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Beverlywood



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Geffen Academy

By Ben Lee

It's that time of year again. If you're a parent of school aged children, March often means it's time to decide where your kids are going to go to school next fall. Magnet points have been tabulated, ISEE tests have been taken, interviews have been conducted, and lotteries have been entered. Now it's time to just linger by the (E)-mail box for the highly anticipated news everyone playing the game has been waiting for: acceptance, rejection or the dreaded purgatory of being waitlisted. Of our three sons, we're only focused on the eldest this year since the younger two are fine staying where they are currently enrolled. The eldest can also stay where he is or make a switch to go somewhere else. The news we'll get in March will hopefully help determine the scholastic path he'll take next.

Our middle son has been fortunate enough to be part of the inaugural class at the new Geffen Academy at UCLA. If you are unfamiliar with this school it's because it's only been around since September. By now, however, most Westside parents have heard the buzz surrounding the school because whenever I meet someone who finds out Spencer goes there, eyes widen in interest as if we've just gotten back from a very exotic trip to a faraway land.

For those who don't know much about this school, it began thanks to a generous (to the tune of 100 million dollars) gift from producer and philanthropist David Geffen. The idea was to provide a highly competitive academic and progressive school that could help benefit the children of UCLA professors. Half of the available spaces are set-aside for employees' kids (and not just professors, I believe the policy pertains to the children of any full time UCLA employee), while the other half of the student body consists of anyone else who applies and gets in. For its first year in existence, only three grades were admitted (6th, 7th and 9th) with an average of about 75 students per grade. For the 2018-2019 year, though, all grades (6th-12th) will be invited to apply for the opportunity to attend. In order to accommodate

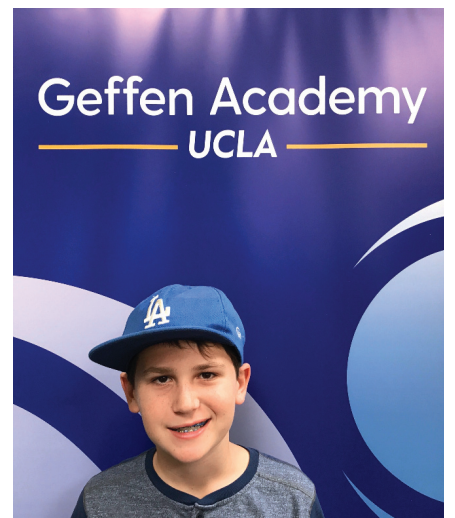
so many new students, the school will be moving out of its temporary campus and into its permanent one (which happens to be immediately adjacent), located in the heart of Westwood Village, specifically on a UCLA owned/operated parking lot on Kinross, just north of Wilshire and in between Veteran and Gayley Avenues.

I get asked all the time: what makes this school so unique? There are many reasons. I find it fascinating that the school is the product of that which comes from a combination of years of research coupled with the most up-to-date studies; all pertaining to what the best practices in education are today. Classes start at 9am because they know kids this age need their sleep. There is not a great deal of homework. It's philosophy centers around project based and hands-on learning so they're not just

reading about how to build a machine- they're actually doing it. The teachers are all experienced yet come to school with a freshness and enthusiasm- bonded by being on the ground floor of something really new and exciting. It's as if they've all finally been unleashed to do exactly what they love, freed from the constraints of the bureaucratic headaches they may have experienced in the past.

Geffen students have been lucky to benefit from much UCLA has to offer. The track team has practiced at Drake Stadium. There have been walking field trips to the Armand Hammer Museum. UCLA students from the School of Education have come to Geffen to assist and tutor.

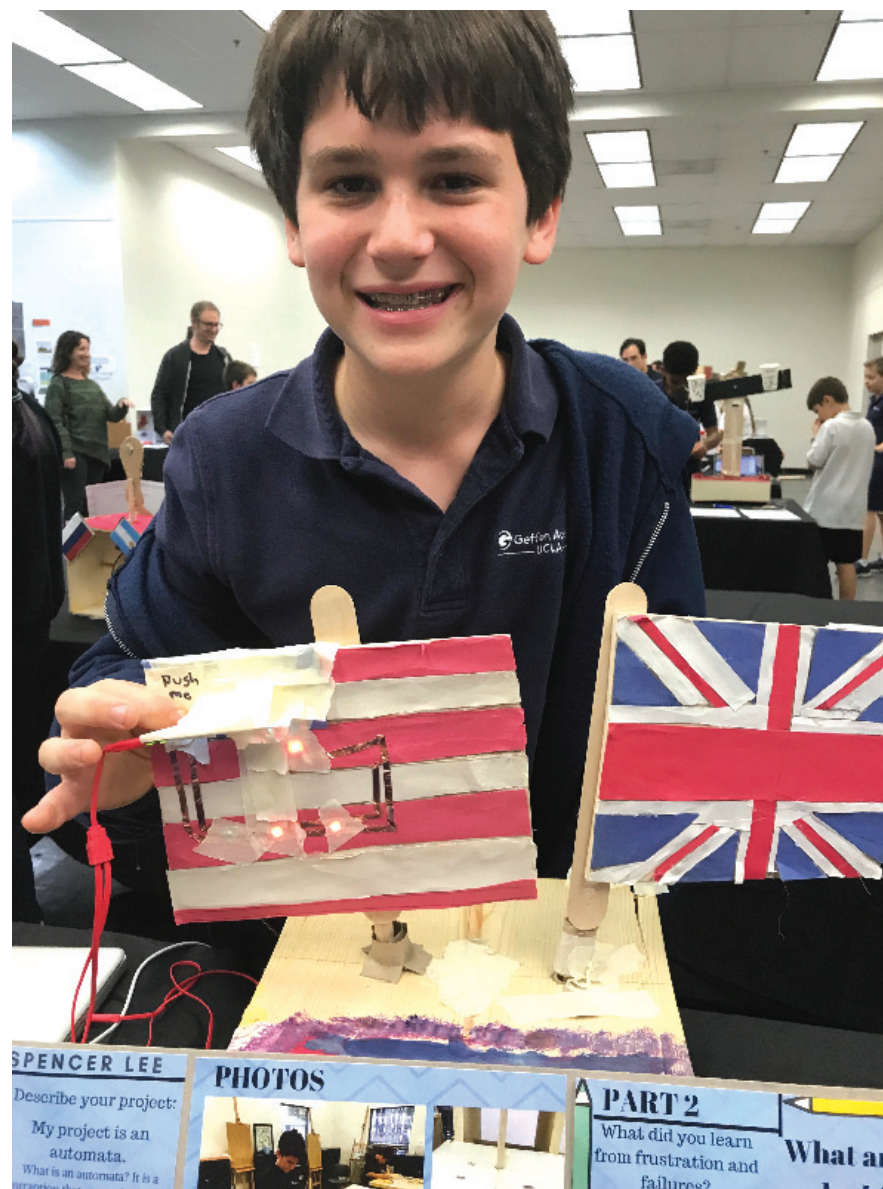
In addition to a rigorous academic workload, students also take art, music, theater, I-track



(design/innovation lab), PE and have a choice of World Languages. There is also a Wellness component to their schedule. Knowing how over-scheduled and highly stressed kids often are, Geffen has built into its curriculum classes dedicated to mental health and how best to handle problems and issues facing kids today. Geffen is a private school but its price tag is significantly lower than other elite Los Angeles institutions and, thanks to David Geffen's endowment, financial aid is readily available so that no child is turned away due to financial hardship.

As far as getting in to Geffen, there is no mandatory standardized test to take for acceptance. However, instead of test results, Geffen looks to a student's written application, transcripts and former teachers' recommendations before conducting an in-person interview. Then there is a determination as to whether the school is a good fit for the student and family. Which is to say, it's definitely not the ideal school for everyone who applies. Startups are hard for individuals who are not terribly "go-with-the-flow." As pioneer families, we have been expected to accept small bumps in the road knowing that this is a brand new school trying to find its way. I have to say, though, the bumps have been minimal and it's really an impressive feat to see how far the school has come in only the few short months it's been in existence.

So, all of this to say that if you happen to go to Westwood and notice a big group of happy, adventurous students walking through the village together, you'll be a bit more familiar with their new school called the Geffen Academy at UCLA. We feel blessed and lucky to be a part of it.



My featured listings

BEN LEE PROPERTIES

Beverlywood - ACTIVE!

3 Bed / 3 Bath 2,245 Sq. Ft.



2407 Bagley Ave – \$1,875,000

Warm and inviting, this traditional style is as charming as it is efficient. Perched above one of the most family friendly streets in the neighborhood. Oversized windows in every room allows for natural light to stream in from every corner. Hardwood floors, wainscoting and crowned moldings shape the personality of the formal dining room and living room. The kitchen offers attractive granite counters, stainless refrigerator and glass cabinetry. Located in the award winning Castle Heights Elementary school district, this winsome home is sure to bring comfort and happiness to whoever inhabits it next.

Cheviot Hills - ACTIVE!

4 Bed / 4.5 Bath 3,075 Sq. Ft.



2826 Medill Place – \$3,095,000

This is a rare opportunity to inhabit an authentic yet updated mid-century modern dream home with arguably one of the most breathtaking views in all of Cheviot Hills. Perfect for the connoisseur who appreciates the beauty and style of 1950's architecture yet with a modern-day sensibility. High ceilings and open dining and living spaces punctuated by floor to ceiling glass doors allows for light to pour in from every angle. Located in the award winning Castle Heights School district, this once-in-a-lifetime chance to call such a special property 'home' should not be missed.

Cheviot Hills - COMING SOON!

5 Bed / 5 Bath 3,842 Sq. Ft., 7,444 Sq. Ft. Lot



2742 Forrester Dr – \$3,295,000

Pacific Palisades - ACTIVE!

5 Bed / 4 Bath 4,100 Sq. Ft., 8,276 Sq. Ft. Lot



515 Muskingum Ave – \$3,195,000 Great new price!

Newer Mediterranean set on a quiet loop street with unobstructed ocean, canyon & mountain views. Bright & dramatic entry leads to wide open living & family rooms with bar/lounge area. Step down to the spacious dining off center-island kitchen – all opening up to huge entertaining deck & views. Five large bedrooms, 4 baths + several balconies, view decks & covered patios. Lower level storage area, etc. (additional 1,200 sq. ft.) with 12-ft. ceiling opens to patio & view.

Cheviot Hills - ACTIVE!

5 Bed / 6.5 Bath



2715 Forrester Dr – \$5,549,000 Great new price!

Luxurious Hamptons retreat on the most coveted street in Cheviot Hills, impeccably designed and newly constructed estate by Diamond West Distinctive Homes. Artfully detailed wainscoting and intricate custom built-ins. Greeted by a formal living room with fireplace and bay window, pass the formal dining room with butler's pantry to enter the gorgeous gourmet kitchen. This dazzling property, unmatched in location is truly an opportunity that cannot be missed.

COMING SOON!

Cheviot Hills - JUST LEASED!

3 Bed / 2 Bath



10272 Kilrenny Ave – \$6,500 p/mo.

Cheviot Hills - IN ESCROW!

5 Bed / 4.5 Bath 4,599 Sq. Ft.



3001 Dannyhill Dr – \$4,195,000

This newly constructed Newport-style home in the highly coveted Cheviot Hills' Country Club Estates. Hardwood floors, wainscoting and crown moldings throughout. Beyond the beauty of the kitchen is a view of the backyard complete with tropical palm trees, patio, pool, hot tub and pool house. Paired with the formal living room with marble fire place, formal dining room with butler's pantry and a temperature-controlled wine room, you are ready to entertain.

Westwood - IN ESCROW!

5 Bed / 5 Bath



1951 Kelton Ave – \$3,095,000

A symphony of colors and textures set against the backdrop of a recently remodeled, Mediterranean-style family home. The formal living room seamlessly merges with the formal dining room. These rooms extend to the expansive kitchen and great room, both featuring a glorious view of the picturesque backyard. Conveniently located in the highly coveted Westwood Charter Elementary School District and a stone's throw to all the shops and restaurants on Westwood Blvd.

JUST LEASED!

Beverlywood happenings

Happy 100th Tutu!

By Ben Lee

I wanted to wish my grandmother, Eleanor 'Tutu' Lee, a very happy 100th birthday! Born in Chicago, Illinois on March 21, 1918, Tutu moved to Rancho Park in the 1940s with her husband Milton and two young sons (my dad, Jeff and his brother, my Uncle Joe). Once settled in LA, my grandparents enjoyed a variety of activities but their favorite pastime was traveling to Hawaii. From those trips came an everlasting love of Hawaiian dance and culture. Tutu learned over 800 traditional Hawaiian dances from the masters of the day and then began a lengthy career teaching others. For nearly sixty years, my grandmother taught generations of students Hawaiian dance, first at Cheviot Hills Recreation Center and later at the Westside Pavilion. She has been celebrated through various Hawaiian cultural organizations and has performed at luaus all over the United States, as well as Tahiti. When our eldest son was a kindergartener at Castle Heights Elementary, Tutu, at 92 years old, taught over 100 kids how to properly do the hula and they were absolutely transfixed by her grace, charm and beautiful warmth. There's something so special watching someone doing what she truly loves—perhaps that's one reason why she's made it to 100 years old. Happy birthday, sweet Tutu. We love you!



Milton 'Mahi' and Eleanor 'Tutu' Lee

Eataly!

By Ben Lee

Congratulations to Cheviot Hills Resident Ross Miller! You are the lucky winner of February's raffle, a \$50 gift certificate to the new British Pub and restaurant: The Stalking Horse on Pico. We hope you enjoy all the delicious fish & chips and pot pies The Stalking Horse has to offer. To everyone who entered but didn't win this month, don't worry—there is always another raffle right around the corner. This month Ben Lee Properties will be raffling off a \$50 gift card to the new Century City sensation: Eataly. All you have to do is send an email to: ben@benleeproperties.com and write 'EATALY' in the subject line. That's it! We'll draw a winner at random at the end of the month. Good luck and thanks, in advance, for participating in our monthly raffle giveaways.



If there is a community event with which you are involved and would like mentioned in this publication, feel free to reach out:

ben@benleeproperties.com or (310) 858-5489. Thank you!

Westside Places

By Michael Harris

Huntington Library and Gardens in San Marino is an absolute requirement for a visit and one can not go often enough. The over 100 acres of grounds include the spectacular Japanese Gardens, Chinese Gardens, and Desert Gardens. The visit must include as well the Huntington original mansion and a wonderful library and art collection. The day would not be

complete without enjoying the tea room which provides a high tea style lunch with an infinite variety of sandwiches, salads and desserts. This is a must see and must visit for everyone. The movies that have filmed there include, Mame, Charlie's Angels, the Wedding Planner, Memoirs of a Geisha and Romeo and Juliet. Even if you have been in the past a re-visit will always reward with new blooms and acquisitions and of course that tea room.



Huntington Library and Gardens