

SHERMAN OAKS SUN

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AUGUST 11-17, 2006



SUNDIAL COMMUNITY CALENDAR

COMMUNITY

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council

Meets second Mon. of each month. 6:30pm. Next meeting Aug. 14. Candidate filing forms for SONC elections. Aug. 11. Sherman Oaks Elementary School Library, 14755 Greenleaf St. (818) 503-2399. www.shermanoakscnc.org

Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association Community Meeting

Meets the third Wed. of each month. Next meeting Aug. 16. 6:30pm social, 7:30pm meeting. 14130 Riverside Drive. (818) 377-4590. www.sohainfo.com. Past meetings are webcast at www.la36.org/soha/soha.html

Sherman Oaks Galleria's Live Summer Entertainment

Cool jazz, Latin fusion and rock n' roll bands provide free outdoor ambiance at the Galleria on summer weekends. Through Sept. 2, Fri-Sat nights. Aug. 11: Mark Harrison Quintet. Aug. 12: Gina Eckstiene. 7-10 pm. 15301 Ventura Blvd. (818) 382-4100. www.shermanoaksgalleria.com/live

Relay for Life at Walter Reed Middle School

Team up with family or friends for an overnight relay walk/run to benefit the American Cancer Society. 10am, August 12 to 10am, August 13. North Hollywood Kiwanis pancake breakfast, Aug. 13, 8am and 9:30am. 4525 Irvine Ave. in North Hollywood. To start a team, call (213) 427-7295

SFV Chapter of Health Care for All Rally and Screening

March from Whitsett and Ventura with banners announcing the OneCareNOW Campaign—a 365 day, 365 event, 365 city grassroots movement to support Senator Sheila Kuehl's bill that would provide comprehensive health insurance for all California residents. Screening of "The Healthcare Solution: California OneCare" with Q & A at Sun Community Newspapers following the rally. 4017 Radford Avenue, S.C. Rally begins at 4:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 18

"Cars, Carnivores and Chaos" at Blue Velvet Salon and Art Gallery

Art reception and cocktail party for hot rod, rockabilly, surf and Kustom Kulture artist Kent Reppert, II. Aug. 12, 7-10pm. Blue Velvet, 11923 Ventura Blvd. in Studio City. www.uccnhjayceeschildspree.org

Town Hall Meeting with Congressman Brad Sherman

Join in dialogues with the Congressman about education, health care, social security and foreign policy. Refreshments and parking, free. August 24, 7:30-9pm. Reseda High School, 18230 Kittridge St. (818) 501-9200

Salsa and Swing Thursdays at the Atrium National Center

Aug. 17: Susie Hansen's Latin Band. Aug. 24: Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad. Aug. 31: Big Town Seven. \$5 admission. 6-9pm. 4700 Western Heritage Way, L.A. (323) 667-2000, ext. 327

Councilmember Wendy Gruel's Community Picnic

Enjoy lunch with 2nd district Councilmember Wendy Gruel. Saturday, Sept. 9, 11am-2pm. Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Park, 14201 Houston St. in Van Nuys

11th Annual ONEgeneration Miles of Smiles Walk & Run Fundraiser

Food, entertainment, children's games and information booths. Team up to raise money for the organization, which provides services to children, families and seniors. Saturday, Sept. 30, 8:30am-12:30pm at Lake Balboa in Van Nuys. Contact Karen Srouf at (818) 708-6618 *continued on page 20*

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Dance duo brings a touch of "Fame" to innovative Valley school

Otis and Kyme Sallid teach CHAMPS students the steps to success

BY LYNN MILLS

They've trained under such legendary dancers as Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham. Their resumes boast credits from stage, screen and television, as well as prestigious nominations and awards.

So what brings Otis and Kyme Sallid to the gymnasium of a 50-year-old Van Nuys church—the new home of CHAMPS (Charter High School of the Arts - Multimedia and Performing) — on a hot Saturday in July?

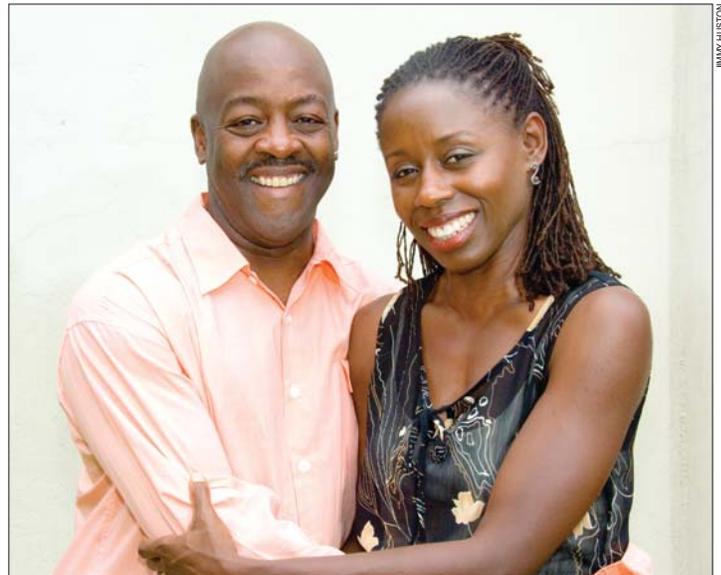
A vision. "It is our interest to create a world-class institution in (the) San Fernando Valley," explains Otis. "That is our dream."

With school opening in five weeks, their dream still has a long way to go.

Otis and his wife, Kyme, co-directors of the CHAMPS Performing Arts Academy (the independent charter is school is entering its second year), are auditioning prospective students.

The dance floor is just a blue taped outline on the scuffed gym floorboards for now. While parents and students work at warp-speed painting classrooms, three nervous kids stand with crossed arms as Kyme patiently demonstrates basic ballet positions at the barre.

"You can do this," she encourages, as they mimic her ever more complicated combinations. "Free it up—don't think, 'Oh,



Otis and Kyme Sallid, co-directors of CHAMPS Performing Arts Academy

ballet!' I'm just walking across the floor." It's a far cry from the brutal audition scene in "A Chorus Line."

The Sallids have won over students with their combination of no-nonsense and nurturing — once the students decided they could live with the requirement that they wear tights in dance class.

Past students describe them as tough, relaxed, funny and approachable — often mutually exclusive terms — and note

that their instruction goes beyond the classroom.

"We teach more than steps here — we're teaching life lessons to these kids that they'll have forever," Kyme explains. "The skills I've learned from training in dance, I've used in every aspect of my life. There's a sense of commitment, discipline, how to work with others."

Sophomore Toppacio Rodriguez described the training experience as "hard, but fun."

"My body started molding into what I needed it to be, so I started getting in shape, eating healthier. Kyme and Otis taught me a lot of good things. Respecting other people was the biggest thing I learned."

Emma Hunton, who woke up at 4 a.m. every day to commute to CHAMPS from San Bernardino, said the toil was worth it. "They really are wonderful teachers...I've never had teachers like them who I can ask for advice and honestly get an answer that shows that they really do care."

As an independent charter school, CHAMPS receives its funding from the state and is not affiliated with LAUSD — or the church where its facilities are located. That gave the Sallids freedom this year to model it after Manhattan's legendary High School of Performing Arts (made famous in *Fame*), from which they both graduated.

Students take four classes in their per- *continued on page 8*

Villaraigosa outlines LAUSD plans at LAVC town hall meeting

BY RACHEL HELLER

Addressing an overflow crowd of public school teachers and parents, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa laid out his plans to reform the nation's second-largest school district August 3 in a town hall meeting at Los Angeles Valley College.

State Senators Gloria Romero (D-24), Richard Alarcon (D-20) and 2nd district City Councilmember Wendy Gruel all voiced support for legislation the Mayor said would help Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) administrators, teachers and parents work together



to improve student education.

"A strong city is one in which we have a strong economy, a strong educational system and a way in which *continued on page 5*

BACK TO SCHOOL

CARD_v_023

• Between 0 to 1 •

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
100									

- How many numbers are there between 0 to 1 (not including 0 and 1)?
- How many numbers are there between 0 to 10 (not including 0 and 10)?
- How many numbers are there between 0 to 100 (not including 0 and 100)?
- How many numbers are there between 0 to 1,000 (not including 0 and 1,000)?
- What is the general rule for how many numbers there are between 0 to a given number?

TOPIC: Number Theory
COMMENT: Compare with "From..."

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Have your child do the math problem above. Does this problem challenge your child? Did they use their fingers to figure it out? If so, then call Nooneh and Mathnasium. She'll be happy to help your child better understand "Math Sense".

SALLID from page 1

forming arts major – music, drama or dance – and five academic classes, making for a long school day that lasts from 7:52 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Kyme, who once endured that schedule on top of a 90-minute commute to and from the Bronx, tells prospective parents, "It was the best! We were doing our art; we were together and committed. There was no one getting in trouble, no getting into drugs."

After Fame high school, both Kyme and Otis built impressive resumes.

A Harlem native, Otis won a scholarship to Julliard and performed in Broadway shows including *Me and Bessie*, playing opposite Linda Hopkins. He wrote and choreographed musicals such as *Smokey Joe's Café* (the longest running musical review on Broadway), choreographed the Academy Awards, the T.V. series *Fame*, and movies including *Swing Kids* and Spike Lee's *School Daze*. Recently, he directed, choreographed and produced the opening number for the 2006 Super Bowl, starring Stevie Wonder.

Otis sees his continuing work in the industry as an advantage to his students. "It allows me to stay up with the latest technology and thinking that's going on around the country. At Performing Arts, the teachers were working. They were in Broadway shows; they were in all the big dance companies."

Kyme is what's known in theater as a "triple threat" – equally talented as a dancer, singer and actress. After college at SUNY Purchase, she performed on Broadway and in world tours of *Black and Blue*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, as well as starring in *School Daze*.

She has also taught dance in South Central, often for free. "I've been so blessed to have studied with masters... for me, teaching was giving back."

Possessing the same "pass it forward" philosophy, Otis has always taught as well. He frequently brings Millikan Middle School's performing arts students on-set for learning experiences – that's how he met Dr. Norman Isaacs, former principal of Millikan and founder of CHAMPS.

"Otis is much more than a dance teacher," says Dr. Isaacs. "He's a father



Kyme Sallid gives instruction in basic ballet moves.

figure; he's a disciplinarian. He basically provides what these children need. Kyme is a role model. We're extremely fortunate that we've been able to get people of this caliber. We couldn't afford them unless they really wanted to do it."

Academics are as important as the arts at CHAMPS.

Last year, when drama major James Cowan's grades plummeted, he was told he must maintain a C-average or he'd be out of dance class. "That was my motivation to work harder in math. I went from an F to an A," he recalls proudly. "They taught me a great deal about responsibility – they pushed me."

With the Sallids, students basically gain an at-school family. "I guess it's good that we're family people teaching here because those kinds of values are instilled in the students without our saying it," notes Otis.

The couple's sunny nine-year-old daughter, Micah, is like a beloved sibling at CHAMPS. Dancing since she was 17 months old – "She 'hoofs' just like an adult," says Kyme – Micah helps her mother teach class when she has a day off school.

While Otis says CHAMPS graduates will be ready for Julliard, Yale's drama school, Carnegie Mellon and Boston Conservatory, they're not all expected to become performers.

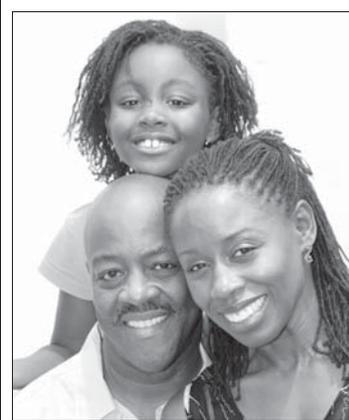
"I would love some of these kids to be lawyers and doctors and community leaders, because they'll have a real sense of the arts. It changes the dynamic of who they are."

Otis believes learning to focus is the key to success in life. "It boils down to focus. We're asking them to do one thing. If you can do this one thing extremely well, you can do a lot of things extremely well, because the tenets for that one thing – the focus, the discipline of that one thing – transcend a whole bunch of other things that you might want to do."

At the audition, lounging in a red plush theater seat but watching intently, Otis explains that the kids don't need to be great performers to get into CHAMPS – they just need an "expressed interest in the arts."

He, for one, is confident that they can make a dancer out of anyone who harbors the desire. "Just that gleam in their eyes," he says, nodding. "I can work with that." *

Final auditions for the CHAMPS Music Academy, Drama Academy and Dance Academy will be held Friday, August 18. Call (818) 994-4744, visit www.champscharter.org or e-mail ksallid@champscharter.org.



Otis and Kyme Sallid with daughter, Micah, 9

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