

FREE

# School News

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Covering the Monrovia Unified School District

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NOVEMBER 2017–FEBRUARY 2018

## Providing the Extraordinary



By **Dr. Katherine Thorossian**  
Superintendent

The mission of the Monrovia Unified School District is to inspire students to engage in meaningful learning within a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

We want to embolden students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of our community. For those reasons, we invest in the growth of our students both academically and socio-emotionally.

While test scores are just one measure of student success, it is one that gauges their academic growth and allows for a comparison to their peers throughout the state. According to the new state report, Monrovia Unified students, in almost every cohort, have shown consistent gains in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math over the past three years. This is best reflected by 75 percent of Monrovia High School 11th-graders meeting or exceeding ELA standards, as compared to the state average of 59.76 percent. We attribute this success to three factors: teacher expertise, finely honed by a rich professional development series; student effort, fostered by the support of caring adults on campus; and parent partnerships, supplementing the work in school. Thanks to these pillars, Monrovia Unified students are afforded ever-greater opportunities to ensure they flourish in their endeavors outside of school—including in college and their chosen careers.



Our “whole child” approach to learning has also led to some changes in our facilities and operations. The Wellness Center at Monrovia High School is a remarkable example of our investment in the social and emotional well-being of our students. Offering students and their families mental health support, counseling, and tutoring, the facility serves as a quiet place for students to decompress and obtain the support they need. Indeed, it

has become such a model program that Congresswoman Grace Napolitano has asked Susan Hirsch, the lead architect of this program, to present at the Mental Health Consortium of the San Gabriel Valley.

Thank you for your continued contributions to our schools. With them, we are able to provide not only the ordinary, but the extraordinary to our scholars.

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## Outstanding Scholars!

By *Kirk McGinnis, Principal*  
Monrovia High School

Monrovia High School is celebrating some outstanding scholars! Senior Nathan Nakamura has been selected as a National Merit Scholar semifinalist for earning a high score on his Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), placing him in the top 1 percent of high school seniors across the nation. Nathan earned a 1500 out of a possible 1520 PSAT score.

The National Merit Scholarship Corp., established in 1955, honors exceptional American youths and encourages them in achieving their goals and aspirations. Students apply through a combination of PSAT scores, academic record and extracurricular achievements.



(Front) **Ishika Muchal, Alexandra Feldman, Rebecca De La O**  
(Back) **Valerie Florez, Gabriel Lujan, Benjamin Tang, Nathan Nakamura**

The pool of 1.6 million students across the U.S. is narrowed to 15,000 semifinalists who received top PSAT scores. Finalists—the top 7,500 seniors—will be announced in February. National Merit Scholars receive one of three scholarships: a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship Corp. scholarship, a corporate-sponsored scholarship or a college-sponsored scholarship.

Five Monrovia High students were recognized as Commended Scholars, scoring in the top 34,000 seniors across the U.S.: Alexandra Feldman, Valerie Flores, Ishika Muchal, Benjamin Tang and Max Young. Three Monrovia High students earned a place in the National Hispanic Recognition Program, scoring among the top 2.5 percent of the Hispanic/Latino population across the states: Rebecca De La O, Valerie Flores and Gabriel Lujan.

Congratulations to these outstanding Wildcat Scholars!



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**Covering the  
MONROVIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Welcome back to another new school year. By now the students are settled into a routine and focused on their academic choices.

The Superintendent begins this issue on the front cover with the District Mission Statement. In this issue you'll be brought up to date on the activities in the classroom including a kindness and love campaign, the study of balls, art and astronomy and much more...it is fun to learn!

Our next issue is January 10, 2018 just in time to start the new year.

# Strong Leaders Transform Schools

At the growing Eastvale STEM Academy, high school students build knowledge in medical science and engineering within an innovative learning community guided by Kim Lu Lawe's leadership and vision.



Eastvale STEM Academy, Medical Biology Class, Director: Kim Lu Lawe, Ed.D. '16

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# Bradoaks *Elementary*

930 East Lemon Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2100 • <http://bradoaks.monroviaschools.net>



**Jayne Nickles**  
*Principal*

## Students First

The 2017–2018 school year is off to a great start at Bradoaks Elementary School. I am honored to be a part of a staff and community who are committed to the success of our students. Over the last several weeks, I have learned much about being a Bradoaks

Bobcat. As Bobcats, we proudly ROAR in all that we do. This means that we are Respectful, On-task, Attitudes in check, and Responsible. Putting our students first is evident not only in the classrooms but also in our PTA activities.

The Bradoaks Student Council was recently nominated. Students in first through fifth grades serve on this council and have a big part in the flag ceremonies. Our Renaissance leaders were also recently selected. They are students in the fourth and fifth grades. Throughout the year, both groups will have the opportunity to grow their leadership skills while helping our Bobcats.

I am looking forward to having an amazing school year and being a part of this exceptional Bradoaks community.



# Canyon Early Learning Center

1000 South Canyon Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2001 • <http://celc.monroviaschools.net>



**Mariana Sanchez**  
*Director*

## Studying is Fun

The children at CELC began their study of balls by answering the questions “What do we know about balls?” and “What do we want to find out?” They engaged in shared

writing activities in which they compared and described different types, textures, sizes and weights of balls. Hypothesized which balls would bounce high and which would roll. As they tested their ideas, they tallied and charted, counted and compared. They discovered that some balls are hollow and some are solid, some you eat (meatballs) and some are tools (wrecking balls). They played with letter sounds when they sang songs such as “Bouncing big brown balls” or had fun with tongue twisters “A big bug bit the beetle...”. Yet, the best part of all was playing ball.



# Clifton *Middle School*

226 South Ivy Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2600 • <http://clifton.monroviaschools.net>



**Jennifer Jackson**  
*Principal*

## A Kindness Movement

In late September, Clifton embarked on a journey to begin our school's new “kindness and love” campaign. This unique, PTSA-sponsored event featured an amazing speaker, student leadership training, staff training, and even parent training. It was an action-filled and inspirational day that taught all of our stakeholders the tools they need to create sustainable change by promoting tolerance, acceptance, kindness, and, simply, love.

Bringing a large group of people together with differing views, opinions, and beliefs is always challenging, but Clifton sees this as an opportunity to stand out as a “Cub-Mazing” school.

Students from Renaissance Leadership, AVID, and the Kindness Club also took part in the leadership training which followed the assembly.



There is also a plan of implementation being prepared to move us forward. The underlying theme is to make kindness normal, and offer our students consistent lessons and skills to positively impact the culture of our school.



# Canyon Oaks H.S./Mountain Park/ Monrovia Community Adult

930 Royal Oaks Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3000 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



**Flint Fertig**  
Principal

## Beginning with Culture

This fall season kicked off for our drama students at a theatrical venue in Downtown Los Angeles. Twenty-eight students rode the bus to experience live theater in the heart of Los Angeles's cultural center

In September, the students made the best of the cool autumn morning by having brunch outside the theater before entering to see the show with nearly 2,000 other high school students from the Greater Los Angeles area. The play, *The Red Shoes*, expressed the tug-of-war between romance and dance through motion and music. No dialogue was spoken during the entire two-hour performance, so audience members had to pay close attention to the plot as it developed onstage.

This was another wonderful opportunity that Mr. Chacón's industry experience and our Fine Arts Pathway provided for students to get exposure to real-world college and career opportunities.



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# Mayflower *Elementary*

210 North Mayflower Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2200 • <http://mayflower.monroviaschools.net>



**Michelle Costarella**  
Principal

## Renaissance Team

Mayflower is pleased to have their new 2017–18 Renaissance Team selected and ready to serve. Renaissance, a nationally recognized program, provides students an excellent opportunity to develop leadership skills by organizing celebratory activities and service projects that build culture and climate on the school campus. The team's focus will be on building respect, promoting recognition and rewards, and reinforcing the positive interactions among students and staff.

After completing an application process, 30 students in third through fifth grades were chosen to serve on the Mayflower Renaissance Team. Under the direction of third-grade teacher Caitlin MacDonald, this team of student leaders has begun planning schoolwide activities aimed at building academic performance and character skills. They will seek to energize a culture of recognition and thoughtfully create opportunities to recognize others for their unique efforts. Additionally, this group will work to develop a culture that rewards actions and achievements that are aligned with school expectations and values.



We are thrilled to be growing our schoolwide Renaissance experience this year at Mayflower and congratulate our new Renaissance Team!

# Monroe *Elementary*

402 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2300 • <http://monroe.monroviaschools.net>



**Dr. Lily Jarvis**  
Principal

## A Great Opportunity

Last year our school set a mighty goal of enhancing the visual arts experiences for the students at Monroe Elementary. We are so grateful to the dedicated parents who took on this charge and established relationships with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and The Getty Center.

As a result of their efforts, all 661 Mighty Monroe Lions and their families will receive a free membership to LACMA until the students turn 18 years of age. Additionally, some third- through fifth-grade students will have the opportunity to participate in a special eight-week series of after-school gallery walks at LACMA.



The gallery walks will include tours, art instruction, and other exciting arts education experiences. Also, in May, all third-graders at Monroe will visit the Getty Center for docent-led tours of the museum. All transportation costs are covered by the museum's educational program.

We are delighted that our world-class students will be learning and touring the world-class galleries at LACMA and the Getty Center. We are roaring with pride!

# Plymouth *Elementary*

1300 Boley St., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2400 • <http://plymouth.monroviaschools.net>



**Dr. Greg Gero**  
Principal

## Reaching for the Moon and Stars!

Plymouth Elementary School celebrated an astronomical event! On October 6, students and their families gathered for the Moon and Stars Family Night. This event, hosted by our PTA, was scheduled to correspond with the Mid-Autumn Festival (also called the Moon Festival), a major holiday in China, when families celebrate togetherness and good fortune.

Students and their families viewed the moon, planets, and stars through four high-powered telescopes, which were provided by a local astronomy group. Families were entertained by a theatrical performance by the second-grade Mandarin Dual-Immersion students in Mr. Cook's class, who performed the story of Chang'e and Hou Yi, a traditional Chinese legend about the moon.



Students also participated in a number of fun-filled educational activities, including Chinese lantern-making, constellation mapping in the night sky, and moon cake sampling.

The Moon and Stars Family Night was an amazing event for children and their families!



# Monrovia *High School*

845 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2800 • <http://mhs.monroviaschools.net>



**Kirk McGinnis**  
*Principal*

## Congrats, Outstanding Scholars!

(Please see our article on the front page.)

# Santa Fe *Computer Magnet School*

148 West Duarte Rd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2700 • <http://santafe.monroviaschools.net>



**Dr. Geoff Zamarripa**  
*Principal*

## Celebrating the Future Now!

Every day Santa Fe students are developing real world skills that will enhance their future career options. As a computer science magnet school we are making strides to expand opportunities for students to develop skills and employ ways of thinking that will have a concrete application to careers they will undertake in their future. By giving our students awareness of these skills at a younger age, we will also increase their understanding of the importance of college as a vital link to these career options. These specific computer science opportunities

will also enhance links to the Math and Science Academy at Monrovia High School. Further, Santa Fe will be the first school to pilot student emails in Monrovia Unified School District. Each student will be equipped with an email that they can use from the district's secure network to collaborate across campus, turn in work and receive feedback instantly and safely. The future is unfolding now at Santa Fe!



# Wild Rose *Elementary*

232 Jasmine Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2500 • <http://wildrose.monroviaschools.net>



**Dr. Leslie Miller**  
*Principal*

## The Arts Soar

The arts at Wild Rose are alive and soaring, as students and teachers look for opportunities to engage our learners.

Wild Rose has a rich history of theatrical and visual arts education, as represented by our partnership with the California Dance Institute (CDI). Every fourth-grade student is working together as a dance troupe to learn movement, choreography, and team work. This year, both our after-school dance team of fourth- and fifth-graders and our third-grade hip-hop team are filled to capacity. Wonderful news!

Our K-5 students are enjoying singing and choir weekly. This year we are focusing on teaching our students patriotic songs, as well as pieces that will excite and motivate them to sing, such as catchy tunes from their favorite movies.



Both students and teachers are gearing up for holiday performances too, including our student choir, strings, band, and school-wide musical production. Our winter season promises to be truly magical.

## CONTEST!

This student is in a picture somewhere in this publication. When you find him, email the **page number** to:  
[Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com)  
Please put Monrovia in the subject line.

Your entry must be received by December 15, 2017. From the correct entries, we will draw a winner to receive a GAZUMP card/dice game - fun for all ages!



**Congratulations to Mariana and Laura Herrera**  
**Winners of the September Word Search Contest!**



## Alana's Book Review

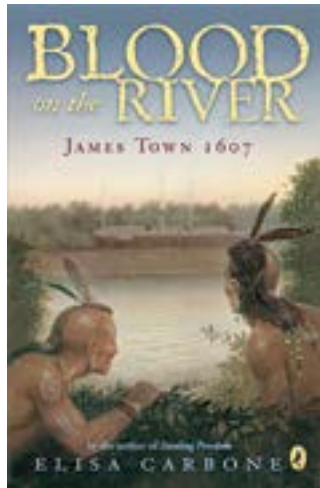
# Blood On the River



Alana F.

By: Elisa Carbone  
Samuel Collins, a tough and hardened preteen boy, was only a young child when his mother passed away. Now snarky, immature (yet undoubtedly intelligent), and living on the streets of England, he isn't personable in the slightest. But when he's given the chance to have a fresh start in the recently discovered "new world," will he take it? Will he put his aggression, pride, and past behind him, or will he endanger all those that care for him?

I'd give this book 5 stars because, while reading this, I couldn't help but compare Samuel to my younger self. Seeing the main character overcome the same social and ego issues that I overcame really made me appreciate this book. Elisa introduces young children to characters with more complex troubles and personalities than those in other children's literature, and that is truly amazing.



Alana is a student columnist. When she doesn't have a book in her hands, she enjoys playing video games and writing fiction. She rates books on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest.

## Lucy's Book Review

# The Only Road

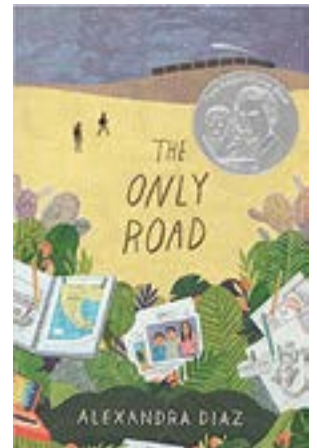


Lucy Davis

Author: Alexandra Diaz  
Life in Jaime's small Guatemalan village is pretty peaceful, excluding one group: the Alphas. Drug dealers that ask for 'favors' and new recruits. If you refuse, you die. So when Jaime's beloved cousin, Miguel, is murdered for that very reason, the whole family is devastated. And the death comes with something else: a request for Jaime and Miguel's sister Angela to join them.

The only way Angela and Jaime can escape is to leave Guatemala, and that might be harder than it seems. Train hopping, refugee churches, immigration officials, and lost dogs are all part of their journey, and hopefully they can make it to the other side. The U.S. is promising safety, but the road to get there isn't.

I really enjoyed this book. It talks about serious topics while still keeping the mood as light as possible. Five of five stars are well earned in this wonderful story.



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

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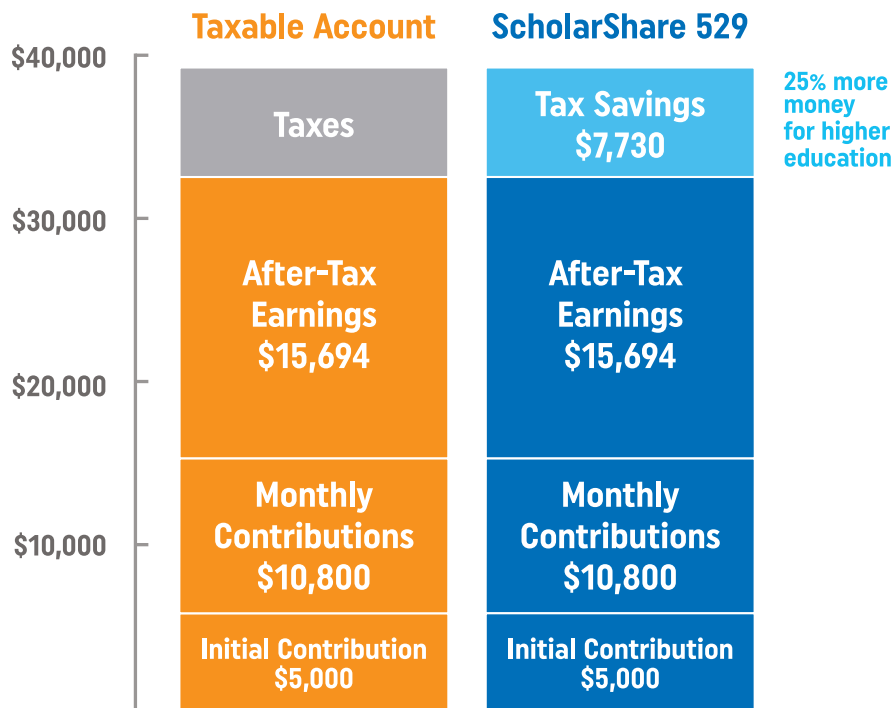
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