hollywood managed to score, tying the game. However, as soon as Poly was up at bat, Preciado scored a base hit and was later brought home by Hernandez's pop fly, again taking the lead which was held for the remainder of the game.

The highlight of the game



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

FOCUS: Sylvette Rodriguez.

came in the third inning when the Parrots took a 9 point lead, helped by a 3-run homer by Rodriguez to ensure the victory. Rodriguez later stated, "I had fun playing with my teammates this year, we're a good squad."

The Lady Parrots would go on to lose in the semifinal round of the invitationals.

By Michael Park
Staff Writer

The Poly Track and Field team has dominated the Sunset Six League in the 07-08 season with a 7-0 record.

First place in each event awards 5 points, second place 3 points, and third place 1 point; winning a relay results in a 5 point gain and nothing for second place.

The Poly Track and Field team is also undefeated in the following events:

110m HH (Running 110 meters with a high hurdle about every 10 meters): Stallone Watson and Victor Gamboa

400m Dash (Running 1 lap, approximately quarter of a mile): Michael Park, Hector Vega, Alejandro Garcia, and Alex Carreno

100m Dash (Running 100 meters, or a quarter of a lap at full speed): Stallone Watson, Jonathan Torres, and Jimmy Segovia

300 H (Running 3/4th of a lap while jumping over a hurdle at every set interval):



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

RUNNING: It's a battle against time and the other competition for this Poly track runner.

Stallone Watson and Victor Gamboa

200m Dash (Running 200 meters, or half of a lap): Stallone Watson, Michael Park, Hector Vega, and Alejandro Garcia

4x400m Relay (Four people

each running 400 meters with baton passes, or a lap right after each other totaling 1 mile): Hector Vega, Anthony Carreno, Victor Gamboa, and Michael Park (Alejandro Garcia as alternate)