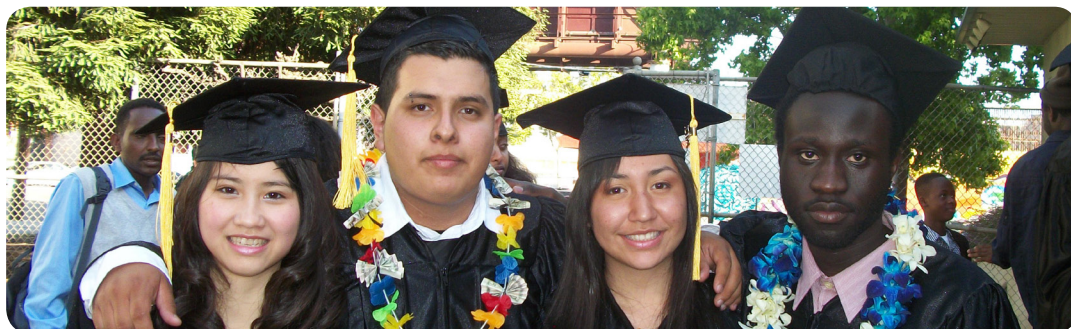


OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



Dear Friends and Family of Oakland International High School,

Four years ago, Nilya came to Oakland International High School (OIHS) as a refugee from Uzbekistan. This spring, she stood with her fellow OIHS seniors and stepped forward to deliver a speech as valedictorian of her graduating class.

In those four short years Nilya had learned English, acculturated to a new city and country, and navigated an unfamiliar education system. "OIHS gave us all words and a new language," said Nilya in her speech. "You gave us our voice in America."

She'll soon take another huge step in making her voice heard: This fall, Nilya enters college at Cal State East Bay as a pre-med student.

When OIHS opened five years ago, outcomes like this were what we envisioned, and we have worked tirelessly together – teachers, community partners, volunteers, and donors -- to help our kids achieve them. Nilya's experience is one in a growing list of inspiring stories on our campus. (For more on Nilya and two other recent college-bound graduates, see the flip side of this letter.)

But much of what we've all worked for is at risk. Over the past three years, state cuts have reduced our budget by \$1,128 per student – in a state that already ranks 47th in per-student funding. We ask our supporters to join us in giving our kids the resources they deserve.

For every \$7 you donate, I will personally donate \$1 until we reach our goal of \$40,000. Will you join me in supporting public education and our incredible group of students? Your donation will directly support essential mental health, after-school sports, and academic counseling programs, especially for college-going seniors like Nilya, TJay, and Gabriela. (Page 2 of this letter has more about the specific opportunities they took advantage of on their path to graduation and college.)

Our deadline for this fundraising push is August 29, the first day of school. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation online at www.oaklandschoolsfoundation.org (designate OIHS), or by mail, using the enclosed envelope. Thank you so much for your support!

With appreciation,

Carmelita Reyes, Principal

About our students:

OIHS is a small, public high school serving recent immigrants and refugees.

- We serve 300 students who speak 29 languages.
- They come from 31 countries, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, Congo, Cuba, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Liberia, Mongolia, Rwanda, Thailand, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Yemen.
- 30 percent are political refugees who escaped ethnic conflicts in countries like Burma, Liberia, Nepal, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan.
- 94 percent live at or below the poverty line.

Help us
reach our goal
of \$40,000

CONTACT US

4521 Webster St., Oakland, CA 94609 • 510-597-4287 • www.oaklandinternational.org
Principal Carmelita Reyes, Carmelita.Reyes@ousd.k12.ca.us

OUR STUDENTS' STORIES



2011 OIHS GRADS GABRIELA AND TJAY AT THIS SPRING'S GRADUATION CEREMONY

Gabriela Martinez emigrated from Mexico in the spring of her 10th-grade year, bringing with her a strong work ethic and desire to learn. In class, and out, she pursued every opportunity to learn English. In less than two years, Gabriela made the journey from performing at the lowest English level to passing state exit exams.

As a senior, Gabriela took full advantage of two internships, volunteering in Emerson Elementary's after-school kindergarten program and interning at KDOL, the school district's TV channel. There she learned to produce documentaries and interviewed Oakland Mayor Jean Quan. In the fall, Gabriela will enter San Francisco State University as the first member of her family to attend college.

Nilya Abdul immigrated in the fall of her 9th-grade year from Uzbekistan. As the child of an Afghan refugee, she and her family did not have legal status to remain in Uzbekistan -- and returning to Afghanistan during the war was not possible. In her valedictory graduation speech, Nilya recalled being scared, stressed, and numb when she first arrived in America. "I still remember how quiet I was for almost a whole year because I had so few words

to express myself. But now I can freely talk and explain what I mean or want. This school gave me words. The school gave us all words and a new language. For this, I say thank you to our teachers; you gave us our voice in America."

Nilya pursued several opportunities at OIHS that helped her gain this confidence. Among them, she led our girls' soccer team, joined student leadership, and worked on the school yearbook. Next year, Nilya will start her pre-med program at Cal State East Bay.

When Chimedregzen Altanhuyag (aka TJay) entered a large comprehensive high school five years ago, he was overwhelmed. He was a new Mongolian immigrant, here in the United States by himself, without family or a support structure. After a difficult year, TJay decided to transfer to Oakland International High School.

"The teachers [at my previous school] didn't work with students like me," explains TJay. "I needed one-by-one attention." At OIHS, TJay found the academic and social support he needed, making up all his missing credits and joining every after-school program he could -- all while navigating his way through the Alameda County foster care system. TJay played on our basketball team, learned welding at The Crucible, produced videos at KDOL, and took music classes at Bay Area Video Coalition. This fall, TJay will join Gabriela as a freshman at San Francisco State University.

SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

Help us reach our goal of raising **\$40,000 before the first day of school, August 29!**

With your support, we can save the programs that were so important to students like Gabriela, Nilya, and TJay.

You can mail your donation to:

"OSF/OIHS," PO Box 20238, Oakland, CA 94620

or contribute online at www.oaklandschoolsfoundation.org (please designate Oakland International).

All donations are tax-deductible.