

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District



Volume 19, Issue 94

February / March 2022

2022 Classified Employees of the Year



Lisa Burke
*IA Special Ed
McAuliffe*



Regina Brown
*Attendance Clerk
Oak*



Armando Gomez
*Database Specialist
District Office*



Tiffany Penick
*EDCC (Kids Korner) Supervisor
Weaver*

(Please see page 2)

Board of Education



Diana D. Hill
*President
(Trustee Area
Currently at Large)*



Chris Forehan
*Vice President
(Trustee Area 2)*



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(Trustee Area 5)*



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(Trustee Area 4)*



Marlys Davidson
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Honoring the Best of the Best Among Us



Dr. Andrew Pulver
Superintendent

One of my favorite aspects of my job is recognizing the outstanding work of my colleagues in the Los Alamitos Unified School District. The time has come now to honor the best of the best among our classified staff — those employees who work tirelessly to make sure our students have the safest and highest quality learning environment possible. I am proud to name Lisa Burke, Regina Brown, Armando Gomez, and Tiffany Penick as our 2022 Classified Employees of the Year.



Lisa Burke
*IA Special Ed
McAuliffe*

Lisa Burke began her career in the District in 2006 as an Instructional Aide in Special Education. Through her 16-year career, Lisa has worked at multiple school sites including McGaugh, McAuliffe, Los Alamitos High School, and the District Office. Lisa is exceptional and embodies what it means to truly serve students by ensuring opportunities for equity and access for all. Lisa is quick to go the extra mile for our

District, including our students, staff and families, by supporting within the classroom walls, as well as outside the school day at sporting events or school dances. Lisa's positive attitude, enthusiasm for student success, and passion for her work shines through in all of her interactions.



Armando Gomez
*Database Specialist
District Office*

Armando came to the District a little over six years ago as our Database Specialist position in the IT department. Armando is an extraordinary employee who is instrumental toward supporting our District and Board instructional goals and vision using technology. Armando endlessly searches for innovative methods to improve our Student Information System and instructional needs. Armando's excels in customer service working

closely with all our employees, students and families at our technology help desk center. Armando has been instrumental in the planning and implementation of our virtual and hybrid learning models during the pandemic. Armando works tirelessly, ensuring students, faculty, and families are well equipped to achieve excellence in our 4 A's — Academics, Athletics, Activities and the Arts.



Regina Brown
*Attendance Clerk
Oak*

Regina began her career in the District as a playground supervisor at Hopkinson Elementary School in 2013. In that same year, she moved to Weaver to be a part time clerical support. Regina called Weaver home for four years until she moved to Oak Middle School as the Attendance Clerk where she currently works. Regina is known for her "can do

"attitude along with the grace and poise she brings each day. Regina is loved by students, teachers and parents at Oak. Her smile, unwavering positivity and her love for her work is contagious to us all. Regina's efforts come from her heart and her motivation is driven by her genuine work to serve others.



Tiffany Penick
*EDCC (Kids Corner) Supervisor
Weaver*

Tiffany Penick has been with the District and Weaver community for over twenty years, Tiffany has supported and nurtured the thousands of students who have crossed her door as the Weaver EDCC Supervisor. Kind-hearted, energetic, and dedicated, Tiffany sees each of her students as if they were her own children, guiding them when they struggle and taking pride in their accomplishments. From

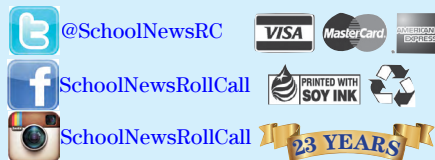
everything including safety protocols to partnering with LAEF, she also works tirelessly behind the scenes in ensuring that the day to day operations go seamlessly. Tiffany is one of the hearts and souls of Weaver, and we are so grateful for everything she does to bring a helping hand and a smile to the faces of so many!

School News

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**Covering the
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Dr. Pulver begins this issue on page 2 recognizing the 2022 Classified Employees of the Year. Congratulations to each of them.

In this issue you will enjoy articles that demonstrate even during challenging times every effort is being made for students to have the school experience they deserve.

This is our 19th year publishing the LAUSD *School News*. Thank you for being loyal readers and including *School News* among your reading choices.

Be sure to enter our Word Search Contest on page 9 (all ages may enter).

Since our next issue isn't until April 6th, I will wish an early Happy Birthday to Dr. Seuss! Enjoy Read Across America March 2nd.



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THC Overdosing from Edibles on the Rise in School-Aged Children



Babak Rahimi, M.D.,
*pediatric cardiologist,
Children's
Heart Institute,
MemorialCare
Miller Children's &
Women's Hospital
Long Beach*

With the legalization of marijuana, it's important for parents to be mindful how accessible marijuana can be for kids. While it's important to watch our teenagers with marijuana use – an alarming new trend is occurring in children much younger.

There has been an uptick in younger children who are suffering from THC overdose, from consuming THC-infused edibles that look like candy. THC edibles such as – gummies, brownies, lollipops, and even lemonade and soda – are growing in popularity. The packaging can appeal to younger kids, who may not even know what THC is.

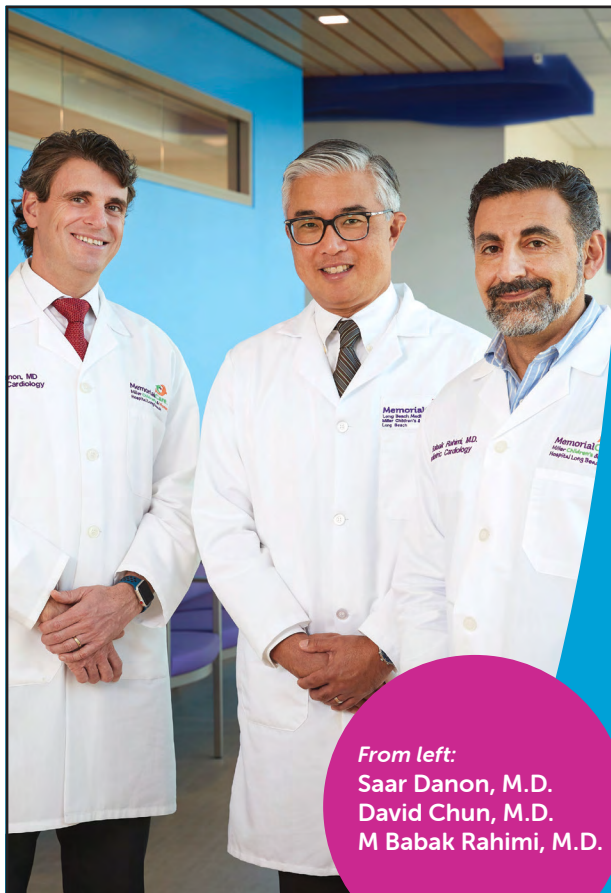
A little over a year ago, THC-infused candy that looked very similar to Nerds Rope® caused several kids to die from a THC overdose. Despite an edible's welcoming appearance, a single THC-infused candy bar can contain several times the recommended adult dose of THC. This creates a significant issue for toddlers and school-aged children. In addition, since THC is digested the "side effects" could take hours to develop, causing kids to eat more since they won't feel any initial reaction.

Anyone can overdose from the effects from edibles – but children especially can experience altered perception, anxiety, paranoia, dizziness, weakness, slurred speech, poor coordination, apnea and heart problems. It's not well known yet what the long-term effects of edibles have on your child's heart, but some children complain of a tightened chest and pain similar to a heart attack.

If you see your child experience any of these signs call 9-1-1 immediately. Learn more about children's heart care at millerchildrens.org/EliteHearts.



2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, CA 90806
800-MEMORIAL (636-6742) • millerchildrens.org/EliteHearts



From left:
Saar Danon, M.D.
David Chun, M.D.
M Babak Rahimi, M.D.

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The Children's Heart Institute includes a team of expert pediatric cardiologists that can diagnose and manage any heart defect or condition in children of all ages – as early as before birth through young adulthood. With various Outpatient Specialty Centers from the South Bay to Orange County, comprehensive pediatric cardiac care is always close to you. When your child's heart needs care, choose a pediatric cardiologist that provides you with access to elite care at the Children's Heart Institute.



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Los Alamitos-Rossmoor Branch Library

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Cassandra Sargent
Branch Manager

Give us a call at 562-430-1048 or stop by Monday - Thursday 10:00am -- 7:00pm and Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm. In-person programming is on pause for February. But we will continue to offer curbside pickup, monthly grab 'n go crafts, virtual book clubs, and zoom storytimes.

Warm Winter Reading Challenge

January 1 - February 28, 2022

Start the year right by reading! Take a moment to cozy up with a good book and set

an intention for the coming year. Read books and complete activities to earn badges during the Warm Winter Reading Challenge. Register at ocpl.beanstack.org

Zoom Storytimes: January 11th – May 28th

Join us for a variety of fun family storytimes, live on Zoom!

Register: ocplstorytimes@occr.ocgov.com

Tuesdays: Bilingual Chinese Storytime (10:30am) / Bilingual Spanish Storytime (6:00pm)

Wednesdays: A Chapter at a Time Storytime (4:00pm)
Beginning readers, grades K – 3rd. A chapter (or two) is read each week, followed by a discussion or activity related to the book.

Saturdays: Music and Movement Storytime (11:00am)
Get up and move with your family!

Teen Book Club (Virtual): Date TBD

Please email ocpl.lar@occr.ocgov.com to receive the Zoom link

Join us virtually for a lively discussion on teen books! Talk about what you're reading or join us in discussing romance novels. Open to ages 13-18. Copies can be found at the Service Desk.

The Craft: Teen Art Studio GRAB-N-GO CRAFT

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Hopkinson *Elementary*

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Evelyn Garcia
Principal

Walk through History

We are so happy to bring back our Walk Through interactive assemblies! Our fourth- and fifth-grade Huskies participated in Walk Through California and Walk Through the American Revolution between Jan. 12 and Jan. 26. Through the use of games, music and storytelling, history comes alive!

The presentations have children actively participating in a lively retelling of United States history. Our Huskies learn through using every modality. It allows for a home-school connection: encouraging students to make costumes with their families, studying the content at home, and inviting one adult per Husky to come watch the presentations.

Walk Through California focuses on major events that shaped our great state of California. Drama, dance, games and music support students' listening skills, vocabulary development, history and geography standards. A large topographical map of California is built for students to experience California's geography hands-on.

Walk Through the American Revolution allows students to explore the famous events, historical figures and relevant vocabulary of this pivotal point in America's history. Through dramatic activities, students "become" famous men and women of the American Revolution. Flags, maps, reenactments, music and games help students explore and understand the importance of American liberty and patriotism.



Lee *Elementary*

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



Amy Vento
Principal

A Day in the Life

Lee Elementary School held its first annual “A Day in the Life” event, sponsored by Project LEAP, in December 2021. On this day, one lucky Leo from every classroom was named the TEACHER for the DAY. This special day

began with breakfast in the media center with their classroom teacher. Students received a unique “staff badge”, photo booth picture, and hot cocoa. Students and staff were served a delicious lunch on our exclusive, staff-only lunch patio. The activities of the day were decided and driven by the new classroom “teacher” for the day. Activities included

games, extra recess, and favorite read-aloud books. This fun-filled day was exciting for students, teachers, parents and especially our exceptional “teachers” for the day! We are grateful to the families who participated in this remarkable fundraising event!



Los Alamitos *Elementary*

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



Gary Willems
Principal

Outdoor Science School

In January, our 5th graders at Los Alamitos Elementary School went to Outdoor Science School. It has been a long time since I have seen students so excited! Since the beginning of the pandemic, our students have

endured unforeseen challenges that have and still do affect their everyday life. Going to Pali Institute in Running Springs, CA was the opportunity for our 5th graders to participate in a traditional right of passage for Los Alamitos students as they head off to middle school. Students learned about science, became forensic scientists in CSI class, dissected squid, learned and touched animals like turtles and snakes, hiked, and learned

about astrology. Of course, all I heard from students when I visited them was how amazing the food was!!! We are truly lucky to be able give them this opportunity this year thanks to the hard work of our district office and staff.



Los Alamitos *High School*

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



Christiana Kraus
Principal

Keeping the Spirit Alive

Prioritizing activities, athletics, and the arts can ignite unlimited possibilities for our Los Alamitos High School students.

Defining the high school experience during a pandemic has required considerable creativity and flexibility. For the past 18 months our Los Alamitos High School students and staff members, alongside their supportive families and community,

have banded together to create the new normal for comprehensive education that features re-imagined traditions and exciting new additions.

Our ASB directors, who typically chaperone multi-school leadership camps, have recently organized outdoor retreats for our school's student leaders complete with team-building talent shows, bonfires, and morning hikes. School dances? No problem! Just transform the school's outdoor courtyard into a pirate-themed wonderland.

Retaining the nation's top-ranked student section was a tall order, but thanks to pre-game celebrations, food giveaways, and themed attire, our Griffin faithful have

retained their #1 ranking! Gone are the days of cramming 3,200 students into two indoor gym Pep Assemblies. Instead, they have now shifted to John Barnes Field, and have since featured a DJ, dance and band performances, and a couple of class competitions.

The school's band and orchestra face obstacles in abiding by local and state mask guidelines. Instrumental bell covers and specially designed masks have thus enabled these talented students to pursue their artistic passions, which culminated in recent holiday concerts. Indoor athletes participate in weekly testing, and our athletic coaches also strategically organize practice sessions to help keep their seasons alive.

Our award-winning drama program has also persevered through masked performances that require understudies for every role should a cast member fall ill. The sensational Show Choir and dance programs have "flipped" their shows outside as well, renting sound and lighting systems to further highlight their students' talents.

While none of this has been easy, it has become the new normal. But this only demonstrates our Griffins' commitment to giving all students the high school experience they deserve.

McAuliffe *Middle School*

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



Dr. Ryan Weiss-Wright
Principal

Love has No Labels

McAuliffe's PEACE Week this year was centered around the theme "love has no labels" and promoted the concepts of compassion, empathy, and inclusion through daily activities and intentional lessons. McAuliffe students studied different cultures and contributed to a PEACE week quilt representing the many diverse backgrounds of our families and community. Students also engaged in

an art competition, a PEACE Week Jeopardy competition, and promoted messages of peace and acceptance on campus. PEACE Week is led by students in our ASB and Leadership program, and we are proud of the work they have done to create a more inclusive learning environment for all students!





Dr. Issaic Gates
Principal

Vitamin C of Instruction!

As a community, McGaugh Elementary School values academics and arts. Dubbed the vitamin C of an instructional diet, art cultivates students' creativity, collaboration, confidence, cultural awareness, critical thinking and courageousness. All of these elements thrive among students at McGaugh Elementary School.

The opportunity we have to provide our Sea Lions with such robust programs is because of Project SEEK. Seeking Excellence in Education for our Kids (Project SEEK) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was formed in 1993. The sole purpose of the program is to raise funds to support enrichment programs at McGaugh Elementary School. For years, the contributions of Project SEEK has allowed every Sea Lion to have an art class. This year, our students are learning drawing and painting

and art history under the teaching of Anya Cappon, our recently appointed art teacher.

McGaugh Idol is another tradition that is a huge hit for our community! Our Sea Lions audition and have the chance to share their talents onstage. This year was indeed another fantastic show! With strict adherence to the CDPH COVID-19 guidance, parents, teachers, students and community members were able to watch the show live and in person in McGaugh's auditorium. Our students are so talented! Singing, dancing, drum playing, ukulele playing, piano playing, Rubik's Cube solving, guitar playing, comedy routines and pogo stick jumping were just a few of the talents on display.

The diversity of talents and the participation of students from every grade and ability level support our inclusive culture and made the evening all the more special. It is always great to take a moment to pause and express appreciation, which we do generously for the events supported by Project SEEK and our Sea Lion community.

Gardening Terms –Word Search Contest

Rules!

One word in the list is NOT in the word search.
When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com Please put LAUSD in the subject line.

Entries must be received by March 15, 2022

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 Barnes & Noble gift card!

SHOVEL	ROW
RAKE	FERTILIZER
HOE	SPADE
TRANSPLANT	SNAIL
POT	FOOD
NEMATODE	STAKE
WORM	HOSE
SOW BUG	SPRINKLER
FENCE	SEEDS
BED	PRUNERS

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

Congratulations to Allison Martin
Winner of our December Word Search Contest!

Oak Middle School

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



Erin Kominsky
Principal

Celebrating Student Success

Recognizing student success is an important part of our Oak School culture. Whether it is a daily verbal acknowledgment, high five or a group cheer, we want our students to know we celebrate their success. Each month, students are recognized with PAW awards given for pursuing academic character excellence, hard work, positive attitudes and academic achievement. These

PAWS are displayed proudly in the main office and pictures of the awards with the students are emailed home to families. Lion Pride Recognition is given only three times a year per grade level and recognize students for a variety of outstanding effort. Our drive by celebration is filled with cheers by peers and faculty. Specially written words of celebration are presented by each teacher and read to the students and their families. These heartfelt words bring happy tears to both the recipients and those around them. Congratulations Oak students.



PAW award recognition



Wall of Fame for PAW awards



Lion Pride Recognition

Rossmoor *Elementary*

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



Amy Coltey
Principal

The House of Code

From coding Ozobots to participating in Computer Science Education Week through the Hour of Code, our Knights have learned the value of programming and coding.

Our first- through fifth-grade students have enjoyed discovering how to be Roboticians by programming Ozobots. This was a great opportunity for them to see how programming and coding have revolutionized

the way robotics technology has improved our way of life, and how robots are being reinvented to become a part of everyday living.

So code away! The Hour of Code was an engaging and hands-on



experience for our Knights to see how algorithms, coding, and a curious mind can open up endless possibilities in the Virtual World. Students had an opportunity to code some of their favorite apps and video games, and they also gained a better understanding of how software engineers can create computer applications and software to help solve real-world problems.

Our Rossmoor STEM Lab provides so many opportunities for our students to explore and learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Go, Knights!

Weaver *Elementary*

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



Dr. Todd Schmidt
Principal

Our Success Passes Forward

One of the core goals for Weaver Elementary is for every student to understand the deep and lasting impression they can have on our community. It is a tenet that we hope lasts with our students long after they leave Weaver.

It is so heartening when you see one of your alumni make an impact that benefitted some of our neediest families and their preschool children during the holidays. Ally Hatakeyama, a Weaver alumna who is now a freshman at Los Alamitos High School, partnered with a business to create an event known as Wishful Wheels. The company specializes in making lightweight bikes specifically for children—they donated several bikes, and through additional fundraising spearheaded by Ally, she was able to present a new bike and helmet as well as a bag of goodies to several families, just in time for the holidays.

To see a short video of the presentation at the district office as well as the smiles from the students and their parents, [access this link](#).





Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

101.ocde.us

Want to better understand how curriculum decisions are made? Need a rundown of the immunizations required to attend school? Or perhaps you'd like to learn more about health education or ethnic studies in California.

These are some of the topics explained in a new website developed specifically by the Orange County Department of Education to help parents unpack complex education issues. It's called The 101, and it can be accessed at 101.ocde.us.

The 101 — the name is a reference to foundational college courses — launched this past fall as a companion site to the OCDE Newsroom, which has provided news and information about OCDE and Orange County schools since 2015.

With a mobile-friendly design and the ability to translate posts to multiple languages, The 101 goes beyond the headlines to break down complicated school-related topics and explain who has oversight in posts that can be read quickly and shared easily.

Current focus areas include school district governance, curriculum and instruction, health education, ethnic studies and COVID-19 protocols. New posts will be added over time, and there's even a form for readers to submit their topic suggestions.

Though the site was created with busy parents in mind, there are also links to primary sources for those who wish to take a deeper dive.

OCDE exists to serve our county's most vulnerable student populations and to support 28 local districts with services necessary for their operations. While much of our work happens behind the scenes, we have strived in recent years to elevate communication by generating and sharing stories and videos that meet the criteria of offering credibility, relevance and utility.

As stewards of this department, we want families and community members to know about the systems that define and shape instruction in California's public schools. We want parents to know how important decisions are made within their local schools and districts — and how they can become more involved. We want all stakeholders to know about the resources that are available to support the academic success and social-emotional wellbeing of students.

In the end, it's about lending our voice, and hopefully adding a little clarity, to the ongoing dialogue over public education, our schools and the students they serve.

We hope you, too, will continue to be a part of the conversation.



Dr. Shari Sweetnam

Lessons of POWERFUL Communication

At no time has the ability to communicate effectively been more important. There is no question that the political atmosphere of recent years has degraded us and demoralized us. "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all" seems to be an archaic ideal as we watch grown adults spew pointless negativity on a regular basis.

If we want to stop the degradation of society, one of the most important changes we can affect, is to upgrade our standards of interaction. Children desperately need models of good behavior, and constructive communication, more than ever.

Following are 5 skills that every child and adult must learn in order to be powerful communicators:

Listen: Even if you do not agree, hear people out, gain an understanding of a person's values as they speak. Never talk over people. Don't interrupt. Affirm that you have heard their thoughts, and then you can share your view with the expectation of the same courtesy. People react more calmly, and are more inclined to listen, when they feel they have been heard.

Ask: Don't claim to have the answers. Get a depth of clarification on their views that contradict your own. Accept that people have different value systems. You will never change a person's mind by imposing your values on them; this only creates defense and negativity. If you want to share an opposing view, do so respectfully, acknowledging that you understand and accept that your partner in the conversation might feel differently.

Avoid Negative Energy: Proper communication is neither negative nor dramatic. A productive conversation stays respectful at all costs. An agreement to proceed productively, is core to powerful communication. Respectfully end a conversation that seems to be turning negative, and agree to reconvene when the atmosphere is calmer.

Maintain Integrity: Don't falsify or exaggerate. If you stray from truth, your communication will be weak, and your informational value will be lost. Even one incident of falsification can destroy a person's credibility.

Develop Mastery: Commit to communicating powerfully until it is habitual. Master communicators listen, ask questions, operate with respect, maintain integrity and avoid negativity and drama. Like the mastery of any important skill, it takes practice.

We can make an enormous difference by committing to these simple standards.

Please share your stories of how you and your children practice to be powerful communicators. ss@doctorshari.com