

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Monrovia Unified School District

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2014

SUPERINTENDENT



World-Class Schools for World-Class Students

The Monrovia Unified School District provides strong programs to help every student succeed—from preschool development and dual-language

Dr. Katherine Thorossian

programs to our Math and Science Academy, Advanced Placement college and career-prep courses. Whether our students are competing at an international robotics competition, winning athletic competitions, or painting murals on their campuses, they demonstrate the 7 Cs emphasized in every school:

- Critical Thinking: the ability to analyze multiple sources of information
- Collaboration: the ability to work with experts from multiple disciplines
- Communication: the ability to effectively translate thought orally and in writing
- Creativity: the ability to think fearlessly in multiple dimensions
- Change: perseverance and resilience within an ever-shifting landscape
- Community: the clear understanding that we draw strength from the collective
- Compassion: that essence of humanity that makes everything worthwhile

Our success is grounded within an active community committed to student achievement in academics, athletics, and the arts. We boast a Nobel Prize winner, professional athletes, and CEOs among our alumni; our students perform in a state-of-the-art theater; our teams have earned consecutive CIF championships; and our students extend their vision of the world in

See SUPERINTENDENT • Page 6

Ready for An Amazing Year!



The newest members of the MUSD team.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Monrovia Unified School District Board of Education welcomes you to the inaugural issue of School News! Our hope is to provide current information on the state of our schools. Our first issue coincides with the start of the 2014-2015 academic year and so, we begin with an introduction to each of our schools, as well as their principals.

In reading through the brief articles, you will come to appreciate, as we do, the expertise and the fierce commitment to student success demonstrated by each of our school leaders. Their passion and persistence

accurately reflect the values of every member of our school community: teacher, counselor, custodian, secretary, clerk, aide, bus driver, food service worker, nurse, psychologist, grounds crew

and district support team. Each of us plays a role in the success of every child - from nourishing them physically to nurturing them emotionally to challenging them intellectually. We believe in the great capacity of our students and are confident that our extraordinary team of professionals will prepare them for college and career by ensuring they have the skills to overcome obstacles, solve problems, and add to the wonder in this world.



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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Welcome to a new school year. We are pleased to begin publishing the excellence from the Monrovia Unified School District every other month. Thank you for including *School News* among your reading choices.

In this first issue we asked the principals to share their bios with you. They always highlight teachers and students and it is fun to find out where they went to school, about their families and hobbies. They all share the same goal of academic excellence for their students.

Our next issue Nov. 12.

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Covering the
MONROVIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Leadership 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 (Please put Monrovia in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **October 15, 2014**
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Accomplished | Organized |
| Caring | Powerful |
| Confident | Responsibility |
| Determination | Role Model |
| Drive | Strong Willed |
| Enthusiastic | Suitable |
| Focused | Teamwork |
| Independent | Trustworthy |
| Initiative | Understanding |
| Intelligent | |

Word Search by Gunnar Coop

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

930 East Lemon Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2100 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Aimee Dyrek
Principal

Touching Children's Hearts

Bradoaks Elementary School has received the California Department of Education's Distinguished School Award not once, but twice! Bradoaks is a school that is known for its strong community involvement and caring staff. Bradoaks students are constantly celebrated for their strong work ethic, academically and behaviorally. The school community gathers together every Wednesday on the school's front lawn for the flag ceremony, where students and staff are recognized for their contributions to the school. Honor pins are handed out to students who have displayed high standards of citizenship and effort. Rapport building with students and families is essential to student success. At Bradoaks, it is said that the way to a child's head is through his or her heart.

Having grown up in the neighboring city of Arcadia and having family in Monrovia, Principal Aimee Dyrek is excited to have the opportunity to be part of a school community she holds so dear. Last year, Aimee served Bradoaks as instructional coach. Mrs. Dyrek is a graduate of Grand Canyon University and Northern Arizona University, and she completed her administrative coursework at Adams State University in Colorado. She has served in public education for 18 years in a variety of capacities. She was an elementary teacher, mentor teacher, instructional coach, district staff developer and assistant principal.

Mrs. Dyrek looks forward to her first year of serving Bradoaks!

Canyon Oaks *High School*

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



Flint Fertig
Principal

A Stellar Educational Experience

Canyon Oaks High School and Mountain Park School are designed to provide an atmosphere where students with a wide range of needs and educational abilities can excel in a nontraditional setting. Staff members provide a safe and caring learning environment where students achieve success, discover and take part in career pathways, and develop both a sense of self-worth and responsibility.

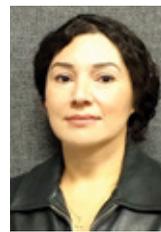
Flint Fertig has served as the director of adult, alternative and career technical programs for over five years. He has served California schools for nearly 20 years as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and director for a number of different schools. Two schools were named California Model Schools under his leadership, including MUSD's Canyon Oaks High School.

Due to the diligent efforts of the Canyon Oaks and Mountain Park staff, over 30 percent of the graduating students have been directly accepted to a four-year university, a percentage that is unparalleled in alternative education. Because of the outstanding efforts of its staff, Monrovia Community Adult School helps 2,300 adult students gain employment skills, earn jobs, learn English, and graduate high school.

Flint has a B.S. from Brigham Young University, an M.A. from Chapman University, an M.A. from La Sierra University, and is near completion of his Ed.D. from La Sierra. Flint will readily admit that Stacey, his wife of over 20 years, is his better half, and together they are raising four stellar children. Flint's oldest son, Ryan, an honors graduate of Bonita High School, has just left home for a two-year mission in Argentina.

Canyon *Early Learning Center*

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



Mariana Sanchez
Director

Committed to An Exemplary Educational Experience

Canyon Early Learning Center is committed to providing an exemplary early childhood educational experience, which meets the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of each child. Our dedicated, knowledgeable staff strives to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences, which encourage hands-on exploration, discovery, problem solving and critical thinking skills. We empower children to believe in themselves and to value diversity. We are dedicated to working in partnership with parents and the greater community as we seek significant ways to prepare today's child for tomorrow's world.

Mariana Sanchez has been the Director at Canyon Early Learning Center for the past 3 years. A graduate of Point Loma, CSULA and Sonoma State, she has served Monrovia Unified School District since 2007 as an elementary school counselor and counselor technician. She has spent most of her professional career working with young children and families in community based settings.

Clifton *Middle School*

222 South Ivy Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2600 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Jennifer Gates
Principal

Changing Lives

Clifton Middle School, a 2013 California Distinguished School, is an amazing school nestled in the foothills of Monrovia with dedicated and talented educators. Clifton is fortunate to have a robust Renaissance program, which places emphasis on the academic effort and achievements of students. The goal of this program is to truly change lives, save lives, and impact futures. It is organized by our remarkable leadership students. Clifton is currently in the process of implementing a school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program to help focus on positive behavior and to teach students expected behaviors without resorting to punitive measures. This will coincide with the Bully-Free Unity Club to foster a culture of acceptance, tolerance, and kindness. Finally, our teachers have done a tremendous job of adopting the new Common Core State Standards as we prepare students for high school and beyond.

Principal Jennifer Gates, a Monrovia Unified School District alumnus, is starting her fourth year at Clifton. She has been an educator for the past 15 years serving as a middle school teacher, high school teacher, and high school assistant principal, prior to her current role as principal. She obtained her bachelor's degree in biology from California Polytechnic University, Pomona and a master's degree in teaching from Azusa Pacific University. She completed her teaching credential at Azusa Pacific and her administrative credential at Point Loma and National Universities.

Monrovia *Adult Education/Alternative Programs/ROP*

920 South Mountain Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3035 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Flint Fertig
Director

Please see
Canyon Oaks High School
for this issue only

Please Drive Safely

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Mayflower *Elementary*

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



Dr. Tamar Kataroyan
Principal

Celebrate 365!

The Mayflower community is committed to its vision of providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets the unique needs of each student. Staff and parents take pride in cooperatively providing powerful learning experiences for students to achieve self-worth, become productive citizens, and conquer the demands of a changing world.

Mayflower school focuses on preparing our students for the future by creating a sense of community in which each child is valued and an enthusiasm for learning is fostered. The school's motto for the 2014–15 school year is "Celebrate 365, where wins will be acknowledged and celebrated every day of the year." An overall emphasis is to create a positive school environment and an effective educational program that encourage our students and staff to take responsibility and pride for their daily work and behavior.

Dr. Tamar Kataroyan recently graduated from the University of Southern California, earning her doctorate in K–12 educational leadership. Prior to taking the helm of the Mayflower Mariners, she served as an elementary and high school teacher, dean of attendance and a high school assistant principal. Dr. Kataroyan earned a Division 1 Basketball scholarship to the University of California, Irvine, where she was a four-year scholar athlete. Additionally, she is the co-founder of a youth-outreach program called FIT, which guides children to develop a healthy social, emotional and physical balance.

Monrovia *High School*

845 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2800 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Kirk McGinnis
Principal

Shining like Silver

Monrovia High School, "Home to Scholars and Champions," has a rich history of providing world-class educational experiences to the youth of Monrovia since its founding in 1893. Monrovia Wildcats are provided with academically rigorous classes with a robust offering of award-winning co-curricular and athletic opportunities. Monrovia High School has earned a full six-year accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is ranked by U.S. News & World Report as a Silver Medal School, placing it in the top 12 percent in California and in the top 6 percent in the nation. The community

of Monrovia truly supported the growth of the "Gem of the Foothills" with the passing of a 45-million-dollar bond to renovate and build state-of-the-art instructional and athletic facilities.

Monrovia high school is proud to offer a full selection of honors and advanced-placement courses as well as career and technical education to prepare students for college and career after high school. The school is home to a robust math and science academy, an award-winning musical department, a nationally recognized video-production class, and countless Rio Hondo League and CIF championship athletic teams. There are over 50 student clubs and organizations that allow students to hone their educational, creative and community-service skills. This last year, one of the four MHS robotics teams won the California State Inspire Award and proceeded to compete at the national level. The Monrovia High School staff takes great pride in the belief of educating the whole child while making authentic connections with students during their four-year school career.

Principal Kirk McGinnis, a Monrovia resident for 14 years and former principal at Mayflower Elementary, is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz with a master's degree in education from Cal State LA. All four of his children attend MUSD schools. He has a passion for making connections with students, staff and the community in order to continue the rich traditions of community of Monrovia and Monrovia High School.

Monroe *Elementary*

402 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2300 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Cynthia Lathrop
Principal

SA Rich History

The Monroe Elementary School community is proud of their school's award-winning, rich history in Monrovia. One of the city's oldest schools, Monroe celebrates student academic success, cultural diversity, and parent involvement. The Monroe Unicycle Club entertains the Monrovia community at parades and school events as Monroe Lions "roar" with pride.

Monroe's Spanish dual-language immersion program sets it apart from all other schools in the area. Students begin in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten to learn Spanish and English. The goal is for all students in the program to be at grade level, bilingual, and bi-literate by the time they finish fifth grade. The program also promotes cultural understanding and embraces diversity. Plans are being made to continue the dual-language program through middle school and high school.

Monroe's principal, Cindy Lathrop, encourages school visits and regularly hosts school tours. "It's amazing to see the students in action," says Ms. Lathrop. "The teachers set high expectations for the students, and the students rise to meet them."

A longtime Monrovia resident, Cindy Lathrop has been the principal at Monroe for the past five years. A graduate of California Polytechnic University, Pomona and California State University, Fullerton, she has served Monrovia Unified School District in a variety of capacities for nearly 30 years. She was an elementary teacher, mentor teacher, instructional coach, and a district program coordinator. Her children both attended Monrovia schools.

Mountain Park

950 South Mountain Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3014 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Flint Fertig
Principal

Please see
Canyon Oaks High School
for this issue only

Plymouth *Elementary*

1300 Boley St., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2400 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Suzanne Heck
Principal

Amazing School, Amazing Leadership

Plymouth Elementary is located in the charming Mayflower Village area of Monrovia and is home to 400 wonderful students. Plymouth teachers embrace the whole child, building self-confidence, resiliency and communication skills while teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Plymouth students know that being a Plymouth Dragon is about being the best you can be.

The amazing Plymouth PTA has ensured that our 21st-century learners can depend upon current technology to reach their individual potentials. To that end, the Plymouth PTA purchased enough laptops for every student to use in the classroom.

Plymouth's principal, Suzanne Heck, boasts that "Plymouth students are the rising stars of the future. We embrace 21st-century learning here at Plymouth." Plymouth students participate in the Los Angeles County Science Olympiad every year, and this year, the team took home the silver medal.

Principal Heck has enriched the fabric of Monrovia for almost 20 years, first as a classroom teacher and program advisor at Bradoaks elementary, then as principal of the Canyon Early Learning Center, and since 2011, the proud principal of Plymouth Elementary School. Mrs. Heck lives in San Dimas with her husband, David, and children Zoe, 9, and Dylan, 7. Her stepdaughter, Jessica, is a Monrovia High School graduate, Class of 2004.

Quest Academy *Day School*

1831 Santa Fe Pl., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2776 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Susan Hirsch
Coordinator

A Successful Transition

Quest Academy is a community day school that serves our most highly at-risk students in grades seven through 12.

Established in September of 2009, the staff at Quest has worked with students who are placed here for a variety of reasons, such as poor school attendance and engagement, excessive disciplinary issues, expulsion, or through the probation system. Our motto at Quest is, "Setting the Course for Life-Long Success," and our high success rate with students underscores this expected outcome.

Through the patience and persistence of our dedicated staff members, Quest students consistently shift to attitudes and habits that lead to growth and success both academically and socially. We are very proud that each year many students successfully transition back to the other school programs, or graduate and go on to community college, trade-technical school, union apprenticeships, or the military.

Our seasoned staff is led by Susan Hirsch. Before taking her current assignment at Quest, Susan had nearly 30 years of experience in the Monrovia Unified School District serving in a variety of teaching and administrative positions. She also leads or co-chairs several community-based groups that further serve our youth and their families.

As we enter our sixth year at Quest Academy, we are excited at the prospect of positively impacting our new and returning students. We are honored to be entrusted with their lives, and pledge to do whatever it takes to ensure the forward progress of each.

SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 1



Dr. Katherine Thorossian

our modern observatory. However, we are most proud of our promise to parents. As you entrust your children to our care, we pledge to safeguard their future by creating opportunities. Regardless of background, our single goal is for all our students to realize their dreams.

The 2013–2014 academic year was filled with success. Monrovia High School was named a Silver School by *U.S. News and World Report*. A comparison of the achievement of our students through multiple measures, including Advanced Placement test scores, graduation rates, and college admissions, ranked Monrovia Unified in the top 12 percent within the state and top six percent in the nation. Our goal is to go for the "gold" in 2014–2015!

Santa Fe *Middle School*

148 West Duarte Rd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2700 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Dr. Caroline Sweeney
Principal

A Sense of Family

Santa Fe Middle School students enjoy an array of activities for a well-rounded education both during and after the school day.

During the school day, Santa Fe prides itself in offering students a rich elective program to build 21st-century technological skills, to cultivate the inner artist, to improve their musical prowess, to speak a different language, or to grow the language of compassion through Renaissance and Leadership.

After school, students may be found on the field or in the gym participating in football, basketball, volleyball, softball or soccer.

Or you might find a Cougar eighth-grader tutoring a sixth-grader in Project Pass, working in Homework Club, or even designing a robot to continue the tradition of excellence with our award-winning Robotics Team.

Even more than they do on the exceptional programs, the staff of Santa Fe Middle School prides itself on maintaining a sense of family. They teach the Common Core State Standards in the classroom and learn about their students throughout the day. It is not uncommon to see teachers and students walking the halls at snack or lunch discussing the latest sports game or eagerly anticipating the latest book series turned into a motion-picture release. These seemingly insignificant moments are the ones that bind the Cougar Community and remind them that strength and success come from the work of the collective.

Dr. Caroline Sweeney, principal of Santa Fe Middle School, earned her undergraduate degree at University of California, Berkeley in math, two master's degrees from Azusa Pacific University and a doctorate from the University of Southern California in 2010.

Wild Rose *Elementary*

232 Jasmine Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2500 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Stacy Ayers
Principal

Planting the Seeds of Success

Wild Rose Elementary School is known for implementing innovative programs to support student learning outside of the core subject areas.

Wild Rose recently received an award for their "iTouch into Foreign Language" program. This year the school is implementing "Power Hour," a time in which all children can receive intervention and enrichment at their own learning levels. Wild Rose also offers a K–5 visual arts program. Students are exposed to an artist per month and have the opportunity to leave the school with an extensive art portfolio.

The fourth-grade students at Wild Rose participate in dance through the California Dance Institute. Principal Ayers notes that, "Student excellence can be measured in many ways, and we try to provide experiences where all students can find personal success."

Wild Rose Principal Stacy Ayers started her successful career in Monrovia in 1996 as a second-grade teacher at Monroe Elementary School. Under her nine years of leadership Wild Rose has received the California Distinguished School Award, the Title I Achievement Award, four Golden Bell Awards, and the California Business for Educational Excellence award.

Principal Ayers continues to provide vision. She inspires her students to succeed, and supports her staff's efforts to use 21st-century practices to achieve the highest-quality instruction. Through creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication, the staff at Wild Rose is planting the seeds for student success.

School News



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Establishing a Routine



**Sandy Spurgeon
McDaniel**

One of several issues child advocates are concerned about these days is that children are not getting enough sleep at night. A regular bedtime is essential to the health and growth of your child.

If eight o'clock is the child's bedtime, it is made clear that there is no room service or further negotiating after eight. "I am done with my mothering/fathering for today. Your job is to get some sleep. Once I leave the room, any requests, complaints or fooling around noise will cost you fifteen minutes off of when you go to be tomorrow night. Two complaints means you go to bed tomorrow night at seven thirty. It is time to sleep. I will be glad to see you tomorrow." Hugs and kisses are given and the line drawn in the sand—no more communication.

Children need a regular study time each day. This is sometimes difficult with the multiple interruptions provided by the after school extra curricular schedule. To the extent the time is regular will the child be able to adapt to doing the work at hand.

With a child who has trouble focusing, it is best to have the child show you what the homework is and then show you what he/she has accomplished at the end of the homework period. Tell the child up-front that work must be legible (Your teacher will love you for this one!) and the work must be done. Work that is not legible will be copied over.

Keep an eye on your child's progress. Too many children flounder in school and then don't have the initiative or skills to catch up again. Ask the teachers for a grade report long before the school schedule provides one. Let the teachers know you will support them and that you want to know if your child slips behind. A letter to the teacher might say, "Thank you for choosing to teach school. We want our son/daughter to be successful this semester and request that you let us know if he/she begins to fall behind, not do homework or otherwise fail to do his/her job in school. Thank you for your time and caring."

Inspire your child, help your child and do not do for your child what he/she needs to learn to do for self. As a former classroom teacher, I can tell you that it is easy to spot work that is done by a parent, not the child. This is especially true with projects. When one California mission is crudely glued together with popsicle sticks and another one has architectural design involved, a teacher knows that the parent probably took over the project.

Working together on a project is great fun, and it is important not to take the "child" out of the project. A good grade is not as important as a sense of doing something yourself. And, if the child puts off a project let him/her fail. Failing is an important lesson that inspires a child to make better choices. Rescuing a child does not teach responsibility.

Most important, make it clear that your child has two jobs in your home:
(1) to be a good human being and (2) to do his/her best in school.

Sandy Spurgeon McDaniel has written four adult books, and a new children's book: *Believe You Are Beautiful*. She has taught school, raised two children, worked as a consultant to schools and has worked with children and families for 52 years. Sandy now lives in Meridian, Idaho. ParentingSOS.com, Amazon and Kindle



iFantastic!



Kate Karp

Whether you're teaching a dual-immersion or a bilingual primary class in English and Spanish or if you just want to introduce English-only children to Spanish, Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band's *iFantastic!* fits its title (that's *fantastic*, natch).

The indie-rock band is a combo of accordions, harmonicas, percussion, guitars and vocalists, including Diaz's wife, Alisha Gaddis. The Jam Band's music has been featured on a major soft-drink commercial, and their previous albums have won praise, including being named Best New Children's Artist by *USA Today*. Their latest collection, sung entirely in Spanish, will have children and parents latching on to the music like a grab bar in a train and joyfully riding it all the way to the last stop.



Some of the songs on the CD were translations of previously recorded Jam Band tunes; the others were written for the CD. "Los números" ("The Numbers") will teach number names in Spanish, and "El gato astronauta," ("The Astronaut Cat"), charming in its own right, will extend the knowledge to simple addition. "A bailar" ("Let's Dance") involves directionality and body awareness through movement and a very catchy tune. "Tres ratones" ("Three Mice")

is a charmer of a repetitive tale: the title characters try to hold on to their own tales in a garden as they hide from a cat. The song's lyrics are simple and a natural fit for the rhythm and the accompanying Dylanesque harmonica played by Joe Harpeat.

The Spanish can be easily translated by anyone with a working knowledge of Spanish. They're available for free download at www.luckydiazmusic.com.

Kate Karp is an editor for *School News Roll Call* and a freelance writer and editor.

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