

# School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Fountain Valley School District



Volume 19, Issue 115

January 2024



## January is National School Board Recognition Month Thanks to Our FVSD Trustees for their Leadership!







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*By Steven Schultz, Board President*

### Play is Learning

If you see a yellow traffic sign with a teeter-totter on it, you are supposed to slow down because children are at play. Increasingly, schools have been sped up and children have less time to slow down and be at play. Mister Rogers once said, “Play is often talked about as if it were relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning.”

We agree with Fred Rogers and have purchased new playgrounds for all seven of our elementary schools in Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley. As a former student in the district, where I now serve as president of its Governing Board, I still have fond memories climbing on the metal submarine jungle gym that used to be at Gisler Elementary School. Soon, every student will play on custom playgrounds designed after the input they gave to what items matter most.

The chimes of the metal chains of the tetherball poles dancing in the breeze still ring in my mind twenty-five years later, reminding me of how I learned to overcome fear by stepping into that tetherball circle and dodge that yellow rubber globe flying at warp-speed straight to your face. Our students can also learn from the swings, that you get higher when someone is behind you pushing you up. From the slide, learn that every time they fall, they must get up and climb back up. From the monkey bars, you must let go of where you are and reach out to grab where you’re going.

Every school will also have a teeter-totter, and twenty-five years from now, I hope they remember the leadership they showed when they selflessly sat down in order to elevate others up to surf the sky, and no matter how old they get, they remember to slow down and be a child at play.

## SUPERINTENDENT



**Dr. Katherine Stopp**  
*Superintendent*

The new year is well underway! While we continue to focus on our mission of “promoting a foundation for academic excellence, mastery of basic skills, responsible citizenship, and a desire by students to achieve their highest potential through a partnership with home and community,” we are on a mission to help new families who are just beginning to navigate the educational landscape. The Fountain Valley School District is eagerly anticipating the arrival of its youngest learners to kindergarten (K) and transitional kindergarten (TK) for the upcoming academic year!

For children who are five by September 1, 2024,

kindergarten awaits, while transitional kindergarten is available for those who reach the age of five September 2, 202 through June 2, 2025.

Early education plays a pivotal role in a child’s academic, social, and emotional development. In kindergarten and TK, students begin to build foundational skills like literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, setting a strong academic base for future success. Moreover, these early educational experiences foster social interaction, teamwork, and emotional resilience, enabling students to develop essential life skills.

The welcoming environment of Fountain Valley School District ensures that these young learners embark on a journey of discovery, growth, and preparation for a bright educational future.





**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



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Netragrednik  
Neta Madison

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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

Covering the  
**FOUNTAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Happy New Year!

This school year is off to a great start. In this issue you will read about coding and engineering, Kindness Counts Projects, winter musical performances, having the right attitude, New Year — New Book, and

so much more...it is a great time to be a student!

On page 5 the Fountain Valley Library highlights their upcoming programs for all ages.

Our next issue is March 13.



**Happy Valentine's Day**  
from the  
*School News Staff!*

# History Depot



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## Discover and Go Passes at Your Local Library!

*Kimberly Tran-Hoang, Children & Teen Librarian*

Did you know that you can explore local museums and attractions either free or at a low-cost? OC Public Libraries has partnered with a wide range of local attractions from the Santa Ana Zoo to Pretend City in Irvine.

Check out OC Public Libraries' Discover and Go program located here: <https://ocpl.org/discoverandgo>

## Below are some highlights of upcoming programs:

### Children & Families

- Spanish Bilingual Storytime: Last Tuesdays at 4pm
- Vietnamese Bilingual Storytime:  
Saturdays, January 20 and February 17 at 11am
- Family Craft Night: Second Tuesdays at 4pm
- Lego Party Hour: First Saturdays at 3pm
- Unplug & Play: Fourth Saturdays at 2pm

We also have weekly Toddler and Preschool Storytimes, monthly painting workshops, movie screenings for families, and more!

### Teens

- Teen Advisory Board: Meets First Thursdays at 5pm – Volunteer application required for teens ages 13-18.
  - Paper Lantern Workshop for Teens: Tuesday, February 6 at 4pm.
  - DIY Chocolate Workshop for Teens & Tweens: Thursday, February 15 at 5pm
  - Trivia & Pie Competition: Thursday, March 14 at 4pm
- Animescapes (Anime Film Screenings for Teens & Adults) – Third Saturdays at 2pm

### Adults

- Crafts for Adults w/Developmental Disabilities: Mondays at 10:30am
- Tech Help Hour: Second Tuesdays at 11am
- Basic Budget Bites: Thursday, February 8, at 4pm
- Paint N Sip Workshop: Second Wednesdays at 4pm (Registration required)
- Adult Yarncraft Group: Third Thursdays at 3pm

We also have monthly book groups, classic movie screenings for adults, unique craft workshops, etc. Check out our Program Calendar for more!



**Glenn Grandis**  
Mayor

## Happy New Year!

Dear teachers, parents and students. As we step into the start of a new year, I find myself reflecting on the positive impact that our local schools have had on myself and my family. Having been a product of Fountain Valley High School and the parent of two sons who have gone through the Fountain Valley Schools, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the community that binds us together.

May this year bring you and your children an abundance of joy, success, and good health. May it be filled with exciting learning experiences, meaningful friendships, and moments of laughter that create lasting memories.

My ask is that you stay involved in your community. Volunteering at your local school, with a youth sports league or with one of the many non-profits that benefit our local community. You can make a positive difference in our community.

During this upcoming year as Mayor, I will focus attention on community engagement, innovation, and fiscal responsibility, all while embracing diversity. I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead for our city, and I am confident that together, we can build a brighter future. My door is always open, and I welcome your thoughts, concerns, and ideas. Let us embark on this journey together, as one united community.

Wishing you a spectacular New Year filled with love, laughter, and countless moments of pride as you witness your children's growth and accomplishments.

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**Ioana Pal, Psy.D.**  
licensed clinical psychologist,  
Stramski Children's Developmental  
Center at Miller Children's &  
Women's Hospital Long Beach

## Recognizing & Mitigating Toxic Stress in Kids

In today's world, 1 in 3 children face the challenge of toxic stress – a complex interplay of environmental, personal and physical factors that impact their well-being. Recognizing signs of toxic stress in kids and empowering parents with proactive strategies is crucial in helping children achieve positive mental health. Some examples include prolonged exposure to domestic violence or other stressors in the home, abuse, neglect, financial or other instabilities.

Navigating the challenges of modern life can be intense, especially for children experiencing an elevated level of stress. Stressors like excessive device use, prolonged indoor activities and exposure to distressing news increase anxiety. Limited resources or witnessing parental hardships in a challenging economy can add a layer of stress. These stressors may resonate more with parents, emphasizing the need for support and understanding with children.

Recognizing the early signs is instrumental in preventing the potential long-term effects of toxic stress on a child's development. Toxic stress can impair cognitive, emotional, social and physical development, and increase the risk of various health problems later in life, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and substance abuse.

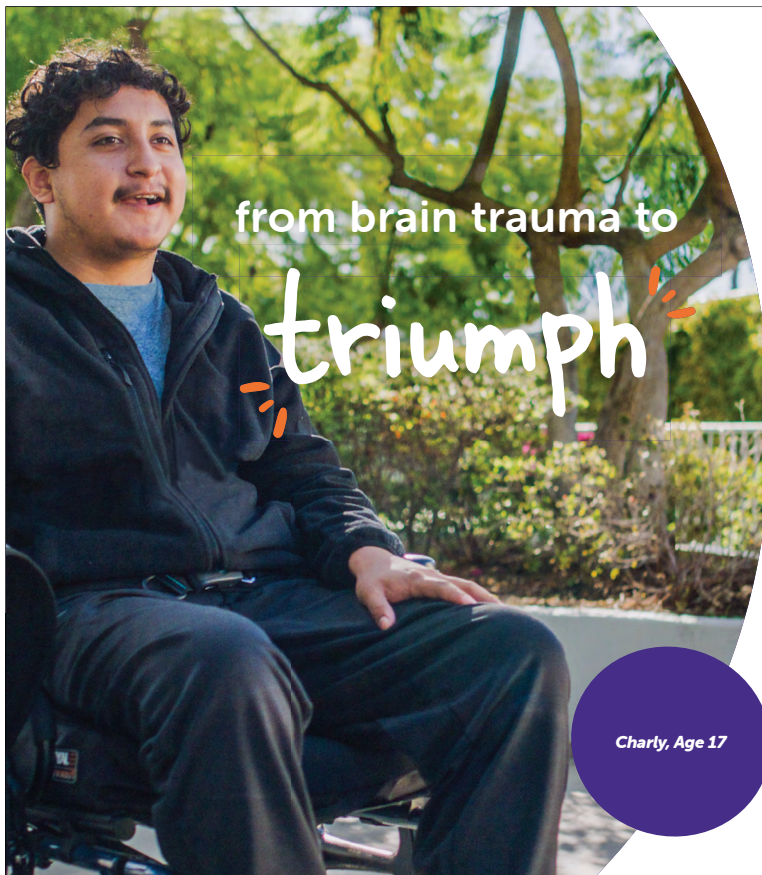
Signs of toxic stress in children include:

- Difficulty with learning, or regression in behavior and skills
- Irritability, anger, fear or withdrawal
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Low self-esteem or confidence

Caregivers who recognize stress factors that may impact a child's well-being is often the first step. Open communication and creating an environment where a child's feelings are not only acknowledged, but also expressed freely, help build resilience and emotional well-being. Addressing toxic stress involves incorporating stress-reducing activities into daily routines, such as mindfulness practice, outdoor activity, healthy boundaries, and family time.

Seeking professional support is essential. Pediatricians, child psychologists and school counselors can provide interventions suited to a child's unique circumstances and well-being.

MemorialCare's Stramski Children's Developmental Center helps children and families understand and manage toxic stress. Call (714) 377-6993 or visit [millerchildrens.memorialcare.org/locations/stramski-childrens-developmental-center](http://millerchildrens.memorialcare.org/locations/stramski-childrens-developmental-center) to learn more.



Charly, Age 17



### It takes a village.

Charly suffered a fall while biking — a severe brain trauma that threatened his life. Until Miller Children's & Women's Hospital helped his brain heal. Our therapists helped him walk and talk again and our highly specialized pediatric team dedicated themselves to his recovery. Because we knew, to lift Charly back up again, it would take a village. So when we watched Charly walk the stage at high school graduation — supported by his physical therapist — we knew he'd only keep going.

Learn more.

[millerchildrens.org/care](http://millerchildrens.org/care)

Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach  
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South Bay to Orange County



# Roch Courreges *Elementary (K-5)*

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



**Lisa Tanita**  
*Principal*

## Empowering Tomorrow's Innovators

This school year we have expanded our coding/engineering program to the primary grades. Guided by STEM educators, students are immersed in hands-on coding experiences, fostering critical thinking, digital literacy, and teamwork. Using Ozobots, our young learners code projects illustrating food chains and demonstrating the water cycle, integrating core content into meaningful projects. Upper grade students

eagerly await their coding experiences in the spring, further developing skills for tomorrow. Courreges' coding program is our commitment to nurturing future innovators, thinkers, and problem solvers. By empowering students to thrive in an ever-changing world, we ensure they are well-prepared for the challenges of the digital age.

**January 9** - Primary Coding

(Upper grades to come in the spring)

**February 26** - Teacher of the Year & STEM Family Night

**April 15** - Outdoor Education & Upper Grade Coding

**May 20** - Classified Employee of the Year





# James H. Cox Elementary (K-5)

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



**Dr. Jennifer Ollila**  
Principal

## Celebrating the Cox Community

Cox Elementary has been celebrating our community through engaging with our partners and highlighting outstanding students. On November 9, 2023 we welcomed family and friends to our first Lunch on the Lawn. We had so much fun spending time with our loved ones on campus. On November 30, 2023, the Cox Elementary Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program welcomed students from the Huntington Beach High School (HBHS)



**Elle Moberg enjoying lunch on the lawn with her mom.**



**Cox students being recognized for trimester awards.**

American Sign Language Program to celebrate the holidays with a party and social gathering. Students enjoyed making crafts, spending time together, and singing holiday songs. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with HBHS. On December 15, 2023 we celebrated some of our outstanding Eagles with trimester awards. Students received awards for Eagle Spirit, All-Star Student, and Attitude is Everything. It was a great celebration of students who exemplify our motto: Cox Eagles are respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.



**HBHS ASL student and Cox DHH students.**



# 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



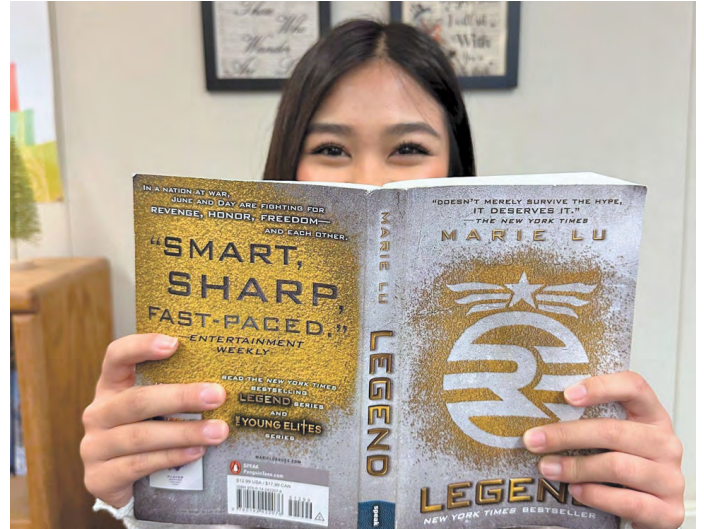
**Molly Kuykendall**  
Assistant Principal

## New Year, New Book to Read

By Ms. Todd's ELA Class,  
1st Period

For many students, picking up a book and actively engaging with its plot and characters is often challenging. Their eyes might glaze over, and their minds might wander off the page.

However, there are strategies to help students pay better attention and actually enjoy reading. This past Fall, Ms. Todd's 8th-grade English students immersed themselves in Marie Lu's dystopian novel, *Legend*, and have created top tips for other students to have a more effective and exciting reading experience:



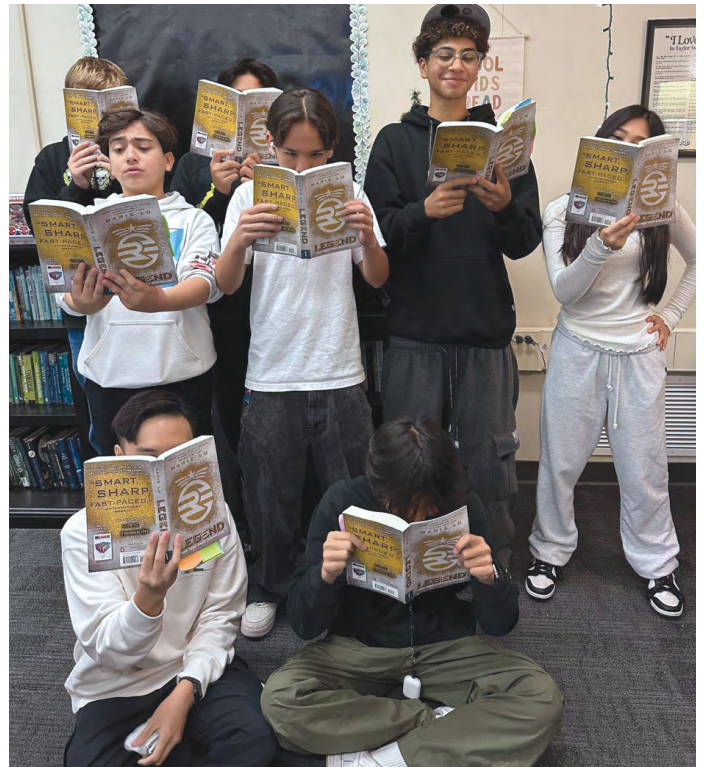
7. Relate to the characters. Consider how their experiences mirror your own so that you can better understand their conflicts, decisions, and motivations.

Remember, the key is to make reading a personal and enjoyable experience. With the right strategies and some exploration, students can continue discovering the pleasure of reading.

When Ms. Todd's class applied these strategies, many students shared that *Legend* was the first book they had actively read and enjoyed, and they are excited to start reading something new!



1. Choose a book that interests you. For example, if you like solving clues and unraveling secrets, you might read a mystery novel.
2. Use sticky notes to annotate the book. Leaving notes of your thoughts, questions, and predictions will help you stay engaged.
3. Check out the audiobook. Listening to the text while you read improves comprehension, and a lively narrator may also help you imagine more vivid characters and events.
4. Find a quiet environment. Reading in a space without distractions will improve your focus.
5. Talk about the book with a reading buddy. Discussing your thoughts with someone else makes the book more entertaining and easier to understand.
6. Eat a snack. If you combine something you don't enjoy (like reading) with something you do (like eating), you might have a better experience. A little treat might trick your brain into enjoying a book!





# Robert Gisler *Elementary (K-5)*

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



**Katherine Pavidis**  
*Principal*

## Making Connections

In our ever-evolving learning environment, fostering connections has become a cornerstone of our school's mission. We are committed to creating a community where students not only excel academically but also build meaningful relationships. Here's a quick look at a few ways in how we're achieving this: Reading/Writing Workshop, CGI math, STEAM hands-on projects, vocal



**Buddy Time**

music performances, weekly whole school assemblies, friendly attendance competitions to build awareness, after-school theater program, 5th gr. Outdoor science camp, lunchtime sports tournaments, and soon our One School, One Book initiative.

These programs work hand in hand, creating a well-rounded educational experience that goes beyond textbooks. Our school is committed to building connections that last a lifetime.



**Writers Workshop**



**December to Remember Attendance Winners (2nd gr.)**



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

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



**Cara Robinson**  
*Principal*



**Jessica O'Malley**  
*Assistant Principal*

## Masuda's Future Engineers

We are in the process of expanding our Robotics and Engineering program at Masuda. Currently, our Masuda 7th and 8th graders have an elective option to learn the basics of robotics

and engineering. Additionally, they are exposed to the design process of designing, developing prototype models and streamlining production. Our students develop simple machines using three-dimensional printers and lasers. Mrs. Arellano, our robotics lead, is shown in the picture below working with her students.





# 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)



**Matt Ploski**  
Principal

## The 6th Annual Presents for Puppies Drive took Place in Mrs. Holliday's Classroom!

It was the most wonderful time of the year in 1st grade, when Mrs. Holliday's students brought Christmas cheer to rescue pups at Dachshund Paws and Pals Rescue of Southern California.

Throughout the month of December, students were encouraged to bring in donations such as collars, food, bowls, and toys, for dogs living in foster care. The donated items were then wrapped by the students at their annual holiday wrapping party. This is traditionally one of the most

exciting days of the year, as the children are so excited to wrap gifts all on their own and celebrate the joy of the season by spreading kindness throughout their community. Once decorated with bows, colorful wrappings, and thoughtful cards, the gifts are delivered to the rescue, where they provided many tail wags during the holiday season.

"This activity continues to grow in both size and love each year and has become a class favorite of our Kindness Counts projects." "I am so proud of what these children have accomplished all on their own." "They are learning to be loving, caring, and kind young boys and girls." "Of all the things I will teach them this year, this is by far the most important." - Mrs. Holliday





# Isojiro Oka *Elementary (K-5)*

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



**Julie Ballesteros**  
*Principal*

## Wolfie's Wolfstastic Food Drive

In an inspiring display of compassion and leadership, Oka's fourth and fifth-grade Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students took the initiative to organize a school-wide food drive that exceeded all expectations. The young minds behind this philanthropic endeavor demonstrated remarkable organizational skills and community spirit.

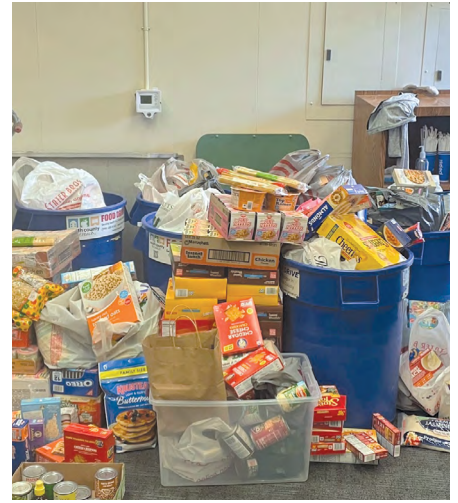
Wolfie's Wolfstastic Food Drive resulted in 1,426 pounds of food donations collected from the entire school community. These dedicated students not only showcased their commitment to making a positive impact but also illustrated the power of collective action in creating meaningful change.



The local food bank, a beneficiary of this thoughtful effort, estimates that each donation of 80-100 pounds can sustain a family of four for a week, and for individuals, even longer. The ripple effect of these donations will undoubtedly touch numerous lives in the community.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the entire community for their overwhelming generosity. It is through

such collaborative efforts that communities grow stronger and demonstrate the true power of unity.





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

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



**Dr. Patrick Ham**  
*Principal*

## Celebrating Plavan's Spectacular Winter Musical Performance

Under the skilled leadership of our music teacher, Ms. Sarah Hughes, over 500 students from grades TK-5th performed 14 winter songs at our annual winter concert on December 15th. Classics such as "A Hat for My Snowman," "Jingle Bell Stomp," "Making Angels in the Snow," and "Holiday Lights" were performed by Plavan students on stage while parents



and friends bundled up in blankets in the audience. Events like this provide enriching opportunities for students, but it also brings our entire school community together. Thank you, Ms. Hughes for directing this amazing event! Thank you to all of our parents, friends and our distinguished guests: Board Pro Tem, Mr. Steve Schultz; Board Member, Mr. Phu Nguyen; and Assistant Superintendent of Business, Mrs. Chris Fullerton for your attendance. Our winter concert truly was an unforgettable experience!





# 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

## The Right Attitude

To promote health and a sense of friendly competition amongst our grade-level students, Talbert's Noon Leagues are up and running this year at lunch time--with the grade levels competing against same-age peers. We started off the year with Basketball,

and then transitioned to Cornhole and Rugby. Starting soon, we will have a popular baseball-type game called "Over the Line"...and the year would not be complete, of course, without the ever popular...dodgeball!



Students do not need any experience to play—just the right attitude. At the end of each “season,” the ultimate champs get bragging rights, as well as enjoying a tangible tasty treat to reward their hard work. But they can't get too comfortable--since the next season is lurking around the corner and there are “up and coming” teammates waiting for their turn to be at the TOP.





# Hisamatsu Tamura *Elementary (K-5)*

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



**Chris Mullin**  
*Principal*

## Winter Sing-A-Long

Tamura recently held our Winter Sing-A-Long Concert. We had both our choir, representing all grades, and band participate. Our students played to a packed house of parents, family, and friends. Music is a vital component of a well-rounded education, offering numerous benefits that extend beyond melodies and harmonies.

In schools, music cultivates creativity, enhances cognitive abilities, and fosters discipline and teamwork.

Moreover, musical education contributes to improved academic performance, particularly in areas such as mathematics and language development. It instills patience, perseverance, and a strong work ethic as students practice and refine their musical skills. Beyond individual growth, music in schools promotes a sense of community and cultural appreciation.

By incorporating music into the curriculum, schools not only enrich students' lives but also nurture skills that are indispensable for success.

