Educating generations of young leaders to become “all of which woman is capable.”
Letter of Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, the oldest high school in San Diego County. As the only all girls school in San Diego, OLP is in a unique position to educate the next generation of women leaders and innovators. As such, OLP is focused on providing a rigorous college preparatory education utilizing 21st Century learning tools. Our new Head of School Lauren Lek has transformed our STEM offerings and OLP is now at the top of mind for students and families looking for a holistic education utilizing modern learning principles with a robust STEM curriculum.

OLP would like to invite you to browse this press kit and contact us if you’d like additional information or to schedule an interview with Head of School Lauren Lek. We are eager to work with you and would be glad to provide additional materials.

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**School Overview**

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace has been educating the next generation of women leaders and innovators since 1882. OLP has a history of educational excellence that spans more than 130 years.

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) is a single gender, rigorous four-year college preparatory school with an unparalleled leadership program and variety of co-curricular activities. Founded in 1882, OLP has faithfully served families of San Diego County for the past 132 years. Young women are educated in the spirit of excellence and innovation that characterizes the founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Inspired by the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, OLP students are challenged to become academic, social and spiritual leaders of the CSJ mission. The school follows its mission to engender a collaborative world view in the tradition of the Gospels. OLP ensures that its students find their voice and develop the skills to compete at all levels, regardless of career and life aspirations.

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace is located at 4860 Oregon Street, San Diego, CA 92116. For more information, visit www.aolp.org.

**School Mission Statement**

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace is a Catholic, liberal arts oriented, college preparatory secondary school dedicated to the education of young women. As a Catholic school, it is committed to helping its students become active participants in building Christ’s kingdom of justice, love and peace. As a school rooted in the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph, it promotes the cultivation of “gentleness, peace and joy” as we respond to the needs of the “dear neighbor” both in our midst and in our human community. Through its college preparatory program, its mission is to empower its students to become knowledgeable in those skills needed to achieve success in post-secondary studies, and to make informed and values-driven decisions in the context of today’s world. As a result of these endeavors, and working with parents as our educational partners providing a family context of faith-in-action, the Academy of Our Lady of Peace strives to graduate responsible women educated to the needs of society.
Key Figures

Lauren Lek, Head of School
Mike Coughlin, Board Chair

Jessica Hooper
Assistant Head of School

Jeanette Handelsman, Assistant Principal & Director of Campus Life

Sheelah Keeter
Assistant Principal of Instruction

Tina Martinez
Director of Finance

Chris Boyer
Director of Technology

Margot Meier Howard
Director of Institutional Advancement

Emily Pippin
Director of Communications
Lauren Lek
Head of School, Academy of Our Lady of Peace

Recent Professional Achievements
Lauren Lek has consistently remained a visionary leader with a passion for meeting the needs of students, and ensuring they are successfully prepared to compete in a global society. As a leader in 21st century education, she successfully implemented one of the first one-to-one laptop programs in northern California, helping bring the school to two separate Apple Distinguished School Awards.

In keeping with pace of her former achievements, Lauren has similarly “taken off” at OLP by way of endorsing a Robotics Club, which began fall of 2013, and bringing new athletic team opportunities to the athletes of OLP. Already, in her short time here in San Diego, she has been active in embracing a collaborative approach by way of reaching out to her faculty and staff to nurture the ideas and innovations right under her roof. She is also fast at work in developing collaborative relationships with other educational leaders within the San Diego area. In her first month she hosted a dinner (on OLP grounds) for the Catholic high school principals, including many clergy and order sponsored sisters, as well as San Diego’s new bishop, Cirilio Flores. She has visited many of north county and south county schools, meeting the leaders and students with desire to formulate long-term cohesive relationships. Lauren has also reached out to USD for guidance in strategizing for the future of academia at OLP. She has also been working with leadership at SDSU to develop a direct line for the students within the SDSU School of Educational Sciences department to partner with OLP for student-teaching opportunities.

Accomplishments Within Profession
In addition to helping Moreau Catholic High School receive two Apple Distinguished School Awards, she also created one of the first coordinated STEM programs in Northern California, launching four different Engineering courses: Engineering Design, Green Engineering, Robotics Engineering, Gaming Design and Analysis, prior to leaving Moreau Catholic High School. Lauren is hard at work building the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) curriculum at OLP. She developed a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program beginning Fall 2014 at OLP, which allows students access to 21st Century learning tools in the classroom via any device that a family chooses. She also created a “zero block,” which gives students an extra block of time in the mornings before the regular school day begins to take classes in STEAM disciplines.

Accomplishments Within Community
In addition to her commitment to empower her own faculty and staff, Lauren also works closely within the larger context of the community to help bring about additional support for tuition assistance, ensuring all students are given access to a rigorous college-preparatory education.

As a member of Rotary Club 33, Lauren is on the STEM committee and works with local schools to enhance their STEM offerings. She was also recognized as a San Diego Business Journal Women Who Mean Business awardee in 2013 and an Athena San Diego Pinnacle Award Nominee in education.

Empowerment & Inspiration to Others
She is extraordinary in soliciting feedback from all levels within the educational environment she leads. This includes parents, students, significant others, family members, volunteers, staff, members of the board and funders. She works collaboratively with a faculty membership consisting of individuals with a teaching history at this particular school that ranges from 42 years to this year! As she bridges the traditions of the past and holds responsibility for the future, she articulates the best aspects of what has consistently resulted in outstanding women graduates of OLP.

Her vision for the future embraces the knowledge of the past. She understands well the extraordinary benefits of an all female learning environment and the importance of partnership with OLP’s all-male partner school, St. Augustine High School. Lauren has also found ways to intentionally bring to life the stories of OLP’s past, helping to reconnect with the alumnae who have impacted the San Diego community.

As an accomplished educational administrator, Lauren has an energetic and welcoming approach to creating a tapestry of possibility and positive results. She is completing her own Ph.D. in Educational Technology Leadership at Pepperdine University, is successful in her role as the wife of a successful businessman, and is the mother to two young boys. She is visionary and a pragmatic navigator to successful outcomes. She’s the Head of School for the oldest, continuously operating high school in San Diego, California and the first lay leader in the history of this all girl’s school.
Academy of Our Lady of Peace publishes OLP Magazine on a quarterly basis.

Academy of Our Lady of Peace publishes Touch the Sky enewsletter monthly.
FAQ

Q: Is OLP a single gender school?
A: Yes. The Academy of Our Lady of Peace is the only all girls school in San Diego County. We are dedicated to providing a 21st Century, rigorous college preparatory education to the next generation of women leaders and innovators.

Q: Does the school only accept Catholic students?
A: No. We do not discriminate based on religion and welcome students of all religious backgrounds and beliefs.

Q: Are there leadership opportunities available for students?
A: Yes, there are more than 300 leadership opportunities available to students each year encompassing many realms of campus life including student life, athletics and the performing arts. The student council at OLP is comprised of more than 50 elected student leadership positions with the common goal of planning school activities and, at the same time, making the school year exciting and memorable. Leadership experiences at OLP help prepare our graduates for college and beyond.

Q: What type of STEM offerings are available?
A: STEM subjects are taken seriously at OLP. The rigorous curriculum includes access to more than 40 classes in STEM disciplines and more than 24 Advanced Placement and Honors courses. OLP believes that in addition to comprehensive STEM offerings, it is also imperative to provide a rich visual and performing arts curriculum. STEM + Arts comes together at the school’s annual STEAM Day, aimed at providing an opportunity for 7th and 8th grade girls to create, innovate and be inspired to further pursue STEAM learning.

OLP’s STEM curriculum features a variety of classes including chemistry, physics, computer applications, marine science, genetics, and AP calculus to name a few.

New Head of School, Lauren Lek, supported the formation of a Robotics club and competition team, the OLP MicroChicks. In a recent competition, the team finished with the second highest total of match points, and won the Connect Award for community service involving STEM.

OLP also has a thriving Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) club. The school was the first Catholic, as well as first single gender, school in the United States to apply for and be granted a Jr. SHPE Chapter status. The OLP SHPE chapter supports and encourages young women interested in becoming engineers. The group regularly welcomes guest speakers from top STEM companies in San Diego, participates in Engineering Week and works with the Society of Women Engineers.

Learn more about our innovative programs and STEM initiatives at www.aolp.org.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Academy of Our Lady of Peace Hosts Endless Summer Suds & Sausage Benefit

SAN DIEGO, CA — July 7, 2014 — The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) will host an Endless Summer Suds & Sausage event, with proceeds benefitting the school’s students. The event will be held on OLP’s scenic North Terrace overlooking Mission Valley on Friday, August 15, 2014 from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

For $35 each patron will receive a commemorative pint glass, one craft brew, one sausage or hot dog and the opportunity to mix and mingle while enjoying the sounds of live music. Beer sponsors include Ballast Point, The Lost Abbey and Lightning Brewery. Mastiff Sausage food truck will provide delicious sausages and hot dogs. Trucked Up Productions’ Ms. Patty Melt food truck, a popular creation of Chef Deborah Scott and the Cohn Restaurant Group, will be on site to sell other mouth-watering foods. Additional popular craft brews will be available for purchase.

“We are very much looking forward to hosting this event,” said Lauren Lek, OLP’s Head of School. “With alums, parents and community members coming together to campus in honor of raising funds for the students, it’s sure to be an enjoyable end of summer event.”

OLP has also partnered with UBER to provide guests with safe and convenient transportation to and from the event. Guests will receive a $20 credit on their first UBER ride in San Diego and $5 will be donated back to OLP. Visit uber.com/GO/OLP or download the mobile application and enter promo code OLP.

This OLP event is only open to ages 21+. IDs will be checked at the door.

Tickets are available for purchase at http://www.aolp.org/about-us/endless-summer-suds-sausage-event/ or https://www.eventbrite.com/e/endless-summer-suds-sausage-tickets-10070951487

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Academy of Our Lady of Peace Hosts Parking Structure Commemoration Ceremony

San Diego, Calif. — (May 23, 2014) — The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) will host a commemoration ceremony for the soon to be built St. Catherine Parking Structure on May 30 at 11 a.m. on the OLP campus with Mass beginning at 10 a.m. The commemoration ceremony will be led by Head of School, Lauren Lek and will serve to kick off the construction process. City officials will join OLP administrators and guests at the ceremony.

The new St. Catherine Parking Structure construction will replace the current OLP senior parking lot, which is located at the corner of Copley Avenue and Uvada Place. When complete, the 2-story, subterranean parking structure will provide 104 off-street parking spaces for the OLP community, alleviating stress and congestion from neighborhood streets. The project is anticipated for full completion by December 2014.

“We are so excited to kick off the construction of this much needed parking structure,” said Head of School Lauren Lek. “This is the first in a series of steps we are taking to improve the Academy to ensure we are able to continue to provide a rigorous education rooted in 21st Century learning principles. OLP is committed to ensuring access to all students who want a Catholic education and we have granted more than $2.6 million in tuition assistance and scholarships to make this a reality.”

The ceremony will include presentations by Head of School Lauren Lek, Board Chair Mike Coughlin and Board Chair Emeritus Mary Caratan Sloper ’58 as well as a blessing of the ground by Board Member Monsignor Richard Duncanson.

Construction officially begins June 2, 2014 and work will be completed in three phases. Phase one includes pre-work on the upper level of the structure. Target date for parking on upper level is August 12, 2014. Phase two includes construction on the lower level and the target date for parking in the lower level is September 17, 2014. As soon as vehicles can park in the lower level, phase three commences and construction work is re-focused on the upper level (majority of the work). Finishes follow including shade structures, doors and hardware, paint, and roof tile installation.

For more information about Academy of Our Lady of Peace, please visit www.aolp.org or call 619-297-2266.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Academy of Our Lady of Peace Unveils New Identity

San Diego, Calif. — (May 21, 2014) — The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) has introduced a new brand identity that captures the essence of the school and its dedication to “excellence tempered by gentleness, peace and joy.” For San Diego’s iconic Catholic college preparatory girls’ high school, the brand visually speaks to the school’s preeminent academics, historic significance, founding principles and remarkable graduates.

OLP’s academic tenets are grounded in the spirit of its founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The Sisters’ empowerment, combined with the student body’s metaphoric association with flight, inspired a color palette and visuals that evoke spirit, courage, unlimited vision and endless possibilities. The school’s new logo, a customized fleur de lis, links the brand identity to St. Joseph, the patron saint of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Academy. Elements of the logo were inspired by the school’s architecture and textures with a Beaux-Artes influence.

“OLP follows in the footsteps of many brilliant and dedicated educators who foster an academic culture of excellence supported by a strong faith tradition, service to others and a plethora of co-curricular learning opportunities,” said Head of School Lauren Lek. “We now have a brand identity to match our vision of helping generations of young leaders become all of which woman is capable.”

Students, parents and faculty at OLP are attracted to the school’s strong sense of community in addition to its rich history and commitment to outstanding achievement. The elite level of education offered at OLP has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education with the presentation of the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

“We are committed to challenging our students to become academic, social and spiritual leaders,” said Lek. “In that, we follow a mission to engender a collaborative 21st Century worldview in the tradition of the Gospels.”

School leaders believe this new look will help OLP continue to attract the best and brightest young women in the community to attend. This belief includes preparing young women for higher education, for them to become agents of change and to allow them to compete on a global scale.

For more information about Academy of Our Lady of Peace, please visit www.aolp.org or call 619-297-2266.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OLP's Tech-Focused Leader Approaches One-Year Mark

San Diego, Calif. — (May 21, 2014) — With graduation fast approaching at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP), Head of School Lauren Lek will celebrate her first year leading the young women of OLP on their path toward becoming global leaders. In her year with the school, Lek has already become a San Diego Business Journal Women Who Mean Business Awardee.

Lek is building on her years of experience as principal at Moreau Catholic High School in Northern California. As a leader in 21st century education, she successfully implemented one of the first one-to-one laptop programs, helping MCHS earn two separate Apple Distinguished School Awards. She also pioneered one of the first integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs featuring Robotics Engineering, Engineering Design and Biotechnology.

Now in San Diego, Lek becomes the first lay leader of OLP, meaning she is not an ordained nun. For the school’s 132-year history, it had been led by OLP's founding order, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Lek has worked to carry on the legacy of the Sisters and build on their mission.

“We know Mrs. Lek has the vision and leadership skills to see the school forward,” said Board Chairperson Mike Coughlin, Academy of Our Lady of Peace. “She’s hard at work ensuring our young women have the 21st Century skills needed to be highly competitive in an interconnected world.”

Recently, Lek put into place the school’s first Robotics Club and Competition Team, and is launching a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative, where students are encouraged to bring whatever device they’d like to use as a learning tool in the classroom.

Lek has also focused her efforts on the following key areas:

• Partnering with various city departments and officials in San Diego to ensure all requirements are met and exceeded as campus improvements are made.

• Opening the gates to the community at large in an effort to benefit from enhanced communication.

• Enhancing its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) class offerings, and creating a zero block, an extra block of time before school starts for those students who want to take extra classes to get ahead. Classes include Visual Arts & Pre-AP Computer Science Principles.

• Launching the school’s first Master Site Plan with a dedicated Performing & Visual Arts space, new STEAM lab and a state-of-the-art lab for students to channel their creativity and science skills into tangible products.

• Introducing on-campus, healthy food service for students. Lek has a holistic view of nurturing students and part of this view is ensuring they have easy access to healthy meals. This also includes future plans for a community garden.

• Rotary 33 Club membership

Lek is accomplishing all this while raising two young boys in Carmel Valley with her husband, John Lek.

For more information about Head of School Lauren Lek and Academy of Our Lady of Peace, please visit www.aolp.org or call 619-297-2266.

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The Academy of Our Lady of Peace has been covered in the following publications: