

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Saddleback Valley Unified School District



Volume 7, Issue 20

February 2023

Laguna Hills High School Hawks 2022 3-A CIF State Football Champions!





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Celebrating Exemplary Teachers



Dr. Crystal Turner
Superintendent

It is always exciting in Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) when it is time to officially celebrate exemplary teachers. I am proud to step foot onto each of our school sites and witness the impactful ways in which SVUSD teachers connect by focusing on intentional and engaging practices which provide opportunities for each and every child to be successful.

Amidst the ever-changing world around us, our teachers create a safe and welcoming learning landscape for our students, instituting a culture of belonging, curiosity, innovation, and rigor. It is because of their dedication, professionalism, and desire to build partnerships with our families that our students continue to grow academically and socially.

It is my pleasure to share the names of the 2023 SVUSD Site Teachers of the Year selected by their fellow colleagues:

Christine Concepcion - Cielo Vista Elementary School
Heather Mezak - dePortola Elementary School
Katherine Mau - Del Cerro Elementary School
Angelik Torris - Del Lago Elementary School
Maura Miles - Esperanza Education Center
Michael Bartetzko - El Toro High School
Ayesha Robin - Foothill Ranch Elementary School
Adrian Rodriguez - Gates Elementary School
Susan Ernsbarger - Glen Yermo Elementary School
Annie-Laurie Gorrien - La Madera Elementary School
Aime Camey - La Paz Intermediate School
Victoria Velez - La Tierra Early Education Center
Ashli Gold - Laguna Hills High School
Nina Russo - Lake Forest Elementary School
Lauren Kaplan - Linda Vista Magnet Elementary School
Roberta Austin - Los Alisos Intermediate School
Kim Moore - Melinda Heights Elementary School
Sandra Hanneman - Mission Viejo High School

Kim Pugh - Montevideo Elementary School
Kate Rayburn - Olivewood Elementary School
Devon Tescher - Portola Hills Elementary School
Allison Hinkelman - Rancho Canada Elementary School
Andrea Mahindrakar - Rancho Santa Margarita Intermediate School
Colleen Allen-Dominguez - Robinson Elementary School
Laura Blackie - San Joaquin Elementary School
Sylvia Brown - Santiago STEAM Magnet Elementary School
Sean Fletcher - Serrano Intermediate School
Stacey Hunt - Silverado High School
Jennifer Vincent - Trabuco Elementary School
Kelli Gaines - Trabuco Hills High School
Kaitlin Anderson - Trabuco Mesa Elementary School
Bailey Russo - Trabuco Mesa Elementary School
Shannon Craycraft - Valencia Elementary School
Jane Betts - Virtual Academy

During a second part of the process, a selection panel composed of Saddleback Valley Educators Association (SVEA) leadership and SVUSD Educational Services leadership met together to choose three District Teachers of the Year. One teacher is chosen to represent Elementary, Intermediate, and High School levels. With so many talented teachers representing their sites, this selection process always creates a challenge.

Congratulations to our three SVUSD teachers who have been chosen as the 2023 SVUSD District Teachers of the Year. These stellar teachers will submit applications to be considered as Orange County Teacher of the Year for 2024:

Laura Blackie - San Joaquin Elementary School
Andrea Mahindrakar - Rancho Santa Margarita Intermediate School
Stacey Hunt - Silverado High School

Congratulations to SVUSD's 2023 Teachers of the Year!



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik

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Dr. Turner begins this issue with her message celebrating the SVUSD exemplary teachers honored as Teachers of the Year.

Throughout this issue you will read articles on various topics such as: student leadership, The

Great Kindness Challenge, the new Wellness Room, STEAM Readers, and so much more...enjoy!

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 27 (all ages may enter).

Our next issue is April 12.



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Educational Services

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Liza Zielasko
Assistant
Superintendent

Athletics in SVUSD

Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) athletic programs are highly respected throughout Orange County and the state of California. Per Niche rankings, SVUSD ranks #18 of 441 for best school districts for athletes in California. Based on 2022 data, 43.5% of SVUSD high school students participate in interscholastic athletic programs.

A few highlights from the 2021-22 school year include four CIF-SS Championships, 14 league championships, 14 teams/individuals advancing to CIF State Championships, and 45 seniors signed National Letter of Intent agreements to compete at the collegiate level. In addition, SVUSD participated in the CIF-SS Academic Awards program and boasted an overall unweighted GPA of 3.44 across 97 varsity athletic programs.

The beginning of the 2022-23 school year has brought early success for SVUSD athletic teams and individual student-athletes. The Laguna Hills High School (LHHS) football program energized the entire school community and city of Laguna Hills with incredible performances in capturing the CIF-SS Division 7 Championship and 3A State Championship.

El Toro High School (ETHS) and Trabuco Hills High School (THHS) boys' and girls' cross country teams competed in CIF-SS Finals and CIF State Championships, while the Mission Viejo High School (MVHS) football program finished the season ranked #3 in the state and #32 in the nation.

As we approach the end of the winter sports season, SVUSD athletic programs will seek to capture league championships and advance deep into the CIF-SS playoffs. Also, the high schools celebrated student-athletes on February 1, 2023, at National Letter of Intent (NLI) Signing Day ceremonies. Currently, SVUSD has 40 student-athletes participating in the NLI events.

Business Services

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Robert Craven
Assistant
Superintendent

Universal Free Meals

More students than ever are eating breakfast and lunch at SVUSD schools! With the implementation of Universal Free Meals, all students are able to receive free breakfast and lunch at school. SVUSD Food Services has seen a significant increase in meals provided with breakfast participation increasing 250% and lunch 40% compared to pre-COVID meal counts. Universal free meals has provided many, who did not normally participate in meal program, an opportunity to do so.

Our department takes pride in the meals we serve and hopes students and their parents are enjoying these meals and the convenience they bring to the household. Increased meal production and service requires additional staffing. Currently the department is looking for people to join our amazing team. The schedule works for anyone, including parents with children in school, and includes weekends, holidays, and summers off! If you are interested, please see our many job opportunities on Edjoin.



Human Resources

25631 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-1234



Dr. Darvin Jackson
Assistant
Superintendent

Welcome New Team Members

The HR Department is ramping up for the upcoming spring hiring season and has done some hiring of its own, as previous members either retired or promoted. Cesilia Mendoza, HR Tech I, has served SVUSD for 16 years and recently as a Bilingual Test Clerk

at Language Assessment Center. Megan Scott, HR Tech I, comes to us with 9 years of customer service experience, most recently as an Office Assistant. Jade Miyashiro, HR Tech II, comes to us with 8 years of experience and recently served as the administrative assistant at Pacific Academy. Priscilla Carrasco, District Receptionist, comes to us

with 8 years of experience, serving recently as a clinical manager at Taskids. Yourie Kong, HR Tech II, comes to us with 9 years of experience, serving most recently as an Administrative Assistant at Western University of Health Sciences.



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Spot the Signs of Congenital Heart Disease



M. Babak Rahimi, M.D.
pediatric
cardiology,
MemorialCare
Miller Children's &
Women's Hospital
Long Beach

Congenital heart disease, or a congenital heart defect, is a heart abnormality present at birth, which can affect the heart walls, valves and blood vessels. Congenital heart defects can range from simple conditions with no symptoms, to complex defects with severe, life-threatening symptoms.

What Causes Congenital Heart Disease? Congenital heart disease is caused by a developmental problem in the heart's structure early on in pregnancy. Researchers have not been able to find the exact cause for why the heart fails to develop correctly, but some suspected causes include:

- Heart defects running in the family
- Illness in the mother during pregnancy (diabetes, viral infection)

What are the Symptoms of Congenital Heart Disease? To make sure your child receives the care they need as soon as possible, it's important to identify the signs and symptoms of congenital heart disease. Symptoms can start as soon as they are born or can appear later in life.

Symptoms in infancy include:

- Loss of healthy skin color

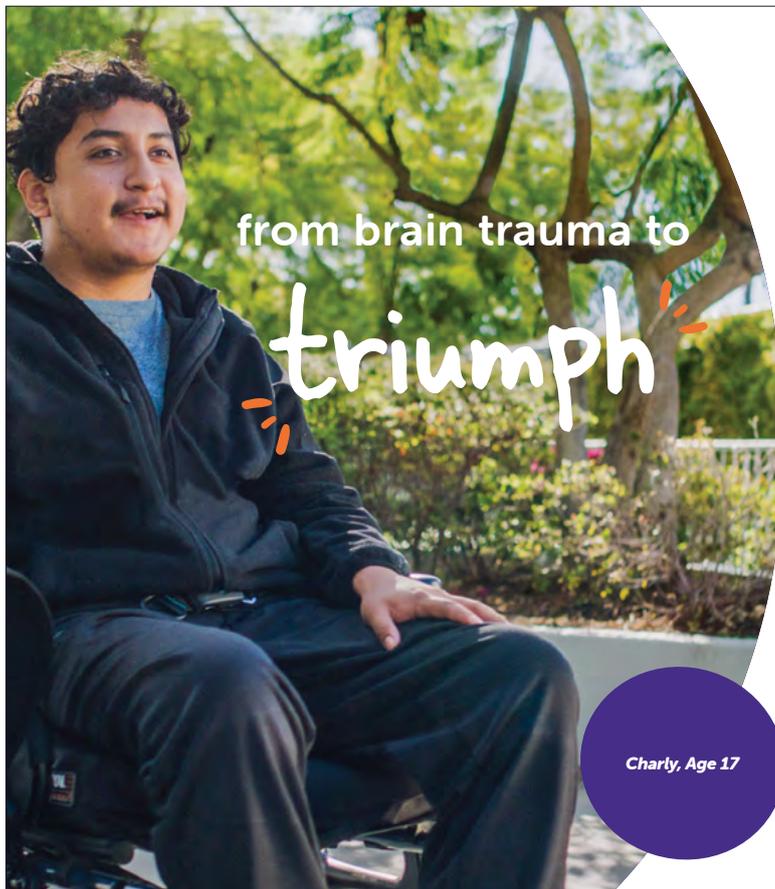
- Cyanosis (pale gray or blue coloring of the skin)
- Swelling in legs, abdomen or around the eyes
- Shortness of breath during feedings
- Fast or difficulty breathing
- Poor or slow weight gain

In Older children, symptoms can include:

- Becoming tired easily during exercise or activity
- Shortness of breath that occurs easily during exercise or activity
- Fluid in the heart or lungs
- Swelling in the hands, ankles or feet
- Chest pain, heart racing or fainting

If your child or teenager is in sports, signs of lethargy or the inability to keep up could be signs of congenital heart disease.

What Should I Do if My Child Starts Showing Symptoms? If your child starts to show any of the symptoms mentioned above, talk with your doctor to see if your child has a congenital heart defect. You may even be referred to the Children's Heart Institute at MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach where we provide total prenatal, infant, pediatric and young adult heart care for patients with congenital or acquired heart disease. For more information, visit millerchildrens.org/heart.



Charly, Age 17



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Cielo Vista *Elementary School*

21811 Avenida de Los Fundadores, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/589-7456 • www.svusd.org/cielovista



Dr. Frances Hansell
Principal

Communities of Practice

Cielo Vista teachers attended AVID Summer Institute and proposed Communities of Practice (CoP) as a way for teachers to grow and learn together. This school year, one staff meeting a month has been devoted to teacher choice in one of five Communities of Practice.

Topics selected were math centers and book studies. Teachers collaborated in cross grade level cohorts and presented to their peers last month. Two math cohorts shared knowledge of number talks, mini lessons, importance of routines, and vocabulary to support multilingual students. Two book study groups, Notice & Note and The Book Whisperer, focused on fiction that supports social skills, novels about shared experience and

common stories, the need for “time” to read and reflect, 40 book challenge for upper-grade students ... all designed to develop a love of reading for everyone! We are proud to be a community of readers!



De Portola *Elementary School*

27031 Preciados Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-5830 • www.svusd.org/deportola



Brendon Morrow
Principal

PBIS System

Our new PBIS system has kicked off. With the focus on our STAR words (Safety, Taking Responsibility, Acting with Kindness, Respect) students can earn STAR bucks from our staff by exhibiting these expectations.

Individual, classroom, and school-wide incentives are available as the STAR bucks accumulate. This winter, we began holding outdoor whole-school assemblies to announce our weekly STAR winners and, weather permitting, we will also begin monthly recognition for students to be recognized as STARS of the month.

Quarterly rotation meetings with our playground assistants, teaching staff, and administration ensure our students are reminded of and incentivized for each of the focal points being highlighted. Along with our weekly Second Step activities in classrooms, students are proactively introduced to topics such as empathy, emotional management, and goal setting. Our Patriot students report loving these activities and have shown a positive response in implementing newly-taught strategies.



Del Cerro *Elementary School*

24382 Regina St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-5430 • www.svusd.org/delcerro



Kristin Thomsen
Principal

Student Leadership at Del Cerro

Del Cerro students once again partnered with TeamKids.Org to lead our school community through four weeks of service-learning challenges. Our student leaders selected four different local charities to support throughout the months of November and December. Del Cerro students surpassed each of their challenges!

Our school community brought in 11 bags of gently used towels and blankets for Mission Viejo Animal Services, 45 bags of clothing and shoes for the Orange County Rescue Mission, and 84 pounds of canned and non-perishable food items for South County Outreach. The students' final challenge had the Student Leadership Team create a kid-run carnival for the school. All money collected from the sale of the carnival tickets was donated to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. Students spent their lunch recess playing simple carnival games, met OC firefighters, and even played some hoops with the visiting firefighters!



Del Lago *Elementary School*

27181 Entidad, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/855-1125 • www.svusd.org/dellago



Jonathan Kaplan
Principal

Teacher of the Year

The votes are in and our 2023 Teacher of the Year is Angelik Torris! Mrs. Torris is one of our Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers, helping our youngest Dolphins grow and play in a structure of social learning and constructive

play. She has taught over 27 years, grades TK, kindergarten, second and fourth. Her experience in preschool and kindergarten aid in knowing the expectations for her students before they arrive and after they move on in their education. Besides being a diehard fan of the LA Kings, Mrs. Torris enjoys traveling, reading, adventures, discovering new things, and spending time with family and friends. But most of all she loves teaching! One of her favorite quotes is, "Playing is an essential foundation for learning in all aspects of life!"



El Toro High School

25255 Toledo Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-6333 • www.svUSD.org/eths



Dr. James Martin
Principal

ParentSquare

In our ongoing effort to increase parent engagement to promote and support student success, El Toro High School, along with several other SVUSD schools, is exploring a new communication platform called ParentSquare. We will be learning how to use it throughout this spring and hope it will improve our processes in these areas:

Engagement

- Parents will receive communication for all of their students – even if they attend different SVUSD schools – through one feed, or they may opt to filter through separate feeds.

- Students can receive communication through the StudentSquare app.

- Communication can be one-way and two-way.

Equity

- Parents will receive communication in their home language, or any language that they choose. They can respond in their home language and the teacher will receive it in the language that the teacher chooses.

- Communications can be received via email link, text link, or ParentSquare app notifications.

Safety

- ParentSquare can be used to alert staff and parents when there is an emergency.

Esperanza Special Education

25121 Pradera Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-5470 • www.svUSD.org/esperanza



Raymund Bueche
Principal

Annual Fall Resource Fair

SVUSD's Adult Transition Program opened its doors on 10/26/2022 for its annual Fall Resource Fair: Life after SVUSD. Over

40 families from SVUSD and surrounding districts, from grades seven to adult, attended to gain information and resources from 15 community support agencies. This event allowed for direct interaction with RCOC, DOR, Saddleback & Coastline Colleges, Adult Day Programs, and community service agencies. The response was overwhelmingly positive from both presenters and those who attended. We look forward to hosting again in fall 2023.



Foothill Ranch *Elementary School*

1 Torino Dr., Foothill Ranch, CA 92610 • 949/470-4885 • www.svusd.org/foothillranch



Deborah Shaver
Principal

Celebration of Our Multilingual Students

Foothill Ranch is the largest elementary school in Saddleback Valley Unified School District with 1,160 students. Our school population is very diverse as we have twenty-five different languages spoken

at our school and over fourteen different languages spoken in first grade alone. Some of these students even speak a third language! This year, our Leadership Team has been working with administrators, teachers, and our community outreach liaison to celebrate and support our multilingual students. During our January PAWS Assembly, we celebrated nine students who were redesignated as FEP, or fluent English proficient. These students worked exceptionally hard to

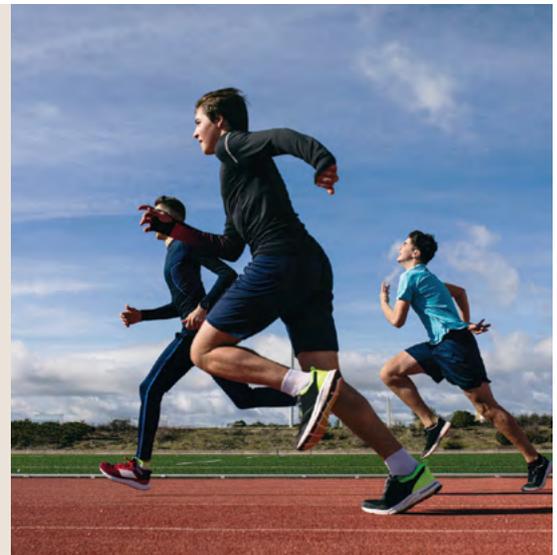
master the English language by meeting all the criteria for reclassification. Their parents and multilingual community were invited to our second ELAC meeting to celebrate their accomplishment. Congratulations, Bobcats!



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Gates *Dual Language Immersion Elementary School*

23882 Landisview Ave., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/837-2260 • www.svusd.org/gates



Diana Clearwater
Principal

Kindness

At Gates Dual Language Immersion Elementary School, our students are Responsible, Respectful, Kind and Safe. As part

of our focus on kindness all year long, students spent an entire week in November participating in kindness activities including kindness posters, thank you cards, door decorating and chalk art. In February, our new student leadership group, Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL), led by 5th grade teacher Alejandra Grande, will lead our Gators in another week of activities focusing on how to be kind and good friends to all.



Glen Yermo *Elementary School*

26400 Trabuco Rd., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-6766 • www.svusd.org/glenyermo



Jennifer Televik
Principal

Welcome Back Roary!

Meet Roary, our beloved Glen Yermo mascot! For years, Roary has joined us for school events, and at the beginning of the year, we were puzzled when Roary didn't return to school, leaving us to wonder where he had gone. We later received a letter from Roary explaining that he had taken an extended summer vacation and was off on a big adventure! Throughout the fall, Roary sent us letters and postcards from his travels around the world, and students sent drawings and letters to him through "Roary Mail."

We are excited to share that Roary has now returned to Glen Yermo, and he made a big impression when he surprised us at a schoolwide assembly. Our mountain lions are happy to have Roary back at school, and are looking forward to many more years of his participation in campus activities.



La Madera Elementary School

25350 Serrano Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/770-1415 • www.svusd.org/lamadera



Jennifer Gass
Principal

Koalas put the "I" in KIND

At La Madera our student LEADS group continues to help students acquire and develop leadership skills, learn the value of helping others, and support our

school community. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade have the option to join. They work with our staff advisors to focus on character traits, plan spirit days, and promote community service.

In January, LEADS students organized schoolwide participation in "The Great Kindness Challenge". They kicked off the week by writing positive messages with sidewalk chalk around campus and created a video message to explain the challenge to our student body. All students on campus were encouraged to complete as many small acts of



kindness as possible for the entire week and to share with peers how they can be the "I" in kind. We are so proud of all the kindness that was shared and the positive impact it made to our school community.

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Boys & Girls Ages 2017-2011
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April 13th
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La Paz *Intermediate School*

25151 Pradera Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-1720 • www.svusd.org/lapaz



Tiffany Harville
Principal

CA School to Watch

Since 2011, La Paz Intermediate has been a California School to Watch. This honor comes with the responsibility of improving what we do to support the academic and social emotional needs of all students. Recently we successfully

redesignated our School to Watch status demonstrating our commitment to student success. Over 500 students received a 3.0 G.P.A or higher in our 1st trimester for 2022-23 school year! Our Leopards excel and shine in the arts as well. This year our theatre students put on an incredible performance of the Christmas Carol. Our Jazz Band had the highest intermediate student representation at the SCSBOA Honor Jazz Band concert. We are only half way

through the year and there are many more exciting events and recognitions to come! Our Leopards are working hard in 2023 to achieve their maximum potential in everything they do! Go Leopards!!



La Tierra *Early Childhood Center*

24150 Lindley St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/707-5276 • www.svusd.org/schools/elementary-a-l/la-tierra-early-childhood-center



Emily Arias
Principal

Eating Books!

La Tierra had a visit from the author and illustrator of the new children's book, "How to Eat a Book." They made a special stop at La Tierra on their California book tour sponsored by Barnes and Noble. Mr. Macleod, the author, presented the book in such a way that the students

were thoroughly engaged for the assembly. Mrs. Macleod, the illustrator, shared how she created the illustrations in the book by cutting out the pictures, putting them all together in diorama fashion and then taking pictures of the diorama. The students enjoyed Mr. Macleod's dynamic performance and they laughed every time the book "ate" one of the characters. It was a wonderful experience for the students as they were able to practice their active listening skills that they have been working on all year. The students (and staff) are anxiously awaiting the sequel set to be released next year.



Mr. Macleod is providing students with some background information about the book before he performs a dramatic reading.

Laguna Hills *High School*

25401 Paseo de Valencia, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/770-5447 • www.svusd.org/lhhs



Bill Hinds
Principal

Go Hawks!

Congratulations to the 22-23 Laguna Hills HS Hawks Football Team on a 15-1 season with a Southern Section Championship, So Cal Regional Championship and CIF State Bowl Championship victory vs. Bellarmine College Preparatory School in San Jose, California. This extraordinary season will no doubt have a positive effect on our school culture and the lives of our student athletes.

The Hawks pulled off some gigantic, seemingly underdog victories: 28-27 over Golden Valley to win the CIF Southern Section Championship, 35-28 over Birmingham HS in Van Nuys to win the So Cal Regional Championship, and the 28-27 comeback over Bellarmine Prep.

We faced some big time opponents on paper and in the newspress. Underdogs historically, what others failed to understand week after week is that what we lacked in height, we doubled in heart. Where we may lack in speed, we made up in special effort. What we don't possess in notoriety, public perception, and playoff prowess, we shine in leadership, preparation, conditioning, relationships and effort. The Hawks have some of the best athletes to ever play football in the CIF Southern Section. Our Coaches are second to none. A compilation of former CiF/SS Champions at LHHS and other OC Schools over more than a decade. All committed to the Hawk Family.

Congratulations to Head Coach John Lester and the Hawks for their accomplishments. Three championships and the support of a school, community, and a city. We are all one town, one team and incredibly proud of our Hawks.

Lake Forest *Elementary School*

21801 Pittsford Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/830-9945 • www.svusd.org/lakeforest



Audra Bailey
Principal

Amazing Staff Members

The community of Lake Forest Elementary School knows how special each of our staff members are. Now, Orange County gets to know a little bit more about two of our amazing staff members. We are so excited that two of our staff members have

been recognized by Parenting OC Magazine. Anmarie MacNevin, a 5th grade teacher at Lake Forest Elementary School, was recognized by our Superintendent, Dr. Turner, along with other members of the SVUSD Cabinet and Board Members, as one of the Parenting OC Magazine's nominees for Teacher of the Year. Mrs. MacNevin is loved by all of our families. She runs her classroom with enthusiasm and compassion. Students in her class embrace their love of learning with hands-on activities, a strong classroom community, and a growth mind set. Along with Mrs. MacNevin, Tammy Klein was also recognized by Dr. Turner and the Board as a Parenting OC Magazine nominee for Classified Employee of the Year. Mrs. Klein works tirelessly on the playground ensuring our students are safe, having fun, and learning how to interact with one another. The students adore her and respect her for her patience, fairness, and how much she cares for the students and gets to know each and every one of them.



This is not an easy feat in a school of over 680 students. Congratulations to both Mrs. MacNevin and Mrs. Klein. Lake Forest Elementary is proud to have you as part of our Dolphin family!

Linda Vista Magnet Elementary School

25222 Pericia Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-0970 • www.svusd.org/lindavista



Shannon Wyatt
Principal

An International Baccalaureate Partnership!

The International Baccalaureate program is thriving in Saddleback Valley. One awesome component is our partnership with high school IB students. IB students from Mission Viejo High School volunteer weekly at Linda Vista Magnet, their IB PYP sister school. The IB high school students work with small groups of students on reading and writing skills, and helping them explain their mathematical reasoning.

Additionally, the high school students are working on their CAS Project here at Linda Vista. The CAS Project is their culminating IB project in an area of individual interest and learning. This year, IB students are helping to plant the kindergarten gardens, create personal hygiene kits, and host a multicultural fair at this year's Showcase.



Lomarena Elementary School

25100 Earhart Rd., Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/581-1370 • www.svusd.org/lomarena



Grace Cruikshank
Principal

Celebrating Student Voice

At Lomarena Elementary School, we value and celebrate student voices across our campus. Students get opportunities to share their opinions, thoughts, and ideas throughout their school day through the lessons that teachers build for students, through student input on schoolwide projects, and even through our PAL student Leadership Program. Celebrating and amplifying student voice helps our students prepare to be active participants in designing a better world for themselves and for others both now and in the future. This picture features our 5th grade students participating in a mock trial using textual evidence from *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. This activity had each student participating and collaborating as jury members, defense team members, and the prosecution team members. This dynamic had our students

experience the power of their voices, the importance of using evidence, and they learned how our justice system operates.



Los Alisos *Intermediate School*

25171 Los Lobos Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/830-9700 • www.svusd.org/losalisos



Michael Marzilli
Principal

New Wellness Room

Los Alisos has a new wellness room for students! This is a dedicated space in which students can come to take a break, practice self-care, then return to learning. The space is used by our school counselors and our mental

wellness counselors who are trained to support students in identifying triggers and effective coping strategies. Prior to wellness rooms, many of these students have been forced to remain in class while their stress escalates to an elevated level. The goal of our wellness room is to teach students to independently manage their own emotions. Students are taught to communicate their wants and needs, name emotions, use coping strategies, reflect, and then return to class. Students become empowered to handle their stress and increase their resiliency.



Melinda Heights *Elementary School*

21001 Rancho Trabuco, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/888-7311 • www.svusd.org/melindaheights



Kathryn Martin
Principal

Students Learn Generosity

At Melinda Heights Elementary, we have the privilege and responsibility of preparing students for the future. Students have the honor of supporting our community by giving back at every opportunity. The Melinda Staff, our Melinda Elementary Leadership Team (MELT), the awesome PTA, and other exciting campus groups model leadership and philanthropy.

Through classrooms and campus organizations, our students learn empathy, compassion, and generosity. In December, families donated hundreds of toys to our Marines and Sailors at Camp Pendleton. Students run lemonade stands in their neighborhoods to raise money to build Clean Water Wells in Pakistan. This spring, our annual Jessie Rees Foundation Joy Jar drive will bring in toys and goodies to encourage children battling cancer to “Never Ever Give Up!”

The Melinda Heights Family is honored to continue to empower our students with responsibility, engage their compassion and offer them the chance to affect the lives of others.



Mission Viejo High School

25025 Chrisanta Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/837-7722 • www.svUSD.org/mvhs



Tricia Osborne
Principal

MISSION Accomplished

In October, MVHS hosted a Future Ready event in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education. In this two-day event, over 400 seniors met and worked on their college applications directly with representatives from community colleges, UC, Cal States, a variety of military branches, out of state, and private universities. Additionally, financial aid representatives presented to students on the FASFA application and how to pay for college. With the support of our guidance team, the students were given the time and space to research scholarships and gain more insight on the NCAA eligibility process for student athletes.



In a post-survey, close to 40 seniors shared that had it not been for Future Ready, they may not have chosen to apply to college. MVHS continues to spark students' passion for higher education with events like Future Ready and we look forward to this event next year. Go Diablos!

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Montevideo *Elementary School*

24071 Carrillo Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-8050 • www.svusd.org/montevideo



Lisa Graham
Principal

Montevideo Mountaineers ROCK!

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) include systems and practices focused on creating a positive and supportive school culture for all. At Montevideo, we ROCK! We are Responsible, Optimistic, Courageous, and Kind. Our matrix of student ROCK behavior expectations for the classrooms, hallways, lunch areas, etc, is actively taught and celebrated.

Students earn tickets as they demonstrate these ROCK attributes throughout their day. Tickets are used for classroom rewards, pulled for our Wheel of ROCK monthly spin for your reward, and placed in the Tower of ROCK at the end of each month, as we work together to fill our tower with tickets and earn a school-wide celebration. At our latest celebration, a school-wide Bubble Fest, students, and staff celebrated as a school family through the creation of giant bubbles! As we ROCK together, we create a school culture committed to a positive learning environment, as well as one another.



Olivewood *Elementary School*

23391 Dune Mear Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/837-6682 • www.svusd.org/olivewood



Alex Perez
Principal

An Idea into Reality

Olivewood Elementary school has a Mustang who is running ahead of the herd and blazing a new trail. Six grader Edwin Hernandez asked his teacher, Mr. Hickson, and Principal Perez about starting a Chess club at Olivewood. Edwin took the initiative to develop

flyers, build interest amongst his peers and request a meeting with administration on how to bring his chess club idea into reality. Edwin discussed how he will train his peers by modeling and explaining the rules. Edwin shared that he fell in love with chess when his cousins introduced him to a chess app. He felt that learning how to play chess has taught him how to strategize, predict and, in his words “build consequential understanding.” Edwin feels that the skills he has learned will help him and his peers improve their academic abilities and behaviors. Edwin Hernandez’s chess club will come to life this February.



Portola Hills *Elementary School*

19422 Saddleback Ranch Rd., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679 • 949/459-9370 • www.svUSD.org/portolahills



Ed MacNevin
Principal

Building Positive Character Traits

Our PHE Explorers' resilience and commitment to learning was illustrated by their many academic engagements during the last trimester. Student recognition is an integral component of our PBIS program at PHE. The system is designed to increase school engagement, improve

academic achievement, and to decrease problem behaviors. We strive to provide opportunities for each student to have the opportunity to shine. Student recognition opportunities are plentiful at PHE:

- **Compass Coupons:** Students can earn Compass Coupons for making great choices, being respectful, being responsible and being safe
- **Monthly PBIS Explorer Expectation assemblies:** The principal brings out the PTA sponsored Compass Coupon Recognition Pencils and recognizes selected students for their efforts.

- Monthly appearances by our school mascot GASPAR. GASPAR helps build school spirit by "high-fiving" students who are recognized each month.



CONGRATULATIONS!



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2 Hour Whale Watch

Blue Whales, Gray Whales,
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Catch the
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To Redeem: 949.496.5794 x7 - Mention School News **To Check Schedule:** danawharf.com

Present certificate at time of check in. One free children's admission (ages 12 and under) with purchase of adult full price ticket, valid for 2 hour whale watching or 5 hour fishing trip only. Subject to availability. Certificate may not be used by groups or with other discounts. Offer expires 6.1.23

949.496.5794 | danawharf.com | 34675 Golden Lantern | Dana Point, CA 92629

Rancho Cañada *Elementary School*

21801 Winding Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/786-5252 • www.svusd.org/ranchocanada



Jennifer Kajdasz
Principal

Rolling Out PBIS

Rancho Cañada has been busy rolling out Positive Behavior Interventions Supports (PBIS) this school year. We have created SOAR bucks that students earn for staying safe, offering kindness, acting responsible and respecting others around campus. These tickets are then placed in our ticket tower

and school wide incentives are being earned throughout the year. Classrooms can also earn positive lunch table reports for cleaning up after themselves and making SOAR decisions when they eat. We have also implemented monthly SOAR assemblies in which family and friends can join us to celebrate students who are making these positive behavior choices and in addition to earning a certificate, students will be given a GOLDEN coin. This coin can be used at our book vending machine that has been loaded with various book titles in varied languages. These books are ones that students can keep forever or book it forward to a friend.



Rancho Santa Margarita *Intermediate School*

21931 Alma Aldea, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/459-8253 • www.rsmintermediate.com



Tyler Morgan
Principal

Teacher of the Year!

A favorite quote of mine is, "Teachers lead and leaders learn." I have learned so much from the staff and students during my tenure as principal at RSM Intermediate. Andrea Mahindrakar is one of those teachers. From creating engaging lessons, to her leadership outside the classroom,

she is a respected leader at RSM. Her passion, composure, and ability to engage with students are noticeable in all facets. One of Andrea's strengths is to lead with conviction and to support all students, not just those assigned to her class roster. Andrea is methodical in her teaching practice and provides a myriad of strategies to ensure all students understand new concepts and learn the material presented. Andrea understands the importance of building relationships with students, and many former students visit her yearly. We are thrilled to have Andrea as RSM, Parenting OC Finalist, and SVUSD Intermediate Teacher of the Year.



Andrea Mahindrakar received RSM, Parenting OC Finalist, and SVUSD Intermediate Teacher of the Year.

Robinson Elementary School

21400 Lindsay Dr., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679 • 949/589-2446 • www.svusd.org/robinson



Suzy McMasters
Principal

Meet Mrs. Colleen Dominguez

Robinson Elementary School celebrates Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Colleen Dominguez. Special Education teacher, Mrs. Dominguez, has been an integral member of the Robinson community for four years and she celebrates her thirteenth year in education this year. She is an

extraordinary teacher, chosen as the teacher of the year by her peers, and celebrated by her scholars and parents. Mrs. Dominguez serves the Robinson community in a number of ways. She is a special education teacher, the Student Success Team facilitator, a member of our site leadership team and leads our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) team. She works closely with the speech education team, school counselor and instructional coach to bring Game Thursdays to our student lunch times. She embodies the inclusive character of Robinson Elementary.



We celebrate our Robinson Rattler Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Colleen Dominguez!

San Joaquin Elementary School

22182 Barbera, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/581-3450 • www.svusd.org/sanjoaquin



David Shun
Principal

Lights...Camera...Action!

During our schoolwide PAWS week, part of our Tier 1 PBIS Support, our Student Council hosted a live Cheetah News, our student created news show, to teach all of our students about Practicing Kindness, Acting Responsibly, Working Together and

Showing Respect (PAWS). Each morning, all of our classes tuned into our Cheetah News to gain a new PAWS perspective from their fellow classmates. In addition, our student council members invited various school members to be interviewed about "PAWS". Some of our special guests included Principal Shun, a first grader, two third graders, and a sixth grader. Each of them shared their unique perspective on how they can model PAWS in various environments around our school!



Santiago STEAM Magnet

24982 Rivendell Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-2820 • www.svUSD.org/santiago



Howard Johnston
Principal

Heritage Garden Opens

At Santiago STEAM Magnet, we strive to educate our students about the complete history of California using a localized perspective - how our current world has been shaped by those who lived before us.

This land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards, the Native nations and peoples of this region.

With the help of many, we built our Heritage Garden, a space for reflection and gathering, where visitors will gain a deepened understanding of the history of this place, and use that information to make empathetic and educated decisions.

“We honor our Mother Earth, and call her Tamáayawut, and may we all walk gently upon her this day, And let us always remember that what we do this day we do for the generations to come.” - Adelia Sandoval

Tree
Embraced by your green branches
Growing, living, reaching
Your shade protects me
Beautiful.



Serrano Intermediate School

24642 Jeronimo Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630 • 949/586-3221 • www.svUSD.org/serrano



David Young
Principal

STEAM Readers

Congratulations to Serrano’s amazing 8th grade STEAM Village teachers, Ms. Pray and Mrs. Suter, who provided their students with a challenge. They entered the STEAM Race to Space Reading Challenge sponsored by OCDE. They wanted to expose their students to STEAM centered literature, and this was

a perfect opportunity to get students researching, reading, and discussing STEAM topics centered around books. Ms. Pray said, “It was great to see how animated students got while discussing topics surrounding this reading challenge.”

Their reading determination earned amazing prizes which included a Disney Animator Zoom Lesson, NBA game tickets, Safari Park tickets, a chat with a literary agent, a Chromebook and much more.

Congratulations to students who earned prizes:

Karina (Saki) Semenov, Shreedeep Goswami, Osiry Flores Castaneda, Drey Allred, Riley LaFlammer, Arya Girish, Erik Nicolas, JD Moore, Caleb Pineda, Chloe Cameron, Joshua Do, Lauren Takacs, Owen Ballinger, Maddelyn Hermann and Lorelei Woodford.



Silverado High School

25632 Peter A. Hartman Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/586-8800 • www.svUSD.org/silverado



David Gordon
Principal

Helping Others

Silverado and our community partner, the Assistance League of Saddleback Valley, helped those in need during the holiday season.

During the month of December, the Assistance League hosted two shopping events at Target for approximately 30 randomly selected students. They also hosted a “Warm for the Holidays” jacket event where 75 Silverado students were gifted a warm all-weather jacket and socks. Silverado and the students who were able to participate in these events are tremendously grateful for the continuing support the Assistance League of Saddleback Valley provides!

Silverado is also honored to have the Saddleback Unified School District Secondary Teacher of the Year! Congratulations to Ms. Stacey Hunt! Silverado is proud of you!



SVUSD Virtual Academy K-12

21001 Rancho Trabuco Rd., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/580-3457 • www.svUSD.org/virtualacademy



Glenn Giokaris
Principal

Preparing for Life Beyond School

At the SVUSD Virtual Academy (SVA), the staff is very purposeful about preparing our students for life beyond school. I recently spoke with a 2022 graduate of the SVUSD Virtual Academy, Stephan Uscanga, to find out how he is fairing.

Stephan is currently a fulltime student at Saddleback Community College (SCC) pursuing an Associate’s Degree with the plan to transfer to a four-year college to earn a Bachelor of Arts in History while he also works full time at Sprouts. Stephan shared that of the four classes he is taking at SCC, three of them are completely online; a typical experience for most college students. According to a recent California Community College’s report, over 65% of classes taught at California Community College classes are online. It is not just community colleges who are expanding their online

learning. Across all California State Universities (CSU), CSU students can enroll in any online class offered at any of the CSU campuses, and a recent capacity building report from the University of California (UC) highlighted the role that online courses will allow for increased enrollment and improve timely graduation.

Stephan shared that as an online student, in addition to content knowledge, you need to focus on “pacing and have the discipline to make a schedule and follow it or you will get swamped real fast.” When I asked Stephan if he thought being a student at SVA helped prepare him to be successful in college he responded, “Definitely! Not only did I learn the content but I learned to establish a routine and work habits to be successful.”

Visit the SVUSD Virtual Academy website to learn more about how we support students’ success as they chart their own course.

Trabuco *Elementary School*

31052 Trabuco Canyon Rd., Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678 • 949/858-0343 • www.svusd.org/trabuco



Dr. Lisa Paisley
Principal

Winter Sing

Trabuco Staff put on our annual Winter Sing this December, and boy, was it cold! Mr. Snow Meiser made a theatrical appearance in our K/1 performance. Pictured here are some of our littles dancing and singing on our new outdoor stage. Our 2nd and 3rd graders dazzled us with a light show compared to no other. Our upper graders entertained us with a host of classics that made us feel that sense of community we are all here for. Each class performed various holiday and winter songs, and then the entire school came together to sing and dance for their families. We are really proud of the Student Council bake sale that raised over \$500 to adopt three different families for the holidays. Big thanks to all who contributed. Our next after-hours event will be the Hoe Down in May. Come on down... yeeeeeee haaaaawww!



Trabuco Hills *High School*

27501 Mustang Run, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/768-1934 • www.svusd.org/thhs



Alicia Foulk
Principal

Spyderlabs

Spyderlabs is a small, independent business that has teamed up with the THHS digital art department to bring real-world experience into the classroom. By providing the class

with industry-standard printing equipment, students are able to work with real clients on real projects learning how to not just create designs but also to print them onto stickers, apparel, and vinyl, or engrave them into wood or metal and more, supporting their creative and professional horizons. Furthermore, interacting

with real clients helps to develop students' soft skills, preparing them for life beyond the classroom. THHS and students in Spyderlab are excited and grateful for this amazing collaborative and educational experience.



3rd period computer graphics students with Spyderlab staff

Trabuco Mesa *Elementary School*

21301 Ave de las Flores, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/858-3339 • www.svusd.org/trabucomesa



Caryn McGrew
Principal

GATE Program

Trabuco Mesa Elementary School has a strong, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program and continues to provide a higher plateau for learning for all students. We are committed to providing a challenging, motivating curriculum that will ensure students will meet and exceed state standards. Many of our teachers are GATE Certified and we have large clusters of students that are GATE identified in grades 3-6. Teachers provide differentiated learning instruction and opportunities through acceleration/pacing, depth, complexity and novelty of curricular tasks. Our monthly character traits incorporate scholarly habits that encourage students to be life-long



EXPLORE, EXPAND, EXCEL

learners and overall good and productive citizens. The prompts of Depth and Complexity and Universal Concepts are used to challenge students to make connections across the disciplines.

Valencia *Elementary School*

25661 Paseo de Valencia, Laguna Hills, CA 92653 • 949/830-3650 • www.svusd.org/valencia



Carolyn Fries
Principal

Festival of Cultures

On Saturday, January 21st, all Valencia families and friends were welcomed to campus for the Festival of Cultures. We had over 30 Valencia families host booths representing sixteen different countries: Armenia, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, England, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Taiwan, Tonga, Ukraine, and Vietnam. At each booth, families shared their cultures through display, dance, music, arts, food, fun activities and much more! There were also some special performances by traditional Indian and Armenian dancers, K-Pop dancers from Laguna Hills High School and Vietnamese Lion Dancers. Students were invited to complete their "Passport" as they visited the countries/cultures by receiving a stamp at each booth they visited.



To make the event more fun, all of this was on the eve of the Lunar New Year! It was a beautiful day to share and celebrate our diversity here at Valencia!

Yoona's Review



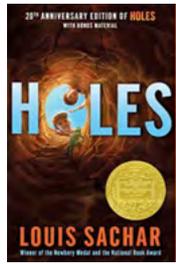
Yoona C.

Holes of Everything

Title: *Holes*

Author: Louis Sachar

This book has lots of themes like friendship and more! The main character of this book is Stanley. He was a 14 year old boy with no friends.



He was bullied at school. He goes to a horrible camp just because he did "something" without any evidence. The horrible thing about the camp is you have to dig very big holes. I mean big. The worst part, it's in the desert. You might think you could just have water to survive, but you have limited amounts of water! Stanley finally gets friends in the camp! He makes deals and has fun with his friends, although some "friends" turn out to be fake. He does get in trouble lots of times in the camp still without evidence. He experienced lots of hardships, but he survived. Yes, the camp was horrible, but there were some good parts! Find out what happens next!

Yoona is a 4th grader. She likes to read books and create stories. She also enjoys playing soccer.

David's Review



David H.

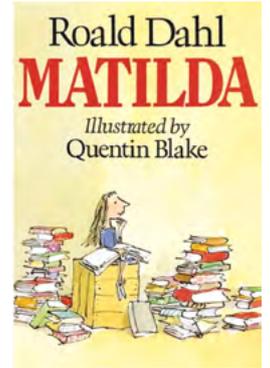
Smart and Funny

Title: *Matilda*

Author: Roald Dahl

Matilda is a book about an intelligent girl whose parents neglect her. When she starts going to school, she meets

a nice and caring teacher, Miss Honey. Matilda later discovers that she has a special talent. What is her special talent? You should read the book not just to find out but also if you want to laugh! The things that Matilda does throughout the book were funny and the author's writing is hilarious. This is one of my favorite books and I'm sure it will be yours too!



David is in fifth grade and he loves to read and play piano. He likes math and activities such as tennis, basketball, and bowling.

Fun Things and Places—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 SVUSD in the subject line.

Entries must be received by March 30, 2023

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

Thank you Barkate / Nehi Orthodontics for sponsoring our contest.
BarkateNehiSmiles.com

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PARK	ZOO
SLIDES	HIKE
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MOVIE	SKATING
POOL	VIDEOS
FOREST	



Orange County Department of Education

Ensure Justice 2023 conference



Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

Human trafficking has been described as a modern-day form of slavery that affects millions around the world. It can take many forms, including forced labor, sex trafficking and domestic servitude, and the need for communities to act is urgent.

That's why I am proud to announce the upcoming Ensure Justice 2023 conference, hosted by Vanguard University's Global Center for Women and Justice and the Orange County Department of Education on March 3 and March 4.

Based on the theme "Finding A Way Home," this year's conference will bring together experts, survivors, law enforcement representatives, educators and community leaders to discuss human trafficking trends, challenges and solutions. Along with in-person sessions at Vanguard's Costa Mesa campus, there will also be virtual presentations, making it accessible to attendees from Orange County and beyond. Students, parents, educators, social workers, service providers, law enforcement representatives, community members and others are encouraged to register in advance at www.gcwj.org/ensurejustice.

Ensure Justice 2023 will examine how to build robust community engagement and resources that support children and youth at risk. Presentations will focus specifically on children and youth who face housing insecurity, have experienced multiple foster care placements, or have to navigate other challenging systems — in other words, the most vulnerable.

"Children with abuse and neglect in their story are more vulnerable to risky behavior that can even result in being exploited through human trafficking," says Dr. Sandra Morgan, director of the Global Center for Women and Justice. "Prevention is our goal. We need to build guard rails so youth don't fall over the edge of a cliff. That means exploring resources in our community to keep children safe, strong and resilient."

Katherine Givens, who leads a survivor-led nonprofit called Twelve 11 Partners, will be this year's keynote speaker. Givens also serves on the White House Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and was recently profiled in *People Magazine's* Jan. 19 issue on human trafficking survivors. Other featured presenters include the Hon. Craig E. Arthur, presiding Juvenile Court judge for the Orange County Superior Court, and Jeanne Awrey, homeless education coordinator for the Orange County Department of Education.

Additional OCDE speakers will break down the challenges facing youth, including homelessness, the foster care system and substance abuse.

As Orange County residents, we all have a role to play in creating a safer and more just community. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about human trafficking, to raise awareness and to join us in the search for solutions. Together, we can ensure justice for all.

For more information on Ensure Justice 2023, or to register for the event, visit www.gcwj.org/ensurejustice.