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School News

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Covering the Capistrano Unified School District



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Castille Elementary 5th Graders enjoying Outdoor Science Camp.

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SUPERINTENDENT



**Kirsten M.
Vital**

We recently celebrated our CUSD Teachers of the Year and I had the opportunity to share some thoughts about our extraordinary teachers with those in attendance.

The work of our teachers truly has an impact on our students – so much so that I bet most of you can remember your favorite teachers – even ten, twenty and thirty years later. We hold those memories close, not just because that teacher taught us math or

English or science, but because they taught us to think deeply or reach higher or to believe in ourselves.

As a teacher, I know how important the student-teacher relationship is for children. The ability to create a safe, warm and loving environment is so important and our

teachers do an incredible job making a space where our young people thrive. As a mom of a preschooler and future CUSD kindergartener, I can't tell you how much that means to me personally!

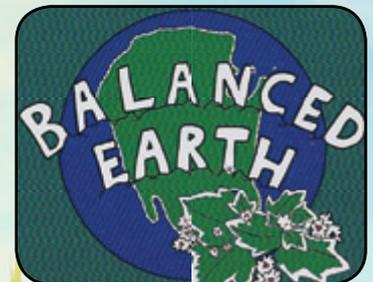
The work of a teacher today is even more complex. Teachers today have to be mentors and coaches, nurses, counselors, security guards, gate keepers, technologists, motivators, travel agents, party planners, comedians, nutritionists, custodians and psychics. Every single day.

In all that effort, our teachers are developing and nurturing generous and kind human beings and future leaders. It's a tough job, but our teachers wake every morning focused on our students and their success.

Thank you to all of our teachers and congratulations to our extraordinary teachers of the year.

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik

Spring Break is over and students are focused on their year end academic goals.

On pages 30 - 34 we have included student book reviews to help with your summer reading choices. Of course, don't forget to include the library in your activities. Have a wonderful summer!



Congratulations Class of 2018!



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Aliso Niguel *High School*

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Deni Christensen
Principal

Inaugural CUSD Forensic Science Forum

The inaugural Capistrano Unified School District's "Forensic Science Forum" was held at Aliso Niguel High School on January 29, 2018, in what is hoped will become an annual event. The program brought together over 325 forensic science students and teachers from Aliso Niguel, Dana Hills, and San Juan Hills High Schools.

The CUSD Forensics Science curriculum began six years ago under the leadership of ANHS teacher Dwyann Famalette. Since then the program has gained status as an approved Cal State and University of California science course, and has grown from serving just 60 students at Aliso Niguel to over 350 students district-wide at the three high school campuses.

The program is part of the Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway, and is funded through grants made

available through the College and Career Advantage (CCA) program. The curriculum features a hands-on, practical approach to applying the concepts previously learned in biology and chemistry/physics courses to an integrated study of forensic science.

During the January Forum, students were treated to a variety of guest speakers and workshops. Topics included DNA analysis, fingerprint and blood analysis, crime prosecution, toxicology, bloodhound tracking, and crime scene analysis. A highlight of the day involved a complete crime scene reenactment featuring Aliso Niguel theater students, as well as community professionals such as law enforcement first responders, detectives, crime scene investigators, the county coroner, officials from the district attorney's office, and a judge.

The Forum will be held at Aliso Niguel again next year, and then move on to Dana Hills for the 2019–2020 school year.

Harold Ambuehl *Elementary*

28001 San Juan Creek Rd., San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/661-0400 • abes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Anthony Bogle
Principal

Coding and Robotics

It started off as a coding lesson, and morphed into a robotics competition!

Ms. Chaddock's fifth-grade class at Ambuehl is in the process of programming robots to perform specific tasks. The tasks are part of a larger national and international competition. Our Ambuehl programmers will be going head to head with their counterparts across the world. Thousands of teams coded together in the U.S. last year, and this year it is going international.

Code.org's competition runs for several weeks. During this competition, teams will be given a new mission to complete each week for eight weeks. Ms. Chaddock's class became interested in robotics after a dash robot was introduced to the class. The motivation was there, and so donorschoose.org provided the funding.

Students must complete specific coding classes, such as algorithms, debugging, and loops. To remain on a team, the students must also demonstrate positive behavior and complete all homework assignments.



Aliso Viejo *Middle School*

111 Park Avenue, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/831-2622 • avms-capousd-ca.schoolloop.co



Cynthia Steinert
Principal

Interesting Outdoor Lab

By Cindy Ortiz, Teacher-7th Grade Science

Our 7th grade science classes are going on a walking field trip in our own backyard! Students are investigating the water at the Aliso Creek, a part of the Aliso Creek water shed. This interesting outdoor lab teaches students all about water efficiency, urban run-off and potential pollutants. Educators from Orange County Coast Keepers bring W.H.A.L.E.S.

(Watershed Heroes – Actions Linking Education to Stewardship) field trips to Moulton Niguel water district schools. They receive hands-on water quality tests and are able to explore the effects of run-off and human influence on the environment. Students were completely engaged in the activities. At the conclusion, students were able to describe in detail which activities have a harmful impact on our precious water resource and come up with ways to improve their individual impact on the environment.



Arroyo Vista *K-8*

23371 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/234-5951 • avk8.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Joe McGann
Principal

Music is Amazing

Students in the Arroyo Vista Middle School music program say that music is amazing, the best part of their day and something that challenges them to be better every day. Under the direction of Ashley Stevens, forty percent of the middle school participates in band, orchestra or choir.

Also, a select group of students meet before school to participate in the AV JazzCatz, a beginning jazz band where students learn improvisation and a new

style of music. Throughout the years Arroyo Vista has enjoyed performances at Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Angel Stadium, and various music festivals. Recently, the String Orchestra earned Unanimous Superiors at the SCSBOA festival held at San Juan Hills High School. Three eighth graders recently received a scholarship from the Philharmonic Society of Orange County; a group that provides a wide array of music education opportunities to students around Orange County. Camryn Bishop, Kinsey Howard and Danyelle Silberman each received a scholarship for a new instrument or private lessons.



Don Juan Avila *Elementary*

26278 Wood Canyon, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/349-9452 • djaes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Dr. Krystal Allan
Principal

We've Got Talent 2018!

Don Juan Avila Elementary School's talent show was a spectacular showcase of the students' talent. This year, students from kindergarten to fifth grade brought their unique and spectacular gifts to the stage for a fun-filled

evening of Hollywood-style showcase that entertained our entire DJAES family! We had acts that sang, danced, told jokes, played instruments and performed in many other ways—not to mention the fabulous students who MC'd the whole performance! These children brought their best to entertain us, and our DJAES family experienced performances that not only entertained the crowds but also showcased the children

of this school in a once of a lifetime "Hollywood" moment for these special performers.

Bottom line—the students *rocked*, and we couldn't be more proud of them. Don Juan Avila continues to encourage our students to be the superstars they are!



Don Juan Avila *Middle School*

26278 Wood Canyon, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/362-0348 • djams.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Manoj Mahindrakar
Principal

Long Term Goals

DJAMS recently hosted our College Career week, culminating in Career Day for grades 6-8. It was such a insightful and meaningful event. DJAMS was fortunate to have over 20 professionals from our community sharing their experiences in the fields of technology, engineering, law enforcement, accounting, business and many trades.

Our students had the opportunity to select three professions that they wanted to hear more about and were placed in 30 minute workshops with those professionals. Research highlights the value of long term goals that students orientate themselves towards which in turn reinforces their engagement and motivation in class now. We are certain we captured the imaginations and ambition of many students during our Career Week.



Bernice Ayer *Middle School*

1271 Calle Sarmentoso, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/366-9607 • bams.schoolloop.com



Nicholas Stever
Principal

Every Student Succeeding Award

Isaac Miranda, a 7th grader attending BAMS, was the only CUSD student, out of 50,000 students, to be recognized by the ACSA Region 17 “Every Student Succeeding Award.” This designation is reserved for

students who have overcome exceptional obstacles to achieve at extremely high levels. Isaac’s grandfather and grandmother accompanied him to this event where he received a free Chrome Book as well as passes to Disneyland. All of us at BAMS are Isaac fans and we firmly believe this is just the beginning for this amazing young scholar. At BAMS we rejoice in the fact that no matter what obstacles a child faces, with the support of caring professional educators, ALL children can learn at high levels.



Bathgate *Elementary*

27642 Napoli Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/348-0451 • bges.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Shelly Kurtz
Principal

Ties and Tiaras

Once upon a time on a magical night in February, Bathgate Elementary School’s multipurpose room was

transformed into a ballroom for our annual Daddy/Daughter Ties and Tiaras Dance! Pre-registration made check-in a breeze as gorgeously attired attendees chose handmade corsages and walked the red carpet. The walls were adorned with festive heart-shaped decor handmade by students.

Daddies and daughters danced the night away to

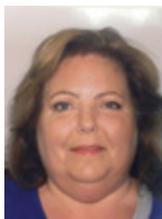


tunes spun by our very own disc jockey, Ms. Anderson. When taking a break from the hokey pokey and limbo contests, dancers enjoyed punch and cookies and struck poses at the photo booth and selfie station.

Parent helpers and teenage volunteers from the Assisteens group made the night a huge success. Local businesses generously donated swag bag goodies for each daughter, and fun prizes were raffled off, making this fundraiser one of our best ever!

Truman Benedict *Elementary*

1251 Calle Sarmentoso, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/498-6617 • tbes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Heidi Harvey
Principal

Bobcats are Actively Engaged In Science!

At Truman Benedict school, our teachers have really embraced Mystery Science and are regularly conducting experiments to test their hypotheses and solidify scientific concepts. Students are actively engaged and can work in groups to conduct experiments aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. Students have “weighed air”, used various household properties to create chemical reactions, researched adaptations in nature and more.



We are also embarking on a voyage to a brilliant partnership with the Ocean Institute, funded by our Foundation. We are working to implement an environmental curriculum, specific to grade level NGSS standards concerning biology, conservation and local environmental topics here in south Orange County. Our vision is to create a heightened awareness and interest in our local ecology and environment.



Marian Bergeson *Elementary*

25302 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/643-1540 • bgnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Greg Hauser
Principal

Students Benefit Shelter

The Bergeson Elementary Student Council comprises 12 fifth-grade students, three from each fifth-grade class, elected by their peers to serve as school leaders with the guidance of a staff advisor. The students meet weekly during their lunch to discuss different ways to support the school and community.

The students' first project was to plan and execute a community-service event. Working within their limited budget and resources, the students decided to organize a blanket-and-towel drive for the local animal shelter. The students planned the drive for two weeks in February. They made posters to go around the school and made

announcements to each class and teacher. After two weeks, they packed the blankets into six large trash bags and loaded them into the advisor's car to take to the animal shelter. The blankets and towels were donated to Orange County Animal Care.



California Preparatory *Academy (9-12)*

32972 Calle Perfecto, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5317 • www.calprepacademy.org



Jolene Dougherty
Principal

Peer Mentoring: Learn, Support, Grow

Cal Prep Academy is piloting a new program inspired by students to help students.

Jeri Fromme, a dual-enrolled junior at Cal Prep Academy and Aliso Niguel High School, founded The Cal Prep Peer Mentoring

Program to provide an opportunity for students of all grade levels to connect with each other. Experienced students volunteer to be mentors to their peers



and also be available, as time allows, to answer questions, lead individual or group study sessions, and share best practices for academic success.

Since Cal Prep Academy is an online school where students primarily learn independently, this program is a valuable social and academic resource for those who desire more interaction with their peers. We are excited for our Cal Prep students to get to know each other better and enjoy a new level of support with their classes. For more information, please visit the Cal Prep website at www.calprepacademy.org.

Canyon Vista *Elementary*

27800 Oak View Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/234-5941 • cves.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jeana Dagley
Principal

Wildlife Cameras

San Juan Hills High School is surrounded by hills and trails—the staff and students have always known that theirs is a school surrounded by wilderness. But it is not until recently that the installation of the new SJHHS wildlife cameras has allowed staff, students and community members to see just what types of wildlife live around the SJHHS campus.

The San Juan Hills Science Department, chaired by Alexandra Easton, installed wildlife cameras last spring in some of the ravines and on some of the trails around the San Juan Hills campus. The data cards are checked once a week for footage of wildlife, and so far, they have been able to identify mule deer, skunks, raccoons, rabbits, hawks, crows, coyotes, bobcats and wood rats on the film. Many students and staff have been especially fascinated by footage of a hawk snacking on a small animal, captured on the film over the summer.

Capistrano *Home/Virtual School (K-8)*

32972 Calle Perfecto, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-9374 • virtual-capousd-ca.schoolloop.com



Jolene Dougherty
Administrator

Show What You Know

Capistrano Home and Virtual School recently celebrated its annual Open House, giving students and families an opportunity to enjoy an educational-themed evening. Our school was filled with the excited chatter of students showcasing projects

they worked on throughout the year. Hands-on activities offered students a chance to practice and create with their parents. Our elementary classroom was transformed into a biome-themed science center filled with STEM projects for



students, siblings and parents. The walls of our middle-school classroom displayed art from novels that students read together, and the tables were covered in interactive math games for all ages.

The staff at Capistrano Home and Virtual School loves the tight-knit-community feel of our school and appreciated the chance to socialize with families. To learn more about CUSD's home and virtual school, including our dual-enrollment options, please visit our Web site.

Capistrano Valley High School

26301 Via Escolar, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/364-6100 • www.cvhs.com



John Misustin
Principal

Inexhaustible Mrs. Harrington

*By Tahlia Vayser, Sophomore,
Business Manager of "CVHS Times"*

It would be easy to assume that for Capistrano Valley's Teacher of the Year Candice Harrington, taking on more responsibility beyond her current teaching obligations would be impossible since she is a mother of three. In reality, rattling off her list of leadership roles in one breath proves to be more difficult. In her ninth year at Capo, Mrs. Harrington currently teaches geometry and AP Calculus, is an instructional coach, and advises ComedySportz, CSF, TeamNEGU, Habitat for Humanity and the *CVHS Times* newspaper. She juggles all effortlessly and with pride.

"So much of my life is Capo, and I am lucky enough to

have a husband that is supportive of that," Mrs. Carrington said. "The balance I have is less of my balance and more of our balance as a family. The students are my favorite part of teaching. High school kids are amazing, funny, hilarious and so resilient—so many kids undergo unspeakable tragedy, and they still wake up the next morning to come to class. I am always impressed by them."

Winning Teacher of the Year is as rewarding as it is humbling for Harrington. Although Mrs. Harrington is always appreciative of the high esteem her colleagues hold her in, the nomination was still unexpected.

"I'm happy to have a job that I love," she said. I look forward to going to work and don't long for weekends like most working people do. I honestly don't think most people my age can say that—that in itself feels like enough of an accolade."

Castille Elementary

24042 Via La Coruna, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/234-5976 • ctes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Laura Lyon
Principal

Meet Moose

*By Caitie Atencio, Teacher
Structured Autism*

We would like to introduce you to Moose, a facility dog provided by Canine Companions for Independence, an organization that provides service dogs to individuals with special needs at no cost to the individual. Moose went through extensive training in his first two years of life and has mastered over 40 commands. I, too, went through a three-week training course to learn how to be his handler.

Moose's impressive skills include picking up objects, opening doors, and turning on lights. While these skills are amazing, it is what he does for the students at Castille Elementary School that is truly remarkable. Moose works in a Structured Autism class (SAC), where he regularly helps to calm students with high anxiety and behavioral issues. His "crash" command, which instructs him to lay across a student's lap, has resolved and prevented many tantrums. He also keeps students who often drop to the ground motivated to walk on their own and stay with the class.

Moose's magical calming powers go beyond the SAC class. He is a celebrity on campus, brightening the days of all of our students, who enjoy the opportunity to give him a quick pat or a hug. Moose has touched the lives of both students and staff and will continue to do so over the course of his "career." Students, parents and staff will attest that Castille is an even warmer and friendlier place with Moose's sweet face roaming the halls and playground.



Concordia *Elementary*

3120 Avenida Del Presidente, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/492-3060 cces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Rob McKane
Principal

A Special Recognition

Recently, Concordia celebrated its “Dude, Be Nice” week. This week of events celebrated kindness and the caring for one another. Our students were actively encouraged to express their appreciation for each other at both school and in the community.

During this week our students proudly celebrated their fellow students, campus supervisors, and our special neighbors, the Marines. The culminating event was a celebration of one individual who deserved to be singled out for all of the great things that they have done to help support our students, school, and community.

The entire effort was driven by Concordia students, and was guided by the founder of the event, Brent Camalich. The students planned the week in secret, and on one special Friday the person who was suddenly surprised by this recognition was celebrated by the entire school.



This year the students chose our school’s office manager, Mrs. Fickling. She is kind and caring and does anything and everything for Concordia and our community. Congratulations, Mrs. Fickling!

Chaparral *Elementary*

29001 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5349 • chpes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Melissa Schaefer
Principal

Abilities Awareness Day

On February 13, 2018, Chaparral Elementary School’s PTA hosted Abilities Awareness Day for students in grades 2-5. The

day began with an assembly by Stephen Hinkle, a motivational speaker that shared about his life with autism. Stephen reminded us of ways to understand and relate to others who we may see as different. The classes then rotated through activity stations that were created to provide students with the opportunity to learn about challenges



many individuals experience in life. The stations included: Athletes from Challenged Athletes Foundation, Allergy Station, Dyslexia Station, ADHD Station, and Random Acts of Kindness. The students were engaged in each station and asked intriguing questions to gain a deeper understanding. Abilities Awareness Day was a success and celebrated diversity awareness.

R.H. Dana *Elementary*

24242 La Cresta Dr., Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/496-5784 • rhdana.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Dr. Christina Portillo
Principal

A Whale of a Time

What a whale of month we've had at RH Dana Science and Technology Academy! Thanks to a partnership with a local whale-watching and sport-fishing company, the entire student

body, including all kindergarten through fifth grade students, teachers, instructional aides,

parent volunteers, and the principal, enjoyed a two-hour whale watching trip on March 1.

It was quite a tremendous experience. The day began with a greeting from the mayor of Dana Point, Richard Viczorek, and the whale-watching business owner, Don Hansen, a former graduate of RH Dana Elementary School. During the trip, gray whales, common dolphins, and sea lions were spotted. Several students shared that this was the best trip ever!

Just two days later, the school marched in the Festival of Whales Parade. While we were carrying the shark whale balloon down Pacific Coast Highway, the clouds opened and rained on our parade. Yet, we still marched proudly and had a whale of a time!



R.H. Dana *Exceptional Needs Facility*

24242 La Cresta Dr., Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/234-5505 • rhdenf.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Judy Doré
Principal

Thank You

The Dana Point City Council has played an important partnership role with ENF again this school year. We thank them for their continued support of the students and staff.

During December the whole school was able to journey to La Plaza to decorate the tree as the opening event of the Holiday Season because of the generosity of the Council, which funds the buses.

During March we participated in the Whale Parade and this year had the pleasure of CUSD Board President, Martha McNicholas marching with us. Penelope Pelican, our school mascot, also joined the parade this year and although it rained, the enthusiasm of all who marched was not dampened.



Dana Hills *High School*

33333 Golden Lantern, Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/496-6666 • www.dhhs.net



A Purrfect Performance

The South Orange County School of the Arts, Dana Hills High's very own visual and performing arts academy, dazzled audiences in its recent production of *Cats*!

Featuring an oversized junkyard playground, this diverse cast of feline characters — which includes Munkustrap, Jennyanydots, Macavity, and Skimbleshanks to name a few — each tell their own

individual tale. In a feline world with so much adversity, these junkyard cats learn that their differences are what make their tribe beautiful even as they embrace the most rogue of outcasts.

Performing to sold-out houses, and breaking ticket sales records, our *Cats* have been showered with rave reviews! In addition to the 27 remarkable cast members, the production

also included a full student band, over 20 crew members, and even a student design team.

Part of a massive undertaking, the design team was responsible for researching, creating, and building all of the elements of technical theater. This included hanging lights to enhance the fanciful spirit of the show; wigs that give each cat their attitude; costumes hand-painted for each individual cast member; make-up, which was researched with a member of the Broadway cast; set design that allowed the cast to freely jump and explore with room to dance; and a choreography team that worked tirelessly to tell the story.

A show that you didn't want to miss, make sure to check out all of the upcoming quality work that is being produced by our SOCSA program. Congratulations to the cast, crew, and band of *Cats the Musical* for a sensational run this year.

Del Obispo *Elementary*

25591 Camino del Avion, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5905 • does.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Family STEM Night

What could be more fun than creating slime, controlling robots, and making paper airplanes? At Del Obispo's Next Generation Family STEM Night in early March, our students and parents had a blast creating and exploring their Next

Generation Science skills!

Over 50 of our families showed up at this wonderful occasion to enjoy mystery bags, balls and ramps engineering, coding necklaces, and toying with robots and slime. There were also plenty of science-themed raffle prizes donated by our PTA. Some lucky families even won gift certificates to a local ice cream parlor!

As Del Obispo continues to support its next generation learners, we also make sure to support both our children and their parents. Hands-on learning is what it takes for this next generation of Dragons to launch their future careers. If you would like to take a tour of our STEAM-centered school, please contact the Del Obispo office at 949-234-5905.



Marco Forster *Middle School*

25601 Camino del Avion, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5907 • mfms.schoolloop.com



Carrie Bertini
Principal

Real-World Competition

Marco Forster students were able to participate in the first Junior High Mock Trial Tournament at JSerra Catholic High School. Students, teachers, and parents were excited to engage in this real-life experience involving a variety of schools in the Orange County area.

Teams were given a packet with information about a hypothetical criminal petty theft case. Students spent four months learning various aspects and components of a trial. Throughout this experience, students presented opening/closing

statements, conducted direct and cross-examination of witnesses, and engaged in research and debate.

At the tournament, students competed in four trials against nine teams. Each trial required students to utilize analytical thought, research precedents, and organize statements. MFMS students maintained their courtesy and respect for others while confidently arguing their views.

This was an amazing experience for our school and students, and we are grateful to the JSerra Pre-Law Magnet Program for the experience. Marco Forster placed second in the tournament and is excited and eager to compete next year!



Carl Hankey (*K-8*)

27252 Nubles, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/234-5315 • chhawks.schoolloop.com



Dana Aguilera
Principal

Enabling Change

As the area's only public International Baccalaureate World School, we are often asked what makes Hankey different. Certainly there are many unique aspects to an IB and its programs, but the emphasis we place on taking action with one's learning is definitely one of the most important ways that we are shaping the leaders and innovators of the future.

Taking action is an essential element of IB. At Hankey, this is as simple as going home and discovering a connection to what was discussed at school, or finding and sharing a book that extends thinking about the transdisciplinary theme being explored in the classroom.

Action taking also happens here on a larger scale. Following Mexico's devastating earthquake, a group of

middle-schoolers organized a school supply donation drive after learning from one of our staff members about how badly the quake had impacted Puebla, her family's village. Boxes of supplies went off with Miss Jackie when she returned home, and the students were able to see the impact of their project through her videos and photos when she returned.

We just kicked off our newest result of action-taking with our "Wake up to Exercise" program. Thanks to the efforts of a group of fourth-graders who researched the effects of exercise on concentration, our upper-graders now meet before school for a burst of cardio and movement activities.

At Hankey IB Academy, learning is a dynamic process that nurtures the taking of action. Whether you are a kindergartner or an eighth-grader, every Hankey Hawk knows that taking action enables change!

Hidden Hills *Elementary*

25142 Hidden Hills Rd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/495-0050 • hhes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Pamela
Allen-Sawyer**
Principal

On Board!

Hidden Hills is a Certified Energy Bus School. In fact, HHES is the only school in California that is a part of this journey to promote a positive school culture and shared leadership. Our scholars have been learning the seven principles of the Energy Bus for Schools, and they recently celebrated this with an Energy Bus Pep Rally led by the co-founder of the Energy Bus for Schools Leadership Journey, Niki Spears. The students also enjoyed a special performance

from our “Superscholar Squad” of cheerleaders.

When you visit our campus, you will see many visible signs of positivity! We are all on the Energy Bus, and continue to find new ways to fuel our ride with positive energy. This month we are focused on Principle #5, which is “Transform Negativity.” Here we look at new ways to turn challenges into great opportunities for learning and growth.

All of the Energy Bus principles help our scholars, teachers, staff, parents, and the community to actively embrace a positive outlook on learning and a strong leadership mindset. At Hidden Hills, we are all on board and moving along the road to success!



Kinoshita *Elementary*

2 Via Positiva, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/489-2131 • kses.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**José Luis
Pedraza**
Principal

College Bound

Kinoshita Elementary School hosts two afterschool programs for our underprivileged students. The first program is Future Scientist and Engineers. This program is taught by two of our teachers in collaboration with a community volunteer who is a retired engineer. Selected students are chosen based on their interest in science and math. These students work on special projects, such as robotics and rocket science. Students are introduced to various Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) projects, and parents are encouraged to attend a grand science finale at the end of the year.

Our second program is called College Bound, and it

is coordinated by one of our primary teachers with the support of volunteers from a local church. In this program, fourth- and fifth-grade scholars are guided through the process of getting to college successfully. Students listen to guest speakers from various colleges and professions and take college field trips.

Both of these programs have been at Kinoshita for over five years and serve a very unique purpose. Since most of our students do not have parents who attended college, these programs serve as a gateway to positive role models and offer our students motivation to attend college for themselves. These programs open the minds and eyes of our students to become professionals in their chosen careers.

At Kinoshita, we strive to put students through college!

Ladera Ranch *Elementary*

29551 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5915 • lres.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Sandra Miller
Principal

Running on STEAM!

STEAM is in the air at Ladera Ranch! In March, we had approximately 120 of our LRES Lions participate in the school science fair. All fourth- and fifth-graders presented their science projects orally. We were fortunate to get district support from Dr. Susan Holliday, Dr. Greg Merwin and Brad Shearer, who helped judge our entrants.

We're now in the process of creating our very first STEAM Lab with the support of our PTA. This lab will provide a place for fourth- and fifth-grade teachers to engage their students in lessons that meet the needs of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Fifth grade held their first-ever robotic Olympics, with students representing their selected countries in figure skating, slalom skiing, curling and hockey. Students prepared by coding and programming their robots to handle the turns, maneuvers and strategies of their sport. It was

an impressive display of competition, camaraderie and advanced-technology skills.

March also saw the launch of our new Buddy Literacy Technology (BLT) Program. Fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms are paired with a first- or second-grade classroom. The older students teach the younger students important technology skills that they will be able to apply in their own classrooms. This time also allows the first- and second-grade teachers to participate in professional learning communities. It's a win-win for everyone!

In February, our student council sold Valentine Grams and donated the entire \$301.25 raised to Knots of Love, a nonprofit organization that provides hand knitted hats and blankets to cancer patients. LRES student council had the privilege of presenting Knots of Love Founder Christin Fabiani with a check at our morning assembly.

Spring at LRES is off to a busy start, and we are excited for the many events and activities still to come in these last few months of the year. Go Lions!

Ladera Ranch *Middle School*

29551 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5922 • lrms.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Dr. George Duarte
Principal

Plant Science Elective

Several years ago, science teacher Mike Hale asked to teach a plant science class as an elective. The response was both an immediate and sustained success!

Mr. Hale and his students have worked to beautify and "agrify" our campus. The students enjoy the class because they "get to learn about plants and the best way to plant them." Another student mentioned that they

also learn about the environment and the importance of vegetables.

The students are responsible for their own gardens. A recent Eagle Scout project even fenced in our main planter. One student remarked that, "We live in a condo, so I am not able to garden at home." All of the children enjoy eating the "fruits" of their labor in a freshly harvested salad.

But it is not all landscaping and planting. The students also recently explored the role of bees as pollinators, and tracing the path of honey from flower to market.



Laguna Niguel *Elementary*

27922 Niguel Heights Blvd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5308 • lnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Michelle Moore
Principal

Third-Grade Innovators

By Lacey Hansen, Teacher – 3rd Grade

Third-grade students at Laguna Niguel Elementary School are innovating in our new Innovation Lab, which is powered by a partnership with amazing volunteers and an engineering entertainment company. Students take items received and use them for hands-on creations. Recently, third-graders took their knowledge of animal adaptations and used biomimicry to create design solutions for weather related-hazards.

While people sink up to their knees in snow, foxes and hares can run across the snow without a problem. Why? They're adapted for the task. Students examined animals from cold, snowy biomes to learn what makes them stay on top of the snow.

The challenge? Design a shoe that will prevent a person from sinking in the snow. Students had size and material constraints. The design could not be overly large, and the cost had to be \$50 or less. To facilitate this part of the process, materials in the lab were individually priced for this project.

Students went to work on designing prototypes for testing. Prior to testing, students shared their prototypes and explained how biomimicry was incorporated into their designs. Students then tested their shoes by placing them in "snow-filled" (actually, it was shaving cream!) bins with several pounds of weight on top. Students measured how far their shoes sunk in comparison to the baseline test shoe. We graphed our results and analyzed the findings.

Keep your eyes peeled. Our Aviators are amazing inventors! Their nature-inspired shoes may be on the market someday!

Las Flores *Elementary*

25862 Antonio Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/589-6935 • lfes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Holly Wiseman
Principal

A Permanent Improvement

The third-grade class at Las Flores Elementary School is asking questions. One essential question is how can we use what we know about our chaparral biome and plant adaptations to help improve the landscaping at our school?

We started our search by answering other questions about native California plants. The students first researched the specific adaptations for plants in this area. We decided to consult with Mr. Anthony Tubbs and his students at Tesoro High School, and then take a field trip to the the Native California Plant Garden and Trail at Tesoro. The high school biology students were our experts and tour guides, sharing their knowledge as we investigated the plants.

Armed with their new understanding of native plants, the third-graders are working on scale drawings of a garden plot for our campus. They are working in groups to make a garden design that includes not only their ideas for plant selection, but also where each plant will be placed, the number of plants needed, and the location of a path and a bench.

Many of the students are focusing on plants that will attract pollinators or butterflies. When all of the group designs have been submitted, one will be chosen for the garden plot. We are partnering with a local nursery to provide the plant and landscaping material we need. Our students and their parents are eager to start building the garden, knowing that it will be a permanent improvement to our campus!



Students on a hike

Las Flores *Middle School*

25862 Antonio Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/589-6543 • lfms.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Sean McNamara
Principal

Career Tech Investigations Lab

Lights, camera, action! The Las Flores Middle School (LFMS) Career Technology Investigations Lab is producing its award-winning school newscast with students at the helm. These media-savvy students are scripting, directing, and filming the school's news show as well as many other film pieces, some of which have become commercials for local industries and others that are being used

by other schools.

When the student director calls, "It's a wrap," the teamwork of tearing down the set begins. The film studio transforms back into a technology lab, where students complete hands-on experiments with many moving parts. There will be the hum of discussions as partners are

engaged in collaboration and teamwork to understand their current assignment in either computer-aided design, robotics, flight simulation, rocketry, biotechnology, digital music, or computer programming, to name just a few of the career opportunities they will investigate.

Critical-thinking skills in both math and science, as well as the daily technical readings, are instrumental in a well-rounded, 21st-century student's technological education. Learning the basics of home and business electrical wiring and how to use power tools to build a carbon-powered dragster provide career experiences that are perfect for a student who favors hands-on work, such as the tasks done by an electrician or engineer. Industrial science encompasses so many aspects of our day-to-day lives, and middle school is the best place to begin the conversation with an introduction to potential careers in technology.

Las Palmas *Elementary*

1101 Calle Puente, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/234-5333 • lpes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Kristen Nelson
Principal

Benefits of Bilingual Education

Dual-language learning has been part of the educational experience at Las Palmas Elementary School since the early 1990s. Our Two-Way Language Immersion program was founded on research showing that bilingualism has significant benefits for our students.

The growing research on how the brain works demonstrates strong links between bilingualism and cognitive benefits. Bilingual individuals interact with languages and make decisions about language on a daily basis. These bilingual experiences improve the process of directing, planning, and performing mental tasks. As a result, bilingual individuals are more efficient at monitoring the environment. In addition, positive effects have been found for bilingual individuals later in life, as the

bilingual brain has been shown to be more resistant to the onset of dementia.

Each of our classrooms is comprised of native English-speaking and native Spanish-speaking students learning together and from each other in a bilingual setting. Exposure to diversity of language and culture presents an opportunity for our students to learn about differing perspectives. Our students learn to experience the world in new and different ways. In addition, our dual-language program creates an environment where all languages and cultures are valued and supported, creating a meaningful connection to school for both students and their families.

Bilingualism also provides students with future career benefits. Bilingual skills are highly valued and sought after in an ever-increasingly connected global world. Our Las Palmas students not only come away with the gift of education, but also the gift of experiencing the world through another language.

Clarence Lobo *Elementary-Academy of Innovation*

200 Avenida Vista Montana, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/366-6740 • cles.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Cheryl Sampson
Principal

STEAM Night a Great Success!

Lobo's Open House had a different look this year. Parents were encouraged to get their hands busy with engineering projects in each of the classrooms. Families had engineering tasks to solve and parents got a feel for the everyday rigor offered at Lobo.

The whole campus was a buzz of positive energy. An example of a task given was to design a wind proof umbrella. We find that our students surprise us daily with creative thinking. At Lobo, we don't ask children what they want to be when they grow up, but rather what problem would they like to solve. Our students are prepared for taking on whatever they choose to do in life!

John S. Malcom *Elementary*

32261 Charles Avenue, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/248-0542 • jmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Laurie Lowy
Principal

Headed to the World Championships!

Both of Malcom Elementary School's robotics teams are headed to the Vex Robotics World Championship Competition to be held in Louisville, Kentucky on April 29 to May 2. Our students will be joining teams from around the world to compete in events involving STEM research, programming, design notebook, and engineering a robot.

This quest began last fall for our boys and girls teams, which are comprised of students from all four Malcom fifth-grade classes under the leadership of fifth-grade teacher Nona Reimer, and ably assisted by parent coaches.

Being a member of the robotics team requires dedication. The teams practice for one to two hours two

to three times each week. Additionally, each team meets with Ms. Reimer for one hour after school to work on their STEM research and oral presentation. The teamwork and leadership skills developed by each scholar go hand in hand with the fun of designing and driving a competitive robot.

Earlier this year both teams competed at regional events from Los Angeles to San Diego, earning top honors and a ticket to the state-level competition in Pomona. At state, the boys placed third in Teamwork Alliance, and the girls won the Amaze Awards competing against 32 other Southern California teams. Both teams then advanced on to the VEX World Competition.

Currently our teams are raising funds to pay for the trip to Kentucky. Good luck to our Mechanical Mariners, and #fullSTEAMahead!

Marblehead *Elementary*

2410 Via Turqueza, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5339 • jmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Dr. Faith Morris
Principal

Funds for Our Forests

As an Environmental Studies Academy, our students are encouraged to seek real-world solutions to local and global concerns. This spring, the Marblehead Student Council is embarking on a community-service project called Funds

for our Forests, joining the National Forest Foundation to plant 50 million trees in our forests over the next seven years.

Students are learning how drought, wildfires, climate change, insects and



disease have impacted our forests and caused millions of trees to die. Student Council president Kidus Sherrell also cited how we need to replace trees we cut down for paper and pencils. Historian Zach Smith, who is concerned about the animals that are losing their habitats, added, "As an eco-friendly school, we need to do this!" And Harper Gideons and Avalon Heintz chimed in, "The more trees, the better!"

To learn more about the National Forest Foundation campaign, check out nationalforests.org/planttrees.

Moulton *Elementary*

29851 Highlands, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5980 • mnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jacqueline Campbell
Principal

Millionaire Readers

Being a millionaire is a really big deal at Moulton Elementary School... a Millionaire Reader that is! All Hawks are encouraged to strive to read 1 million words. And when a Hawk reaches this goal, it is a really big deal!

Each word read by a student is calculated by Scholastic Reading Counts (SRC). When a student finishes reading a book in SRC, he or she takes an online



quiz. After the student passes the quiz, the number of words in the book is added to the student's total words read. When a student reaches 1 million words, the teacher notifies Principal Campbell. Then, at the next Friday flag ceremony, with the help of students, parents, and teachers, the student is celebrated for reaching this amazing accomplishment with the school-wide chant "Moulton Hawk, you rock!"

Each Millionaire Reader receives a T-shirt for his or her first million words and a Moulton Hawk Brag Tag for each million words read after that.

Go, Hawks! Reading rocks!

Newhart *Middle School*

25001 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/855-0162 • newhart.schoolloop.com



Jeff Jones
Principal

A Multilingual School

Newhart is the first middle school in Capistrano to proudly embrace both Spanish Immersion and Mandarin Immersion programs. Last year, Newhart welcomed its first group of Spanish Immersion students from Viejo Elementary. This year, the first group of Mandarin Immersion sixth-graders from Bergeson Elementary elevated us to a multilingual campus.

The strong desire for families to nurture bilingual global thinkers has made our campus the third middle school in

the district to thrive with the energy and unique spirit of bilingual scholars. Sixth-grade students in both programs are using the target language in both their language elective and social science class. Additionally, Spanish Immersion sixth-graders are learning the Next Generation Science Standards en Espanol. Meanwhile our seventh-grade Spanish Immersion students are using their target language to learn about medieval history as they hone their Spanish in their language elective class.

The language elective classes are also venues to embrace the cultures that the languages represent. The Chinese New Year was celebrated with a Lion/Dragon

Dance performance, where the Mandarin Immersion students presented the traditions of the Chinese New Year to their fellow Newhart students. Spanish Immersion students learn about Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), Dia de Los Tres Reyes (Day of Three Kings), as well as music, art, and poetry from Latin America.

These global, biliterate, and bicultural scholars will be able to open doors both in education and in future career opportunities, and be able to see the world with multi-perspectives.



Oak Grove *Elementary*

22705 Sanborn, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/360-9001 • oges.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jill O'Connell-Bogle
Principal

Use Your Imagination

By Maya D'lima, Fifth-Grader

Students and staff at Oak Grove eagerly await the yearly assembly that features a group of adult actors acting out students' short stories. This group is devoted to teaching about genres, plot and how to create an eye-catching story as well as a cliff-hanging ending. The assembly motivates students to make a story and possibly have it turned into a play.

Imagination is something that is essential to visualizing things your way. For example, simply predicting something or guessing is using your imagination without you even knowing.

Now that you know how important imagination is, here is what some students at Oak Grove think about the assembly. Dayna Lauer, fifth grade, said, "I think every school should have the program and have the option to send them one of their own stories, and even when kids don't get picked, they still congratulate everyone else for putting in effort."

Elizabeth Xu, another fifth-grader, said, "Sometimes they mess up, but they change it to a joke, and it makes everyone laugh. And I think it's creative. I think every school should have the assembly because it gives students hope to become more imaginative."

The program helps students become better writers as well as teach them about the essentials to writing a great story.

Niguel Hills *Middle School*

29070 Paseo Escuela, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5360 • niguelhills.schoolloop.com



Tim Reece
Principal

A Devoted Leader

Niguel Hills Middle School is proud to announce our Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Susan Peterson. We are especially proud

of her because she was selected as the Capistrano Unified School District Middle School Teacher of the Year out of all 12 district middle schools. Mrs. Peterson is a seventh-grade social science teacher, as well as our Social Science Department chair. She is an excellent representative of the quality of educators at Niguel Hills.

Mrs. Peterson obtained her bachelor's degree in history from University of California, Santa Barbara, and her single-subject teaching credential from San Diego State University. Susan is a strong leader among her colleagues. She leads through thoughtful decisions, encouragement, and positive support of her department and the rest of her



staff. Her colleagues respect and value her completely, and she is very much “in tune” with the staff when we are considering direction or making important decisions at the site. Susan is a truly talented teacher who is devoted to her students, the staff, and our community.

Oso Grande *Elementary*

30251 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5966 • ogres.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jayne Martin
Principal

A Passion for Teaching

We are proud to announce that our 2018 Teacher of the Year is Ms. Mary Haupt! Ms. Haupt attended University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for her bachelor's degree, where she majored in psychology and played for the women's soccer team. While in school at UCLA, she completed an internship at the Lovaas Institute, an early intervention program. She enjoyed her experience so

much that she was inspired to get her master's degree in Marriage Family Child Counseling at University of Southern California. Although she intended to continue as a marriage, family, and child counseling therapist after graduation, Ms. Haupt began teaching at a center for a severe emotional disorder middle school students. It was there that she found her true love of teaching.

Currently Ms. Haupt teaches fourth grade and is our lead technology teacher. She has a strong passion for teaching as well as incorporating technology in the classroom. Ms. Haupt is one of our Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) team teachers and has played a pivotal role in the planning, development, and implementation of our STEAM labs.

Ms. Haupt's students inspire her every day. She believes that each student has something that makes him or her special, and her goal is to educate them academically and also to help them to see and embrace all they have to offer this world. Ms. Haupt's hope is that each child sees in himself or herself what Mrs. Haupt sees and that they take that with them as they move on in life.

We are fortunate to have such a dedicated, passionate teacher at our school. Congratulations Ms. Haupt!

Palisades *Elementary*

26462 Via Sacramento, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624 • 949/496-5942 • pses.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Curt Visca
Principal

Waves to Success

Many schools throughout both the Capistrano Unified School District and the nation use Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This is a proactive approach to the

behavioral supports that are needed for all students to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Throughout the school year our Capistrano teachers review the



Joyce Toledo, School Counselor,
is a member of the PBIS Team

“Palisades’ “Waves to Success” PBIS program with their students. A PBIS video made by Palisades teachers is shown. Our teachers also tour the school and review PBIS guidelines in the following areas: classroom, lunch area, walkways, playground, restrooms, and bus.

The goal of the PBIS Waves to Success for Palisades program is for our students to become respectful, responsible, and ready to learn every day. Waves to Success posters are also displayed in the classrooms and throughout the school to remind students about proper behavior.

Philip Reilly *Elementary*

24171 Pavion, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/454-1590 • pres.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Sharla Pitzen
Principal

Our Show of Spirit

Reilly Elementary celebrated “Dot Day” in January, which is based on Peter H. Reynolds’ book called *The Dot*. This inspiring story is about a girl who begins a journey of self-discovery after her teacher challenges her to “make her mark.”

Over 500 Reilly Elementary students participated in enrichment activities that challenged them to “make their mark and see where it leads.” Their artwork and writing samples were later on display at Reilly’s Dot Museum, which was a

celebration of our students’ creativity, collaboration, and courage.

One very inspiring moment came when all of our Reilly students, faculty, and staff members assembled to make a Human Dot. This tremendous show of spirit was captured by the Rancho Santa Margarita Fire Department, who brought their hook and ladder firetruck and high-flying drone. Excitement was high as everyone certainly “made their mark!”

This first annual Dot Day culminated with students enjoying ice cream treats. Our Reilly Patriots forever “marked” their community!



San Clemente *High School*

700 Avenida Pico, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/492-4165 • www.scritons.com



Chris Carter
Principal

Electives Fair

The Tritons hosted their first annual Electives Fair during lunch this past month to learn more about all the courses offered at San Clemente. Teachers and students from a variety of departments offered

Tritons a chance to ask questions and explore classes such as Digital Photo, Robotics, Drawing and Painting, AP Psychology and many more! CCA also joined in the fun presenting some of the incredible career pathways available to the Tritons next year during and after school!

From the state-of-the-art CYSCO Lab to the new and upcoming Culinary Arts classroom, San Clemente High School is excited to be gearing up for a successful 2018-19 school year.



San Juan Hills *High School*

29211 Stallion Ridge, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5900 • www.sjhhs.org



Jennifer Smalley
Principal

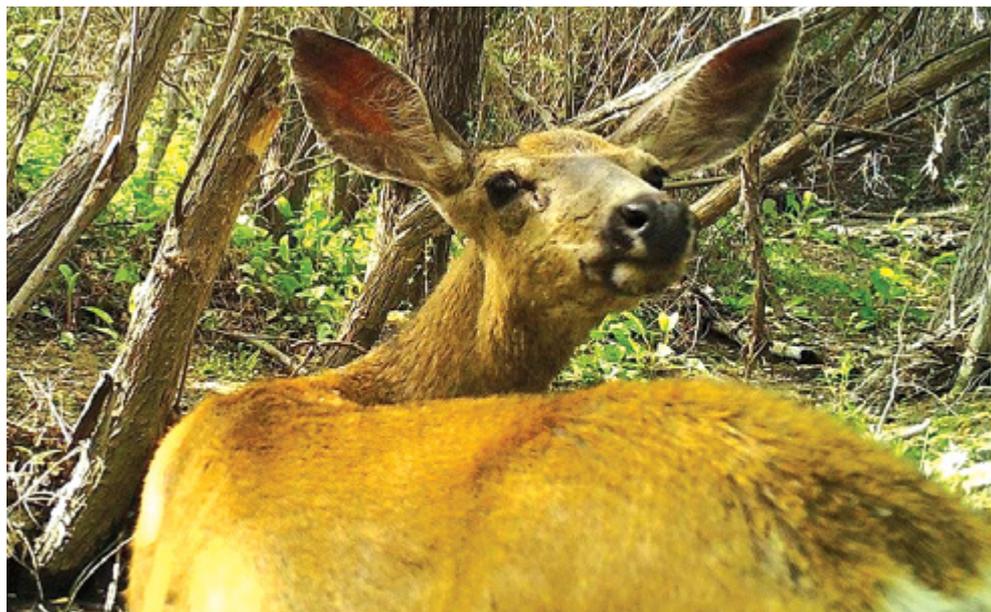
Wildlife Cameras

San Juan Hills High School is surrounded by hills and trails—the staff and students have always known that theirs is a school surrounded by wilderness. But it is not until recently that the installation of the new SJHHS

wildlife cameras has allowed staff, students and community members to see just what types of wildlife live around the SJHHS campus.

The San Juan Hills Science Department, chaired by Alexandra Easton, installed wildlife cameras last spring in some of the ravines and on some of the trails around the San Juan Hills campus. The data cards are checked once a week for footage of wildlife, and so far, they have been able to identify mule deer,

skunks, raccoons, rabbits, hawks, crows, coyotes, bobcats and wood rats on the film. Many students and staff have been especially fascinated by footage of a hawk snacking on a small animal, captured on the film over the summer.



A curious mule deer captured on film by one of the SJHHS Wildlife Cams.

San Juan *Elementary*

31642 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/493-4533 • sjes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Silvia
Mazzeo Pule**
Principal

The Jungle Book

Last February, San Juan Elementary School (SJES) was honored to present its third annual production of Disney musicals. This year's show was "The Jungle Book," based on the novel by Rudyard Kipling and the Disney film from 1967.

A total of 61 SJES scholars in third through fifth grades participated in the play, either acting or as off-stage cast. They began rehearsing in September to ensure amazing performances. The show delighted people of all ages with the tale of an orphan boy in the jungle and the tribulations

he faces, as well as the good friends he makes along the way back to the human village.

Mrs. Rocío Sandoval directed the show, Ms. Carmen Pérez provided the choreography, Mr. Pierre Jacques was the music director, and Mr. Bernardo Sabad served as technical advisor. Mrs. Lidia Sánchez ensured all costumes were up to par, and Mrs. Gabriela Reyes and Ms. Isis Camacho worked on amazing props and set design. Mrs. Martha García-Serrato and Mrs. Victoria Gerson were the producers, while Ms. Silvia Pule, SJES' principal, was the executive producer. This production would like to specially thank Mr. Edward Chade and all of the parents and staff whose volunteer efforts made this production possible.



Serra High School

31422 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/489-7216 • serra.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Student's Best Friend

As you enter Serra High School's office, you'll be welcomed by our warm and helpful staff. However, if you venture beyond the reception area, you might receive a welcome of a different kind—the furry kind—from one of our service-dogs-in-training.

Dr. Meg Ervais
Principal

Serra High School, in conjunction with two different service-dog organizations, is helping to acclimatize the dogs

to serve in therapeutic settings. Hadley and Pax are working toward supporting pediatric-hospital patients. Swagger and Irish are breeders for Guide Dogs of America. Together, some combination of this foursome can be found around campus, hanging with the students and making life here at Serra more homey and comfortable.

Thanks to Deb Forrester, who runs the school's health office and cares for the dogs full time, students help the dogs get used to the distractions of lots of activity. The dogs return the favor with love and affection. Students who are feeling stressed tell staff that time with the dogs relaxes them and helps them return to class better able to focus and concentrate.

The dogs are keenly attuned to students who are sad or need a little extra TLC.

Dr. Meg Ervais, principal at Serra, says that having the dogs on campus contributes to the school's mission of creating The Small School with the Big Heart.

"I have seen students come in to the office stressed or upset, and after a few minutes cuddling with one of the dogs, they are in a better place emotionally," Dr. Evans said.



Shorecliffs Middle School

240 Via Socorro, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/498-1660 • shorecliffs.schoolloop.com



A Heart for Teaching

Being an outstanding teacher is part science, part art, and a ton of heart. Anyone who has had April Stone as his or her math teacher—or anyone who has had the pleasure of working with her—knows she exemplifies this

Dr. Brad Baker
Principal

equation of a superior teacher. Students

leave her classes not only with gained knowledge of math, but also the knowledge that they are cared for.

Mrs. Stone grew up in the Capistrano Unified School District system and knew early on that she wanted to be a teacher. "I'm a helper at heart," she said. "I love kids and wanted to be a source of light for them on their path to growing up."

Mrs. Stone's path to teaching math was not a direct one. She began in kindergarten and second grade before becoming a middle

school math teacher. When asked if she would ever want to change careers, she answered with an emphatic, "No!" Mrs. Stone loves living in San Clemente, and it's not unusual for her to be stopped on the street by former students, who thank her for giving them a math background that readied them for high school—along with a huge hug.



In her words, "The best thing about being a teacher is changing the attitudes of kids who don't believe in themselves. I find things they like and connect with them in order to gain trust. Once this happens, the teaching can begin." With this kind of an attitude, it's easy to see why her peers nominated her as the 2018 Shorecliffs Middle School teacher of the year.

Congratulations, Mrs. Stone, on your well-deserved honor!

Tesoro High School

1 Tesoro Creek Rd, Las Flores, CA 92688 • 949/234-5310 • www.tesorohighschool.com



Dan Burch
Interim Principal

OCC Math Meet Champs

Tesoro Math Club successfully defends their title and is Back-to-Back OCC Math Meet Champs!!!

On Friday, March 9th, Tesoro High School's Math Club participated in the annual OCC Math Meet which was held at Orange Coast College. This math competition gives students an opportunity to demonstrate their math skills and compete against other high school math clubs in the county. The Tesoro Math Club won

this event last year and then, on Friday night, the Tesoro Math Club (1057 points) successfully defended its title by beating out the likes of University High School (844 points), Dana Hills High School (754 points), Fountain Valley High School (714 points), JSerra Catholic High School (708 points), and numerous other schools that participated in the OCC Math Meet (the schools listed above rounded out the top 5). The Tesoro team consisted of Daniel Ortega, Alair Zhao, Jason Lee, Darren Wang, and Irfaan Karim. Individual Honors were earned by Daniel Ortega (placed 2nd in the entire competition – roughly 75 competitors) and Alair Zhao (placed 5th in the entire competition).



Adam Wondra (faculty advisor), Daniel Ortega, Alair Zhao, Irfaan Karim, Jason Lee, and Darren Wang.

Viejo Elementary

26782 Via Grande, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/582-2424 • vjes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jesus Becerra
Principal

Riding Into Success

By Mrs. Nancy Berber, School Counselor

This year we held our first College and Career Week here at Viejo Elementary. The school counseling program planned this week because we recognize the importance of exposing our students to college and career opportunities at the elementary level, not only for the students' sake, but for their families as well.

The students completed activities that explored various careers. They also had the opportunity to show their college spirit by wearing their favorite college T-shirt and college apparel. Our great fifth-grade students also completed a college research project and presented their

findings on a tri-fold later showcased in our MPR.

Another exciting event is our fifth-grade college field trip to SOKA University! Our PTA also organized a great parent night providing stakeholders with information regarding the continuum of the Dual Immersion Program, paying for college, and other academic supports. One of the culminating activities was a visit from our local fire department, and also visiting school resource officers who donated their time to answer questions about their careers, all while displaying their service vehicles. On Friday, the students were invited to dress up as a career of their choice.

Our students will take the knowledge and experiences they gain here as they continue their education, while using their imagination to visualize their successful futures.

Tijeras Creek *Elementary*

23072 Avenida Empresa, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/234-5300 • tces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Diann Buckingham
Principal

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Carol Cutkomp was nominated by her peers for the prestigious honor of Teacher of the Year. On Friday, February 2, Mrs. Cutkomp's level of recognition elevated to new heights as family members, administrators, and colleagues recognized Mrs. Cutkomp as the Capistrano Unified School District Elementary Teacher of the Year. This is an amazing accomplishment!

All the scholars of Tijeras Creek along

with parents and her colleagues cheered as Mrs. Cutkomp accepted this award. Mrs. Cutkomp will now advance to the Orange County Teacher of the Year competition.

Mrs. Cutkomp is a testimony to the teaching profession. She will do whatever it takes to help a student learn. She makes learning come alive, and she implements Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), most recently with the introduction of mini robots. She is committed to being the best she can be.

Mrs. Cutkomp wants the best for her students and for all the students at Tijeras Creek Elementary School!



Vista Del Mar *Elementary*

1130 Avenida Talega, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5950 • vdmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com

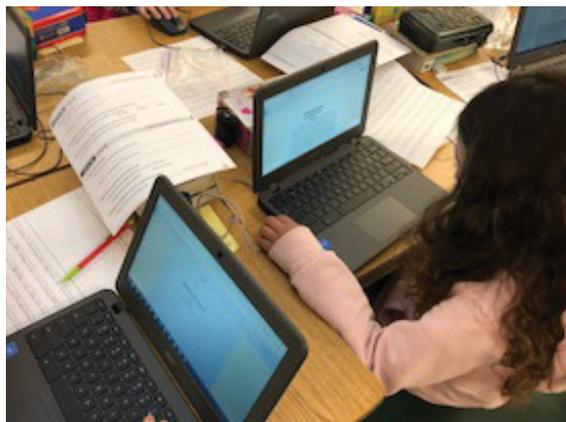


Dr. Troy Hunt
Principal

Working on Writing

Vista del Mar (VDM) Elementary school students are committed to improving their writing skills. Two years ago, our distinguished teachers decided to adopt a school-wide K 5 writing program. The program,

called "Write from the Beginning and Beyond," begins the writing process by using Thinking Maps. These are an instructional tool that helps students organize their thoughts. The writing program then uses a systematic process to help guide students in how to write narrative, informative, and argumentative types of papers.



Within the first year we saw an immediate improvement in our students' writing skills. This process allows all children, such as English learners, special needs, and gifted students, to learn to excel in their writing.

In addition, our students have also increased their higher-level thinking skills through the use of evidence to help support

their thoughts. Thank you to our parents for financially supporting the purchase of these materials, and for supporting the professional development of our teachers.

Vista Del Mar *Middle School*

1130 Avenida Talega, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5955 • vdm.schoolloop.com



Michelle Wrenn Benham
Principal

A Worthy Project

Middle School is a universally accepted “challenging time” in the lives of most adolescents. Finding friends you enjoy and trust is one of the most pivotal factors in making the sixth through eighth grades a more positive experience. Vista del Mar

Middle School eighth-grader Ozodi Njaka recognized

this fact and decided to make a difference.

Njaka approached the school administration to pitch his idea for a “Buddy Bench.” He had seen this at his elementary school, and thought it was needed for the older students too. “He told me that he knew that there were several students who were struggling to make friends,” explained Principal Michelle Benham.

The idea was presented to the ASB class, and they determined it was a project worthy of funding. Feeling “buddy” was too juvenile, the students decided to call it the “Mako a Friend” bench, a play on our school mascot.

The bench was recently installed in a shaded area with a view of the outdoor stage. It has already been a popular spot for the students.



Great way to “Mako a Friend” at Vista del Mar Middle School!

George White *Elementary*

25422 Chapparosa Park Dr., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/249-3875 • gwes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Andrew Klinkenberg
Principal

Hands-On Learning

Nothing is better than learning by doing! At George White in the month of March, both our fourth- and fifth-graders participated in

hands-on learning.

Our fifth-graders returned from Outdoor Science Camp and were able to learn about geology, ecology and wildlife. Camp in San Geronio Mountains was a great experience for the fifth-graders. They were able to spend four days and three nights in the mountains while learning all about science.



Outdoor Science Camp.

This month, our fourth-graders will participate in the overnight field trip of the Pilgrim Tall Ships Program. The students will be spending the night on a tall ship with the same conditions as sailors had in the 1800s. The students will be assigned work groups, each of which will be responsible for a part of the ship. The captain and first mate are always in character, which makes for a highly entertaining and fun event.

How much more fun can learning be?

Wagon Wheel *Elementary*

30912 Bridle Path, Coto de Caza, CA 92679 • 949/589-1953 • wwes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Jean Grabowski
Principal

The Performing Arts Thrive

Wagon Wheel's spring production of *Alice in Wonderland* was a joy to behold. For several months, students worked collaboratively as they read, memorized, sang, and acted out their lines from this year's musical. Our amazing Mustangs were delightful onstage, and we are so proud of the work they dedicated to the production.

Costume changes, set changes, choreography, and so much more gave our Mustangs the opportunity to not only perform, but to collaboratively problem solve in front of peers and a live audience. Our students truly exhibited our school's mission on stage by fostering innovation and creating a culture of learning. The successful production of this magnitude was a direct result of the phenomenal partnership with our community and volunteers.

Go, Mustangs!



Wood Canyon *Elementary*

23431 Knollwood, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/448-0012 • wces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



Paul Foucart
Principal

Open House

On March 8, Wood Canyon Elementary School held its Open House for our school community. The halls were bustling with excitement as teachers and students showcased their work throughout the year for their parents and surrounding community members.

The night began with a silent auction to help raise funds for technology in the classrooms. Following our silent auction, classrooms were open for both parents and students to view the students'

grade-appropriate work. Third grade performed "The History of Orange County" to a packed crowd in our Performance Arts Center. Second-graders conducted their own version of "Shark Tank" in the school library. In addition, our first-graders participated in a "Red, White, and Blue Heritage" performance and highlighted many of the patriotic songs and symbols that display our honor for our country.

We were excited to highlight all of the great activities happening at Wood Canyon, the Arts and Communication Academy. Open House is an exciting event for students, staff, and parents, and we look forward to it each and every year.



FUN

Isabella's Book Review



Isabella A.

Entertaining and Informative

Anastasia, The Last Grand Duchess, Russia, 1914, by Carolyn Meyer is the diary of a 13-year-old Russian Duchess.

Anastasia the youngest of the 4 daughters of the Russian Tsar, Nicholas II and Alexandra Feodora.

Life was perfect. The sisters wore expensive jewelry and they lived in many palaces. The only downside for Anastasia was her school work and her brother's hemophilia.

In the winters, they got to play in the snow and had dances. Then, WW1 breaks out. Under pressure, the Tsar abdicated the throne and the family was arrested. While imprisoned in the palace they attempted to stay happy and even continue their studies.

However, the family is executed. It is commonly believed that Anastasia escaped. Scientist have been able to prove Alexie and either Marie or Anastasia might have escaped.

I rate this book 4 stars because it is entertaining and informative, yet it can be rude.

Isabella is a 6th grader who loves to read, write, volleyball and plans on becoming an author of children's books. She rates books 1-5 stars with 5 being the best.



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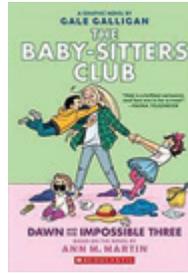
Sofia Atoofi

The Baby-Sitters Club

Dawn Schafer is moving from sunny California to freezing Connecticut. She is eager to accept her first big job as a babysitter in the Baby-Sitters Club. But things don't go exactly as expected. Taking care of three kids whose mom seems too busy to even care about is a hard task. And getting along with the leader of the club, Kristy, isn't as easy as it looks, either. But Dawn finds a way to steer through all these obstacles and makes joining the Baby-Sitters Club a success.

I really liked this novel because it teaches you about responsibility yet in a fun and interesting way. I rate this comic book 4 out of 5 stars, because the drawings were very detailed and funny.

Sofia is a fifth grader who loves writing. When she isn't submerged into a book, she enjoys doing gymnastics, acting, and singing. Her favorite kind of books are informational books, as she loves learning about new topics. She wants to become a writer or designer when she grows up, and hopes to someday publish a book, called *Painting a Path*, which she wrote for a school competition.





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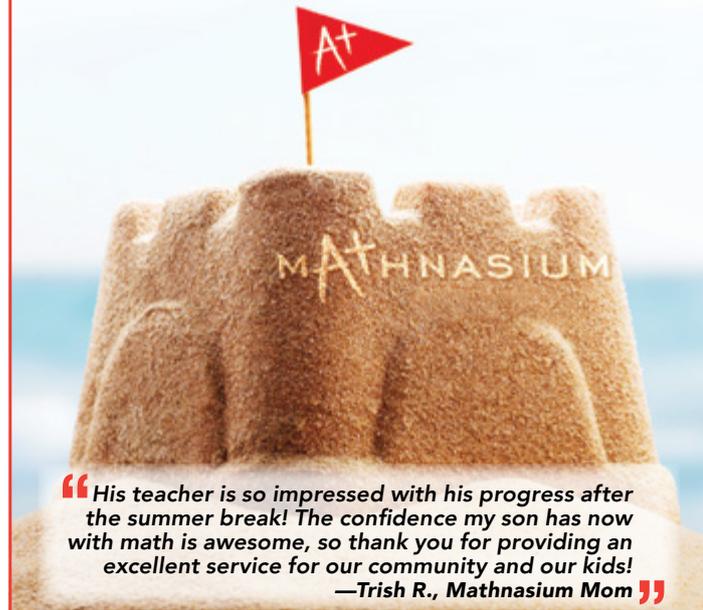
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AVOID THE SUMMER SLIDE

Summer is the best time to shore up your child's math skills.

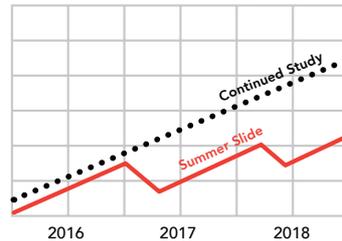
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**“His teacher is so impressed with his progress after the summer break! The confidence my son has now with math is awesome, so thank you for providing an excellent service for our community and our kids!
—Trish R., Mathnasium Mom”**

Summer Learning Gap



What is the Summer Slide?

Students can lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Mathnasium is here to help!

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- San Clemente** • (949) 481-6284 • mathnasium.com/sanclemente

Book Review By Katrina



A Virtual World

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline is all about the OASIS, a virtual world where you can be anyone, do anything and enjoy life to the fullest. And that's pretty important, seeing as the world is currently dirt poor.

Creator James Halliday however, leaves his players one last surprise on his deathbed.

Located within the game are three hidden

keys, and whoever can find them and unlock all three gates, will inherit both his wealth and the OASIS itself. Though for five years, no one has any luck. Only for teenager Wade Watts to find the first key. Now the world is scrambling to find the keys, especially the IOI, an internet company intent on turning the free OASIS into a playground for the rich and powerful alone. Despite the dangers, Wade and his friends continue to search for the keys, and won't stop until its GAME OVER for everyone. Thrilling and fast paced, this book is a shocking theory of what our own future as a society could look like in a few decades. A great read for lovers of 80s pop culture and gaming in general. I give this book 4 out of 5 crescent moons.

Katrina is a tenth grader who loves reading books as much as writing her own stories and enjoys watching Anime. Katrina hopes to be an author one day very soon. Katrina will rate her book reviews from 1 to 5 crescent moons with 5 being the best.

Lucy's Book Review



In 27 Days

Twenty-seven days is a very specific amount of time, but if you're trying to prevent a suicide it's nothing short of a race against the force itself.

Lucy Davis

Hadley Jamison never really knew Archer Morales, but she made a deal with Death that if he gave her twenty-seven days, she could stop Archer from taking his own life. So, she tries her best to befriend the closed off, quiet kid from freshman English. He doesn't seem to want her help, but their jobs at a coffeehouse and tutoring sessions bring them closer together, and soon they're becoming quite the pair.

Problem is, chaos wants to pull them apart. With events endangering the people that she loves, will Hadley succeed in keeping Archer alive? Or will she run out of time?

I enjoyed this book immensely for many reasons. It's funny, suspenseful, thoughtful, and all around a great read. Five out of five bookworms.



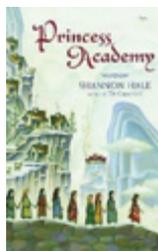
Lucy is a 6th grade student. When she isn't immersed in a book, she loves musical theater, ballet, and singing. She enjoys stretching her imagination by writing short stories of her own. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

B is for Book



Surprising Twists

Princess Academy by Shannon Hale left me craving for more. It's the perfect combination of adventure, princesses, friendship, and even a little romance!



Bailey

When the people of Mount Eskel receive message from the lowlanders saying their prince is looking for a princess and all young girls will be sent to an academy, everyone is in shock, especially Miri. Without a choice, Miri, her friends, and a strange lowlander girl named Britta, set off to the academy, only to find themselves with a horrible tutor and homesick. Now, the pressure is on to be the best of the academy and marry the prince. Will Miri find out that even though she's small for her age, her voice is big? Will she stand up for what's right?

I couldn't put this book down! Shannon Hale always describes the moment just right and the twists were surprising! I give this book 5 out of 5 stars. Don't forget to read the rest of the series!

Bailey is a 6th grader that likes to read fantasy and daydream about adventure when she isn't dancing ballet or playing with her friends and siblings.

Richard's Book Review



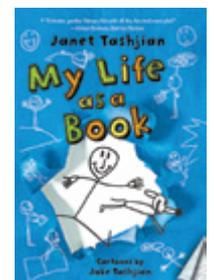
Interesting Mystery

My Life as a Book is about a kid named Derek Fallon. All Derek wants to do this summer is goof around and hang with his friends. But his parents have other ideas.

They signed him up to a summer reading camp. Derek hates reading! Nothing in the world could be duller to him than reading a book. So he hid in the attic, and found an old newspaper there about his babysitter who drowned when he was a baby. He wants to learn more about her and finds that the story is she saved him from going into the rough seas but drowned ... But then with more digging he finds out that wasn't the case at all!

My Life as a Book has an interesting mystery and is relatable to someone who doesn't like to read. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars, with 5 being the best.

Richard J. is a third grader. Richard likes math, playing sports, physical activities like bike-riding and running, reading and spending time with his family.



Alana's Book Review



Alana F.

Consumed by Deception?

In a world divided by power and status, it takes everything that Mare Barrow's got to stay alive. But when she discovers a strange, otherworldly power she never knew she had, her chances of survival suddenly seem much slimmer. Battling heated emotions, twisted morals, and chaos, Mare fights to save herself and her people in an uphill battle. Will she stand against injustice, or will she be consumed by deception?

Although I loved this book, I'd have to give it only four out of eight trifold shards. The excitement, when present, was hardly noticeable- all of the politics and social issues were generic and dull. However, I'd attribute most of my disappointment to a low amount of challenges for Mare and an unnecessarily slow pace. Throughout the book, Mare tends to use deception as a first resort for solving problems, therefore not making herself seem like a strong female lead.

Alana is a student columnist and a self-proclaimed "huge nerd." When she doesn't have a book in her hands, she loves to play video games and write fiction. She rates books on a scale of 1-8 trifold shards with 8 being the highest



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Sophie's Choice



Sophie O.

An Adventure!

This book really takes you on an adventure. I'm not kidding, it's an adventure book!! Now on to the info or quick summary of *Mysteries of the Attic Trunk*.



The book is about a girl named Sue who was adopted from China and had hoped to explore California with her grandmother. Her grandmother ends up getting sick and is unable to come and take Sue on their California Adventure.

For Sue's 10 birthday, she gets to open a trunk that her grandmother left her. The trunk is no ordinary trunk. Once opened, it takes Sue on unexpected adventures to California, visiting historical or famous places. During her travels, Sue learns new things and visits new places. A little bit of history is at every stop and the excitement of never knowing where the trunk will take her next and who she will meet keeps the journey a mystery.

If you like mystery then this is a good book for you to read to yourself or others. I give this book a big thumbs up and 5 stars.

Sophie Olko is a 5th grader who loves to read and write her own stories. She enjoys soccer, loves to bake, act, draw and sew. One day she would like to have her own baking show.

Fun Things and Places—Word Search Contest

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 word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com Please put **Capo** in the subject line.

Entries must be received by May 5, 2018

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift card to Barnes & Noble

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