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School News



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Covering the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District

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Fall Right Into Studying



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The Art of Storytelling



Donald B. Austin, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Rudyard Kipling once said, "If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten." This edition of *School News Roll Call* for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District (PVPUSD) is largely presented as stories from our leaders. We believe that stories can help to bring our daily work to life. As you will see, some of the stories will bring tears, laughs, or evoke memories.

Our Enrollment Center is a busy office. The staff processes all new families, including those just beginning the journey. I often pop my head into the office to meet and welcome our new families if I am in the area. More often than not, I am more of a distraction than a help. It happens! Two recent encounters reminded me of the importance of maintaining excellent schools through the lens of parents.

I met a man enrolling his young son. With broken English, he shook my hand and thanked us for our school system. He told me that he had lived in a neighboring area

and spent the last several years saving enough money to afford a rental property in our boundaries. He told me that it was not a sacrifice. Instead, he categorized his decision as an investment in his children. I promised him that we would take care of his son and that our students can go anywhere in life when they start here.

Military families arriving in fatigues get my attention. A husband and wife enrolled their daughter and told me how grateful they are that PVPUSD accepts all active military families as residents. They described the many moves in their past, including some good and bad experiences. They were amazed at the opportunities afforded to our students and felt like it was one less thing they had to worry about before their next deployment. There were some tears. I wiped my eyes and thanked them for their service to us.

These two examples represent a fraction of our interactions with families, yet underscore the reasons why we owe all of our families our very best. It means something special to send your children to PVPUSD, and we want that to be true now and in the future!

#OneHill – A Unified School District

By Malcolm S. Sharp, President Board of Education

As we celebrate the 55 years of the PVPUSD it's important to think about what it means to be unified.

In technical terms the California Department of Education classifies unified school districts as those that are comprised of grades K-12. Of the 1,022 districts in the state 343 are unified with 48 of them in Los Angeles County.

But there is a more important meaning of unified: working together toward a common vision and goals. When students, staff, parents and community operate harmoniously, the real value of unification is realized.

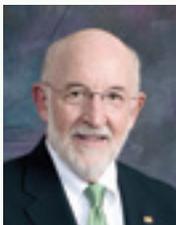
In setting direction for the district, the Board of Education has approved programs which will contribute to unity in areas of curriculum and facilities. Last year's implementation

of mathematics course sequencing provides opportunities for all students to be successful and reach high levels of mathematics in high school. A similar approach will be used in developing an improved english/language arts program and in the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards.

Soon the district will begin development of a comprehensive facilities master plan and the process will involve the entire community. The result will provide a guide for improving our facilities district wide.

Unification is valued along with the unique qualities found at every one of our eighteen campuses that give each their special identity. Collectively we are #OneHill.

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Covering the
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UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Fall is here and students are settled into the routine of school and focused on goals. In this issue, you will read stories of what it means to work and attend school in the PVPUSD. Beginning with Superintendent Dr. Austin's column on page 3 you won't want to miss a word...find a comfortable chair and enjoy. I'm sure many of you have

your own stories of why you chose to locate in this unique community. I am not a resident, but I certainly enjoy the shops and ambiance. In fact, my husband and I return to the glass church every August 3rd to celebrate our 1961 wedding day.

Our next issue is December 7. Until then have fun Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving!



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PVP Council of PTAs

Disaster Preparedness

By Beth Meyerhoff, President,
and Lori Siembieda, Publicity Chair



snacks, and portable toilets, among other items. These are in addition to school-wide disaster provisions kept at all school sites and include critical items, such as two-way radios and backpacks for search and rescue.

In addition to disaster supplies, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Council of PTAs, together with each school site and the district, assists with various disaster drill scenarios at each site throughout the year. Each school runs an

earthquake drill in the fall as well as a second drill later in the year. Scenarios for the additional drill have included a chemical spills, lockdowns, and gas leaks. Representatives from the district, the PTA council, and the school site disaster preparedness team are present at these drills, and parent volunteers often help with these drills to ensure the scenarios are carried out in a realistic manner.

While it is sobering to think of any disaster befalling our schools, our children and community are very fortunate that our Palos Verdes schools are well prepared. On behalf of all the PTAs in the district, we thank the families for their support of disaster preparedness at our schools.

October is Disaster Preparedness Month. In the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District, PTAs partner with the district to support disaster preparedness. Our district is unique in this aspect. It is unusual for PTAs to support disaster preparedness with volunteer hours and financial investment.

At the council level, our vice presidents of community service, Judy Gilligan and Timothy Massey, along with the chair of the disaster committee, Cheryl Dawson, lead our PTA members with their years of experience. Each school site has a dedicated chair position that is overseen by the site's vice president of community service. The community service vice presidents meet once each month to ensure that procedures and supplies are current and up to date.

Under the supervision of the school principal, volunteers complete an inventory of supplies and replenish what is needed. PTAs fund disaster supplies beyond those provided by the district. Each classroom has supplies in case of school site lockdowns. These include first-aid supplies,

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Peninsula Education Foundation

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Christine Byrne
Executive Director

Thank You!

On behalf of the Peninsula Education Foundation I would like to extend our gratitude to all of you who supported PEF during Back-to-School registration. We are off to a great start toward our commitment to raise \$3.5 million for PVPUSD. Our pledge helps to maintain vital teaching positions and education programs that help keep our school district one of the best in the nation!

I would also like to take a moment to thank the PTA's and PTSA's at our local schools for including the Peninsula Education Foundation in the Registration Packets. It is the combined team work of PTA/PTSA, Booster Clubs and that helps subsidize what the district receives from the state to match the actual cost of providing a world class education for our children. It is wonderful that we can all come

together as ONE to provide all of our children with that ONE great chance at an education!

On September 21st we held our second annual PEF Pledge Day. I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who participated and made their pledge. This effort provides an opportunity for those who did not have the chance to donate during the registration process.

Tuesday, October 4th we held our first "Meet the Superintendent" evening for families who are new to the district this year. Thank you to everyone who came out, and to Dr. Austin and the district for taking the time to update our new parents and welcome them to the PVPUSD.

For all of our supporters who have donated \$1,500 or more, please save the date for our annual Donor Recognition Food and Wine Fest on Thursday, November 17th at Trump National. Invitations and details will follow, and we are looking forward to a great event with local restaurants showcasing their amazing food!

Palos Verdes Library District

701 Silver Spur Rd., Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274 • 310/921-7500 • www.pvld.org



Kathy Gould
Director

Library Unveils New Online Services

As the school year gets underway, the Palos Verdes Library District (PVLD) has added three new and powerful offerings to its suite of online learning and homework-help tools. Rosetta Stone, World Book Student Edition, and JSTOR round out a robust digital library available on PVLD's "Research" web page: www.pvld.org/research

Students, teachers, and parents can take advantage of these services and more anytime, anywhere. All that's needed are an Internet connection and a PVLD library card. By entering their unique library card number, users are ready to explore!

Rosetta Stone is a renowned language learning system that offers instruction in 30 world languages—plus English courses for non-native speakers. Used by millions of



learners around the world, it employs an interactive approach that includes core lessons to build reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

World Book Student Edition is tailored for students in elementary and middle schools. It includes all

the articles from the print version of the World Book Encyclopedia, plus learning resources and research tools.

JSTOR is an ideal tool for high school students who want to get a jump on college-level research. It contains full-text scholarly articles from more than 2,000 academic journals in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

Every year PVLD strives to enhance its collection of premium online reference tools, many of which are subscription-only and NOT available on the open Internet. Gaining access to them requires only a free library card.

Applying for a library card is quick and easy at: <http://www.pvld.org/> application

In this digital age, every student needs ready access to comprehensive and authoritative sources of information that have been vetted by professional librarians and educators. PVLD encourages everyone (student, parent, or teacher) who needs a library card to sign up today!



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Cornerstone @ Pedregal *Elementary School*

6069 Groveoak Pl., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-2261 • 310/378-0324



Michele Marcus
Interim Principal

The Power of 'Yet'

Cornerstone is a special community with a common focus of teaching to the whole child. This includes a strong academic program and an equally strong program that supports the social-emotional well-being of all students.

This year, our Cornerstone community is using a newly transformed Character Counts program and a focus on growth mindset to create a unified theme throughout all grade levels. The collaboration between parents and staff can be seen throughout the school. Together, teachers and parents are supporting a focus on one character trait a month for our students to immerse themselves in. The first character trait, perseverance, aligns perfectly with our focus on the power of yet. We are working with our students to understand that by adopting a growth mindset, the sky is

the limit as to what they will be able to learn and do. No longer do we want our students to say that they can't do something—we are changing this message to the message that they might not be able to do something yet. We explain to our students that this small three-letter word is quite powerful and, by using it, they are changing their mindset and sending the message that they will in fact be able to do everything they want as long as they persevere.

Students are hearing and seeing this same message in the classrooms as well as around campus. Bulletin boards include inspirational messages to remind students of this, and the growth-mindset philosophy is embedded in the lessons that teachers are delivering.

Growth mindset will be a focus of our professional development at Cornerstone this year, and as a unified teaching staff, we will strengthen our understanding and instructional practices to support our students as they adopt a growth mindset.

Dapplegray *Elementary School*

3011 Palos Verdes Dr. North, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-7303 • 310/541-3706



Nancy Parsons
Principal

Worth the Wait

"In teaching you cannot see the fruit of a day's work. It is invisible and remains so, maybe for twenty years." So says Jacques Barzun, a French-born American historian who is also known as a philosopher of education. As Barzun asserts, much of an educator's influence is not immediately apparent. But the realization that your actions make an impact on a child's life or

on a family is a profound reward—as in goose bumps and a stinging behind the eyes.

In the course of my lengthy career in education, the rewards have been many. Most of them are expected: children learn to read, write, and solve math problems. These outcomes are expected. Students learn to share, be kind, and walk in lines. These are also expected. A parent says thank you or tells you what an impact you had on his or her child's life. That is not expected but always appreciated. But the real rewards are rarer and much more meaningful.

The first time I met my friend, he was crying in my office. He was not in trouble, but he had been in the same room so many times in past years that he knew the new

principal must want to scold him, too. In a conference with the parents, it became obvious that the happy boy at home and the miserable child at school were not the same person. Intervention with the school psychologist, follow-up by the parents with a pediatrician, and a change in placement to allow for a new start helped this young man to turn a corner.

I ran into my friend in a local store one evening after all of this had transpired. Though he was still not happy go lucky, he was doing better. I asked him to help me pick something out that would be part of a holiday display in the school office. He made the selection, I made the purchase, and the next day his decoration was in use for all to see.

Fast forward nine months to the first day of school the following year. I entered his classroom and gazed around at the wide-eyed faces. When my friend and I made eye contact, there was a rare smile, and then the question: "Are you using the decoration again this year?" Of course!

While the changes for this young man were the result of a professional educational team, my reward comes in knowing that I was on that team and that my small action one night made a personal connection with him that made a difference! That is definitely worth the wait!

Contest!!

Your entry must be received by November 15, 2016
From the correct entries, we will draw a winner to receive
a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes and Noble.



This black cat is somewhere in this issue
in 2 places. When you find it, email the
page numbers to:

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Please put PVPUSD in the subject line.

Congratulations to Aarushi Chaudhari winner of the September Word Search!

Lunada Bay *Elementary School*

520 Paseo Lunado, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-4377 • 310/377-3005



Julie Tarango
Principal

Celebrating Kindness

As a child, my first day in the fourth grade began in a new school. I will never forget how terrified I felt arriving on the playground and not knowing a single person. I will also never forget my mom's advice as she dropped me off that morning. She told me that if I wished to find friends, I could start by being a friend, even to all the new children I didn't know.

When kindness like this is expressed, it often comes back to you. I was reminded of this scenario on the first day of school at Lunada Bay. Many of our children experienced the same feeling. And I'm sure they felt the way I did: terrified!

It does not cease to amaze me how children demonstrate kindness to each other. On the first day of school, a boy new to Lunada Bay was hanging his backpack outside a classroom. His mother told me later that he was convinced this would be the worst day in his world because he was devastated to have left behind his best friend at his old school. But within seconds, nearby students asked him his name and invited him to play. Excitedly, they all ran to the playground after quick introductions.

His mother also shared how he was beaming when she picked him up that afternoon. He was excited about his

teacher, his new friends, and his new school!

Sometimes all it takes is an act of kindness to help ease nerves in a new situation. A good mindset matters when students arrive to school. They should feel safe, comfortable, and happy, all of which will ready them to receive instruction, ask questions, and discover new things.

At Lunada Bay, we expect kindness from one another. This goes a long way in the classroom, and in life!



At Lunada Bay, students and parents enjoy walking to school and enter the classroom ready to learn!

Mira Catalina *Elementary School*

30511 Lucania Dr., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-6272 • 310/377-6731



Brett Egan
Principal

Like a Second Home

The most important aspect of any school is the interaction that takes place in the classroom between teacher and students. That's the heartbeat of any school. We at Mira Catalina are fortunate to have a great group of teachers who work closely as a strong team to prepare our curriculum.

While the classroom is the heartbeat of the school, its lifeblood is our classified support staff. We have an amazing group that includes Suellen Walker, our office manager; Debbie Rozas, our health clerk; and John Barlow, our custodian. All three have worked at Mira Catalina for 12 to 18 years, and they are amazing at their jobs. Both Ms. Walker and Ms. Rozas started at Mira Catalina as parents of children here before working at Mira Catalina. In an age when so many employees move jobs frequently, having three stellar employees like Ms. Walker, Ms. Rozas and Mr. Barlow working together on one campus for this long a period of time is rare.

Mira Catalina is more of a home—or a second home—to our parents, students and staff. This is because of the environment created by these three individuals. They continuously go above and beyond their duties, including



Debbie Rozas & Suellen Walker.

coming to school events like the Halloween Harvest Festival and the Talent Show to volunteer their time. In addition to his custodial duties, Mr. Barlow runs our Student Council and makes a fantastic impact on our children in a positive manner. It's common to see Ms. Walker, Ms. Rozas or Mr. Barlow interacting with a student or a parent to enhance that person's experience.

Without these three individuals, Mira Catalina wouldn't be the great school that it is, and we are very grateful for them. Please thank them for their dedication and for what they bring to Mira Cat!

Miraleste *Intermediate School*

29323 Palos Verdes Dr. East, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-6470 • 310/732-0900



Brent Kuykendall
Principal

Hand in Hand Through the Hurdles

With the start of another school year, excitement, opportunity and possibility rule the day. Students and parents look forward to a year filled with growth and learning. However, we all need to keep in mind that sometimes, our biggest gains often come through overcoming what may first appear to be an insurmountable challenge.

Learning how it feels to overcome a hurdle or even failing while trying is a big part of growing up. I challenge parents to support their children to reach beyond what is comfortable, and if they fail, focus more on picking themselves up and learning from the experience instead of their lack of “success.”

For adults, it’s sometimes easy to forget how hard it is to be a young person, filled with anxiety, pressure and so many unknowns. Keep this in mind as your children experience each day at school. Sometimes, just reminding them how much you love them is all they want or need to hear, even if they never show it.

Finally, celebrate each new day, week and school year with the enthusiasm of a child. Children’s uncertainty can cause stress, but more importantly, their innocence can create excitement and be contagious.

This picture embodies that youthful joy and energy. These three students were just having a good time at

lunch, and we were lucky enough to catch it in a picture.

So, when in doubt as to what to do as a parent, celebrate an accomplishment and appreciate who they are today. It matters less if the achievement is big or small, but instead, your appreciation reminds the student that you care and are always there for them.



Palos Verdes *Intermediate School*

2161 Via Olivera, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-1983 • 310/544-4816



Frank Califano
Principal

Making Connections

The longer I am in this profession, the more I realize how important it is to connect with students and adults. You never know how and where you will run into them in the future.

Two years ago, a young lady named Brittany Scimeca reached out to me. She was looking for a teaching job. She had just graduated and earned her credential in math. I invited her to come and meet with me, as I knew that one of my teachers was considering retirement. We had a very pleasant conversation, and then she revealed that she was dating a young man by the name of David Rozas, who happened to be one of my students when I served as the assistant principal of Miraleste Intermediate School. I have fond memories of David and the entire Rozas family. This young lady is now Brittany Rozas and a brand-new math teacher at Palos Verdes Intermediate School (PVIS).

My second job was teaching chemistry and coaching basketball at West Torrance High School. A year ago, a



Brittany Scimeca



Danny Barbara

young man named Danny Barbara came to interview me, as he was finishing his administrative credential and needed some information for one of his classes. As we spoke, he informed me that he was a student at West during the time I was there. As we continued the conversation, I learned that he was good friends with a couple of my star players. Once I began searching my memories, I clearly remembered him as a student. He is now the assistant principal of PVIS.

Making connections—it’s the best part of my job!

Montemalaga *Elementary School*

1121 Via Nogales, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-1671 • 310/378-5228



Jody Pastell
Principal

With Sincere Gratitude

A very special educator is caring, makes connections, and develops motivated and confident students who strive to do their personal best. Mr. Sestich was that very special fifth-grade teacher. During the 1960s and 1970s, after-school activities included riding your bike or skateboard at the neighborhood school. Mr. Sestich offered more student opportunities and provided tumbling coaching to children who wanted to learn gymnastic skills. So many stunts were learned during those sessions that a “talent” show was organized to perform before the entire elementary school. He listened to me and my friends and told us about the importance of hard work and improving as people—one small step at a time. Confidence and perseverance replaced feelings of inability. John Sestich was a great mentor! Our skills improved, and we strived to do our best under his tutelage.

My weekly group of friends who practiced gymnastics skills became smaller as the seasons changed. Tumbling practice occurred less often, but we were always made to feel like school leaders. We led school projects to help the community and plan school activities. We were strong, caring, and very confident working with Mr. Sestich, who taught young leaders the importance of working together to make a difference.

A few years ago, I spoke with Mr. Sestich’s widow. I shared that I had learned so many outstanding things from her late husband. She listened to me with tears in her eyes. I told her that kindness and the value of the strong character traits instilled in me are still being taught today.

I love to share the stories and educational memories that Mr. Sestich provided. Annually, before the start of our short tumbling demonstrations, I am honored to explain how this one outstanding teacher personally influenced me to keep his legacy alive.

Point Vicente *Elementary School*

30540 Rue de la Pierre, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-5364 • 310/377-6972



Beth Hadley
Principal

Teamwork

A few years ago, Point Vicente was assigned a late addition to its staffing. With just a weekend to prepare before the first day of school, we had to help a teacher move her classroom across campus, and then help set up a new classroom for another teacher who had just been hired for the PVPUSD. Keep in mind that most teachers at Point Vicente had already put the final touches on their classrooms. The books and supplies were neatly stacked on desks, cheerful bulletin boards were posted, and a great deal of hard work had been dedicated to classroom preparation and organization. And now, at the last minute, more changes had to be made.

So husbands and children were drafted into service that weekend, and almost all of our teachers showed up to help pitch in. One group disassembled the fourth-grade classroom and set it up in its new location, cleaning out closets and staging the new room for the start of school.

Another group of staff volunteers dug into their own supplies to help the new teacher prepare her classroom. Thanks to all of the hard work, everything was ready for the big day!

I was so proud of our staff team. I can tell you that the same esprit de corps is consistently evident at our school. Point Vicente is not just a great place for students to learn, it is also a great place to work. Teachers and support staff build solid relationships based upon respect, appreciation, and collegiality. We challenge each other, support each other, and enjoy each other.

I know that our mutual respect, admiration, and affection are felt by the students and parents, and that our school climate reflects this positive approach.

We commit to maintaining this approach for you and your children. These words of Mr. Fred Rogers sum it up well: “Mutual caring relationships require kindness and patience, tolerance, optimism, joy in the other’s achievements, confidence in oneself, and the ability to give without undue thought of gain.” Point Vicente reflects this every day!

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Charles Park, Ed.D.
Principal

Laughter and Family

Palos Verdes High School (PVHS) is a vibrant campus full of life and endless opportunity. Over the summer, I was given an important reminder about the value of laughter and family in maintaining the spirit of our amazing high school.

In my 19 years working in schools, I have been to many first-day faculty meetings.

And every one has included serious

discussions about educational initiatives and school-wide policies. This year, I decided to shift our first-day agenda and focus more on encouraging the emotion within my staff so they can be fully engaged in what it means to impact the lives of students.

I turned to comedian Mark Schumacher. His bit was all about the work of being an educator from the humorous perspective of a former teacher. I knew this was a gamble, shaking up what is the tradition of the first day back at school. But the minute Mark opened with his one-liners, I knew the gamble was about to pay off.

The PVHS multi-purpose room was transformed from our standard faculty meeting to a meaningful yet hilarious comedy routine. There was laughter everywhere—and

even some tears. Teachers told me that it was the best meeting they have had as educators.

It's important to laugh with our students, colleagues, and families, and this first meeting reminded everyone of its importance. We need to make sure that there is always some time to laugh in between the serious business of learning.

How does any organization become better? How do leaders affect change? I've read many leadership books over the summer, and I've recently found one I really like: *The Ideal Team Player* by Patrick M. Lencioni. Through this reading, I discovered the value of emphasizing the importance of a family-like environment with my leadership team.

So I posed the question, "What can we do to build a stronger bond with each other?" We all realized how human we are and how much we love our school. This common ground helps our team feel more united in our work and as we face the many challenges that comes our way.

This change has been seen by our students already. A family-like environment starts from the top. While it took time, we created an environment where our students and staff feel like a family. Let's get to know each other and spend time together working hard for what we love...Palos Verdes High School.

Palos Verdes Peninsula *High School*

27118 Silver Spur Rd., Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-2300 • 310/377-4888



Mitzi Cress
Principal

Restoring the Roar

Last October, the Palos Verdes Peninsula High School Panthers' roar became a whimper with the premature end to our football season. But fast forward 11 months, and here we are with a brand-new coach and staff, more players than we have had in years, and an energy and excitement that is palpable on our campus.

So how is it that Peninsula High School managed to "restore the roar?" It begins with David Young, a teacher who now patrols the sidelines as our head coach. David never saw himself as a teacher, but perhaps others saw strengths he did not; in eighth grade at Holy Trinity School in San Pedro, he was voted the most likely to become a teacher and coach.

David's journey as an educator in our district began in 2001, when he was hired by Rancho Vista Elementary School to teach physical education. In 2005, he joined the Palos Verdes High School coaching staff. It was then that the potential others saw in him began to emerge. He

grew into his roles as teacher and coach, and he is quick to recognize the influence Guy Gardner, PV High's current head coach, has had on his career path.

Because David flourished as an assistant coach in a highly successful program, it was easy to imagine that he would one day assume a head coaching role and put a stamp on his own program. A South Bay native, David remembers the history of outstanding players and coaches who were once a part of the Peninsula High football program, and he welcomes those valued stakeholders to join him as he rebuilds that legacy.

Since David joined Peninsula High in January 2016, our program has tripled in size. Panther Pride is in full bloom for our students, staff, and community. In David's words, "It is not about the wins and losses but rather the camaraderie that football brings to the development of character in these fine, young men."

When you talk to David, it's easy to understand why so many of our students are responding to his leadership as a teacher and coach on our campus. He is humble about his accomplishments, generous with his time, and eager to make a difference in the classroom and on the playing field.

Rancho del Mar *High School*

38 Crest Road West, Rolling Hills, CA 90274-5058 • 310/377-6691



Rosemary Humphrey
Principal

Finishing Well

By Gabby Grant, Student

When I first came to Rancho del Mar High School (RDM), I was anxious because I was a former victim of bullying. Many things were hard because of my anxiety attacks. As I got comfortable at Rancho, I began to calm down. This was due to the support given by the teachers and staff. This support gave me the push I needed to not just finish well, but confidently. The confidence I gained here

has allowed me to achieve many things I never thought I could have, such as becoming the Associated Student Body (ASB) vice president, a Palos Verdes Women's Club and Project EGO grant recipient, and a participant in Leadership Day.

None of this would have been possible if it weren't for Mrs. Humphrey, the teachers, and the educational curriculum at Rancho. The curriculum is designed to empower and help students understand their course of study so that they can successfully graduate and move on to post-secondary education. I probably wouldn't have pushed myself as hard as the teachers and counselor pushed me. That propelled me to work harder and do

more, encouraging me with awards, kudos and praise. That formula motivated me and many of my classmates to achieve successful results.

I will soon graduate from Rancho, attend Harbor Community College, and transfer next fall to Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) to major in visual communications. Throughout my 12 years in school, I've realized that you need three things to do well in life: a goal, the will to work, and a league of supportive, genuine people who are dedicated to your future well-being. That was exactly what I got at Rancho del Mar!



ASB colleagues Savannah Moneu, Jessica White, and Gabby Grant welcoming the WASC Visiting Committee.

Rancho Vista *Elementary School*

4323 Palos Verdes Drive North, Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-1576 • 310/378-8388



Salvatrice Kuykendall
Principal

Meeting Individual Needs

Rancho Vista's model Learning Center supports all students in the areas of reading and mathematics, from kindergarten to the fifth grade.

The Learning Center is staffed with two resource specialist teachers and two para-educators. This allows for four small-group instruction centers at a time. Each center is individually designed to target specific areas of need. The weekly progress monitoring

allows teachers to examine whether the intervention is proving effective, or if changes need to be made to the student's specific program. The scores, along with teacher input, allow students an opportunity to move throughout the leveled groups.

In reading, students receive instruction from their general teacher, and then rotate into small, level-specific reading groups in general classes and in the Learning

Center. Classroom teachers then provide students with level-appropriate reading instruction.

The average student who enters the Learning Center shows a significant increase in reading scores. A great example is our third-grade class, which showed a reading fluency increase of 50 words per minute!

In mathematics, struggling students receive additional individually designed instruction. The Learning Center provides these students with additional core mathematics practice, along with a reinforcement of the concepts taught in their general classes.

Along with curriculum support, the Learning Center also provides designated instructional support to meet various student needs.

The occupational therapist works with the Learning Center to incorporate intervention programs and curriculum into the students' occupational goals.

The Rancho Vista Learning Center offers an optimal program, one that provides all students with the tools and support they need to achieve their potential.



Chelsea Morgan and Stacie Salvador

Ridgecrest *Intermediate School*

28915 Northbay Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-4902 • 310/544-2747



Kelli Keller
Principal

Comprehensive in Every Sense!

Ridgecrest Intermediate School opened its first-ever special day class this year, serving students with moderate to severe disabilities. The addition of this program completes the continuum of services made available to all students within the school's attendance boundaries and finally designates the school as a comprehensive middle school.

This program's addition is also aligned to the work the RIS staff has been committed to over the last 14 months with Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) implementation.

The teacher, Ms. Arakaki, specializes in differentiating core curriculum and embedding necessary behavioral supports so that all students can be successful regardless of ability. Ms. Arakaki is passionate about serving students with special needs and coordinates with the specialist and support staff to deliver her unique instructional program. RIS is lucky to have such a conscientious and kind educator!

In the first week of opening MTSS at RIS, the program hosted whole-group speech and psychological services, a new parent orientation—some parents stayed all morning!—and schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) introduction. It didn't take long for our new students to find "lunch buddies" with typical peers, initiating RIS to campaign as a formal Friendship Circle chapter. We are excited to bring this program to our school!



A Classroom Specialist Session

Silver Spur *Elementary School*

5500 Ironwood St., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-1739 • 310/378-5011



Marta Jevenois-Richardson
Principal

Because of Brooke

The loss of and grief for a loved one can happen to any of us at any time. According to the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement, most children will experience grief through the loss of a friend or a family member by the time they graduate from high school, and approximately 5 percent will lose a parent by age 16.

Childhood loss is tragic and remarkably common. However, it is often underplayed.

As adults, it is our job and duty to support and guide our children through grief so that they don't feel alone in their journey. No child should be allowed to deal with loss, separation and grief alone.

Last year, Silver Spur students, teachers and families were faced with the loss of a former student and a teacher, and were forever changed. Brooke Randle was a sixth-grader at PVIS when her life was tragically cut short by a brain aneurysm. She was a sweet and kind young lady. While I never had the pleasure of meeting Brooke and being her principal, her brother is still a student at our school. Through knowing her family and hearing the stories told by teachers, parents and friends, I feel like I know her. Brooke is in Silver Spur. Brooke is around us. She will forever inspire us to slow down, enjoy life's precious moments, keep on learning, be positive, and be kind to one another.

The Randle family was an integral part of planning for Yellow Ribbon Week this year. With them, we created what will become a Silver Spur tradition. Spearheaded by Sandi Randle, Brooke's mom, volunteers created a Kindness Tree in our multipurpose room. Every school year, our students will write words of kindness and friendship on the tree's leaves. By remembering Brooke and her inspiration, we can also remember to make a difference in our world and spread kindness, patience and mindfulness. By remembering all that was good about Brooke and keeping her spirit alive, we ensure that no child will ever grieve alone.

We as a school community will continue Brooke's legacy and support our children and community, now and always.



Soleado *Elementary School*

27800 Longhill Dr., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-3909 • 310/377-6854



Gina Stutzel
Principal

Journeys

A rite of passage is an inevitable part of life, a celebration of when an individual will transition in order to prepare for new roles and growth.

I remember mine clearly. I was a young athlete going away to my first weekend

tournament without my family in tow. The fear, excitement, and exhilaration of this opportunity are part of an important experience which can be so impressionable to a young life.

Our Soleado fifth-graders get to experience their rite of passage by attending Outdoor Science School each year for a week. This program offers students a chance to learn in the splendor and majesty of the outdoors. It also offers time away from family, familiar surroundings, and Mom's famous macaroni and cheese!

Each year, I am impressed with the emotional commitment and fortitude that our students and parents show as they prepare for their journey to Science School. As principal, my job is to not only prepare for the details of the trip, but also to support our parents with plenty of hugs, and the reassurance that their child is embarking on a journey of growth and independence.



One of the most precious cargoes I have ever been in charge of are the letters from loving families that I hand-deliver to the students mid-week. My visit to Science School provides evidence of students having the times of their lives, while also learning and thriving on their own. There is nothing better than watching a child go through an awakening to discover their spirit of independence for the first time.

Outdoor Science School is a well-earned rite of passage in the lives of our fifth-grade students, and I think it might just be for the parents as well.

Vista Grande *Elementary School*

7032 Purpleridge Dr., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-3059 • 310/377-6066



Jeri Delatorre
Principal

Everyone Grows

A Vista Grande teacher was approached by a parent regarding her child's progress in writing. "Tim (not his real name) has great ideas," Tim's mother said, "but he gets so discouraged by all the marks on his paper to correct spelling and grammar errors."

In defense of her expertise and experience, the fifth-grade teacher responded with an explanation of grade-level standards and expectations for sixth-grade writing. The mother respectfully persisted, "Shouldn't the focus of writing be on the communication of ideas? Shouldn't content be considered more important than mechanics?"

That gave the teacher pause. So, she agreed to devise a writing rubric to honor content over mechanics. Tim was given multiple opportunities to share his work with his classmates. As a result, he wrote compelling and insightful essays revealing a depth of understanding far beyond

his peers—and years! Tim found his writer's voice. He transformed from a reluctant writer who wrote the bare minimum to fulfilling assignments as a productive and passionate author.

Lessons learned? Even experienced teachers have room to grow. Acknowledging student strengths and capitalizing on them allows children to grow. Respectful discussions between parents and teachers usually result in positive outcomes.

Today, Tim is a high school sophomore enrolled in honors classes, with an interest in biomedicine. It was a chance meeting with Tim's mother at a coffeehouse that allowed this teacher to catch up with her former student and to hear what a positive impact she had on his life.

Education is truly about relationships. As this school year begins, take the time to connect with your child's teacher. Share your hopes as well as your concerns. You are an essential partner in your child's education!

BETTOLINO

KITCHEN

Halloween Crossword Puzzle



Down

- The thing you carve a face into on Halloween
- What you say when you walk door to door for candy
- What you wear on Halloween
- What you eat on Halloween
- Halloween's month
- She rides a broom
- An animal that says meow



Answer Key

Across

- bettolinokitchen
- boo
- bat

Down

- pumpkin
- trickortreat
- costume
- candy
- october
- witch
- cat

Eat Bettolino...

Because nutritious meals

= better grades.



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Balance amount	Bonus	Balance amount	Bonus
\$10,000 - \$20,000	\$100	\$40,001 - \$50,000	\$400
\$20,001 - \$30,000	\$200	\$50,001 +	\$500
\$30,001 - \$40,000	\$300		



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