Excelsior Charter Schools
Volume 1, Issue 9: Pg. 1
May 2026

Student Services News for Excelsior Families

EXCELSIOR TALON TIMES Newsletter

EAGLE EYES : SPOTLIGHT

Excelsior Hosts Successful Two-Day Tasting Tour Event for Future Food Services

Last month, Excelsior's Student Services Department hosted an exciting two-day Tasting Tour event, bringing together students and staff from across all campuses to help shape the future of the school's nutrition program.

The event gave participants a unique opportunity to sample a wide variety of menu items, meet potential food service vendors, and provide valuable feedback. With seven vendors participating as potential partners, attendees rotated through tasting stations, engaging directly with representatives and exploring new meal options.

The energy throughout the event was high, as students and staff shared their opinions, discovered new flavors, and contributed ideas. The strong turnout marked the largest participation to date for School Food Solutions (SFS), highlighting the Excelsior community's commitment to improving student meals.

"It was great to see so many people actively involved," said Theresa Reyes from the Student Services Nutrition Department. "The conversations and feedback we received will play a key role in determining our next Nutrition Food Service Partner."

Beyond its purpose, the Tasting Tour was also an enjoyable experience. Participants not only evaluated food options but also connected with peers and vendors in a lively, collaborative environment.

Excelsior's Student Services Nutrition Department expressed gratitude to everyone who attended, emphasizing that the success of the event reflects the community's shared dedication to providing high-quality, nutritious, and enjoyable meals for students.

As the selection process moves forward, the feedback gathered during the event will help guide decisions that impact the future of school meals across all campuses.









Food service vendors, along with Excelsior staff and students, take part in a two-day tasting tour event at the Redlands and Victorville campuses.

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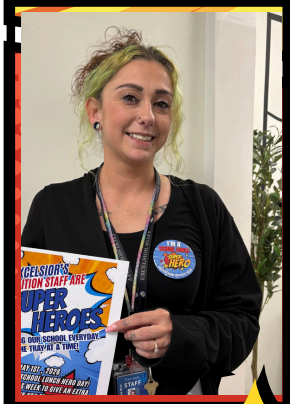
THANK YOU!

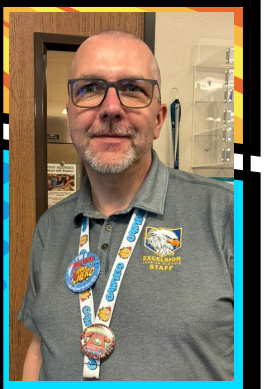
CELEBRATING OUR SCHOOL LUNCH HEROES









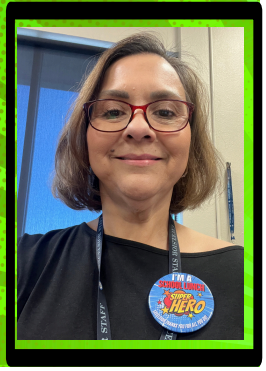


AWESOME!









On May 1st, the Excelsior school community joins schools across the nation in celebrating National School Lunch Hero Day, a special occasion dedicated to recognizing the hardworking individuals who keep our cafeterias running smoothly every day.

Excelsior proudly honors its outstanding nutrition services team for their dedication and commitment to serving students. From arriving early each morning to prepare fresh meals to efficiently serving hundreds of students during busy lunch periods, these staff members play an essential role in supporting student success.

By providing nutritious meals each day, our cafeteria team helps students stay focused, energized, and ready to learn. Their efforts, often carried out behind the scenes, make a lasting impact across campus by creating a positive and welcoming environment for everyone.

The nutrition services staff's hard work, care, and efficiency deserve special recognition. Their contributions are an important part of daily school life, helping ensure students have the nourishment they need to thrive academically and personally.

In honor of National School Lunch Hero Day, students and staff are encouraged to take a moment this week to express their gratitude. A simple "thank you" or small act of appreciation can go a long way in showing recognition for these dedicated team members.

Let's come together as an Excelsior community to celebrate our School Lunch Heroes and thank them for all they do!

Pictured left are just some of Excelsior's amazing Nutrition SUPER HEROES, who help keep our school powered up!

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WELLNESS NEST

Therapy Dogs Bring Comfort and Joy to Excelsior Redlands Campus



Tahoe gives a heartfelt hug to a student.

Students and staff at Excelsior Redlands Campus recently experienced a visit that was anything but ordinary. Instead of the usual rhythm of classes, assignments, and busy hallways, the campus was filled with wagging tails, soft fur, and an atmosphere of calm excitement. A group of certified therapy dogs from the Inland Empire Therapy Dog Association, accompanied by their trained handlers, spent the day connecting with students and offered a *"Brain Break" during* our State Testing — one rooted in companionship, empathy, and stress relief.

The visit was organized by Excelsior's Student Services Department as part of an ongoing effort to support students' well-being and mental health. With academic pressures, extracurricular commitments, and the general challenges of student life, many schools are exploring new ways to help students manage stress. Therapy animals have become an increasingly popular and effective approach, and the results at Excelsior Redlands Campus were clear from the moment the dogs arrived.

Students gathered eagerly in designated areas, some excited and energetic, others quietly curious. As each dog entered, the mood shifted noticeably. Conversations softened, smiles widened, and a sense of ease spread across the campus. For many students, the opportunity to sit with a dog, pet its fur, or simply share a quiet moment provided a welcome break from their daily routines.



Gracie waits patiently for students to arrive.



Aelish enjoys being pet by students

"I didn't realize how much I needed this," one student shared. "Just spending a few minutes with the dogs helped me feel less overwhelmed."

The therapy dogs themselves came in a variety of breeds, sizes, and personalities. Some were playful and energetic, happily greeting students with enthusiastic tail wags. Others were calm and gentle, content to sit quietly beside someone who needed a moment of peace. Each dog was carefully trained to respond to human emotions, making them especially effective in environments like schools.

Handlers played an important role as well, guiding interactions and ensuring both the dogs and students were comfortable. They also shared insights about how therapy animals are trained and the many environments in which they serve, including hospitals, nursing homes, and disaster relief areas. This educational component added another layer of value to the visit, helping students better understand the purpose and impact of therapy animals.

The success of the visit has sparked interest in making therapy dog sessions a more regular occurrence on campus. Administrators are considering future events, recognizing the clear benefits for student wellness and community building.



Tahoe showing love to our students



Gracie's handler speaks with students about therapy dogs and their calming support

In a world where students often face mounting pressures, moments like these serve as a reminder of the importance of balance, compassion, and care. The therapy dogs' visit to Excelsior Redlands Campus was more than just a fun break from the school day—it was a meaningful experience that left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

With such a positive response, it's safe to say that the return of these four-legged visitors would be welcomed with open arms—and plenty of pats.

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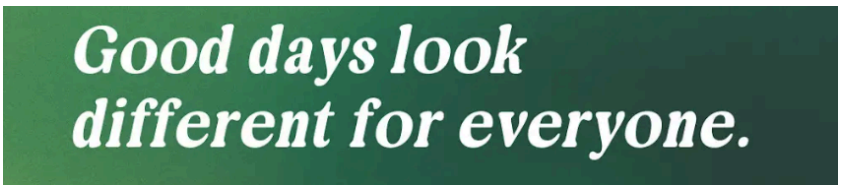
MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness, providing resources, and encouraging conversations about mental well-being. This year's theme, More Good Days, Together, reminds us to think about what makes a "good" day for ourselves and our communities. By understanding these needs, we can help connect people to the right support, strengthen advocacy, and promote education and community involvement so that everyone has the opportunity for more good days.

Throughout May, organizations such as Mental Health America, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and many others host events, webinars, and outreach programs across the country. Their goal is to improve access to mental health resources and ensure that more people receive the help they need. Mental health has become an increasingly important topic, which is a positive step forward. As awareness grows, the stigma surrounding mental health challenges continues to decrease, allowing individuals and healthcare professionals to speak more openly about their experiences. While progress has been made, there is still more work to do.

Mental health can sometimes be difficult to define because it includes many aspects of our overall well-being, including emotional, social, and psychological health. It influences how we think, feel, and act each day. Positive mental health helps people manage stress, stay productive, and reach their full potential. Just as we prioritize physical health through nutrition, exercise, and regular medical check-ups, it is equally important to care for our emotional and mental wellness. Daily pressures and responsibilities can take a toll, making it essential to pause, reflect, and seek support when needed. This month serves as an important reminder that mental health matters every day, and together, we can build stronger, healthier communities. **For more information and helpful resources visit the Mental Health America's Website at https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month/**



Only you can define what a "good day" looks like to you.

Mental Health America's 2026 *#MentalHealthMonth* Action Guide is a great place to start figuring it out. Find free tools and ways to get involved at mhanational.org/may

#MHM2026 *#MoreGoodDaysTogether*

"Right now, a 'good day' looks like having enough energy to show up, feeling a bit more grounded in my body, and having at least one moment of genuine connection."

"A good day includes...being with people I love, or having free time to do what I wish on my own."

"Sometimes, a good day for me is as simple as making it through each moment, good or bad, as they come."

**If you're in crisis or need immediate support, help is available now.
Call or text 988 or chat via 988lifeline.org for free, confidential support 24/7.**

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S.M.A.A.R.T. Stop Bullying Event Comes to Excelsior!

Students at Excelsior in North Victorville are invited to take a stand against bullying during the upcoming S.M.A.A.R.T. Stop Bullying! Event, presented by Young Visionaries.

This important anti-bullying program will be held on Friday, May 8th from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at Excelsior, North Victorville.

The event's message, "We Stand Up Against Bullying," encourages students to promote kindness, respect, and positive change within their school community.

Event Highlights:
Raffles
Games & Prizes

Special Guest Speakers:
Gabriel Cannon
The V.I.P. Team

Students can look forward to an engaging and educational experience designed to raise awareness about bullying prevention while also enjoying fun activities and exciting giveaways.

This event is a great opportunity for the school community to come together, support one another, and build a safer, more inclusive environment for everyone.

Mark your calendars and join the movement to stop bullying!

Farewell and Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2026

As we proudly celebrate the graduating Class of 2026 from Excelsior Charter School, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to each and every student on this remarkable achievement.

Graduation is more than a milestone—it is the culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, growth, and unforgettable memories. The Class of 2026 has demonstrated resilience, determination, and excellence throughout their journey, leaving behind a legacy that will inspire future generations.

While it is bittersweet to say goodbye, we are excited to see where life's next chapter will take you.

Whether you are pursuing higher education, career goals, or new adventures, know that your Excelsior Charter School family is incredibly proud of you.

Though you may be leaving our halls, you will always remain an important part of the Excelsior community. We encourage you to stay connected with us as proud alumni, and we look forward to reaching out, celebrating your future accomplishments, and continuing to support you along the way. Your journey does not end here—it simply becomes part of our growing legacy.

As you step forward into the future, may you continue to dream big, work hard, and embrace every opportunity that comes your way.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!
We wish you success, happiness, and the very best in all your future endeavors. Goodbye and good luck—you will always be a cherished part of the Excelsior family.



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COMMUNITY EVENTS



RIVERSIDE STRIKES BACK

Free family friendly community event. 75+ Vendors, Food, Community Resources, Kids Activities, Character Meet & Greets and much more!

May 3, 2026

4145 La Sierra Ave Riverside CA 92505

2:00-6:00PM

Meet & greets - Epic cosplayers - Raffles - Giveaways

Music + Photo Ops - Delicious Food Vendors

Bring your crew, dress up if you'd like, and come be part of the experience

This is the community event you've been looking for!

Click here for more information: [Riverside Stikes Back: A Star Wars Event]



HOOPS FOR THE KIDS FREE 3V3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT MAY 17, 2026 9: 30 AM

This high-energy, one-day event features 16 high school teams (ages 16–18) competing in fast-paced 3v3 matchups with referees, music, vendors, and community support. Each team must include 3–4 players (including at least one female player).

Prizes: Over $800+ in prize packages

1st Place: $500+ value

2nd Place: $250+ value

3rd Place: $100+ value

Entry: Free (requires a $5 refundable deposit to secure your spot)

Only 16 teams accepted — register early! *Must be registered to participate.*

Location: 4500 Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside, CA 92505

Follow @hoopsforthekidsorg on InstaGram for updates

Contact: hoops4thekids@gmail.com or call 909-341-6642

click here for more information: [HOOPS FOR THE KIDS 3V3 TOURNAMENT]

"MAY THE FAIR BE WITH YOU"

Get ready for the 79th annual San Bernardino County Fair, where the High Desert comes alive with excitement, live entertainment, thrilling carnival rides, delicious food, games, animals, shopping, and fun for the whole family. With the return of the beloved $20 Truckload Special, you can pack your vehicle with family and friends (properly seat belted) and enjoy an unforgettable fair experience together at one affordable price.

Visit [www.sbcfair.com] for more info.

