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Heritage Oak's Middle School Students Select First Semester Electives

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students recently had to make a difficult choice as they were offered eight class programs, five of which were new this year.

One of the top new choices was Chess, offered by Social Studies teacher Mr. Andy Guagenti. This class was a particular favorite of eighth grade students, and it filled quickly. Another very popular class this semester was Origami, offered by accounting office staff member Ms. Karen Yamashita. This ancient art of paper-folding has students from all middle school grades creating some amazing and beautiful items, and the year has just begun.

Mr. Mark Hendrickson, middle school's new science teacher, steps into a new role with his offer to teach Public Speaking. Mr. Hendrickson believes that being able to effectively address groups of people has become an increasingly necessary skill. The class allows students to practice in a safe environment. In addition to speaking, Mr. Hendrickson will have students practice effective posture, movement, volume and enunciation. Students will use a variety of content including impromptu, extemporaneous, prepared and dramatic. Time will also be given to work comfortably with a microphone and visual aids.

English and Literature teacher Mrs. Kathy Paysen has offered Reader's Theater; "the theater of the imagination." This new class helps students learn how scripts are developed and written, and provides many opportunities to read aloud, perform with purpose, and bring enjoyment to themselves and their audiences. The students will prepare for performances at the end of the first and second academic quarters.

The final new class offered this semester is Piano Music and Theory, presented by Mrs. Antonios. The class focuses on fundamentals of music theory and piano playing. Class activities will include sight-reading, technical exercises and finger drills. Mrs. Antonios will also provide a general review of music history and famous composers.

Returning class favorites include "Watercolors with Friends" offered by returning elective teacher, Mrs. Sandra Kyle; Irish ("Ceili") Dance offered by English and Literature teacher (and acclaimed Irish dancer herself), Ms. Lara Governale; and Digital Graphic design, perennially offered by Art instructor Mrs. Meghan Kennedy.

Heritage Oak is a traditional school appealing to parents who are seeing a proven curriculum and a safe, nurturing environment. Community awareness, academic achievement, and family values are part of its program that focuses on the development of the whole child.

The U.S. Department of Education bestowed its highest honor upon Heritage Oak when it awarded the school the 1998-1999 "Blue Ribbon" award. The "Blue Ribbon", our Nation's most prestigious education award, distinguishes Heritage Oak for its excellence in leadership, teaching, curriculum, student achievement, parent involvement, and community support.