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School News

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Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 59

www.SchoolNewsRollCall.com

DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015

Los Al's Commitment to the Four A's

By Dr. Sherry Kropp, Superintendent

Los Alamitos Unified School District has a long-standing commitment to excellence in the four A's: Academics, Athletics, Activities, and the Arts.

We believe that we provide an equally outstanding education in all four areas, which is a major highlight and source of pride for our families, communities, and staff. For this edition of *School News*, we are focusing on Activities in order to give readers just a small glimpse of the variety of activities that are happening throughout the District.

At the District level, LAEF recently held the State of the District (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtWR9JNoW1A&feature=youtu.be>). Board President Dr. Barke and Board Clerk Diana Hill greeted over 100 guests for this festive breakfast, an event for participants to learn more about student achievement and accomplishments in all four A's. Teacher of the Year Justin Padilla, Teacher's Association President Richard Smith, PTA Council President Jody Roubanis, and LAEF Executive Director Carrie Logue each spoke briefly to the crowd. The participants also heard from our three communities: Los Alamitos City Manager Bret Plumlee, Seal Beach City Manager Jill Ingram, and Rossmoor Community Services District General Manager James Ruth. A highlight of the morning was Congressman Lowenthal presenting a plaque to the District in honor of Rossmoor receiving recognition for the third time as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. We are extremely grateful to LAEF for making this event possible and to their Title Sponsor Alamitos Eye Care and Gold Sponsors BNSF Railway and mac-fusion for their support.



Congressman Alan Lowenthal, Board President, Dr. Barke, Rossmoor Elementary Principal Kiva Spiratos, and Superintendent Dr. Kropp.

I am honored to be the Superintendent and grateful that I get to work with a District Community that I admire and respect and one that expects continuous improvement. It was exciting to share a plethora of student results that clearly demonstrate excellence throughout our District. We are fortunate to be in a unified school district, which gives us the opportunity to see the results of our preschool through high school efforts in the accomplishments of our seniors.



LAEF Board President Randy Hill, Superintendent Dr. Kropp, Board President Dr. Barke, Board member Meg Cutuli, Board member Diana Hill, and LAEF Board Member Sean Payne.

Listed below are just a few of the many highlights shared at the State of the District:

- District API 922
- All schools California Distinguished Schools
- Only District in OC on College Board Honor Roll four years in a row
- Three schools in the top 10 in OC
- LAHS in the top 100 in the Country
- Three reigning CIF Championships
- Choral Group National Grand Champions three out of the last four years
- Over 400 LAHS students active in a service club
- Over 600 students in choir
- 40 Division One Scholar Athletes
- 263 Graduates earned white cords for community service
- Over 75 student clubs at LAHS

College Board's 5th Annual AP District Honor Roll

By Superintendent Dr. Kropp

Since this distinction started five years ago, Los Alamitos Unified School District is the only District in Orange County to be recognized all five years for simultaneously increasing access to AP courses and also maintaining or improving the rate at which AP students earn scores of three or higher on AP exams. With the vision of the Board of Education, commitment of the staff, and support of our families, one of the District's Priority Goals is for every student to complete at least one AP course in high school. This recognition is validation that the District is making steady progress toward attainment of this ambitious goal. Being named to the College Board's 5th Annual AP District Honor Roll is a tribute to the entire District Community's unified commitment to its motto, Igniting Unlimited Possibilities for Students, through excellent teaching and learning and dedication to continuous improvement, preschool through high.

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Having Fun for a Worthy Cause

By Carrie Logue, Executive Director

On September 27, the Los Alamitos Community Center enjoyed an exciting evening of gaming, food, drinks and fun. The Los Alamitos Education Foundation's (LAEF) and Los Alamitos Police Officers Association's Casino Night fund-raising event was a huge success, raising over \$15,000!



LAEF Executive Director Carrie Logue, Los AI School Resource Officer Dan Brandt, LAEF Program Lead Teacher Katie Miraglia.

The event featured 20 gaming tables, including blackjack, craps, roulette and poker. The big winners received a trip to Las Vegas, Ducks hockey tickets, and gift certificates for shopping and dining. The Lucky Card 50/50 raffle winner took home \$1,000, and many door prizes were awarded. A number of local restaurants also donated food and drinks.

The LAEF and the Los AI POA are so appreciative of this support. They look forward to bringing this fun-filled night back in 2015.



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Happy Holidays! For adults the years pass too quickly and for children not fast enough. It is hard to believe we are about to welcome in a New Year. There have been many academic changes this year with Common Core Standards at the top of the list. The Superintendent's message on the front page is informative and gives the community many reasons to be very proud of LAUSD.

We are always mindful of our men and women in the armed services and grateful for their service.

Our next issue is February 11.

Covering the
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC
P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740
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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com
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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



Gary Feldman, MD

Medical Director,
Stramski
Children's
Developmental
Center

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood brain disorders, affecting millions of children between the ages of 4–17 in the United States.

A child with ADHD might have trouble focusing on tasks or subjects because the part of their brain that controls attention and activity is different, than a child without ADHD. Common symptoms of ADHD include difficulty staying focused, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity.

A child with ADHD might:

- Daydream a lot
- Forget or lose things a lot
- Squirm or fidget
- Talk too much
- Have trouble taking turns



Diagnosing ADHD takes multiple steps. There's no way to tell if someone has ADHD from blood tests, X-rays or other medical tests. Doctors diagnose ADHD based on history, interviews and special evaluations — such as vision, hearing and learning tests. In most cases, ADHD is best treated with a combination of medication and behavior therapy.

As a parent, you can help your child by structuring situations in more positive ways. For example, restrict the number of playmates to one or two, to prevent overstimulation. Or, if your child has trouble completing tasks, divide large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps to help your child accomplish their goals.

Your child may be eligible for an “individualized education program” or “free appropriate education” if they are attending a public school. In order to make sure that your child is receiving the proper attention at school, be sure to discuss their specific needs with their teacher or school counselor.



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Inside the Outdoors



Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

José was struggling in school. He knew he needed to complete his core classes to graduate from high school, but could not imagine how he would ever need those skills outside of school. José needed an experience that would help him grasp the connection between classroom learning and real life. Recognizing that hands-on lessons would make the difference for students like José, his teacher signed-up for Orange County Department of Education's (OCDE) Inside the Outdoors field program. As part of the field program experience, José performed water quality tests and biological studies in the foothills of the Cleveland National Forest. He used science to identify plants, mathematics to document results from experiments, and language arts to record his observations. José felt successful and inspired to learn more.

Jose's situation is not unique. The evidence is clear: Project-based learning creates a platform for academic success. In the book *Getting Ready for College, Careers, and the Common Core*, author David Conley shares that "in many cases, learning never goes beyond what and how," so students often lack the ability to conceptualize how to apply what they have learned to real life situations. Conley contends that activities that encourage students to engage actively in learning and provide them with opportunities to process and integrate what they have learned are more effective and sustainable. Hands-on activities allow students to develop deeper learning skills that connect knowledge (what) and procedures (how) to the appropriate conditions (when) and concepts (why). For José, that meant figuring out which science, mathematics, and language arts skills he needed to use to find and articulate what he discovered during his field studies.

Deeper learning is an essential element to college and career readiness. The mission of OCDE is to ensure that all students are equipped with the competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century. We achieve our mission by providing students with hands-on learning opportunities through programs such as Inside the Outdoors. An important part of OCDE's portfolio since 1974, Inside the Outdoors offers a variety of programs.

- **Field Programs:** Daylong STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) outdoor education K-12 programs that use nature's classroom to bring textbook lessons to life
- **Traveling Scientist:** hour-long classroom programs that engage K-12 students in a variety of hands-on labs
- **Service-Learning:** In-depth multiple experience programs that allow students to apply what they have learned to community-based action projects
- **Teacher Trainings:** Webinars and in-person trainings that provide teachers with strategies to integrate Common Core Standards into classroom lessons
- **Community Programs:** STEM-focused family activities designed to support student college and career readiness and parent engagement

Inside the Outdoors' programs support Common Core and other relevant academic standards, as well as 21st century skill development. I invite you to learn more about engaging Orange County students in Common Core experiences through an Inside the Outdoors program. For additional information, visit www.insidetheoutdoors.org or contact Stephanie Smith at 714.708.3885 or ssmith@ocde.us.

For more information, visit www.ocde.us/EdTech.



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Hopkinson *Elementary*

12582 Kensington Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4500 • www.losal.org



Andrea Reed
Principal

Thriller Flash Mob

The Hopkinson Elementary School Husky Leadership Council surprised the crowd at the school's annual Halloween Parade with a flash mob to Michael Jackson's "Thriller." The Halloween parade is planned and facilitated by the leadership students, and the idea for the flash mob came from a brainstorming session at a weekly leadership meeting. Student leaders were tasked with the charge of coming up with creative ways to engage audience members during the parade. Student leaders believed the flash mob was a great way to showcase their ability to collaborate and problem solve. Sixty-two leadership students worked together for a month perfecting the routine.

The leadership program at Hopkinson gives fifth-grade students an opportunity to cultivate skills in the areas of critical thinking, civic

responsibility and inclusivity. The students facilitated Operation Gratitude to kick-off the month of November, asking families to donate Halloween candy, dental products, and thank you letters for care packages that were sent to members of the U.S. military serving abroad.



Hopkinson leadership students performing flash mob during annual Halloween parade.

Lee *Elementary*

11481 Foster Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4540 • www.losal.org



Robert Briggerman
Principal

A Safe Place to Learn

Students who are involved in school perform at significantly higher levels than those who are not. Research shows that student enrichment activities will also help children develop a deeper, more conceptual understanding of the core academic curriculum.

At Lee, our students can participate in a number of activities which will motivate, engage and inspire their interest. At our Monday and Friday flag ceremonies the whole school comes together to celebrate itself as a community. In addition to the regular patriotic celebration, student birthdays are announced, character education awards are given, and school-wide activities like "Dance Party Fridays" can also involve students in their community.

In addition to the Flag Ceremony, there are also a variety of activities that can involve our Lee students and parents. Field trips and school-wide assemblies extend learning from the classroom into the real world. After-school classes in the arts, sciences, foreign languages and Scouting also enrich the regular classroom curriculum, and support working parents in the afternoon. Our before- and after-school day care program also provides working families with a safe place for their students.

Our annual ice cream social, Camp Lee, and "Spring into Summer" PTA activities work to truly help bond our school community. Student connectedness is a key goal in keeping children on track to academic success. By providing students with safe and enriching activities, our hope is that everyone will achieve. For more information on the many activities at Lee, please visit our Web site, or contact our main office.



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Los Alamitos *Elementary*

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Dr. Sunghie Okino
Principal

Connecting through Ambassadors

Upper-grade students connect to the school and community through the Ambassador Leadership Program, which trains students to be leaders in public relations and community and school service. Each Ambassador chooses school-service jobs such as assisting on the kindergarten playground and helping to beautify the campus by caring for plants and cleaning up.

One of the Ambassadors' most successful projects is Operation Candy Share. Last year, LAE's student body sent over 450 pounds of candy to soldiers serving overseas. This year, students donated candy to a health-care provider for distribution at local shelters.

In early December, they'll participate in a canned-food drive for Los Alamitos families. The year's focus on serving LAE's local community will end with the Holiday Read at a senior-living community.



Ambassadors take a break from weighing candy collected for Operation Candy Share.

McAuliffe *Middle School*

4112 Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 714/816-3320 • www.losal.org



Ann Allen
Principal

Planning the Future

To help support the Los Alamitos Unified School District's K-12 College and Career Initiative, one of our counselors at McAuliffe, Mrs. Jean Foley, came up with a novel idea. Rather than host a single Career Day event, she instead created the College and Career Café!

Every Friday our students are given the opportunity to meet and talk with professionals from a variety of fields. Over the past few weeks they have been able to enjoy lunch while discussing college and career expectations with a veterinarian, a social worker and a police officer.

Mrs. Foley is scheduled weeks in advance due to an outpouring of support from our community. Our future "speakers du jour" will include a corporate event planner, a CSI agent, cosmetologists, a professional baseball player, a mathematics professor, a firefighter, a writer, and a lawyer.

Our school's College and Career Café has been embraced by the students, staff and community. This is just another example of McAuliffe's dedication to its students, and our commitment to educating every child "the Los Al" way.

Los Alamitos *High School*

3591 Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4780 • www.losal.org



Dr. Joshua Arnold
Principal

Participation

There's no place like Homecoming!

More than just the year's Homecoming theme for Los Alamitos High School, this mantra speaks to the overall culture of pride that we are constantly looking to spread throughout all of the student activities here at Los Al. As Griffins, our students are fortunate to be able to participate in tons of events that can connect them to each other, their community, and our global society.

For the Homecoming Dance in October, our ASB students turned the school into The Land of Oz. There was even a Yellow Brick Road that flowed through the campus to represent the tie that binds us all together: the fact that we all go to Los Alamitos High School!

As the year continues, and we prepare to send our 47th graduating class out into the world, the fact will remain that there's no place like Homecoming, no place like home, and absolutely no place like Los Alamitos High School.



McGaugh *Elementary*

1698 Bolsa Ave., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/799-4560 • www.losal.org



Dr. Jerry Gargus
Principal

March Onward!

As is the case with all Los Alamitos schools, McGaugh Elementary strives to provide students with rich experiences in "The Four A's" of Academics, Athletics, Activities and the Arts, and we take great pride in offering our students a wide range of activities to enrich their education.

During the month of October, McGaugh collaborated with a variety of community partners that included the City of Seal Beach, the Seal Beach Police Department and the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station to promote International Walk to School Month by hosting the Inaugural March to McGaugh in October. Hundreds of students and their families met at designated locations to "March to McGaugh" alongside dignitaries from our community. The activity helped to promote a healthy lifestyle and to encourage families to walk to school as a way to avoid the hassles of traffic congestion in the neighborhood.



Weaver *Elementary*

11872 Wembley Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4580 • www.losal.org



Erin Kominsky
Principal

Friday Flag Ceremony

School-wide activities bring the entire community together. Our Friday flag ceremony is led by a different class each week. Students help raise the flag, lead the pledge of allegiance and sing patriotic songs. The ceremony includes special announcements highlighting our random acts of kindness, high fives and birthdays for the week. Our school pledge is recited, and our school song shows our school spirit. Reading incentive Super Heroes and Celebrate with Books characters often join us to encourage reading.



This is Jim Crisman, 92 year old WWII veteran with his great grand children Andrew and Benjamin Reed.

proud to see their parents and grandparents in uniform. Showing pride for our school and our country is an integral part of our core values.

For Red Ribbon Week, we welcomed special guests from our local law enforcement agencies. Each year we have a very special flag ceremony on Veteran's Day to salute those who have served our country. Veterans are invited to attend as honored guests. Our students were

Rossmoor *Elementary*

3272 Shakespeare Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4520 • www.losal.org



Kiva Spiratos
Principal

Girl Scouts Boost Awareness of Childhood Cancer

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and the Rossmoor Elementary Girl Scout Troop 802 has committed to the goal of promoting awareness of children with cancer to our community. The devastating illness has made its presence in the lives of children and families at Rossmoor School.

Based upon the children's book Alex and the Amazing Lemonade Stand, about a small girl battling her own cancer, our Scouts collected community donations of lemonade, baked goods, gold ribbons and balloons from surrounding stores and restaurants and then hosted a lemonade stand. Their effort raised over \$1,750, which was donated to cancer research at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, where one of our Rossmoor Knights receives treatment.

The collective love shown by our Rossmoor community demonstrates the strength and perseverance gathered when we work as a village to heal our loved ones.



Oak *Middle School*

10821 Oak St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4740 • www.losal.org



Sally Neiser
Principal

Lots of Activities

By Chris Davis, Assistant Principal

Oak Middle School has been bustling with activities this year. The year's activities kicked off with PEACE week. Every day had its own dress up theme, activity, and an anti-bullying message that students were taught through class discussion and video clips. In addition to participating in dress up days like Super Hero Day, and lunchtime activities like an obstacle course, students learned about topics such as what to do when confronted with a bully and cyber bullying. Our Intramural Sports program began with basketball, and now football during lunch. Students at Oak have been fortunate enough to participate in LAEF sponsored activities such as a Lacrosse clinic and guitar classes. Oak Middle School ASB hosted a successful Red Ribbon Week, which concluded with the Halloween Dance. The bar has been set high for Oak Middle School activities and there's more excitement to come in the 2014 – 2015 school year.



Seal Beach Animal Care Center

1700 Aldofo Lopez Dr., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/430-4993 • www.sbacc.org

Want a puppy?

By Murlyn E. Burkes, Cat Committee Liaison

Hardly anyone can resist a puppy. These bundles of joy are full of energy and require a lot of time, care and love. These little ones will depend on you for frequent feedings and walks, training, and guidance for a long time.

So, before you decide on adopting a puppy, consider what it involves. There are so many rewards, but there are many requirements, too.

Consider what breeds or mixes fit your lifestyle. Take your time getting to know several puppies before selecting the next one for your family member. Be sure to have a crate, collar and leash, food and water bowls, a bed and chew toys ready for the new arrival. Be sure to schedule your puppy for potty breaks to ensure successful potty training. Keep a schedule for feeding and daily walks, as well.

Give your puppy a friendly name and use it frequently. Everything that you do with your new four-legged friend should be with pleasure and excitement. Now, are you ready for a puppy?

Reading is Fun!



Kelly Rowe
*Child Development
Coordinator/
Early Learning
Specialist*

To further increase literacy and a love for reading, the preschool students at Los Alamitos Child Development Center recently participated in the Jumpstart “Read for the Record” program. Read for the Record is a national effort that encourages millions of children and adults to celebrate literacy by participating in a large and shared reading experience.

The goal of Jumpstart’s mission is to work towards the day when every child in America will enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Participants across the country united together to read a children’s book called Bunny Cakes. Written by bestselling author and illustrator Rosemary Wells, it is a comical story about sibling bonding and birthday shenanigans.

Families at the Los Alamitos Child Development Center have also been asked to participate at home in the national campaign of “Read Aloud-15 minutes a day, every parent, every child, every day!” Parents are a child’s first teacher, and reading aloud is the single most important thing that a parent or caregiver can do to improve a student’s readiness for learning and literacy.

It is our goal that even the youngest students in the Los Alamitos USD should have the opportunity to increase their academic excellence with programs that support school readiness. We want to change the face of education in our country.

A Gift from/to the Community



Sean Whittle
Branch Manager

As some of you may have followed, early last year Friends of the Library spearheaded an effort to have the front area of our library remodeled. This area had not been remodeled since 1977, and Friends of the Library explored the idea of remodeling the space to make it open and useable, especially for children’s programming. Throughout 2013 and 2014, the group managed to raise more than \$100,000 from generous community and business donors. It has been an amazing testament to this community’s dedication to what the library means: lifelong education, cultural enrichment, social interaction, and much more.

Now we have begun construction. While our entrance area is temporarily relocated, we are still in business, with all services intact. I encourage you to continue your visits to the library and especially to check out the new “front porch” when it is done around the beginning of the new year. It will be a beautiful space and will prove to be a fun and useful space for our children.

A county library has been in this community since 1935, and the Friends of the Library have supported it since 1961. As the community has grown from a quiet agricultural area to the suburbia we know today, it is reassuring to know the partnerships and mutual support of libraries, schools, businesses, and community members remain strong. Stop by the library and check out what we have, see the new front when it is done, and tell a friend!

Bicycle Parts–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 LAUSD in subject line)

Entries must be received by January 15, 2015
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| BASKET | FRAME | LIGHT |
| BRAKES | GLOVES | PEDALS |
| CHAIN | GOOSENECK | REFLECTOR |
| CHAIN GUARD | GRIPS | SEAT |
| CRANK | HANDLEBARS | SPOKES |
| FENDERS | HELMET | TIRES |
| FORK | KICKSTAND | WHEELS |

Congratulations to Trevor Toda
Winner of the October Word Search Contest!

H	A	N	D	L	E	B	A	R	S	K	M	X	S	A
C	M	P	S	D	N	A	T	S	K	C	I	K	P	H
H	K	V	E	T	Y	R	E	F	L	E	C	T	O	R
A	A	N	W	D	E	K	R	E	V	N	A	F	K	R
I	I	Y	A	H	A	M	B	N	R	E	I	L	E	T
N	N	T	Z	R	E	L	L	D	S	S	G	A	S	Y
G	F	R	B	T	C	E	S	E	V	O	L	G	H	T
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D	X	R	K	R	O	F	H	A	J	P	W	Z	L	V
L	P	W	S	E	R	I	T	B	R	R	R	W	K	Y

Remember When?

Ring in The New Year



Charlene Ashendorf

Ring in the New Year...Whatever bells you use to ring in the New Year, each of us has memories of the special night! Long before Dick Clark there was Guy Lombardo. No matter your age, you must remember the images of long ago: the big band music, people dressed in their finest attire, dancing and singing Auld lang syne! The torch was passed on to the king of American Bandstand, Dick Clark. He brought a renewed air of inspiration to a younger generation with a ball drop in Times Square.

Tradition is what joins the present to the past. It can also be a means to connect today's families to rich cultural customs. For us, the New Year blends southern hospitality to central European warmth. I remember with great satisfaction welcoming in the New Year. The key ingredients were food, family and fun.

According to mother, New Year's meant good fortune which could only happen if you started the year off with Black-eyed peas, cornbread which symbolized the glories of gold and ham. I never understood how black eyed peas showed humility and invited in good fortune, but once a year the peas were soaked and served.

My paternal grandparents assured me every year that Gingerbread cakes, hot tea and and hearty bigos, meat and cabbage would certainly be the path to a fabulous new year.

My husband and I have melded both traditions and added our own. In an inconspicuous space on the bookshelf, your eyes may miss the large box. Throughout the year we fill it with mementos: movie stubs, matches from restaurants, brochures from art galleries, programs from lectures and even photos from special gatherings along the way. On New Year's Eve we gather around the fire and let the contents of the box fall upon the dining room table. With each slip of paper, we pause and remember when. And then, when our memories our full and our hearts emptied, we make room to ring in the New Year.

Charlene remembers growing up in Chicago with hot and humid summers, leaves that turned colors in the fall and endless winters. Active in her community and church, she advocates for seniors, affordable housing, literacy and libraries. Her hobbies include reading, writing and visiting art galleries. Charlene resides in Costa Mesa with her husband, Dennis who is a teacher in the Newport Mesa Unified School District. <http://about.me/cmash>

Note-ables

Love Bug



Kate Karp

Are you a Beluga Grad? If Raffi was part of your childhood, you are. You dug into the meaning of "Baby Beluga" and had a great time singing "Down by the Bay." And if you're not one, here's your chance to get a midlife diploma and mentor the children in your life.

Raffi Cavoukian, known by his first name, is bridging the near generation gap he created by not issuing a children's CD in the last 12 years. *Love Bug* honors children and the world they live in; the collection is an extension of Raffi's social-change movement, Child Honoring, as well as his desire to create environmental awareness and action as a team of humans. Worldly wise and socially and environmentally conscious, *Love Bug* pays lip service to causes only through what comes out between Raffi's own lips.

All songs are meaningful and tuneful; they're instructive for children and therapeutic for adults. "Mama Loves It" sings about teamwork beginning in the home. The instrumental "Pete's Banjo" honors Pete Seeger, one of Raffi's social inspirations. "Seeing the Heart," like a Zen parable, is interpretable through intuition only, and "Water in the Well"—well, surely a teachable moment for our drought-parched state.

And "Turn This World Around" brings it all together. Raffi's music is gentle and at the same time serious about the planet, both in leaving it for children and for children doing their part to preserve it. They, too, will be adults someday. Discover Raffi's Child Honoring philosophy at www.raffinews.com/.

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

Over My Garden Gate

What is a Garden



Nancy

I was invited to write "over my garden gate" and have been trying since then to define "garden." A garden can be a pot of flowers in your window, even your terrarium, or a small planter box on your porch or patio. A garden can be a wide swath of flowers and trees curving around a magnificent green lawn, bordered by tall graceful trees and enclosed by a winding brick road and driveway, even if all in your imagination.

I have many gardens on my ranch in Northern California, some actually planted and growing in the ground and others planned on paper or dreamt of in my head. Most of my gardens have flowers in them and some vegetables and several others both. A garden is a place to grow ideas, plans, to dream as well as harvest its bounty for your vase, table and cupboard. And so my "garden" is defined. Now to that gate!

This morning I gazed across the garden gate and looked directly into the soft brown eyes of a doe. It was difficult to decide which of us was the more startled. We both assumed the "freeze" position and took our time to look one another over. Finally the spell was broken, we each passed the test. Neither of us encroached on the private space of the other and each allowed the other to go on their way into the day. A soft and beautiful beginning to a day.

Better Than a Movie

The gardens of our lives change so quickly (and regularly) it would seem. For almost 20 years we ran close to 200 sheep on our farm, ewes and babies and a few rams. Suddenly there were small groups of dogs forming packs and coyotes becoming more in number and the loss of lambs and ewes no longer made it fun or financially feasible to continue with them. These days I am boarding a few cows to keep the grass down in the orchards so I do not have to mow as much. The cows have proved to be as entertaining as I remember them from my childhood. Of course they either came with names or I've bestowed them one based on their unique personalities.

The owner purchased a new bull last year, Eclipse by name, who is a Belted Galway (black with a white stripe around his middle). The calves have been such a combination of colors with stripes it has been so interesting. The first calf was a little heifer I named Harriet. She wears the beautiful dark red of her mom (Scarlet) and the white stripe from her dad, as well as little white socks. The beige cow, Dolly, has a little heifer of her own now, Buffy by name, who is beige with the white stripe, and a little bull calf named Jeb is too cute for words and knows it. I think the little male calves are born with a strut.

So my animal garden has changed from little wooly four legged "baa baa" babies who dance ballets and play "King of the Hill" throughout the orchard to larger more lumbering "moo moo" babies who throw their tails up and run with the wind. If nothing else, it is better than watching a movie.

Publisher's note: Nancy is a mother, grandmother, great grandmother, retired school board member, and community volunteer. Nancy is a rancher in Northern CA. I don't think I have ever known anyone quite as appreciative of nature as Nancy. She can stand in the middle of a field of weeds and find beauty in the gentle swaying of the tassels. At the end of her busy day, rather than settle down for a much needed rest, Nancy is preparing sugar water to not disappoint the hummingbirds the following morning. After much arm twisting, I convinced Nancy to share with our readers a few tidbits of her days on the farm. Enjoy!



Happy Holidays
from the
School News Staff!

Protect Your Family from Holiday Stress



Jodie Lynn

Always File Your Receipts in a Safe Place: You never know if the gift is going to do or measure up to what you think it supposed to; so keep those receipts filed in a special place just in case. Eight-five percent of gifts are returned or exchanged. That's a high number, but isn't too terribly complicated if you have the receipt. Make up a folder and clearly write 2013 Holiday Receipts on the outside. For online stores, make sure you know about their return policies, especially if you are sending any type of plant, food or toy.

Keep a Running List of Names for Greeting Card Recipients: Make a list of each person you'd like to send out a card to. Get the kids to help address envelopes and even to put on stamps. Depending on how many cards you are sending out, it might be best to do this in steps so the kids will view it as Holiday joy and fun instead of work and dumb. That's right; delegate the card sending to the kids by separating the process into steps so no one will get overwhelmed.

Meal Planner: Always plan your dinner way ahead of time. Go to the store with ingredients written on a list for each dish. If it's a dish that uses heavy creams or other fat-laden ingredients, don't forget to scan either a conversion chart for healthy substitutes or look them up on the Internet to see just how good or bad they might actually be. Since this is the time to gain weight, remember that kids cannot always say no to certain foods rich in fat largely in part because they taste so good. Consider what you need to have around the house for the kids

to snack on and only allow a nibble here and there of special food. Compare notes and make a plan that you are comfortable with for your family keeping in mind my personal motto: "easy to add weight on...but very hard to get off."

Utilize an Organizer: It's never too early! If you would take a few minutes to organize every couple of days now YOU WILL FEEL SO MUCH BETTER especially if you do a little delegation to other family members and don't put so many stressful things on any one day. Write every detail up and mark it off as it is done. It doesn't matter how small it is, it still counts and feels great when you get to mark it off. The kids love to help with this task as well as will stay busy for hours making and marking off lists.

Take a little time for yourself: It should and must be done even if it's only a 30-minute lunch with a long lost friend; sitting down with a brief short book; watching a loved but often missed TV show, taking a walk, or even making a visit to a local nursing home. Or, take a family trip. There's nothing better than to take several loaves of homemade cranberry bread, pumpkin cookies or fruit pies to a nursing home that the kids have helped you bake. Let them help to pass out the food and enjoy those smiles from senior citizens. Giving to others fills your heart with incredible warmth and makes a huge impact on your kids by allowing them to see firsthand how their special made gifts bring pleasure to other people—as well as see you smile.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author. She has authored several books including *Mom CEO (Chief Everything Officer)*, *Having Doing*, and *Surviving it All!* and *Syndication Secret—What No One Will Tell You!* Check www.ParentToParent.com for details on new radio talk show, Inside Parenting Success.

Nutrition Update

Navigating the Holiday Party Season

This column provides insight from Carol Berg Sloan RD, (a registered dietitian for 37 years) and her daughter Kelly Sloan, (a dietetics student at the University of Hawaii). Both give their perspective and tips to help make healthier food and beverage choices.



Carol Berg Sloan, RDN

Studies reveal that most consumers gain about a pound during the holidays. Many will say "no big deal", but we don't lose that pound. Do the math from starting at age 18 through age 58....40 pounds! Don't become a statistic. Plan ahead and don't let extra calories turn into extra pounds.

Typical situations

Cocktail party and hors d'oeuvres: Don't go to the party hungry and plan what you are going to drink. Eat a small meal before heading out the door such as peanut butter on toast or cottage cheese and fruit. Once you arrive, look at the appetizer food table before you grab a plate and start loading up. If you're not the designated driver, then think about your drink, Diet beverages and sparkling water are best mixers, but remember a 1 ounce shot is considered a drink as is 12 ounces of beer or 4 ounces of wine. Bottom-line: remember you are at the party to enjoy the company, not pig out.

Dinner party: Ask the host if you can bring a dish. Good choices would be fruit salad, mixed greens, fresh seasonal vegetables or a beautiful plate of grilled or roasted vegetables with a balsamic glaze. Enjoy dishes you really want and take smaller portions so you can enjoy a wide variety.

Holiday eating means planning ahead. Continue your daily exercise routine and if you do overdo it, you can always walk around the block a few more times.

Carol Berg Sloan, RD is a nutrition therapist in Long Beach. She can be reached at: cbsrd@verizon.net



Kelly Sloan

Eating away from home during the holidays can be difficult for college students. You are on your own to make choices and many times parties turn up unannounced with no room for planning. In addition, for those who stay in the dorms, it can be a challenge to make holidays meals that don't scream "college student" with pasta dishes, ramen noodles and cereal.

Typical situations

Happy hour: Friends call you to meet them at the local happy hour restaurant where cheap fare includes fried foods, carbs in every shape and size and local beer at prices you can afford. Before you run out the door make sure you are not starving. Try to plan ahead once you arrive and ask the servers for some carrot or celery sticks to go with all that ranch. Remember that beer and other drinks contain calories. Don't overdo.

Pity party: Friends and family are partying at home and you're looking at another week of school and then finals. The easiest thing to do is to run out and get all your comfort foods and sit in your room wishing you were home DON'T DO IT. Call home or your friends for support. Or plan your own party and make a healthy dish like my popular Sweetie Carrot Bites. Enjoy the season!

Kelly Sloan-Staff Writer, Ka Leo O Hawai'i
Twitter: @KSloan6 University of Hawaii at Manoa

Ingredients:

- 1 12-ounce bag baby carrots, chopped
- 1 1/2 cup vanilla almond milk
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 cup almonds, sliced
- 2 tablespoons agave or honey
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

Sweetie Carrot Bites.



Directions:

Add carrots to boiling water and boil for 15 minutes, or until soft. Drain and let cool. Combine the vanilla almond milk, cinnamon, almonds, agave and shredded coconut. Blend until mixture is smooth. In a large bowl, place boiled carrots in bowl and pour blended mixture on top. Toss carrots until fully covered. Top with raisins and shredded coconut. Refrigerate for 20 minutes or until cool and serve.

Puppet Shows Address Social Issues

“I made it; I made it! I got away from those guys!” Nam and his best friend come running into the neighborhood store where they know John, the proprietor. “Those guys....two of them held me down and the third one punched me in the stomach. And then...and then...they took my money and ran away. Ooh, my stomach.”

The friends talk it over with the nearest adult, John. What do they do now? How can they address the situation without causing more violence? Many parents might urge them to hit back, harder. But the boys come up with a better way — a way that doesn’t cause more violence.



At the end of the 15-minute play, the students get a chance to talk with Nam and his friends. What bullying have they seen? How do girls bully without hitting? What do girls do to be mean? What about the new form of harassment, cyber-bullying?

Assistance League of Long Beach offers this and other social issue programs through The Kids On the Block™ free to elementary school classes at the request of teachers, counselors and other staff in elementary schools in the area.

The actors are large colorful puppets operated in the style of bunraku by Assistance League volunteers who have been offering these free programs for more than 30 years.

If you would like your children to see this program, their teachers can contact Assistance League at (562) 627-5650 to request a performance. For more information on this and their other community philanthropic programs, visit www.ALLB.org.



Working Together for Hunger Relief



Marissa Aldegarie

My Girl Scout Troop 602 based out of Weaver Elementary collected food and donated it to the Second Harvest Food Bank. We collected 190 pounds of food that can feed 150 meals. Our troop has been doing this annually since Kindergarten. On November 1st, our troop took a tour of the Second Harvest Food Bank. This is the largest food bank in Orange County and it also has the largest freezer which is the size of a playing field! They help feed over 200,000 people a month.

On the tour we saw a display called, “30 Faces of Hunger and Hope.” The pictures showed the elderly and young, and people of all races. The pictures could even be your neighbor and you would never even know it.



Our troop in Izzy’s Corner with our volunteer tour guide Lorna. Marissa, Payton, Lauren, Summer, Carmen, Savannah and Lorna.

We also saw a model of a small motel room that was only 214 square feet. It showed us the lives of those who make their home out of the small motel rooms for their entire family. It was very crowded and there were descriptions of bed bugs in their bed. This made us feel sad and we learned to appreciate what we had.



Our troop looking at what a typical box of food consists of.

Our troop learned a lot about hunger in Orange County and we were inspired to help those in need. We would like to come back again in the future to be Harvesting Volunteers. This job will allow us to plant and pick produce for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Or, we could also volunteer in Izzy’s Corner where kids can help package boxes of food.

I learned that we can help the Second Harvest Food Bank with their mission to end hunger in Orange County. We hope others will be encouraged to volunteer too!

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