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School News

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Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District



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April 2021

Time for Summer Fun!



(please see Los Alamitos Recreation & Community Services page 7)

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An Exceptional Leader of School and Community



Dr. Andrew Pulver
Superintendent

I am thrilled to have the chance here to highlight an extraordinary member of our Los Alamitos Unified family: Evelyn Garcia, principal of Hopkinson Elementary. She is our 2021 Administrator of the Year, an exceptional leader who works tirelessly to provide unlimited opportunities for her students and advocate for the entire school community. She even lives across the street from her school!

As the principal of Hopkinson Elementary for the past six years, Garcia has shown herself to be caring, collaborative, compassionate, and always willing to share her time and talent. She gave up her summer last year, for example, to become an integral member of the team that developed the District's Opening Safety Plan that allowed to be among the first public school districts in the state to safely welcome students back to campus.

Garcia promotes the success of all students through a commitment to educational quality and student achievement. As a first-generation college graduate in her own family, she understands the value of quality education for all and that all students are capable of greatness. She believes the path to college and career is paved the moment a child steps foot in school and works passionately to spread this mindset across her campus. Garcia holds two bachelor's degrees from UC Irvine, one in criminology and another in psychology. She received her teaching credential from Cal State LA, and a master's degree and administrative service credential from National University.

Garcia leads with a sense of urgency, maintaining a presence in classrooms and in consultations with teachers. And she gets results: Hopkinson has been recognized nationally for excellence and this past year, Hopkinson posted the highest math scores in the county, with 87% of her 5th-grade class entering an honors path on moving up to middle school.

Garcia is a person of strong character who models an exemplary code of integrity, honesty, and heart for



Evelyn Garcia

kids. She leads through action, always making decisions that are in the best interest of children. While she fosters instructional programs that encourage high academic achievement, for example, she also ensures that each child has opportunities to develop qualities of leadership, initiative, responsibility, creative expression, self-discipline, and positive self-esteem.

Garcia also works tirelessly responding to the interests of diverse populations and is involved in district and community groups that promote the success of students of all backgrounds, cultures, and experience.

Garcia understands that as educators, we must equip kids with tools to excel in a global, 21st-century world, so she energetically promotes opportunities for her students to learn coding and other technological skills for creating, communicating, collaborating, and thinking critically.

During the COVID pandemic, Garcia has used technology to remain connected with the school community by hosting monthly "Coffee Connections" to virtually open her office to all families, along with monthly "Conversations with Mrs. Garcia" where she engages in real time with her students.

Garcia is the proud mother of three amazing children, all Huskies — something that she says gives her a unique perspective. "Having the ability to work at the same school my kids attend allows me the privilege of feeling involved and connected in multiple capacities. I give my all to Hopkinson. I am here professionally and as a mom. I get to see all issues through two lenses and that truly is a gift."

Finally, despite her success and achievement, Garcia displays a grace and humility in her outlook to which we all should aspire. "The people I work beside—my teachers, staff, administrators, the whole Los Al team—are all the best. I can do what I can only because of their support. We carry each other, and that makes this the best place to be. I am blessed."

I hope you feel as proud as we do to have this amazing woman playing such a critical role in the success of our children.

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Spring seems to always bring hope of new beginnings as the flowers bloom and birds chirp. This Spring is especially hopeful as we get closer to normalcy emerging from the pandemic.

On page 5 the MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach article has important information regarding children returning to sports after a year of less activity.

In this issue you will also read how each school has adapted to continue to create special events for students. Virtual music lessons and Google Classrooms became the norm. Athletes took to their respective fields to be cheered on after a long year away from organized sports. Successes and accomplishments were celebrated. The end of this school year is in sight, but in many ways this is just the beginning.

Our next issue is May 12.

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Returning to Sports Safely After COVID-19 Surge



Kenneth Huh, M.D.,
pediatric orthopedic surgeon,
Orthopedic Center,
MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach

COVID-19 has kept children sedentary and largely away from organized sports and activities for a year. This can lead to weaker muscles and lessened flexibility, which greatly increases the risk of injuries. To help your young athlete avoid injuries and gradually return to sports safely, there are a few things you should consider.

First, if your child has been infected with COVID-19, make sure their pediatrician clears them for sports. Children who have been infected by the coronavirus may have lingering inflammation of the heart and lungs or other more serious illnesses, such as multisystem inflammatory syndrome, which has been linked to COVID-19.

Once your child has been cleared for sports, they should focus on pre-conditioning for three to four weeks. Cross-training, which involves strength, conditioning, agility and balance exercises that involve different muscle groups, is most effective.

In the first week, try 15-minute sessions of moderate aerobics, like brisk walking, followed by rest. The duration and intensity of exercise should increase in the following days and weeks.

While conditioning is vital, don't discount eating well and getting the proper rest. Eating a well-balanced diet filled with fruits and vegetables and adequate rest are essential in the month or so leading up to the return to sports.

Lastly, this has been a difficult year for children. Your child's body may have changed or they may not be able to perform at their previous level of activity, which can be frustrating. Encourage and support your child through these changes.



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Los Alamitos-Rossmoor Branch Library

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Cassandra Sargent
Branch Manager

Los Alamitos – Rossmoor Library is offering Curbside Pick-up, limited Grab & Go browsing, computer use, and we're making personalized book bundles upon request! Give us a call or stop by Tuesday - Thursday 11:00am - 7:00pm and Friday – Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm. Don't forget to check out our virtual programming and grab & go crafts!

Virtual Teen Book Group

Join us on the 4th Thursday of every month at 5:00 pm, starting on April 22nd. The book group is open to ages 13-18. April's book is *Lovely War* by Julie Berry. Email savannah.feiner@occr.ocgov.com to register for a zoom link and reserve a copy of the book!

Kindergarten Readiness

Children who enter kindergarten with basic reading, math, and social skills are more likely to achieve success in school, attain higher levels of education and secure employment. OC Public Libraries has compiled resources and designed programs to support our families in getting ready for school. For more information, visit ocpl.org/kindergartenreadiness

Craft of the Month!

April's Grab & Go craft is Cork Boats and May's craft is Cupcake Flowers! These crafts are available while supplies last. Show us your creations with the hashtag #ocplcraft

ZOOM into Storytime!

Join us for a variety of fun family storytimes, live on Zoom! Storytimes take place throughout the week and include Baby Lapsit, Music & Movement and Bilingual programs. If you'd like to see your Librarians from Los Alamitos – Rossmoor Library, you can join them April 14th, April 20th, May 18th, May 19th, May 25th, and May 26th at 10:30am! Space is limited, register today at ocplstorytimes@occr.ocgov.com

OCPL Celebrates 100 Years of Possibilities!

Residents are invited to join the year-long celebration with virtual and safe programs highlighting the library's commitment to the community over the last 100 years. To join, follow @ocpubliclibraries on social media and hashtag #OCPL100. For more information about OC Public Libraries and the centennial, visit ocpl.org/centennial.

Be sure to sign up for the 100 Book Reading Challenge! You'll receive a badge for every 10 books you read. Can you collect all 10 centennial badges?

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Face coverings will be required until further notice. Health screenings and social distancing guidelines will be in place. Camp subject to change based on the safety guidelines in place at the time of the program. For more information please visit cityoflosalamitos.org/recreation.

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Los Alamitos

Recreation & Community Services

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Lost-Pet Tips

By Murlyn E. Burkes, Cat Committee Liaison

Connecting lost animals to their owners is a focus that our shelter works hard to address. We have created a list of recommendations to make sure that you are prepared in the event that your pet is lost:

- Make sure that your pet is wearing an ID and a license tag. Both of these are important in returning your pet to you.
- Be sure to register your pet's microchip with whatever company your microchip is purchased from. If your address changes, be sure to update that information.
- Always keep a current photo of your pet. Pets do change in looks in the course of time, so a photo from five years ago may not look exactly like a pet five years from now.
- If you lost your pet, be sure to file a report with the local shelter. That information can be found on the shelter's website.
- Be sure to file a lost-pet report with the microchip company as well.
- Post information on Craigslist, Nextdoor and Facebook missing-pets pages.
- Create lost-pet signs to post around the community.
- Be sure to search the neighborhood by walking or driving around several times a day at different hours of the day.
- Most importantly, don't give up your search. Animals have been lost for months and later reunited with their owners.

Hopkinson *Elementary*

12582 Kensington Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4500
<https://hopkinson.losal.org>



Evelyn Garcia
Principal

Music Lessons

Hopkinson Huskies have continued to enjoy music lessons from our dedicated music teacher, Mrs. Suzanne McElderry. Mrs. McElderry plans virtual lessons for all Huskies on campus and at home to enjoy. Although Huskies miss their weekly time with Mrs. McElderry, the virtual lessons are engaging and rich, ensuring that our kids have fun while learning music.



We are thrilled to be able to continue to foster the 4 A's (Academics, Athletics, Activities) during these times. In typical years, every grade level puts on a musical performance at a local auditorium, which is a music celebration with singing and dancing. This is a Hopkinson tradition and Mrs. McElderry made a version of this experience possible for our 1st and 2nd grade students this week. She set socially distanced markers outside for students to perform in their cohort of 12. She will create a video to share with families that includes all cohorts. A HUGE shout out and thank you to our phenomenal music teacher!

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Lee Elementary

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Amy Vento
Principal

5th Grade: Next Level

Our 2020-21 classrooms and activities have been transformed to create engaging instructional opportunities while meeting important safety protocols. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many of our traditional events have been drastically altered or canceled altogether. In an effort to create special memories for our 5th grade students before they venture on to middle school, our team coordinated with the Los Alamitos

Community and Recreation Services department to plan an amazing week of events called 5th Grade: Next Level! Our week consisted of daytime team building challenges and obstacle courses. We offered three, night events to include all traditional and LosAl@Home students. Our Leos participated in a Scavenger Hunt night, Park-a-palooza game night, and a drive-in family movie night. The week allowed our students an opportunity to build connections, develop leadership skills and create memories. 5th Grade: Next Level generated magical, shared experiences for our Leos to treasure for years to come!



5th Grade Next level bungee run



5th grade next level team challenge



5th grade next level jousting



5th grade next level rock wall

Los Alamitos *Elementary*

10862 Bloomfield St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4700 • <https://lae.losal.org>



Gary Willems
Principal

Closing the Achievement Gap

LAE has been nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2020-2021 School Year! This is the Federal Government's highest honor for a school. We are nominated in the area of "Closing the Achievement Gap." According to Education Weekly, "The 'achievement gap' in education

refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures." By LAE being nominated for Closing the Achievement Gap, it shows that we give our TIGERS amazing educational opportunities where they excel academically. We were able to Close the Achievement gap

not only because we focused on academics, but because we focused on the social, emotional, and mental needs of our TIGERS. Los Alamitos Superintendent Dr. Andrew Pulver summarized it best, "The Federal Department of Education is recognizing what we have known all along..... LAE is the Place to Be and you are all ROCKSTARS!"



Los Alamitos *High School*

3591 W. Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4780 • <https://lahs.losal.org>



Gregg Stone
Interim Principal

The Griffins are Back!

As the COVID-19 health guidelines became more favorable, our Griffins were able to get back on the fields, in the pool, and on the courts. Boys/Girls Water Polo and Boys/Girls Cross Country just concluded their abbreviated season. Boys/Girls Swim is now in full swing as is Boys/Girls Golf. Cheerleading, Surf, Boys/Girls Tennis, Football, Softball, Baseball, Track/Field, Boys/Girls Soccer, and Boys Volleyball are all back in action.



We are hopeful things continue to improve, allowing our performing arts groups to also perform in front of live audiences. It is great to hear the cheers coming from the softball field and watch our football play on campus under the lights with our cheer squad on the track rooting them on. Even though our athletes are able to compete, the number of observers remains limited at this time. However, that also is moving in the right direction.



McAuliffe *Middle School*

4112 W. Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 714/816-3320 • <https://mcauliffe.losal.org>



Dr. Ryan Weiss-Wright
Principal

Success and Accomplishment

McAuliffe Middle School has been recognized as a 2021 California Distinguished School by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and the California Department of Education.

Recognized as one of only 100 middle schools and high schools to have attained the distinction this year, during these

uncertain times it is a particularly remarkable achievement.

Founded in 1985, the California Distinguished Schools program recognizes elementary and secondary schools every year in one of two categories: Exceptional Student Performance or Closing the Achievement Gap. McAuliffe Middle School has been distinguished for Exceptional Student Performance, earning qualifying marks on the California School Dashboard in the following categories: student achievement in English language arts and mathematics, suspension rate, chronic absenteeism, and a 95 percent participation rate on state testing.



This accomplishment is one of many examples of how the McAuliffe community of staff, students, and parents come together to ensure the success of every student. McAuliffe's recognition as a Distinguished School highlights the commitment of our teachers to excellent teaching as well as efforts in the areas of teacher professional development, student wellness, and data-based decision making.

McGaugh *Elementary*

1698 Bolsa Ave., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/799-4560 • <https://mcgaugh.losal.org>



Dr. Issaic Gates
Principal

McGaugh Innovation Lab

McGaugh is proud to continue to bring the Innovation Lab and STEM lab, to our Sea Lions, for the 2020-2021 school year. Each week, students log into Mrs. Samari's Google Classroom, where she introduces them to different STEM lessons. Mrs. Samari designs lessons that empower students to develop and apply skills to solve

real-world problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate through technology and engineering.

Today we highlight the 5th-grade Lunar Lander project. The students' mission was to research, design, engineer, and build a Lunar Lander that protects their delicate cargo, a hardboiled egg. As engineers, they considered the impact gravity would have on their lander and the effect of air resistance on their parachute. On the day of the drop, students were so excited to see if their "precious cargo" survived the descent and landing. As always, with an engineering design project, students went away reflecting on how they would improve their design.



Oak Middle School

10821 Oak St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4740 • <https://oak.losal.org>



Erin Kominsky
Principal

Black History Month

At Oak we connect students to learn beyond the classroom. Almost 300 students participate in over 20 clubs offered in person and online. Clubs help students to connect with each other, school and community.

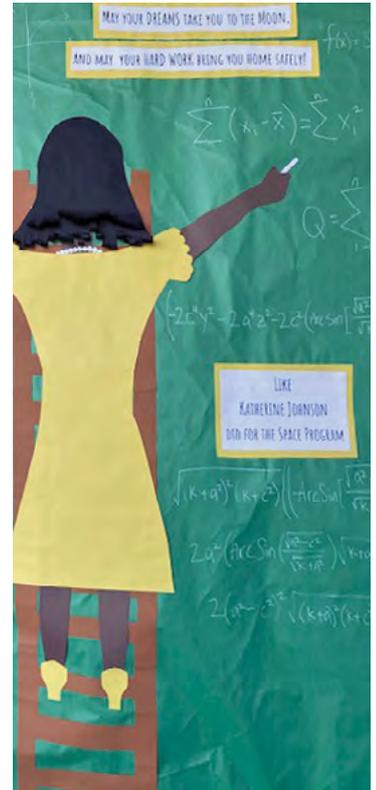
Our MSWB club, took on the task of planning and delivering activities throughout the month to Celebrate

Black History. This club designed and implemented educational resource pages, interactive lessons for students including Jeopardy, the Jelly Bean Challenge, Escape room and a door decorating contest.

Financial literacy is a great skill learned in our "Cash Flow Club". In this club, students learn about investing and managing budgets.

The Engineering Society is a student run club focusing on building and creating while finding solutions to real world problems. This year the club has hosted the Director and a Senior student from the Stanford architectural design program and a mechanical engineer from Boeing.

We are so excited that there are so many clubs to choose from at Oak.



Door decorating contest from our MSWB club



Demi Coolen -
Boeing Engineer
USC Alumni



Nicko Rucker -
Stanford Senior,
Architecture and
Design

Oak Engineering Society Guest Speakers

Director John Barton - Stanford Architecture and Engineering Program



Guest presenters at our Engineering Society Club

Rossmoor *Elementary*

3272 Shakespeare Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4520 • <https://rossmoor.losal.org>



Amy Coltey
Principal

Ready, Set–Pledge!

Our Knights participated in a STEM-A-Thon during the month of March. Our parent group, Friends of Rossmoor (FOR), has an annual live auction and fund-raising night called Knightlife to help raise funds to support our STEM Lab and other incentives on our campus. Because of the pandemic, this was the second year we were not able to host this event. Therefore, we became creative in finding a way to engage our students while still being able to fund-raise to support our STEM Lab. As a result, we had an incredible STEM-A-Thon!

Our Knights were challenged to design and make their own catapults. This was a four-week process during which

students watched videos and took part in lessons provided each week by our STEM Lab teacher, Mrs. Baluyot. She introduced the project, shared information on how catapults are designed, and reminded our Knights of the incentives that FOR was providing for our fund-raiser. We were able to tie in our House System by awarding House Points to the top fund-raising student in the school as well as in each classroom. Free play was also a prize as well as gigantic “squishmallows” and more!

Our students were able to use their STEM knowledge and creativity to engineer and design unique catapults. All the while, our amazing school community not only had a blast but also fund-raised a total of \$35,049! Great job, Knights!



Jeremyah Washington



Liam Semaan

Weaver *Elementary*

11872 Wembley Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4580 • <https://weaver.losal.org>



Dr. Todd Schmidt
Principal

Helping Out in Tough Times

This year, the theme for Weaver Elementary has been Teach-Lead-Love. Although the year has been unlike any other, with many of our students being in either our hybrid or Los Al @ Home programs, our fifth-grade Ambassadors have been able to continue the tradition of participating in their annual CARES projects.

With an emphasis on bettering their community and improving the lives of at least one person, special teams have been created and projects crafted to help make the world a better place. From collecting 102 birthday cards for a Rossmoor resident who was turning

102 this year, to collecting toiletries for the Orangewood Youth Shelter, to collecting snacks for those real-live superheroes -- our front-line medical professionals -- our Weaver fifth-graders went above and beyond in showing the power of empathy, collaboration, dedication, and community-mindedness.

All over social media, our families shared their progress and the results of these projects when the goods and services were delivered. During these challenging times, it was heart-warming to see the many smiles and greetings on people's faces. We could not be more proud of our students for embodying that #WeAreWeaver spirit, and the tenets of Teach-Lead-Love.



Positive Parenting



**Sandy Spurgeon
McDaniel**

What's Next Parents?

After a year of changes in school schedules, the parent may ask, "Now what is my role as their parent?"

(1) See that a child does follow-up work (homework) each day. Most teachers have information as to what is required of each child on the computer. Have the child show you what work is to be done. If help is required, choose a time that's best for you. Otherwise, have the child show you completed work before the media is used again.

(2) Whenever possible, have dinner together. If not possible, have a "just us" ten minutes to talk about (that means the parent contributes to each topic as well,) (A) What was your favorite thing today? Least favorite? OR (2) What happened that was new today? OR (3) What was your high today? What was your low today?"

(3) LISTEN! As a teacher and family consultant, my instinct is to jump to "fix it" when a problem is presented. Allow the child to solve the problem. "Suzie told me I was stupid today." Response: "Wow, that probably didn't feel good. What did you do?" Answer: "I thought of myself as Swiss cheese and watched her mean words shoot through the holes." Response: "High five!"

(4) Plan family gatherings: Have dinner together, play a board game, go for a walk, play croquet, ride bikes, swim, go for a picnic. It is easy for all family members to retreat to individual spaces. Emotional health is often strengthened from a feeling of belonging. Make kindness a non-negotiable rule and glue all your family experiences together with love.

Sandy Spurgeon McDaniel is an author, taught school, raised two children, worked as a consultant to schools and has worked with children and families for 52 years. Sandy now lives in Meridian, Idaho. ParentingSOS.com.

Parent To Parent



Jodie Lynn

No More Excuses

Q. We have three kids ages 7 to 10 that have weekly chores but are either too lazy to do them or have too many excuses or don't care about them. How can we get them to follow through on what they're supposed to be doing around the house?

A. Write chores on "coupons," then fold and place them in a bowl or box. Let them choose a coupon to see who does what. It's a fun way to break the ice and get them started. Coupons can be worth a certain amount of points. Once they reach a total of a specific amount of points, they can choose an activity, treat or whatever.

Make a chore "spin" chart out of construction board or an old box. Write chores on the chart that you know each child can handle. Add a spinner, which would have a pointer that can be made out of various types of materials. Let each child spin to see which chore they will be responsible for.

Your kids probably use WiFi for their digital devices. Change the password until all chores are done which will inspire them to get their chores done pretty quickly.

These ideas will not only teach responsibilities but also math as well as perseverance.

You could even consider asking them for suggestions.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author. www.ParentToParent.com

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



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