

## HOW IS SDJA DIFFERENT TO OTHER SCHOOLS?

Haley E.

Truly, you can find great academics anywhere, I mean look at San Diego county. It's home to at least three other private school's who boast great academics. But what I think the academy has that those other schools don't is the idea of family. It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child, and as a child I found my "village" at the academy. Here you're not just friends with someone in your grade or class, but rather I have found something so much greater. I have become friends with their families; families who have invited me over to Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations. There is this close bond that people make at SDJA that I really don't think you can find anywhere else.

It's important to learn about your family's history and their cultures, and as a Jew your family's history grows beyond just your relatives but into the whole Jewish community. By learning in a Jewish environment you are able to learn that history of your people.

I don't think I have one memory, though I could talk about the endless hours I have spent on the volleyball court with my team, and how much I loved it, or I could talk about the amount of fun I've had at school dances; there is something much greater than any memory, it's the friendships I have made at SDJA. I truly believe that I wouldn't have been able to meet such amazing people or make such fabulous friends anywhere else. I have made friends here, in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, which I will know forever. They aren't people that I will say bye to at graduation and never see again, but there are people that my children will know. They are people who I want to take with me where ever I go in life.

My favorite classes are "Super- Stark APS, including AP ART HISTORY, AP UNITED STATES HISTORY, and AP EUROPEAN HISTORY. While these classes may seem frightening to some these classes have served as the perfect stage for me to grow. I remember clearly walking into my first AP EUROPEAN History class intimidated beyond belief. I sat down among my fellow students, mainly seniors, and when the class was open to discussion about Europe and the entire class was able to add in their two- sense I sat there silent. As I walked out of class I asked myself what have I gotten into, I was ready to drop the class; I felt so out of my element. But I stuck with it. Though, I struggled in the beginning I wouldn't have changed my decision to drop that class at all. That class forced me to mature as a student and step up and push myself to my absolute limit. While there are nights that I lost hours of sleep over homework it was all worth it. My countless hours of studying and creating PERSIATS (Politics, Economy, Religion, Society, Intellectual Arts, and Technology) all paid off, because of the student I became. On my last day of class, when I walked out I didn't walk out intimidated but rather proud of all that I had accomplished and how hard I had pushed myself all under the guidance of Ms. Stark. That class made me love learning.

While most teachers care about the grades a student earns, at the academy the teacher care about far more aspects. They care about the people you become and not just the grades you receive in their class. They encourage you to do your absolute best in class, and are always there to help better your understanding in a subject. Teachers at the academy push you to do your best, treating you as more than a number and more than a student but as a growing human being.