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School News



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**Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District
and the communities of Los Alamitos, Rossmoor, Seal Beach and Sunset Beach**

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 47

www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

JUNE 2012

Unlimited Possibilities



Mark Johnson
Assistant Superintendent Educational Services

With the school year coming to an end and summer rapidly approaching, it is a great time to take a step back and reflect upon all of the amazing things we have to be grateful for in Los Alamitos Unified School District! At the top of this list is the world-class education that is taking place in our classrooms and on our campuses each and every day. The teachers, coaches, administrators, and support staff are passionately dedicated to providing a rigorous and comprehensive education to all students. This commitment includes a strong foundation in academics and the arts, as well as a committed effort to engage all students in at least one co-curricular or extracurricular program.

In our classrooms, teachers are implementing state-of-the-art, research-based programs and strategies. Examples include MIND, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), Writer's Workshop, Reader's Workshop, Daily Café, and engaging explicit direct instruction, modeling and checking for understanding techniques. Additionally, we have a commitment to ongoing staff development to ensure that we have a culture of continuous improvement throughout the district. Recent staff development opportunities included training in reading assessment administration, Brain-Based Learning Strategies, the development of site-level coaches in Reader's and Writer's Workshops, CGI training for new teachers, Thinking Maps, and the implementation of an instructional framework

SEE SUPERINTENDENT • PAGE 11

Reaching Optimum Health



A small group of grade 2-3 students in the Step by Step Club take a break to pose for a photo.

By Dr. Sunghie Okino, Principal Los Alamitos Elementary

The students at Los Alamitos Elementary are getting healthier "step by step," thanks to the school's Step by Step Club.

Funded by a grant from the Run Seal Beach Foundation and the school's PTA, as well as additional support from Health Care Partners, LAE now operates a daily walking/running club.

The idea for this club was conceived by LAE's health clerk Lisa Brady, who saw a need to promote regular daily exercise. As many as 178 students in grades two to five meet every day during their lunch period to walk for 15 to 20 minutes together.

SEE LOS ALAMITOS ELEMENTARY • PAGE 4

BOARD OF EDUCATION



Meg Cutuli
President

Over Spring Break, I was very fortunate to be part of a delegation of administrators, teachers and board members from Los Alamitos Unified School District to visit schools in China. No district money was used for this trip. The Global Foundation, who works with Los Alamitos Educational Foundation to offer our after school Mandarin classes, organized and supported the trip. The travelers from Los Alamitos individually paid for the air fare, visas and extra costs that every trip entails. The Global Foundation made the arrangements for us to visit the different schools and see some of the incredible sites that China has to offer. They opened doors for us that we wouldn't have been able to do on our own. In our Mandarin classes, we are setting up skyping with sister schools in China and we were able to visit these schools and meet the teachers.

SEE BOARD OF EDUCATION PAGE 11

Carnival of Fun



Lexi Luyben enjoys being a human hamster.
(Please see page 6 Rossmoor Elementary)

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Los Alamitos Educational Foundation

Post Office Box 1210, Los Alamitos, CA 90740 • 562/799-4700 • www.loaledfoundation.org

More for Every Student

By Janine Ingram – Executive Director

Our students are privileged to attend school in one of the highest rated school districts in America. Consistently ranked first or second in Orange County, Los Alamitos Unified School District (LAUSD) continues to deliver academics, activities, athletics and the arts at the highest level of excellence.

As a non-profit organization, the purpose of Los Alamitos Educational Foundation (LAEF) is to raise funds to provide programs and services that benefit every student in every school in the LAUSD. With deep reductions in education funding, maintaining quality education relies at least partially on community support. The fact is every donation to LAEF directly impacts every student. How, you ask?

Donations help pay for teaching positions at every level in every school! Additional teachers provide targeted instruction that directly impacts increases in Academic Performance Index (API) scores.

Donations support after-school and summer enrichment programs, such as music, dramatic and visual arts, world languages, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and other curriculum areas that have disappeared from most school districts due to lack of funding.

Harvard University research confirms that students in enrichment programs reap positive benefits—academic, social-emotional, prevention, and health and wellness—skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century global economy and world.

Our goal this year is more! More teachers! More enrichment classes! More opportunities! Your donation will allow LAEF to continue to add more targeted instruction and enrichment activities at every level in every school! Your tax-deductible donation of any amount will help us reach that goal.

Please visit www.loaledfoundation.com to make your tax-deductible donation today!



Kay Coop

Founder / Publisher



As this school year comes to a close I would like to thank you for continuing to include *School News* in your reading choices. June 30 is the deadline to participate in our survey and be entered to win \$100. Simply log onto our web site and click on the survey icon. www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

This issue's topics range from staying healthy, global learning, technology, science, music, carnival fun to sharing learning with other teachers. Whether you are reading in the car while waiting for your child to finish a sport practice or enjoying a cup of coffee at home—enjoy.

Our next issue is October 10. Have a wonderful summer!

School News

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covering the
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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SchoolNewsRollCall

SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL

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Water Safety



Chief Keith Richter

Children drown without a sound and water safety is a serious matter. Learning the ABC's of Water Safety will provide added layers of protection for you and your family. We all can make a difference in a child's life by educating the public about the importance of active, adult supervision around the water, multiple barriers around pools & spas, as well as classes for children and adults.

Drowning is the nation's number one killer of children under the age of five, and remains the top five leading causes of death among 0-17 year olds. Drowning can happen in bathtubs, mop buckets, toilets, and even in standing water as shallow as 2 inches. Drowning happen year round!

Active adult supervision is the key to preventing drownings! Parents need to realize that it can "happen to them" and carry this message forward. One look away could become a lifetime of regret! OCFA offers drowning prevention and water safety classes for children and adults, featuring Stewie the Duck – a fun and colorful book – along with instruction from an Education Specialist.

For more information or to schedule a class, contact the Community Relations Section at (714) 573-6200. visit www.ocfa.org.

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Our next issue is October 10.

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Hopkinson *Elementary*

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Global Learning

By Kimberley Hattabaugh

I had the special opportunity to travel to China with 14 other teachers, principals, superintendents, and Board members from Los Alamitos Unified School District to help bring our two cultures closer together. The many schools we visited were excited to meet us and show us the educational programs of their country. It was a life-changing experience.

Dr. Linda Stewart
Principal

Los Alamitos students are already enjoying Mandarin classes and Skyping with their friends in China. We hope Hopkinson Elementary School will soon have enough enrollees in our language program to adopt a sister school relationship with Qiy Elementary School and possibly other schools in China. It would be a truly wonderful learning experience, one the students would remember for the rest of their lives.

I am so excited to spearhead this truly global, cultural language experience for our students. Through the Mandarin classes and the technology of Skype, your children will have the opportunity to communicate with, work with, and learn from students their own age in China. One of my main goals is for our young students to learn that there are many cultures and languages other than their own. This leads to acceptance and personal growth. One thing I learned from my visit to China, and hopefully your child will learn as well, is that, despite a difference in language, religion, and government, they are all just children, eager to learn from each other.

We look forward to a growing relationship with our new friends in China!

Los Alamitos *Elementary*

10862 Bloomfield St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 714/816-3300 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



FROM PAGE 1

Afterwards, some students participate in lively games of soccer and dodge ball. The club also holds monthly meetings to learn about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Nutrition, label-reading and the importance of sleep are some of the topics they discuss during these meetings.

Dr. Sunghie Okino
Principal

Goal-setting is also encouraged. The students work towards earning T-shirts and pedometers, or monthly drawings for donated movie tickets, hats or gift baskets. The students can also log in to an online monitoring system and record the number of minutes they walk or run each day, or the number of steps they have taken.

Tammy Buffehr, our club supervisor during lunch, shared that, "Best of all are the good feelings the kids have about themselves after exercising! The Step by Step Club has been an awesome addition to our school's goal of staying healthy. It is a program that we hope to continue for many years to come."

Laurel *High School*

10291 Bloomfield St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4820 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



A Positive Year

The spring at Laurel High School has been dedicated to learning through the arts, service to our community, and preparation for state-wide testing.

"Laurel Live and on Stage" took place on the evening of March 29 and was enjoyed by over 125 parents and friends of Laurel High School. Over 80 percent of the student body participated in this Shakespearean-themed evening, complete with short plays, poems, and films produced and edited by Laurel students.

Spring break was ushered in as Laurel students and staff gave back to their community. Signs and cards offering well wishes and thanks were delivered by students and staff to several community organizations.

Accompanying the signs and cards were smiling faces and gift baskets for each



community group. During their trip to Children's Hospital of Orange County, Laurel students were especially touched, as their presence and care had an immediate effect on the children.

Finally, students were excited to demonstrate what they have learned on the California Standards Tests (CSTs). We expect another year of positive growth.

Lee *Elementary*

11481 Foster Road, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4540 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



Keep Cognitively Fit

It's that time of year again! Summer is a great time to relax, enjoy going to the beach, camping, barbecuing, and spending time with family and friends. It's also a great time to keep your child's brain active. Take a book with you to the beach. Spend some time at local museum while visiting with family out of state. Practice a foreign language when traveling abroad. There are all types of fun activities to keep the mind active when relaxing during the summer months, and research shows that students transition to the next grade much more quickly and successfully when their minds have been actively engaged over the summer.

If you're looking for more formal learning activities, you may want to consider the following ideas. This summer the Los Alamitos Educational Foundation is offering a summer school program for all students. Grade-level enrichment courses will be offered to kindergarten through fifth-grade students at Oak Middle School. The Los Alamitos Unified Summer School will be held at Weaver Elementary School for kindergarten through fifth-grade students in need of extra support.

Endless learning opportunities are available for students through the Parks and Recreation Department and individual student camps. Many local colleges and universities also provide summer learning programs for elementary students. This is a perfect time for students to explore curricula of specific interest to them.

In addition, the Lee Elementary School Web site has information on activities and summer reading that you can access to help keep your child actively engaged at home.

No matter what your summer plans are, keeping your student cognitively active will support a healthy transition to the next grade level.

School News

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Los Alamitos *High School*

3591 Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4780 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



We're FAME-ous!

The Los Alamitos High School Show Choir's SoundFX and SoundTrax flew to Chicago last month, aspiring to once again climb to the top of the show-choir world. Los Al has made quite a name for itself at these national competitions over the past few years, winning national champion titles in New York and Nashville. This year, they were among the favorites yet again, competing with teams from over 130 schools that produce amazing productions that even professional choirs would be proud to perform.

Even with incredible competition and tremendous pressure, SoundTrax brought home a Women's Division National Championship and Sound FX brought back a First Runner-Up trophy in the highly competitive Mixed Division. With our school's five different choirs connecting over one tenth of our student body to an activity at LAHS, it is a great sign that they—and choir director David Moellenkamp—continue to produce spectacular results like this.

They don't do it alone, however. Winning competitions like FAME take tremendous dedication and hour upon hour of practice from huge numbers of students, a great and generous booster club, supportive parents, a talented band that's willing to travel across the country to give our students the best shot at winning possible, production-quality sets and costumes, perfect choreography from people like Heather Hoppus-Warner, and accompaniment every day from great musicians like Eddie Clement.

Everyone involved with all five LAHS choirs are further evidence that it's great to be a Griffin! Congrats to our FAME National Champions!

McGaugh *Elementary*

1698 Bolsa Ave., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/799-4560 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



Creating Space for Technology and Science

As California moves closer to the adoption of the new Common Core Standards, McGaugh School is actively looking for ways to address them. The proposed new technology studio and inquiry-science laboratory for the 2012–2013 school year will be two big steps in the right direction.

The technology studio was conceived as a 21st century learning space, where students can interact with and employ technology thoughtfully to help enhance their reading, writing, reasoning and speaking skills.

The tech studio will be outfitted with 30 iPads, iMac computers, a digital interactive white board, a state-of-the-art amplification system, as well as video cameras, photo music and video editing, and videoconferencing capabilities. Teachers and students will use the collaboratively designed space to access content, synthesize information and create digital projects and media to share what they've learned.

The proposed inquiry-science lab will also serve as a shared learning space for students. It will be a full-sized classroom equipped with tables, stools and state-of-the-art science equipment, including FOSS (Full Option Science System) hands-on science kits for the third- through fifth-grade students.

The lab, partially paid for with a School's First grant written by our fifth-grade teachers, will promote mastery of science content, non-fiction reading, critical thinking and applied mathematics; all cornerstones of the new college and career readiness anchor standards.

At McGaugh School, we are committed to igniting unlimited possibilities for our students in the area of technology and science!

McAuliffe *Middle School*

4112 Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 714/816-3320 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



All That Jazz

On Saturday, April 28, the McAuliffe Middle School Jazz Band and Jazz Combo, led by Mr. Wackerman, competed at the 50th Annual Reno Jazz Festival. The jazz band won third place in the middle school division out of 22 competitors from the five western states. Eight soloists, Emily and Sydney Carpentier, Tyler Chiu, Alex Lytle, Joseph Masterson, Jeremy Moses, Olivia Wissa, and Jeffrey Wong, were awarded certificates for their outstanding performances. Alex Lytle also won a festival award for Outstanding Rhythm Performance. Though the group has competed in the festival for the past 26 years, this is the first year the smaller McAuliffe Jazz Combo has participated, and they received superior scores from all three judges.

The Reno Jazz Festival is a program of the University of Nevada, Reno. The mission of the festival is to provide a stimulating and educational environment for jazz students, jazz educators, and jazz supporters who come from Nevada and around the west to the University of Nevada, Reno campus. It is estimated that more than 300,000 students, parents, jazz lovers, and festival staff have participated in the festival over the past 50 years.



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Rossmoor *Elementary*

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Carnival of Fun

Rossmoor Elementary School's Carnival of Fun was a fantastic day for all! We are so grateful for our parent volunteers, who dedicated months of preparation for our community to come together and share fun in the sun

Our carnival was on April 28, and the weather was perfect. The sun was shining, and the students were drenched in water and smiles as they played, enjoying our inflatable

Kiva Spiratos
Principal

rides, human hamster balls, laser tag, games, and more. Community vendors shared their products, and local talent performed on our stage. Students were able to emcee the event and humorously worked the microphone, making announcements for the day. We even had a dunk tank! Daring dads and our Rossmoor staff braved the all-star pitches thrown by our skilled and accurate students.

We are so grateful to our parents, who volunteered and dedicated their entire day to the event. We hope you are able to stop by carnival next spring!



Mrs. Spiratos was dunked 17 times by her all star Rossmoor Knights.

Oak *Middle School*

10821 Oak St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4740 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



Alive and Thriving

It's been a banner year for our musicians at Oak Middle School! Their endless hours of hard work and practice has paid off with championship results in a number of festivals and competitions.

As one of the few middle schools with an all-boys choir, our "ShowMen" has brought audiences to their feet. They even received a first-place award at the Xtravaganza festival. Additionally, the ShowStars and ShowTime girls choirs received second and third place respectively in the Xtravaganza's intermediate middle school division, while the ShowStoppers earned fourth place in the advanced division.

Sally Neiser
Principal

The ShowCase mixed choir also traveled to San Diego to participate in a Heritage Music Festival, ranking in the top "Gold" category. The choirs are under the direction of Mrs. Rachelle Randeen.

Mr. Justin Padilla directs the bands, orchestras and jazz bands at Oak. The jazz band was awarded first place in all the festivals they've attended, including Esperanza, Irvine and Fullerton. This year was the first time they were selected to perform in the Monterey Next Generation Jazz Festival. They ended up receiving two of the four awards given to middle school jazz bands: the best saxophone section and the best rhythm section.

Most recently, the Oak orchestra performed for adjudicators in the San Diego area, and received unanimously superior ratings, the highest given.

The choirs and bands from Oak always perform to full houses at their fall, winter and spring concerts. This year both groups were also selected to perform in Disneyland's Community Showcase program.

Undoubtedly, the music and arts are alive and thriving at Oak.

Weaver *Elementary*

11872 Wembley Road, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4580 • www.losalusd.k12.ca.us



Sharing the Learning with Other Teachers

Weaver teachers and students continue to open their doors for visiting educators. This year alone, Weaver has hosted over 200 visitors. Teachers and administrators from both Northern and Southern California have visited our classrooms this year to learn about Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), Shared Inquiry and Socratic Dialogue, Guided Reading Instruction, incorporating Ipad technology in the classroom, and Spatial Temporal Math (ST, MIND). Our visitors are eager to learn new strategies and ideas.

Observations include lessons and time to debrief with our classroom teachers where in depth conversations occur. Many of our visitors return throughout the year and maintain contact with our teachers. Our staff and students are proud to share with other schools. It is a wonderful opportunity to share our best practices beyond our own school walls. Way to go Weaver Whales!

Erin Kominsky
Principal



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On The Run

Foot Injuries at the Beach



Dr. Doug Richie

With summertime here again, it is appropriate to alert beachgoers about the potential for injury in the sand and in the ocean. For various reasons, there are reports of increased foot and leg injuries affecting unsuspecting visitors to the beaches of southern California.

Walking in Sand

Barefoot walking in the sand may be a unique and joyful experience, but some caution should be considered. Unfortunately, our beaches may be filled with debris, such as broken glass, torn aluminum cans, and even hypodermic needles.

The use of sandals can minimize the risk of a laceration or puncture wound from a potential hazard buried beneath the sand.

Injuries in the Ocean

In the ocean, natural wildlife may pose a threat to your feet and legs. Jellyfish abound in the waters off California. A jellyfish sting can be annoying, if not painful, but can be quickly remedied by applying rubbing alcohol to the affected area.

Sting ray injuries can be far more painful, and they seem to be on the rise along California beaches. To avoid these injuries, shuffle your feet in the sand as you walk slowly in and out of the water. If you have the misfortune of getting stung by one of these creatures, your best remedy is to soak the affected foot and leg in a bucket of very hot water (100–105 degrees F) for 30 minutes, then repeat once every hour until the pain subsides. Occasionally, antibiotic therapy will be needed as a follow-up treatment, so seek the advice of your physician.

Onstage Dance Center

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Junior Song
6th – 8th Grade
Starts in
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Ages 4 – 14 • 9:00a.m. – 12:00 Noon

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Jazz/Lyrical • Hip Hop • Pom

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Ages 4 – 14 • 9:00a.m. – 12:00 Noon

Sign Up by July 1st & receive free Pom Poms

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Art To Grow On

Ready, Get Set...Create!

As a parent, I really now understand what everyone was saying when my sons were born: "It goes by so fast! Before you know it they will be...." And it is true! Since they grow so fast, I often think, what are the "seeds" that we parents should plant in our children? Manners? Of course! Respect? Of course! Self-esteem and self-confidence? Yes and yes!

But as I my youngest child moves into elementary school, I truly believe that giving children the opportunity to think critically, problem solve, imagine, and create will elevate them even more as they continue to grow.

Math calls for it. Social studies calls for it. Playing in the yard and getting into arguments call for it—the ability to analyze a situation, concretely or theoretically come up with solutions, and communicate those solutions through thought, speech, written word, movement, or art.

I opened Art To Grow On Children's Art Center, Inc. in 2000. There were not as many demands on our children as there are now. Kindergarten is truly the new first grade. Our children's minds need to be agile, sharp, open to new ideas, curious, passionate, and creative, no matter if they will become chemists, professional athletes, teachers, artists, musicians, or business executives.

If you can give your child a gift in 2012, take the time to do something creative with him or her. Get out those cardboard boxes and turn them into a race car or doll house. Get out wire, tile, and glue and play. Read books, take walks and collect rocks, write letters, and talk! These life skills will be a gift to your child.

Lauren Perelmuter, President/Founder of Art To Grow On Children's Art Center, Inc.
www.art2growon.com (310) 625-6028



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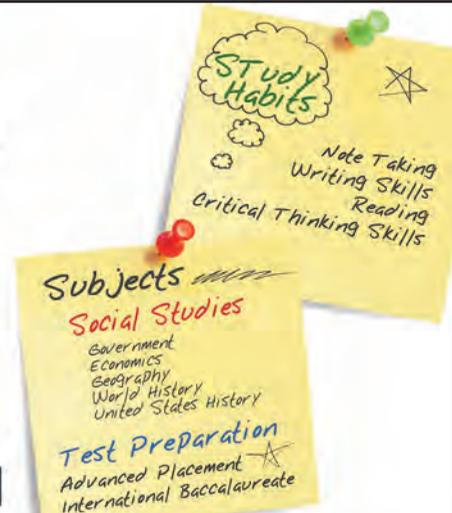
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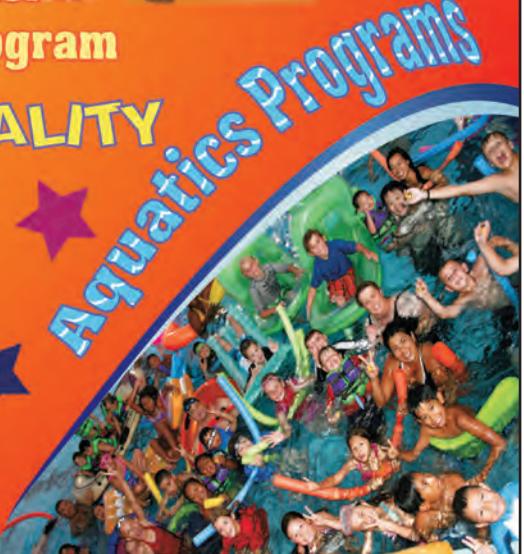
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Dream Big: READ!

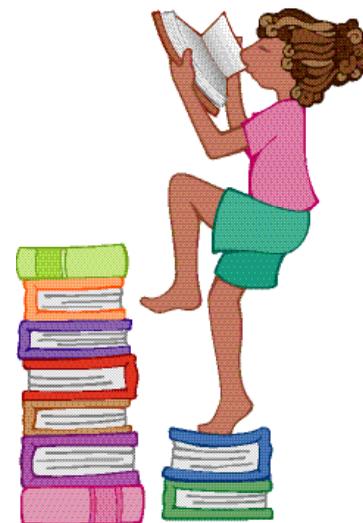
By Cathy DeLeon, Branch Manager

Help your children maintain the reading skills they've worked so hard all year to build by encouraging them to participate in the library's Summer Reading Program! Summer Reading Program is a for-fun free reading-incentive program that encourages children and teens to explore the wonderful world of reading, books and the library. Children earn prizes at the library just for reading!

Here's how it works: Register your children at the library beginning June 25, take home a reading log, check out library books, record the amount of time your child reads library books at home, and come back to the library between July 2 and July 31 to pick up prizes.

Also, join us for our special Dream Big Wednesday afternoon programs at 3:30 p.m.:
June 27: Wildlife Co. Live Exotic Animals;
July 11: Magician Abbit the Average; and July 18: Silly Songs with the Ukulady. Reserve a space for our Portable Planetarium program on July 25 at 3 p.m. or 4 p.m. All programs are free and most suitable for children ages 4-9.

See you at the library this summer!



Pokemon Word Search Contest

**NEW
Rules!!!**

One word in the list is NOT in the word search.
When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that is the word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com (Please put LAUSD in the subject line)

Entries must be received by July 15, 2012

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Slater's 50/50 Burgers by Design, 8082 Adams Ave., HB (corner of Beach & Adams)

A special thank you to Tristan Luedee, 7 years old, for suggesting this Pokemon Word Search and emailing the words.

- | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|
| Aerodactyl | Jigglypuff | Rotom |
| Bayleef | Kingler | Seviper |
| Chikorita | Lileep | Togepi |
| Ditto | Meowth | Unown |
| Electabuzz | Noctowl | Vibrava |
| Flygon | Oddish | Wobuffet |
| Grimer | Pokemon | Xatu |
| Hoothoot | Pikachu | Yanmega |
| Igglebuff | Qwilfish | Zubat |

**Congratulations to Joshua Smith
Winner of the April Contest!**





Mark Johnson
Assistant
Superintendent
Educational
Services

to better plan and deliver instruction. Furthermore, we provided technology training on MacBooks, SMART Boards, Data Director (our data management platform), student response systems, iPads, and using assessment results to better inform future instruction. We were also one of the few preschool through 12th-grade districts selected to live stream an entire day of the recent Technology, Entertainment, and Design (TED) event hosted in Long Beach. This event was one of the most exciting in recent memory, as we had thousands of students watching live TED talks with their teachers. These efforts, along with many others, clearly demonstrate our unwavering passion to ensure that every student in our district has the opportunity to be successful and flourish!

Next year will bring some exciting changes in the areas of curriculum and instruction with the implementation of the California Common Core Standards (CCCS), a nationwide set of standards which will allow us to garner the best, research-based programs from across the country. As part of this new initiative, we will see the phasing out of the California Standards Test (CST), which we have all become accustomed to over the last 10 years, and the implementation of a new assessment system, which is being led by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a group charged with taking the American assessment system into the 21st century. The new assessments will be piloted in 2013–2014 and fully implemented in 2014–2015. In addition, the new assessments will provide us with results which will finally allow us to compare Los Alamitos Unified School District to other high-performing districts across the United States. By learning from the best, we can ensure our amazingly supportive parents and community that we will continue to provide extraordinary learning outcomes for every student for many years to come.

As I finish my 12th year in Los Alamitos Unified and my first year as Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, I am immensely grateful to the Board, the superintendent, the leadership team, the teachers, the parents, and community members for always keeping the needs of students as our greatest priority. Our parents and guardians place the highest level of trust in us as professionals by choosing to send their students to our schools, and our promise is to take this responsibility seriously. Because of our highly talented staff, we are currently and will continue to offer a unified, preschool through 12th-grade education taught by teachers who represent the ideals of the district's vision, employ engaging strategies, and implement targeted instruction so that graduating seniors have unlimited possibilities for their futures!



Meg Cutuli
President

Probably the biggest concept that I took away from this experience is that children are children. They want to succeed and be recognized. They want to stand in straight lines but sometimes it's hard to do that. They are eager and happy and love their teachers and schools. They may wear uniforms but the girls have different bows in their hair. Encourage one and others will speak to you in English. And their English was much better than my Mandarin! The students were wonderful!

We visited schools in cities. With China's large population, it is logical that they have large schools. The elementary schools have over 2,000 students in them. The classrooms are large with 50 or more students in each class. I noticed more "workbooks" than "textbooks" which the students used with the directions from the teachers. Chinese students attend school from 8:00 am to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Music, art and sports are important parts of their education. With the extra hours in school daily, these studies are usually held in the afternoon. And foreign language is taught in 1st grade. Some of the schools have dormitories. Children as young as 1st grade will stay at their school during the week and return home on the weekends. The high school students didn't have any problems with their college dorm like setting and the younger children told us that it was fun to be with their friends but they were also happy when they could see their parents.



Most of the teachers had microphones to project their voices. Some of our teachers in Los Al have a microphone set up in their classrooms and they say that it is good tool for student engagement. With a large class, you need to be sure that all students can see and hear you. You can't start to engage students if they can't hear you. In China, we saw the teachers use many of the same techniques we use to keep our students engaged – whole class response, share with your neighbor and individual student response.

We were also able to visit a special education class. These children were severely disabled. The class had only about 7 students but what was most interesting was that each student had a parent with them in class. We were told that the parents come to school with the student to learn the techniques from the teacher to reinforce at home what is taught in the classroom. This is considered the parent's "job" and they come daily.

We also had a quick tour of the Peking University to see their foreign studies department. It seems that China is committed to being part of the world and is training their students to do so.

All the administrators that we met were so proud of their schools. Whether they told us in English or through an interpreter, you could see the pride on their faces when they spoke about what they were doing on their campus for their students. One of the principals had studied American education systems in America for a year. On one the walls of the buildings, in Chinese and English, were the goals for the school. The last goal was "One long and exciting field trip." This speaks to life-long learning, getting the most out of each day and embracing something different. All of us who were on the trip agreed that life should be one long and exciting field trip and our trip to China was truly an experience that has enriched our lives. We are grateful to the Global Foundation for making this possible and for helping us offer Mandarin after school to our students!



Meg Cutuli
President



David Boyer
Clerk

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