

FREE

School News

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Covering the Torrance Unified School District

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NOVEMBER 2015–JANUARY 2016

Maximizing Student Potential



Dr. George Mannon

In my ten-year tenure as superintendent, I am so proud of all that we have accomplished together.

Torrance Unified School District serves the families of nearly 25,000 students, and our primary goal is to maximize the potential of each one of them. Student success is made possible through the collaborative efforts of a district community. Our teachers, classified employees, and administrators work in unison to ensure that each student is receiving the educational experiences he or she needs to achieve academic success.



Congratulations Employees of the Year:
(B) Arlene Sato, Jason Rosenthal, Ricardo Villa, Ruben Soliz, Graciela Basso
(F) Carol Grossi, Diane Judt, Nancy Roy, and Amy Argento.

Recently we had the opportunity to recognize the crème de la crème of our already exemplary employees. I would like to once again congratulate our Employees of the Year with a special shout out to Carol Grossi, our representative for the Los Angeles County Department of Education Teacher of the Year Program. Carol was also voted as one of the Top 16 educators at the county level, further advancing Torrance Unified's reputation as a premier educational institution.

In my ten-year tenure as superintendent, I am so proud of all that we have accomplished together. The teamwork, dedication, and strategic leadership are evident throughout the district. I know the 2015–2016 school year will be full of achievements and milestones for all our students.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Leadership, With An Emphasis On Collaboration, Consensus, and Accountability



Don Lee
President

For the past eight years, I have had the privilege of being your Torrance Unified School District (TUSD) School Board member, and I am currently the Board president. During my time on the Board, we have faced several challenges and celebrated many victories. From weathering the recession that began in 2008 to simultaneously passing bond Measures Y and Z, and most recently T and U, I have a firm belief that effective leadership is collaborative, builds consensus, and is accountable to the community.

As a new Board member in 2007, one of the very first challenges I faced along with my colleagues on the Board was how to survive severe funding cuts imposed on us by the state. We worked in collaboration with TUSD administrators, our union groups, parents, and other stakeholders to ensure that, even with fewer dollars, the quality of education TUSD students received did not diminish. We made difficult decisions, and we made those decisions by dialoguing with our teachers, classified employees, parents, and students. TUSD not only survived the Great Recession, but we came out of it stronger and more efficient. Fast forward eight years, and we have been able to reduce class size, hire more teachers, restore programs, and put TUSD on a path to even better achievement.

TUSD was also able to get down to the business of modernizing our dilapidated schools. Being a product of TUSD, a proud Torrance High Tarter,

See BOARD OF EDUCATION • Page 14

Teacher of the Year, Carol Grossi



Teacher of the Year, Carol Grossi, in her classroom at Towers Elementary School with her fifth graders.



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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik
Neta Madison



School is well underway and students are focused on their academic goals. Dr. Mannon's message on the front page is positive about the past accomplishments achieved by collaboration and the milestones yet to be reached.

This issue is informative about the arts in the classroom, afterschool opportunities, the importance of giving back, computer codes and robotics, and so much more...

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. Our next issue is January 27, 2016.

Torrance Education Foundation

P.O. Box 1397, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/972-6418 • www.torranceeducationfoundation.org

STEM Grants and Big News

By Kevin O'Brien, President, Torrance Education Foundation

Hello from the Torrance Education Foundation. I have some important fall 2015 news to share.

Recently 24 teachers – an increase over 2014 – applied to participate in our TEF annual STEM Initiative grants program. The winners will be selected in October. The TEF grant checks will be delivered in early November, and so these innovative, hands-on, STEM-focused classroom projects may begin shortly thereafter. Check our website to see all of the exciting projects that will happen this year, at www.TorranceEducationFoundation.org.



Susan Swinburne joined TEF in August as Executive Director.

In August we welcomed Susan Swinburne as our new executive director. Susan's background includes leadership roles in business, community affairs, and philanthropy, in both Los Angeles and Orange Counties. A longtime Torrance resident, Susan and her husband live in Seaside Ranchos with Oscar, their boisterous Wheaten Terrier.

Susan is eager to get to know everyone interested in working with TEF to help strengthen our TUSD schools. She may be reached at SusanS@TorranceEducationFoundation.org.

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What Changes after a Diabetes Diagnosis?



Mario Brakin, MD
Medical Director,
Endocrin,
Diabetes &
Metabolic Center

Having a child diagnosed with diabetes is a major event, but it's important to keep everything in perspective. Managed properly, diabetes shouldn't prevent your child from doing anything other kids do.

Think ahead: Form a consistent schedule, and carry around diabetes supplies, such as snacks and treatments for low blood glucose.

Take an active role in their health care: Arrange for routine follow-up visits, call your child's doctor if you have questions and become an advocate for their health.

Stay organized: Put your child's diabetes routine on the refrigerator or carry around an organized kit, labeling the items inside, and keeping spares on hand.

Communicate: Develop a system to help you and your child remember when and who gave medicines. Determine ways of keeping in contact with your child, their school and other caregivers. Post emergency numbers in a visible location. It can be helpful to others caring for your child.

Take care of yourself: When possible, share the load and try to do things together (e.g. draw insulin, discuss solutions). Parents need time to themselves, so educate other caregivers, such as babysitters, grandparents and older siblings, so you don't have to be with your child at all times.

Living with diabetes can be scary, especially at first. Diabetes has been added, but nothing about your child has been taken away. Sometimes diabetes can even be a positive change. If everyone improves their diet and exercises, this can be a healthy change for your family.



Paying Tribute to Our Teachers



Arturo Delgado, Ed.D.
Superintendent

I was delighted to once again host the annual Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year Awards Luncheon on Sept. 18.

It's one of my favorite days on the academic calendar because it gives me a chance to acknowledge our teachers and let them know that we see how hard they work and how they are making a difference in their students' lives.

We highlighted a special annual salute to our Top 16 County Teachers of the Year, and wished them well as they went on to the state competition.

Joining us at this special event were two of last year's Top 16 who made us extremely proud when they became California Teachers of the Year: Maggie Mabery and Lovelyn Marquez-Prueher.

We also recognized each of our 75 district nominees at the 2015-16 award luncheon as a treasure and an exemplar of the highest standards of a distinguished profession.

And even though we could never really thank teachers enough, the event was a chance to offer them a small token of our appreciation for all the years they have devoted to educating and inspiring our county's young people.

Teachers care for their students well after the school day ends. They put in long hours finding new ways to make lessons come alive. They work hard to build relationships with the students' families to make sure the students have the support that they need at home.

Some of them even reach into their own pockets to pay for school supplies. These are just a few examples of how teachers go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the best education for their students.

As one of our past Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year, Rebecca Mieliwocki, who went on to become the 2012 National Teacher of the Year, said: "A schoolteacher is the best tax-dollar bargain you will ever get. If you want to see tax dollars hard at work, come into a classroom and see what's going on."



Our specialists are the leaders in children's health care.

After receiving treatment at Miller Children's for diabetes, Marcelino Sr. recognized the same symptoms in his son: fatigue, excessive thirst and frequent urination. He took Marcelino Jr. to the emergency department at Miller Children's where he too was diagnosed with diabetes. Knowing the kind of care he would receive, Marcelino Sr. requested his son be seen by the care team at Miller Children's Endocrine, Diabetes & Metabolic Center. With diabetes now under control, Marcelino Jr. has time to play king of the castle!

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800-MEMORIAL

Our specialty:
Pediatric Diabetes

Marcelino's specialty:
King of the Castle



Marcelino Jr., 4-years-old, Miller Children's Diabetes Patient is supported by a strong foundation: **Marcelino Sr., his father**

Adams *Elementary*

2121 238th St., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4480 • adams.tusd.org



Dr. Kumi Toyoda-Smart
Principal

Arts Come Alive

This year marks the second year of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) partnership with John Adams Elementary School. The program has offered our students and faculty exposure to LACMA's broad and diverse art collection. Students have been talking about art and making personal connection to art objects. Furthermore, they have worked with real-life artists and created their own individual work based on the LACMA collections.

Last year, transitional kindergarten through fifth-grade students met with LACMA artists six times and created original works of arts. Several classes were also able to take free field trips to LACMA. And, as a LACMA partnership school, our faculty has had free access to their Evening for Educators program. Several Adams teachers attended these night sessions and shared their original works of art.

Students and teachers alike have benefitted tremendously from this partnership. This year will mark the last year of the two-year partnership with LACMA, and we are doing everything we can to make it the best year ever! Seven sessions are being scheduled with our LACMA artists. On their last visit, they will collaborate with our teachers on a multidisciplinary art lesson. Our two free field trips are being scheduled, and we are also trying to plan two free family Saturdays at LACMA. Lastly, we are hoping to showcase the students' original works at our annual Portfolio Day.

We're looking forward to a fun and artful year at Adams!

Arlington *Elementary*

17800 Van Ness Ave., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4519 • arlingtonpta.com



Dr. Vicki Hath
Principal

Family Fun

Good ol' family fun—that's how Arlington Elementary School kicked off the 2015–2016 school year! Our families were invited to a fun-tastic night of game playing with exciting board games aligned with the Common Core State Standards! Students from the North High School J and V Club volunteered their time to be our game docents. It was a great night to socialize with each other, spend time away from electronic devices, and play!

Arlington will continue with our theme of family fun in October with our upcoming PTA-sponsored Family Movie Night. This is one of our best attended events, where families gather on our playground with their beach chairs and blankets, share a picnic-style dinner, and enjoy some outdoor entertainment.



Additional family nights this year will include Math Night as well as a new event related to Science and Engineering. Arlington is proud of our family connections and parent involvement.

Anza *Elementary*

21400 Ellinwood Dr., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4559 • anzaelementary.org



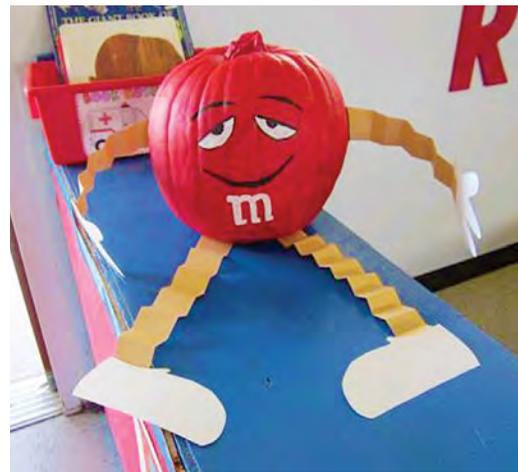
Barbara Marks
Principal

Giving Back

From kindergarten to the fifth grade, our Anza School students are being taught the pillars of Character Counts. "Becoming a helping person is a way of building your life upon a very special ideal. It means caring about people you may not even know; it means that you give a portion of your strength and energy to aid others; it means that you serve those who need your support in small and large ways."

Some of the ways that our students practice this philosophy is by reaching out to the less fortunate children and families in our community.

For example, during the holiday season, our Anza students work together to adopt a family in need and provide them with a food gift box. Specific information is provided about the family members, such as the age and gender of a child, and their family size, so that each classroom can personalize their baskets. The students write holiday letters and draw pictures to the children to help them feel special and cared about.



The boxes are then decorated, and a complete family meal is donated by each classroom. Last year our Anza students donated enough extra turkeys, stuffing, canned vegetables, potatoes, and pies to fill a service organization's food pantry. That's a lot of food!

Also, during the fall holidays our students gear up to create special pumpkins. These pumpkins are elaborately decorated and auctioned off to help raise money for children's charities.

Arnold *Elementary*

4100 W. 227th St., Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4524 • arnold.tusd.org



Justine Lang
Principal

Student Registration Days

The first-ever Arnold Student Registration was quite a success, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our amazing PTA!

A week before school started, families were invited to bring in all of the required paperwork that we usually receive on the first day. This way they could also sign up to volunteer for activities, buy spirit wear, and see who they had missed all summer.

Many families mentioned how much easier it was to fill everything out ahead of time. Our teachers and staff members were also happy that all of this important information was received before the first day.



Over 560 students were registered during the two days of registration.

This means that all of their paperwork was turned in, and the preliminary teacher assignments were received! It was a festive atmosphere, as well as a great way to kick off the school year and introduce our cute new Arnold logo. Go, Alleycats!

Torrance Memorial Physician Network Providing Comprehensive Women's Care

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Soha Elgharib, M.D.



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Barbara Schulz, M.D.



TORRANCE MEMORIAL
PHYSICIAN NETWORK

Calle Mayor *Middle School*

4800 Calle Mayor, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4548 • callemayor.tusd.org



Dave Mosley
Principal

Afterschool Opportunities

Calle Mayor Middle School students are extremely excited about our new afterschool enrichment programs. With the support of the PTSA and the school community, Calle Mayor is proud to offer its students robust afterschool programs in robotics, computer programming, and wood shop.

The robotics program, under the direction of Mr. Schwartz, will give students an opportunity to learn how to build robots and program them to perform many different tasks. This great program will give students a sampling of robotics and hopefully inspire them to continue at South High School.

The computer programming program, under the direction of Dr. Franklin, will use the Scratch program, which was designed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to teach students how to design applications. We all know that some of the greatest apps have yet to be created. Who knows? Maybe the next great one will be created by a Calle Mayor student!

The wood shop program, under the direction of Mr. Fowler and with my assistance, will teach students the foundational skills of carpentry and give them an opportunity to build items to donate to local charities. This truly is a great opportunity to teach students the importance of helping others and also to give them some time to make some cool projects as keepsakes.

We are also proud to announce the continuation of our Model United Nations Club. Under the direction of Mr. Somoano, the Model United Nations Club teaches students about real-world problems. Students will have an opportunity to research, work in small groups, and debate as if they are real ambassadors representing a country.

These new afterschool programs will give students an opportunity to participate and learn many new, challenging, and fun skills which will prepare them for the 21st century.

Carr *Elementary*

3404 W. 168th St, Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4467 • carr.tusd.org



Dick Peterson
Principal

Old Friend Memorialized

Carr staff, students and parents are all excited about the new construction that started at the beginning of October. At this writing, the construction company has already put its staging area in place. We are all aware that we will need to endure some changes in day-to-day operation during the construction period but feel that it will be worth it for the many improvements to come.

Unfortunately, the first "casualty" of construction was the beautiful old tree that was next to the cafeteria and that enhanced the entrance to the campus. Although we all knew that it had to be removed, it was difficult to let it go. The good news is that we are getting a bench made from part of the tree donated by the man who runs the tree-removal service. We were also provided with a large piece of the tree to shellac and put up in our cafeteria so that the students can see and count the rings in it. Once construction is complete, a new tree will be planted nearby and a new tradition can be established with its growth.



Casimir *Middle School*

17220 Casimir Ave., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4498 • casimir.tusd.org



Susie Holmes
Principal

21st-Century Skills

Casimir Middle School is taking a bold step forward by implementing an innovative curriculum that focuses on teaching students 21st-century learning skills. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning, www.p21.org, created a framework of skills with the support of teachers, researchers, and business leaders. This framework is designed to describe the skills students will need to “succeed in work, life, and citizenship. These include items such as critical thinking, flexibility, adaptability, communication, problem-solving, and creativity. At Casimir, we are working to embed a curriculum that teaches these skills in the very fabric of the school.

The plan is to initially work out the details of the curriculum with small groups of students at each grade level and then move to embed it into the curriculum during the regular school schedule. We have chosen to use Dr. Jonathan Brennan’s “A Good Road” (www.agoodroad.com) because of its engaging presentation of the material and its excellent design. Last year, a team of five teachers went to a training on the curriculum and is testing it out in their classrooms. We plan to meet at the end of the year to evaluate our approach and make recommendations for next year.

We feel that this is a vital approach to ensuring our students are not only successful in our classrooms but in their lives and careers.

Fern *Elementary*

1314 Fern Ave., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4506 • fern.tusd.org



Debbie Mabry
Principal

Making a Difference!

Welcome to a new and exciting 2015–2016 school year at Fern Elementary! Our hope is that the summer break has provided each and every one of you with a chance to relax, rejuvenate, and spend quality time with family and friends.

It is often thought that teachers spend the summer months relaxing. Our Fern teachers though spent the summer researching, collaborating, and learning. They engaged in a variety of topics related to Common Core reading, writing, math, Next Generation Science Standards, and training in assessment and instructional models that utilize technology.

Thanks to Measure T, this year all Fern students will have access to a technological device that supports learning throughout the school day. With Common Core and technology at the heart of our instruction, we look forward to implementing 21st-century best practices.

By definition, the Common Core Standards are academically rigorous, and yet we understand how we must reach beyond textbooks to engage the whole child. We hope that each student will challenge themselves to try five new experiences outside the classroom. Throughout the year they can also engage in creative opportunities like Show Choir, art contests, or the science fair. Students may also serve our school by participating in school clean-up days, recycling cans/bottles, or assisting their younger peers.

Our school-wide theme this year is “Falcons Can Make a Difference.” We believe that educational practices beyond the classroom will inspire students to connect more deeply to the learning process, create more meaningful connections, and ultimately make a difference in our school community.

Fern Elementary is an exceptional school filled with eager, thoughtful learners. Our staff is proud to say that our students are leading the way to help make a difference in the world!



Edison *Elementary*

3800 W. 182nd St., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4513 • edison.tusd.org



Dr. Erin Lahr
Principal

Keeping It REAL

Welcome to all new and returning staff, students and families joining our Edison Elementary School community! We are very lucky to have both high-quality teachers and support staff who are well trained to make a positive difference in your children’s lives.

We are excited to share the good news of our positive school culture with you. Our campus climate is built on high expectations for learning and behavior through a schoolwide system of positive-behavior supports. Everything we do at Edison is tied to “Keeping it REAL,” and we have four simple expectations for all that promote success: R is for respect; E for empathy; A for awareness; and L for learning.

Having clear expectations for learning, acting and treating others helps create a learning environment where everyone can thrive. Students are explicitly taught the expectations and are reinforced for achieving the goals. Students receive Keep it REAL slips and weekly awards based on displaying the desired behaviors. You will see fifth-grade students leading us in our schoolwide chant at morning assemblies to help keep a focus on learning and building character as we go throughout our day. Families are welcome to attend our Friday-morning assemblies and join in the fun. Hope to see some of you there soon!



32nd Annual

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TORRANCE MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER

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Hickory *Elementary*

2800 W. 227th St., Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4672 • w1.hickory.tusd.org



Edna Schumacher
Principal

Hickory Happenings

The 2015–2016 school year opened with a record enrollment at Hickory Elementary School. We welcomed 935 students to our school!

Thanks to our wonderful staff and enthusiastic PTA, the opening went smoothly for all. Our PTA also welcomed the new families in our TK and kindergarten to our first “Kiss and Cry” social event. Parents were given an overview of events and programs, and later went on a tour of important places on campus.

Students and teachers were showing their school spirit and getting “whipped” into shape for the Skechers Pier-to-Pier Friendship Walk on Oct. 25. Last year we had over 110 walkers! We were able to purchase technology for the Room 4 students who had the most signups. We also purchased playground equipment for students.

Our students in grades four and five are preparing for the Student Council elections. Our procedure mimics the real election process, and gives students the experience of running for an elected office. Students must petition, provide qualifying documents, campaign, and then give speeches that highlight their qualifications and platforms. All students in grades one to five attend an assembly and listen to the candidates’ speeches. Then they cast their confidential vote for the candidate of their choice.

The Student Council is very active at Hickory. They help run the Monday morning assemblies, organize and run noon leagues, plan spirit days, and sponsor philanthropic campaigns. This year they will also be spearheading the new “Sprit Monkey” program at Hickory. With the sales of “spirit sticks,” the Council also helps support our many programs and projects.

Stop by the school office or library to admire our new Hickory Hound welcome rugs! Thank you, Mrs. Amie Kownacki, and Mrs. Kelly Collin, for acting as our Student Council moderators.

LAUNCH *Preschool Programs*

4100 W. 227th St., Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/972-6500x2550 • launch.tusd.org



Dr. Elaine Semple
Principal

School Nurses: Our Unsung Heroes

The Torrance Unified School District has seven school nurses, all of whom selflessly serve our schools. In order to be employed as a school nurse, an individual must have a B.A. or B.S. in nursing. They must also be R.N. licensed, and possess a California Health Service Credential.

Once employed, the magnitude of their responsibilities is staggering. Nurses annually conduct vision and hearing screenings for each kindergarten student, as well as the second-, fifth-, eighth-, and tenth-graders. They screen every seventh-grader for scoliosis. They also screen the vision and hearing, and review all health information, for every child who participates in an initial or triennial IEP meeting.

Our nurses also train staff members yearly in the use of EpiPens. They provide information regarding common illnesses, immunizations, lice, communicable diseases, etc. They oversee our health services assistants and counsel parents regarding immunizations.

All of these responsibilities are just an addition to the most important component of their work. School nurses most of all develop care plans for our most vulnerable children. They ensure that children with diabetes, seizure disorders, feeding tubes, cancer, or any other medical condition all receive the support they need to be safe and productive at school.

At LAUNCH, we often have little ones with significant health problems. Eileen Lipp, our school nurse, understands how scary it is for parents to leave these fragile children at school. So she takes time to talk to them and listen to their concerns, and provide feedback.

I know from talking with Eileen that all of our TUSD nurses are dedicated and passionate about their profession. So let’s give a shout-out to District Nurse Specialist Heidi Allred, as well as Anita Hawkins, Melissa Foster, Arevic Shahumyan, Eileen Lipp, Maria Fitzgerald, and Lovvet Hollis. They are our unsung heroes!

J.H. Hull *Middle School*

2080 W. 231st St., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4516 • hull.tusd.org



Patty Girgis
Principal

Ye Olde Celebration

History Day was a huge successful event at JH Hull Middle School! In June, all seventh- and eighth-graders were invited to be a part of the Annual History Day devoted to the medieval and Renaissance cultures based on the seventh-grade world history curriculum. Approximately 150 students had signed up for guild membership in January in 14 areas that included military history, embroidery, medicine, castle housekeeping, alchemy, clothing and a drama troupe. The student docents educated themselves about these topics with guidance from teachers, prepared presentations and hands-on activities for the actual day, and put together their own costumes. Parents volunteered for setup the night before and turned one of Hull’s courtyards into a fairgrounds with medieval-styled tents bought through the years with grants and donations. The docents decorated their tents with garlands and props and welcomed the other 350 students as guests throughout the day.

It was a fabulous time of amazing energy and engaged and hands-on learning, with students teaching their peers on how to make sachets to ward off the Black Death, participate in alchemy experiments, dance around the Maypole and myriad historical reenactments.

Jefferson *Middle School*

21717 Talisman St., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4794 • jefferson.tusd.org



Kara Heinrich
Principal

Help at Hand!

Middle school—when every parent gains full understanding of what their parents might have gone through! Middle school students live primarily in a world of black and white—no gray. Things are either a crisis or not, and parents don’t get it.

In middle-schoolchildren become progressively more independent. Sixth grade is the transition between elementary and secondary. There’s a bit more academic nurturing, and students have a healthy sense of unease entering the secondary social world. By the end of sixth, they’ve got it all figured out, and their social world explodes.

Mood swings are epidemic; popularity becomes a curse and a blessing; and body image, attire and cool take precedence. How do parents navigate these years while keeping their sanity? Here are some of my favorite tips to help you:

Stay in contact with the school, especially the counselor. School counselors have different credibility from that of parents. They can say the exact same things you say, and students listen because they’re not the parent.

Set time for homework, and stay on top of grades. Don’t wait for teachers to contact you—you contact them. Have a specified time and place for homework. Don’t accept “I don’t have any homework.” No homework means “review or reading time.”

Technology—it’s their life. And they can get caught up in things they shouldn’t, with devastating effects. If technology isn’t used safely and appropriately, cancel it. It’s a tough lesson. Make them earn back the privilege.

Vary friendships. Identify your children’s passions and interests, and get them into groups outside school.

Don’t rescue your children from natural consequences. Set boundaries and rules with consistent expectations and consequences.

Good luck with middle school! Keep your eyes and ears open, and ask for help when you need it. We’re here for you as your children’s advocate!



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Lincoln *Elementary*

2418 W. 166th St., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4464 • lincoln.tusd.org



Katherine Castleberry
Principal

Shaping the Future

Let the good times roll!

That's how I feel as I enter my ninth year as principal of Lincoln Elementary. I'm thrilled to be welcoming our new families this year, and am personally overjoyed to see all of our returning students back for another great year of meaningful learning, rewarding experiences, and lots of laughs!

I consider it a distinct honor to be serving as Lincoln's principal. I feel as though my professional journey has shaped me into a leader who is insightful, transparent, and understanding of how important it is to have strong relationships between our school and community stakeholders.

My professional experience has included serving for the past 12 years as an elementary school principal in the Torrance and West Contra Costa School Districts. Prior to my current role, I was a middle school assistant principal, curriculum coach, and classroom teacher throughout Northern and Southern California. I am proud to be a life-long learner with high expectations for myself, my staff, and my students.

Throughout my career what has remained paramount is that each student in my care attains success through being nurtured and encouraged academically, socially and emotionally. I believe this is achieved through truly getting to know each child – their strengths, their challenges, their beliefs, their culture, their family, their uniqueness.

This is how we, in education, can position ourselves to meaningfully educate and shape the lives of young people...by guiding them through a journey that brings them joy and helps them realize their maximum potential...this too, is what brings me joy!

Lynn *Middle School*

5038 Halison St., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4495 • bertlynn.tusd.org



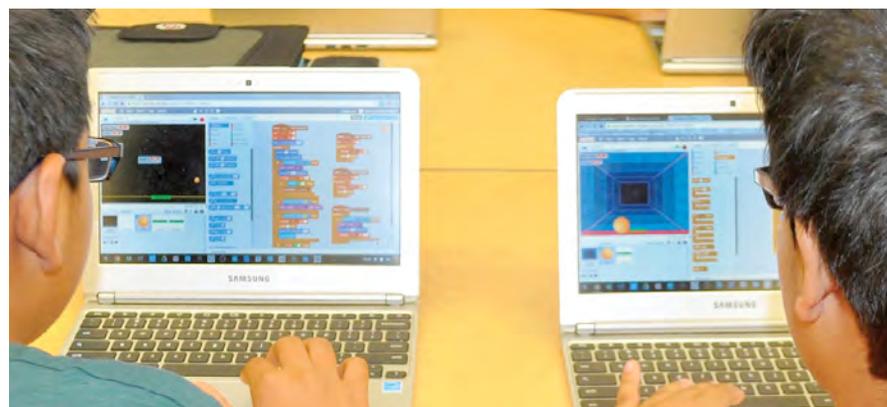
LeRoy Jackson Jr.
Principal

Computer Coding and Robotics

International Business Times estimates that 1.4 million jobs will be needed in computer sciences over the next 10 years. Following our success with last year's pilot course offering, demand for our Coding and Robotics (CC&R) class has jumped from 30 students to over 140 students.

Our new course develops the basic concepts of computer programming and simple robotics. Students learn basic programming concepts such as functions, loops, conditionals and Boolean logic through several programming languages such as Scratch, JavaScript, Processing and Python. These languages are used to create original games, interactive puzzles and multimedia applications. Beyond programming, students assemble electronic circuits that allow student programs to interact with Arduino microcontrollers used in our robotics program.

Consistent with our motto, "Today we learn, tomorrow we lead," we believe that our students will have the tools necessary to compete in an ever-expanding digital world.



Playing games in class? Yes, students are developing "game code" in class!

Magruder *Middle School*

4100 W. 185th St., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4527 • magruder.tusd.org



Chris Sheck
Principal

Exciting Improvements

The opening of this school year was the smoothest I have experienced in my more than 10 years as an administrator. Thank you to our parent volunteers, students, faculty, and staff.

Our chief responsibility as educators is to monitor students' academic progress and achievement to ensure their continued success at Magruder Middle School (MMS). Daily, the MMS faculty implements different levels of learning opportunities for all students, in an effort to both support and extend learning.

The middle school years are challenging for many students; therefore, it is critical that administration, counselors, teachers, and parents work together to provide support and sufficient opportunities for academic success. To this end, Magruder is excited to introduce two exciting changes to our campus this year.

First, is our implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS focuses on teaching appropriate social and behavioral skills and values, while providing students with the necessary tools to navigate their middle school experience. While PBIS focuses on proactively teaching and purposefully recognizing appropriate and positive behaviors, it also seeks to find effective solutions to potential inappropriate student behavior. Reported school-wide incidents have already declined 85 percent in the first month of school.

Secondly, teacher Leadership Teams worked collaboratively during the spring of 2015 to develop a 30-minute Academic Mastery Period (AMP), which has been embedded into the school day to ensure that every student is learning at high levels. AMP will occur four times weekly and allow many students to receive extra academic support in both math and English language arts and move them toward the mastery of grade-level standards. Other students will use this time to stay current with class work and activities, review and study class notes, and, of course, read!

Madrona *Middle School*

21364 Madrona Ave., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4562 • madrona.tusd.org



Chris Lipsey
Principal

STEAMing Forward

Summer was a time of reflection for Madrona Middle School. This fall our teachers and community returned with a refreshed dedication, offering dynamic programs for all of our students to prepare them for college and career.

Gifted And Talented Education (GATE) students hit the road early this fall, with 50 of them travelling to Idyllwild to participate in AstroCamp, a hands-on physical science weekend with an emphasis on astronomy and space exploration. Additionally, our GATE students will participate in monthly enrichment activities. The program is expanding this year with two advisors, Ms. Wooldridge and Ms. Rocha.

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is back! Last year we sent over 50 percent of our matriculating students to the continuing program at Torrance High School, where they are eligible to earn college credits with the completion of PLTW courses there. Also, Science Olympiad continues to pull in a large number of interested students, who will compete against some of the best schools in the state!

Model United Nations (UN) just had its first informational and recruitment meetings, with over 60 students interested in this enrichment program. Model UN is an educational simulation and academic competition, where students learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations. The program teaches research, public speaking, debating, writing skills, critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership.

The arts are in full swing, with music and drama continuing to enroll many students for performance-based programs that are presented to the public. You can check our school calendar at madrona.tusd.org for dates and times.

With these activities, our intramural competitions, our academic clubs, which include chess and math, and community service organizations, including California Junior Scholastic Federation and Associated Student Body, Madrona is looking forward to an enriching and successful year.

North *High School*

3620 W. 182nd St., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4412 • northhighschool.org



Dr. Ron Richardson
Principal

Celebration of the Arts

North High School encourages students to express themselves creatively through dynamic visual and performing arts classes. Students learn to sharpen their skills in the areas of drama, dance, drawing, painting, ceramics, band, and choir.

At the annual Celebration of the Arts, students share their talents with the entire community. Every student shows his or her best work and explains why the selected item is exemplary. The Saxon Band, the jazz band, the choir, and the dance groups perform, culminating the year's efforts. In 2015, students incorporated technology using

the Aurasma app, which allowed visitors to listen to pre-recorded interviews with the artists.

North High's entire visual and performing arts staff collaborates for the Chalk Walk and show, and the event is also supported by many of the school's teachers. We hope you will join us for the 2016 Saxon Celebration of the Arts on Friday, June 3 at 6 p.m.



Student produced ceramics May, 2015.

Riviera *Elementary*

365 Paseo de Arena, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4460 • riviera.tusd.org



Christie Forshey
Principal

Visit from Ozobots!

The Riviera PTA's successful fund-raising has provided a campus Science Lab teacher and Computer Lab teacher. Students visit the labs 45 minutes per week to experiment and develop STEM skills with the goal of having hands-on experimentation and technological skills that integrate technology into daily instruction. The Ozobot lesson is a perfect example of integrated instruction and best practices in Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Second-graders programmed Ozobots to follow a color-code program. First, students drew their own colored maps that the Ozobots followed.

Then, students experimented with programmed codes to create sequences of moves. Finally, students partnered and solved challenge problems like getting the Ozobot to move from point A to point B.



Teacher, Mrs. Elder working with 4th grade students.

Fourth-graders watched a short video clip on beginning programming. Then, they visited ozoblocky.com to learn how the technology and Ozobot interact. Partners calibrated their Ozobot with an iPad, created codes, and programmed the robot to move in designed sequences.

Richardson *Middle School*

23751 Nancy Lee Lane, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4790 • richardsonmiddleschool.org

Ian Drummond, *Principal*

Latest News

Ian Drummond replaced Chad Mabery as the principal just prior to the start of the school year. Mabery accepted a director position with Manhattan Beach USD, which coincidentally is the same district from which Drummond departed in order to take the helm at Richardson. Drummond, a former English teacher, joins Richardson during his 22nd year in education. He served as vice principal at Mira Costa High School for the past three years.

Richardson MS Environmental Club is working to bring Trash-Free Lunches to campus this year. Under the leadership of science teacher Mandy Mason, the goal of these lunches will be to reduce waste and increase awareness. Students will be encouraged to bring their lunches in reusable containers rather than disposable plastic bags.

The YMCA will once again be working in conjunction with RMS social studies teacher Robert Medrano to create its Youth and Government Model United Nations program. Students in this program will gain leadership experience and learn about global issues by attending training sessions throughout the year as well as a weekend conference and a four-day MUN Summit.

Engineering Club for Girls is continuing into its third year this year at RMS. The goal of this club is to increase interest in STEM with girls, as women are currently underrepresented in this area of the workforce. Curriculum from the Museum of Science in Boston will be implemented under the guidance of science teachers Lisa Case and Edithza Mesta.

Richardson Middle School has also implemented two new classes this year. Ambassadors works under the direction of its teacher, Ryan Beck, to develop strategies and activities to cultivate a positive school culture. The Digital Media class, taught by Josh Buby, teaches students a variety of skills that focus on both the video and journalism aspects of the course.

Shery *High School*

2600 Vine St., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4440 • shery.tusd.org



Jamie Jimenez
Principal

The Success Gap

At Kurt T Shery High School, we are very proud of our high graduation rates. We believe, however, that there is more that we can do for our students beyond helping them achieve their diplomas. We realized that a number of students were leaving high school to start their postsecondary education paths or enter the workforce, and they are not prepared to be successful.

In order to address some of the areas of weakness we saw as areas of concerns, we have implemented a few programs we feel will benefit all our students.

With the support of our district, all of our students have been enrolled in a program called Achieve 3000. This is a differentiated reading program that provides engaging nonfiction content that supports core curriculum. The teacher chooses articles based on their lesson plans, and the article is then differentiated to meet every individual's Lexile level. The goal is for all students to improve their reading by one to two grade levels.

Rounding It Out

We also believe that people who are connected and invested in their communities are more well-rounded and overall better human beings. This year, we have started a community involvement program. Students who are doing volunteer work in the community can work with one of our teachers to do relevant assignments and with their hours of service can earn elective credits for their commitment to our community. Kurt T Shery High staff is also committed to promoting volunteer opportunities on a monthly basis for students and staff to participate in together. For example, we have an upcoming Campus Beautification Day, and we are looking forward to finding opportunities to serve meals to the needy.

So far, we are getting great feedback from the students about both programs, and we are hopeful that we will see positive changes that will help ensure that when our students leave us, they are better prepared for life.

Seaside *Elementary*

4651 Sharynne Lane, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4532 • seaside.tusd.org



Michele Bauer
Principal

Another Talented Parent

Seaside is excited to announce that local artist and Seaside parent, Greg Simkins, has donated his time and talent to our library. A beautiful, kid friendly, ocean theme mural has been painted above the bookshelves. The mural covers the entire wall and unites the library with the repetition of ocean creatures on the rug and wall. I encourage you to check out his art work on line. Seaside is truly a community school. Many parents were Seaside students themselves and have returned to the neighborhood to raise their children in the community in which they grew up. Our parents and our teachers literally make the school a fantastic place.

Torrance *Elementary*

2125 Lincoln Ave., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4500 • torranceel.tusd.org



Dr. Kelly Joseph
Principal

Jog-A-Thon

At Torrance Elementary, our PTA's goal is to enhance the elementary school experience.

To raise funds for the amazing programs that we present to our students each year, we recently hosted a Jog A Thon at Zamperini Stadium, which was our own version of a color run! While we could not actually spray colors on the students, we asked them to all dress colorfully. Each grade had a different color: Rock N Roll Red; Outrageous Orange; Hello, Yellow; Gnarly Green; Bodacious Baby Blue; and Rambunctious Royal Blue.

One lucky teacher was even selected to wear a rainbow clown wig, and she encouraged the other first-grade teachers to join her. The students thought it was awesome!

We kicked off the year with two energetic gymnasts from the TNT Dunk Squad, who between flips discussed responsibility and training. Their goal was to get our students ready to do their best physically and also raise money for the school. The children decorated posters and selected their own music to hear during their time on the track!

We also had a spirit week to help promote the Jog A Thon. This included Mustache Monday, Blackout Tuesday, Colorful Wednesday, PJ Thursday, and Hollywood Friday. The children had so much spirit! Everyone had a great time, and the memories will live on in our yearbook.



South *High School*

4801 Pacific Coast Highway, Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4352 • shs.tusd.org



Dr. Scott McDowell
Principal

Additional Avenues of Service

Having just offered a record number of AP Exams in May, nearly 1,200, our students have continued to show interest in additional opportunities at the AP and college-prep level. In September, we were able to offer five new courses to meet a variety of needs and interests.

AP Environmental Science involves topics like global warming, pollution, and drought, and so it's no surprise that interest in this class reached a peak last year. This year we had 110 students enroll in three periods of the course, as taught by physical science teacher Trisha Minahan.

We are also offering sports therapy. After several years of having a handful of students work as student trainers with teacher Michael Taylor, we thought the time was right to offer a new course focusing on sports medicine. Taught by Mr. Taylor, we now have 70 students taking this first-time offering.

An additional course is AP Music Theory. With over 200 students in a highly successful marching band, and another 50 students in choir, this class seemed a natural fit. We now have 28 students taking a zero-period offering taught by first-year choir teacher Rebecca Salazar.

Lori Smith-Hillman has been teaching American Sign Language I and II for eight years. In that time, the program has grown from one period to four. Because American Sign Language is a UC/CSU recognized subject, many students were interested in taking the recommended third year instead of just the minimum two. So now we have American Sign Language III.

After a successful first year of teaching Introduction to Engineering Design, Lumi Denisiu is currently teaching the second course, Principles of Engineering. It is part of the Project Lead the Way engineering sequence, which will eventually include aerospace engineering and engineering design courses.

Overall, these five courses represent 260 students taking additional college and career-prep coursework.

Torrance *High School*

2200 W. Carson St., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4396 • ths.tusd.org



Karim Girgis
Principal

Great Traditions

Torrance High School is currently undergoing modernization, and we are pleased to announce the re-opening of our historic main and home economics buildings. The main building opened in 1917 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It has also been seen in numerous movies and television shows, including "Beverly Hills 90210" and "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer." We receive visitors from all over the world who come to see where Buffy roamed the halls. In addition to the fresh paint and window treatments, there have been upgrades

to the technology in each classroom, and we look forward to the completion of modernization in time for our centennial celebration in 2017.

Our main gym is also getting some much-needed upgrades. The Tartar Pride Foundation has cut the tartar out of the center of the old gym floor and is selling small pieces in shadow boxes for \$50. If anyone in the Torrance community is interested in purchasing a piece of Torrance High history, please contact us at torrance.high.school@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Torrance-High-School for more information.

Fall has started out very well for our students in a variety of competitions. Girls cross country captured the South Bay Cup, led by sophomore Megan Neumann with a time of 15:41. Drumline and color guard both captured first place at the West High School Field Tournament. Girls golf is also off to another outstanding start, led by Nina Novilla, the 2014 Daily Breeze Player of the Year. Lastly we would like to congratulate our softball team on winning their first CIF championship last spring! In a 13-inning dramatic finish, our ladies defeated Highland High School 1-0 with dominating pitching performance from Marissa Moreno.

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Torrance *Adult School*

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Dr. Wayne Diulio
Director

Many Choices to Succeed

To support TUSD students, TAS developed a number of courses for your child. In collaboration with Princeton Review we offer affordable SAT and ACT test prep on the Hamilton and Levy campuses. For information on courses enrolling now, or to sign up for a FREE Practice SAT on November 14th, visit PrincetonReview.com. Be sure to enter promo code TUSDPREP for a discount. We have also built a robust online program to assist your child with high school graduation and other educational needs. In addition, TAS has a testing center to assist adults with Microsoft and QuickBooks online certification assessments. Finally, we have a Career Technical Education program to assist students enter the health profession in Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant and other entry level medical areas.



Victor *Elementary*

4820 Spencer St., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4542 • victor.tusd.org



Bill Baker
Principal

Reaching All Students

Victor implements a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) that ensures every child succeeding. MTSS is an evidence-based model of schooling that uses data to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. It promotes school-wide practices to ensure the highest possible success for all children. The MTSS framework helps schools take a positive, proactive, and differentiated approach to educating children. It encourages schools to provide early intervention services to help prevent academic, social-emotional, and/or behavioral difficulties. MTSS enables schools to identify students who struggle with learning or behavior and who excel beyond their current grade level. The MTSS Leadership Team, which includes administrators, teachers, and school staff, meet regularly to discuss possible reasons for learning or behavior problems. The team then implements a plan for the student and progress is monitored weekly. Victor has seen great results with an increase in student achievement and a drastic drop in discipline referrals.



Towers *Elementary*

5600 Towers St., Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4535 • towers.tusd.org



Sandy Skora
Principal

Scout's Honor—Literally!

This same time last year, Towers was in full swing with our modernization project. It is now completed, with 16 new modular buildings, a kindergarten village that includes a playground, and new blacktop and sand areas for our first-through-fifth-graders. I would like to thank Sharefest as well as two Eagle scouts, Eddie Jang and Andre Jang, for their enhancements of our playground area.

Sharefest, working with Creativity Heals, brought in four incredible Los Angeles artists that painted beautiful beach-themed scenes on our new handball courts. Eddie Jang's Eagle project included painting the United States on the blacktop and improvements to our garden area. Andre Jang's Eagle project included constructing a lawn-size chessboard out of tiles.

All these projects, along with our long-awaited modernization, have transformed our campus into a beautiful place in which to work and attend school.



Walteria *Elementary*

24456 Madison St., Torrance, CA 90505 • 310/533-4487 • www.walteriaelementary.org



Bobbie Wynhoff
Principal

On the Road to Learning

Walteria Elementary School is off and running this school year. Our enrollment has increased by 23 students as of this writing; as a result, we have added some new staff members. Mrs. Panagetopulos, a first-grade teacher, retired at the end of the 2014–2015 school year, so Ms. Porter was hired to teach fifth grade, as enrollment changes in June meant we no longer required another first-grade teacher. Over the summer months however, our increase in student numbers allowed us to hire Ms. Vasquez to fill a need in first grade. Mr. Johns has joined Mr. Bertone as one of our two physical education teachers, who come on Wednesdays. Finally, Mrs. Ruparatne, our intervention teacher, is now providing extra language arts support for targeted student populations.

Thanks to bonds passed last year, door latches were added to classrooms. These allow teachers to keep their doors in a locked position while still having them open for fresh air. If there is a need to shelter-in-place, teachers just need to close their doors and the rooms will be locked. Another safety feature we will be adding is security cameras.

We anticipate another year of learning for all and wish to thank our staff members and families for all of their support in the education of our Walteria Wildcats! All the extra effort expended ensures all students are learning and on the road to becoming lifelong learners.

West *High School*

20401 Victor, Torrance, CA 90503 • 310/533-4299



Pam Metz
Principal

Recognition and Involvement

West High School opened the school year with almost 2,100 students, adding a freshman class of 520. We welcomed eight new teachers in English, math, social science, science, world languages, and choral music. Our maximum class size has dropped significantly over the past two years as funding for education has improved.

West High was named to the Newsweek list of top schools in the country as well as a similar list from U.S. News & World Report. Added to our designation as a California Gold Ribbon School, these recognitions are an indication that we are providing students with a challenging, well-rounded education.

Club Rush was held in late September, and students were invited to find their match among over 50 clubs and organizations. Service clubs, special interest clubs, and academic clubs make up a majority of the opportunities for students to get involved.

The cross country teams, both boys and girls, began their year with a division win at the Nike Invitational in Portland. The robotics team also began their fall season with a victory at the Southern California Regional Robotics Forum Fall Classic. West High hosted the 30th annual South Bay Invitational Field Show, which was dedicated to former band director Mr. Jim Banim. Fall sports are heading into league play, and we proudly support our student athletes. Performing groups, including dance, drill team, drama, and music, are preparing for fall productions and competitions.

There's always something going on at West High.

BOARD OF EDUCATION • From Page 1



Don Lee
President

and having three children graduate from the district with the last one still in TUSD, one of my main priorities in running for School Board was to see our schools updated to 21st-century facilities. In the last eight years, we have passed four bond measures—Y, Z, T, and U—allowing the district to rebuild our schools, making them centers for dynamic learning, as well as safer and more secure in the process. Measures Y and Z were the most comprehensive capital improvement projects the district had ever undertaken in the past 50 years. Now with the passing of Measures T and U, we will see such facilities as a brand-new aquatic center, additional middle school gyms, and high school auditoriums at North, South, and West High Schools, with the Torrance High School auditorium getting the much-needed love it requires to be restored to its former glory. Speaking of Torrance High, which is the oldest school in our district, the school will be completely renovated in time for its centennial celebration in 2017, heralding it into the 21st century but retaining its historical integrity and charm.

The most essential aspect of Measures T and U is the safety upgrades we will be making at our school sites. We live in a very different environment than the one in which we were raised. Some of the safety measures going into place are brand-new fencing and surveillance systems, giving our schools the tools they need to be extra diligent in keeping our students safe. As chair of the Torrance 4 Kids Bond Committee, I spoke with parents across the district, and the major concern they voiced was the safety of their children. Passage of these bonds reflects the community's vested interest in the education of our children and the Board's dedication and leadership to deliver those services to the students and parents of Torrance.

As a former city council member, I have intimate knowledge of how the city functions and have encouraged collaboration with our city partners. Such programs as the crossing guards, joint usages of our facilities, and shared resources have helped our district save dollars and create greater efficiency.

As our world evolves and technologies advance, the district's and the Board's objective remains constant: providing Torrance's students with the highest quality education. I look forward to another school year full of possibilities and opportunities.

Wood *Elementary*

2250 W. 235th St., Torrance, CA 90501 • 310/533-4484 • wood.tusd.org



Dr. Teresa Lanphere
Principal

Cool Welcome!

In September, Howard Wood Elementary School hosted its first-ever Ice Cream Social as a welcome-back-to-school event for students and families in anticipation of the first day of school. We had an incredible turnout of returning and new families that had the opportunity to enjoy some festive Hawaiian music and an ice cream float while mingling with students and teachers.

All the Wood teachers were present and had a great time scooping ice cream and saying hello to our students. The PTA sold T-shirts, signed up volunteers, and promoted PTA membership. It was a great event for all, and we plan to do it again next year!

Yukon *Elementary*

17815 Yukon Ave., Torrance, CA 90504 • 310/533-4477 • yukon.tusd.org



Elaine Wassil
Principal

Lots of New Developments!

So many new and wonderful things have come to Yukon this year!

We are a "tech forward" school, and our parents have access to all the excitement. If your child is a third-, fourth-, or fifth-grader, they are now on "Achieve 3000" at our school. This is a state-of-the-art reading program where your student can read thousands of articles at his or her "just right" reading level, and then do activities that will help their reading level grow.

Parents have access to everything their children are reading, as well as many other aspects of the program. They can go online anytime and see how their children are doing, and then have them do some more if they'd like! Be sure to ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about how to access Achieve 3000.

If your child is a K-5 student, which would include just about all of you, you and your child can access Raz Kids. This will give you great access to thousands of books, trade books included (that's some great literature). Once again, your child's teacher will help you figure out how to get online to use this new tool with your child.

And it isn't just about reading. ST Math is also coming to Yukon this year as well. And parents again will be able to see it!

This program helps students understand many important math concepts. They will be having so much fun that they won't even realize how hard they've been working. We are in the process of training on this and are just beginning implementation, so the math won't be online for another month. We will keep you informed about all these new developments at Yukon!

Board of Education



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A Bit of History

Music in History

By D. H. Coop

I remember my first years in school with finger painting, drawing and music. The class would listen and sing songs together, playing with blocks wrapped in sandpaper and striking triangles and other instruments to accompany our songs. My teachers exposed us to classical music with the *Surprise Symphony*, explaining the story behind it. Then around third grade, the art and music stopped, the students with the best voices joined choir, and those interested in art took art classes. What I liked about the art and music were the stories behind their creation.

Later as I became an adult, I started to notice that some of the songs I sang in school were tunes that were reworked. In the 1960s, my uncle could not believe what they had done to "I'm Going to Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter" from the 1930s. Some of the rewrites were unknown to my generation, such as "A Paper of Pins" from the colonial days that was redone as "The Bus Stop Song" and "Mockingbird," about the price of love. Then with rock 'n' roll came the civil rights movement.

Music before rock 'n' roll fell into groups. At the top was popular music and classical that was mainstream. All other ethnic music was called race music. Elvis changed the music world in the 1950s. Yet he was not the first. Back in the 1840s, Louis Moreau Gottschalk introduced a sound that mixed European and African slave sounds from the parks of New Orleans. "Le Banjo" is Gottschalk's attempt to make the piano sound like the banjo, an instrument developed by slaves. That sound can be found in Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer," which seems to be a favorite melody of ice cream trucks. Joplin's sound became known as ragtime, and it turned into jazz, which spread out of the South into cities in the North after the Great War.

Aaron Copeland took the sound and introduced it into classical and big bands, which turned it into swing. After World War II, big bands fell out of popularity. Bill Haley and the Comets hit the stage with "Rock Around the Clock," which brings us back to Elvis the King.

Elvis is not the one I want to use to demonstrate the value of music in history, although he played a major role. Instead, I want to mention Johnny Cash and his influence on country music. Country music groups before Cash did not include a drum player. Cash's songs all sounded the same to me. Then I learned the stories behind some of his songs. "I Walk the Line" introduced the drum into country music. He made the drum sound by placing a piece of sandpaper under the strings of his guitar. Then with "Ring of Fire," he introduced the Mexican trumpet into country music.

Rock 'n' roll went on to play a very important part in the civil rights movement and the Cold War. Rock 'n' roll went to the Soviet Union, where individuals cut tracks on x-ray plates to copy songs of the Beatles and others from the West. Then during the protests in the 1990s in China, Cui Jian sang "Yi Wu Suoyou" ("Nothing to My Name") in rock 'n' roll. In this country, Billy Joel's "Allentown" as well as his "We Didn't Start the Fire" is an indictment against the Greatest Generation for broken promises.

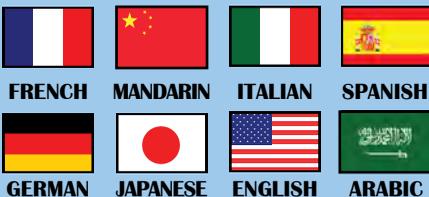
So the next time you hear a song, it may not be just a tune and words. It may be social change, protest, a story, just entertainment or part of the historical picture.

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Note-ables

Build It Back Again



I'm delighted whenever I come across a collection for children featuring music that isn't formulated, childishly cute or backed with electronic tracks. *Build It Back Again* by the Billy Jonas band is none of this, even with the use of a toy piano as a percussion instrument. The melodies are catchy compositions performed by a full range of vocal and instrumental mastery—even that little piano—and the lyrics do more than instruct and educate. They traverse sometimes wonky pathways to communicate profound messages of determination, maintaining humanity in a technological world, balance and historical significance.

The title song features a strong tempo with words to match. From the architecture of ancient Greece to the ravages of Hurricane Katrina—and certainly not stopping there—the band sings of the resolve of the human spirit to rebuild, often in new ways. The rollicking "Monkeys Driving Cars" tells how necessary it is to advance ourselves as humans to the same extent as technology if we want to survive as people. In a primal atmosphere of percussion, "Moment of Noise" seamlessly transitions from the creation of the universe to thankfulness and appreciation for every little sound and what causes it.

The CD is heavy but not any means ponderous. The songwriters also love wordplay, especially as it increases vocabulary and wallows in punning, as in "Hairy," "Maybe Maybe Not" and "What Kind of Bear Are You?"

The Billy Jonas Band has dug a sturdy foundation in *Build It Back Again*—good stuff for any group discussion that involves young minds.



Kate Karp is an editor for *School News Roll Call* and a freelance writer and editor.

Three Ways the PSAT Can Pay



Susan D. Marshall

Well, it's "One for the money, Two for the show, Three to get ready, Now go, cat, go." Words sang by the King, Elvis Presley. Popular before most of us were born.

May this Mnemonic help put the PSAT in perspective.

One for the money... The PSAT is a money test. You open the door to multiple scholarship opportunities. Not only the National Merit Scholarship Program, but additional scholarships as well. It is key to applying for many awards.

Two for the show... You show up on the college radar. The College Board gives you an advantage through the Student Search Services (SSS) program that allows you to share preferential information with over 1,100 colleges. This will introduce you to colleges that you may not have considered or even knew existed.

Three to get ready... It gets you ready for the SAT. It gives you a competitive advantage. You get access to My College Quickstart after you take the test. It is a free college resource that has proved to be invaluable in several ways. College Board reports: Students who prepare for and take the PSAT score on average 145 Points higher on the SAT than their peers who skip the test.

Now go, cat go... Sign up of course. The PSAT is a two-hour test given once a year in October. Many take it in their freshman and sophomore years to prepare for when they take it in their junior year to officially qualify for National Merit Scholarship Program.

If you don't know the value of the PSAT or are thinking of skipping it – Do some research... Just Google "PSAT." You never know how much it could pay off.

Susan both educator and advisor specializes in college planning. She helps families save for and pay for college. If you have questions you would like answered in a future article contact her at Susan@College4Less.com or on her Web site at www.college4less.com

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Lucy Davis

The Land of Stories – Beyond the Kingdoms

Author: Chris Colfer

The Masked man uses a portal potion to jump from story to story to recruit a powerful army of the worst fairytale villains!

Alex has been un-godmothered, so she and Conner are in trouble. No one believes her except Mother Goose. Conner, Alex and Mother Goose along with a few other friends they make along the way, follow the Masked Man through some of literature's most loved fairytales. Meanwhile, Bree discovers a family secret that you just won't believe.

The author delivers another MAGICAL book, while using different fairytales than the first three books of the Land of Stories series. The book jumps back and forth from one setting to another so you must pay attention to what's happening. For those that haven't read the first three, I encourage you to do so before reading this book.

Another five bookworms out of five, it's a brilliant read!



Lucy Davis is a 4th grade student at Beryl Elementary in Redondo Beach. Besides reading, she enjoys riding her bike, theatre, and playing guitar. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

Ask Dr. Shari

Good for the Mind & Great for the Heart



Dr. Shari Sweetnam

The way we choose to spend our time and the activities in which we engage help form our value system. With a wide array of possibilities and opportunities, volunteering is a positive and vastly beneficial way of helping young people develop a strong sense of self.

Volunteering offers benefits spanning from the intellectual and spiritual to the educational and professional. As young people give of themselves and their time, they can learn about being selfless. In a busy world of "pursuit of personal happiness," too often the intrinsic values of empathy and giving are the lessons that are overlooked. Helping others via a structured volunteer program is a positive and safe way to develop oneself in this regard.

Additional Benefits of Volunteerism:

- Learning: Acquiring a new trade or skill can help teens see the world in a bigger picture and be inspired to continue to expand intellectually.
- Networking: Volunteering brings people of like minds, interests and values together. This will inevitably lead to positive interaction and healthy relationships.
- Building the Résumé: Engaging in service to others and taking the initiative to learn new trades or skills is a brilliant way to expand your portfolio. This is especially beneficial for students and young professionals.
- Personal Growth: As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others." Teens who experience growth at an early age are likely to continue cultivating positive behavior and friendships.

Motivational Speaker, Founder of *The Brainpower Programs for Schools*, Author, Consultant, Radio Host contact: info@doctorshari.com, www.doctorshari.com, twitter: DrShariS, Youtube: Dr. ShariS, LinkedIn: Dr. Shari Sweetnam



Every Step – a Journey!



Tyler Robert Armstrong

I am 11 year old, Tyler Armstrong, mountaineer. At age 9, I set the World Record as the youngest person ever to climb Mt. Aconcagua (22,841 feet). I also set the record for the youngest person to climb Mt. Whitney (14,505 ft) in a single day (age 7), and was the second youngest to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,341 ft) (age 8).

Everyone always wants to know why a kid would want to climb mountains? I wanted to start climbing because when I was 6 I watched a nature documentary on the Great Divide. What was interesting about that documentary was that you hiked all the way from Canada to Mexico! Also, my dad had just come back from a hiking trip and showed me some videos. After the video was over I was inspired by what he just had accomplished! The next night I told my parents I wanted to start hiking! Then, after my dad got home I told him, "Let's go jogging." At first I could only go about a quarter mile. The next time I went jogging my goal was a half mile and it kept building from there. About a month later after a lot of hard work, it was time for my first hike!

My first hike was for about 6 miles and I could climb only to about 5,000 feet elevation, but at that time it was very challenging to me. I slowly made it to the top of the mountain and back, but I still made it all the way! The next day I was very sore. About a week later I told my dad that I wanted to do something bigger. We went on the internet and found more mountains that I was ready for. After climbing other local mountains and longer distances, I was ready for my test - Mt. Baldy (10,064 ft)! My dad decided to take a difficult trail up Mt. Baldy for 6,000 feet of elevation gain and 12 miles round trip. That day was very tough and tiring, but I was ready because of my hard training. When we got to the top I could see every thing. I was so high I could see LA! It was amazing that everything was under me, even the clouds! And right there I knew what I wanted to do... Mountain Climb!

After months of hard work I was ready to try to set a record by ... (to be continued).

Publisher's note: I read an article about Tyler and immediately invited him to be a guest columnist. He is such an inspiration and I want our readers to hear his amazing stories. If you can't wait for the next column, please enjoy Tyler's web site: www.topwithtyler.com and www.facebook.com/topwithtyler and www.youtube.com/user/TopWithTyler

Contest!

Our office tortoise, Cheeseball, is somewhere in this issue 2x's. When you find him, email the page numbers to:

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