



# SAMUELI ACADEMY

2020 - 2021  
ANNUAL REPORT

**WE  
ARE NOT  
FINISHED  
GROWING**

## DEAR FRIENDS,

In this academic year, filled with many ups and downs, one thing was for sure. We were not held back!

Our Design Four class won an award, given by the OC Human Rights Commission, for a campaign they created called **"I AM NOT"** and it is emblematic of the year we have experienced. As a winner, the students were given \$5,000 to launch the campaign on campus. You will see it reflected throughout this year's annual report.

For the first time, we welcomed seventh graders to Samueli Academy. These brand-new students, along with returning Firewolves, spent August through February in the virtual learning space. This one-dimensional type of learning demonstrated just how vital the interactive Project-based learning environment of Samueli Academy is for our students.

They faced a number of new barriers to their learning during the pandemic. Because many of their caregivers worked outside the home, some students faced isolation, negatively affecting their mental health. Others navigated environments where multiple siblings overloaded inadequate internet connections. Still others became the de facto supervision for their siblings, needing to keep them on track with virtual learning before attending to their own.

Despite this, our students persisted. They did so because our teachers found creative solutions and software to keep them engaged in class and made home visits to deliver supplies, meals and support. They did so because Samueli Academy partnered with supporters to provide free Wifi for families whose connections could not support virtual learning. They did so because we hired a school psychologist to provide free counseling over Zoom. And they did so because the unique environment of Samueli Academy, even when it was forced online, made sure to always, always look after one another.

As the students returned to campus in March, they got a glimpse at a more active and spirited future on campus. We broke ground on a gymnasium and soccer field and they could envision themselves seated next to their family and friends, chanting and cheering for their classmates on our sports teams.

As the school year came to an end, we saw one more beacon of bright light. Our students that took a chance on Samueli Academy in 2013 when it first opened, began graduating from college.

This year has shown us how truly impactful Samueli Academy is for our students. For this, we cannot thank you enough!

Fondly,



*Sandi Jackson*  
**Sandi Jackson**  
Chair,  
Board of Trustees



*Anthony Saba*  
**Anthony Saba**  
Executive  
Director

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## OUR MISSION

*To ignite the passion within all students to reach their greatest potential through a nurturing and innovative learning environment.*



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**WE  
ARE NOT  
LACKING  
AMBITION**

**U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT** ranks Samueli Academy among the **top 5%** of high schools in California *and* in the United States. In Orange County, Samueli Academy ranks **#10 out of 112** public schools, with those ranking higher serving a very different demographic.

**100%** of students graduated, including **100%** of youth in foster care

**82%** college attendance post-graduation

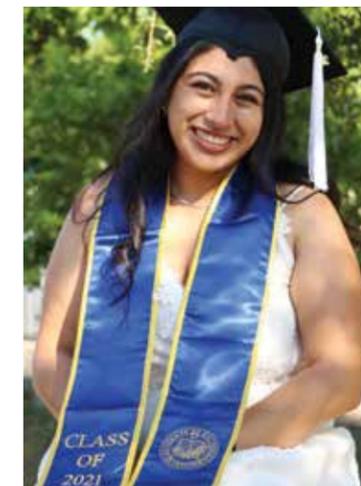
**53%** earned a 3.0 GPA or higher

**39%** of graduates are pursuing STEM degrees

**7** Advanced Placement and  
**11** college credit courses offered

**THE FIRST CLASS OF SAMUELI ACADEMY**, which started in 2013, began to graduate from college this year.

**Chelsey Martinez** (right) who graduated cum laude from UC Riverside with a double major in Political Science and Sociology, plans to study for the LSAT then attend law school.



**"When I arrived at Samueli Academy, I didn't even plan to attend college. It was not an expectation or a goal in my household,"** explains Chelsey.

**"There are several of us from that first class who are graduating this year from universities like Carnegie Mellon, UCLA, the University of Texas, UCI, Chapman and more,"** explains Chelsey. **"Thank you for creating Samueli Academy, the foundation of our success."**



# LIVING ON CAMPUS

**WE ARE NOT WITHOUT SUPPORT**

**THE LONG-AWAITED DORM** for students in the foster care system on the Samueli Academy campus was completed, and became ready for occupancy, right as COVID-19 struck. The Orangewood Foundation staff was not to be stopped. They moved forward, recruiting the youth who would eventually call the dorm home and the foster families needed for weekend and holiday care.

The new three-story building will house up to 48 youth when it is fully occupied over the next three years. It will be a “home away from home” for youth who will receive support from a team of social workers, psychologist, counselors and other staff members. Through an innovative 5/2 model, the students will live on campus five days per week, Sunday night through Friday afternoon, and spend the weekends, with their relatives or foster families. The idea is to provide youth with a stable, nurturing and community-oriented environment during the week and consistent, loving family connections on weekends, during the holidays, and over the summer break.

Living on campus will be a game changer for many foster youth. “I moved four times in my first two years at Samueli Academy,” says Enrique Jaimes. “I lived in South County and had to take three buses to get to school. It would take me two hours to get to school and two hours to get home. But I loved it so much at Samueli Academy that it was worth it. If I had had this dorm, I would have had stability. I would not have had to move over and over again,” Enrique continues.

The dorm (also known as the Podlich Family Residence Hall) is one part of a larger program for students in the foster care system, initiated by Orangewood Foundation, called the Youth Connected Program. Its goals are to provide a world class education at Samueli Academy, a stable living arrangement during the weekdays, and provide connections and love from foster families while not at school.

“If I had had this dorm, I would not have had to do homework on the bus and I would have been able to do extracurricular activities, like cross country,” says Enrique. “This dorm will be so great for so many young people.”

“We are deeply grateful to the donors who gave so generously to this campaign,” says Campaign Co-Chair, Susan Samueli. “These resources have empowered us to create a state-of-the-art dormitory, on the school campus, so that our foster youth don’t have to worry about where they will live while attending high school. Under one roof, we’ll help them build the support system they need now and throughout their lives.”



# COMPLETING THE CAMPUS

**WE ARE NOT INCOMPLETE**

**A GYMNASIUM AND SOCCER FIELD** mean a whole lot more to Samueli Academy students than just the enjoyment of playing a game of hoops or scoring a goal. At Samueli Academy, these facilities can represent a feeling of safety or the promise of building a much-needed relationship or even the possibility of graduating high school. That’s why completing the campus with these two remaining resources is crucial.

To date, students have been playing soccer on a dirt field. While that’s been challenging, the rewards are plentiful. “Playing soccer really motivated me to improve my grades. During my junior year I was cut from the team because my grades were bad but I worked hard to get them back up so that I could play again,” remembers Robert Garcia, Class of 2020. “That’s what playing ball does for a lot of students.”

Robert continues, “Having a gym and soccer field on campus will be great. It will be a safe place where students can go to get away from anything else that might not be good in their lives.”

For those who don’t have strong familial bonds, sports is often a great way to develop relationships and a sense of belonging. “My soccer coach was super supportive,” says Jewel Campos, Class of 2018 (pictured right). “He was a positive father figure and role model. I knew he wasn’t going to give up on me and that made me want to work harder because I did not want to disappoint him.”

Lee Fleming, Head of School, explains why a gym and soccer field are vital to the Samueli Academy campus. “When you design a school that is meant to address the needs of students from more challenging backgrounds, including foster youth, you can’t create a school that is missing parts,” says Fleming. “They need to have every single piece of a campus. No one in America thinks of a high school without an athletic experience, without a gym, without a home game or without a homecoming. That’s why we’re building a gym and a soccer field. They are just essential.”

While fundraising for the gym and soccer field slowed during the pandemic, those of us at Samueli Academy were not thwarted. We forged ahead knowing that our students need these facilities as an important part of their high school experience. The capital campaign continues and we invite you to be part of the team.



# DONORS

**THANK YOU** to all the individual, corporation and foundation partners who supported our students during this uniquely challenging year in education. Your generosity allowed us to leverage technology, infrastructure, small class sizes, and caring staff to serve students in a pandemic. We were able to increase mental health services, continue to provide work-based learning opportunities, and support our alumni despite not being on campus for much of the school year. Your support meant that students always felt that they had access to resources and opportunities despite physical distance. On behalf of our students, thank you very much.



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## FINANCIALS

**OVERALL**, our fiscal year 2020/2021 was stronger than anticipated due to receiving additional State and Federal dollars to handle the COVID-19 crisis. The surplus has been invested in technology and infrastructure which helped our students work virtually during the crisis and will be invested in additional summer enrichment activities. We are committed to a strong culture of accountability and transparency, and post our finance meetings, audited financial statements and tax returns annually on our website.

### REVENUES

Local Control Funding	\$ 6,553,536
Federal Revenue	1,638,641
State Revenue	1,732,558
Contributions	870,342
Other	27,703
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 10,822,780</b>

### EXPENSES

Certificated Salaries	\$ 3,573,143
Classified Salaries	780,758
Benefits	1,161,895
Books & Supplies	557,055
Occupancy	1,333,577
Services & Other	1,129,099
Depreciation	105,002
<b>Subtotal Program</b>	<b>\$ 8,640,529</b>
Management & General	518,736
Fundraising	42,021
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 9,201,286</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,621,494</b>

## CAPITAL DONORS

The \$11,000,000 capital campaign to build the gym and soccer field began this year. We extend a huge Thank You to the following individuals and foundations for helping to complete the campus.

The Samueli Foundation  
 Peter & Ginny Ueberroth  
 Family Foundation  
 ABAR Foundation  
 The 6-18 Foundation For Hope  
 Harry and Valerie Langenberg  
 Yvette and Kevin McCarthy Family  
 Cvengros Family  
 The Lennar Foundation  
 James & Susanne Moore

The above capital campaign gifts are listed by the level and date the pledge was received.

As of August 31, 2021



**WE ARE NOT WITHOUT A BRIGHT FUTURE**



**Top:** Cynthia Ramirez proudly displays where she'll be going to college at Decision Day.

**Center Left:** Engineering 3 students expand their knowledge of electricity to wire a model house per code.

**Center Right:** Head of School, Lee Fleming, gets a hug from Senior Class President Ray Diaz at Awards Night.

**Bottom Left:** Valedictorian Aneal Singh sports all of the awards he won at Awards Night. Pictured with Aneal is his younger sister Anisha, who is the ASB President for the 2021/2022 school year.

**Bottom Right:** Students celebrate during Decision Day, a rally where they announce where they will be going to college or what they will pursue in their post-high-school years.

*Samueli Academy* is a program of Orangewood Foundation, whose mission is to strive for equity for our youth by valuing and supporting the life they envision.



**Orangewood**  
FOUNDATION  
Innovator of Youth Services since 1981

# SAMUELI ACADEMY

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[samueliacademy.org](http://samueliacademy.org)

Federal Tax ID # 45-3866750

## ENROLLMENT OR EMPLOYMENT

**Anthony Saba** – Executive Director

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[ASaba@samueliacademy.org](mailto:ASaba@samueliacademy.org)

## MAKE A GIFT TO SAMUELI ACADEMY

**Alex Choperena** –

Director of Development

714-619-0228

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