

# School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 33  
SUPERINTENDENT

MAY 2019

## PYLUSD Sparks Joy in the Next Generation of Teachers



### Dynamic Learning for All in PYLUSD

In the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District's strategic plan titled, "The PYLUSD Advantage," Focus Area 2.0 identifies "Effective Instruction

and Leadership" as essential to the academic growth and sustained excellence of our students. Our organization is committed to developing strategic leaders who embrace the vision and values of our District in whatever role they serve.

Any given week, the District holds a wide variety of content-based trainings and extensive learning opportunities geared towards the development of our people – both certificated and classified. We even have an entire facility dedicated to the growth of our workforce called the PYLUSD Professional Development Academy in Yorba Linda.

Some examples of specific content trainings we've offered this year include sessions on Balanced Literacy, Google Slides 101, Vocabulary Building, GATE Collaboration, and Business/Human Resources Software just to name a few.

Another dynamic learning opportunity in PYLUSD is the Aspiring Leaders Program, an annual offering devoted to advancing a small cohort of certificated individuals who may aim to enter into an administrative role in the future. Under the direction of our District's leaders, participants fine-tune their leadership skills through in-depth discussions and collaborative activities along the way. They also partake in an internship committed to practicing servant leadership in benefit of our organization.

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From the District

High school students received an authentic professional development experience at first-ever Future Educator Pathway Summit.

On March 18, 2019, the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District (PYLUSD) hosted nearly 70 high school students for the inaugural "Sparking Joy Future Educator Pathway Summit." All student participants are enrolled in the Teacher Pathway Program at either Esperanza (EHS) or Valencia High School (VHS).

The goal of the summit was to match the professional learning opportunities that PYLUSD teachers receive in benefit of students.

"We want to grow our own teachers. That means imparting the idea that teachers are lifelong learners," shared Cary Johnson, Director of K-12 Innovation and Technology for PYLUSD.

The morning began with a few words from distinguished guests including PYLUSD Superintendent, Dr. Greg Plutko, Deputy Superintendent, Candy Plahy, Cary Johnson, Director of Human Resources, Cara Robinson, Association of Placentia Linda Educators (APLE) President, Linda Manion, and California State University, Fullerton's College of Education Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Kim Case. All of the speakers shared about their personal experiences in education, as well as uplifting notes of encouragement for the future teachers.

The event then went on to feature a variety of STEM-oriented breakout sessions for students to choose from instructed by PYLUSD teachers on special assignment



Superintendent, Dr. Greg Plutko, inspires students with stories of his own career in education at the inaugural Future Educator Pathway Summit.

Kim Voge, Jenner Rasic, Stacy Owens, Will Truong, and STEM Coordinator Eddie Tabata. Sessions included specialized information about effective instructional practices, as well as integrating technology into the classroom.

In partner with the North Orange County Regional Occupational Program (ROP), the Teacher Pathway is one of the District's newest career technical education programs. Students in this pathway, known as teachers in training, learn about the growth and development of children, classroom management, lesson planning, exceptional student issues, and much more.

Esperanza's program, known as the Aztec Bulldog Connection or "ABC," partners with Glenview Elementary School down the street from their campus. Valencia's program, named Tigers Leading Cubs or "TLC," works collaboratively with Kraemer Middle School and Ruby Drive Elementary School. Classes offered include Principles of Teaching and Learning, Teaching Students with Special Needs, Child Development. The programs are led by North Orange County ROP teachers Bird Potter at EHS and Amy Jensen at VHS.

"Our purpose was to emulate an authentic professional development day. Students need to write their future story; we're just helping with the narrative," ended Johnson.

### Board of Education



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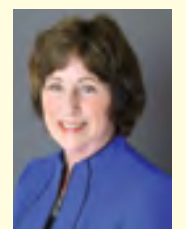
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**Covering the  
PLACENTIA-YORBA LINDA  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



As this school year comes to a close I want to thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. PYLUSD has much to be proud of and it is a privilege to bring you the excellence from the classrooms.

Our next issue is November 8th. Have a wonderful summer!



## Bernardo Yorba Middle School (7-8)

5350 Fairmont Blvd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7400 • www.byms.org



**Ken Valburg**  
Principal

### AVID March Madness

Bernardo Yorba Middle School's AVID students recently hosted March Madness College Week, a fun-filled activity week designed to promote college awareness in our student body, as well as develop leadership skills in the seventh- and eighth-grade AVID students.

The week's activities included "College Fun Facts" during the morning announcements, a College-Mascot Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest at lunch,

and a college corn hole game at break. During the corn hole game, the students had to answer a college fact and get a bean bag in the hole to win a prize.

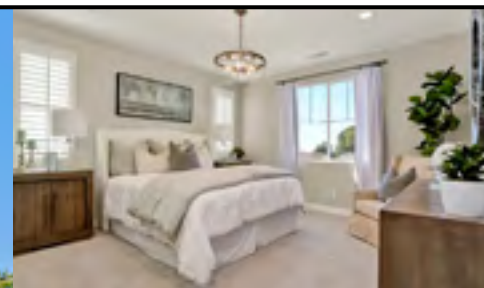
The Matadors also made predictions on which college might win the March Madness Basketball Tournament. While the school doesn't know if their picks will make it through the brackets, BYMS is certain that everyone enjoyed the week, and learned a whole lot about colleges and universities!



# Jasmine

at Loma Vista

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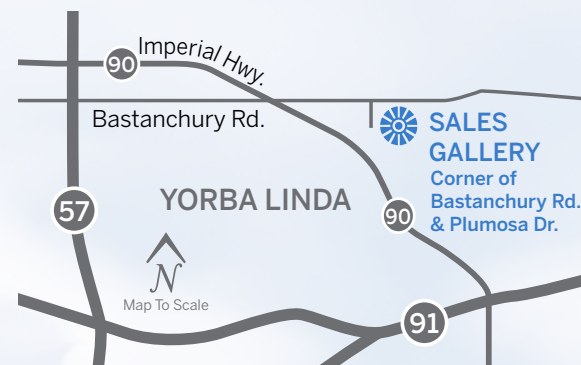
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Julie Lucas  
Principal

**A Magical Evening!**  
Every spring for the last 19 years our Brookhaven kindergarten teachers have been holding a very magical evening known as “The Fairy Tale Ball.” On this special evening, each kindergarten student gets to attend the Fairy Tale Ball with their King (dad) or Queen (mom) as their date.



The Ball is the culminating activity of a unit on fairy tales and stories from our newly adopted Benchmark Advance curriculum. Our students learn about characters, setting, and plot. They then discuss their stories and engage in activities such as the creation of group projects about the classic fairy tales! As they read each fairy tale, students create artwork that is then used to decorate our MPR for the Fairy Tale Ball event.



Parent volunteers and teachers use this artwork to transform the MPR into a ballroom that creates a magical evening for our kings and queens and princes and princesses. This magical night is just one of the many experiences that our students are able to participate in. It brings their learning to life and creates memories that will last a lifetime!



Carey J. Aiello  
Principal

**Raptors Reach Out**  
*By Carey Aiello, Principal*  
El Camino’s Project Based Learning team is committed to designing learning experiences that support academic growth, development of workplace skills, and authentic community connections. Students participating in Project Me, a PBL class combining English, mathematics, and digital arts, are addressing the following essential question: How can I declare myself in a manner that is beneficial to my personal growth and my larger community?



Project Me students share their experience with local middle school students. Junior, Jaime Velazquez, embraces the role of teacher.

Through examination of street art, our students are learning key academic, interpersonal, and entrepreneurial skills. In March, Project Me students shared their recent tour of downtown Los Angeles street art with their younger peers at Tuffree Middle School. The high school students provided a formal presentation, shared a student-created video, and demonstrated spray paint art in action. The middle school students produced their own art, while the high school students offered support. Project Me students hope to share their talents through an installation of a mural in the city.



Shannon Robles  
Principal

**Shining on Stage**  
One of the many ways students can show off their talents at Bryant is through our school play. This is made possible through the support of our amazing PTA. This year featured a musical, *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. This musical was open to students ranging from Preppy Kindergarten to fifth grade. Over 50 students participated in the play. A local professional production company ran our auditions and rehearsals and directed our musical. Parents donated our set, which included spectacular paintings of the Peanuts gang that many of us remember from our childhoods.

Our students spent countless hours preparing for their parts, and they shined on stage while their friends, family, teachers and peers came out to support them. We had so many talented students that there were two different casts, and they added two extra songs to be sure to showcase all of the talent. The musical consisted of four different shows to attend, all of which provided fun and entertainment. We are so proud of all of our students who shined in this production and grateful to our PTA and parent community that make experiences like this possible.



Gina Aguilar  
Principal

**Working in Partnership**  
Esperanza is proud to offer the “ABC Teacher Pathway” that prepares students for future careers in education. In the capstone course called “Principles of Teaching and Learning,” students work side-by-side in classrooms with a Glenview Elementary School teacher. In the “Teaching Students with Special Needs” course, our students work in partnership with the Esperanza special education teachers. The Pathway students also recently participated in the “Sparkling Joy Future Educator Pathway Summit,” an event put on by the PYLUSD to give our future educators the opportunity to participate in an authentic professional development day. In addition, our students may also join Educators Rising, an organization that participates in community service projects as well as the state competition each year. This year, four students placed in the top-three of their respective categories at the state level, and this summer they will go on to the nationals in Dallas, Texas. The categories include lesson planning, job interview, and creative lecture.





# El Dorado *High School (9-12)*

1651 N. Valencia Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7580 • [www.edhs.org](http://www.edhs.org)



**Joey Davis**  
*Principal*

### Artist of the Year

On Sunday, March 10, the Orange County Register, in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), announced the 2019 Artist of the Year nominees. In total, EDHS had 11 of the 22 PYLUSD students nominated in the six categories of Dance, Film/Animation, Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Theater, and 2D Visual Arts. This year, a total of 507 students were nominated by teachers and private instructors from 88 Orange County high schools and arts organizations as the county's standout arts students.

The EDHS nominees are: DANCE - Sydney Serrano; FILM/ANIMATION - Joe Siroonian (DMAA '19), Joeli Schwartz (DMAA '19); INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC - Lia Mimun, Maxximus Gomes; VOCAL MUSIC - Kelly Kudlik. Sophia Scarsi; THEATER - Cory R. Wright, Krista Eliot; MUSICAL THEATER - Julia Chau, Hannah Oertwig

In addition the annual PTA Reflections competition recently announced the results. Congratulations to the following EDHS students: 1st place Award of Excellence in the Music Composition Category - Maverick Shuck; 2nd place Award of Distinction in the Photography Category- Tabitha Rogers; 3rd place Award of Merit in the Literature Category - Alyssa D'Errico. Film Production Winners: 1st place Film Production - Cameryn Harvey; 2nd place Film Production Rebecca Mezza; 3rd place Film Production Tyler Black.

Finally, Chapman University hosted the annual Holocaust Art and Writing Contest recently. El Dorado Junior, Ethan Lee was selected as a finalist for his film. The film featured a dance choreographed and performed by 10th grader Ava Siniscalchi.

We are proud of all these talented Golden Hawks and their artistic accomplishments. Links to their work are posted on our Website.

# Fairmont *Elementary (K-6)*

5241 Fairmont Blvd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7130 • [www.fairmontelementary.com](http://www.fairmontelementary.com)



**Cynthia Rex**  
*Principal*

### Honoring Our Volunteers

Over 200 parents and community members volunteer their time and talents at Fairmont Elementary School every week! Our office is always humming with good citizens signing in and out as they support our 900 students. Our volunteers teach art lessons, assist in the library, listen to children read, answer questions in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) lab, organize emergency supplies, plan events, and fill in wherever needed during the school day.

Our PTA Executive Board and committee chairmen work with our administration and teachers to support our school goals, helping every child to have a positive school experience. It is a difficult challenge each



year to choose who to honor, as we are only able to recognize a few. Well-deserved recognition for 2018-2019 goes to: Cathy Suh and Lett Robertson, Honorary Service Awards; Ron Barry, Very Special Person Award; and Jan Horton and Sue Yamamoto, Outstanding Teacher Awards. Congratulations!

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# George Key School *(K-12)*

710 E. Golden Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7170 • [www.georgekey.org](http://www.georgekey.org)



**Kim Smith**  
*Principal*

## We Did It!

It “pays” to be a small school with students, parents, and staff who support the REACH Foundation! What better way to spend a Sunday morning than to meet up with our amazing school family for a walk/jog/roll around the park for a good cause!

The students were all smiles as they navigated the course. We were very fortunate to have students from Mr. Nakanishi’s sixth-grade class at Brookhaven Elementary School to push our students for the 5K. Anytime our students have opportunities to interact with their typical peers it is a win for everyone. We are grateful for their willingness to help, and their compassion for our wonderful students.



Thank you to the REACH Foundation for their support of our schools and to the district for the extra \$1,000 incentive to participate. George Key School will use these funds well.

# Glenknoll *Elementary (K-6)*

6361 Glenknoll Dr., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7140 • [www.glenknoll.org](http://www.glenknoll.org)



**David Cammarato**  
*Principal*

## Celebrating 50 Years!

Glenknoll Elementary School celebrated their 50th anniversary this year! The school hosted an all-school assembly and carnival during the month of April. The event highlighted some of its history and invited previous principals, alumni and our Yorba Linda mayor to speak at the assembly. The celebration was followed by a reception for guests in the multipurpose room where memorabilia and artifacts that had been collected from the past 50 years were available to view.

Glenknoll was the 11th school built by the Placentia Unified School District during a rapid expansion era that began in 1959. Glenknoll first opened its doors in 1968 along with fellow Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District (PYLUSD) campuses Tuffree Middle and Brookhaven Elementary. Glenknoll creates an environment that enriches the lives of approximately 500 students and has a rich history and connection to the community, which makes Glenknoll such a great place for children to learn! Glenknoll was recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2008, 2014 and 2018 and a California Gold Ribbon School in 2016. We are proud of these accomplishments.

Elementary school has a powerful connection for people, and most of us can name that teacher that meant something special to us or a classmate who may have become a lifelong friend, and of course the activities that hold a special place in our hearts and minds. A special thank-you to our 50th anniversary team for putting this event together: Krista Dorado, Sarah Hoffman, Becky Wren, Amy Huhn, Jackie Deano, Shelly Frost and Sheri Hess. Glenknoll has impacted students over the last 50 years, and it was a great day of reflection as well as a look into the future of how Glenknoll will continue to impact our community.

# Teachers See the Possibilities

During her first year teaching in her own classroom, Rene Engle discovered that reaching high-school learners means setting clear expectations while getting to know students’ hearts and strengths. Growth happens together every day, she says—for both student and teacher.



Gladstone High School, 9th Grade English Class, Teacher: Rene Engle '16, Single Subject Teaching Credential '17

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# Glenview *Elementary (K-6)*

1775 Glenview Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/986-7150 • [www.glenviewbulldogs.org](http://www.glenviewbulldogs.org)



**Alondra Ramos**  
*Principal*

## Spirit Squad

Glenview Elementary School's Spirit Squad relaunched this March for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Last spring, parent volunteer Stephanie Aven brought the program to Glenview after learning about the school's interest in a dance cheer performance opportunity for students.

Now in its second year, Glenview's Spirit Squad has partnered with Esperanza High School (EHS) Cheer and Song Team to give participants more opportunities to grow and learn. Coach Stephanie and parent volunteer Amber Fairburn are instructing the squad of 76 members by teaching dance choreography and incorporating the school's Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) core values of showing their P-A-W-S. In the new partnership with EHS Cheer and Song, Glenview's Spirit Squad is now learning cheer basics, including cheer angles, moves, jumps, and stunts, all of which will prepare them for their performance at this year's school carnival being on May 31.



# Kraemer *Middle School (7-8)*

645 N. Angelina Dr., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/996-1551 • [www.kraemerms.org](http://www.kraemerms.org)



**Keith Carmona**  
*Principal*

## Fix it Fridays

Kraemer Middle School AVID Ambassadors facilitated Fix-it Fridays. During Fix-it Fridays, students needing additional help with organization can attend a 30-minute

tutorial session where they work on organizing their universal binders.

AVID Ambassadors assist students in small groups by three-hole punching papers, organizing papers in the three-rings, throwing away old work, and restocking on supplies such as dividers, papers, and even new binders.

After attending a Fix-it Friday, students are prepared for success!



# Golden *Elementary (K-6)*

740 E. Golden Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7160 • [www.golden.pylusd.org](http://www.golden.pylusd.org)



**Dr. Alison DeMark**  
*Principal*

## Outdoor Science Camp

Golden Elementary sixth-graders attended Emerald Cove Outdoor Science School in April. It was an incredible week in the San Bernardino Mountains at Green Valley Lake, with all of our sixth-grade teachers in attendance!

Students participated in daily hikes, science lessons and team-building activities with their cabin mates. In addition, sixth-grade campers worked together to ensure that the camp was left in better condition than when they arrived. Students spread seeds, ensured that wildlife habitats were preserved, and practiced water-conservation efforts by taking three-minute showers!

Principal DeMark and Assistant Principal McDonald visited campers on their last full day of camp and were able to participate in the skit-night activities with the campers and teachers.

Wonderful memories were made, and new friendships were fostered throughout the week in the mountains.



# La Entrada *High School (9-12)*

4999 Casa Loma Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7026 • [www.laentradahighschool.org](http://www.laentradahighschool.org)



**Carrie Bisgard**  
*Principal*

## Different Pathway

Looking for a different pathway through high school? La Entrada High School could be right for you. LEHS features two distinct pathways for students.

**Independent Pathway** students complete 20-25 hours of weekly coursework independently and attend meetings on campus for approximately two to four hours per week. They focus on one class at a time, completing a class every four weeks. This pathway maximizes flexibility, allowing students to work whenever and wherever suits them best!

## Hybrid Pathway

students attend daily two-hour academic sessions and work ten additional hours per week online. This offers the advantage of daily teacher support, while still maintaining the advantage of a short day in a small classroom.



**Students at their cap and gown graduation in 2018.**

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# Lakeview *Elementary (K-5)*

17510 Lakeview Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7190 • [www.lakeview.pylusd.org/](http://www.lakeview.pylusd.org/)



**Tamie Beeuwsaert**  
*Principal*

## Congratulations, Mr. Raul!

I am proud to announce that Lakeview Elementary School's wonderful plant coordinator, Raul Lopez, was recently recognized as the 2018--2019 Support Services Employee of the Year for his outstanding service and dedication to our students, staff, and community.

Raul, or Mr. Raul, as the students call him, is the perfect recipient of this recognition. Mr. Raul doesn't just perform his job every day—he engages with our students and staff and has fun while doing it. He greets everyone on campus with a huge smile every single day. And, as busy as he is getting the school ready for a day of learning, he is never too busy to set up our speakers on Fridays to play music for the students. He is our resident disc jockey, and the students love to see him dancing to the music and greeting them as they arrive.

We love you, Mr. Raul!



# Mabel Paine *Elementary (K-5)*

4444 Plumosa Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7210 • [www.mabelpaine.org](http://www.mabelpaine.org)



**Melanie Carmona**  
*Principal*

## The Greatest Show

More than 200 students performed in Mabel Paine Elementary School's talent show on March 27. The show included grade-level, small-group, and individual performances, all of which were featured on the stage of the Valencia High School auditorium.

PTA and parent volunteers dedicated countless hours to choreographing, designing, organizing, supervising, and hosting the event. On any given day in the weeks before the performance, Mabel Paine had little pockets of students practicing on the basketball courts or grassy fields, perfecting their routines.

Performances spanned all grade levels and included dance routines and piano, drum, and voice solos. The entire event was led by a group of fifth-grade emcees, who treated the audience to short skits between each act. Perhaps the most heartwarming moment of the night was when a group of students



with special needs took the stage with their student and staff "big buddies" to perform the Internet phenomenon "Baby Shark" together.

All of the students' hard work paid off with ample smiles and a great deal of applause.

# Linda Vista *Elementary (K-5)*

5600 S. Ohio St., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7200 • [www.lindavistaelementary.org](http://www.lindavistaelementary.org)



**Kristen Petrovacki**  
*Principal*

## A Place to Belong

Every year our third- and fifth-grade students participate in the district's annual Stakeholder Survey. Of all the questions that our students are asked, I believe the most significant one is, "Do you feel like you belong at your school?" In recent years we have increased from 67 percent to 89 percent the number of students who feel that sense of belonging.

Although it is hard to pinpoint the exact reasons for our increase in score over the past few years, we have implemented a variety of supports that we believe have positively impacted our students' sense of belonging at school. One example of this is our morning walking program, which helps to ease student transition from home to school and ensures an active start to the school day.

We have also implemented alternatives to recess that include both indoor games and a robot club where students can form connections with their peers in a more sheltered environment. Additionally, we have facilitated several social skills groups that have helped us to address and support the social and emotional needs of our students.

Students also benefit from the leadership of our peer mentors, big buddies, and student council officers, who all lead by example and make an extra effort to ensure that all students have an alliance at school.

The adults on campus play the most critical role in our students' perceived sense of belonging. Our teachers and support staff fully invest in the "name, face, and story" of each student, and they go to great lengths to support them in their journey. Our parent community also goes to great lengths to support and implement enriching activities and events that further connect our students to their school.

As a school community, we are determined to achieve 100 percent. We believe that every child deserves to feel a sense of belonging at their school.

# Melrose *Elementary (K-5)*

974 S. Melrose St., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7220 • <https://melrose.pylusd.org>



**Cynthia Alvarez**  
*Principal*

## Melrose Students Read Everywhere!

Our students at Melrose have been busy reading. Parents, teachers, staff members, and the entire community have joined together to set reading goals with our students and monitor their reading progress.

These Magnificent Marlins are tasked with reading to their siblings, family members, staff members, friends, or even a pet. Our teachers have also developed classroom monitoring systems, and utilize AVID strategies that show the students how to keep track of their pacing and progress towards goals. Our librarian also celebrates their progress weekly during regular library visits.

During the second trimester, we celebrated reading with our Read Across America community event. Every trimester those Marlins who achieve their three goals of accuracy, book level, and percentage achieved are recognized with their friends and family at an awards ceremony. They also later celebrate with a pizza luncheon.



Our role is to develop strong readers who will be able to access the curriculum and thrive in school. Most importantly, we strive to spark the love of learning and reading in our students.

Our Marlins can read both here and there; our Marlins love to read everywhere!



# Morse *Elementary (K-6)*

431 E. Morse Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/524-6300 • [www.morseschool.net](http://www.morseschool.net)



**Tonya Gordillo**  
*Principal*

## Genius Hour

This year, Morse Elementary Academy students are becoming specialists in their areas of interest. During Genius Hour, students explore their own passions and discover creative ways to share these passions.

Throughout the spring, students participate in Genius Hour sessions in our inquiry lab. Scholars research, speak to specialists in the field of study, view Web sites, and read educational materials to learn more about their topic of interest. At the end of the school year, students will present their learning during an Academy Night Showcase.



To kick off this year's academy, our scholars spent the afternoon developing as a community of learners. They wrote inquiry-based questions in wonder journals as they contemplated what made them curious. Students were actively engaged in team-building activities as they shared their wonders and curiosity about the world. Students left very excited and inquiring about future academies and events.

# Parkview *Home Schooling (K-12)*

2189 N. Kraemer Blvd., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7050 • [www.parkviewpylud.org](http://www.parkviewpylud.org)



**James Hardin**  
*Principal*

## Seussical Jr.

Parkview School performed "Seussical Jr." on Friday, February 15 and Saturday, February 16 at the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District Performing Arts Center.

Each show was approximately an hour and a half. The musical's theme was centered on doing what's right, friendship, and community. The small, but mighty Parkview community dedicated themselves to over five months of rehearsals with 20 different choreographed dances. In addition, all the sets were designed, constructed, and painted by the school's families. More than 70 volunteers worked tirelessly to support the performances' success. And lastly, Parkview's version of Seussical Jr. included over 600.

Way to go Parkview!



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# Rio Vista *Elementary (K-5)*

310 N. Rio Vista St., Anaheim, CA 92806 • 714/986-7240 • [www.riovistaschool.org](http://www.riovistaschool.org)



**Jose Cabrera**  
*Principal*

## Student Chefs

Students at Rio Vista Elementary School continue to amaze us with their talents, not only as scholars but now with their culinary skills. In collaboration with the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District Nutrition Services and our Children's After School Arts (CASA) program, our students were immersed in discussions on healthy eating, recipe development, and cafeteria menu items.

In February, five scholars worked with staff to develop their dishes and present their recipes to a panel of judges. Students were scored on originality, flavor, preparation, and presentation. The final cook-off was held at Yorba Linda High School on March 26 in the school's culinary classroom, where these student chefs had access to state-of-the-art cooking equipment.



Chefs Brian Rios-Juarez and Miranda Vega tied for first place, Delfina Alvarez earned third place, and Izabel Dominguez and Vanessa Cortez were both recognized as runners-up. Brian and Miranda's dishes will be featured on the district's elementary menu in May.

# Rose Drive *Elementary (K-5)*

4700 Rose Dr., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7250 • [www.rosedrive.pylusd.org](http://www.rosedrive.pylusd.org)



**Kathleen Escaleras-Nappi**  
*Principal*

## Rising to the Challenge

Dr. Seuss once said, "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?" At Rose Drive School, we believe in the power of a positive growth mindset. Our shared vision embraces our commitment to nurturing a dynamic learning community that prepares all students for success, now and in the future. This trimester, Roadrunners had various opportunities to shine, collaborate, and learn new skills. Three of the recent extracurricular opportunities that allowed our students to thrive were Garden Club, Young Scholars Clubs and "Willy Wonka Jr."

Our Garden Club planed California poppies, potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes, nasturtiums, strawberries, and peas. Students are taking a leadership role in maintaining our garden and helping it to grow.

In our Young Scholars afterschool club, students focused on improving

their reading comprehension and math operations by working together and explaining their solutions. Lastly, our students performed "Willy Wonka, Jr." this trimester and showed us that hard work and dedication are key qualities of a Roadrunner scholar.

We are proud of all that our students have achieved.



# Ruby Drive *Elementary (K-6)*

601 Ruby Dr., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/996-1921 • [www.rubydrive.org](http://www.rubydrive.org)



**Diana McKibben**  
*Principal*

## District Cook-off

We are so proud of our Ruby Chefs who moved onto the second round of the district cook-off! Thank you district Chef Orlando, whose idea brought creativity and ingenuity amongst the competitors.

They were required to develop a recipe using broccoli as the main ingredient while meeting PYLUSD nutritional guidelines! In addition, they provided the quantity of ingredients, as well as the preparation steps. Their public speaking skills were activated through explaining the presentation for the judges' tasting.

Thank you chefs Jane Delgado, Valeria Madrigal, Eduardo Maya, Miranda Rios, and Sammy Ruiz for your bravery in this endeavor!



Congratulations to Miranda Rios (lemon-broccoli pasta skillet), Sammy Ruiz (broccoli-cheddar soup) & Valeria Madrigal (steak-broccoli quesadilla) for moving on to the second round!

# Sierra Vista *Elementary (K-6)*

1811 N. Placentia Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7270 • [www.sierravistapta.com](http://www.sierravistapta.com)



**Jacque Bluemel**  
*Principal*

## Ecolutions Club

Sierra Vista Elementary School sixth-graders have the opportunity to be part of a unique club called Ecolutions. This group of students is dedicated to creating a sustainable, beautiful environment in our school and our community.

The club was started in 2011. Since then, they have been responsible for planting and maintaining two fruit and vegetable gardens and implementing a school and community recycling program. They have also been certified as a Monarch Waystation

by the University of Kansas Monarch Watch Program.

Each year, Ecolutions spearheads the Earth Week activities, including "Dreaming of a Green Future" on Pajama Day, participating in International Walk/Roll to School Day, and enjoying a waste-free lunch on the lawn.

We are so proud of all the hard work Ecolutions students do to keep Sierra Vista green!



Ecolutions club members work in one of two gardens on campus.



# Topaz *Elementary (K-6)*

3232 Topaz Ln., Fullerton, CA 92831 • 714/993-9977 • www.topazschool.org



**Christa Borgese**  
*Principal*

## Working Together

Topaz Elementary is proud to be partnering with OC GRIP (Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership) in encouraging our students to be the best Topaz Tigers they can be!

OC Grip is a collaborative effort between the Orange County District Attorney's Office, the O.C. Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department, various police departments, several school districts, faith-

-based organizations, and private businesses who all work together to support children at risk.

Targeted students set goals in the areas of attendance, academics, and attitude. Students can earn incentives for their efforts, such the opportunity to earn a turkey dinner for their family during Thanksgiving, tickets to attend a special Angel's game, or the chance to attend a soccer camp during spring break.

Individual students who show great progress are often provided with special incentives, such as gift cards to take their families out to a nice dinner, bikes, sports fees to join a team, and more! Thank you, OC GRIP, for all that you do for our students and families.



# Tuffree *Middle School (7-8)*

2151 N. Kraemer Blvd., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7480 • www.tuffree.org



**Cindy Freeman**  
*Principal*

## History Night

Each year, Tuffree students embark on a journey of historical inquiry in which they select their own topic and engage in research and project development from September to March. The process is modeled after the National History Day project.

This year's topic was "Triumph and Tragedy." History Night gives students an opportunity to share their research in a setting similar to a professional historical conference. Students invite family members, friends, teachers and peers to witness them share their research findings. Students engage in much more

than simply summarizing their research; they are tasked with infusing their own voice and reasoning into the study of a topic.

At the event, awards are presented for outstanding projects, including a special award from the El Dorado High School social science teachers. This year's History Night was held mid-March and was attended by hundreds of our Tuffree community!



# Travis Ranch School *(K-8)*

5200 Via de la Escuela, Yorba Linda, CA 92887 • 714/986-7460 • www.travisranchschool.org



**Susan Metcalf**  
*Principal*

## Travis Ranch Gives Back

From clothing drives to food bank donations, Travis Ranch is empowering its students to be active citizens, involved community members, and possessed with the life skills they need to help serve others.

Throughout this school year all of our students have participated in organized drives established by the various teachers and clubs on campus. In the fall, our WE Club launched the "WE Won't Rest" winter clothing drive, as well as the "WE Scare Hunger" canned food drive to support our local homeless families and the O.C. Rescue Mission.

The JUMP Club also donated over 225 new and unwrapped toys to the Toys for Tots organization, and is currently collecting diapers and baby supplies to donate to HIS House families in Placentia. In addition, the P.E. Department has collected 135 pairs of gently worn shoes for the "Soles for Souls" campaign, which will provide clean shoes to local children in need.

In an effort to give back to our district classrooms, Travis Ranch also recently organized a book drive in March. From picture books to novels, nearly 2,600 different books were collected by our students for donation to our own library and the other schools across the district.

Finally, to support our very own campus, more than 125 students, family, and community members recently helped to beautify our grounds. Our elementary and middle school leadership students took charge and assisted with this big spring cleaning effort!

Through these acts of generosity, as well as developing a connection between our campus and the neighboring communities, Travis Ranch hopes to have a dramatic affect on our students' overall engagement with their school, and help teach them the importance of giving back.

# Tynes *Elementary (K-6)*

735 Stanford Dr., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/996-5550 • www.johnnotynes.org



**Dr. Debra E. Silverman**  
*Principal*

## Jog-A-Thon a Success

On Friday, March 22, Tynes hosted the annual Jog-A-Thon as a fundraiser for our PTA.

Students from preschool to 6th grade in both special education and general education ran around one of the two tracks established on the field. Students collected tallies on their wrist bands to count the number of laps they ran. Ms. Freeland's class ran over 500 laps collectively. PTA provided water and bananas for students after they ran for the allotted amount of time.

Many parents came out to support the school. Some parents ran right alongside their students, while others supported the students' hard work by spraying them down with spray bottles.



A big thank you goes out to teachers, parents and students for making our Jog-A-Thon a tiger-rific success.



# Valadez *Middle School Academy (6-8)*

161 E. La Jolla St., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7440 • [www.valadezacademy.org](http://www.valadezacademy.org)



**Refugio Gracian**  
*Principal*

## Middle School Teacher Of The Year

Xochitl Diaz is an amazing educator, mentor and colleague. Xochitl is one of the original staff members that opened Valadez Middle School Academy 11 years ago and her impact over the years towards influencing the positive trajectory of our Valadez Soaring Eagles Scholars is second to none. Thus, we are proud to have Xochitl represent Valadez and our school district as the 2018-2019 PYLUSD middle school teacher of the year.

The students, parents, staff and community partners that make up the Valadez family are proud and honored to have Ms. Xochitl Diaz be a cornerstone of our campus. We look forward to having Ms. Diaz represent Valadez with integrity and intrinsic motivation toward maximizing student social, emotional and academic potential for years to come.



# Van Buren *Elementary (K-6)*

1245 N. Van Buren St., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7100 • [www.vanburenelementary.org](http://www.vanburenelementary.org)



**Connie Roe**  
*Principal*

## Students are Leading with Kindness!

The Van Buren Elementary PTA recently treated our students to two assemblies entitled, "Leading with Kindness" for students in 3rd-6th grade. Through the use of humor, magic, dancing,

and role playing, these assemblies taught our students that each of them is a leader, whether they know it or not! Students learned that all leaders share common character traits and that they already possessed many of them.

The leadership skills on display in these assemblies aligned with our S.T.A.R.S. positive behavior system: Safe, There and ready, Act responsibly, Respect, and Show compassion.

Many thanks to Van Buren PTA for supporting and encouraging our students to be strong (and kind) leaders!



# Valencia *High School (9-12)*

500 N. Bradford, Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/996-4970 • [www.vhstigers.org](http://www.vhstigers.org)



**Olivia Young**  
*Principal*

## Academic Teams Excel

Valencia High School has had a banner year in academic competition.

Our Academic Decathlon team competed in Division 1 and won third place in Super Quiz and fourth place overall in the county, which advanced them to the state competition. There our team competed in Division 2 and won ninth place, while also placing 24th place overall in the state.

Our Science Olympiad team competed and captured seventh place in Orange County. Our Chemistry Olympiad team earned second place in Orange County and is proud to have two students advancing to the national competition.

Our CyberPatriot team competed and advanced to semifinals, where they captured 22nd place in California. Our Robotics team, TiGears, hosted a local scrimmage and is headed to the First Robotics competition this month.

Our Future Business Leaders of America team hosted sectionals, and over 40 students are headed to the state competition this month.

We are proud of our students and their coaches for their dedication to excellence. Go, Tigers!

# Venture Academy *Adult Transition (18-22)*

701 East Golden Ave., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7178 • <https://ventureacademy.pylusd.org>



**Kelli McFedries**  
*Coordinator,  
Special Education*

## Giving Back

Although Venture Academy may be a small program, our students have been showing up in a big way to help others.

As we close out the year, the students have been continuing to learn about how to access and navigate their community, and are focusing on giving back to our community members in need. In this spirit, Venture Academy has begun to support a "blessings box" that is located in Koch Park.

The blessings box is an honor system food pantry where people in need can pick up food donations anonymously. Our staff and students noticed that this box was often depleted, and so they decided to take action. Twice a month they started to fill the box with non-perishable food items.



This special project has given our students the ability to practice their leadership and decision-making skills in the community, while also learning about empathy and respect for others.



# Wagner *Elementary (K-6)*

717 E. Yorba Linda Blvd., Placentia, CA 92870 • 714/986-7180 • [www.wagnerwildcats.org](http://www.wagnerwildcats.org)



**Janice Weber**  
*Principal*

## Two Peer Programs

Two of the many ways in which students at Wagner have the opportunity to extend kindness and service to others are our Peer Mentor and Cross-Age Tutoring programs moderated by teachers Teri Krueger and Heather Marasco.

Peer Mentors are students in grades five and six who have exhibited leadership capabilities and who have demonstrated responsibility and respect. They apply to the program and are selected to spend time with and care for our students with moderate to severe disabilities.



Cross-age tutors are students in grades four through six who may be nominated by their teachers to be a helper and a friend to a student in another class or grade. This partnership is beneficial to both students. It builds self-esteem and responsibility, and it fosters service. Both programs afford students the chance to learn about and think about others.

# Woodsboro *Elementary (K-6)*

7575 E. Woodsboro Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/986-7040 • [www.woodsboro.pylusd.org](http://www.woodsboro.pylusd.org)



**Dr. George Lopez**  
*Principal*

## Building Kindness

The 100th day of school is always a big celebration in our Preppy-K and kindergarten classrooms here at Woodsboro.

But this year the students took their celebration one step further and performed a huge act of kindness for our furry friends. Their goal was to collect 100 cans of dog and cat food to help feed the countless abandoned animals that are living at the Orange County Animal Shelter. But our Woodsboro scholars went far beyond and donated 215 cans plus five bags of bedding, toys, and treats!

Once collected, local Girl Scout Troop 7242 then delivered these precious goods. They even got to tour the facility. As PK teacher Veronica Pena and kindergarten teachers Tami La Magna and Janeen Hill said, "We would love to see more kindness in the world, and we think this is a great way to start!"

## SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 1



**Dr. Gregory S. Plutko**

One more example of ongoing professional development in PYLUSD is our annual Certificated and Classified Leadership Seminars. Employees with a common interest in growth come together during this year-long program to study leadership through reading current literature, engaging in reflective conversations, and identifying their personal and professional strengths.

It is our expectation that these dynamic, high-quality professional development strategies facilitate life-long habits of learning in our employees to benefit our students' ongoing success and our overall organizational excellence. This is the PYL way!

# Yorba Linda *Middle School (6-8)*

4777 Casa Loma Ave., Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7080 • [www.ylms.org](http://www.ylms.org)



**Greg Kemp**  
*Principal*

## Serve Before Self

Yorba Linda Middle School won the coveted Outstanding Leadership Program Award at the California Association of Student Leaders (CASL) Convention in Santa Clara this year. The organization recognizes exceptional leadership programs who exemplify a positive school culture and climate.

We are proud of our diverse leaders in our Associated Student Body (ASB) who develop a mission to nurture an emotionally safe place with inclusive behaviors consistently demonstrated on our campus. Our motto, "Serve Before Self," is which encompasses not only our spirit but our desire to serve the student body.



# Yorba Linda *High School (9-12)*

19900 Bastanchury, Yorba Linda, CA 92886 • 714/986-7500 • [www.ylhs.org](http://www.ylhs.org)



**Dave Flynn**  
*Principal*

## Greetings

During the month of March, we were visited by a six member team of educators from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

During their visit, they looked at our academics, instructional program, co-curricular clubs and organizations, along with talking to our staff, students and parents.

They reported back to our staff the following strengths at Yorba Linda High School:

- Yorba Linda High School offers a wide variety of curricular programs.
- Staff are available to students in many ways for extra support.
- Yorba Linda High School has a large, highly involved and supportive PTSA
- Programs and events are designed to provide students with life-long learning about being safe, healthy and respectful citizens.

We are deeply appreciative of the visiting team's report and support of our school's focus on preparing students for college and careers, engaging all students in the high school experience and developing a system to support socio-emotional and mental health needs for students.

As we move into Spring 2019, we are looking forward to our PTSA Academic Mustang Awards on April 8th, YLHS Senior Awards on May 20th and Graduation on June 12th.

"It's great to be a Mustang!"







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## Isabella's Book Review

### Amazing Message



**Isabella A.**

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens is an amazing book with a very complex person as its main character. Scrooge begins the book as a very mean cold hearted man. As the book goes on, Scrooge repents and tries to change.

The reason for this starts when his dead business partner, known as Marley, pays him a visit. During this visit, Marley prophesizes that 3 spirits will come.

The first spirit still comes that night. The Ghost of Christmas past shows Scrooge how happy he once was. It also shows him how he changed into the greedy person he is. Scrooge is sorry for what he has done and takes the first step to change.

The next night, the Ghost of Christmas present shows Scrooge how poor his clerk is and how much he is suffering. Scrooge sees that his clerk's son is very sick and that the family does not have the money for treatment.

The next night, Scrooge sees what will happen if he continues the way he is going.

Will Scrooge change? Can Scrooge change?

I would rate this book a 5 out of 5 because it is very emotionally enticing and it has an amazing message.



Isabella is a 7th grader and just published her first short story in a school anthology of young authors after winning first prize with her work. She rates books on a 5 star scale.

## Rabina's Review

### An Impactful Book

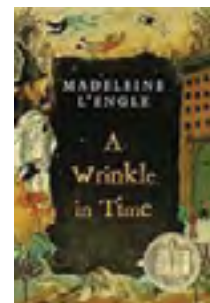


**Rabina K.**

*A Wrinkle in Time* is a kind of science fiction, as the characters in the story travel thru time and space to go to fifth dimension. But there is plenty in the book that touches humanities. The heroin of the story is a lonely girl who conquers her negativities and weaknesses to fight against 'IT', the darkness and brings her dad back to earth from fifth dimension. The story has a happy ending with the whole family united together on earth.

Meg has a sense of herself as somebody who does not fit in. It is the struggle all of us face, to be ourselves despite the overwhelming pressure to be like everyone else. This battle in Meg comes to an end when Mrs. Whatsit tells them that life is a sonnet. You all are given the form but you have to write the sonnet yourself.

I give this book a five star rating.



Rabina is a 5th grader, who enjoys reading historical fiction and biographies. Writing is her passion. Besides, reading books and writing, she also enjoys playing soccer and piano.



## Sophie's Choice

### Saving the Seven Seas



**Sophie O.**

*Waterfire Saga Deep Blue* is the first book of a series that I've been wanting to read for a long time since I own the second book. The Waterfire Saga series is about a group of mermaids who are brought together by the Isle, or water witches. Sadly they are brought together not for a good reason, someone is trying to release a monster that their ancestors had put in prison. Throughout the series, the girls try to stop the bad people from unleashing this monster, because if they don't, it will destroy what they call home, the sea.



Sophie O. is a 6th grader who loves to play soccer and bake. She's an avid reader and writer and is working on writing her first book. She hopes to be an architect one day





Julie Nibali  
President

The ShamRock ‘n Run

The REACH Foundation’s seventh annual “ShamRock ‘n Run” was a win-win for both our PYLUSD schools and the REACH Middle School Track Meet. All 34 schools in the district participated in this great event. The REACH Foundation dispersed over \$3,700 to participating schools through our registration drive.

The school registration winners by category were Glenknoll Elementary, Bernardo Middle School, and Esperanza High School. Special high-fives also go to George Key Elementary for taking the top prize of \$1,000 for having the highest percentage of participation based upon school size.



The Annual REACH Middle School Track Meet was held at Shapell Stadium on March 28. There were over 400 student-athletes from our seven PYLUSD middle schools who participated, and in nine track and field events. Congratulations to all of the students who participated, and to those who medaled. You can view photos from both events at the REACH website, [reach4pylud.org](http://reach4pylud.org).



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Girl Scouts of Orange County congratulates **Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District’s Yorba Middle School** on being recognized as a Distinguished School by the California Department of Education’s Distinguished Schools Program.

We applaud your efforts to create opportunities for students to succeed and shine at every stage of their lives. Your extraordinary commitment to students motivates our communities and builds a brighter future for us all!

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# An Oregon Tale



Bailey

*Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* by Kristiana Gregory will always be my favorite historical book!

Hattie Campbell is going to Oregon! Before she knows, she is traveling the Oregon Trail with 8 grueling months ahead: Rivers to cross, Indians, snakes, poisonous vegetables, it has it all! People everywhere are dropping like flies and everyone must fight to survive. Will Hattie fall among the fear, the blistering heat, and the losses? Or will she emerge at the end with memories, a new land and heart in Oregon?

Told as a diary, *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* is an entertaining way of learning about the Oregon Trail. I really love how the author describes events, I feel like I'm in the story.

I give this book 5 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.

## Yoona's Review

# A Funny Story



Yoona C.

Have you recently lost your baby tooth? In *I lost my tooth!* by Mo Willems, all the squirrels except Zoom Squirrel thought that when Zoom Squirrel said he lost his baby tooth, it was a real baby. So then they went to go look to find the baby tooth. Then Zoom Squirrel found his tooth. When Zoom Squirrel showed his tooth, the other squirrels got gifts for the baby tooth. Do they finally know what a baby tooth is? I like this book because it has jokes and makes me laugh. It also has cute drawings and some facts about teeth at the end.



Yoona is a 1st grader. She likes doing cartwheels and soccer. She also likes asking questions to her parents. Having a playdate with her friends is her favorite too.

## Book Review By Katrina

# Books Link Worlds



Katrina D.

*The Invisible Library* by Genevieve Cogman is a peculiar story centering on a cryptic Library that is filled with millennia of knowledge from hundreds of dimensions. Tending to this massive collection of information is a number of Librarians whose sole purpose is protect these paperback treasures. They also have to collect new stories from across multiple worlds, whether it's a scroll from Viking times, a novel from a secret society or just a cookbook for trolls, these books all have one thing in common — the library must have them, no questions asked. And for all of her life, Irene has accepted the Library's beliefs. But now, as she seeks out the mysteriously stolen book of fairy-tales, Irene and her partner Kai realize there's more to the Library than meets the eye. With delightful world building, contraptions and a giant centipede, this book is perfect for bibliophiles as a whole.

Katrina gives this book four out of five crescent moons.



Katrina is a junior in high school who enjoys sketching, reading and writing as much as she loves watching cartoons. Katrina hopes to be an author, an accomplished biologist and an animator some day very soon.

## Christina's Book Review

# Journey for Victory



Christina J.

*The School for Good and Evil: Quests for Glory* by Soman Chainani

The 4th book in *The School for Good and Evil* series follows through the quests of recently graduated students (most of which are children of famous storybook characters) on a journey to create their own legends. These kids will be either heroes or villains of their own stories. But as Tedros, the son of King Arthur of Camelot, struggles to rule his Kingdom, it is realized that a great menace is keeping Tedros from being able to pull Excalibur from the stone, which causes other students to fail in their quests. Now several former and current students are off on a journey to save everyone's story from getting ruined. I enjoyed this book, as it is like the Harry Potter series, you read from book one and on, and watch the characters grow, change and become the great heroes and villains they were trained to be at school. Now they have to use these lessons against a villain who threatens to disrupt their world. I rate this book 5 out of 5 stars.



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).

## Keira's Book Nook

# Household Pet to Wild Animal



Keira

*The Call of the Wild* by Jack London is a classic that shows the reader how a life can change overnight. This novel is written from the perspective of Buck, a California dog, who lives a comfortable life in Santa Clara when he is stolen and sold as a sled dog. Buck learns to adapt to his new life and overcome obstacles. He goes through many different masters as a sled dog, and makes friends and enemies along the way. Through it all, the wild calls.

Jack London is an extraordinary writer who is best known for his books, *Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, and *The Sea-Wolf*. London is also widely known for his naturalist writing style. I rate this book four stars, because although it was a good read, it could be a little morbid at times. However, I would still recommend this novel to anyone 4th grade and up.



Keira is a 7th grader who loves to read. She also enjoys crafts, traveling, soccer and playing with her cats. Her reviews are rated from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest.

## Manhar's Book Review

# A True Story



Manhar M.

*The Hen Who Sailed Around the World* by Guirec Soudée is an amazing true story where a boy describes his voyage around the world with his brave and adorable red hen named Monique. They took three and half years to complete the journey. This book talks about the special bond between animals and the humans. The book is full of interesting photographs and maps that helped me to visualize their exciting trip. My favorite photograph is the one taken by a drone when they were in the middle of icebergs!

After reading this book, I also want to have a pet and go on a long sailing trip! This book is a must read for all ages.



Manhar M. is in Kindergarten. Manhar likes science, math, coding, traveling, hiking, reading about world news and spending time in building robots from Legos.



Timmy Grows Up



Richard J.

*Timmy Failure It's the End When I say It's the End* by Stephan Pastis

This is the 7th and last book of the *Timmy Failure* series. Timmy and his imaginary polar bear named Total (T. Failure + Total = Total Failure of Total Failure Inc. Detective Agency) take on a task of solving the world's problems and defeating crime. Timmy also has to do routine things like writing a script for his class project. But then a new student takes over the show and ruins Timmy's vision of Greatness. The script gets stolen and more Christmas shenanigans follow.



I liked these book series because despite it's ridiculous, over-the-top narration by Timmy, you can see he's just a young kid with great imagination, producing action-packed scenarios, which help him escape the harsh reality of struggles — like getting a new step-dad, finding his real dad and trying to get him to participate in his life, and not realizing his aunt, with whom he and his mom lived during hard times, is dying. But in the end Timmy grows up and lets go of his imaginary sidekick Total by helping him find his long-lost brother and releasing Total to the Arctic. This book is definitely 5 out of 5 stars.

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 leaning new things and spending time with his family and friends.

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Jenna’s Review

Demigods’ Destiny



Jenna C.

Title: *The Lost Hero*  
Author: Rick Riordan

Do you ever think that you are related to a god or goddess? Well, these three characters do. Their names are Jason, Piper, and Leo. They went on the field trip, and suddenly a storm spirit came and took their coach. They find out that one of their parents is a god or a goddess. They went to camp with Annabeth, a daughter of Athena and Butch, a son of Iris. Each kid has a problem. Jason lost his memory and thinks Hera took it. Piper has a problem with her dad. Her dad is a famous actor. She dreams about her dad being captured because he has been missing for three days. Leo has a way with tools but there are obstacles that are hard for him to understand. Do you think they can solve the problems? I recommend this book for who want to learn more about gods and goddesses.



Jenna is a third grader. She likes art and soccer. She likes imaginary stories and someday she wants to be a book illustrator.

Lucy’s Book Review

Immersive



Lucy Davis

*The Blackthorn Key* / Kevin Sands  
Who knew cubes could hold adventures? Christopher Rowe lives in 17th-century England as an apothecary’s apprentice. Remedies and his best friend Tom are all that seem important. But, when his master leaves behind a trove of secrets, it is up to him to solve the mystery of the Cult of the Archangel. With it comes the archangel’s secret substance - something rumored to have power beyond description. Codes, turns, and discovery awaits in the hunt for Blackthorn’s key.



I was surprised at how much I enjoyed this book! It’s clever, well-written, and simple to follow. Kevin Sands uses masterful storytelling that will leave you excited for more. I’m looking forward to reading the next two books in this exciting series. Five out of five bookworms.

Lucy is a 7th 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.

Justin’s Review

Amazing!



Justin K.

Have you ever thought about living in a super tall building? What if it’s taller than 100 stories? What if it’s a treehouse, not a brick house? What if it has lots of mysterious rooms like Mt. Everest, a 2-dollar shop with nothing OVER 2-dollar things, a 2-million-dollar shop with nothing UNDER 2-million-dollar things (hmm?), a burp bank you can pay with burps, a mighty fortress reinforced with extra strong fortress reinforcer and so on and so on (too many rooms I can write here!).



One of my favorite authors, Andy Griffiths, just published *The 104-story Treehouse* with even more great ideas since the first book about the 13-story treehouse. I can’t imagine what would be the final book, the 1300-story treehouse or the 13000000000-story treehouse or what?  
I have to rate this book 5 out of 5 stars again because it is still funny.

Justin is a first grader. He likes reading, writing and making his own comic books. He also likes playing piano & chess, swimming, baseball and hockey.

Alana’s Book Review

Making Video Games



Alana F.

As a young person that’s going into the field of game development, it’s surprisingly hard to find any sources to look to for guidance. Fortunately, however, I had the luck to come across this book at my local library: *The Ultimate Guide to Video Game Writing and Design* by Flint Dille and John Zuur Platten.



This text tells you all you could ever hope to learn about video game creation- character development, world-building, establishing a franchise, and so much more. With special assignments and tangible activities for the reader to complete throughout the book, this flawlessly executes education on a very specific topic like I’ve never seen  
I’d give this book 7 out of 8 Triforce shards for creativity and readability. With the help of this book, I went from having no experience with video game development to having countless pages of work done on my very first video game.

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



Katie’s Review

The Power of Words



Katie C.

Power is something that is typically misunderstood as something that requires physical strength. However, it can be far from that. In *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak illustrates a scenario of a girl who uses her power of words to express herself. Liesel is a girl who becomes an orphan in the midst of a war. She loses her brother as well, and is devastated and traumatized from it. She lives with her foster parents who care for her, and along her journey of exploring her power, she meets a new friend Max. Max teaches her that it’s not always about what you do, what but you say. Together they read and start to see the real truth: words are the power. Liesel grows as a person throughout the book and even though she doesn’t find her happy ending, she reminds herself that her words are important, and they give her power.



Katie is a ninth grader. Her passion is writing and she likes finding new ways to structure poetry. She is working on creating a story line with a series of poems. In her spare time, she enjoys soccer, song writing and reading books.



## Encouraging Teens to Read for Pleasure



The amount of time that teens spend reading for pleasure has declined a lot over the past few years. Whether this is due to the rise in short-form reading, the prevalence of multitasking, time spent with screen media, or other factors is unknown.

Fortunately, we do know the way to encourage readers of any age: Keep books in the house, set aside daily reading time, and read yourself. For teens specifically, it may help to tap into whatever they're passionate about. From music and fashion to video games and the Victorian era, if you can name it, there's a book about it.

In a world filled with entertaining diversions, it can be difficult for teens to find reading material that really motivates them to read. Check our reviews (you can sort our book reviews by age, genre, and topic).

Here are some more ideas:

- **Try an ereader.** Ereaders offer your teen a bit more independence, flexibility, and privacy. And they're great for travel.
- **Consider humor.** Some teens just need the funny.
- **Draw inspiration from pop culture.** Late-night comedians, musicians, and even software developers (think Steve Jobs) are great subjects (or authors!) for teen reading because they're relevant to teens' lives.
- **Insist that they read the book before seeing the movie.** If they want to see a story on the big screen, hand them the book first.

Common Sense Media is an independent nonprofit organization offering unbiased ratings and trusted advice to help families make smart media and technology choices. Check out our ratings and recommendations at [www.commonssensemedia.org](http://www.commonssensemedia.org)

## 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.

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