

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Saddleback Valley Unified School District



Volume 4, Issue 13

February / March 2021

La Paz Intermediate School Honored with the CSBA Golden Bell Award



**Suzie R. Swartz (President, SVUSD Board of Education),
Jean Walker (Principal, La Paz Intermediate School),
and Dr. Crystal Turner (Superintendent, SVUSD)**



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**Dr. Crystal
Turner**

Happy New Year!

As we enter 2021, and the halfway point of the 2020-2021 school year, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had an opportunity to relax and unwind over winter break, and that our students are ready to tackle the second half of the school year. While this school year has looked quite different due to

COVID-19 restrictions, there is still plenty to be proud of within SVUSD as our staff and students find innovative approaches to teaching and learning that ensure the continued success of our students, whether they are participating in the Hybrid or Full Distance mode of learning.

One of the greatest highlights of this school year has been the awarding of the prestigious Golden Bell award to La Paz Intermediate and SVUSD in December. The award is given by the California School Boards Association (CSBA), and it "...promotes excellence in education by recognizing outstanding programs throughout California and reflects the depth and breadth of education programs and governance decisions supporting these programs that are necessary to address students' changing needs." La Paz earned the award for the great work staff is doing with their First 20 Days – Supporting Student Success program. La Paz implemented this program that strategically and systematically teaches and monitors social-emotional and academic literacy skills across all content areas. By establishing foundational learning skills in a matter of weeks, not months or years, all students achieve academic success, with significant subgroups experiencing exponential growth. In addition, students transfer these skills and reach their full potential as contributing and

compassionate global citizens. The entire La Paz staff is to be commended for their commitment to meeting the social-emotional and academic literacy needs of all students.

Whether students are attending campus in the Hybrid model, or participating in Full Distance Learning, our staff and administrators have made it a priority to keep all students engaged in school culture by providing innovative opportunities for connections with school, outside of academics. This includes schools hosting activities like virtual pep rallies and pep assemblies at the high school level, running philanthropy projects like food and toy drives across all grade levels, and running virtual events like pajama day, movie night, family game night, etc. at the elementary and intermediate level. These activities ensure our students and families maintain a connection to school, peers, teachers, and staff, all while having fun in a safe, online environment. Many of these events are also made possible due to the generosity, hard work and partnership with PTAs & PTSOs and I look forward to seeing many more of these innovative ideas during the rest of the school year as well.

This time of year also brings School Showcases and virtual tours. These events provide an excellent opportunity for current and prospective students and families to learn more about the academic and extracurricular activities our schools have to offer. I'd encourage you to visit the school websites of schools you and your student may be interested in for additional information.

As we transition from winter to spring, I'm hopeful that we will be able to see the beginnings of a return to normalcy, and that you and your family are healthy as we continue to traverse the challenges of the pandemic together. Again, Happy New Year and we wish you a wonderful 2021!

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Saddleback Valley Unified School District
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Educational Services

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Liza Zielasko
Assistant
Superintendent

Intervention

SV Reads was implemented during the 2019-20 school year at the elementary level in order to address foundational reading skills based on results of a universal screener that was administered to all elementary students. During the implementation phase, all first and second-grade teachers participated in site-based release days focused on foundational skills as part of the SV Reads initiative.

This year, SV Reads has expanded to all elementary grade levels through participation in after school opportunities to engage in meaningful data driven discussions. As a result of the current Distance Learning and Hybrid environments, the i-Ready Diagnostic system was implemented in order to replace the majority of the one-on-one assessments. Additional part-time intervention teachers have also been hired to provide targeted small group instruction for students who qualify for this intervention time.

Plans have also been finalized at the secondary level to provide extended learning time and targeted intervention for students in need. Extending the school day in order to provide intervention and/or more in-person classroom time is being implemented. The goal at all levels Kindergarten through 12th grade continues to be that additional support and intervention is essential for students who are struggling, especially in light of the unique learning environment that has become our reality during this pandemic.



Operations

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Robert Craven
Assistant
Superintendent

Winter Break Food Service

Over the Thanksgiving and Winter breaks, the SVUSD Food Services Department was excited to provide meal service for families throughout the District. Members of the department came together to volunteer their time in preparing and serving the meals. During the Thanksgiving Break, Food Services provided 5 days' worth of meals (breakfast and lunch) to families via drive-thru service. The service provided a total of 5,920 meals.

With the popularity of the Thanksgiving food service, the winter service was expanded to serve from 3 sites. A steady stream of 1068 families were able to receive meals, with a total of 12,816 meals served.

Human Resources/Fiscal Services

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Connie Cavanaugh
Assistant
Superintendent

COVID-19 Stimulus Funding

In late December 2020, the President signed a new national COVID-19 relief package to provide widespread economic aid, including more financial support for schools. The new stimulus package provides approximately \$82 billion for education – with California expected to receive approximately \$6.8 billion. Of the \$82 billion provided for education, \$54.3 billion will be allocated to K-12 schools, largely delivered

through the Title I funding formula method determined by a district's poverty rate, enrollment and other factors.

Funds may be used for the following activities (note: this is not an exhaustive list):

- The coordination of preparedness and response efforts with public health departments, and other relevant agencies;
- Activities to address needs of low-income children, Children with disabilities, English learners, minorities, homeless, and foster care youth;
- Training and professional development for staff on sanitation and minimizing spread of infectious diseases;
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities;
- Purchasing educational technology (i.e. hardware, software and connectivity, assistive technology or adaptive equipment);
- Providing mental health services and supports;
- School facility repairs and improvements to reduce risk of virus transmission; and
- Learning loss mitigation.

English Learners

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Dr. Rowena Mak
Coordinator

Series of Workshops

During the 2020-2021 school year, content-area teachers and academic support staff from five of our secondary schools will participate in West Ed's QTEL e-Series: A Pedagogy of Promise. This four-part series of workshops engages participants in synchronous and asynchronous learning with the goal of developing expertise in working with English Learners (EL). The four modules address the

following topics as they relate to ELs: Pedagogy of Promise, Pedagogical Scaffolding, Three-Part Lesson Architecture, and Principles of Distance Learning. Participants work independently and in collaborative groups with secondary teachers and staff from districts across the country to design academically rich and rigorous learning opportunities for ELs that simultaneously supply the support needed to develop academic language. Strategies to manage and encourage student engagement in online learning are modeled and reinforced throughout the workshops.

SVUSD teachers' participation in this series is part of Services for English Learners Departments' ongoing efforts to support content-area teachers in planning and delivering curriculum to EL students as they develop their content-knowledge foundations and their academic language skills.

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Happy New Year!

At times it is hard to think of this as a happy new year; however, as you read Dr. Turner's message on page 3 you realize there is much to be optimistic about.

During this pandemic the students collaborated with the community to help those less fortunate. In this issue you will read how teachers are staying connected and engaged with their students. You will read about digital literacy, keeping and creating innovative traditions, learning how to operate new technology, and so much more...

We converted all of our publications to digital and the response has been excellent. Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. Our motto is Education+Communication= A Better Nation. Communication has never been more important.

I appreciate your notes when you email your answers to our contests. Be sure to enter the Contest below.

Our next issue is April 14.

Be well.

School News

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Contest

This character is in this issue. When you find it, email the page number to: kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com Please put SVUSD in the subject line.

Entries must be received by March 30, 2021. From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.



**Contest sponsored by Barkate Orthodontics
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Congratulations to the last contest winners:

Serena Lee and Karen Lally

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Dr. Frances Hansell
Principal

Digital Literacy

Sixth grade teachers Julia Ibrahim, Pauline Kim and Carly Sullivan provided students with a Benchmark Writing emphasis on research. Students were tasked with researching an endangered animal. Students compiled information, as

well as how humans impact nature. Next, students created a slide-deck and presented findings to the class. Then, teachers extended their learning through a Project-Based Learning (PBL) assignment where students created a storybook for younger students. Stories highlighted how humans are impacting the animals' ecosystems and possible solutions. To foster school community, and give students skills in

digital literacy and leadership, stories were shared via Zoom. Students recorded themselves reading their stories, so that a digital library can be created. We appreciate teachers providing student voice and choice!



Cordillera *Elementary*

25952 Cordillera Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-3400 • svusd.org/cordillera



Jennifer Kajdasz
Principal

Cougars Show Their Giving Spirit (and receive some too)!

This holiday season, Cordillera partnered with Families Forward to bring joy to families by helping to provide the necessary food to fill up rumbling tummies. We asked our community to help fill several empty barrels

and not only did we meet our goal, but we exceeded it by far. I am so proud of how our students, staff, and families were able to make this season brighter for others. Not only did we give, but we were also on the receiving end as we partnered with Grace Community Church in Lake Forest who provided toys, clothes, food, and even hand-knitted stockings for more than 30 of our own families who needed assistance to make this holiday one to remember. When we all work together, great things can be accomplished!



De Portola *Elementary*

27031 Preciados Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-5830 • svusd.org/deportola



Brendon Morrow
Principal

Kindness Rocks!

De Portola students recently participated in World Kindness Day. As part of our shared vision to be a kind and safe place for all, our group of Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) students and teacher coordinators put together a day full of activities promoting kindness throughout our school. From painting kind messages on rocks for our garden, to virtual reading of books, to videos promoting random acts of kindness, our community of learners became a much kinder place.

Kindness will always continue to be an emphasis at our school. Not only have we come to expect our students to exhibit this, we ask all of our staff, parents, and community to participate and show a good example as well. Join us in helping to make our school a place where great things continue to happen and spread!



Del Cerro *Elementary*

24382 Regina St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-5430 • svusd.org/delcerro



Kristin Thomsen
Principal

Keeping Innovative Traditions Alive

Balloons and creativity were flying high over Del Cerro in honor of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Mrs. Fischbach's and Mrs. Megow's fifth/sixth grade students were the masters of the ceremony, announcing their balloons as they paraded school and virtual hallways. Classmates as spectators saw relevant additions to the parade including the Grinch, Mario, Luigi, a Tardigrade, The Child, Totoro, and several Crewmates and an Imposter were among them too...

The school parade was the culminating project from students researching the historical significance of this parade. Students viewed primary sources and studied the innovation needed to improve the balloon materials and structures through the years.

Sixth grade student Mia was excited to blend academics with her creative side. "It's so exciting when we get to create such fun art projects as we learn about history," she stated. Students are already looking forward to creating balloons for next year's parade!



Del Lago *Elementary*

27181 Entidad, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/855-1125 • svusd.org/dellago



Jonathan Kaplan
Principal

The Gift of Giving

After the Del Lago community gave 693 pounds of food donations to a local food bank at the beginning of December, we continued in the spirit of kindness when we were given the opportunity to be a part of the “Shop with

a Cop” program through the Mission Viejo Police Services. Working with our School Resource Officer (SRO), Deputy Carrasco, our teachers narrowed down a list of students to be chosen from a lottery. Three lucky students joined our fabulous sheriffs at a local Target store to shop for their families and themselves. Our three students enjoyed the gift of gratitude by selecting items to enjoy unwrapping over the holidays. An amazing experience for all! HUGE thank you to the Mission Viejo Police Services and our fabulous SRO’s!



El Toro *High School*

25255 Toledo Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-6333 • svusd.org/eths



Terri Gusiff
Principal

Holiday Spirit

The Officers of the El Toro High School AVID Program hosted a school wide toy drive to lift up holiday spirit in these times of need. The students

partnered with the Spark of Love Program to provide 100 non-profit organizations throughout Orange County with toys to distribute to children in need. The AVID Program (Advancement via Individual Determination) is a college-readiness academic elective to prepare high school students for college and careers. Thank you to the entire Charger community for making this special event possible through your generous donations.



Emily Bautista, Isaac Flores, Charles Mendoza, Advisor: Christine Francis, ETHS AVID Coordinator, Elliot Cavanaugh, Angel Bonilla
AVID Program Officers Not Pictured

Danielle Citino, Linette Gonzalez, Giovanni Beltran, Angelica Gonzalez, Matthew Biedebach, Robert Garcia, Noemi Miranda Perez, Elijah Romero, Luis Miranda, Faith Yanez, Samantha Pool

Esperanza *Special Education*

25121 Pradera Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-5470 • svusd.org/esperanza



Raymund Bueche
Principal

A Salute to Staff

The Adult Transition Program (ATP) staff never ceases to amaze me with the creativity and ingenuity in creating meaningful lessons for the adult transition student. This month I would like to highlight our excellent teaching staff: Michael Seyler, Mary Margheim, Karen Jones, Stacy Eldred, Eric Bunyan, Mel Coe, Maura Miles, and Michelle Rodriguez. ATP curriculum is centered around community engagement and interaction. With students being site-based, the staff was tasked with developing lessons replicating these experiences as best they could.

The team has done a fantastic job reaching out to the community bringing engaging lessons such as information interviews, virtual job shadows, safety, and vocational skills. One area core to the ATP is vocational development. This includes participation in on and off-site unpaid work-based learning. To replicate this on-campus, we continued the micro-enterprises momentum that was started last year. In addition to Hope Blooms, our student-run floral business, we have begun The Perfect Shine, an on-campus car wash, and Jones Bones, homemade doggie treats business. The energy placed in on-campus job development allows our students to continue working on financial literacy, personal appearance, self-determination, and productivity.

Foothill Ranch *Elementary*

1 Torino Dr., Foothill Ranch, CA 92610 • 949/470-4885 • svusd.org/foothillranch

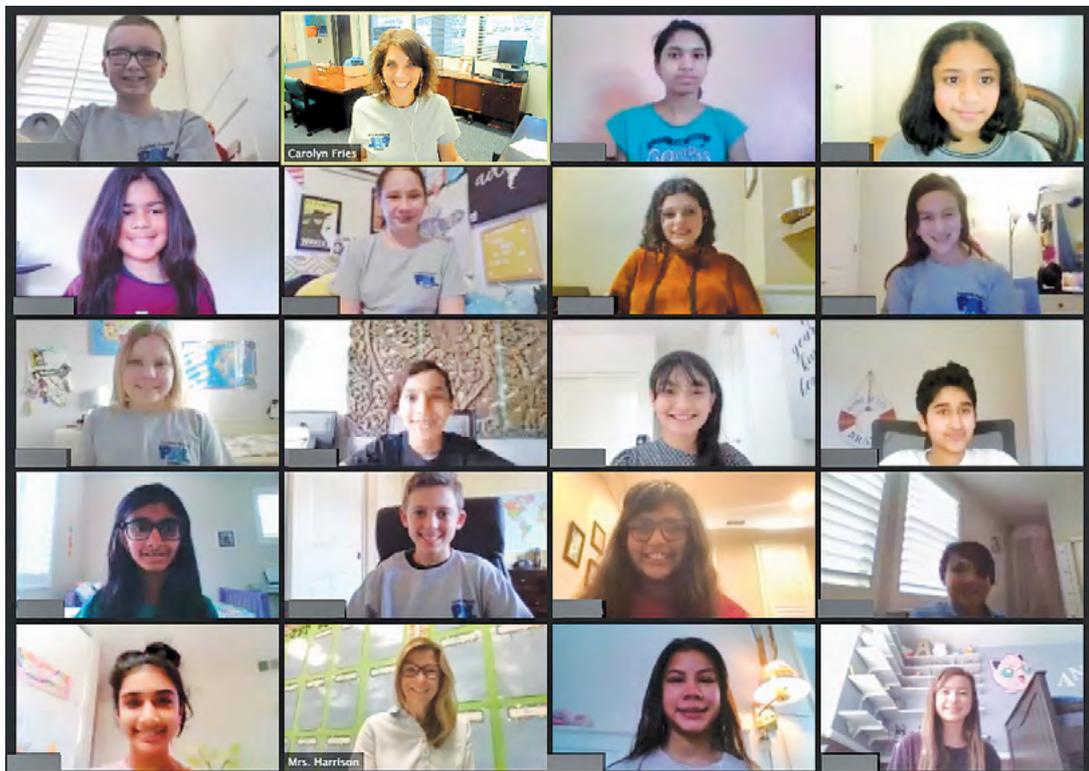


Deborah Shaver
Principal

Student Leadership

Foothill Ranch has been focusing on bringing our Online and Hybrid students together in community through student leadership. Recently, our online and hybrid students engaged in community through Student Council elections and PAL recruitment. For Student Council elections, students were responsible for creating digital election posters and campaign

videos. Candidates used digital platforms to campaign and receive votes. For PAL, current PAL Leaders created a video that was shown to 5th and 6th graders to help them understand the role of a PAL leader. Through digital platforms, students applied, received peer and teacher recommendations and even had to participate in a Zoom interview. These two student leadership groups will be focusing their attention on Random Acts of Kindness Week in February and use their leadership skills to continue to bring our Online and Hybrid communities together in the name of kindness.



Gates *Elementary*

23882 Landisview Ave., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/837-2260 • svusd.org/gates



Diane Clearwater
Principal

A True Inspiration

Gates' very own Alondra Diaz, a 3rd grade dual language immersion teacher, was recognized as the 2020 National Hispanic Business Woman of the Year in the Community Service, Education, and Non-Profit category. On

any given day when you walk into her room, you will find thought provoking conversations in English and Spanish, activities that encourage students to



Alondra Diaz 3rd grade DLI Teacher
2020 NHBWA Woman of the Year

challenge themselves, or 5 minute yoga sessions! In addition to being a full-time mentor to her students, student teachers, and her colleagues, she also manages a small health and fitness business in the Santa Ana community in which she grew up. Having overcome many obstacles in her own life, she reminds everyone she meets to persevere and to be grateful for all of their blessings. Alondra is a true inspiration.

Glen Yermo *Elementary*

26400 Trabuco Rd., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-6766 • svusd.org/glenyermo



Jennifer Televik
Principal

Staying Connected

While the 2020-2021 school year has presented challenges for all of our students and families, Glen Yermo has continued to help our students stay connected with school, the community, and

each other. This fall, several of our students were selected as winners in the City of Mission Viejo's Red Ribbon Week art contest. Through our partnership with the OC GRIP program and Ford Motor Company, a group of our students met virtually this fall for a mentorship series aimed at fostering strong academics, attendance, and attitude. Our School Counselor and Principal also had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with students last month during a Hot Cocoa and Fuzzy Socks virtual event, aimed at bringing students together for games, conversation, and a fuzzy sock contest. We are so appreciative of our school community and look forward to continuing to connect with our amazing students!



Principal Televik and School Resource Officers present an award for the City of Mission Viejo's Red Ribbon Week art contest.

La Madera *Elementary*

25350 Serrano Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/770-1415 • svusd.org/lamadera



Jennifer Gass
Principal

Koalas Making a Difference

At La Madera, our students seek opportunities to improve our school community. Recently, our 6th grade Koala, Kaj Linehan entered the OC Health Mask Contest. Students had the option to design artwork, write an essay, or produce a video. Kaj submitted an original essay to spread the word about mask safety. Over 600 students in grades K-12 throughout Orange County submitted entries. Kaj was awarded 3rd place in the elementary essay category. In addition to being recognized for his work, Kaj also earned a \$5000 technology grant for our school. These funds will be used for technology supplies to support learning for all of our students. We are beyond proud of Kaj and his contribution to our school.



La Paz *Intermediate*

25151 Pradera Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-1720 • svusd.org/lapaz



Jean Walker
Principal

Awards Earned

La Paz Intermediate Receives the CSBA Golden Bell Award and the OCDE Community Cares Award

In a year characterized by social distancing and limited student activities, La Paz teachers, staff and students have

been recognized for their consistent attention to personal

connections and student support systems. In November, the California School Board Association awarded La Paz the Golden Bell Award and the Orange County Department of Education recognized La Paz as a Community Cares school, CSBA highlighted La Paz' school-wide academic support program, The First 20 Days, and the OCDE gave accolades to the Public Service Announcement videos created by the Video Production class. Both programs were instrumental

in helping students successfully navigate the COVID academic world, and helped them stay connected to their classmates. As SVUSD School Board President, Dr. Ed Wong states, "The passion that La Paz teachers and staff show towards making every student feel important and seen has made La Paz one of the most successful intermediate schools around."



Laguna Hills *High School*

25401 Paseo de Valencia, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/770-5447 • svusd.org/lhhs



Bill Hinds
Principal

Show Goes On!

Involving approximately 30 students in cast and crew, LHHS Theatre created a virtual performance of the play CLUE which ran Dec 10-13.

Director, Susan Lord, called it a lesson in resilience, reinvention, and resolve. "Rehearsing

and recording on Zoom was challenging," shared Mrs. Lord, "and while it wasn't the same as live performance, we were happy to succeed in mounting a show in this crazy situation."

One advantage to the online format was that friends in faraway places were able to attend. One student even had family in Brazil tune in to watch!

J.P. Van Dam, a junior who led the recording team, summed up the experience this way: "Even though it had its rough parts, I learned how to operate some new technology which I'll always have for the future."

Lord added, "We can't wait to get back into the theater but, meanwhile, we will do what we can!"



Lake Forest *Elementary*

21801 Pittsford Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/830-9945 • svusd.org/lakeforest



Audra Bailey
Principal

Celebrations in 2020

While 2020 has been a different year for everyone, Lake Forest Elementary continues to find different ways to keep our community and families involved. We hosted our first Virtual Family Fun

Night. Families of all ages participated in answering fun questions about the school, math, science, and even Mrs. Bailey. It was so much fun to see our families virtually, laughing and having a great time!

This year we have continued to honor students through virtual Student of the Month Assemblies. Students join an early Zoom meeting to hear their name called and have the students applaud their hard work. Certificates and stickers are either passed out to students, or mailed home.

A pandemic can't stop Lake Forest



Flipper says Keep Up the Great Work!

students from showing their school spirit! Students continue to dress up for different spirit days. Our distance learners send in pictures so all of our students can show their spirit. We have an amazing community and are so thankful for our families, community, students and staff who continue to persevere through it all.

La Tierra *Early Childhood Center*

24150 Lindley St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/707-5276 • svusd.org/schools/elementary-a-l/la-tierra-early-education-center



Marion Springett
Principal

Staying Connected!

The La Tierra Early Childhood Center staff have done a fantastic job of teaching our early learners safe, alternative methods for socializing during these unusual times, resultant of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring that young students continue to develop critical social-emotional skills in our new, “socially distanced” world has been no small feat. Staff had to rethink current approaches to teaching and develop social-emotional lessons designed to teach a different set of social skills – those needed for navigating life at a distance. Rather than teach students how to appropriately use touch during socialization (i.e. give a high five), staff shifted to teaching students how to use powerful words to gain attention, how to greet others by waving, or using a “thumbs up” to express happiness or excitement from across the room. I am continually impressed with the ingenuity, creativity, and teamwork of our teaching staff!



Marissa Kahle, La Tierra ECC Special Education Teacher

Linda Vista *Magnet Elementary*

25222 Pericia Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-0970 • svusd.org/lindavista



Suzy McMasters
Principal

Future - Focused Education

Linda Vista Magnet Elementary is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program World School. Our scholars in kindergarten through sixth grade engage in daily, student-centered, inquiry-based, rigorous instruction in the Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary curriculum framework with their classroom teacher. Each week all scholars participate in specialist classes for music, Spanish, the IB Inquiry Centre in the library and physical education.

“The PYP has evolved to become a world leader in future-focused education. The PYP is an example of best educational practice globally, responding to the challenges and opportunities facing young students in our rapidly changing world.” — International Baccalaureate

We'd love to tell you more about the LVM IB PYP so give us a call and visit our website for additional information.

<https://www.svusd.org/schools/elementary-a-l/linda-vista>



Lomarena *Elementary*

25100 Earhart Rd., Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/581-1370
svusd.org/lomarena



**Mona
Montgomery**
Principal

Community Spirit

Lomarena is a true community school. Our school exemplifies this through the many events the school and PTA sponsor throughout the year in order to give back to our students, families and community. Our PTA recently conducted an online family craft night where approximately 300 students constructed a winter gnome craft together. The next events that are being organized are a Family BINGO night and possibly a Valentine craft night. Lomarena teamed with local churches and businesses to have a grocery distribution and a toy drive during December. Former families and staff even sponsored students for the holidays. Once a Lomarena Lion always a Lomarena Lion. We are proud of our pride as WE ROAR to hold each other up in good times and in bad.



Los Alisos *Intermediate*

25171 Moor Ave., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-9700
svusd.org/losalisos

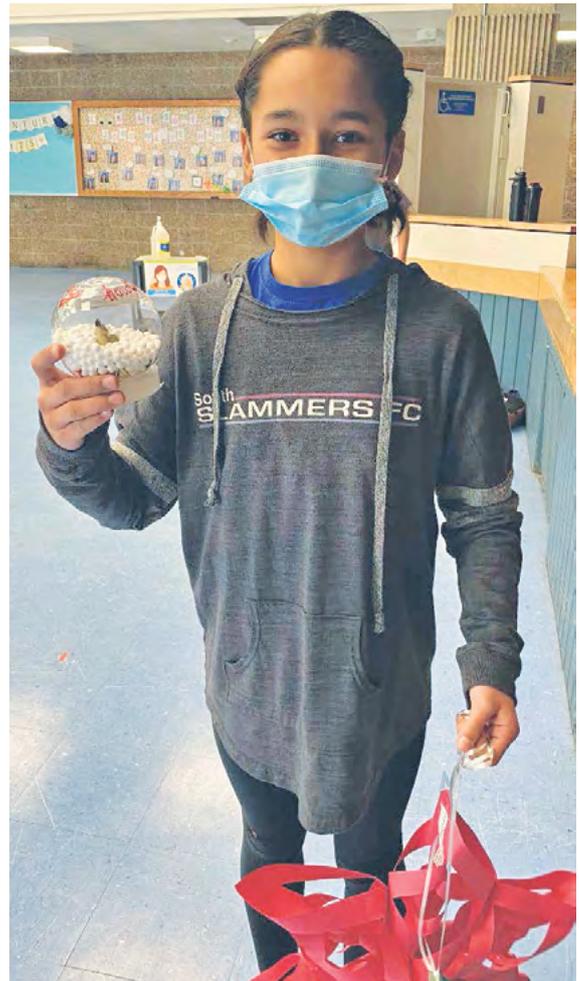


Rich Freda
Principal

21 Days of Kindness

Be the change you want to see in the world.
— Mahatma Gandhi.

In November we showed our thankfulness by hosting our 3rd annual 21 Days of Kindness campaign, hybrid-learning style. Each day we had a targeted act of kindness that could be enacted in person or virtually. Students and staff were made aware of the call to kindness through our morning announcements. Some of the acts of kindness included texting someone something positive, telling someone a cheerful joke (I got a few of these from students) and doing a chore for someone without them knowing. The campaign ended with a very touching video shown to all in-class and online students during homeroom about the Pay It Forward concept. Please search Life Vest Inside-Kindness Boomerang-One Day to see this video on YouTube and take on the 21 Days of Kindness campaign yourself!



Rylie Hoes donating homemade Christmas decorations.

Melinda Heights *Elementary*

21001 Rancho Trabuco, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/888-7311 • svusd.org/melindaheights



Kathryn Martin
Principal

"I Matter Because..."

At Melinda Heights, we could not be more proud of or grateful for our PTA. The Melinda Heights PTA is well-known for putting children first and going above and beyond to support the children and students at our school. During this challenging time of COVID rules

and restrictions, the Melinda Heights PTA has made it their mission to keep our community close and provide opportunities for our students from afar. Annually, the California PTA sponsors an arts contest called "Reflections." The Reflections program allows students to express themselves imaginatively through the arts and taps into critical thinking skills to create art inspired by the annual theme. This year's theme was "I Matter Because..." Melinda Heights participants choreographed dances, wrote stories, painted, drew, made movies, and took

photographs. The arts are incredibly important to our community, our staff, and our students at Melinda Heights. The members of our Melinda Heights community, including our amazing PTA, are like glue; they help hold us together!



Mission Viejo *High School*

25025 Chrisanta Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/837-7722 • svusd.org/mvhs



Tricia Osborne
Principal

ASB Spirit & Positivity

Mission Viejo High School is widely recognized for academics, co-curricular programs, and school culture. We are proud of the Associated Student Body (ASB) for their work in promoting a positive school culture. Campus clubs have continued activities virtually; many attended Club

Rush and student participation is strong. ASB created an incredible virtual Fall Sports Pep Assembly, which featured a hundred students in various games, sports, and cheer to keep the Diablo spirit. Dress up days for students and staff continue (even in Zoom), including Red Ribbon Week and "Pink Out" for breast cancer awareness. ASB works hard to keep students informed using their Instagram (mvhsasb), posts regularly about school activities, highlights Diablos who are exemplary, including a new tradition celebrating teachers and coaches each quarter, who go above and beyond. Go Diablos!



Montevideo *Elementary*

24071 Carrillo Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-8050 • svusd.org/montevideo



Lisa Graham
Principal

Engagement Matters

The pandemic and safety precautions have certainly presented challenges, but have not stopped Montevideo's commitment to student engagement. We encourage: confidence, choice, and relationships. Whether students are participating through Distance Learning or are on campus, we strive to support confidence through growth mindset, personal goals, and focus on individual progress and effort. We provide student choice within lessons, activities and projects. However, perhaps most important in this current time is the need for meaningful relationships... online, in person, and within our community. Recently, our student leadership/ASB provided a sweet opportunity for community connection. During the holiday season, they provided a project that enabled our students to spread holiday cheer to senior/adult homes in our neighborhood. The joy on students' faces, and in receipt of the handmade gifts, was a such blessing of relationship and engagement. A BIG thank you to our ASB and students. Once again, you made a difference!



Olivewood *Elementary*

23391 Dune Mear Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/837-6682 • svusd.org/olivewood



Alex Perez
Principal

Community Outreach

Olivewood Elementary School partnered up with several organizations during the months of October, November and December to provide support to families in need. A local church provided pumpkins and groceries. Cars lined up in front of Olivewood and wrapped around the corner. An estimated 50 families participated in this contactless event. The church provided complete Thanksgiving dinners to 3 of our families. These Olivewood families were comforted in knowing that they would have a full family dinner with all the fixings. Community outreach exploded with Christmas cheer during the month of December. The church delivered wrapped gifts to 40 families so that children and parents would have something to open on Christmas morning. An anonymous donor provided financial support to five families. A construction company provided a Christmas tree filled with hundreds of dollars in gift cards to one family. All of our Olivewood families were overjoyed with emotion and appreciation for our community.



Portola Hills *Elementary*

19422 Saddleback Ranch Rd., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679 • 949/459-9370 • svusd.org/portolahills

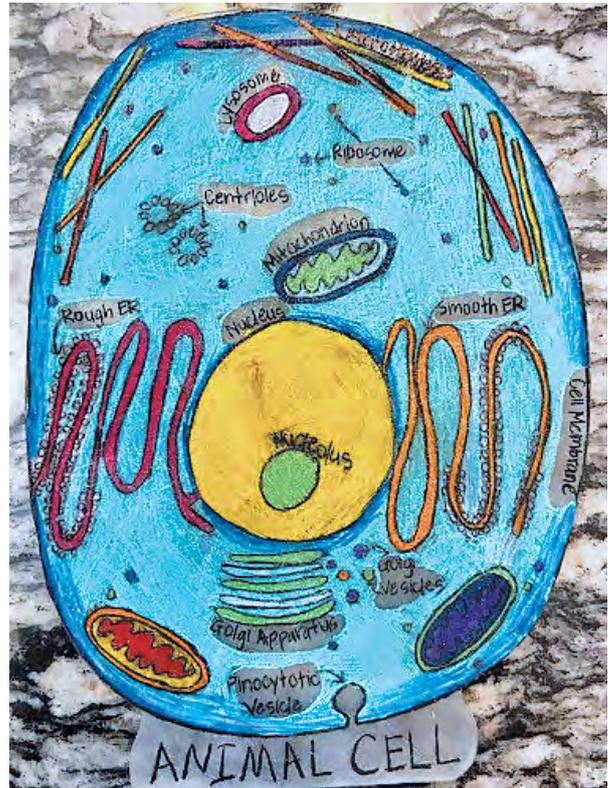


Ed MacNevin
Principal

The STEAM Program

Despite the Pandemic, we have not slowed down our supplemental STEAM Program at PHE, led by our instructor Mrs. Chan. The STEAM program has been adjusted to accommodate remote learning by utilizing live instructional Zoom meetings. All students benefit from the supplemental STEAM program that has been funded by parents through the PTA. PHE understands

the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics for our PHE Explorers. STEAM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators. One project worth spotlighting is titled: Shrinky Dinks. Shrinky dinks were used to teach inherited traits to 1st and 3rd grade. Students observed how offspring inherit their traits from their parents. Using shrinky dink plastic, students selected certain traits (eye color, turtle color, and shell pattern) from the parents, to create their own offspring. Once colored, the shrinky dink was baked and made into an offspring key chain model.



Rancho Canada *Elementary*

21801 Winding Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/786-5252 • svusd.org/ranchocanada



Dr. Larry Hausner
Principal

The Dream Team

One thing that has surfaced during the pandemic has been those who have risen to the occasion going above and beyond in the community and in our schools as well. At Rancho Canada Elementary School we have numerous people who fit this description.

One such group of employees at Rancho Canada has been the Playground Assistants. I like to refer to them as “The Dream Team” because they give so much of themselves to our school-far more than on the playground. They provide daily supervision of the ingress and egress in the parking lot and around campus to ensure the safety of our students. In addition, they have provided support by distributing computers and materials on numerous occasions. They are always willing to lend a hand and Rancho is a better place because of them.



The incredible “Dream Team” is composed of Laura Magwood, Bob Capistran, Karla Rivera, and Nicole Ohlsen.

Rancho Santa Margarita *Intermediate*

21931 Alma Aldea, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/459-8253 • www.rsmintermediate.com



Tyler Morgan
Principal

OC Middle school Winners!

The student experience at RSM is a constant focus for our team. We strive to build engagement both in and beyond the classroom. Our teachers work collaboratively to construct a rich

and rigorous educational experience focused on mastering skills and building students' character. Students gain access and exposure to content throughout all departments that set them up for success entering high school and far beyond. Our staff, parents, and community work to support our most important stakeholders, our students. Everyone who enters our campus comments on the RSM experience as warm and welcoming and of the commitment to student learning. RSM truly is a remarkable campus.



Robinson *Elementary*

21400 Lindsay Dr., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679 • 949/589-2446 • svusd.org/robinson



Megan Hannen
Principal

Keeping Traditions Alive

Robinson traditions are at the heart of being a Rattler! As we approach our 11th annual ChalkFest we are getting creative in reimagining this event in a way that allows us

to keep our tradition while celebrating the arts in a COVID safe manner. In the past we have covered the blacktop with beautiful murals created by each classroom. This year we will have each student create a square section with their own chalk on paper and we will combine each child's artwork into an assembled patchwork of artistic expression to be showcased virtually to the school community. We look forward to innovating through this challenging time and keeping our traditions alive and well!



San Joaquin *Elementary*

22182 Barbera, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/581-3450 • svusd.org/sanjoaquin



David Shun
Principal

Virtual Winter Game Night

With all the changes and challenges this school year has brought, our staff and community brought our campus together for a virtual event much like our prior in-person community nights. San Joaquin hosted our premier Virtual Winter Game Night featuring digital escape room style challenges that encouraged families to work

together to solve digital puzzles within a set amount of time in order to “break out.”

The laughter was flowing as children and adults alike visited differentiated “rooms” where challenges were tackled with delight and participants applied the 4 C’s of 21st Century Skills (Collaboration, Creativity, Communication and Critical Thinking) in a fun and immersive environment. Children were thrilled to explain their logic and reasoning as they problem solved, formed new hypothesis, and tested new theories all wrapped in a growth mindset. As our community joyfully expressed, it was a wonderful family event filled with memories and smiles.



Santiago *STEAM Magnet*

24982 Rivendell Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-2820 • svusd.org/santiago



Howard Johnston
Principal

Building STEAM!

As we welcome the 21st year in the 21st century, Santiago STEAM Magnet is stronger than ever. Whether learning from home through Distance Learning, or at school in our Hybrid Model, Santiago students are thriving. We are still fully engaged in our High-Quality Project-Based Learning while

making sure all students feel safe as we traverse through these unprecedented times. Throughout this year, students have been resilient, hard working, and creative. Without the dedication of all Santiago’s teachers and staff, this would not have been possible. If there is one thing that we have all learned over the course of this school year is humans are capable of adapting to their environment. Santiago is excited to see what the future holds for all of us as we navigate the second half of the 20-21 school year. The sky is the limit! Join us on this exciting ride.



Serrano *Intermediate*

24642 Jeronimo Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-3221
svusd.org/serrano



David Young
Principal

Seahawk Superstars!

Despite the Covid lockdowns, Serrano students continue to excel and accomplish many great things. First of all, I want to highlight and celebrate the achievement of 8th grader, Harper Blackwell, who entered the OC Health Care Agency Mask Message Contest. Harper's essay, "Wear a Mask—They're important", creatively and effectively expressed the need to wear a mask, and her essay placed 3rd in all of Orange County! Due to this, Serrano will receive a \$5,000 technology grant. Congratulations, Harper!



Harper Blackwell

In addition to this, several of our students received Distinguished Artist awards for their PTSA Reflections submissions. They are: Taylor Bowman, Dance; Hussein Hirani, Literature; Tarini Neeladaran, in both Music and Film; Kera James, a double winner in Visual Art; Lila Taylor, Visual Art; Daniel Clancy, Visual Art; Amanda Chi, Visual Art. Some of these students are moving on to the 4th district competition. Congratulations to all of our terrific students!

SVUSD *Virtual Academy K-12*

21001 Rancho Trabuco Rd., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688
949/580-3457 • svusd.org/virtualacademy



Glenn Giokaris
Principal

SVA Student-Athlete

This past November, the SVUSD Virtual Academy celebrated its first student-athlete to sign a National Letter of Intent to play college water polo at Biola! Enrolled as a fulltime student at the SVUSD Virtual Academy (SVA), Matthew Rodriquez played water polo for Mission Viejo High School, his resident school. In the pool, Matt led the Diablos to a CIF championship while earning 1st Team All-League and CIF Player of the Year accolades. As a student, Matt worked just as hard completing Advanced Placement courses and college courses at Saddleback Community College. At Biola, Matt plans to major in kinesiology. Way to go Matt. The SVUSD Virtual Academy is proud of you!



Silverado *High School*

25632 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-8800 • svusd.org/silverado



David Gordon
Principal

Smooth Transition

Silverado has had a smooth transition to Hybrid Learning with an average of 100 students on campus during hybrid days. It's great to have kids back in our classrooms.

With students returning to campus, SHS relaunched our PBIS Rewards program. Our PBIS student store is open 24/7 with a new feature that allows students to redeem

their Eagle Bills online. Orders are then filled and both Hybrid and Distance Learners can pick up their order every Thursday after school.

SHS is now offering English tutoring after school on Mondays. This specialized tutoring is for all students, but in particular our EL students.

Our newest SOARing Eagle Award goes to our community liaison, Mary Espiritu! Mary has more than earned this staff recognition. Congratulations to Mary!

Trabuco *Elementary*

31052 Trabuco Canyon Rd., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678 • 949/858-0343 • svusd.org/trabuco



Lisa Paisley
Principal

Time to Change the World

Things are always a little different down here in the canyon and we are proud of it! We cannot wait for things to get back to our normal. Our students are coming to school daily and visiting the farm to keep the animals engaged. We have six new fancy chicks that we are raising to be healthy chickens. Watching the woodpeckers is a delight right now, as there are fewer of us on campus at a time, and therefore, more of them. Our students get lots of time outdoors, and they get dirty every day. We are beginning to get back into our garden. We are also changing the world one laugh at a time this year. Our newest teacher, Mr. Mac, tells a joke a day, and students who earn HOWL coupons get to tell a joke, riddle, or sing a song over the loudspeaker for dismissal. Go Coyotes!



Trabuco Hills *High School*

27501 Mustang Run, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/768-1934 • svusd.org/thhs



Alicia Foulk
Principal

"Celebrations and Successes"

The pandemic has created a unique and challenging learning and teaching environment, and we are proud of all the adaptations and changes our staff has managed. This year, we are finding as many ways as we can to celebrate our staff and students. THHS acknowledges and recognizes staff members each month with four different awards. This year, we have continued this tradition. So far this year, we have acknowledged the following staff:

Motivated Mustangs: The recipients of this award are selected by our administrative team and staff for going above and beyond the requirements of their job.

- Mary Pat Daly-Hiller
- The Custodial Team
- Stephanie Krupp

Be Amazing: The recipients of the Be Amazing Award are recognized by the administrative team and staff for particular dedication to THHS.

- Carlos Leon
- Amador Renteria
- Emily Alvarez

Golden Apple: Recipients of the Golden Apple are selected by the previous winner. This award is specifically designated for our teaching staff.

- Ashlynn Hall
- Emily Tomblison
- Liam Clemons

Instructional Leader: The recipients are selected by our Secondary Chairs and recognized for outstanding teaching and support of our students.

- Brian Ault
- Jeb Berry
- Amber Flores

We include a brief write up about each winner in our monthly newsletter as well.

THHS has tried very hard to offer numerous ways for students to get involved during the pandemic. We currently have 31 Curricular Clubs with 852 student members, 20 Service Clubs with 516 student members and 30 Non-Curricular Clubs that have 419 student members. Furthermore, we have held spirit weeks, a canned food and toy drive and two Got Spirit Rallies. We have numerous athletic and music camps for our student to participate in. We are determined to help our students thrive in 2020-2021 school year.

Trabuco Mesa *Elementary*

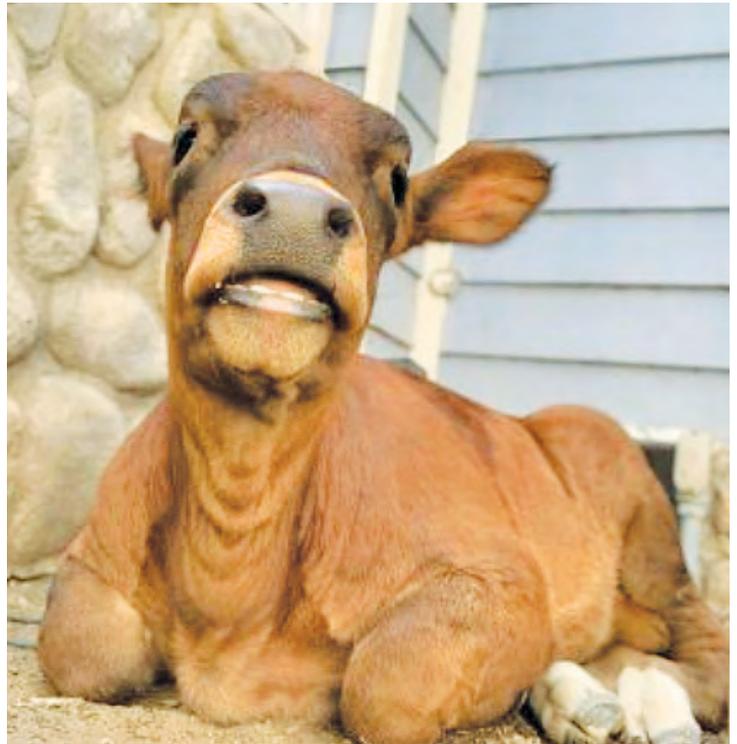
21301 Ave de las Flores, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/858-3339 • svusd.org/trabucomesa



Caryn McGrew
Principal

Engaging in Kindness

Students in Mrs. Ruffridge's 6th grade class (Ruffridge Ranch) at Trabuco Mesa were inspired to find a way to give back and share kindness this holiday season. Over the past 6 weeks, this class looked for ways to gather donations to help sponsor an animal at "The Gentle Barn." Students helped around their homes for extra chore money, made flyers to send family members, and even traded holiday spending money to be sent to these animals in need. The class was able to collect generous donations to sponsor not only a pig, but a cow too! The Ruffridge Ranch is grateful to meet Miracle and John Lewis this month as the animals personally visit their classroom (via zoom, of course). Each month, updates on their growth and other data are used for activities in math, writing prompts, and to learn more about their journey including a guided virtual field trip this spring.



Valencia *Elementary*

25661 Paseo de Valencia, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/830-3650 • svusd.org/valencia



Wendie Hauschild
Principal

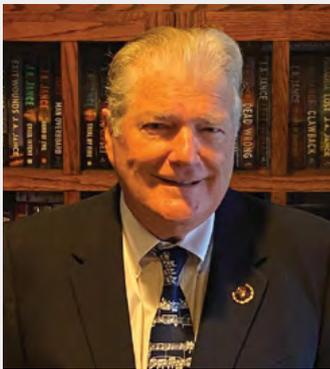
Valencia's Culture of Giving

Valencia Elementary students, families, and staff have cultivated a long-standing practice of giving. Following safety protocols, Valencia Oranges opened up their hearts and donated many items the past few months. In November, our Oranges filled twelve overflowing bins with food items to benefit South County Outreach. In December, the whole school – both Hybrid and Distance Learning – took part in our annual Wear-a-Pair, Bring-a-Pair Pajama Day, donating 209 pairs of pajamas to Miller Children's Hospital to help put a smile on the faces of babies, children, and teens facing chronic illnesses. Last, but not least, our resident Cub Scout Pack 800 designed, constructed, and donated to our school a beautiful Buddy Bench, displaying our school colors of orange and blue and reminding our students about kindness and inviting others to play. This is a different year for all of us, but one thing remains the same, the importance of spreading happiness to others.





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