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School News

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Covering the Monrovia Unified School District

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Strength of Character



Dr. Katherine Thorossian

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” The Monrovia Unified School District (MUSD) invests its resources into creating pathways for each of our students to meet that goal.

From early childhood development classrooms, where our youngest learners take their first steps into education, to our graduating seniors, we prepare all students to take on the future they envision for themselves. This includes not only providing quality instruction, but also achieving our mission by challenging students to be productive members and leaders of the community and to serve as an inspiration to the next generation of Monrovians.

In each grade, we adapt lessons and experiences to prepare students for traditional and emerging career opportunities. For students to find meaning and develop that passion for a life goal, we encourage them to explore and develop their talents. This includes an array of courses and opportunities in science, technology, medicine, and visual and performing arts. Our Monrovia Unified scholars dedicate themselves to gaining the knowledge and skills to achieve any goal they set, while exemplifying strong character in academics, in athletics, in the arts, and in life.

Some of MUSD’s top priorities include providing a high-quality education and strengthening vital character traits that motivate students to contribute to their community. We are fortunate to serve a population that values the importance of using their talents and skills to give back. Whether through Red Ribbon Week, Pennies for Patients, blood drives, or other charitable and community activities, our students and schools take great pride in helping others and in donating time or resources to those in need.



Throughout our students’ time at Monrovia Unified, they will build the intelligence and character that will allow them to flourish in the wider community. They will become responsible citizens, learning that as they follow their own paths and interests in life, they can make a positive difference in the lives of those around them.

The ALA Great Stories Club Grant



Flint Fertig
Principal
Canyon Oaks H.S./
Mountain Park/
Monrovia
Community Adult

This fall, the Monrovia Public Librarian of Youth Services, Anush Balayan, partnered with Canyon Oaks High School and Mountain Park administrators in an effort to obtain the ALA Great Stories Club reading grant for at-risk and underserved students. The ALA Great Stories Club is a thematic reading and discussion program that engages teens who are facing difficult challenges through literature-based library outreach programs. ALA’s long-standing

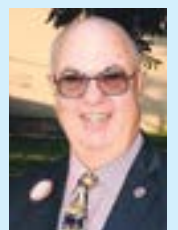
Great Stories Club program model, the Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) series feature books that explore questions of race, equity, identity and history, and support racial healing sessions with participating libraries, their community partners, and their teen readers.

After several weeks of writing and many days collaborating, Ms. Balayan’s hard work had paid off — The ALA Great stories Club selected the Monrovia Library and MUSD alternative schools as a recipient of the grant! Under this grant, students will meet regularly in groups of ten to twelve teens; be provided with up to four theme-related books for each participant to keep as their own and discuss relevant humanities content among peers. Ms. Balayan, an experienced librarian, in close cooperation with COHS/MP, will lead book discussions with teachers, administrator and counselors.

Additionally, our team is looking at options for awarding students the opportunity to participate in this program as a positive behavior and intervention incentive as well as an opportunity to receive school credit.



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President



Ed Gililland
Vice President

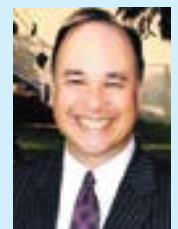
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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Fall is here and students are enjoying the season. In this issue you will read about Outdoor Education, Creative Arts, Moon & Stars Family Night, The Power of Play, Creative Arts and much more...

Our next issue is January 9, 2019. In the meantime, Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!



We are always mindful and thankful for our men and women in our armed services.

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Jayne Nickles
Principal

Our Special Visitors

During the last week of September our Bradoaks classrooms had a small group of student guests become immersed in an excellent American education!

Our fifth-grade teaching team welcomed these student guests and used this unique experience to provide multiple learning opportunities that enriched the lives of everyone. Bradoaks students worked alongside our guests collaborating and learning from each other as they delved into each day's lesson.

Hosting these student guests from China was a very rewarding experience for our students and teachers. During our time together friendships grew and experiences were shared. Students from both countries learned about each other's culture and educational system.

As their visit came to an end, our student guests received a special certificate for participating in this Cultural Immersion Program sponsored by JESIE.



Canyon Early Learning Center

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



Tom McFadden
Director

Partners Preparing!

Canyon Early Learning Center kicked off the school year with an amazing Back to School night. The event began with an overview of the Canyon Early Learning Center Program presented to the parents by the CELC director. Parents were then given an opportunity to visit their children's classrooms and hear from their teachers about all the wonderful learning activities the students will have at Canyon Early Learning Center. There were over one hundred parents in attendance at Back to School Night, and it was a great way to engage with the CELC families.

At Back to School Night, we also discussed themes for the school year. Fall is the first theme we talked about. It is a wonderful time for exploration and discovery at Canyon Early Learning Center. We will discover the colors of fall through themes such as leaves, make-believe and pumpkins. The season wraps up with discussions about family, friends and gratitude. The children will have a wonderful time walking through and taking pictures in our Pumpkin Patch, made possible through donations from families and community members.

Fall also brings some wonderful opportunities for parents. The first opportunity is the Canyon Early Learning Center Parent Advisory Meeting. This meeting will introduce parents to ways they can partner with CELC and how they can help in the process of developing their young learners. Parents will also be involved with creating the fall-based events for the students, like our Pumpkin Patch and Fall Festival Parade.

We love partnering with our parents to make the home-to-school connection as strong as possible. We are looking forward to having fun and learning in our fall activities!

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Clifton *Middle School*

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



Jennifer Jackson
Principal

Cub Nation's Robotics Journey Begins

Our Clifton's robotics teams are off and running as they try to conquer this year's challenge!

The teams compete through an international organization called FIRST. Each year a new game is launched. Our teams must design, build, program, and strategize different ways to overcome the unique obstacles that each year's game has to offer.

Clifton's program director Paul Flores is excited to work with the new team members. "Each group of kids has their own identity," he remarked. "Previous teams have set the bar extraordinarily high with the work they have put in and their subsequent successes. I cannot wait to see what this group of kids is able to accomplish."

Returning Hippy Bot Alex He says that he is looking forward to "competing against older kids and working hard with my teammates to build the best robot we can. It is a lot of work and a lot of time, but we are all looking forward to the challenge."



Mayflower *Elementary*

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



Michele Costarella
Principal

Culture of Play

We know that children who play are resilient, empathetic and active. Through play, children learn to make friends, solve problems, and learn to enjoy physical activity. They also gain valuable social and emotional skills that they will use in the classroom, the workplace and life.

At Mayflower, we understand the power of play. Through the implementation of a new program called Playworks, we have improved our recess and playtime experiences, creating more engagement and inclusiveness for all students. Our staff utilizes positivity and engagement strategies, and students learn to use positive conflict-resolution techniques.

Along with greater opportunities to play games and participate in imaginative play, students are building leadership skills and confidence. Playworks provides opportunities for upper-grade students to serve as Jr. Coaches leading games, working with others, and empowering students to be leaders on campus.

We are proud to be building a culture of play at Mayflower that provides students with a strong sense of belonging, connectedness and community.



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Monroe *Elementary*

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Dr. Lily Jarvis
Principal

Outdoor Education

This September, forty-four Mighty Monroe Lions had an experience of a life time in the beautiful mountains of Southern California! The outdoor science school brought our children engaging, experiential and innovative learning experiences that extended beyond the typical school day. For some of our students this was their first time away from home on an overnight trip, and for some, it was their first time visiting the mountains.

The tearful and excited bunch that left on Monday returned on Wednesday, a little more resilient, a touch more independent and in-tune and connected with nature.

It is our continued commitment to provide our Mighty Monroe Lions with unique and progressive learning opportunities that stretch them beyond the traditional classroom.



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Kirk McGinnis
Principal

WASC 2019

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) will be visiting Monrovia High School (MHS) from March 17–20, 2019. This accreditation visit is an opportunity for the school to be recognized for the outstanding programs available for students as well as to validate the goals set forth for improvement.

The school was granted a full six-year accreditation—the highest award available—in 2013 and has continued to set goals for continued improvement. The visiting team of educators will review a comprehensive report written by the school and then spend three full days on campus visiting classrooms and meeting with constituent groups. The school report and visit will showcase the award-winning programs and the systems MHS has put into place for student success, engagement, and support.



As the school teams strive to create a school campus that allows all students to thrive, this visit will provide both validation and critical feedback for future growth.

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Dr. Geoff Zamarripa
Principal

Taking On Bullying

In an effort to eliminate bullying behavior from our school, Santa Fe is implementing the world-renowned Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This school-wide effort is aimed at educating our students and staff members on the negative impacts that bullying can have on campus, as well as how we can do something about it and restore justice, dignity, and respect for everyone involved.

Comprehensive in scope, the Olweus program uses online data collection tools to gauge the nature and frequency of bullying so that we can analyze the results and develop plans to counteract, educate, and support all students to live a healthy lifestyle full of positive interactions and relationships.

For the 2018–2019 school year, we have created a Wednesday morning schedule with a special time called “Cougar Coaching.” This is dedicated to discussing the effects of bullying, social-emotional issues, and goal setting. Cougar Coaching allows us to further deepen our connections with the students and help strengthen their ability to thrive at Santa Fe while making wise choices, learning to cope with the challenges of adolescent life, and building resilience to succeed in a global democracy.

We look forward to offering opportunities for parents to learn about these important elements through our forthcoming Parent University workshops.

Plymouth *Elementary*

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



Dr. Greg Gero
Principal

Reaching for the Moon and Stars!

Plymouth Elementary School celebrated an astronomical event! On September 21, Plymouth 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 eight high-powered telescopes provided by the a local astronomy group. Families were entertained by a theatrical performance from the second- and third-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.



Families also participated in a number of fun-filled activities, including hands-on science projects, moon-themed art crafts, a moon and stars photo booth, and delicious moon cake and tea tasting.

What a fantastic event for our Plymouth families!

Wild Rose *Elementary*

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



Dr. Leslie Miller
Principal

School of Creative Arts

Hands clapping and students dancing marked the celebration as Wild Rose was presented to the world as the Monrovia Unified School District's designated school of the arts.

Mr. Terrence Williams, president of the board of education, welcomed the entire community to our new Wild Rose School of Creative Arts. He shared that Wild Rose now offers an integrated arts curriculum that extends into, through, and beyond the school day in all curriculum areas.

Live performances showcased the talents of our students and staff members. The Hip Hop Club danced to a Bollywood techno beat, and the entire fourth-grade class sang and danced to Cant Stop this Feeling.

The celebration also featured student speaker Joshua Menlove and faculty member Mrs. Dana Elliott. Both shared their heartfelt passion for both our school and the arts.

I am so proud that we are setting our elementary students on a pathway to the arts. Their first experiences can lead to vistas of potential!



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Helpful Writing Book



Alana F.

Do you ever feel the pains of writer's block? Chances are, you have, if you've ever written before. Well, here's the funny and extremely useful solution! Insightful and hilarious, *642 Things to Write About* is endlessly helpful. Containing prompts like "A houseplant is dying. Tell it why it needs to live," to "A day in the life of the person sitting next to you," this book will give you the best ideas to spark your creativity.

This book is amazing for beginning and experienced writers alike. I'd give it seven out of eight triforce shards for being inspirational and creative, seemingly never running out of things to give you. 642 is a lot of prompts, after all. And even if you're not a 'writer,' per se, this book is great for passing the time. So pull up some cushions, make yourself a cup of tea, and release your inner writer!



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

Fantastic to the End!

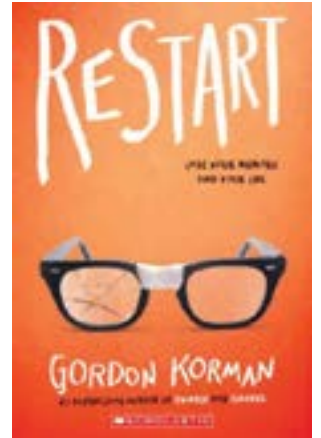


Bailey

I just LOVED *Restart*, by Gordon Karman. It made me laugh and kept me interested with the action.

Boom! Chase wakes up in the hospital. What happened? Where's his mother? He can't remember anything, except a blonde girl with a blue dress. With each day that goes by, Chase meets "new" people and finds out "new" things about him that help bring back the memories of his old life: a cherry bombed piano, a stolen medal of honor, a football star, a cruel bully... Will Chase be able to remember his past? Will he be able to fix it? Or will he remain the rotten kid he was before?

Gordon Karman definitely wrote a great book! I like how the book shows the point of view and opinions from the different characters. I rate this book 4 out of 5 stars.



Bailey is a 7th grader who loves being with her friends and reading. When she isn't doing these things, she's dancing ballet or lyrical.

Toy Store Items Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.
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Congratulations to David Aguilera
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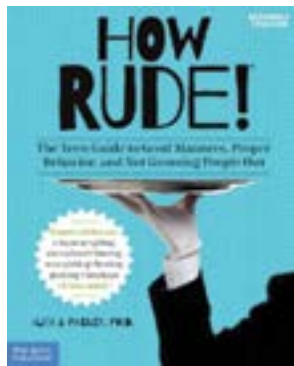
Politely Funny



Christina J.

How Rude!: The Teen Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out By Alex J. Packer, Ph.D

The book title is self-explanatory. Hands down, this was one of the most enjoyable, fun, informational, entertaining, captivating book I have ever read. "Good manners don't cost anything. You can have the BEST for free." You can look up a specific topic or read the whole thing for all-around understanding of manners. So, why choose good manners? I will answer with one quote from the book: "We used to spend every Christmas with my aunt. I was always nasty, bored and annoying brat. When she died, I lost out on her \$1,000,000 will." There are manners for behaving with friends, parents, teachers, employers and much more. The best part is that the book demonstrates how good manners bring you many benefits (for instance, get you a job or get help from teachers) versus how bad manners are detrimental to your life. I give this book a 5 out of 5 stars. 465 pages, but what a worthy reading!



Christina J. is an 9th grader. Christina is an avid reader, who enjoys a good book about some great adventure, mystery or action. She is a hard-working student and a young author herself. In 5th grade she wrote a book *Melody's Stories: I Am a Spy Now*, published by Studenttreasures Publishing (PIN #3582798).

Daring Escapes



Richard J.

I Survived: True Stories: Extreme Weather! By Lauren Tarshis

This book is about real people experiencing weather disasters like the Joplin tornado, hurricane Sandy and avalanches while skiing. It's exciting to read about people's daring escapes. I liked how after each of the 3 stories there is a fact sheet about the weather type and a list of rules to help you be safe in each situation. My favorite survival story is about Ariel, who escaped with her family from their house in Rockaway, New York before hurricane Sandy hit. Afterwards Ariel started a Facebook page to help people get connected to places where they could receive help or get donations to replace the things they lost.

I give this book a 4 out of 5 stars, because I think more details could have been given about each story for more information, but it's definitely a great real-life book that describes helpful skills and provides some good advice.



Richard J. is a 4th grader. Richard likes math, playing sports, physical activities like bike-riding, swimming, diving and running. He is a hard-working student who enjoys reading, seeing and learning new things and spending time with his family and friends.

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Good for the Mind & Great for the Heart



Dr. Shari Sweetnam

The way we choose to spend our time and the activities in which we engage help form our value system. With a wide array of possibilities and opportunities, volunteering is a positive and vastly beneficial way of helping young people develop a strong sense of self.

Volunteering offers benefits spanning from the intellectual and spiritual to the educational and professional. As young people give of themselves and their time, they can learn about being selfless. In a busy world of "pursuit of personal happiness," too often the intrinsic values of empathy and giving are the lessons that are overlooked. Helping others via a structured volunteer program is a positive and safe way to develop oneself in this regard.

Additional Benefits of Volunteerism:

- Learning: Acquiring a new trade or skill can help teens see the world in a bigger picture and be inspired to continue to expand intellectually.
- Networking: Volunteering brings people of like minds, interests and values together. This will inevitably lead to positive interaction and healthy relationships.
- Building the Résumé: Engaging in service to others and taking the initiative to learn new trades or skills is a brilliant way to expand your portfolio. This is especially beneficial for students and young professionals.
- Personal Growth: As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others." Teens who experience growth at an early age are likely to continue cultivating positive behavior and friendships.

Motivational Speaker, Founder of *The Brainpower Programs for Schools*, Author, Consultant, Radio Host contact: info@doctorshari.com, www.doctorshari.com, twitter: DrShariS, Youtube: Dr. ShariS, LinkedIN: Dr. Shari Sweetnam

Global Water Campaign

By Jei Florentino



On September 10th, Los Angeles based environmental education nonprofit Grades of Green kicked off its global Water Campaign for middle and high school students. The Water Campaign engages students to research a local water issue, develop an innovative solution, and then share that solution with the

community to advocate for policy change. Each team receives personalized support throughout the program from a Grades of Green Mentor. Last year's winning Water Campaign teams collectively conserved and protected a total of nearly 900,000 gallons of water. Now, over 80 student teams from 10 different countries are competing to win the \$1,000 grand prize for the team with the most impressive overall impact.

Are you interested in joining a Grades of Green Campaign? Email info@gradesofgreen.org for more information on how to sign your school up for Grades of Green's Waste Campaign beginning January 2019!

Grades of Green has been empowering students to take action to care for the environment since 2010. In this short time, Grades of Green has helped mentor over half a million students across 21 countries. Based in California, they provide personalized mentorship to hundreds of students in the greater Los Angeles area. To find out more information about Grades of Green, email info@gradesofgreen.org and follow us on Instagram @gradesofgreen.

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A Happy Kid in the Digital Age



Happiness is a warm puppy. If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. Don't worry, be happy! Rules for how to live happily are nothing new. But lately, our well-being -- and that of our kids -- seems to be in free fall. Depression, anxiety, and even youth suicide rates are increasing, as is cell phone and device use and the constant expectation

to be "on." Raising kids to be happy in today's world isn't impossible: Many generations of parents have managed to do so when the threats were way worse than FOMO. We just need to rewrite the rules for the digital age.

The quest to make sure our kids are happy may have led us in the wrong direction. While media and tech deserve some of the blame for our collective stress, no one really knows how much. However, we do know that turning everything off doesn't magically make us happier. In fact, studies show that some types of screen-based activities can be beneficial -- and we all know the warm, fuzzy feeling we get when we enjoy media together. As more research emerges on the impact of media and tech on kids' mental health, it confirms what we've always known about how to be happy: Supportive relationships, a feeling of self-worth, strong character, and other positive influences are what really matter. And while you can't mandate joy, supporting your kid -- both online and off -- creates an environment where happiness is there for the taking. These tips can help you raise a happy kid in the digital age:

Get gritty. Grit -- the combination of perseverance and resilience that helps you bounce back from disappointments -- plays an important role in well-being. At school, online, and even with friends, kids feel pressured to achieve something on the first try. Instead, instill what's called a "growth mindset," the process of trying, failing, and learning from mistakes. When they feel defeated, their inner voice will say, "You got this!"

Nourish their sense of self-worth. Likes, comments, and other indicators of online status are part of kids' social-media lives. But there's a tipping point when a kid's perfectly natural curiosity about what others think about them turns into a harmful fixation on peer validation that can cause depression. You can help inoculate your kid against this by fostering an internal sense of self-worth. Encourage activities and hobbies that give kids a sense of accomplishment on their own terms.

Be grateful. Being aware and thankful is a tried-and-true life hack that leads to a stronger sense of well-being. You can actually use media and tech to cultivate a sense of gratitude. Check out sites and apps that let kids help make the world a better place. Watch TV shows and movies that inspire gratitude. At home, create a culture of appreciation by discussing what you're grateful for.

Go outside. Seriously, that's all you need to do. Nature is scientifically proven to boost well-being. If you need inspiration, watch nature movies or download apps that encourage outdoor exploration. Or just put down your phone, close the laptop, turn off the TV, and go for a walk.

Foster connection. In the digital age, kids can make new friends and strengthen existing relationships online, whether it's in a rousing game of Fortnite, a few hearts on Instagram, or even a FaceTime session with the grandparents. But the happiest people are the ones who consistently find a balance between screens and the rest of life. And as the grown-ups, we're the ones who need to model healthy habits. So, carve out screen-free times at home. Unplug everything so you can make eye contact and really listen to family and friends without distractions. By all means, enjoy media together -- but set limits so it doesn't interfere with face-to-face interactions.

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