

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Fountain Valley School District**



Volume 19, Issue 111

May 2023

## **Congratulations Staci Trestik FVSD Teacher of the Year**



**Staci Trestik, FVSD Teacher of the Year (right) with  
Erin Bains, our Director of Student Services and Safety.**

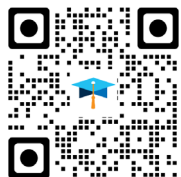
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**Dr. Katherine Stopp**  
Superintendent

Each year Fountain Valley School District names a teacher of the year at each of our ten schools. We enjoy celebrating and recognizing these outstanding educators for their professionalism, knowledge and skills, and dedication to the students, families, and community they serve. They approach teaching with positivity and inspire their students and peers with their passion for serving others. Please join us in celebrating the excellence of FVSD's Teachers of the Year:

Courreges Elementary School - Rachele Coy  
Cox Elementary School - Jennifer Hopkins  
Fulton Middle School - Staci Trestik  
Gisler Elementary School - Carissa Nunn  
Masuda Middle School - Nikki Pham  
Newland Elementary School - Michelle Siefker  
Oka Elementary School - Mai Pham  
Plavan Elementary School - Kristi Manthorne  
Talbert Middle School - Loren Howard  
Tamura Elementary School - Becca Hom

From our top ten, we were tasked with selecting one teacher to represent FVSD at the county level. This year the FVSD Teacher of the year is Mrs. Staci Trestik. She is deserving of this award for always going above and beyond the call of duty for her students and peers. She is respected and loved as a mentor and friend, and she forms lasting relationships with those who have the opportunity to learn from her and know her generous spirit. Staci Trestik's positivity and unwavering student-centered compass make her an asset to the teaching profession!

Congratulations Mrs. Staci Trestik and all our FVSD Teachers of the Year!

*By Sandra Crandall, Board Clerk*

The November 22 election brought two new members and one incumbent to the Fountain Valley School District Governing Board. We welcomed Dennis Cole and Phu Nguyen as our newest members.

Since that time, we have worked together as a five-member board to build our capacity. We've reviewed our mission statement, core values, board priorities, board policies and board protocols.

To do this work and have our Superintendent be a part of the conversations, we hired two facilitators for our workshops. We have invested the time in 4 to 4 1/2 hours per workshop on Saturdays. We've had the opportunity to learn about each other, our leadership styles, ask questions and give input to help define and refine our work. It has been interesting and fun work!

Developing organizational strength and sustainability is essential for an organization's health and longevity. Doing so keeps us on track to becoming a highly effective board whom our students, parents, community, and staff can trust to work on their behalf in always making sound decisions.

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This year is quickly coming to a close. Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices.

Have a wonderful summer and we'll be back with our next issue September 20 for the new school year..



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**Congratulations  
Class of 2023!**

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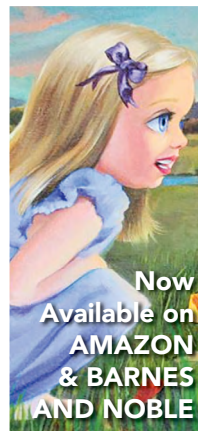
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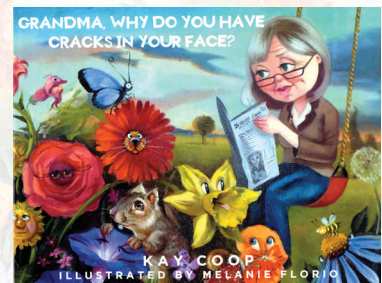
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## Grandma, Why Do You Have Cracks In Your Face?



By Kay Coop | Illustrated by Melanie Florio





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## Ask Dr. Shari



**Dr. Shari Sweetnam**

### Good for the Mind & Great for the Heart

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.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Teens who experience growth at an early age are likely to continue cultivating positive behavior and friendships.

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

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## Mental Health in Children

By: Ioana Pal, Psy.D., clinical psychologist, Stramski Children's Developmental Center, MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach

Mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and self-harm among children have risen in recent years, and can have long-lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional, and social development.

Factors that can affect a child's mental health include genetics, environment, and life experiences. Common mental health disorders in children include anxiety disorders, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and behavior disorders. These conditions can impact a child's ability to learn in school, interact with others, and develop healthy relationships.

Parents and teachers play a crucial role in promoting positive mental health among children. Some strategies for support include providing a safe and supportive environment, encouraging open communication, promoting healthy habits like exercise and good nutrition, and seeking help when needed.

Recognizing the warning signs of mental health issues in

children is important. These may include changes in behavior, mood, sleep, or appetite. Additionally, a child may express feelings of sadness, worry, or fear, have difficulty concentrating or completing tasks, or exhibit physical symptoms such as headaches or stomachaches. They may also isolate more than before.

It's important not to minimize their feelings. Children need to feel safe coming to parents with their issues, and as parents it's important to ask them how they feel if there is a change in behavior.

Early intervention and treatment can significantly improve a child's mental health outcome. Treatment options may include therapy, medication, lifestyle changes or a combination tailored to each child's needs. By supporting their mental health, we can help children develop into healthy, resilient adults.



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# Roch Courreges *Elementary (K-5)*

18313 Santa Carlotta, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4280 • [www.courreges.fvgsd.us](http://www.courreges.fvgsd.us)



**Lisa Tanita**  
Principal

## Springtime Events

In March, we hosted an interactive parent-education night in the area of math. Domino Night began with some delicious pizza, followed by math games that support mathematical concepts using dominoes. A fun, meaningful night was had by all!

Fifth-graders participated in an

outdoor-education science camp at Emerald Cove Outdoor Science Institute from April 24 through April 26. In the great outdoors, students' curiosity was sparked, confidence grew, and connections were deepened. A few highlights included adventurous hikes, meteorology/watershed experience, and line dancing! We are thrilled that we were able to provide this memorable experience during this rainy school year!





# James H. Cox *Elementary (K-5)*

17615 Los Jardines E., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4240 • [www.cox.fvgsd.us](http://www.cox.fvgsd.us)



**Cara Robinson**  
*Principal*

## **Congratulations Mr. Weaver**

This year, we are honored to recognize our school custodian Mr. Andrew Weaver, as our 2023 classified employee of the year. Andrew joined our school team during the COVID-19 pandemic and immediately impacted our school for the better. He is always present at morning drop off and pick up--in the parking lot connecting with

our families and students. He mans our crosswalk to help our students safely cross the street. He keeps our campus well-organized, safe and clean every day. Any time we need something, we call "Mr. Andrew" to help us. He is always positive, upbeat, and kind. Even when inundated with many tasks at the same time and amidst an unhappy client or two, Andrew sees past the stressful situation to connect with people and to make sure their needs are met. He is loved by all in our school community!





# Harry C. Fulton *Middle School (6–8)*

8778 El Lago St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-2816 • [www.fulton.fvgsd.us](http://www.fulton.fvgsd.us)



**Jenny Salberg**  
Principal



**Molly Kuykendall**  
Assistant Principal

## The Dungeons & Dragons Club

It's a wizard, it's a druid, it's a...dragon? Fulton Middle School recently completed its inaugural season of the Dungeon & Dragons Game Club. Inspired by two eighth-grade students, Cassidy Stone and Ella Lamsus, and sponsored by teachers

Jennifer Rehling and Adam Elmi, Dungeons & Dragons is one of the most popular clubs on campus.

For those unfamiliar, D&D is a collaborative tabletop game. It requires inventive storytelling and role-playing that is limited only by the imaginations of the Dungeon Masters and the players involved in "The Quest." Each group has a designated "Dungeon Master" who devises the quest, and the players invent their own characters. Adventures can encompass a single day, or they can carry on indefinitely depending upon the character direction regarding any obstacles, puzzles, riddles, and, of course, the rolls of the polyhedral dice.

The response from our students and parents to the club is overwhelmingly positive. Seventh-grade Dungeon Master Rylan Gattis describes his responsibilities as, "The role of the DM is to run the game, and make sure everyone is having fun. To be a good DM you need to be creative, and read the room for unexpected twists when the story drifts from the original plan. If players struggle to solve a puzzle, I'm there to help."

A newer player, seventh-grader Carter Tran, said, "What I love most about D&D Club is having fun with friends and exciting experiences. I definitely recommend it." Rehling and Elmi note that the game intellectually challenges the players' imaginations in a safe, fun, and welcoming environment. Students embrace new friendships, have elevated self-confidence, and develop a true sense of connection to Fulton.

As this year's players become next year's Dungeon Masters in Season Two of the Fulton D&D Club, they look forward to inviting new peers to join in the adventure.





# Robert Gisler Elementary (K-5)

18720 Las Flores, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4211 • [www.gisler.fvgsd.us](http://www.gisler.fvgsd.us)



**Katherine Pavidis**  
Principal

## Empowering Others

Spring is here and our campus is bustling. We welcomed students back from spring break with a re-set on our school-wide expectations. Students were introduced to our re-vamped Gator Way slogan, “Be Respectful, Responsible, and Safe” at our Gator Gathering assembly, and then were taken through explicit teaching through station rotations in several of our areas on campus.

Last but not least, our staff honored our Classified Employee of the Year, Mrs. Kathy Castro. Mrs. Castro has put in countless years to our district in a variety of capacities to help serve the community of Fountain Valley. Everything she does, she does with the thought of her students first, and with heart. She is an “includer” that empowers others around her with her infectious and positive attitude. We are so lucky that Mrs. Castro is a part of our Gisler family!



**School-wide expectations being taught through station rotations—everyone on the same page!**

**Gisler’s Classified Employee of the Year—Mrs. Kathy Castro, Congratulations!**

School spirit is also alive and thriving. To get us through these next two months of fun, we launched an “adopt a duck” event at our school-wide assembly. Each teacher chose a duck from “Lake Gisler,” and then was tasked with taking the duck back to their room and giving it a name.

Once a week over the next two months three lucky ducks will be chosen for a free recess. The teachers are encouraged to utilize the ducks for teachable small moments and incentives during this busy time of the school year.



**Building school spirit through adopt a duck fun!**



# Kazuo Masuda *Middle School(6-8)*

17415 Las Jardines W., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4250 • [www.masuda.fvdsd.us](http://www.masuda.fvdsd.us)



**Jennifer Morgan**  
*Principal*



**Matt Ploski**  
*Assistant Principal*

## Masuda Hosts District Basketball Tournament

Masuda Middle School was proud to hold the Fountain Valley School District's annual Basketball Tournament, hosting teams from all three district middle schools as well as Mariner's Christian School. As one would expect, the day featured intense competition

among the teams. While the competition was fierce, the players from all teams showed excellent sportsmanship. Cheerleaders from the various schools were there to boost morale and get fans excited, and parents turned out in force to cheer on their kids. The highlight of the event was a friendly basketball competition among students from various Special Day Classes put on by Fountain Valley School District's Adaptive PE program. Visitor's expressed amazement at the high level of organization - kudos to Masuda's ASB Director, Mr. Danny Garcia, and his ASB students. They worked hard to make the tournament a success and it showed.





# William T. Newland *Elementary (K-5)*

8787 Dolphin St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4200 • [www.newland.fvgsd.us](http://www.newland.fvgsd.us)



**Kathy Davis**  
*Interim Principal*

## Walk through California

On March 31st, Newland Elementary's 4th grade students participated in Walk Through California. Students learned about the major events that shaped the state of California through active participation in an engaging retelling of California's history. Students traveled through time, met historical figures, and danced the day away at a fiesta. All

students were experts on a relevant vocabulary word and had the opportunity to teach their classmates something about California's history.

After they traveled through time, the 4th graders learned about the four regions and other important features and landmarks in our state by working together to build a large topographical map of California. All students left the experience raving about how engaging and entertaining the experience was!





## Isojiro Oka *Elementary (K-5)*

9800 Yorktown Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4260 • [www.oka.fvdsd.us](http://www.oka.fvdsd.us)



**Julie Ballesteros**  
*Principal*

### **Classified Employee of the Year**

Oka is proud to present Lindsey Soderberg as our Classified Employee of the Year. Lindsey serves as an Oka transitional kindergarten instructional assistant, and she is a true light on our campus. The children and her partner-teacher are blessed to work with an individual who is hard working, dedicated, loving, kind, intelligent, creative, and has a heart of gold.

Lindsey is a true educator that takes the time to get to know and connect with each child. She highlights their strengths and supports their areas of need. She goes above and beyond each day out of true love for children and her team.

Lindsey shows up every day with a smile, a positive attitude, and is always ready to help, even when it's beyond her immediate classroom and job. She can also be relied upon to help with students on the playground, at lunch, during class time, small groups, and will offer to help all students whenever she can.

In addition to her stellar work ethic, Lindsey willingly helps to create a positive culture for our school by participating in school-sponsored events, always inspiring our staff members and supporting our Wolfpack Way. And she does all of this while being an active parent at her own children's school.

Lindsey goes out of her way to make a difference, never looking for recognition, but is absolutely deserving of it. We are incredibly blessed to be working with her each day.



**Mrs. Lindsey Soderberg celebrates her Classified Employee of the Year announcement with teammate Miss Lipman.**



# Urbain H. Plavan *Elementary (K-5)*

9675 Warner Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4230 • [www.plavan.fvds.us](http://www.plavan.fvds.us)



**Dr. Patrick Ham**  
*Principal*

## Plavan PTO – Enriching Our Students' Educational Experience!!!

Plavan Elementary is so grateful for our partnership with our amazing PTO! This year, Plavan PTO hosted engaging family-oriented fundraisers like Pins for Plavan, Family Movie Nights, Spring Book Fair, and the Jogathon to sponsor enriching and fun educational field trips and assemblies (Natural History Museum, Aquarium of the

Pacific, and Irvine Outdoor Science Camp, Shipley's Nature Center, Imagination Machine, Multicultural Celebration, and Art Explorers). Under the leadership of new PTO Board - President: Dr. Huy Tran; VP of Fundraiser: Thao To; External Vice President: Steve Nguyen; Internal Vice President: Tran Nguyen; Treasurer: Wendolyn Dao; Secretary: Loc Nguyen; and Parliamentarian: Phu Nguyen

Plavan students have participated in engaging and educational activities that truly supplement the instruction in the classroom. Our partnership with our PTO is an essential component of our amazing school culture that makes Plavan a very special place. Thank you Plavan PTO for this amazing school year!



**Dr. Ham and Plavan students enjoy a fun day of bowling during Plavan PTO's "Pins for Plavan" Fundraiser!**



**Mrs. Kha and her students showcase their art projects from the Art Explorers program (Thank you Art Chair: Jessica Carr!)**



**Ms. Hughes and her 4th grade students having fun at Mission Capistrano!**



## Samuel E. Talbert *Middle School (6–8)*

9101 Brabham Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4220 • [www.talbert.fvdsd.us](http://www.talbert.fvdsd.us)



**Jay Adams**  
*Principal*



**Brandon LoMonaco**  
*Assistant Principal*

### Classified Employee of the Year

Talbert is proud to honor Mrs. Agnes Pham, Office Assistant, as our Classified Employee of the Year. Mrs. Pham's peers all state that she is "the heart and smile of Talbert!" Agnes

has a steady, calming effect on all with whom she interacts. She is patient and kind, and she truly cares about our entire Talbert Community, giving freely of her time/energy to support anyone in need.



We at Talbert are blessed by Mrs. Pham's positivity and infectious cheer. The entire Talbert community benefits from all that she has to offer and the efforts she extends! We are proud to present her as our Classified Employee of the Year on the basis of her outstanding contributions to the children (and adults) whose lives she touches daily.

## Hisamatsu Tamura *Elementary (K–5)*

17340 Santa Suzanne St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-6226 • [www.tamura.fvdsd.us](http://www.tamura.fvdsd.us)



**Chris Mullin**  
*Principal*

### Tamura's Magic Night A Big Hit

Tamura recently held a family magic night in our bowl. The evening was a fun filled night built to bring the community closer together. The evening was well attended by students, families and friends. Mr Mullin participated in the fun by putting his head on the line to the thrill of the crowd. As educators, we know that Family Nights

benefit us by ultimately improving students' academic achievement. The more parents and families understand and take part in their child's school work and activities, the more likely that child will succeed academically. Additionally, the more deeply teachers get to know their students and their families, the better they can teach to their students' individual needs. It is important that as student population becomes increasingly diverse, we continue to establish close connections with our families.

