

Celebrating our Silver Jubilee

By Marc Baum, Oak Crest Institute of Science | Photos by Paul Webster



As we tirelessly work to maintain our research trajectory and ensure our students have fulfilling laboratory experiences at Oak Crest, we sometimes find ourselves giving less attention to other significant milestones. This year, one such milestone was our 25th Anniversary. In this season

of gratitude, we reflect on what we cherish most, and Oak Crest and its achievements are at the forefront.

Comparing Oak Crest today to its humble beginnings in 1998 fills me with awe. Walking through our laboratories, one could easily mistake it for an institution that has always been this distinguished and well-equipped. Building Oak Crest into what it is today has been a labor of love, and I'm deeply thankful to all who have contributed to this vision. Together, we've created an institute where cutting-edge research on vital human issues seamlessly integrates with innovative teaching methods.

Our success has been the result of a collaborative team effort of dedicated scientists, research associates, and diligent administrative professionals, and even our students have consistently shown unwavering dedication and support. In many ways, they've become an extension of my family, and their successes bring me immense joy. Numerous students not only earn their bachelor's degrees but also excel in PhD programs, accomplishing remarkable feats through their own skills, knowledge, and unwavering effort. I am immensely proud of all their achievements.

To highlight the many transformational student experiences at Oak Crest over the past 25 years, I would like to focus on one

exceptional individual among them, Sylvia Pere, a recent UC Berkeley graduate and former Oak Crest Rose Hills Foundation Fellow from 2018. In March of this year, she embarked on a journey to Nairobi, Kenya, as a Fulbright Scholar, where she is being hosted by U.S. Ambassador Meg Whitman.

During her tenure at the Oak Crest Institute of Science, Sylvia was mentored by Senior Scientist Manjula Gunawardana to analyze enzymes and cytokines in vaginal samples, cultivating a deep interest in the female reproductive system. She is now continuing her exploration of female reproduction by investigating the co-occurrence of preterm birth pathogens with COVID-19 infection, in collaboration with Dr. Moses Madadi at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Dr. Madadi is a trained clinician-scientist specializing in reproductive medicine and sciences.

The Fulbright Program is dedicated to fostering mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those of other nations. Sylvia joins the ranks of past program participants who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields, a distinguished list that includes 61 Nobel Laureates, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners, 76 MacArthur Fellows, and numerous leaders in various sectors.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Sylvia for receiving this prestigious award, and we are profoundly thankful for the collective dedication, passion, and talent that have brought us to this celebratory moment. If you want to read more, let us know by dropping us a line at media@oak-crest.org to find out how to keep Oak Crest in the news. Happy Silver Jubilee to Oak Crest and Happy Thanksgiving to all!



Sylvia Pere



Oak Crest Institute of Science (Oak Crest) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to teach and conduct cutting-edge science research. The institute provides an experience-giving role in education, where students work on authentic, funded research projects and develop a sense of belonging to the STEM community.

132 W Chestnut Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016

Phone: 626-817-0883 ~ info@oak-crest.org / www.oak-crest.org