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School News

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Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 65

www.SchoolNewsRollCall.com

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2016

Los Alamitos Unified 2016 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

By Dr. Andrew Pulver,
Assistant Superintendent
of Human Resources

The cornerstone of Los Alamitos Unified School District's spirit of excellence is a team of highly skilled and passionate staff who are relentless about igniting unlimited possibilities for students.

Our classified employees are often our front-line and behind-the-scenes heroes, making seamless improvements to ensure students and teachers are well equipped to achieve excellence in Academics, Athletics, Activities and the Arts throughout the school year. We are proud to recognize our various classified employees of the year for 2016 who exemplify our outstanding staff.

Tamara Smith, School Office Coordinator, Los Alamitos Elementary, exemplifies the heart and soul of



Tamara Smith



Anita Patten



Bill Scott

Los Alamitos Elementary School and the district. She is usually the first person and the last person any parent or visitor sees when they come to LAE. The warmth she exudes and her willingness to help extends beyond the parents and visitors who come to the office. She takes the initiative to see what is needed and takes extra steps to assist staff, students, and families. She is also an exceptional manager, problem solver, and communicator who goes above and beyond her daily responsibilities to volunteer at school events or come on weekends to take care of school needs. Two of Tamara's greatest attributes are her smile and her positive outlook.

Anita Patten, Instructional Assistant, Special Education, has been an amazing team member at McGaugh since 2009 and has served the students of Los Alamitos Unified School District since September of 2000. She currently works with students in one of our Special Day Classes, where she supports their academic and behavioral needs. Over the years, Anita has worked in our ABA Program as both a classroom support aide and as a 1:1 aide. Each summer, she

works with students in the Extended School Year Program. Anita does an excellent job of building relationships with students, partnering with her colleagues, and helping ignite unlimited possibilities for students. She is a highly-valued member of the McGaugh team.

Bill Scott, Custodian, Los Alamitos High School exemplifies all that is good about Los Al. He always looks for ways to help students and staff above and beyond his normal duties. It is not uncommon for Bill to drop what he is doing to help students with their locker, getting their sports equipment from the locker room, or any number of myriad requests. He regularly assists staff members with classroom needs and always with a smile on his face. It was said about Will Rogers that he never met a man he didn't like. This could also be said of our own Bill Scott. He is an outstanding employee and an even better person. He is an integral member of the Los Alamitos High School and District Family.

Beyond the Hour of Code

By Karen Russell, President Board of Education

Los Alamitos Unified School District always strives to offer students and families the most enriching, balanced, cutting-edge educational opportunities possible. One such example was the annual, worldwide Hour of Code initiative in December, aimed at giving all students exposure to programming and coding. Last year, all students preschool through 12th grade joined in by accessing a customized Web site filled with resources for every student, teacher, and parent across our district. This year, Los Al raised expectations beyond the Hour of Code.

Los Alamitos teachers and students once again joined the worldwide effort, but in true Los Al style—by leveling themselves up and going beyond one hour of programming and coding exploration. Students created posters promoting the event, explored new resources, met with buddy classes to teach each other what they learned during their hour of code, and creatively designed projects that required coding and programming. Some classes programmed robots and drones to apply their coding skills in real-life contexts. Other classes designed Web sites, created online games, and debugged programs.

Moving forward, Los Al is exploring new and creative ways to offer coding and programming experiences and opportunities to every student. Not only

does coding prepare them for their future, as programming is a key component of digital literacy, it also reinforces the academic signature practices the district embraces, including strong reading strategies and the writing process. Programming also reinforces the engineering design process currently being implemented strategically through the new makerspaces in development at the elementary schools and Project Lead The Way in our secondary schools.

See **BOARD OF EDUCATION** • Page 9

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"I want to express my sincere gratitude for the academic support you and your staff have provided to my son during the past year. I can attest to the significant impact the Tutoring Club experience has made in his life. As a result, he has earned A's and B's and is less frustrated when given difficult homework assignments. Beyond this, he has developed the academic self-confidence needed to be successful. I attribute a great deal of my son's academic success to the team at the Tutoring Club. Thank you for making a difference!!"

*Paul R. de Dios
Dean of Cypress College*

"I am the mother of 3 children and my oldest son was having reading problems. The Tutoring Club helped my son and myself to learn new reading strategies. With Tutoring Club's help my 6 year old son was able to sound out words and read. He is very proud of himself and I am so happy and proud of him as well. He couldn't have made the growth without the Tutoring Club. Thank you Tutoring Club for giving my son the help he needed."

*Mother of 1st grader – SES Student
Norwalk-La Mirada School District*

"My son always fought me to do homework, and this would be an all night thing. I tried everything, and then found the Tutoring Club. Putting him in the Tutoring Club's the best thing I could have done for him. His 2011 California Standards Test was proficient in everything!!!!"

*Mother of student at
Landell Elementary, Cypress*

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**Covering the
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Happy New Year! By now your year is well underway. Students are focused on year end goals as well as Spring Break.

In this issue you will read about topics from community service to whale watching.

Thank you for your emails and requests for copies of *School News* to share. I am always happy to email you a digital copy. We have updated our web site and all of our publications may now be read online as a flipbook or pdf.

Our next issue is April 13.

Los Alamitos Education Foundation

P.O. Box 1210, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/277-6876 • www.LAEF4kids.org



King and Queen

By Carrie Logue, Executive Director

The Los Alamitos Education Foundation (LAEF) announced the 3rd annual King & Queen of Hearts Royal Court on December 10. The King and Queen will be crowned at the Royal Ball and Coronation gala on February 19 at The Grand in Long Beach. During these ten weeks, candidates will raise funds for LAEF and every dollar counts as a vote! Proceeds will support school STEAM Fairs (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Math) and another district-wide STEAM showcase on May 21.



(B) Matt Herrick, Diana Hill, Aaron Roberts, Dr. Sean Braithwaite.

(F) Adriana Preciado-Ziegenbusch, Kiva Spiratos, Gina Biri.

are Dr. Sean Braithwaite of Braithwaite Chiropractic, Matt Herrick of Southland Credit Union and Griffins Grill, and Aaron Roberts of Anytime Fitness. To donate/vote for your favorite candidate and buy gala tickets, visit LAEF4Kids.org/KingAndQueen.

The Queen candidates are Los Al USD Alumna Gina Biri, School Board member Diana Hill, Seal Beach Lion of the Year Adriana Preciado-Ziegenbusch, and Rossmoor Elementary principal Kiva Spiratos. The King candidates

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Opening the Door to Literacy



Kelly Rowe
Child Development
Coordinator/
Early Learning
Specialist

As an adult, I can remember some of my early reading experiences—whether it was a favorite story being read to me by my mom, cuddled up close to her on the couch with my favorite blanket, or when I first realized that I could read on my own, the infamous Dick and Jane stories. I remember being so excited as a young child when my mom signed me up for a book club. I received a new book in the mail every few weeks, which she read to me or I read to her and my little sisters. I still have many of those books today, and I have read them to my own children and the children I have taught. I knew that as I became a mother and an educator, I wanted my children and those that I taught to have the same favorable experiences with reading.

Opening the door to literacy is such an important part of development. It is a role that parents and educators share, giving opportunities to children to enjoy and understand reading by reading to them, helping them make their own books, and sharing nursery rhymes, songs, stories, and alphabet letters. Literacy deals with listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Young children need opportunities in all four of these areas before beginning elementary school.

In order for children to make sense of phonics (sounds combined with written symbols) in school, children must first be able to hear and be aware of

those sounds. Children learn phonemic awareness by being read to. As they learn to read themselves, they become more phonemically aware. This is not a natural experience. Children do not gain phonemic awareness by growing and maturing; experiences help them to become aware of and manipulate sounds and words. Phonemic awareness can and should be fun and playful. Activities such as storytelling, word games, songs, and hearing and repeating rhymes are all ways to encourage phonemic awareness in young children.

Exposing your young child to the alphabet is also an important step to reading. Although, informal teaching of the actual letters is best done during the preschool years, exposing children to environmental print (usually their names) can also be a first step toward reading. Familiarity with the letters of the alphabet is a powerful predictor of early reading success. When a child knows the names of letters, it can often help with remembering the sounds. Knowing the letter names frees a child to work on the sounds those letters make. Teaching children the alphabet song familiarizes children with the names. Pointing to the letters while singing helps your child to correlate the letters with the names. Don't be surprised when little Tommy thinks that every letter T that he sees is the start of Tommy! Also, using great alphabet books can reinforce the recognition of letters and their sounds.

It is up to adults, parents, and educators to bring forth tomorrow's readers, who will look fondly back to their childhood memories of reading. I am so happy that my own parents understood the importance of opening that door for me so many years ago.

If you would like more information on phonemic awareness or helping your child become ready for school, the Los Alamitos Child Development Center/ School Readiness program can assist you in finding activities and resources to help your child with pre-reading skills.

Girl Scout Troop 602

Sharing the Spirit



Marissa Aldegarie

The Girl Scout mission includes making the world a better place. We promise to help people at all times, and part of our law says to be friendly and helpful, considerate and caring.

Our Troop 602 displayed this during the holiday season. We volunteered with the Happiness Project OC. They help local children in Orange County that are homeless or living below the poverty level. They hosted the Sharing the Spirit Holiday Party 2015 at a shopping center and invited children in need throughout the community to celebrate Christmas. Our troop members were the "elves" that greeted the children at the party,

and we helped them visit 25 stations that had crafts, sports, manicure stations, pet shows and food. The children were able to take a picture with Santa and get presents to take home so that they can enjoy the holidays. We learned to help others and appreciate what we have.



Girl Scout Troop 602 Sharing in the Spirit. Marissa, Lauryn, Phoebe, Summer, Payton, and Sophia.

Los Alamitos-Rossmoor Branch Library

12700 Montecito Rd., Seal Beach CA 90740 • 562/430-1048 • www.ocpl.org

Reading the Movie



Sean Whittle
Branch Manager

One topic that often comes up in library work is reaching the reluctant reader. The library deals in many formats: book, video, magazine, audio, and others. But at the core is fostering a lifelong love of reading and learning. So, how do we reach those who are reluctant to read, for whatever the reason?

First we have to realize that we have to meet people where they are. What are their interests now? Movies are practically universally loved in our culture. We love to go to the movies, rent them, read reviews, dress up as characters, and show our love of movies in a variety of ways. Last year the movie industry

domestically reached about \$11 billion in sales at theaters, not including video sales and rentals. Wow! Chances are that a reluctant reader likes movies—and chances are one or more of those movies started with a book. This is a great avenue to help someone fall in love with books and stories.

Here are some examples from recent years for younger folks: *Insurgent* by Veronica Roth, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell, *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green. The list goes on and on, including every age group from children to adults. All of these movies are highly regarded. Why not read the book and compare it to the movie?

So, next time you hear someone talking about loving a movie but not being really keen on reading, suggest reading the book behind the movie. It may prove to be just the thing to inspire the reluctant reader to unlock the treasures in books.



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Be Alert – Protect Personal Information

By Michael Ezroj, Police Corporal

These days, many of us do most of our shopping and banking on the web. With all those account numbers and passwords floating around, it's easy for someone to nab your information and go on a spree.

- Clear your logins and passwords. This is especially important if you've been working on a public computer.
- Pay for online purchases with your credit card, which has better guarantees under federal law than your online payment services or your debit card.
- Be alert for phishing, a trick in which spam or pop-ups mimic legitimate banks or businesses to obtain your personal information, which they use to access your accounts. Always verify that you're on a familiar Web site with security controls before entering personal data.

Monitor your bank and credit card statements. Check your accounts regularly so you know when something's awry. Purchases you didn't make should be obvious. Verify your mailing address with the post office and financial institutions. Identity bandits may fill out change of address forms so that delinquent credit notices remain off your paper billing radar.

Monitor your credit report. By law, you're entitled to a free report every year from each of the three bureaus (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). Request one every four months, changing bureaus each time. You can order the report directly through each agency, or at annualcreditreport.com, and don't fall prey to faux free credit report advertisements.

Shred sensitive documents. Buy a shredder and regularly shred outdated bank statements, credit card applications, bills, and anything with your personal information before tossing it into the trash or recycling. Criminals are always looking for the easiest way to make some cash and they don't care about what happens in their wake.

As always, if you notice anything suspicious please contact the Seal Beach Police Department at (562) 594-7232.

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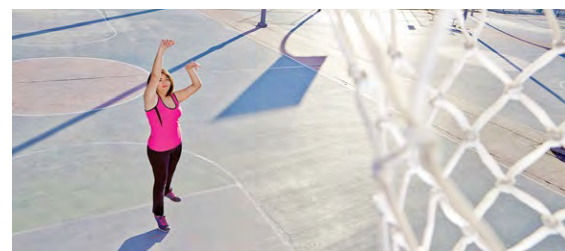
The news has been filled with heartbreaking stories of young athletes dying during the middle of a sporting game. While many assume these children are suffering from other medical conditions, the majority of these children are passing away from an undiagnosed enlarged heart causing an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) when stressed. This causes them to collapse and is labeled sudden cardiac death.

Congenital heart defects are a malformation of blood vessels or the heart structure that occurs before birth. Depending on the defect, symptoms can appear right away or they may not manifest until a child participates in sports. In some cases, symptoms may not present until adulthood.

Constant heavy breathing and extreme fatigue are common warning signs of a congenital heart defect. If your child gets tired very quickly or easily, or their heart races, during physical activity, this could be a sign that their heart can't maintain the ability to meet their body's needs.

Be sure to educate yourself and your young athletes on potential signs and symptoms of a congenital heart defect. Encourage them to talk with you if they are experiencing any health concerns during sports and make sure they see their physician for an annual sports physical.

Knowing the signs and symptoms and getting annual check-ups can help catch a congenital heart defect before it becomes a more serious issue for your young athletes.



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At a routine 3-month-old check-up, Piper's doctor found a murmur in her heart. She was referred for more testing and it was discovered that she was suffering from heart failure due to a life-threatening congenital heart defect. Immediately she was sent to Miller Children's Pediatric Heart Center where just a few hours later she was undergoing surgery from cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Shaun Setty. With the help of the dedicated care team at the Pediatric Heart Center, Piper is back to giggling with her older siblings.

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Our specialty:
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Piper, 6-months-old,
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Congenital Heart Defect Patient

Hopkinson *Elementary*

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



Evelyn Garcia
Principal

Huskies Make a Difference!

The Hopkinson Elementary School Husky Leadership Council led a campaign and worked diligently during the month of December to facilitate a school-wide collection of food for families in need. With the overwhelming support of the school community, their efforts resulted in a collection of 466 pounds of food to be donated to families in need.

In order to secure a variety of items, leadership students encouraged grade levels to bring specific donations. This allowed for families to get packages that contained an assortment of foods, including breakfast items, grains, soups, fruits, and vegetables. After the collection, Hopkinson's Cub Scout Troop 657 helped to sort all of the food to be distributed.

Giving back to the local community and understanding the meaning of philanthropy is a key goal of the Husky Leadership Council and of all Hopkinson Huskies.



Hopkinson Husky Leadership Council and Principal Garcia.

Lee *Elementary*

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



Amy Laughlin
Principal

Meeting the Challenge

Lee has opened a hands-on, inquiry-based learning lab called Makerspace.

The lab focuses on engineering and design activities. The students learn by doing as they construct, reflect and redesign, problem solve, and think critically. Students in the lab can also create, tinker, invent, and collaborate on various projects.

The lab was launched with various exploration and discovery stations. Some students have been using Legos to build various forms of transportation, while others have deconstructed old electronics to discover the inner-workings. Students have also been challenged to assemble the tallest freestanding tower using straws and Strawbees. Creativity and collaboration are being fine-tuned as groups test and redesign structures to withstand the challenge. Future projects include creating and constructing bridges and boats to hold weight. Students will also learn the properties of energy and motion using electrical circuits.

Our Lee students are determined to invent models that will meet their challenges. Our teachers are constantly hearing comments like, "I wish we had more time in Makerspace!"



Fourth graders work together to win the tower challenge.

Los Alamitos *Elementary*

10862 Bloomfield St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 714/816-3300 • www.losal.org



Dr. Sunghie Okino
Principal

Students Stepping Out into the Community

Just before the school's winter break, students from Los Alamitos Elementary (LAE) spent time visiting some of our city's senior citizens at Katella Manor. Each student brought a favorite book to share with the goal of bringing holiday cheer and spirit to the residents. What students encountered was not what they expected. It was the residents who brought the love of holiday cheer and spirit to the kids.

The residents embraced each student with artful listening, sharing of stories, and readings of their favorite books that they had carefully readied. The connection was so profound that students returned to LAE and started a pen pal exchange with the residents. Oftentimes, the best experiences involve the human heart.



Los Alamitos *High School*

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



Dr. Brandon Martinez
Principal

Celebrating Excellence

The choir show and the drama productions were big successes. We enjoyed two Los Al Live Comedy Improv Nights, and the Marching Band competed in state championships. Dance put on a fabulous production, and the jazz, orchestra, and symphonic groups performed their winter concert.

Model United Nations (MUN) won 22 awards at the Tustin MUN Conference, and Los Al took second place at the Varsity History Bowl. Our Interact Club provided a holiday experience for families in our district, and our One Warm Coat Club helped to collect over 300 coats for needy families.



Boys soccer, girls soccer, boys basketball, girls basketball, and girls water polo are all ranked in the top 10. We celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the 2006 CIF Championship basketball team and retired the jersey of Los Al alumnus and NBA player Landry Fields.

We look forward to continued excellence in academics, athletics, activities, and the arts.

McAuliffe *Middle School*

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



Ann Allen
Principal

Standing Room Only

In early December, the McAuliffe Choir and Drama Clubs presented *Lion King Jr.*, The Musical at the Sackett Center. It was a resounding success. Both shows were standing room only, and the performances left our audience members amazed and astounded!

The production was a collaborative effort between Mrs. Tanaka's art classes, Ms. McGovney's computer classes, and the seventh-grade world history classes. Mrs. Tanaka's art students made all of the papier-mache masks used in the performance, which included lions, monkeys, giraffes, and other African wildlife.

Ms. McGovney's computer students created the programs as well as the advertising flyers and posters. The world history students completed group research projects and informational posters about Africa, which they then posted around the Sackett Center.



A big thank-you goes out to Directors Shannon Wallace and Megan Cozad, who coordinated this most successful event. A hearty congratulations also goes to our amazing students, whose outstanding performances made for a memorable evening.

McGaugh *Elementary*

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



Dr. Jerry Gargus
Principal

Rocking the House!

On January 15, the stars of tomorrow lit up the stage in the McGaugh Auditorium. This was when our amazing students shared their talents with the community at our annual McGaugh Idol Talent Show.

A packed house cheered on musical performances that ranged from the latest pop songs to classical piano pieces, along with original dance routines, magic tricks, and even a synchronized swimming performance that will be remembered for years to come! Of course, our spectacular McGaugh Chorus (under the direction of Mrs. Suzanne McElderry) opened and closed the evening's festivities.

This important fundraiser helps make sure that all of our fourth-grade students will have the opportunity to travel to Sacramento for a learning-packed field trip to the state capital building and Gold Country.

McGaugh's longstanding commitment to providing its students with an arts-enriched experience will continue this spring as well. Our students are now hard at work preparing for their 34th annual Pageant of the Arts. This two-night extravaganza is scheduled for April 14 and 15.

This year we are celebrating the work of Antonio Berni, the Argentinian master artist whose work our students will be learning about through the rest of the school year.



First grader Ace Chen performs at McGaugh Idol.

Rossmoor *Elementary*

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



Kiva Spiratos
Principal

Supporting Our Troops

This holiday season, the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Army Base deployed 900 soldiers to Kuwait. Rossmoor students wanted to show the soldiers their love and gratitude and made a goal for each soldier to receive a letter. This effort doubled, with 1,300 letters!

The students also collected such gifts for them as candy, toiletries, games and lots of socks, with the Joint Forces Base supplying overseas transport.

The Orange County and Los Angeles fire authorities matched the effort. Between Rossmoor and the fire authorities, over 2,000 pounds of candy and goods were collected!

In thanks, the Base and the OC Fire Authority visited Rossmoor to share a schoolwide-assembly demonstration of a prized fire engine and Humvee and Army transport vehicles. The letters and packages were then presented to the representatives.

This holiday, Rossmoor students experienced the true joy and happiness of the season by giving to soldiers who give so much to us.



Rossmoor's fourth graders initiated the 1300 letter writing campaign for our soldiers overseas.

Oak *Middle School*

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



Erin Kominsky
Principal

Spotlight on Mathematics

Mathematics instruction at Oak Middle School includes rigorous course selections for grades six to eight. Our math students utilize the language of the discipline while drawing parallels to real-life, project-based learning.

Oak students also participate in "Modeling Monday." This is where a single problem is posed to each student in grades six to 12. Students then utilize their knowledge of numbers, algebraic thinking, and algorithms to help solve these multi-step problems. They then share their solution strategies with the class.



Technology also plays an important role in many of our math classes. Students use computers to evaluate and graph exponential functions, participate in Spatial Temporal (ST) math, and even learn to code.

Math is also used at Oak to help program robots, design engineering projects, count musical measures in band, orchestra and choir, and calculate discoveries in our science labs. Hear us roar!



Modeling Monday.

Weaver *Elementary*

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



Robert Briggerman
Principal

A Whale of a Trip!

By Nicole Nixon, Friends of Weaver President

This year began with a whale of a trip for several Weaver families as a special item auctioned off at last year's Weaver Goes Hollywood. Seventy-nine participants from Weaver along with Mr. Briggerman and Mrs. Kominsky braved the January cold for a three-hour private tour. Unlike the crew of *Gilligan's Island* fame, we are thankful that everyone made it back safe and sound!

During the whale-watching tour, we were able to see pods of dolphins, buoys full of seals, a humpback whale and a battle of nature between a sea lion and a thresher shark. Watching the sea



lion having lunch was definitely the highlight of the trip, according to the children.

The trip was so popular that we will be offering this excursion again as a Weaver Goes Hollywood auction item on April 15. Look out for this and other fun experiences yet to be announced!

OC Pathways



Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

On a cool December morning, in a historic airplane hangar at the Orange County Great Park, some of the region's top educators and business leaders gathered for a very special birthday party.

OC Pathways, an initiative that brings together schools, colleges and businesses to create new career paths in targeted industry sectors, was celebrating its first year — and what a year it's been.

Over the past 12 months, more than 8,600 high school students have enrolled in OC Pathways programs, receiving career preparation in the fields of health care, biotechnology, engineering, advanced manufacturing, information technology and digital media. In our community colleges, more than 12,500 students have participated in OC Pathways coursework, earning roughly 600 certificates and 85 degrees.

Led by the Orange County Department of Education and Saddleback College, OC Pathways was launched in 2014 through a California Department of Education grant. Along with its efforts to partner schools and colleges with industry leaders, the project creates work-based learning opportunities for students — these include internships and mentorship — and it empowers educators with innovative teaching strategies.

In just the first year of this initiative, more than 2,500 students participated in one or more work-based learning experiences, and we have seen a 13 percent increase in the number of articulation agreements that allow high school students to receive community college credit for taking career technical education courses.

Moreover, OC Pathways has established 53 additional businesses partnerships that will help strengthen the 21st-century workforce.

On Dec. 2, these business leaders were among the 300 or so who gathered in the Great Park's Hangar 244 for a morning showcase that featured incredible displays from local schools, colleges and businesses, as well as video profiles of students who are on successful career tracks thanks to OC Pathways.

NASA astronaut Leland Melvin, who made two trips aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis, was riveting as our keynote speaker at the end. I was also honored to say a few words, joining Saddleback College President Dr. Tod A. Burnett, OC STEM Executive Director Dr. Linda Christopher, Orange County United Way president and CEO Max Gardner, and four very impressive high school and college students.

Thanks to the unparalleled levels of collaboration between Orange County's secondary and postsecondary partners, OC Pathways has already racked up more achievements than can be listed in this column, and we're just getting started.

Just think of what can be accomplished in year two.

BOARD OF EDUCATION • From Page 1



Karen Russell
President

Los Al is designing ways to ensure that every student in the Los Alamitos Unified School District gets hands-on, personalized, engaging opportunities to explore and learn programming and coding to best prepare them for our digital world. These experiences also build the life skills needed to excel: resilience, tenacity, risk taking, perseverance, focused attention span, and self-regulatory

strategies. Los Al continues to give students exploratory opportunities to ensure balanced, successful lives now and following high school graduation.



College 4 Less

Not Accepted To Your Dream School?



Susan D. Marshall

After the shock and disappointment fades there is a hidden secret many discover.

Did you know with a little work you can go to any college you want to? Pick a college, then work backwards. Sure you may have been rejected once, maybe twice, but that shouldn't keep you from taking classes there.

Look online. Many times there are online courses even degree programs available from your dream school. There are countless stories of students starting their degree online and finishing on campus.

Consider a transfer program. Many community colleges have transfer agreements and alliances with Universities. Find a transfer program that gets you where you want to go.

Look into extension programs offered by your dream college or through your community college. They may not be well advertised, but may be perfect for your situation. Two of my children discovered these programs unexpectedly. Although completely different programs; each program offered benefits that couldn't have been a better fit.

My daughter graduated after discovering the Pepperdine Graziadio School of Business and Management. The program she selected allowed her to work full time, attend classes in the evenings and on the weekends and offered a MJB option. Many of the students in her courses were already CEO's and business executives.

My son who always dreamed of and is now a commercial pilot, began attending MT. SAC; a community college. He discovered that he could attend classes on the Mt. San Antonio College campus every other Saturday and graduate within four years with a Bachelors in Business Management/Aviation Management from University of Southern Illinois.

Hidden treasures that may be just perfect for you.

Susan both educator and advisor specializes in college planning. She helps families save for and pay for college. If you have questions you would like answered in a future article contact her at Susan@College4Less.com or on her Web site at www.college4less.com

Real Estate Matters

New Tax Provisions and Extensions



CathyLyn Brooks

By the time you read this article an important tax legislation may be signed into effect. The bill contains the renewal of several expired tax regulations that aid homeowners, businesses, and real estate investments. It was strongly supported by the National Association of Realtors (NAR).

A significant feature of the work is the continuation of tax relief for those receiving mortgage debt forgiveness. This prevents "underwater" homeowners from incurring a large tax bill for income associated with a mortgage workout or a short-sale. The belief is that this tax relief has fortified both local regions and the overall economy since 2007 when homeowners were first granted this benefit. The bill gives an additional two years of shelter for sales in 2015 and 2016.

Also included is the permanent continuation of a 15-year cost recovery term for the depreciation of qualified leasehold improvements. This component ensures that a reasonable cost-recovery period remains in place for improvements made to non-residential commercial property.

Additionally the legislation renews certain incentives to promote energy efficient commercial and multifamily buildings. And an expired tax credit of between \$1,000 and \$2,000 for energy efficient new homes is also continued for an additional two years.

The bill also permanently extends regulations allowing small and mid-sized businesses to expense business equipment in the year obtained, rather than being required to depreciate the equipment over an extended period of years.

The tax bill also includes revisions to the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act (FIRPTA) that will ease limitations on investment in commercial real estate. Please see your tax advisor for specifics on how you can benefit from these recent changes.

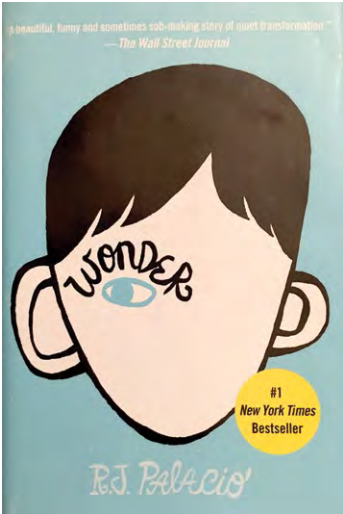
CathyLyn Brooks, CRS, GRI is affiliated with Main Street Realtors. She has worked as a real estate broker since 1980, is a graduate of USC, the UCI paralegal program, and serves FINRA as a public arbitrator. Consumers should seek legal and tax advice pertaining to their transactions.

Don’t Judge a Book/Person By the Cover



Keira

Wonder by R.J. Palacio
This amazing book is about a boy named August (Auggie) who was born with a facial difference that prevented him from going to school. When he finally goes, well you know how hard it can be starting a new school! Auggie is just a normal boy inside with an unusual face. He talks about his life filled with challenges, such as the many surgeries he has gone through to improve his face.



This story teaches that no matter how you look, it doesn’t change if you are a nice person or not. Whenever people see Auggie, they just think about how he looks, not about whether he is funny or kind. It is also about his fifth grade year at a new school.
This story is so good I already read it twice, and I plan on reading it again! I rate this book 5 out of 5 apples.

Keira Fukuwa is a fourth grader at Los Alamitos Elementary. Besides reading, she enjoys soccer, jazz dance, crafts and cooking. Keira rates books 1-5 apples with 5 the best.

Smiles Ahead



Kate Karp

You may have heard the term *indie music* and not thought about the meaning because what’s played on indie stations sounds so good. Accomplished indie musicians are in fact artists who opt to transport their performances to eager ears through small labels and the Internet instead of recording with big, largely commercial corporations. This gives these artists more room for creativity, self-expression and their own “heart.” If you’ve heard bands like Wilco and Radiohead, you’ll agree that it all works really well.

And if you and the children around you also know the names Okee Dokee Brothers, Rissi Palmer, the Pop-Ups and the 10 other artists and bands on this new multigenre collection, you’ll also agree that a flourishing, delightful bunch of indie artists exists for the very young. *Smiles Ahead* is a project of Mighty Mo Productions, a small label founded by award-winning children’s entertainer Jim “Mr. Stinky Feet” Cosgrove, who appears in this collection as a producer only. This happy, tuneful CD includes songs that all children will enjoy and that could also be on your own hit parade. Secret Agent 23 Skidoo, aka King of Kid Hop, raps about self-confidence in the hippy-hoppy “You’re It.” Grandparents and sixties-music aficionados will recall the English Invasion in The Verve Pipes’ “Get Happy.” Spring and bluegrass go together, and the Okee Dokee Brothers pair them well on “Walking with Spring.” And Brady Rhymer and the Little Band That Could have the best CD opener—the catchy “Jump Up.”

There are definitely smiles ahead for everyone here!

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

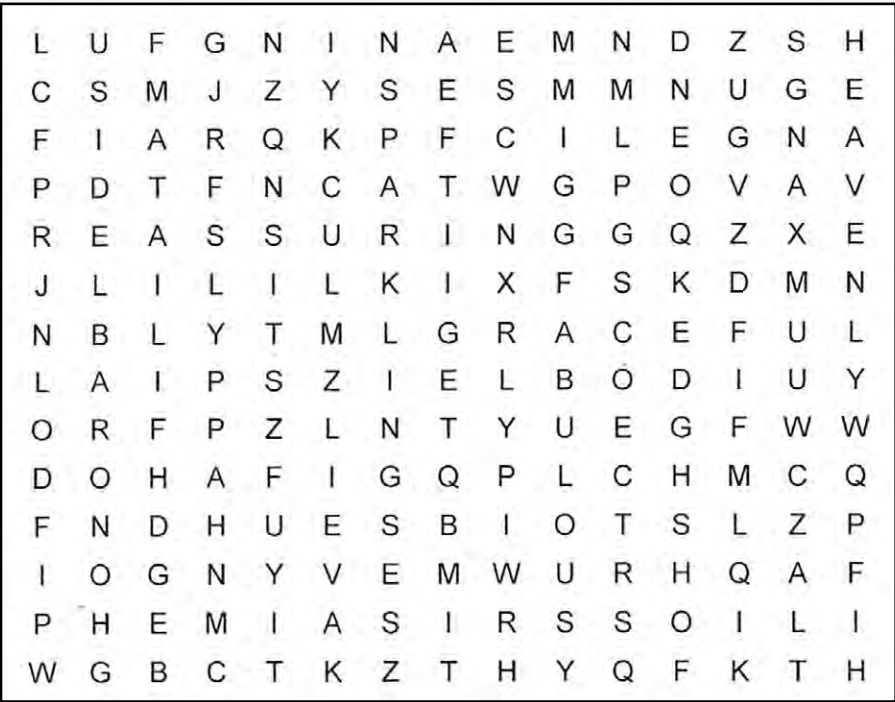
Positive Words – Word Search Contest

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 Los Al in the subject line)

Entries must be received by March 15, 2016.
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- | | | |
|----------|------------|------------|
| ANGELIC | HEAVENLY | PHENOMENAL |
| DAZZLING | HONORABLE | REASSURING |
| FABULOUS | KIND | SMILE |
| GENUINE | LUCKY | SPARKLING |
| GRACEFUL | MEANINGFUL | TRUTHFUL |
| HAPPY | OPTIMISTIC | UPBEAT |

Congratulations to **Cassidy Nguyen**
Winner of the December Word Search Contest!





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A Bit of History

Music to the Ears

By D.H. Coop

I do not know exactly when music became important to me. It may have been on the ride in the car back from Valley Forge in 1949 with my mother, uncle, aunt and grandparents singing “Home on the Range.” Or it may have been the radio shows of the day, such as *The Lone Ranger*, whose theme was from the *William Tell Overture*, or *The Green Hornet* and the theme “Flight of the Bumblebee.” It could have been the two blocks of wood with sandpaper on them that I made music with in the first grade.

I do know that music made life enjoyable and that it became markers for events in my life. Elvis takes me back to the mid-fifties, Hank Williams to the lonely mornings in the fields, and Jack Benny to radio and television when families sat listening together to the same shows. Jack Benny would always get a laugh with his poor violin playing when in reality he was an accomplished violinist.

The truth is, music is good for our soul. For many of us, our music studio is in our bathtub or shower. What would humanity be without music and the teachers that pass the knowledge on to others? It is difficult to imagine a world without music.

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