



# HONOR GRAM



La Sierra  
UNIVERSITY

HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 2

WINTER QUARTER 2013



**Discovering Science in San Diego**





## THE HONORGRAM

is a newsletter designed to inform and update Honors faculty and students as well as those who are interested in the La Sierra University Honors Program. If you have any questions or comments concerning the newsletter or ideas that you would like to contribute, please email us: [honors@lasierra.edu](mailto:honors@lasierra.edu)

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*Rachel Rojas, Paula Hernandez, and Laura Strawn Ojeda at the San Diego Zoo.*

## Sightseeing for Science Class

*by Laura Strawn Ojeda, junior Honors/English: literature major*

Thunder roared in the sky and rain crashed on the hotel roof with such ferocity that I thought the ceiling would split in two. Paula, Caitlin, Rachel, and I ran to the window and threw our room's door open. The damp air blew gently in, and we left the door gaping as we enjoyed a quiet Friday-evening worship. We were in San Diego, and our field trip with Dr. James Wilson and Dr. Lisa Kohlmeier's "UNHR 324: Science and the Future" class had just begun. When dinnertime arrived that first night, I took advantage of our hotel's (the Old Town Inn) proximity to a well-rated

Indian restaurant to walk there with two classmates. The rain had let up just enough so that we went to this place—Taste of the Himalayas, a delicious place to eat if you're ever in the area—ate, and returned before the clouds released their wet burdens once again.

On the Sabbath, the class explored the beautiful San Diego Zoo. This is one of my favorite zoos that I've been to—the Calgary Zoo in Canada is lovely as well. For some reason, zoo maps are always confusing, so my little group of four wandered around in aimless circles but ended up seeing a plethora of animals anyway: red pandas, panda bears,

meerkats (one of my favorites!), lions, elephants, koala bears, tigers (another favorite!), and the list goes on. We read the explanatory boards in front of each enclosure and saw which animals were not threatened, threatened, really threatened, or extinct in the wild.

That night, we ate in San Diego's charming Old Town at a Mexican restaurant. The flour and corn tortillas at this place were scrumptiously soft and completely homemade: we watched the cooks roll the dough out and cook each tortilla on the tortilla grill. After dinner, several students went to Extraordinary Desserts, a fancy (and crowded!) dessert place in downtown San Diego where each dessert is elaborately decorated with real flowers and gold-colored foil. I ordered a dulce de leche-and-chocolate bar, and I almost ate a white flower petal because I thought it was a sliver of white chocolate! Alas, it was only part of the adornment that graced my delightful dessert. After we received our treats we explored the streets of downtown San Diego and took pictures of the famous 'Little Italy' sign, and then we rode the train back to Old Town and our hotel.

At eleven o'clock the next morning, we headed to Balboa Park's Reuben H. Fleet Science Center. This museum is one of many that appears in Balboa Park, and it is filled with hands-on science displays and myriad eager children. I became an eager child myself as I explored all those different displays. My favorite one was a long set of coils. Each coil alternated between being warm or cold, and when touched individually, each coil stayed true to its respective temperature. When, however, I placed my hand on the coils, I jerked it off immediately because those coils burned! The description stated that the brain mixes the signals of cold and warm metal and misinterprets the coils as fiercely hot when the



**UNHR 324 students were able to study science at various locations in San Diego recently, including the Zoo (above) and Balboa Park (left).**

entire hand is placed on them. How fascinating! This was but one of the many intriguing setups to explore in the Fleet Science Center.

After I finished my explorations in the museum, I walked around Balboa Park, and during that time I got to hear the park's outdoor organ play the United States' national anthem. I enjoyed food from a tiny café that was tucked in by the Prado restaurant, and I poked my nose into every corner of the park. As I walked, the clouds billowed spectacularly in the sky above me, slate-grey remnants of Friday's storms. The Spanish-style California Bell Tower reached mightily to those clouds, and I snapped a photo of the scene on my iPhone.

Sightseeing and science became one during that weekend, and I would not have had the time or resources to do such a fun and enlightening trip on my own. I am grateful to the Honors Program and to the "Science and the Future" class for making this weekend in San Diego part of the class requirements.



# No More Nerves

by Victoria Belliard, freshman Honors/music: violin performance major

The initial adrenaline rush and excitement of moving into South Hall started to fade as I said goodbye to my family and sat alone in my new room. I was struck by the reality that in a couple of days, college would start.

Suddenly silence engulfed the dorm and I felt very young, inexperienced, and lonely. That's when I received a text from my R.A., Cidnee Walker, inviting me to hang out and enjoy some snacks. Without having to think twice I responded and made my way downstairs.

One of my prevalent concerns about being in the Honors Program was that I might feel inadequate and insignificant in a group of elite students. Those worries left me as South Hall R.A.s John Payne and Cidnee Walker spent several hours chatting and giving advice to a couple of nervous freshmen over some glasses of chocolate soymilk and a plate of cookies. Their warm, kind behavior toward us was just a taste of the quarter to come. As I headed to bed that night, I felt that I was exactly where I was supposed to be.

Once my classes started, I began to experience firsthand the benefits that had drawn me to the Honors Program. My professors challenged me to analyze my opinions and beliefs. I couldn't simply read the material for class—I had to digest the words in order to form my own view and know why I held that view. Rote answers had no place in the classroom.

My first Honors class, "Beginning to Seek," reminded me why I was in college. My professor encouraged our class to look at education as more



*It is hard for me to imagine that this past fall was only the beginning of this phase of my life, and I'm excited to see what God has in store for me in the months to come.*

than passing exams and getting a good G.P.A. Even though those things are an important aspect of college, education is a lifelong process based on the love of learning itself.

Amidst the joys and novelties of my first quarter there were definitely times where I was stressed and overwhelmed with trying to balance school, work, and my time with God and my family.

What got me through was my relationship with God and the new friendships that I made here at La Sierra University. My friends kept me laughing and reminded me of what truly matters when life gets hectic.

Often when I read the advantages of school programs on bulletins, I doubt their authenticity, but that's not the case here. So far, my experience at La Sierra in the Honors Program has surpassed my expectations.

It is hard for me to imagine that this past fall was only the beginning of this phase of my life, and I'm excited to see what God has in store for me in the months to come. Little did I know that first night—as I sat nervously in my room—how inviting the entire Honors community would be, how South Hall would turn into a second home rather than just a dorm, and what a stimulating environment for learning I would take part in.

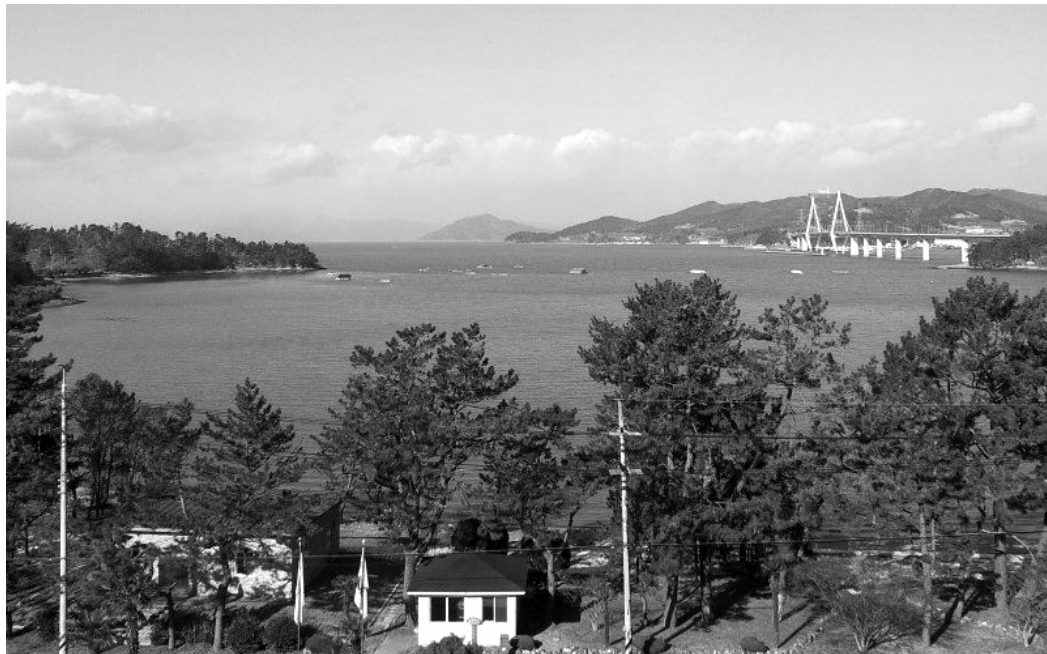
# A Promise at Sorok Island

by Luthia Chang, sophomore Honors/biology and pre-medicine major

After an exhausting fourteen-hour flight, two-hour bus ride, and thirty-minute taxi ride, I made it to Sorok Island, a place known as the last leper colony in South Korea. The facility staff warmly greeted me and showed me to my room. After I got adjusted there, I received one of their signature yellow vests to show that I was a volunteer. Along with the other volunteers, I walked to a building next door called the “Happiness Building” where I was assigned to a specific area to help. There I met many grandmothers and grandfathers who were delighted to see new faces, and we volunteers immediately got to work. We changed diapers, bed sheets, and clothes. We bathed the lepers and gave them haircuts. We fed them, gave them medication, and took them to their physical therapy, but my favorite part of all was when I got to talk to them.

Many people fear to get near these grandparents, because Hansen’s disease—leprosy—is contagious. The facility, however, did a great job of making sure that everyone stayed healthy and safe by implementing strict hand-washing techniques. This reassurance of protection from contagion pulled down the barriers between the sick and the healthy, allowing many of the volunteers to sit next to the grandparents and communicate freely with them. Seeing my fellow volunteers interact with the elderly taught me to be more willing to put myself out there as well. I pushed past any shyness I felt, and when one of the grandmas asked me to sing a song, I did so. She meant more to me than my fear of embarrassment. Because it was the holiday season, I think my experience in doing these types of things meant more than it would have during the regular part of the year, and I received far more that Christmas season than I could ever give.

One grandpa, named Yoo In-Suk, an elder at one of the



Christian churches there, loved to sing hymns and have the Bible read to him. He would always say, “Though I cannot see, I am so grateful for each day and even more grateful that God has provided me with such loving volunteers.” His happiness and wisdom provided me with the strength to wake up at four in the morning and not see my service as work, but as something I loved and looked forward to doing. I became attached to Yoo In-Suk because during my free time he and I would have meaningful conversations. He would ask me about my aspirations and inspirations and smile as he waited for my replies. He told me that he had something to ask of me on the day that I would leave to go back to America.

That last day arrived, and I said my teary-eyed farewells to each grandparent, volunteer, and nurse. Finally, I got to Yoo In-Suk-Grandpa. As he heard my footsteps, he told me that I had better not be crying and I just started to laugh and cry more. He grabbed my hands and sat silently for a bit as I kept sniffing. He stuck out his pinky finger and suddenly said, “You will become a person who will spread an abundance of love in this world. You are someone with a beautiful heart, because the Holy Spirit is ever so present in you. Spread His love and joy in this world, because God will use you. Pinky promise?”

His words resonate in my heart even now and fill me with an indescribable warmth. There on the lovely island of Sorok, a beautiful pinky promise was made, and I will be sure to keep it.



# Rugăciunea Mea

by Edward Vulpe, sophomore Honors/communication major

I am Romanian by birth, and those who know me well will recall that the first things I mention to them are that I am Romanian and that the Twilight movies are based on me. This poem is written in Romanian as a testament to my heritage. While I can't think in Romanian without great effort, being raised Romanian in America has had a strong influence on my perception and understanding of the world around me. Rugăciunea Mea captures the essence of my interpretation of a typical Romanian Pentecostal Prayer: agony through prayer and reverence through humble submission. The Romanian history is an interesting one, and in my prayer I begin by stating the following: *Lord, I come before you and admit that you are everything, you were, are, and always will be, and I am . . . nothing. I continue to pray for wisdom, for peace, for my family...* and so on. In the poem I maintain the humble, submissive omission of my pride and focus instead on my weakness and what I think God can do for me if He is willing. I would gladly translate the poem to anyone interested enough to approach me about it: [evul911@lasierra.edu](mailto:evul911@lasierra.edu).

## Rugăciunea Mea

Tată, vin înaintea ta  
Și recunosc că nu sunt  
Nimic.  
Și tu ai fost, ești, și vei fi.

Îți mulțumesc pentru toate:  
Fiindcă că mi-ai dat încă -o zi,  
Pentru harul Tău,  
Și prezența ta.

Fără tine, Doamne  
N-aș putea  
Și recunosc că nu sunt  
Nimic.

Te rog să rămâii cu mine  
Cu familia mea;  
Dă-ne pacea ta,  
Dă-ne înțelepciune ta.  
Ajută-ne să nu ne uităm  
La stînga sau la dreapta  
Dar numai la tine.

Ajută-mă,  
Sfințește-mă,  
Curățește-mă,  
Și ai milă de mine,  
Doamne,  
Că am nevoie de tine.

Fară tine nu pot,  
Și nici nu vreau.

Ajută-ma  
Să fiu un om ai  
Inimi tale;  
Sa fiu un binecuvintare  
Pentru toți care-le cunosc.  
Ajută-ma sa fiu  
Un Creștin adevărat;  
Să nu obosesc pe cale,  
Dar să fiu aprins  
Pentru tine . . .  
Să-ți aduc slavă numelui-tau.

Îți dau slava,  
Cinste și,  
Onoare ție  
În numele lui Isus Hristos  
Te rog  
Amin.



*Artwork by Alisha Pruitt  
junior Honors/psychology major*



# Vegan Zucchini Muffins

## *A Healthy, Scrumptious Breakfast*

provided by Anita Strawn de Ojeda,

mother of Laura Strawn Ojeda, junior Honors/English: literature major

“You can substitute whole-wheat flour for white flour in ANY recipe—and still get great results,” says Anita Strawn de Ojeda, a recovering cancer caregiver and seeker of healthier eating ideas. While helping her husband recover from a stem-cell transplant, Anita began looking for ways to make family recipes more nutritious—and she discovered the benefits of using whole-wheat flour, which has more protein, few carbohydrates and a lower Glycemic Index than white flour. It also tastes better—as long as you use high-quality flour such as Wheat Montana Prairie Gold (a non-GMO white wheat) or other white wheat.

While on sabbatical from teaching high school English, Anita decided to start a blog that chronicles both her caregiving journey and her kitchen journey: *Blessed (but Stressed): A Cancer Caregiver’s Companion* ([www.blessedbutstressed.com](http://www.blessedbutstressed.com)). She hopes to inspire others to make healthy changes in their lives and share her knowledge about caring for critically ill family members.



### ANITA’S VEGAN ZUCCHINI MUFFINS (with pecans and chocolate chips!)

Preheat oven to 380°

Yields 12 muffins

In a medium-sized mixing bowl pour:  
½ c. boiling water over

2 Tbs. whole flax seeds

Let this combination cool a little, and then add:

1 1/4 c. brown sugar,

1/4 c. oil

2/3 c. applesauce (unsweetened)

2 c. grated zucchini

2 tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. ground nutmeg

1 tsp. baking soda

2 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1 c. chopped nuts (optional)

1 c. vegan chocolate chips (optional)

Mix all of these ingredients well, and then add:

3 cups whole-wheat flour

Mix gently, just until the flour is incorporated into the wet mix. Scoop into greased muffin tins (about 2/3 cup of batter for each muffin—unlike muffins with white flour, these will not rise overmuch, so it’s okay to fill each one a little past the top).

Bake at 380° for 30-35 minutes.

©Anita Strawn de Ojeda



*From the Director*  
Trisha Famisaran

## Summertime in Istanbul

One of the most exciting elements of the Honors Program is the class “Global Cultures in Context,” an international course in Istanbul, Turkey. In the summer between their sophomore and junior years, students have the opportunity to spend a month immersed in an environment that allows them to open their worldview to better understand the relationship between religion, politics, and society.

The time spent in Turkey is not a vacation simply to enjoy sightseeing, even while there are many wonderful sites to see! It is a life-changing experience that invites students to form friendships, share meals with local families, and deepen their understanding of the many layers that make up a culture. Time and again, Honors students return from the course with a brand new perspective on life and a fresh appreciation for their own roots.

I invite you to visit the Honors Program website ([www.lasierra.edu/honors](http://www.lasierra.edu/honors)) to learn more about “Global Cultures in Context,” and to read stories about past trips to Istanbul on the course blog pages. Students will also deeply appreciate your financial support for the “Going Global” scholarship fund to help them pay for a portion of their time abroad.

A donation link can be found on the La Sierra University website at [www.lasierraconnect.org](http://www.lasierraconnect.org). Thank you, in advance, for supporting our students as they prepare to embark on a new adventure!





Honors students Jonathan Rojas, Luthia Chang, Rachel Rojas, Melissa Totton, and Jon de la Paz enjoy the fall quarter Honors dessert hour.

**INTERESTED IN THE HONORGRAM?** If you enjoy writing, taking pictures, or drawing, become a part of the Honors newsletter! We love to showcase talent, and your artistic contributions to this publication will give your résumé a boost. Contact the Honors office in South Hall for more information.

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Layout

**THE HONORS PROGRAM**

began at La Sierra University in 1971. It strives to give special attention to undergraduates of outstanding intellectual and creative ability and aims to charge the imagination in an environment where student initiative is the guiding force. Students are given the opportunity to recognize their potential through encouragement, discussion and interaction. The overall objectives of the program are focused on the La Sierra University mission: *“to Seek Truth, to Know God and Ourselves, to Serve Others.”*

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