

## The Preuss School UCSD Raises a Record \$375,000 at Its Annual Benefit Celebration

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"*A World of Possibilities*" was the theme of this year's benefit celebration for The Preuss School UCSD - a charter middle and high school for motivated, low-income students - and record-breaking net proceeds of \$375,000 will open the door to that world a little wider for the 820 students at the school. The Preuss School has held seven annual fundraising events.

Exhibits from a variety of Preuss programs, including a working robot that has competed successfully in national tournaments, demonstrated the breadth of the Preuss experience. Background music was provided by chamber music students and a mini-musical, "*Take a Chance on Me*," adapted from the ABBA production *Mama Mia!* by the Preuss theatre department, was performed during dinner.

Two Preuss school graduates, Marco Murillo (class of 2004) and Jackie Nguyen (class of 2006), were keynote speakers. Both Murillo and Nguyen were among the first classes to graduate from Preuss and each, while taking a different professional path (Murillo in politics and Nguyen in musical theatre), came with a message that hard work and perseverance pay off.

"The Preuss School represents opportunity, the opportunity to become anything we want through higher education and to exceed above and beyond society's expectations," Nguyen said. After graduating from Cal-State Fullerton, she performed in the national tour of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and is pursuing musical theatre in Los Angeles and New York.

Murillo, a UC San Diego graduate and now a Ph.D. student at UCLA, shared his appreciation of the community at Preuss. "Though my main goal was to attend college, my experience at Preuss became so much more than that," he said. "For the first time, I had the opportunity to develop friendships with peers of different nationalities, ethnicities and race."

"In light of the difficult economic realities faced by everyone in public education, we are especially grateful for our donor support," said Scott Barton, principal of The Preuss School UCSD. He continued, "Our school is unique in the county in that we serve, exclusively, a low-income population who might not otherwise have the chance to go on to higher education," he said. "Our students come from 41 different zip codes, but they all have a common goal - to become the first in their families to graduate from college."

This year, 95 percent of The Preuss School UCSD seniors were accepted to four-year colleges and universities, with 81 percent accepted to at least one University of California campus, the largest percentage in school history. "These numbers are all the more meaningful in light of the difficult circumstances each of our students must overcome just to get to Preuss each day," Barton said. Once on campus, 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.

Four Preuss students recently won scholarships from the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholars Program, a national competition that annually awards "good through graduation" scholarships to 1000 talented students nationwide for use at any college or university of their choice from undergraduate through graduate school. Over the past five years, 21 Preuss School seniors have won Gates Scholarships. In addition, three Preuss students were named QuestBridge Match recipients. The QuestBridge National College Match helps outstanding low-income high school seniors gain admission and full four-year scholarships to some of the nation's most selective colleges. There have been seven QuestBridge recipients at Preuss over the previous three years.

The Preuss School UCSD was recently named a California Distinguished School by the state's Department of Education. In 2010, the school was named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. It was also ranked 16th among America's top 100 high schools by *Newsweek* and was the only California school in the top 20.

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