

March 26, 2015 | By Laura Margoni

Celebrate the Preuss Promise April 17

Annual benefit will support school's mission to transform lives and ensure a Preuss education is available for generations to come



Preuss students are in school longer each day and for 18 more days a year than the typical student in California. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego

James Noraky knows exactly what ignited his interest in pursuing a career in research: It was his experience at The Preuss School UCSD, a charter middle and high school for low-income students who strive to become the first in their families to graduate from college. During his time at Preuss, Noraky recalls undertaking a variety of science fair projects, a requirement at the school. His projects were often creative and ambitious – once, he experimented with using sound waves as a means of refrigeration. Another time he developed control circuitry that allowed muscles in the forearms to control prosthetic hands.

“These projects were my creative outlet and helped spur my decision to go into research,” he said. “The experiences and guidance I received from my teachers and mentors also helped steer my interest in science and engineering.”

Noraky graduated from Preuss as co-valedictorian in 2009 and received his undergraduate and master's degrees in electrical engineering from MIT. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at MIT, researching novel techniques to advance video compression technology.

"Preuss was my big break," he said. "I benefited from the rigorous curriculum and opportunities to communicate, collaborate and lead, as well as from caring teachers, mentors and community members. I'm not sure how any high school can get any better."

Noraky will share his story during Preuss's annual benefit, The Preuss Promise: Sustaining What Matters on Friday, April 17. The festivities will begin at 6 p.m. in the Price Center on the UC San Diego campus.

The event starts with a cocktail hour featuring music, science demonstrations and a fine arts exhibit by Preuss students. After the cocktail hour, guests will enjoy an elegant dinner with entertainment provided by the band NRG.

UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla will speak during the event, which will also highlight The Preuss School's [Campaign for Longer Learning Time](#).

Expanded learning time is a fundamental tenet of the Preuss educational model, enabling the school to create a rigorous academic environment with the support students need to succeed. Preuss students are in school longer each day and for 18 more days a year than the typical student in California, which adds up to almost an entire extra academic year over the course of their middle and high school careers.

"Each and every gift to the campaign will help support our longer school day and school year, ensuring that we remain a beacon of opportunity," said Scott Barton, principal of The Preuss School UCSD.

The benefit will also feature a live auction with a variety of items up for bid including a trip to Patagonia Sur in South America, a week-long stay at a spectacular Rocky Mountain retreat, a two-night stay at Caesars Palace Augustus Tower with tickets to a headliner show, and a private tour of Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Research Pier among other live auction items.

Event co-chairs include Erin and Peter J. Preuss and Svetlana and Matthew Weil. Peggy and Peter Preuss are co-chairing the Honorary Committee. Sponsors include Cellana, Green Flash Brewing Company, Darcy and Robert Bingham, Ann L. Hill and Gaynor Pates.



James Noraky

Individual tickets and tables are still available. Please visit preuss.ucsd.edu for more information or contact Stephanie Venti at sventi@ucsd.edu or (858) 822-4239.

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