

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

VIEWBOOK





Trail restoration at Santa Cruz Island

EXPERIENCE YOUR EDUCATION

On a hilltop overlooking the Ojai Valley is a special place where outgoing, intellectually curious students come to live and learn. It is a place where students make lifelong friends in a warm family environment, a place where students learn inside and outside the classroom, whether experimenting in the chemistry lab or testing their confidence on the climbing wall. It is a place where students develop the character and critical thinking to excel in college and beyond.

As a student at Ojai Valley School, you will meet experienced teachers with a deep understanding of the subjects they teach and a passion to share their knowledge with students who care about learning. Our academic program offers an array of college preparatory and Advanced Placement courses, as well as unique interdisciplinary and hands-on classes such as Equine Science, Journalism, Robotics, and Environmental Justice. Beyond academics, students have the opportunity to participate in athletics, equestrian, clubs, community service activities, outdoor education, adventure sports, and much more.

Our graduates attend some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. But they also leave with qualities that don't show up on a high school transcript: a strong work ethic, a sense of integrity and responsibility, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and a respect for the natural world.

“

I got involved in everything from running cross country and playing volleyball to knitting and building bird houses. OVS has given me the opportunity to do all of these things, and I'm incredibly lucky.”

Eugene Fisher (L19, U23)
New York University





View from the Upper Campus

WELCOME TO OVS

“

Ojai Valley School offers a distinctive place for learning — a coeducational, boarding and day school serving students from preschool through high school — on two campuses in the beautiful Ojai Valley. It is a home-away-from-home for students from around the world, and a tight-knit community as evidenced by the warm greetings teachers and students exchange and the life-long friendships they form.



Academically, the curriculum provides an intellectually challenging experience for students as they prepare for college and beyond. They learn to participate, to be respectful, to work both collaboratively and independently, to love challenges, to reach beyond limits, to strive for excellence, to try again if they fail and, ultimately, to value themselves. They graduate with character and a sense of responsibility, but even more so, with a feeling of confidence that they can make a positive difference in a rapidly changing world.

There have been many changes to our high school in recent years, including new classrooms and science labs, an expanded curriculum, renovations to our dormitories, and construction of a spacious new dining hall and library complex, the Littlefield Student Commons. But the sense of family that pervades our Upper Campus remains unchanged, as does our belief that every student has potential – and in our environment that potential can be realized.

I hope that after reading this viewbook you will want to visit and see for yourself the energy, spirit and love of learning that thrives at Ojai Valley School.

Lars Kuelling
Head of School



Hiking in Sespe Wilderness, circa 1960

HISTORY AND TRADITION

In the early part of the 20th century, a distinguished Eastern couple settled in the beautiful Ojai Valley and opened a small private school. Little did they know it would be flourishing more than 110 years later.

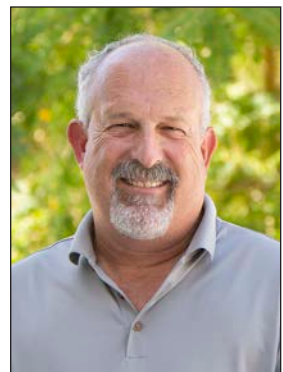
Edward Yeomans, a Chicagoan educated at Phillips Academy and Princeton University, had written a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* on the need for educational reform. The articles caught the eye of a wealthy businessman, Frank Frost, who persuaded Yeomans to move to Ojai and create a school that would embody his very modern ideas. At the core of Yeomans' beliefs was the concept that children learn best through experience. Yeomans considered his own education to have been dull and stifling, and wanted to establish a school that would emphasize experiential learning and a love for the outdoors. He envisioned a place where music, art and woodshop would be taught alongside math, history, and languages. Yeomans declared that "Integer Vitae" – meaning the wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore poise and strength of life – would become the school's motto and philosophy. "The truth of every subject taught," he wrote, "is the emotion and the music at the center of it; and the fact of life is that we miss it all if we miss the joy."

Today, the breadth of learning experiences offered at OVS is Yeoman's legacy. The school has grown from a one-room classroom serving 12 pupils to a boarding and day school on two campuses for 320 students in Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. But its values, spirit and pursuit of joy remain the same.

“

My education at Ojai Valley School began as a boarding student at the Upper Campus. Back then, as now, many of the most important lessons were taught outside the classroom, and learning was reinforced by the examples my teachers set and the experiences in which I was a participant.”

Craig Floyd (U83)
Head of Upper Campus





Literature discussion in Humanities class

ACADEMICS

At Ojai Valley School, you will find an academic program that is both challenging and engaging. We know that a competitive world waits for you beyond high school. An OVS education will give you the academic edge, individual attention, problem solving, and critical thinking skills you need to succeed.

During your freshman and sophomore years, you will develop study skills and a solid academic foundation in English, math, science, foreign language, social science, and visual & performing arts. As a junior and senior, you will choose from a variety of Advanced Placement and interdisciplinary courses. Ojai Valley School's location, adjacent to the national forest and a short boat ride from the Channel Islands National Park, provides the ideal setting for hands-on field studies and distinctive Land and Climate courses such as Environmental History, Marine Science, and Literature of the Wilderness.

Through your academic journey, dedicated teachers will lead your classes — teachers whose knowledge and passion for learning is contagious. They will encourage you to engage in class discussions and empower you to reach your academic potential. Because our classes are small, averaging about 12 students, your teachers will come to know where you might need help and where you might be ready to take on a bigger challenge.

Beyond the classroom, you will be assigned a faculty advisor who will oversee your academic progress. Your advisor will meet with you regularly and be a point of contact for your parents. Our College Counselor will also work with you and your family to help navigate the university admission process and help you find the "right fit" college to continue your education.

“

The best part of my job is the people. I absolutely love the community, the family feel, getting to know the students, the families, the teachers — nobody gets lost like you would at a big school.”

Laurel Colborn
Assistant Head of Upper Campus for Academics
Law & Society, Government and AP Research





Cast and crew of *Chicago: Teen Edition*

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Ojai Valley School's founding father Edward Yeomans once observed that some people believe you can get by without the arts. He also observed that you could get by being color blind, but you would miss much of the richness and beauty of nature. It is that belief – that a life without the arts misses much of life's richness and beauty – that drives the Visual and Performing Arts program at Ojai Valley School.

Ojai is known throughout the world as a Mecca for artists and musicians. Visitors are drawn here for the many art galleries and the annual Ojai Music Festival that brings world-renowned musicians to the community every spring. At OVS, our curriculum offers 22 courses in the Visual and Performing Arts, including Drawing, Ceramics I and II, Introduction to Music-Making: Composition, Mixing, and Production, Music Theory and Composition, Piano, Guitar, Photography, Media and Digital Design, Video Production I and II, Woodworking I and II, and Advanced Placement art courses.

All students must complete one full year of an arts course as a graduation requirement. For those passionate about pursuing the arts in college, OVS offers a pathway that can lead to some of the finest arts schools in the country. Recent graduates have attended Rhode Island School of Design, California Institute of the Arts, Pratt Institute, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, and the Berklee College of Music.

OVS students also have the opportunity to participate in art exhibits, musical productions, and talent shows presented in our beautiful outdoor amphitheater. Video Production students produce a broadcast news show and AP Art students enjoy creative space for fashion design and other projects in our new art classroom, The Studio.

“

My OVS teachers were instrumental in helping me get into Berklee. So much of my musicianship came from them. I am grateful to have these connections and even into my first year at college they continued to motivate and help me as I navigated through the year. They have been like family to me.”

Alex Alvarez (L18, U22)
Berklee College of Music









Cross country team at home meet

ATHLETICS

Grab your cleats and pack your tennis racket. At Ojai Valley School, a well-rounded educational experience includes participation in our athletic program. Here, sports give students an opportunity to learn how to push themselves, stay healthy and work as members of a team.

OVS students compete in basketball, baseball, golf, volleyball, track, cross country, lacrosse, flag football and soccer. OVS is a member of the Omega League, which competes with other independent schools in Southern California. OVS athletic facilities include tennis courts, baseball, soccer and lacrosse fields, a 3-mile cross country course, and a heated pool available for recreational swimming or intramural water sports.

OVS also has access to stunning canyon trails for hiking, running, and mountain biking – and the Dawn Patrol surf club takes advantage of world class surf breaks and spectacular Pacific Ocean views. Every student participates in some way in the athletic program throughout his or her time at OVS, whether as a player or a team manager. You may have never touched a golf club or a lacrosse stick, but you will have an opportunity to give it a try. By the time you graduate, you will have participated in a variety of sports and physical activities and gained a lifelong respect for teamwork and the benefits of exercise.

“

One of my favorite things about OVS students is the incredible amount of support they give each other to cross over into other areas of school life — athletes in musical performances, students creating clubs or trying new sports. The school community really embraces and encourages you to go and try things you wouldn't normally try. The doors are open to all students who want to open them.”

Brad Weidlich
English 9 and English 12
Boys Basketball and Girls Lacrosse





Outdoor exploration at Canyonlands in Utah

OUTDOORS

It is easy to feel overwhelmed with the rapid pace of new technology. At OVS, we want students to learn how to adapt and work responsibly with tech. At the same time, we also want students to unplug and learn to navigate trails as well as websites, and to discover that beyond search engines, there are journeys.

The outdoor program is a core part of the educational experience at Ojai Valley School. On both campuses, students are introduced to the stunning mountains, canyons, deserts, and beaches of the West, while learning how to respect and care for our fragile environment. It is an experience that will introduce students to some of the most breathtaking mountains, canyons, deserts, forests and coastlines in the Western United States, and one that will teach how to respect and care for our fragile environment.

During the fall semester, high school students spend four or five days at a time base camping or backpacking in the wilderness – bonding in ways they have never imagined. OVS alumni often say it was the lessons learned on these trips that they remember most. Students also get to test their mettle on the climbing wall, learn wilderness first aid and CPR training, and experience the wonder of places like Yosemite, Joshua Tree, the Channel Islands, the Los Padres National Forest, the Colorado and Rogue Rivers, and much more.

When you shuck your pack at the end of the trail, you will discover that these experiences are character building, soul enriching and just plain fun!

“

The honors rafting trip on the Colorado River is a favorite. What it lacks in whitewater, it makes up for in stunning rugged beauty, silent solitude and maze-like slot canyons. A highlight for me is the floating flotilla of music where students and faculty alike join in songs as they drift through the final miles of the canyon.”

Zach Byars
Outdoor Education Coordinator and Geology





Dressage lesson at Upper Campus arena

EQUESTRIAN

Ojai Valley School is known throughout the region for its riding program, which is designed for both beginners and advanced equestrians. Working with horses requires patience, sensitivity, persistence and good judgment – qualities OVS strives to instill in all its students. At OVS, our professionally trained instructors literally know how to ease beginners into the saddle, and they are equally skilled at teaching advanced equestrians how to maneuver a dressage test or a cross-country jumping course.

Every day after their academic classes, OVS equestrians walk to the stable on our Upper Campus to ride as their sport activity. Students are assigned a horse and are responsible for its daily care, grooming, and exercise. The school owns about 40 horses and students are encouraged to ride different ones throughout the year as each horse teaches something new. Students also can arrange to board their own horses at OVS during the school year.

The goal of the Equestrian Program is to teach self-confidence, responsibility, maturity and an interest in horse sports. Students ride English and Western styles and may participate in horse camping trips and trail rides. Many students achieve basic skills and ride only for recreation, while others choose to participate in horse shows as part of our competitive equestrian team.

“

My first year at OVS I did sports like cross country and basketball. But then I thought, most schools don't have equestrian, so I should just try it out for one semester. I didn't think it would turn into something I love so much ... Empathy, dedication, perseverance, and trust are the many things that the OVS horseback riding program have taught me, and I implement them into my everyday life.”

Ellen Hou (U18)

Savannah College of Art and Design, Equestrian Team member





Dinner outside Commons, overlooking the valley

RESIDENT LIFE

Living away from home for the first time can be exciting and, maybe, a bit scary. Fortunately, you will quickly come to consider OVS your second home, a community where you will forge lasting friendships. It will start with your roommate. Some of the strongest friendships form when roommates are from different parts of the country or even different countries. These friendships form when you discover that no matter how different your backgrounds, you have much in common.

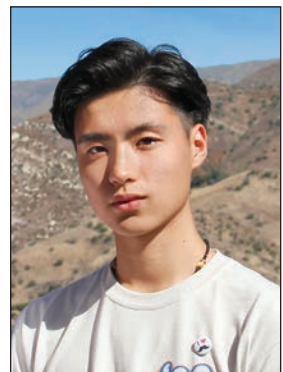
During the week, you will eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner in our spacious new dining hall. The dress code is casual, except for nights when we have formal Dress Dinner, which is sometimes followed by a student art exhibit or guest lecture. On most nights, you will have study hall and the opportunity to collaborate on assignments with peers.

On weekends, there are planned activities to add a little fun and relaxation to the school week. You might stroll around downtown Ojai or Santa Barbara, or visit the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. There may be an organized surf trip or a BBQ in your dorm. There also are school dances, karaoke parties, and down time to watch movies in the common room with friends. One thing is certain: as a resident student, you will make deep, enduring friendships that will last long after you have graduated from Ojai Valley School.

“

What OVS offered me was a home away from home. Not only the stunning campus but the amazing faculty and staff that embraces you with open arms, enlightening you with the ability to tackle any obstacles in the world!”

Joshua Hsu (U20)
Michigan State University





PERFECTLY PLACED

Ojai Valley School is ideally situated to take advantage of the best California has to offer — whether it's adventures in the big city or the back country. Surrounded by the stunning Los Padres National Forest, OVS is also just a 90-minute drive to Los Angeles, and students here get the benefit of it all.

People travel from across the globe to see places that are right in our backyard. Just a few hours' drive will find you rock climbing in the rugged deserts of Joshua Tree National Park, or exploring Redwood forests in Big Sur, or taking selfies with Mickey Mouse at Disneyland.

Imagine waking up early to go surfing before school, and staying up late to catch an NBA game. Imagine Marine Science lessons at the Channel Islands National Park, and getting inspiration for your AP Art project at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Imagine passionate teachers right there with you, tying each of these world-class experiences into the curriculum, in ways that will stick with you long after you've graduated.



OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL, UPPER CAMPUS

10820 Reeves Road, Ojai, CA 93023

For more information, contact the OVS Admissions Office:
(805) 646-1423, Ext. 1259 | admission@ovs.org

WWW.OVS.ORG

**OJAI
VALLEY
SCHOOL**



“The truth of every subject taught is the emotion and the music at the center of it; and the fact of life is that we miss it all if we miss the joy.”
- Edward Yeomans