



THE FACULTY CORNER

FROM ANACAPA SCHOOL . . .

Announcing the 2016-2017 Synthesis Unit: Ocean Health **(in collaboration with The Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting)**

Anacapa students and parents are very aware of the prominent role Synthesis Units play in the development of the critical thinking skills and the education of our students. This year's unit, *Human Migration: The Search for a Better Life*, was a real blockbuster. Our students rose to the occasion to explore in-depth the biggest crisis in human migration since the World War II era. Their attentiveness, their questions, and their knowledge of the human and legal complexities of migration were noticed time and again by our speakers.

The Human Migration unit was the most difficult of all our units to find top-notch speakers, simply because the people active in helping migrants and refugees are working far away from Santa Barbara. During my persistent search for speakers, I discovered that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the worldwide leader in assisting migrants and refugees. I contacted their headquarters in Switzerland and was given permission to contact the head of IOM in Washington, DC. As a result, I was invited to attend an international conference on December 11 at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. During the conference there were four amazing panels of speakers from around the world. The contacts I made helped us bring an amazing array of speakers to Anacapa, who either traveled to Santa Barbara or Skyped with us. One of the best contacts I made was with the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, whose Educational Director became fascinated with our very ambitious Synthesis Unit. One thing led to another thing, and Anacapa is now collaborating with the Pulitzer Center on next year's Synthesis Unit, **Ocean Health**.

Our World Geography class has already been doing lesson plans provided by the Pulitzer Center, whose reporters are all over the world, covering unfolding crises. One special area of their reporting is Ocean Health. We are starting the planning for next year's unit now, and we are very excited to be able to utilize the reporters and resources of the Pulitzer Center. Please check out the Pulitzer Center's web site to see what they are covering. <http://pulitzercenter.org/>

I hope you have had a chance to check out our website special feature on the *Human Migration* unit. Included there is a summary of the unit, the schedule of speakers, photos, video snapshots, and testimonials. This year, for the first time, our students' Synthesis Unit research papers will be published as an Amazon eBook, and we are now finalizing a student-produced video, which will report on the six areas of the world that the groups researched. The six groups did very strong presentations during the morning of April 20, and now they are busy finishing their video projects.

Whew! What a whirlwind learning adventure! The students and their teachers have performed exceptionally well. Kudos to all!

Gordon Fick