



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pioneer High Sisters Bump, Set and Spike Their Way to Varsity Success

WHITTIER, CA – Friendly competition has always brewed between sisters and Pioneer High School students Leslie, Annai and Valeria Jimenez when it comes to athletics and academics. This year, however, the competition has brought the trio closer than ever.

Leslie, a senior, Annai, a junior, and Valeria, a sophomore, are all playing together on Pioneer High's varsity volleyball team for the first time. And while each sister has her own unique quirks, they all agree that being teammates has strengthened their sisterhood.

"I like the unity that volleyball provides," said Leslie, 17, a third-year varsity player. "You have friends and people you can rely on, and now I have my sisters, too."

"It's brought us closer together, but not just on the court," added first-year varsity player Annai, 16. "You have to learn to get along and make it work."

The youngest of the three who just joined varsity, Valeria, said the connection – and commitment to success – among them has grown.

"It's a nice camaraderie," the 15-year-old said. "We critique each other and make each other better. Their problems are my problems."

Getting her first glimpse of volleyball while in middle school, Leslie has been playing competitively since her freshman year at Pioneer. The next year, she was promoted to varsity, where she is now an outside hitter. Her sisters then followed suit.

Annai played on the freshman and junior varsity teams, while Valeria skipped the beginner's team and went straight to junior varsity, joining her sister. Both are middle hitters.

Incidentally, they all followed in the footsteps of their mother, Alma, who was also a volleyball player in high school.

"Our family is very unique," Valeria said. "We have a lot of fun experiences."

In addition to the competitive spirit of these multi-sport athletes, the sisters are also fierce in the classroom.

Leslie, an aspiring surgeon, has a 3.8 GPA, takes honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, is ranked 33rd in her class of 333 and is currently enrolled in ROP dental assistant classes. Annai, who wants to go into business, has a 3.6 GPA, takes honors classes, is ranked 31st in her class of 345, and plays varsity basketball. Valeria has a 3.9 GPA, is enrolled in honors and AP courses, currently taking math analysis, is ranked 20th in her class of 374 and plays varsity soccer.

“It’s a friendly competition between us, but we’re good motivators of each other because we know that we have to perform well in class to win on the court,” Annai said.

Assistant Principal of Business and Activities Annette Ledesma said the students are a shining example of Titan Pride.

“These young ladies are successful scholars and athletes, challenge themselves and each other to excel, and are carving a path to having bright futures,” Ledesma said. “They represent so many good qualities of a standout student-athlete, and I’m proud of what they've accomplished so far.”

And although balancing life as sisters and teammates can be a challenge, the Jimenez sisters say they wouldn't change a thing about their unbreakable bond.

“Before we didn't hang out together,” Leslie said. “I couldn’t picture them on my team before, but I like that they’re there now. They’re good partners and sisters.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

SISTERS1: For the first time, sisters and Pioneer High School students Leslie, left, Annai and Valeria Jimenez are playing on the school’s varsity volleyball team together.

SISTERS2: Pioneer High School students and varsity volleyball players Valeria (23), Annai (12), and Leslie (7) Jimenez don pink wardrobes to raise cancer awareness during a game against Whittier High School on Thursday, Oct. 9, 2014.

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