

**FREE**

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the San Marino Unified School District**



Volume 2, Issue 4

June 2021



[www.SchoolNewsRollCall.com](http://www.SchoolNewsRollCall.com)

# YOU INSPIRE US

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## Superintendent



**Dr. Jeff Wilson**

### Relationships Most Important

As the ruinous pandemic of 2020-21 appears to be winding down in the Southern California area, there is much in the San Marino Unified School District to reflect on, learn from, and take pride-in. While maintaining our standing as Niche's #1 Best School District in the Los Angeles area, we also learned so much about our students, ourselves and our teaching and learning. We learned that we could pivot our practices and expand our tool belts to continue to effectively teach our students. We learned that while many of our students pivoted with us and demonstrated high levels of resiliency and engagement, others struggled to connect and suffered significantly with anxiety, depression and motivation loss. Most importantly, the staff, students and community of San Marino learned that relationships were the most important component of our outstanding educational history. Throughout this past year, we have remained committed to providing our teachers and support staff with professional development to support student-centered instructional shifts, social-emotional learning and mindfulness to help them reach and connect with each of our students in meaningful and effective ways.

## Board of Education

### Thank you

*By Shelley Ryan, President*

One year ago, the World Health Organization declared the spread of COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic. San Marino schools and institutions across the world switched to virtual learning with teachers, staff and the community pivoting to innovative education opportunities, tools and programs to promote social emotional learning, wellness resources and 1:1 connection. SMUSD made student-centered engagement a priority by remaining steadfast in delivering a robust, meaningful curriculum so students may develop a passion for learning that will prepare them for the rest of their lives.

A year later, schools are beginning to reopen, the \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill has been passed and a sense of normalcy seems to finally be in view. There is hope of finding "light" but it's safe to say that COVID-19 will change education forever, casting a light on everything from equity issues to education technology to school financing.

The pandemic challenged the current capacity of our public education system to address the widening gap in learning and mental health of our student population. With the generosity and dedication of PTA, PTSA, PTAffiliates, SMTA, CSEA, and community members, we will continue to leverage commitment and shared goals on learning opportunities that will not only accelerate learning but provide a financial plan to ensure a thriving community to preserve our commitment to a differentiated, dedicated world-class education.

San Marino schools will need to activate public and parental engagement to strengthen our civic and social capacity as public education can no longer remain insulated from other policy sectors, especially public health, community development, and social emotional wellness. These efforts will strengthen our capacity and prepare our education system for future challenges.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I would like to thank the San Marino community for creating and sustaining a safe and welcoming virtual and in-person learning environment where students master challenging and engaging subjects and where the faculty and staff share a unity of purpose to make a positive impact in all of our students' lives.

### Board of Education



**Shelley Ryan**  
*President*



**Jane Chon**  
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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



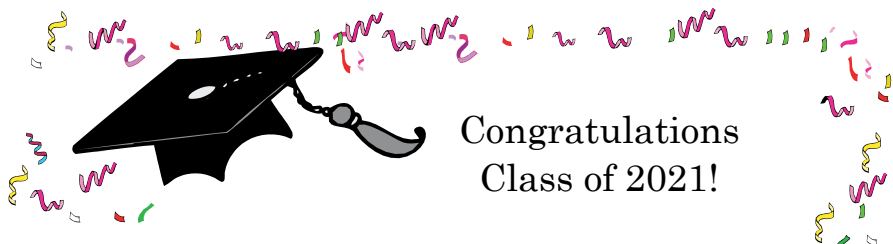
*Netragrednik*

As we come to the end of this school year in many ways it seems like the beginning. As Superintendent Dr. Wilson said in his message on page 3, relationships are most important.

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices as we transitioned to digital, which has been very

well-received and will be our permanent model going forward. Thank you for your kind words when you email your contest entries. Be sure to enter the word search on page 10 (all ages may enter). We included several student book reviews to help with your child's summer reading choices.

Our next issue is November 10. Have a wonderful summer.



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## PTSA

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### *Kathryn Oliveros, President*

It's been clear all year how lucky the San Marino Schools Community has been to have so many dedicated volunteers working to better our students' experience, but it wasn't until the last two weeks of the school year that our 2020-2021 PTA Council Board was able to meet in person and reflect on their time serving "together." As have teachers,

administrators, students and parents, every PTA volunteer has had to reimagine what our roles are in a pandemic year. Every volunteer across San Marino Schools has contributed creatively to advocacy, family engagement and fundraising in a suddenly digital world. As we start to physically reemerge into our schools and community we reflect on some amazing achievements





## San Marino Schools Foundation

1665 West Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7014 • smsf.org

*By SMSF Executive Committee*

San Marino Alumni are not only our history, but they hold an important part of our future at the San Marino Schools Foundation.

As the world shifted into the virtual form, we took this as an opportunity to expand and refresh our donor's experience. We launched our own Alumni networking system, so that no matter where you are in the world, you can always stay connected to your community in San Marino. We even launched our new program that allows our donors to create their own profiles and view their donation history. These changes are a part of our ongoing commitment to the community, that no matter the challenges we face, our dedication is and will always be for the continued excellence of our schools. We want to thank all our donors for being so supportive in this year that was filled with many changes and challenges.

Visit us as <https://www.sanmarinoalumni.org/>



## Educational Services

1665 West Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7010 • [www.smusd.us](http://www.smusd.us)



**Dr. Lena Richter**  
*Executive Director*

### Farewell, and Welcome!

The San Marino Unified School District is excited to welcome aboard our new director of special education, Rakhee Comar. Mrs. Comar joins us with six years of special-education leadership experience and 12 successful years of teaching experience in both special-education and general-education classrooms. Along with her



**Mrs. Rakhee Comar**

## Huntington *Middle School*

1700 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7060 • [www.hehms.us](http://www.hehms.us)



**Dr. Daryl Topalian**  
*Principal*

### Tradition of Excellence

Henry E. Huntington Middle School is nestled in the heart of the San Gabriel Valley in the beautiful city San Marino. The Huntington Middle School Foxes are comprised of grades 6, 7, and 8. Holding a deep tradition of academic excellence, the teachers and staff of HMS offer high quality instructional strategies and in return our students apply their knowledge by participating in award winning academic

programs, such as Science Olympiad, Mock Trial, Speech and Debate, Robotics, and the Math Team. Beyond academics, almost half of the school population is enrolled in HMS's highly recognized visual and performing arts program, consisting of choir, band and orchestra. Athletically, over two hundred and fifty HMS students compete annually in the 210 Athletic League. Whether it's in flag football, volleyball, softball, soccer, tennis, wrestling, cross country, track and field, or basketball, HMS student athletes go on to compete at the varsity level in high school. Now as the 2020-2021 school year finishes, all these opportunities will be fully available in person for the 2021-2022 school year. HMS welcomes you to be part of the Fox family.

background in special education, Mrs. Comar brings to her new position experience with PBIS, MTSS and mental health. She is excited to help enhance our school and district programs, build relationships, and share her passion for students with disabilities within the San Marino schools and community.

Our current director of special education, Abigail Cabrera, will be transitioning to a new position as lower school dean of teaching and learning at Polytechnic School in Pasadena, starting July 1. Mrs. Cabrera has spent five years in San Marino USD and has built many positive relationships with students, parents and staff. Her passion for student success and collaboration has been a key to helping our special-education program grow.

Mrs. Cabrera and Mrs. Comar are currently working together to ensure a seamless transition in leadership in the Special Education Department. We will miss Mrs. Cabrera and wish her luck on her new journey. With that, we welcome Mrs. Comar into the San Marino family and look forward to the upcoming year.



# Carver *Elementary School*

3100 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7080 • [www.carverschool.us](http://www.carverschool.us)



**Dr. Michael Lin**  
*Principal*

## Universal Design for Learning

K. L. Carver Elementary School is a 3x California Distinguished School and 2x National Blue Ribbon School. These recognitions reflect the caliber of students we have at our school and the long-standing commitment in our mission to educating the whole child by fostering intellectual, emotional, and social development. Whether students choose to attend school in-person or participate in learning remotely, students are

encouraged to be active, engaged learners empowered to tell their stories and create new beginnings as responsible and caring citizens. In a year of new beginnings, the expectations for excellence have continued to be the same. We implement Universal Design for Learning practices and students have access to choose among multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Students reflect on their choices while teachers continuously redesign the art of pedagogy to provide students with a variety of options to access information and opportunities for flexible work and learning spaces.





# San Marino High School

2701 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7020 • [www.sanmarinohs.org](http://www.sanmarinohs.org)



**Jason Kurtenbach**  
Principal

## College Poster Day

The month of May has always been a time for high school Seniors to take an AP test or two, get away with a ditch day, and learn they have no finals.

However, more than that it is a time to celebrate the final moments of high

school, and they look forward to their plans ahead! Even though we are still in the midst of pandemic rules, procedures, and protocols, we are doing everything we can to make this last month as special as any. To that end, the staff of SMHS led by Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Davidson organized and hosted College Poster Day wherein Seniors were invited to come to campus and were given supplies to make a poster representing their plans for the fall. We also have the Sound of Summer Drive Through lights and DJ event on May 8, Graduation, Grad Night. Congratulations and best of luck to the SMHS Class of 2021!





# Valentine *Elementary School*

1650 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7090 • [www.valentineschool.org](http://www.valentineschool.org)



**Alana Fauré**  
*Principal*

## Secret to Success

At Valentine Elementary School, it took every member of our educational community to make it through this pandemic year successfully. Our secret to success was that we worked as a team. Our teachers worked above and beyond to master a host of new technologies and deliver rigorous academic instruction. They never lowered expectations for students, and students worked harder than ever to learn in a strange, new, virtual environment.

Parents supported teachers and students online at home for the first part of the year. Even while we had to

stay apart, distance learning kept us connected. Then, our school reopened, and many students were able to attend in person. Whether at home or at school, our staff and programs focused on the healthy development of the whole child. Library, music, art, Second Step and physical education rounded out a comprehensive curriculum that engaged students and helped them make meaningful connections with their teachers and peers.

In a year like no other, when faced with innumerable uncertainties, what a relief to arrive at the end of the school year and be able to declare: We did it! Our teamwork made it possible. We know beyond a shadow of doubt that the heart of Valentine beats just as strong ever.



## Katie's Review



**Katie C.**

### Feeling "Inspired"

Book Title: *Inspired*

Author: Susan Schaefer Bernado

Imagine you've moved to a new home. You open a package, a seemingly harmless mirror, but somehow it opens up a whole new world.

In a Harry Potter style escape,

Rocket grows out of her awkward self and finds new skills in the new world of Mount Olympus that she has found. Her nemesis turns out to be haunted, and she realizes that sometimes the only way to resolve conflict is to recognize that everyone could use a helping hand, even if they seem awful at first glance. She finds that she can connect to people, form relationships, and truly understand those around her. In short, she's been "inspired." To help not only others but to find herself, and to live to the potential that she has. I recommend this book to those who love Greek mythology references and to anyone who wants to feel like they have escaped to an alternate reality, one that we can all make our own.



Katie is a junior in high school. She likes reading and writing. She loves to read to younger kids. She provides book reviews to kids who want to find more good books.

## Daniel's Review



**Daniel H.**

### Cute Friends' Adventure

Title: *Sydney & Taylor Explore the Whole Wide World*

Author: Jacqueline Davies

Do you ever feel like you want to go on a big adventure? The best friends in this book do and they go on one together.

Sydney, a skunk, and his best friend Taylor, a hedgehog, live together in a cozy burrow. One day, they decide to leave their home for the first time ever to go on an expedition to places unknown in the outside world. Along the way, they discover new things and meet different animals. They also run into some problems, but they help each other out and make things better.

This book teaches you that friends help each other and no matter how much fun you have in new places, home is always the best place to be!



Daniel is in first grade and he likes to spend time with his family playing board games, reading, and playing sports like tennis, soccer, and basketball.

## Road Trip—Word Search Contest

### Rules!

One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: [Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) Please put San Marino in the subject line.

Entries must be received by July 15, 2021

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

MAPS	SUNGLASSES
BLANKET	WATER
GPS	SUNSCREEN
PILLOW	CLOTHING
MOTEL	CELL PHONE
HUMOR	RADIO
HOTEL	MONEY
CAMERA	FLASHLIGHT
CAR GAMES	CREDIT CAR
BOOTS	SPARE TIRE
SNACKS	

**Congratulations to Addison Seely**  
Winner of our previous Word Search Contest!

C	E	L	L	P	H	O	N	E	R	V	S	L	H
I	R	W	W	B	H	X	Y	Y	G	E	G	O	D
P	U	E	O	M	B	L	A	N	K	E	T	F	B
H	H	O	D	L	O	R	I	G	R	E	W	A	P
L	T	H	G	I	L	H	S	A	L	F	W	J	W
S	S	R	D	Z	T	I	S	P	G	I	H	D	X
L	Z	A	F	O	U	C	P	C	A	P	S	H	A
K	R	R	L	P	A	Y	A	R	W	M	M	I	K
V	G	C	E	S	E	R	R	R	Q	Q	K	E	P
K	W	S	T	N	G	Z	E	O	D	F	J	F	G
W	R	P	O	A	N	Z	T	M	M	V	V	K	J
Q	D	M	M	C	N	S	I	U	A	N	N	E	Q
O	K	E	U	K	O	D	R	H	T	C	D	C	Z
I	S	U	N	S	C	R	E	E	N	Y	B	M	G



## Jenna's Review

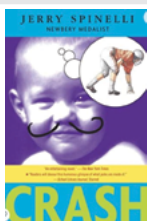


### Friendship

Book Title: *Crash*

Author: Jerry Spinelli

Have you been desperate to do or get something? Well in this case a boy named John who prefers being called



**Jenna C.**

Crash bullies a neighbor named Penn. Crash bullies Penn so he won't lose his popularity.

Crash has a friend named Mike who also likes making fun of Penn. Suddenly, this all changes when Crash's "crush" Jane comes up to him and confronts him about a letter that was sent to Penn from someone unknown saying that they have his beloved pet turtle. Jane thinks of Crash as a bully and bad person, so of course she thinks he sent the letter. After Crash denies any of these comments he goes straight to Mike's house and finds Penn's pet turtle. Crash returns the turtle to Penn and wants to be friends with him. Do you think Penn will want to be friends with him after everything Crash has done to him for so many years? Read to find out!

Jenna is a 5th grader. She enjoys playing soccer and painting. She likes to read fiction novels. Someday she wants to publish a book.

## David's Review



**David H.**

### Save Little Claws!

Title: *The Animal Rescue Agency #1:*

Case File: *Little Claws*

Author: Eliot Schrefer

If you love animals like I do, you should definitely read this book.

Esquire Fox and Mr.

Pepper the rooster run the



Animal Rescue Agency, which rescues animals in trouble all around the world.

Little Claws, a cute polar bear cub, is stranded on an iceberg that is floating away from his mom, Big Claws. This dangerous situation is caused by a man in a white fur hat. Big Claws contacts the Animal Rescue Agency for help. Join Esquire Fox and Mr. Pepper on their daring adventure to discover WHO the man in the white hat is, WHAT he wants to do, and find out if Little Claws gets reunited with his mom.

You'll love reading this exciting book!

David is in third grade and he loves to read and play piano. He likes math and outdoor activities such as rock climbing, tennis, and basketball.

## Kailani's Review



### Favorite Tree House Adventure

*Monday with a Mad Genius*

by Mary Pope Osborne is the 10th book in the series Magic Tree House. It is about two siblings of Frog Creek, Pennsylvania (Jack and Annie) who go back in time by the magic tree house. Their



**Kailani T.**

mission is to help a magician named Merlin of Camelot find the secret of happiness. During the journey, the siblings travel to Florence, Italy and meet Leonardo DaVinci in the 1500s. Jack and Annie watch DaVinci fly the Great Bird and finish the Mona Lisa painting.

This was a fun book to read. The story is full of excitement and interesting information. I learned about Mona Lisa and Leonardo DaVinci. Reading that DaVinci was also an inventor, architect, stage and costume designer, horseman, chef, geologist, and botanist was fascinating. My favorite parts are when Jack and Annie figured out the secret of happiness and that DaVinci was also a horseman. I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves adventures.

Kailani is a 3rd grader who loves to read. When not playing with her baby brother, Kailani likes to color and draw. She started taking Spanish lessons while sheltering-in-place. Horseback riding and skate boarding are the new activities she enjoys. Hope everyone stays well and healthy.

## Taegyong's Book Review



**Taegyong K.**

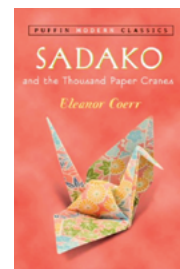
### Sadako's Wish

Title: *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

Author: Eleanor Coerr

Have you ever heard about the myth of one thousand paper cranes?

This story is based on the real story of Sadako



Sasaki and the thousand paper cranes. Sadako loved running. However, she got the atomic disease, and she couldn't run anymore. One day, her friend, Chizuko, showed her how to make a paper crane and said, "If a sick person folds one thousand paper cranes, the gods will grant her wish and make her healthy again." She gave Sadako the paper crane that she folded as the first one. Then, she decided to make one thousand paper cranes to make her well. Did she fold one thousand paper cranes? Did her wish come true? This book is not only about Sadako's story, but also about the horrors and tragedy of war. This is a touching and inspirational story. If you are interested in her story, I recommend this book.

Taegyong K. is a 5th grader. She loves reading books and writing her own stories. Also, she likes to play video games, board games, and badminton. She would like to be a person who is kind and helps others.

## Parent To Parent



**Jodie Lynn**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, often our kids were on their devices upwards of eight hours per day. What can parents do to keep them safe online and on their cell phones? It seems like more than ever, kids are getting spam emails, calls and texts from unknown sources. This is not acceptable, quite scary and exhausting to try to constantly monitor.

COVID-19 has isolated the majority of us and leaves us with levels of uncertainty, unusual scariness and frequent loneliness. Individuals are in a vulnerable place, especially our kids. This is the perfect time for sexual predators to approach them as it can come in many forms.

Give your kids a set of online safety rules that they will understand with explanations that they will believe and take to heart.

It's important for you to know which online games that your kids are playing. Many are multiplayer games where several online players can be together playing at once or just watching. These games have text and voice chat capabilities from around the world. This is highly dangerous because people can pretend to be someone else and of a certain age and can expose kids to unsuitable and unacceptable predatory language and content. These individuals can develop friendships with kids and eventually encourage them to meet in real life. It's important to recognize that each game has specific settings which you should check out and change for better online safety.

Remember not only to talk with your kids frequently about staying safe online, but also explain that anyone at any age can be cyberbullied. If a person or group want them to chime in about someone, tell them to ignore the request and don't return to that area and group. Explain why it's so important to think about what they are going to post at any given time or in any area before doing so, to keep their passwords safe, to always log off and not to click on links from people that they don't know. The right thing to do is to report the cyberbullying to an authoritative figure as well. They may just save a life.

You could also take their electronic devices away for a few hours each day, but for those hours that they're on them, rules and guidelines still need to be in place. Even if your kids seem to have level heads on their shoulders and you feel like you can trust them, they can still be sneaky.

It's easy to hide all kinds of online activities from parents with various apps:

Snapchat is a program where people can send images, videos, etc. to friends which will disappear within 10 to 30 seconds. It's pretty popular among teens. The hidden danger is that those "private" moments are not really deleted. They're hidden in files on most phones. Even more devastating and scary is that if someone takes a screen shot, the message, image or whatever can be posted anywhere.

Finsta is a fake Instagram account where anyone can create photos, conversations, etc., staying anonymous and keeping everything private through sharing with a few close friends and can be hidden on devices. But again, just like anything else, if a screen shot is taken, boom, it can show up anywhere online.

Be sure to read about popular apps and arm yourself with knowledge for options that you as the parent can do to help your kids be safe. Below you'll find a few but there's many others that you can find by doing an online search: Instagram, YouTube, Kik, Telegram, TikTok

There's also several phone apps offered to parents to help them monitor their kids' phone and online activities.

For unwanted calls or texts, it's simple to register landlines and cell phone numbers with the office of your state Attorney General's No-Call list for unwanted calls or texts. It's available online, free and will cut down on both. While it does take a few weeks to actually go into effect, it's best to get that done straight away. Do a little research and you'll also find several other government agencies where complaints can be made. Unfortunately, it's not going to totally eliminate them and that is even truer for robot calls. Learning some basic rules to share with your kids can also help.

For example: Don't answer any calls that are not in your contact list. If it's truly someone trying to reach you, they'll leave a message. If they don't, the number can quickly be blocked. The same goes for unwanted texts. The exception in this situation is going to be from "Unknown" or "Private" numbers, which are really hard to trace because no number shows up. However, there are phone apps to help with this. As far as spam email goes, if it's opened, don't click on any links. Look up how to set up filters and teach your kids how to recognize, delete and block it.

As you are well aware, this whole cyber safety situation is extremely exhausting. But, there's no way of getting around it if you're going to be proactive in protecting your children.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author. Her column Parent to Parent™ ([www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)) has been successful for more than 20 years. She is a regular contributor to several sites including *School News Roll Call* and has written four books and contributed to three others, one of which was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show. *Mom CEO (Chief Everything Officer)*, *Having Doing, and Surviving it All!* and *Syndication Secret—What No One Will Tell You!* [www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)