

EYE ON EDUCATION

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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JANUARY 2009

Sonya Cuellar Elected School Board President



The Board of Education elected new officers for 2009 during their December meeting. Trustee Sonya Cuellar was elected President and Trustee Alicia Anderson will serve as Vice President/Clerk.

Gaines' Headliners

Gaines School is truly proud of Valerie Zarate, Grade 2. Valerie won 1st place in the 2008 Children's Bookmark Contest sponsored by the Los Angeles County Library System. Valerie was honored at the City Council's monthly meeting with a backpack full of "Catching the Reading Bug" prizes and reading incentives. Her award winning bookmark has been shared with all of the students here at Gaines School.

Gaines School has hosted a series of Family Literacy Nights. Parents have learned about many aspects of the Open Court Reading Program that they can reinforce and support at home. Parents can help build reading fluency. They can also prompt reading comprehension questions. Each family participating in the workshop received a one minute timer and a free reading book. Parents also received an incentive sticker to place on their Incentive Card. Parents filling their entire card with eight stickers will receive a prize for their participation.

Linda Stevens,
Principal

Zamboni Students Explore a Career in Law Enforcement

The fourth grade students of Zamboni School started the year off by welcoming Deputy Mike Abbot, of the Paramount Sheriff's Station. Deputy Abbot was invited to speak about the theme, Risks and Consequence as a part of their Unit Opener in Open Court. Deputy Abbot shared the risk and consequences students will face if they become involved with gangs. He also discussed effective strategies they can use to avoid confrontations if pressured by gangs.

Deputy Mike continued by sharing the diverse career opportunities available to students if they choose a career in law. Several students expressed a keen interest in becoming a police officer. Deputy Mike avidly responded to their probing questions and shared the personal



rewards and benefits of being a deputy in our community. The students were thrilled at the conclusion of his visit to receive materials to take home and share with their parents. These materials will as-

sist their parents in being aware of the resources available to them to help their children resist the temptations and dangers of gang involvement. This visit was another example of the ongoing partnership

between our school and the Paramount Sheriff's Department.

Rosemary Mendez
Ruthanne Shearer
Zamboni Fourth
Grade Teachers

Helping Hands for the Holidays

Mokler School's Helping Hands Service Club collected over a hundred bags of canned and dried foods for the Thanksgiving holiday. Students from the club, headed by Mrs. Shelley Monroe, 6/8 math and science teacher, collected the items during the month of November to donate to the Long Beach Food Bank. All students from kindergarten to eighth grade were encouraged to bring in items.

Students who donated items received an angel cut-out that they wrote their names on. The angels were then posted on the windows of the front office for all to see. The teachers and staff of Mokler were impressed at how many students got involved in the service project. "I was so elated to see how many students wanted to be involved in the community," said Mrs. Monroe.

The members of the Helping Hands Service Club, (sixth through eighth grade students) wanted to start a group that would help their local community. Sixth grader Brenda Garcia stated, "It's fun and we like helping others. It made me feel happy because they [the people who received the donations] have food and supplies when they need it."

But, the fun doesn't stop at the holidays! The club already has plans for future projects that include: school and community beautification, environmental clean-up with the Surf-Rider Foundation, and other community projects with the city of Paramount. Mokler School's Helping Hands Service Club is dedicated to the future welfare of our community!

Theresa M. Diaz,
Mokler Math Coach

Outgoing President Vivian Hansen Honored



MAPS President Teresa Kugler, School Board Members, Superintendent David Verdugo, Mayor Gene Daniels, Council Member Tom Hansen and husband of Mrs. Hansen congratulated outgoing President Vivian Hansen on her successful year as President of the Board of Education.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

January 20, 2009

Board of Education meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at the District Office, 15110 California Avenue, Paramount, and are open to the public

Paramount Elk's Honored



Board of Education Members and Superintendent David Verdugo recognized the Paramount Elk's at a recent Board meeting for their continued support with their annual dictionary project that provides every 3rd grade District student with a dictionary.

Paramount Students Acquire Career Skills in High School



The Regional Occupational Program (ROP) provides high school students the opportunity to take classes in which they learn essential job skills and receive high school credit. Students can prepare for various careers by taking classes that range from graphic arts and web design to fashion marketing and office occupations. Classes are offered during the school day as well as evenings and Saturdays. Currently, over 582 students are enrolled in ROP classes at Paramount and Buena Vista High Schools. These students are in the unique position to learn skills they can apply to the workplace while earning elective credit for graduation.

Macaws Show the True Meaning of Christmas



Teamwork makes the dream work...these are the words to describe the Paramount High School Macaws and the magnificent work they did in raising \$22,000 for their 2008 Angel Project.

Through the Angel Project, the Macaws brought more than holiday cheer to 44 households in the Paramount community. They delivered food, toys, clothing, blankets, dishes, and other household items to all the households, and this year they even gave away two computers, two bicycles and a bed. Many of the households the Macaws delivered to were multi-family homes, and 21 were foster-family homes. Student-Services Techs at four Paramount elementary schools referred families to the Macaws, and Foster Youth techs at every school in the District chose one family each.

All the members of the Macaws and their advisor, Language Arts teacher Ms. Nancy Himel, poured their hearts into the Angel Project, spending long weekends and after-school hours working hard to make it possible. They raised money selling gifts, cheesecakes and cookie dough, and snacks and pizza several times throughout the year. They also sponsored a food and toy drive on campus. By the time of deliveries, the "food room" housed 232 boxes of groceries and the "gift room" was piled high with wrapped gifts. The Macaws did most of their shopping at their local Wal-Mart, which gave them a 10% discount on everything they purchased. They also shopped with their favorite vendors at the Paramount Swap Meet, who once again dropped their prices on toys and clothing. Macaws were able to collect food and money by standing in front of Northgate Market and Food 4 Less and each Angel Family received a generous gift card or coupons purchased at one of those stores. The Macaws also received a \$2000 donation from the Paramount Lion's Club who donated the money for two vision-impaired little girls and their families.

Deliveries were made in school buses donated by Durham Buses on the rainy nights of December 15-17. During the three nights of deliveries, Macaws officers dressed as Santa and Mrs. Claus passed out stockings to 185 "Angel Children" while other members delivered the Christmas trees, gifts and food



into the houses. Every family had its picture taken by an elf and printed on the spot while the Macaws sang a carol or two. Outside of each home, Deputy Alphonso Esqueda, who has accompanied the Macaws for the last three years, passed out candy and toys to neighboring children brave enough to come out in the stormy weather. Santa had more candy for them as he left each home. The Macaws ended each night's delivery around 9:00 p.m. On Monday and Tuesday night, they ate dinner at local McDonalds, hosted by General Manager Mike Valenti, and on Tuesday night they ate at Doublz, hosted by manager Alberto and his crew. At Doublz they were honored for their outstanding service to their community with a proclamation from Congresswoman Linda Sanchez's office delivered by her aide, Maritza Romero.

Making these deliveries is Ms. Himel's favorite part of the year. "Whenever I go on an Angel Project delivery, it makes all of the problems and negativity worthwhile; it does something to you," she said.

Nick Frank, Braille Production Unit Manager for the Los Angeles County Office of Education, who joined the Macaws on their Monday night delivery, described the experience best. In an email to Ms. Himel, he said, "Thanks for letting me tag along last night; it was a great experience. Acts of good will become contagious...A little holiday help could be the final push that some families need to head in a positive direction. I think above all it gives one faith that good things can happen. Well done." The Macaws could not agree more

Helping the Community

This is the time of year when struggling, homeless families are doing their best to keep warm, maintain their health, and feed their families. The Student Nutrition Services (SNS) staff is pleased to inform you that on Friday, December 19, 2008, in a combined effort with the Operations/Warehouse employees, collected all leftover perishable food items from twenty school site cafeterias. Any leftover food items that SNS staff cannot freeze and that would not last until students return from the holiday break, were donated

to the Long Beach Rescue Mission and Lydia House, an associated branch of the Long Beach Mission for abused women and children.

SNS staff members, Chris Stamm and Frank Barraza, delivered a truck-load of perishable food items including chocolate, strawberry and white milk, 100% juice, fresh fruits and vegetables, salad dressings and much more to the Mission. They were welcomed by grateful staff from the Mission who receive, store and prepare the donated items to needy men, women and children.

Eye On Education is a monthly Publication of the
Paramount Unified School District

Board of Education

Sonya Cuellar, President
Alicia Linden-Anderson, VP/Clerk
Linda Garcia, Member
Vivian Hansen, Member
Tony Peña, Member

District Superintendent
David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.



Good things are happening in Paramount Schools

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Harvest Festival at Paramount Park



Paramount Park School celebrated their annual Fall Harvest Festival in November to promote a spirit of community and thanksgiving. The festival was initially organized to provide a non-threatening way for parents and staff members to interact together to show support for the students. The school's activity committee worked to ensure that the evening contained something that everyone could enjoy. As a result of meticulous planning, the festival included a variety of games, prizes, music and food. Although the committee organized the event, the sizeable number of parent volunteers helped seal the success of the celebration. Paramount Park parents rallied together to create advertisement posters, set up, run the game booths, and manage the parent volunteers. Without the overwhelming support of the community, this event would have not been possible. This



year the community support extended to The City of Paramount, STAR program, who helped to make the event fun and memorable for the students by providing candy donations; face painting, and a cool interactive Wii station! Once again, the Harvest Festival demonstrated that through teamwork; great things can be accomplished.

Superintendent's Message:

I wanted to share with everyone the tremendous pride and joy that I experienced at a recent Board meeting when our Board of Education honored and recognized first the Ladies Varsity Tennis Team and coach Curtis Mu for their success as the San Gabriel Valley League Tennis Champions. This was very significant since it is the first League Title in thirteen years for the Lady Pirates. Congratulations to each team member and coach Mu.



Second was a very special award presented to Varsity Baseball student athlete Eduardo Magallon. Recently, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) selected Eduardo as the Southern Section Champions of Character recipient. This a major award based on demonstrating the very finest in sportsmanship, character, integrity and athletics. Our Varsity Baseball coach Cameron Chin should also be congratulated for his role in shaping one of our finest student athletes.

These young ladies and our young man are true role models for all Paramount Unified School District students. Their hard work, sacrifice and team effort are outstanding examples of Paramount's best.

Congratulations to the players, coaches and their parents for believing and accomplishing so much.

David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.
Superintendent



PHS Senior Campus Band Director Mr. Angel Carmona is a 2009 Bravo Award Candidate

Paramount High School Senior Campus Band Director, Mr. Angel Carmona, has been recognized as a candidate for the prestigious Music Center Bravo Awards Program.

The Bravo Awards is a program that was established at the Music Center in 1982 in order to recognize teachers and schools for innovation and excellence in arts education. This award specifically honors educators who use the arts to revitalize teaching, enhance student achievement, and foster self-esteem, teamwork and cross-cultural communication and understanding. Through these awards, the main goal of the program is to cultivate a cadre of arts teachers who are dedicated to sharing best practices in the field through their leadership.

Mr. Carmona was nominated in the category of Music Center Arts Specialist Teacher in Music by several district personnel including Superintendent Dr. David Verdugo; Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, which also supports Visual and Performing Arts programs, Ms. Stella Tobin; and Arts for All Specialist Ms. Julianne Kosareff. Each of these individuals believes Mr. Carmona exemplifies excellence in the field of music. According to Dr. Verdugo, "The term 'Renaissance Man' truly applies to Mr. Carmona. He reminds me of a modern-day John Phillip Sousa, engaged in directing, planning, collaborating, and creating standards-based instructional music lessons."

Upon his nomination, Mr. Carmona began the arduous application process, which is a thorough and detailed articulation of the candidates' arts program, teaching style, leadership roles in the community, descriptions of student/school demographics, and sample lesson plans. Completing the nomination packet was no simple feat, for Mr. Carmona's end result was eighteen pages. After the applications are screened by volunteer educators and then screened by Bravo award judges, the select candidates will receive visitations. All nominees, candidates and recipients are publicly honored and recognized at Walt Disney Concert Hall in the spring at the BRAVO Awards Ceremony.

This is Mr. Carmona's fifth year of teaching at Paramount High School Senior Campus. He teaches Marching band (fall), Jazz band (Spring), Advanced Concert band, Wind Ensemble, and Orchestra. He also has the Color Guard/Pageantry class, and the PHS Funk Band. Mr. Carmona is honored by this recognition, he stated, "I am really excited; even the fact that if I don't go past this round, it's still pretty cool."

Latino Club Gives Back

The holidays are a time to be generous, to help those in need by bringing a little joy to their lives. Just like other organizations, the Latino club is doing their fair share of giving.

The Latino club has been extremely generous to a children's orphanage since last year. They have given a child a chance to live their dream of at least having a gift on Christmas day. Since last year Mr. Leon, the advisor of the ELD club came up with the idea of donating clothes and toys to the orphanage, this year Ms. Lopez and the Latino Club are taking charge, they collected toys and clothing from

students at PHS. (Something new they did was sell holiday grams for 75 cents and with the money they bought food for the orphans). Last year was their first year and they did well, they are hopeful for a great success this year. Officers spent many hours after school in preparation for this donation; they went shopping and packed everything for delivery. The donations were delivered before Christmas by some Latino club members.

Daisy Cornejo
Student
PHS

Students Off to a “Strong Start” at the West Campus

The Counseling Department at PHS West Campus works in a collaborative spirit with teachers, classified personnel, and administration to provide the most supportive environment for all students. The Counseling Department is comprised of four full-time counselors, each of whom is responsible for a caseload of students. It is the goal of our Counseling Department to see all students strive to achieve their full potential.

Because the transition from a K-8 site to a high school site can be especially challenging for some students, K-8 teachers and counselors in Paramount Unified School District share concerns regarding “under supported” students based on behavior, emotional, academic, and/or attendance issues with the West Campus counselors. These collaborative meetings take place in the spring semester prior to the students enrolling at West Campus. This academic year marks the second successful implementation of the “Strong Start” program.

Identified students are assigned a mentor teacher even before the first day of school. These mentor teachers and/or staff members have volunteered to be a part of this program, and 45 teachers volunteered for the program in the current 2008-09 school year! Because this is an anonymous program, the identified students do not know that they are part of this program and do not feel as though they are being singled out.

Teachers were eager to sign up because of the simplicity of the program and the sheer fact that most, if not all, teachers are already making these connections and this allows them to be a bit more deliberate with their words and actions. Strong Start teachers were given very simple suggestions on how they can make a connection with these students so that they will have a successful 9th grade year. Some even got really creative by adding their own ideas to the mix. Some of these examples include basic yet intentional ways of connecting such as: giving these students extra responsibilities in class; calling home with praise reports; collaborating with counselors or other teachers early on with concerns or observations; invitations to Pirate Praise Breakfasts; or even recommendations to be part of the ASB leadership team.

The Counseling Department is thrilled to see how many of the “Strong Start” students are thriving here at the West Campus. We believe that by working as a team and not in isolation, we are not only able to be more efficient at our jobs and meet the needs of more students, but we are able to provide that vital connection to students that could make all the difference in the world.

Kelly Gray, Counselor

Election Day at Los Cerritos



Mrs. Hasty's 8th grade Social Science Classes cast their vote for President of the United States in Los Cerritos' Mock Election last month. Marianne Appel and Janeice McConnell from the Long Beach Chapter of the League of Women Voters presented information on voting procedures and the importance of voting. They brought in a real voting booth and sample ballots. Students were engaged and highly interested. Kimberly, an 8th grade student, commented that this was a great experience and really gave us a better understanding of the electoral process. Students cast their votes for president on a sample ballot. With 97% of the votes, an overwhelming majority voted for our new president-elect, Barack Obama. The student's voices were heard loud and clear in the election process.

Mercedes Gomez, Assistant Principal

Safety Fair at Howard Tanner School



The kindergarten students and their parents at Howard Tanner School had the wonderful opportunity to participate in a special safety fair on November 19, 2008 hosted by Infinity Insurance called The Infinity Cares Back Pack Program. The Back Pack Program encompasses the idea of preparing kindergarten children for school by handing out backpacks that contain school supplies as well as safety brochures. Infinity Cares also partners with the National Center for Missing and Exploited children to provide each child with an Infinity Cares Identification Kit. These kits have a place for a picture of each child as well a place for information such as height, weight and identifying marks. On the day

of the event, a Polaroid picture and fingerprints were taken of each child to send home in their kits. Along with Infinity Insurance, representatives from Blue Shield of California, GRIP, and the Paramount Police Station gave presentations on Healthy Families, health care, nutrition, gang prevention, and community safety and were available to answer questions from students and parents. The students were also allowed to tour a police car and run the siren. It was a successful event that provided much needed information to parents as well as a teachable moment for the students.

**Avon Torres, Counselor
Tanner School**

Armstrong and Elliott Sign Letters of Intent

The opening of the 2008-2009 Winter season at PHS got off to a great start as two standout Varsity basketball players, Lady Pirate Ebony Armstrong and Pirate boys' senior center Devonte Elliott signed national letters of intent to play Division I college basketball following graduation in June. Ebony will attend Big West conference power UC-Riverside while Devonte signed with the University of Nevada, a program that has qualified for the NCAA “March Madness” tournament the last several years. Paramount High School is proud of these two student-athletes, wishes them the best of success with their teammates during their senior seasons, and looks forward to following their exploits at the next level.

Winter sports programs at Paramount are also hoping for success during tournament time in December and in approaching league play in January '09. In addition to Armstrong and Elliott, the Pirate hoops programs return other veteran players that hope to make a run to the playoffs in February. The Pirate

boys opened the season with a second place finish in the tough La Quinta tournament while the Lady Pirates took individual wins over Lawndale and Norwalk. Paramount's soccer teams also have high expectations this season; the boys, league champs three of the last four years, are fielding a young squad but have seen some early success in the prestigious Paso Robles tournament while the Lady Pirates have enjoyed wins over Bellflower and Artesia while placing in the Artesia tournament. The ladies believe they are in great position to challenge for a league title this season. Pirate wrestling's early schedule is full of tournaments, and the program has fielded a large squad to provide the depth to compete in league matches in January. Finally, the fledgling Lady Pirate water polo program is working to improve each day in the pool and pulled off a couple of victories over Rancho Alamitos to reinforce their efforts as they learn the game.

Mark Kemp, Athletic Director