

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District



Volume 15, Issue 75

February / March 2018

Walk-to-School and College Day



This Rossmoor Elementary school-wide event is one the Knights truly love!
(please see page 10)

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Los Alamitos Unified 2018 EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

*By Board of Education
Dr. Jeffrey Barke, President
& Mrs. Diana D. Hill, Clerk*

The cornerstone of Los Alamitos Unified School District's spirit of excellence is *One Team... One Vision... Unlimited Possibilities for Students!* Collectively, this mission permeates our daily actions and provides a sense of purpose for the hard work each staff member devotes to our



Chou Chiang, Brian Millfelt, Eddy Clement

students and families. Our classified employees work the front-lines and behind-the-scenes 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 2018 who exemplify our outstanding staff.

Chou Chiang Food Service Cook

Chou has been an exemplary food service employee for the past seven years. On a daily basis, he shows dedication and commitment to the students and employees of the District. He demonstrates high initiative and an eagerness to serve at all times. His focus is on the best and most efficient way to serve our customers, especially the students. He knows what is necessary to ensure food is the best quality and served in the cleanest environment. Chou

faces changes with a positive outlook and provides his full support to the food service department and the District. He is extremely professional, reliable, kind, courteous, and has impeccable integrity. He takes pride in his work and is exceptional at his job. Chou goes above and beyond to support students in a myriad of ways. His positive and warm demeanor elicits joy in all he encounters. Chou is simply remarkable and gives his all in everything he does.

Eddy Clement Instructional Assistant - Accompanist

Eddy has been an IA-Accompanist for the Los Alamitos High School Choral Program for the past 16 years. During this time, he has been instrumental in the growth and success of the program. He spends countless hours working with students, arranging instrumental charts, and directing the show choir instrumental ensemble. Eddy has a bachelor's degree in Music Performance from Northwestern Louisiana University. Highlights of his performance career include being the featured piano player

for the 1984 Olympic Opening Ceremonies and playing the French Horn in the Disney College Band. Eddy is beloved by students and parents! His genuine care and drive to provide enriching experiences for students is beyond measure. His humble service and attention to detail centers on highlighting our students and their award-winning talents but this time the curtain call is celebrating Eddy and his remarkable talents both on and off the stage with our students.

Brian Millfelt Purchasing Services Lead

Brian has been an extraordinary employee of the Los Alamitos Unified School District for the past five years. He is very well known throughout the district for his commitment and energy to provide the best customer service possible. Making sure District funds are spent wisely and efficiently while purchasing quality items is his mission and passion. The energy and enthusiasm with which he goes about his daily work day is remarkable. Brian is seen as a very positive person, has an amazing sense of humor, and exhibits a "win-win" philosophy.

He is highly respected by his peers and appreciated by all staff members for the way he works vigorously to serve and support students and staff with their purchasing needs. Brian personifies excellent customer service skills, demonstrates a continuous calm demeanor, is a problem solver, has a positive attitude, and works tirelessly, ensuring students and faculty are well equipped to achieve excellence in our 4 A's - Academics, Athletics, Activities and the Arts.

We are fortunate to have a team of dedicated and skilled staff who work tirelessly on behalf of our students and families and we congratulate Eddy, Chou, and Brian on

being selected as our 2018 Classified Employees of the Year. We are proud to have them part of Team Los Al!

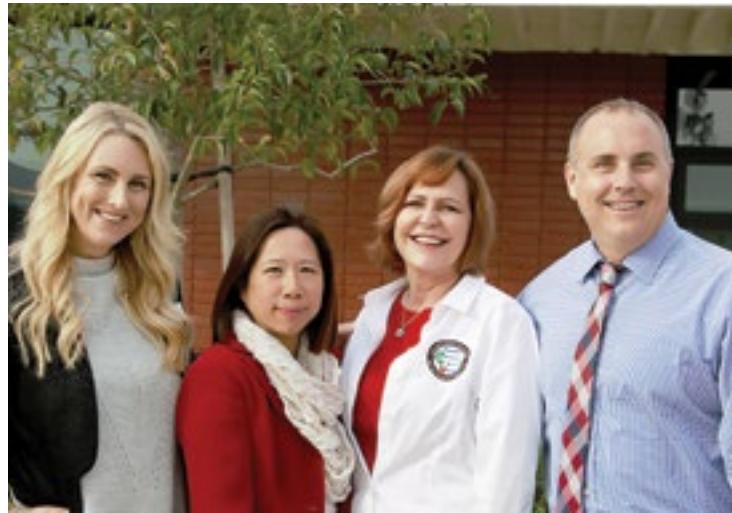
The Leaders of Los Al

*By Dr. Sherry Kropp,
Superintendent*

Los Al is guided by our vision, mission, and beliefs, but most importantly, we are one team with one vision. We work together to Ignite Unlimited Possibilities so that we provide the very best education possible to each and every one of our students. We are here to serve and support the goals and aspirations our families and community members have for students' futures. We dream big and want our students to dream big, too.

We have lots of leaders throughout our District, but there is one group I'd like to highlight: Executive Cabinet. We all, ultimately, work for the Board of Education, which is the elected, governing body of our District. After that, we have an Executive Cabinet, which consists of the Superintendent and three Assistant Superintendents. Executive Cabinet members lead the outstanding programs we have in our District, and they are the group to whom I garner the most input and counsel.

Dr. Andrew Pulver is the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. He leads the work pertaining to all aspects of hiring the best staff members available and inducting them into our District. He is the lead negotiator and works tirelessly to improve relationships among all staff members, especially when it comes to solving problems and issues between management and employees. He serves as the beacon for what we want for the culture of our District, how we are going to treat one another, and how we will always put students first. He also oversees attendance, registration, and safety initiatives, along with a myriad of other duties.



Mrs. Ondrea Reed, Dr. Nancy Nien, Dr. Sherry Kropp, and Dr. Andrew Pulver

Ondrea Reed is the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. She leads all work that helps us provide excellent programs to our students. This entails developing state-of-the-art professional development plans so that teachers are highly skilled and trained to help all students be successful. She is responsible for creating robust co- and extra-curricular activities in academics, athletics, activities, and the arts so that students

develop their special interests and talents. She lives in our community and her children attend our schools. This, coupled with her work ethic and passion for this work, clearly demonstrates what we mean by all in, all the time.

Dr. Nancy Nien is our newest member, and she is the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services. She leads business operations, which include financial oversight, vendor contracts, facilities, maintenance, transportation, technology, budgeting, ordering supplies, and food services. She is bright, highly educated, and comes to us with a wealth of experiences and a solid background that enable her to lead this work. Our students, families, and staff deserve the facilities and equipment necessary in order to provide students with a 21st Century education, and Nancy is ready to lead continuous improvements in these areas. She, too, is all in, all the time.

Together, Andrew, Ondrea, and Nancy make an extraordinary team, and they are the best in their respective areas! We are blessed to have them as leaders in Los Al.

Board of Education



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Barke, M.D.**
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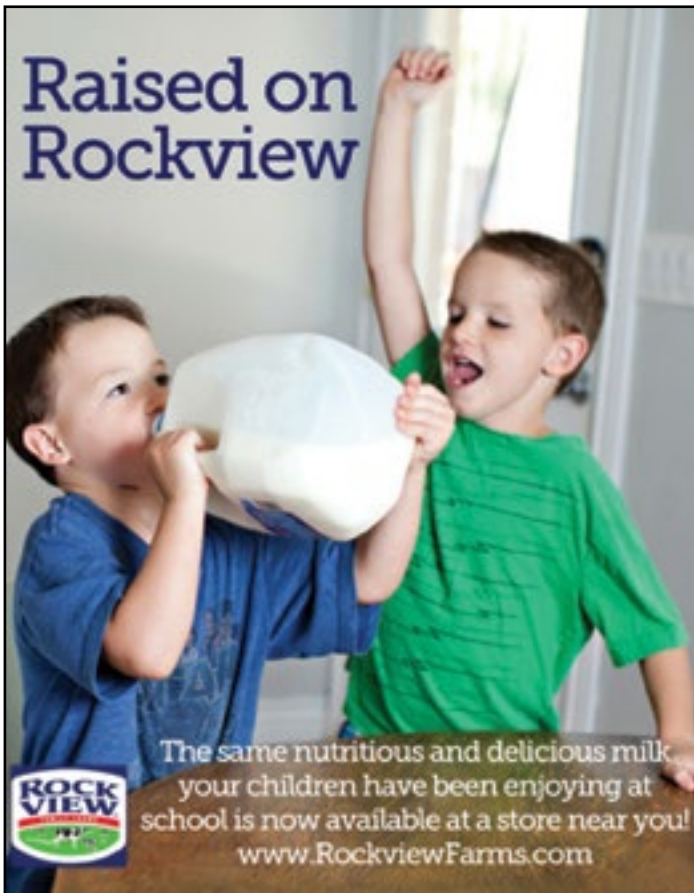
Netragrednik

This is our 15th year publishing the excellence from the LAUSD. Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. Over the years much has changed in the classroom. In this issue you will read about students interpreting binary code, coding to create their own interactive computer game, students honoring the military,

Going Green, Class Act Program, History Comes to Life and more...

Thank you for your thoughtful messages when you email your answers to our contests. (Be sure to enter the Word Search Contest on page 11.) We have lots of student book reviews to fill your Spring Break reading..

Our next issue is April 11.

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School News

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Covering the
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach

Knowing Congenital Heart Disease Signs Can Save a Child's Life



Shaun Setty, M.D.
Medical Director,
Pediatric & Adult
Congenital
Cardiac Surgery
MemorialCare
Miller Children's &
Women's Hospital
Long Beach

Congenital heart disease is a defect or malformation of the heart or its associated blood vessels that forms in a developing baby. Depending on the specific defect, symptoms can appear right away or later in life.

Common signs and symptoms include:

- Abnormal Heart Murmurs – commonly heard during an annual checkup
- Labored breathing – especially with activity and in a baby during feeding
- Growth Abnormalities– not gaining weight or growing appropriately, when feeding well
- Blue skin or lips – nail beds or lips can turn blue, especially during crying
- Extreme fatigue – tiring quickly or easily; racing of the heart during physical activity
- Swelling in the legs, abdomen or areas around the eyes is a late finding that can be seen in chronic heart failure

2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, CA 90806
1.800.MEMORIAL • millerchildrens.org/heart

When a non-critical congenital heart defect goes untreated, it can put undue strain on the heart and body which can lead to organ failure and ultimately lead to death. Being aware of the potential warning signs of a congenital heart defect can save your child's life.

The Children's Heart Institute at MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach offers total care for patients with congenital heart disease at any age, including surgical treatment. The Institute has the whole spectrum of care that includes a non-invasive imaging center (including heart ultrasounds) to accurately diagnose and treat pediatric patients using advanced equipment, and the Interventional Cardiology Program which can offer catheter based treatment options for certain conditions using intra-cardiac devices to treat children and adults with congenital heart disease.



Our specialty:

**Congenital
Heart Surgery**

Lucy's specialty:

**Hostess with
the Mostess**

Anna and Jesse brought their 2-year-old daughter Lucy to a pediatric cardiologist, who found a hole and abnormal blood vessel causing a heart murmur. After researching the perfect fit for their family, Newport Beach residents Anna and Jesse felt connected to Shaun Setty, M.D. Dr. Setty performed open-heart surgery to fix the hole and abnormal blood flow in Lucy's heart. Two days later, Lucy went home. Today, at 3-years-old, Lucy hosts tea parties full of heart for special friends.



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Lucy, 3-years-old,
Miller Children's & Women's
Heart Patient



City of Seal Beach Police Department

911 Seal Beach Blvd., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/799-4100 Ext. 1145 • www.sealbeachca.gov



Dave Barr
Sergeant

CERT Classes Starting

The City of Seal Beach, the Seal Beach Police Department, and the West County CERT team will be hosting a free Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training class. CERT educates people in disaster preparedness for events that may impact their area and provides basic disaster response skills. Using the training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in projects in their community. WEST COUNTY CERT is comprised of those who live and/or work in Buena Park, Cypress, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach and Westminster plus their attached communities.

The 20-hour FEMA-approved course includes training in Disaster Preparedness, Medical Operations, Light Search and Rescue, Fire Suppression, Team Organization and Disaster Psychology.

Training will be held at the Joint Forces Training Base—Building 244, 11200 Lexington Drive, Los Alamitos, CA 90720. The training schedule will be comprised of two weekend training sessions;

- Friday, March 16th, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Saturday March 17th, 2018 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Friday, March 23rd, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Saturday March 24th, 2018 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

REGISTRATION: email WestCountyCertAcademy@gmail.com or call (714) 229-6625.

Los Alamitos Police Department

3201 Katella Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4780 ext. 82245

Guilty of Distracted Driving?

By Justine B. Kim, #170, School Resource Officer

In 2013, nationally 3,154 people were killed and an estimated 424,000 were injured in vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. Distracted Driving is driving a vehicle while engaging in any activity that diverts attention from driving; especially texting and cell phone use. Following are other facts from a survey that show how dangerous Distracted Driving can be. In 2016, more than 54% of California drivers stated they had been hit or nearly hit by a driver who was talking/texting on a cell phone. In 2016, 10% of drivers, under the age of 20, involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of impact. Also in 2016, “5 seconds” is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, it’s enough time to cover the length of a football field blindfolded.

Here are few reminders to keep yourself safe on the road. Never ever text and drive. Turn off your phone before getting behind the wheel. Don’t text or call someone when you know they’re likely driving. Don’t eat or drink while driving. Don’t program any devices such as GPS while driving. If a phone call or text message is necessary, pull over to a safe parking spot. If something falls onto the floorboard of the vehicle, pull over to a safe parking spot.

Lastly, California laws prohibit cell phone and electronic wireless device usage among any driver, except for a valid emergency. Any driver under the age of 18 cannot use a cell phone or any other electronic wireless device at all; including hand-held, hands-free, Bluetooth, speaker phone, or any other means.

(Survey Resource—California Office of Traffic Safety)

Seal Beach Animal Care Center

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

Love Benefits Guaranteed!

By Murlyn E. Burkes, Cat Committee Liaison

Fall in love with our shelter dogs each day and help them feel safe and loved! Walking shelter dogs not only provides them with needed exercise but also enriches their lives while living in a new environment. Kennel life can be quite stressful, and dog walkers provide dogs with companionship, stimulation and exercise.

How would you like to begin your morning with the happy sound of kitties awaiting your arrival? Each morning or afternoon, cat volunteers assist with creating a healthy and happy environment for our feline friends. Shelter life

is tough on cats, as any transition can be stressful. You can get to know the kitties and help them feel more comfortable and loved, which in turn will help them connect with potential adopters.

Volunteers can also help out in fund-raisers, transporting animals to and from the vet, and various other duties that may come up during time at the shelter. Our volunteers play an integral part in placing animals and promoting shelter adoption. We couldn’t do everything that we attempt to do without their continued support. Become a volunteer, and feel the love and appreciation of the animals!

Hopkinson *Elementary*

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



Evelyn Garcia
Principal

'Class Act' Lessons

We are very excited to have started our fourth year with the Class Act Program, produced by a professional symphonic orchestra. We are so fortunate to have your PTA support and to be selected as a school to participate in this amazing experience!

This year's Hopkinson musician, flutist Cynthia Ellis, introduced our students to the 2017-18 composer of the year: Ludwig van Beethoven. This year, Class Act will explore the theme of "Trials to Triumph" through music.

Ms. Ellis is coming in and offering individual lessons to each class at Hopkinson! This is an extremely memorable and enriching experience for our Huskies. The Class Act program enhances Hopkinson's existing music program by providing additional musical experiences through the symphony. This program has helped to increase awareness of and involvement with symphonic music for elementary school students, their families and educators.



Class Act Classroom Lesson

Lee *Elementary*

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



Amy Laughlin
Principal

Project Lead the Way

Students at Lee engage in the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) computer-science modules every week in the media center. The lessons empower students to develop and apply skills to solve real-world problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate.

First- and second-graders use an iPad app called Scratch Jr. to write their own programs to tell stories and create games. Third-graders use math skills and explore patterns in programming to create arcade-style games using an iPad app called Hopscotch. Fourth-graders are learning how computers store and process data. They use an application called Tynker to learn basic



Two 2nd graders using a coding application to create their own interactive computer game.

programming concepts, including sequencing, repetitions, conditionals, events, functions and variables, to create their own interactive games. Fifth-graders are learning about the role computer simulations play in the biomedical field. Then, these students are writing computer programs to create models to run their own simulations.

At Lee, we celebrate innovation and creativity!

4th grade student interpreting binary code.

Los Alamitos *Elementary*

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



Gary Willems
Principal

Super Students

At LAE, our students are learning to ignite their super power of reading in Learning Lab Reading Intervention. LAE's reading intervention is phonics-based, and it focuses on phonological awareness, letter knowledge, letter sounds/spelling patterns, and guided reading with reading strategies.

Our students are being taught multiple strategies to help tackle tricky words during their reading. These strategies are the bedrock of reading proficiency. Our

super readers are also learning to use these effective strategies on their own, which gains them confidence and independence.

The Learning Lab is a data-driven intervention. Our intervention teachers assess students every day, which creates a flexible learning environment where both teaching and learning can grow together. We are currently in Session 2 now, and are servicing 76 students in the kindergarten through third grade. The majority of the work is being done in kindergarten and first grade.

We love the dedication and hard work of our super readers. Superheroes do exist at LAE!



Los Alamitos *High School*

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



Dr. Brandon Martinez
Principal

Exciting Extracurriculars

Los Alamitos High School has seen student success in all areas. Our award-winning Los Alamitos Marching Band performed in London's New Year's Day Parade, which was viewed by millions worldwide. Our fall dance production featured more than 200 students, and our drama and show choir

are busily preparing for their spring performances.

Winter athletics are well into the season. A notable highlight is the top-five ranking of our girls varsity water polo team. Wrestling, boys and girls basketball, and boys and girls soccer have had successful tournament and league competitions, with many holding top positions in the Sunset League.

As the current Division 3 champions, our Academic Decathlon

team will be looking to add to their success this year. Science Olympiad, Model United Nations, our robotics team, and the newly formed eSports team will also be participating in numerous competitions.

We look forward to many more exciting opportunities for our students.



McAuliffe *Middle School*

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



Ann Allen
Principal

History Comes to Life

McAuliffe Middle School students Summer Drake and Madelyn Nollan recently participated in a nationwide American history essay contest sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Both chose to write about World War I from a first-person perspective. Their essays emphasized the women's suffrage movement and discussed how the war impacted their

lives as women and activists. Madelyn and Summer both won in their respective categories and will present their essays in February at a DAR luncheon. They have also both qualified for the state competition.

"I really enjoyed the project" said Summer. "I like history, and I love to write. Someday I want to be an author." Madelyn expressed much the same: "I love to write. You can make it whatever you want it to be and move in any direction. It's fun!"

Led by US history teacher extraordinaire Mr. Thomson, social studies students in sixth through eighth grades recently created a Wall of Honor in the McAuliffe breezeway to recognize family members who have served in the US Armed Forces. Mr. Thomson expressed that he wanted to

do something for Veteran's Day that was meaningful and a school-wide endeavor. Students were asked to create posters with pictures of family members or relatives who had served in the military. The posters included short biographies of these service men and woman and the branches they served in.

"We wanted to come up with something to pay homage to veterans and the families of students who are veterans," said Mr. Thomson, who feels that projects like this become personal for students and lead to increased engagement.

Keep up the good work, Eagles!



McGaugh *Elementary*

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



Roni Ellis
Principal

Heroes of Our Hearts

The McGaugh School community knows the importance of developing partnerships with our local community. We have a great relationship with the City of Seal Beach as well as our Police and Fire Departments. The

one partnership that holds a special place in our hearts, however, is the relationship we have with our military.

With a U.S. Navy base across the street from McGaugh, and the Joint Forces Base up the street, we have enjoyed a wonderful and lasting friendship with our military. On a regular basis, men and women from the Navy, Army, Marines, and Air Force find an open door and open arms at McGaugh. These service men and women volunteer to have lunch with our McGaugh students during the Week of the Military Child; they volunteer to help during our annual Fit-a-thon; and they also help during the



holiday season by bringing Santa Claus over in a military Humvee.

The boys and girls of McGaugh know what true heroes look like; all they have to do is look around our school and they are guaranteed to find an individual who is serving our community and country.

Oak *Middle School*

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



Erin Kominsky
Principal

Going Green

The Oak Middle School Lions are going green! We have partnered with the Grades of Green organization to promote our new trash-free lunch program. This program instills environmental values by inspiring and empowering students to pack trash-free lunches and sort lunchtime waste.

Our scholarship students have been working hard to prepare for our school green kickoff

event. The students have created signs and learned about recyclable trash and best sorting practices. They have designed and organized five recycle stations, which have taken the place of all 18 landfill trashcans that previously surrounded our lunch table area. These five stations include the following: bottles and cans; mixed recycling; liquids; cardboard; and landfill. Students have signed up to supervise each station to help support and encourage others to reduce their trash. In just one week, our students have already decreased our landfill trash from 18 bags to 10.

Hear us roar—and go green!



Rossmoor *Elementary*

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



Amy Belsha
Principal

Walk-to-School and College Day

Here in Los Alamitos, we have a tradition of promoting college attendance beginning at an early age. Once a month, we come together as a district to create a college-going culture by spotlighting a college or university and encouraging our Knights to dress in college apparel.

At Rossmoor Elementary School, we combine College Day with Walk-to-School Day! Our Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) students promote walking to school by creating signs, promoting the event with weekly morning announcements, and participating themselves. On this special day, we have a few parent volunteers guiding the many students who meet at Rossmoor Park for the walk to school. Our Knights walk to school together in their college gear!

Our teachers also take this opportunity to highlight college in their classroom by engaging students in conversation about the monthly college and sharing opportunities for future leaders. We encourage parents to participate as well by having conversations about their alma maters.

This school-wide event is one that our Knights truly love!





Dr Robert Briggerman
Principal

Engaging All Students

Students who are involved in schools perform significantly higher than peers that are not engaged. Additionally, research indicates that student-enrichment activities and connectedness to school help them develop a deeper, more conceptual understanding of core academic curriculum. This is why we so profoundly believe in the 4 As: academics, athletics, activities and the arts.

At Weaver, a variety of opportunities connect students and families to our culture. At Friday flag ceremony, everyone comes together to celebrate. In addition to patriotic celebrations, student birthdays and recognitions are announced to the whole school.

Beyond Flag Ceremony, other opportunities involve students and parents in the Weaver community. A growth mindset and an inquiry-based instructional approach with district signature practices places students in the driver's

seat of their own learning. Additionally, assemblies, field trips, music, the Class Act Program presented by a symphonic orchestra, and Meet the Masters art program provided by our PTA provide our students with additional opportunities. After-school enrichment classes in the arts, sciences, foreign languages, music and scouting extend the curriculum and support in developing a community connection. Our PTA also provides regular family nights and an annual ice cream social, Carnival and Summer Jam. Friends of Weaver, our parent nonprofit group, works tirelessly to raise funds to bring extended-learning opportunities that are engaging to our students and creates real-world connections to the curriculum. Our annual Weaver Goes Hollywood event is a great venue for this, and it also brings our parent community together for a fun-filled evening.

With these opportunities, we endeavor to provide the foundation for lifelong learning and citizens who are capable, involved, adaptable and successful.

Adventures – 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.

Thank you **Barkate Orthodontics**
for sponsoring our contests.
www.BarkateSmiles.com

Entries must be received by **March 30, 2018**
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble.

CRUISE	SCUBA DIVING
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HIKE	THEME PARK
MINING	SIGHT SEEING
RAFTING	MUSEUMS
FISHING	GALLERIES
HUNTING	RIVERBOAT
CLIMBING	SAILING
SURFING GEO-	ROAD TRIP
CACHING	ZIP LINE
BIRDWATCHING	



Congratulations to Lindsey Billings
Winner of our December Word Search Contest!

Book Review By Katrina



Katrina D.

A Virtual World

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline is all about the OASIS, a virtual world where you can be anyone, do anything and enjoy life to the fullest. And that's pretty important, seeing as the



world is currently dirt poor. Creator James Halliday however, leaves his players one last surprise on his deathbed. Located within the game are three hidden keys, and whoever can find them and unlock all three gates, will inherit both his wealth and the OASIS itself. Though for five years, no one has any luck. Only for teenager Wade Watts to find the first key. Now the world is scrambling to find the keys, especially the IOI, an internet company intent on turning the free OASIS into a playground for the rich and powerful alone. Despite the dangers, Wade and his friends continue to search for the keys, and won't stop until its GAME OVER for everyone. Thrilling and fast paced, this book is a shocking theory of what our own future as a society could look like in a few decades. A great read for lovers of 80s pop culture and gaming in general. I give this book 4 out of 5 crescent moons.

Katrina is a tenth grader who loves reading books as much as writing her own stories and enjoys watching Anime. Katrina hopes to be an author one day very soon. Katrina will rate her book reviews from 1 to 5 crescent moons with 5 being the best.

Unforgettable Books



Sofia Atoofi

A Book to Conquer Your Fears

The story *Ghosts* by Raina Telgemeier is one of my favorite books. Some people think it's scary, but actually it's about conquering your fears. Katrina has to move to Bahía de la Luna, a town in Northern California, to help



treat her sister, who has cystic fibrosis. Soon, she finds out that there are ghosts in this town, and her sister will give up anything to meet one. Cat is scared, but finds she has no choice, as Día de los Muertos, a celebration where ghosts reunite with their family, rises. She learns how to get over her fears, and have fun doing it.

Sofia is a fifth grader who loves writing. When she isn't submerged into a book, she enjoys doing gymnastics, acting, and singing. Her favorite kind of books are informational books, as she loves learning about new topics. She wants to become a writer or designer when she grows up, and hopes to someday publish a book, called *Painting a Path*, which she wrote for a school competition.

Katie's Review



Katie C.

Three wishes

My Unfair Godmother

What if you had three wishes? What if your fairy godmother was just an average tooth fairy? What if your fairy godmother had an annoying leprechaun assistant?

Well, unfortunately, that was the case for Tansy Miller. After the news of her parents' divorce, she hated the world. When her fairy godmother arrived, she hoped that her world would change. She ended up in the story of Rumpelstiltskin, unfortunately.

In order for Tansy to return her and her family back home, she had to make a moral for her story. She tried many, but none worked. Tansy almost gave up on coming back to the 21st century.

Until she realized: love. Love was more important than wealth. Throughout her journey, Tansy Miller experienced love, stronger than she had ever felt before. With her family, and with the unbreakable bond of friendship.

I give this book a five out of five stars. It is a story that will give you warmth as Tansy finds out what true love means.

Katie is a 8th grader that loves to read and write. Fictional books are her favorite. Besides writing and reading, she loves soccer, acting, dancing, and playing the violin. She hopes to publish her own book someday.

Sophie's Choice



Sophie O.

A Mysterious and Exciting Read

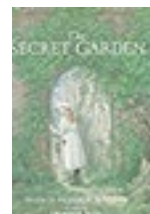
The Secret Garden written by Frances Hodgson Burnett is a book about a girl named Mary Lennox. Mary lives in India and her parents who don't pay any attention to her.

One day Mary woke up and finds herself all alone. Mary learns that the entire household has died from cholera, leaving Mary as the only survivor.

Mary is sent to go live with her uncle, Archibald Craven in Yorkshire at Misselthwaite Manor, a huge mansion with hundreds of rooms and lots of lands and gardens. It is a mysterious house with many locked rooms and strange noises.

Mary discovers a locked garden with no key. Why is the garden locked and who does she hear crying each night inside the manor? A bird helps Mary discover the key to the garden and with the help of her friend Dickon, they begin to restore the secret garden. Mary is determined to find the mystery behind the locked garden and who is crying

I give the *Secret Garden* 4 stars, because I didn't want the book to end, but 5 stars because it was such a great book!



Sophie is a 4th grader who is a lover of all books, loves to bake, act, draw, sew and play soccer.

Victoria's Review



Victoria Lowe

Amazing Adventures

The Land of Stories by

Chris Colfer is a fantasy/ fiction novel about twins named Alex and Conner who get trapped in the *Land of Stories*, a book that their grandmother



gave to them. They go through many adventures all trying to get back to earth

to their mom. In between these adventures, the twins go through different realms: The Elf Empire, The Northern Kingdom, The Eastern Kingdom, The Dwarf Forests, The Red Riding Hood Kingdom, The Corner Kingdom and much more. They also meet Disney Princes and Princesses who become their best friends. In the end, Alex and Conner realize they are stronger than they once thought.

How did they get trapped? How do they escape? What do they experience in each realm? All of these questions will be answered once you read this amazing adventure! I give this book a "5 out of 5 Smiles."

Victoria Lowe is a 7th grade student. She loves school and enjoys spending time with her friends. Victoria's favorite kinds of books have mystery and fantasy plots and will rate them with "Smiles." Victoria has an affinity for singing, loves musical theatre and is a member of the South Bay Children's Choir.

Rabina's Review



Rabina K.

An Impactful Book

The Old Man and the Sea

By: Ernest Hemingway

This book is a literary fiction, a story of courage and personal triumph won from loss. The story is tragic but it leaves the reader to appreciate the strength of the



main character and his positive approach towards life.

Down on his luck with not much caught in 84 days, Santiago, an old Cuban fisherman, goes to try again in deep sea. He got lucky to have caught a giant marlin far out in the Gulf stream. He faces relentless agonizing battle with this creature who is as stubborn as he is. Though he succeeds in catching this big fish but the bad luck does shadow his efforts, and eventually the fisherman does not get to enjoy his reward.

I think this book speaks to the reader and teaches the reader that hard work does not always lead to rewards. Instead of getting frustrated from unsuccessful events, one should accept it positively and keep working towards one's goal.

Rabina is a 5th grader, who enjoys reading historical fiction and biographies. Writing is her passion. Besides, reading books and writing, she also enjoys playing soccer and piano.

Note-ables



Kate Karp

Rise, Shine, #Woke—Alphabet Rockers

"We want to grow children to shape the country," said the creators of Rise, Shine, #Woke. Grow, not mold them into the mainstream. Woke



is an African American Vernacular English term that means to be connected, to not be placated, to think for oneself, and to not remain 'cool' but ever active in social justice. That's the substance of Rise, Shine, Woke.

This is the weightiest, most powerful collection I can remember reviewing. The no-fooling lyrics deal with resolving conflicting messages, persevering and celebrating differences instead of subscribing to the ideal of everyone being equal.

"It's easy to say that we're all the same and that for the most part, we're equal. That's not what we see..." sing the artists on "Turn on the Light." This is a "woke moment" for anyone who is or feels "different" in culture, race or nationality or as an outsider. It's also discussion material for all children, no matter the experiences or culture.

The catchy "I'm Proud" goes beyond simple comfort in one's skin. "The Nitro" gets you moving as the lyrics fly right by. You'll want to download those lyrics from the link provided with the CD—you'll need them!

The music is interspersed with conversational raps by children and inspirational dialogue from President Barack Obama, Maya Angelou and other African American guiding lights. The songs themselves could be thought of as the spirituals of the 21st century; like spirituals, they're composed for jumping up, shouting out, and ultimately moving in a positive direction.

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

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Christina's Book Review



Christina J.

The Secrets to Ruling School (Without Even Trying) by Neil Swaab

The story is written in third person, and plays out as smoothly as a movie. You are a new student at William H. Taft Middle School and are approached by Max Corrigan, your life coach, who will help you to become popular



among the cliques at school, so you start by trying to join into the Class Clown table that won't let you in, unless you can get them a good artists for their comics, so you go to a good artist who agrees to help you, only if you get the Band geeks away from their table at the cafeteria, so she can display her graffiti on that wall, they agree to leave, but only if you help them raise money to save their Music program, so you ask a rich girl for money, she agrees to help, but only if you rig the football team to lose, so she could win a bet... and this interestingly problematic cycle continues on and on, until you reach your goal.

I really liked reading this book, so I will give it 5 out of 5 stars.

Christina J. is an 8th grader. Christina is a hard-working student who did a community service project "Quilts for the cold" last school year. She is an avid reader, who enjoys some peace and quiet with a good book about some great adventure. Christina is a young author herself. In 5th grade she wrote a book *Melody's Stories: I Am a Spy Now*, published by Studenttreasures Publishing (PIN #3582798).

Jenna's Review



Jenna C.

It is Owlsome!

Owl Diaries-Baxter is Missing

Author: Rebecca Elliot

Do you have a diary?

Do you like writing in the diary? There is an owl named Eva. She has a diary and writes in it every day. This story is

about Eva's pet bat going missing. When Eva was at school, her teacher Mrs. Featherbottom told the class about a story contest. Whoever wins gets owl Ninja books signed by the author! Some kids in Eva's class had stories already. But Eva had no idea what to write about. Then Eva went back home. The next morning, she found that her pet bat, Baxter, was missing! Eva started a new club called Baxter Bunch to find Baxter. Her club friends started helping Eva to search for Baxter. Can Eva find Baxter after all?

I like this book because Eva talks about her daily life with flapstastic illustrations.



Jenna is a second grader. She likes reading books and her parents reading books to her. Besides reading, she also likes art, dance and soccer.

Lucy's Book Review



Lucy Davis

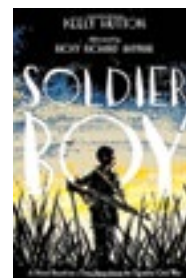
Soldier Boy

Author: Keely Hutton

"Can we go and watch the road?"

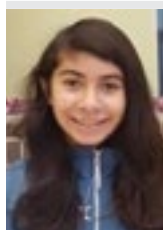
One simple request will change Ricky Anywar's entire world. What was an innocent wish soon turns into a journey as he and his brother and friends are forced to join the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel force fighting in the Ugandan civil war. They fight to stay alive on the battlefield, witnessing death, destruction, and enduring hundreds of kilometers of land on foot. Many are lost and all abductees carry the burden of being a child soldier.

In this true story, Keely Hutton works closely with Ricky himself to shed light on what it is like to be a child soldier, telling his story that are like hundreds of others. Although the subject matter is dark and at times highly disturbing, the final message of hope and forgiveness is truly one to admire. Five out of five bookworms well earned!



Lucy is a 6th grade student. When she isn't immersed in a book, she loves musical theater, ballet, and singing. She enjoys stretching her imagination by writing short stories of her own. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

Isabella's Book Review



Isabella A.

A Ghost Story

Took, by Mary Downing Hahn, is a ghost story about a family that moves to Woodville, West Virginia. Against Daniel and Erica's will, they moved because of financial difficulties. Some kids treat them like they're

aliens colonizing Woodville. Kids scare them with stories about "Old Auntie" and how she takes one girl every 50 years. Last time, she took Selene Estes; Now, it will be Erica.

Erica begins talking to a doll, claiming she talks back. She hears her name whispered and sees people. One day she follows one of those people into the forest. That is when she gets "took." Her parents become unhappier with time and blame Daniel for Erica's disappearance.

People say "Old Auntie" took her and will keep her for 50 years. Are people right? Will Erica be found?

I rate this book 4 stars because although I loved it, I disliked the character's attitudes.



Isabella is a 6th grader who loves to read, write, volleyball and plans on becoming an author of children's books. She rates books 1-5 stars with 5 being the best.

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Sean Whittle
Branch Manager

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

OC Public Libraries is now a participant in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. This nation-wide initiative aims to promote reading to pre-K children and encourage parent/child bonding through reading. Numerous studies estimate that as many as one in five children have difficulties learning to read. Reading has been associated as an early indicator of academic success.



The challenge is simple. Register at any OC Public Libraries branch. Read any book and tick off a circle as you go. When you complete 100 books, pick up a new log at the library and receive a prize. Repeat until 1000 books are read! If you read one book per night, you will have read 1,095 books in three years!

With children having this educational asset, we hope to establish strong early literacy skills and help them gain the confidence necessary to become lifelong readers. Visit www.1000booksbeforekindergarten.org for more information.

Register at any OC Public Libraries branch. Read any book and tick off a circle as you go. When you complete 100 books, pick up a new

Keira's Book Nook



Keira

Best Night Ever or a Catastrophe?

Best. Night. Ever. By Rachele Alpine, Ronni Arno, Alison Cherry, Stephanie Faris, Jen Malone, Gail Nall and Dee Romito

This book is about school dance preparations at Lynnfield Middle School, which include a televised performance by Heart Grenade, the all-girl band recognized for winning a Battle of the Bands contest. The lead singer Carmen is stuck at a cousin's wedding while Genevieve, the backup singer, is about to faint from stage fright. Tess, Ryan and Ellie can't wait to attend, and another girl is determined to ruin it all. Finally Ashlyn, who is being forced to babysit two little girls, drags her charges to the dance. This could all lead up to the best night ever or a catastrophe!

I loved this book, because the seven authors tell their points of view based on each of their "middle grade" experience. No single story teller tells the entire story. I rate this book 4 out of 5 apples, because it does get a little confusing being written from seven points of view.

Keira F. is a sixth grader. In addition to her love of books, she enjoys art, crafts, traveling and playing with her cats. She rates books from 1 to 5 apples with 5 being the highest.

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B is for Book



Bailey

The Grass isn't Always Greener

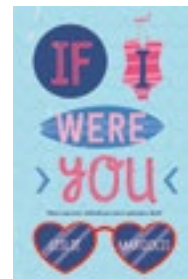
If I Were You by Leslie Margolis is a book that has magic in its own way. I can totally relate to the characters and their feelings.

Katie and Melody have been best friends ever since they were little.

But the truth is, Katie is very jealous of Melody. Her house is huge and she's so pretty! But also, it turns out that Melody is equally jealous of Katie. She has fun little brothers and family dinners every night. On the last summer of vacation, at the same time, they wish the same wish: that they were each other. Their wish comes true! Will they realize the grass is not always greener on the other side?

I enjoyed this book because I feel like the reader can relate to the emotions of the characters: being jealous of others, knowing or not knowing the pros and cons of their ups and downs.

I give this 4 1/2 stars out of 5. Bailey is a 6th grader that likes to read fantasy and daydream about adventure when she isn't dancing ballet or playing with her friends and siblings.





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