



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Media Contacts: Kristian Keeney  
1-619-933-3881

Doreen Smillie  
1-760-846-0599

### **Eight St. James Academy Students Recognized for Academic Excellence and Awarded High Honors by The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth**

**Solana Beach, California - May 19, 2009** – Eight students from St. James Academy were recently honored at a statewide awards ceremony for gifted children held by The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY).

The students, Anna Maria Couvrette (6th), Josh Dillen (6<sup>th</sup>), Thomas Gascho (5th), Rex Hammock (6th), Patrice Nguyen (4<sup>th</sup>), Wyatt Schmitt (5th), Casey Toohill (6th) and Spencer Whitney (4th) were invited to the awards ceremony sponsored by CTY ([www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu)) based on an exceptional performance on a rigorous, above-grade-level test given to second through eighth grade Talent Search participants. Seventh and eighth graders took the SAT or ACT—the same tests used for college admissions. Second through sixth graders took the SCAT, an above-level test scaled for younger students.

Since 1979, CTY has sought the most academically able elementary- and middle school students each year and encouraged their enrollment in CTY's annual Talent Search. Students enrolled in the Talent Search go on to test through the fall and spring.

The results of these tests give families a better idea of a child's academic talents, particularly in comparison to the thousands of other academically talented students in the Talent Search. Students can also earn recognition at CTY's awards ceremonies, and their test scores may qualify them for CTY's summer programs and distance education courses.

“We are very proud of the achievements of these students and of all our students who qualified to participate in this prestigious program,” said Mrs. Donna Kruszona, Principal of St. James Academy. “The fact that there were only 118 total recipients in all of San Diego and Riverside County Regions is testimony to our strong academic focus.”

In 2007-08 alone, over 63,000 students from 19 states and the District of Columbia participated in the Talent Searches offered through CTY. About 30% of the 2nd and 6th graders who tested this winter earned an invitation to CTY's Awards Ceremony, and about 25% of the 7th and 8th grade testers earned an invitation to an Awards Ceremony.

The St. James Academy recipients joined other award recipients at the recent state ceremony, where they were individually honored by Johns Hopkins for their academic performance and promise.

"With our annual award ceremonies, we're committed to giving these exceptional young people a stage on which to recognize their academic achievements, just as we celebrate achievements in athletics or the performing arts," said CTY executive director, Lea Ybarra. "Their performance places them in the top tier of students taking these tests, and they certainly deserve acclaim." Who gets the credit for success? "The students," said Dr. Ybarra. "They possess an academic fearlessness and intellectual ability that will benefit their entire generation."

Leading them to their success, she said, are parents and educators. "Parents who support and encourage their children, and teachers who inspire through their knowledge and passion for a subject, create engaged young people who are well prepared to lead and shape tomorrow's world."

California's 2009 Awards Ceremonies were scheduled at Santa Clara University on Sunday, May 3; California State University - East Bay, California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, and University of San Diego on Saturday, May 16; California State University - Los Angeles on Saturday, May 30; and University of San Francisco on Sunday, May 31.

#### **About St. James Academy**

St. James Academy is a Catholic (K-8) Elementary School serving North San Diego County coastal communities, including Solana Beach, Del Mar, Carmel Valley, Encinitas, Rancho Santa Fe, Carlsbad and La Costa. St. James Academy is part of the St. James Catholic Community, which also includes St. James Church and St. Leo's Mission. St. James Academy is currently taking applications for the 2009 – 2010 Academic Year. For more information, go to: [www.saintjamesacademy.com](http://www.saintjamesacademy.com) or call 1-858-755-1777.

#### **About The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY)**

CTY conducts the nation's oldest and most extensive academic talent search and offers educational programming for students with exceptionally high academic ability. CTY parallels and complements, a gifted child's regular school experience. CTY's programs and students have been profiled in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, and other premier American publications. Other information:

- \* CTY is a nonprofit center at The Johns Hopkins University.
- \* CTY draws students from 50 states, as well as students from almost 120 countries.
- \* 2007-08 saw over 63,000 second- through eighth graders in CTY's Talent Searches.
- \* CTY provided \$5.3 million in financial aid to over 1,700 students in 2007-08.
- \* In the 2007-08 Talent Search, 19.7% of students in CTY's Talent Search were identified as underrepresented.
- \* Gifted students qualifying for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program may join the Talent Search virtually for free.