

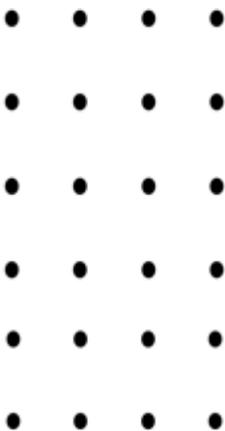
# Peninsula Heritage Connects

Peninsula Heritage School Newsletter



November 2025

Peninsula Heritage School's  
CHARACTER QUALITIES:  
Caring, Attitude, Respect,  
Gratitude, Perseverance, and  
Self-Control. Hint: Remember  
as CAR, GPS!



Take a peek into the **Third Grade** classroom at PHS, and you'll immediately feel the breadth and depth of academic work accomplished by our students under the direction of Ms. Denise Resendez, teacher, and Ms. Hoover, associate teacher!

Whether in mathematics, language arts, social studies, or handwriting, our Third Graders are "scholars, makers, engineers, interpreters, observers, and investigators," as Ms. Resendez writes.

For instance, each morning prior to their math lesson, students build math fact fluency using the program XtraMath, which allows for individualized achievement in the four math operations. Knowing math facts is vital for every student, as it frees the brain for more in-depth mathematical exploration and achievement.

As the British mathematician Marcus de Sautoy of the University of Oxford observes, "Doing mathematics is a bit like playing sport or learning a musical instrument. You can't do it well immediately—it requires practice. Think of having a mathematical muscle in your mind that with practice gradually gets stronger."

Our Third Graders (above) are figuratively flexing their mathematical muscles during a recent activity involving place value concepts with metric measurements. Using multi-colored connecting cubes that each weigh one gram, the students first grouped the cubes into tens, then hundreds, until they had one thousand cubes. These were re-arranged into a large cube weighing one kilogram. Each student had the opportunity (photo, left) to heft the kilogram, so they could see and feel its one kilogram weight.

While this activity may appear quite simple on the surface, it provides multiple long-term benefits. It offers a hands-on experience for understanding the actual mass of a kilogram, beyond an abstract definition, and it gives students an additional opportunity to collaborate and work together to solve a problem. It showcases our Character Quality of perseverance and allows students to achieve completion and experience success.

These types of learning experiences occur continually across the Third Grade curriculum and throughout all the grades at PHS for each child's benefit!



We extend a warm PHS welcome to **Esma Tarakji**, our new Middle School Associate Teacher! Mrs. Tarakji lives locally with her husband, an oral surgeon, but she was born in



Istanbul, Turkiye (Turkey) with ancestors of Antiochian Greek origin. After earning a bachelor's degree in architecture from Middle East Technical University, she moved to the US with her family and obtained an MBA from the University of Baltimore. She then worked for Accenture in New Jersey where her two children were born.

After moving to the South Bay and managing her husband's office, she began to tutor students in mathematics. This sparked her interest in teaching, and she went on to earn her California teaching credential in foundational math at Calif. State University, Dominguez Hills. For three years she has been doing substitute teaching, primarily in mathematics in PVPUSD.

Mrs. Tarakji enjoys playing pickle ball with her husband, watching sci-fi shows with her college-aged children, reading, walking her dog, and traveling abroad.

We are so pleased to have Mrs. "T" at PHS!



Also joining our PHS faculty this year is another very talented young lady, **Brooke Martinez**. As an Associate Teacher, Brooke works primarily with the 6th and 7th Grade classes.

Brooke is a native of San Pedro, graduating from San Pedro High School where she was a member of the School for Advanced Studies—a high-level academic program to meet the needs of gifted learners. Brooke also ran track at San Pedro High, focusing on the 800 m, 400 m, and relay events. She went on to graduate in three years from the University of California, Santa Barbara with a major in linguistics & speech language and a minor in history. Preparing for a master's degree in speech pathology, Brooke recently completed one year of speech classes at California State University, San Marcos.



In her free time, Brooke loves to crochet, sew, cook, draw, paint, and spend time with her Labradoodle, "Sage," and her Cockapoo, "Macky"!

"I love being here at PHS," Brooke shares. "The approach is so personalized, and teachers truly care about each student!"

## What's Happening Next?

Thurs., Nov. 20—Care Families & Thanksgiving Feast at Noon for all grades

Fri., Nov. 21—9:00 AM to Noon, GRANDPARENTS/SPECIAL PERSONS DAY, 9:30—4th Grade's Assembly, Character Quality of Gratitude, Coffee and light refreshments served, Time in classrooms with students

Mon., Nov. 24 through Fri., Nov. 28—NO SCHOOL; Thanksgiving Break!

Thurs., Dec., 4—NOON DISMISSAL, Parent/Teacher Conferences

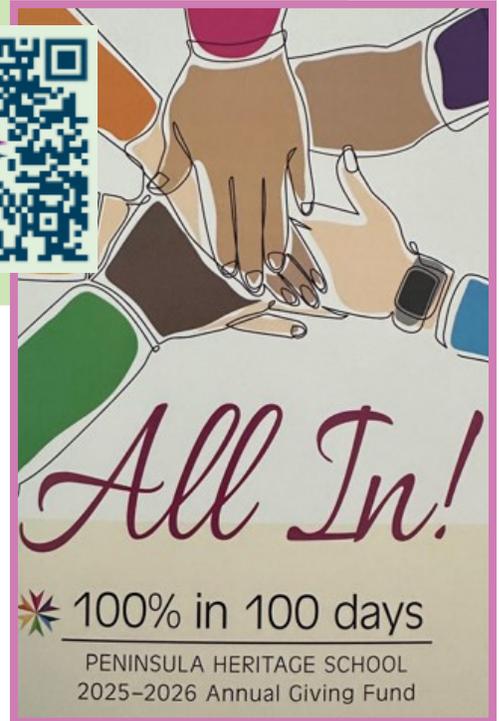
Fri., Dec. 5—NO CLASSES—Parent/Teacher Conferences Continue

Fri., Dec. 12—100 in 100! Days of Giving to PHS Annual Giving Fund Concludes!

Fri., Dec. 19—NOON DISMISSAL—Carol singing by Middle School students

Mon., Dec. 22—Mon., Jan. 5—Winter Break

Tues., Jan. 6—School Resumes at usual time



The 100 days of PHS Annual Giving are speeding along! We thank all those who have already donated and invite all PHS constituencies to help us reach our giving goals. Just go to [peninsulaheritage.org/giving](https://peninsulaheritage.org/giving) or easily access this site by using the QR code shown above!

# Thank You, Harvest Fair Volunteers!



This year's annual PHS **Harvest Fair** was a fun-filled day of friends, food, face-painting, and fanciful goodies from Janice's Country Kitchen! Beginning with the Alumni Breakfast through the delicious Habit lunch, and concluding with the ever-popular Cake Walk, students, parents, siblings, relatives, friends, faculty, staff, and alumni enjoyed all that Harvest Fair offered.

Students were quick to share what they loved about Harvest Fair:

"I like the games, especially the water balloon toss! I lasted a long time, and was one of the top two!"

"For me, it was all about the food—the popcorn and The Habit."

Special thanks go to PHS Parent Association Co-Presidents, Noran Eid and Tisha Agha, to Samra Durvesh and Janice DeMarti, to all those who donated baked goods, and to all the parent volunteers!

## Sixth Grade's Assembly!

The 6th Grade's Assembly on Halloween morning wowed the PHS audience! Mrs. Mahoney's class combined the Character Quality of Self-Control with the 6th Graders' study of Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt—all brought to life with popular songs and dance.

Portraying the Mesopotamians' historic transition from hunter-gatherers to farmers, these young performers utilized the melody of "Sweet Caroline" to sing with gusto, "Sweet Farm of Mine, DA-DA-DA," while simultaneously waving their sheaves of wheat in rhythm. Other key historical facts were emphasized with the "YOU-phrates River" chorus repeated and repeated!

Also, readers from all grades thoughtfully shared their insights about the Character Quality of Self-Control, especially during Halloween time. Congratulations to all these outstanding participants!





Peninsula Heritage School

*Grandparents /  
Special Friends'  
Day*

**Friday, November 21, 2025**  
9:00 a.m. - Noon

**Peninsula Heritage School**  
26944 Rolling Hills Road  
Rolling Hills Estates, CA  
**VALET PARKING**

**Please send an RSVP to**  
[jbehrens@peninsulaheritage.org](mailto:jbehrens@peninsulaheritage.org)

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***November 2025***

**Peninsula Heritage School**  
**Kindergarten—8th Grade**  
**Phone 310.541.4795**  
**26944 Rolling Hills Road**  
**Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274**

