

Outlook



Issue 54 **SPRING 2023**

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley Educational Community,

Spring is in the air! Spring Break in Walnut Valley signals a time for reflection, celebration, and the beginning of the end to another wonderful school year ... as well as an increased emphasis on upcoming local, state, and national assessments. As

much as ever, at this time of year, I believe it is important that we work together to support our students as we practice this year's theme of:

Take care of ... Yourself ♦ Each Other ♦ The Team!

Thanks to a very supportive community, a visionary Board of Trustees, and a dedicated staff, our District continues to innovate and excel. Teachers continue to collaborate and employ instructional methodologies and practices that best prepare our students for a bright future; our technology program expands both operationally and instructionally in areas such as increased wireless access points and improved bandwidth on all campuses, a redesign and update of our District Website, and the implementation of researched-based software, which addresses areas such as STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Mathematics); and our facilities continue to grow into world-class caliber learning environments, highlighted by recent Ribbon-Cutting and Ground-Breaking events across the District for buildings in the areas of Performing Arts, Science, Multi-Purpose Rooms, libraries, and gymnasiums ... in fact, as we enter into our final phase and issuance of Measure WV funding (thanks again to our community), I am extremely proud of the fact that we are on schedule to complete all of the school-based facility projects that we planned for upon originally passing the bond.

As always, I am continually in awe of the tremendous support and care that our students are afforded by the community, our parents, and our staff.

Thank you for all you do!

Robert P. Taylor, Ed.D.
Superintendent



2023 California Distinguished Schools Five WVUSD Elementary Schools Spotlighted as State's Best

After a hiatus due to the global pandemic, the California Department of Education is shining light on five Walnut Valley USD schools.

The prestigious 2023 California Distinguished Schools Award is saluting Collegewood Elementary, Westhoff Elementary, Evergreen Elementary, Walnut Elementary, and Maple Hill Elementary for the on-going delivery of education excellence through quality dedication and continuous improvement toward student advancement.

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond announced the roster of 355 exceptional elementary schools for providing outstanding public education and opportunities to students.

"We're so glad to continue to celebrate the power of education and what it means for all of our students and families," he said on stage at the California School Recognition Program held February 16 at the Disneyland Hotel.

Mickey Mouse even skipped over from Disneyland to take celebration photos with the honorees.

"California Distinguished Schools represent examples of not just excellent teaching, learning, collaboration, but also highly successful data-driven school efforts ranging from professional development for educators to mental health and social-emotional wellness strategies to address the needs of students and families," Thurmond said.

The California Distinguished Schools program focuses on one of two categories: closing the achievement gap or achieving exceptional student performance. Schools were assessed based on indicators included on the California School Dashboard. Schools that ranked on the list demonstrated "excellent work" in one of two categories – "closing the achievement gap" and "achieving exceptional student performance."

All five Walnut Valley schools have received the state's highest honor in previous years.



Collegewood teacher Christopher Ko celebrates 2023 California Distinguished Schools Award with Mickey Mouse at the Disneyland Hotel.

"What an exceptional achievement it is for Westhoff to be named a California Distinguished School for the fourth time!" shared Principal Rosa Northcott.

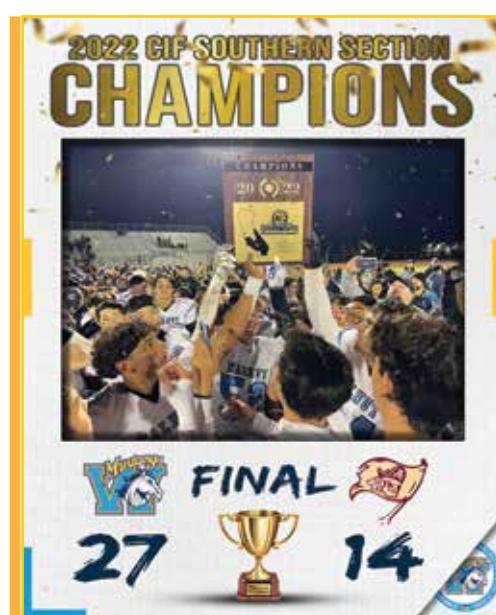
"This is a testament to the work of our dedicated teachers and staff who make the magic happen each day with their caring and capable hands. We are also incredibly grateful for the continued support from our parents, Board, and District. We are truly an example of how 'it takes a village' to achieve great things."

Collegewood Elementary is a three-time winner of the state's top award.

"I am so proud of my teachers, support staff and of course, our students," shared Principal Rochelle Wolf.

"This recognition coming out of the pandemic is even more meaningful, as it demonstrates the resiliency of our Collegewood family."

Elementary schools and middle and high schools are recognized in alternate years



50 years in the making! Mustang Football Takes CIF Title

Emotion poured out on the sidelines as Walnut High scored the school's first-ever football CIF championship this season. The mighty Mustang team outlasted Bellflower 27-14 during the CIF Southern Section Division 11 championship game held on November 25.

"We just wanted to make sure we honored those guys (former coaches and players)," coach Eric Peralta told the San Gabriel Valley Tribune.

"We're making them proud and I'm just ecstatic, it's a proud moment for me, for the kids and Walnut Mustangs football. We built this program and we're going to keep building it."

"This was everything we could ask for," added quarterback/punter Sal Quintanilla who finished with 135 yards passing.

"It's literally a dream come true. Coach called the plays and I trusted they would be there and they were. It's a testament to good coaching."

"It was a ride, I loved it," said middle linebacker and receiver Phil Cotton of their playoff run that ended with the title.

"It's emotional. It hasn't been done in Walnut history and we're the first group of guys. Words can't describe it."

Cotton finished with three receptions for 101 yards and two touchdowns, including a 39-yard touchdown catch with 2:34 on the clock.

The Mustang journey concluded December 3 when, for the first time in school history, Walnut hosted the CIF Division 5A Regional Championship against Shafter High School at Ken Gunn Stadium with the final score 16-20.

"This historical CIF championship run not only brought pride to the players but also to the entire school, community, and alumni. We are so proud of these student-athletes and coaching staff!" said Principal Dr. Ryan Maine.



Steps to Success

It's Time to Enroll for the 2023-2024 School Year!

Students explore, imagine, and discover unlimited possibilities for their future. Please share the following information with any families who have a child who is Preschool, Pre-K or Kindergarten age.



Walnut Valley USD early education programs:

- **Preschool** (Children 2 years old to kindergarten) www.wvusd.org/Preschool/
- **Transitional Kindergarten** (Children Age 5 between 9/2/23 to 4/2/24) www.wvusd.org/TK/
- **Kindergarten** (Children Age 5 on or before 9/1/23) www.wvusd.org/Enroll/

Ena Mendez named Classified Employee of the Year



“Being named the 2022 Classified Employee of the Year has come with much surprise and honor,” said veteran bus driver Ena Mendez after being crowned with the top award at the culmination of the “A Class Act” Cornerstone Awards.

“It is my pleasure to serve our Walnut Valley students and families!”

For the past 32 years, Ena has been a dedicated, reliable, positive, and passionate member of the Transportation team. She takes the time to get to know her students and makes long-lasting connections with families.

“Ena is the first to arrive each

day, always ready to go, and always available in a pinch!” said Transportation Coordinator Samantha Horton.

“She is someone I would clone 50 times!”

A Class Act! 2022 Cornerstone Awards

Walnut Valley USD continued the longstanding tradition of celebrating excellence during the 24th Annual “A Class Act” Cornerstone Awards. The ceremony recognizing a dozen outstanding classified (non-teaching) employees was held February 9 at the Holiday Inn in Diamond Bar. The Personnel Commission’s monthly Cornerstone Award, established in 1999, recognizes classified staff members for the pivotal role they play in the District.

“Tonight, we get to honor a select few who represent the best of the best of our nearly 700 classified employees,” said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor. “We have high student achievement and so many great things happening for our kids throughout the District – and it wouldn’t be possible without them!”

Congratulations to the following 2022 Cornerstone Award winners:

Charlene Tsao,

Instructional Aide II Bilingual/Bicultural - Walnut Elementary

Dodjie De Luna,

Nutrition Services Driver - Diamond Bar High

Suzanne Ly,

Instructional Aide II Special Education - Suzanne Middle School

Helen Chung,

Morning Supervisor - CJ Morris Elementary

Ena Mendez,

Bus Driver - Transportation

Pam Huang,

Budget Analyst - Fiscal Services

Leticia Acuna,

Preschool Clerk Typist II/Receptionist- Child Care

Gloria Diaz,

Secretary II- Educational Services

Carrie Yee,

School Administrative Assistant - Diamond Bar High

Tiffany Brawley,

Instructional Aide II - Special Education - South Pointe Middle School

John Bowles,

Electrician - Maintenance & Operations

Nina Arita,

Instructional Aide II - Special Education - Maple Hill Elementary



Get a Little Colorful! Students Join Global School Play Day

Children had the chance to connect with their school community with unstructured play during Global School Play Day celebrated on February 2 at Collegewood Elementary.

“We’re going all in on this exciting day!” announced Principal Rochelle Wolf.

The event launched in 2015 with 75 nations and nearly 2 million children participating around the world. Collegewood students eagerly joined giant 4-in-a-row, wooden toppling tower, cornhole, ladder toss, bowling, and ping pong games in the school amphitheater.

“It’s a perfect day!” exclaimed fifth grade teacher Brandon Kamana while overseeing the action.

“I think it’s awesome to get this opportunity to come out and have unstructured play with different grade levels sharing time together.”

Some students brought in games and athletic equipment (no electronics) from their homes, including fourth grader Amy Ni who dazzled schoolmates with her Chinese yo-yo skills.

“These lawn games are my favorite!” she said.

“This is so much fun!” said fifth grader Catherine Lin with a group carefully pulling wooden blocks out

of the four-foot-tall tower.

It took skill, strategy, and a little luck stacking the pieces back on top to prevent the game from crashing down.

Out on the upper playground grass, students competed in rousing Dodgeball and Capture the Flag games led by teachers Lori Huckler and Joey Navarro.

In classrooms, students played board games like Battleship, Chess, Kerplunk, painted watercolor pictures, and weaved friendship bracelets.

“Playing with my friends is the best part of the day!” commented fifth grader Arlene Chen.

On the other side of campus, students were doused with colored powder as they ran through a Color Run organized by the Community Club.

The morning of fun and play kicked off with Principal Wolf getting “slimed” by ten students who raised the most money during the school fundraiser.

“Getting slimed by my hard-working students was so much fun!” she said dripping with green goop.

“It really got the kids excited about the rest of the day and I was so happy to do it.”

Several Walnut Valley USD elementary schools including Quail Summit, Vejar, and Westhoff also hosted the Global School Play Day.



Walnut Elementary Colt Championship Games Return

Hundreds of assembled students cheered and chanted as their Walnut Elementary teachers, staff, and Principal Robert Chang competed in the annual Colt Championship Games on February 3.

During the camping-themed competitions, rival teams raced to pitch tents, find gummy worms in bowls of spaghetti, build s’mores carrying graham crackers, marshmallows, chocolate with tongs and spatulas, and eat tiny powdered donuts dangling from strings.

In the final Hungry, Hungry Human game, teams raced on rolling carts while scooping plastic balls into their baskets.

The event topped off with staff turning their principal into a human sundae, dowsing him with whipped cream and chocolate syrup.

Teacher Dan Park finished up the dessert by dumping a jar of candied cherries on the school leader’s head.

Students roared as Principal Chang popped one in his mouth and sampled the toppings off his shirt!

“This was the first time in three years our Community Club presented this rally for the entire school,” according to President Natalie Liu.

The assembly was the prize for reaching the \$30,000 fundraising goal during the Colt Campaign.

Turning the principal into an ice cream sundae was another reward for reaching the \$15,000 Fun Run goal that helped fund a new digital marquee.

“Today was so much fun for the kids!” she said.



Special Delivery!

South Pointe Teacher Gifts Valentine’s Day Flowers to Every Girl on Campus



Before the first bell on February 14, about a dozen South Pointe Middle School boys were proudly passing out pink and white flowers at the front gate.

Education Specialist Kevin Troudy wanted to show appreciation for every girl at the school and decided purchasing 550 carnations for Valentine’s Day was the perfect way to make the grand gesture.

Special messages of affirmation including “You are Special”, “You are Valued”, “You are

Beautiful”, and “You Make a Difference” were tied to each bloom.

For about 45 minutes, the gift-giver boys eagerly greeted the surprised girls entering campus.

“Happy Valentine’s Day – we have a flower for you!” one proudly said.

Some middle school girls timidly skirted by the arms outstretched with long stems, while others accepted the kindness gesture. ASB members supported the effort by tying messages and distributing flowers for the give-a-way.

“It was pretty fun!” commented eighth grade member Isaiah Ortiz.

“A lot of girls took the flowers, but some ran by.”

“They were speeding!” added eighth grader Joseph Nemeth.

“I think it was a success!” said Troudy who was fittingly clad in a pink and red Valentine’s Day shirt for the occasion.

“The girls were really happy and the boys were happy handing out the flowers!”

“I hope it brought them some joy today!”

Troudy also hoped the event would serve as a model for boys to respect and value the girls on campus.

“I have a daughter who means the world to me - and I want guys to treat her like I treat her!”



Walnut High Senior Named U.S. Presidential Scholar Candidate

Walnut High School senior Margaret Lee was “delighted” to receive news of her selection as a 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program candidate on January 18. The prestigious program is only offered to the nation’s most distinguished graduating seniors for accomplishments in many areas: academic success,

leadership, and service to school and community.

“I am proud to represent Walnut Valley USD as its sole candidate,” the 18-year-old shared.

Approximately 5,000 candidates from around the country were chosen from nearly 3.6 million students this year.

Lee is a stellar student who maintains a 4.0 unweighted GPA, serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Hoofprint newspaper, Key Club President, Speech and Debate Captain, and Mock Trial Captain. She also has big dreams of pursuing a career as an attorney.

“Growing up, I always wanted to do something related to law especially since so few minorities are seen in the field. I think that greater representation is something our world really needs to see – especially in this day and age,” she shared.

Lee will now complete an extensive application package that takes approximately 16 hours to continue in the competition.

“It’s a little daunting, but you’re being recognized by the President – so it makes sense! Regardless, I would like to take my shot!”

Presidential Scholar Semifinalists will be announced in mid-April and Scholars in May.

Construction Update



Building projects made possible through the support of Measure WV. Thank You, Community!

Tax Dollars at Work Groundbreaking Commemorates New Walnut High Gymnasium

Walnut Valley USD marked construction onset of the new 15,700 square-foot Walnut High School gymnasium on January 18. Parents, staff, students, community members, and local officials attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the \$7.7 million project.



"I want to thank our community for your ongoing support of Measure WV," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"Not only for this amazing facility that's about to be built, but for so many across our District."



The new gymnasium will feature full-size basketball, badminton, and volleyball practice courts, a scoreboard, bleachers, and weight room.

"We cannot express our appreciation enough to our community, our school district, and all those behind the scenes making this project a reality," said Principal Dr. Ryan Maine.

"This multi-use facility will accommodate not only athletics, but activities, performing arts, showcase nights, community events, and much more," he said.

"It will be a great opportunity for our kids!"

"This is going to be the best addition for our student athletes!" said Athletic Director Jerry Person.

"This new gym will provide all of us more time to practice

and become the best athletes we can be," said sophomore volleyball player Caylin Caballero.

"We can't wait to finally walk through the doors and do what we do best!"

The Board of Trustees awarded the contract to Robert Clapper Construction Services, Inc. at the September 7, 2022 meeting.

Construction of the building designed by HMC Architects began on October 10, 2022 and is slated for completion in January 2024.

Walnut High School Blue Thunder Band and Pep Squad led the "Mustang Fight Song" at the conclusion of the program.

"A year from now at the ribbon cutting ceremony, Dr. Taylor has said he'll do a slam dunk to inaugurate the new gym!" Principal Maine announced to the crowd.

Video at: https://youtu.be/3u_h2_3xcjU.

Strike Up the Band! Diamond Bar High Instrumental Music Building Opens

It was a day overflowing with high notes as Walnut Valley USD celebrated the new Diamond Bar High School Instrumental Music Building on Saturday, February 4. The Thundering Herd Band kicked off the ribbon-cutting ceremony as hundreds gathered to commemorate the towering three-story structure. Student musicians, proudly led by Directors Steve Acciani and Marie Santos, marched out from the magnificent building to perform center stage.

The official unveiling marked the completion of the nearly \$9.8 million construction on the 15,700 square-foot building funded by voter support of Bond Measure WV passed in 2016.

"What a beautiful day on this momentous occasion!" announced Principal Dr. Reuben Jones.

"Our theme this year is Raising the Bar and this building is definitely an example of that!"

Parents, teachers, staff, students, alumni, community members, and local officials attended the opening day event.

"I want to thank our community for passing Measure WV that made this all possible," shared Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor to the audience teeming with friends and families.

"It's such a significant mark for our community."

"And, I want to congratulate our kids – this is all for you!"

After the ceremony, visitors toured the sprawling building with three strategically designed levels to see students rehearsing, performing, and working in the recording studio.

"Enjoy what we think is a world class facility for a world class



Diamond Bar High Instrumental Music Building ribbon cutters; Principal Dr. Reuben Jones, Directors Marie Santos and Steve Acciani, and Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

community for world class students!" Acciani said.

The school's nationally recognized Instrumental Music program boasts over 600 students with three bands, three orchestras, three color guards, the Performing Arts Academy, marching bands, and drumline.

"Thank you to our community for your years of support, both financially and emotionally," gushed Santos.

"We couldn't have done this without you!"

The beautiful new building features instrument lockers for individual students, matching professional black chairs, indoor Color Guard facility, three percussion rehearsal rooms, individual practice studios, and a rehearsal room that can convert into a recital hall. In addition, there are two recording studios, one where students can record for All-Southern, All-State, and college auditions, and a second one patterned after the Columbia Records Studio Immersive Audio Listening Room where students will get hands-on experience in high end recording engineering.

"I've never heard of anything like this in other high schools in the nation!" Santos said.

The opening celebration was a longtime dream come true for Acciani, a veteran 30-year music educator.

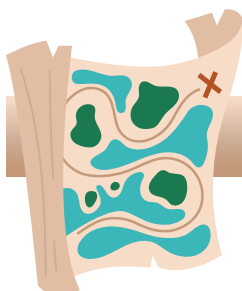
"Thank you for being here today, but more importantly, thank you for the decades of support you've given to these students," he shared.

"The building you see before you is so much more than just an edifice. It is a true reflection of the value placed on these kids."

"We are so excited to be a part of the first class to use these new facilities and celebrate the arrival of a new age for the program," said drum major Joseph Wangsa.

"And, we can finally fit our largest ensembles without having to breathe down each other's necks or hitting each other with bows!" added band president Rachel Yang.

Video at: <https://youtu.be/Si5VSqK-kxs>.



Explorers Through the Ages

Castle Rock Fifth Graders Present Living Museum

The Castle Rock Elementary fifth grade Living Museum has returned after a three-year pandemic pause. About 120 cleverly costumed

IB-PYP students presented research projects on famous explorers through the ages.

"Just press their button and they'll come alive and tell you their life story!" shared teacher Lori Stokes.

The Living Museum is the culmination of research, practice, and



creativity. After a unit of study on exploration, students depicted pioneers from ancient through modern times including 12th century voyager Marco Polo and astronaut



she said.

Families, teachers, staff, and schoolmates rotated through the exhibit held in the multi-purpose room.

"I think the fact that parents were allowed to come and see us made me happy," shared Amin Shah who portrayed Norse explorer Leif Erikson.

Buzz Aldrin. Wearing a pipe cleaner curly mustache, Tianni Gong depicted Sir Frances Drake who sailed around the world in the late 1500s.

"I love that we presented in front of so many people and they got to see our hard work!"

"And we got to do it in person this year!"

Morgan Nguyen selected Sacagawea who was made famous for

helping the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804.

"I loved dressing up, saying my speech, and creating my timeline," she said.

"It was fun!"

Teacher Julie Urbaniec echoed the exhilaration of students who frequently shared interesting facts they discovered during the research.

"They got so excited learning about their personal explorers!"

View VIDEO at: <https://youtu.be/fkEbU7q8u4I>



C.J. Morris Elementary Presents...



Cozy Family Literacy Night

Cyrus J. Morris Elementary Principal Kelly Morris and staff members brought the adorable “Gingerbread Girl” book to life as Family Literacy Night kicked off on December 1.

Morris shined as the perky pastry who bolts from the oven during the reader’s theater performance.

“You can’t catch me, I’m the cutest Gingerbread Girl” Morris animatedly lip-synced dashing off stage while being chased by the farm family.

The children, many wearing pajamas, squealed in delight at the site of their sweet school leader and storied characters racing through the audience. Then the clever cookie met her match after jumping on the Fox’s back (portrayed by teacher Laurie Eyestone) while trying to cross a river.

“Climb on my head and you won’t get wet,” the sly Fox mouthed rubbing his tummy and licking his lips.

And with a quick flick, the Fox threw the Gingerbread Girl into the air and “snick snack” gobbled her up.

After the opening performance, families joined classroom activities hosted by teachers spreading a love of literacy.

For the next hour, students rotated through 15-minute sessions including Make and Take Sight Word Practice where primary grade families learned how to make a fun memory game with note cards or any paper at home. Children and parents cut out cards, flipped them upside down, and quickly began playing. They even recorded their matches to get in a little extra writing practice.

In the Padlet book club session, teacher Megan Wammack shared how older students could make community digital bulletin boards so they could share ideas about books.

A total of 14 classes were offered during the event aimed to inspire cozying up with a good book.

“Literacy Night was a great success with over 500 in attendance,” shared Title I Specialist Lisa Esse.

“Tonight, our school was filled with excitement and joy for reading and learning!”

Westhoff Elementary Presents...

Season of Love

Students delivered plenty of holiday cheer during the winter spectacular at Westhoff Elementary on December 9.

“We are grateful to be able to hold this event after a three-year pandemic hiatus,” shared Principal Dr. Rosa Northcott.



“Our students are ready to dazzle you today!”

Transitional kindergarten through fifth grade students took the stage to perform special holiday songs complete with costumes and choreography. Adorable transitional kindergartners opened the show with “I

Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas.”

Kindergartners wearing leis and sunglasses sang “Merry Hula” followed by the first graders’ rendition of “Run, Run Rudolph.”

Second graders performed the delightful “Frosty the Snowman” and third graders rocked out to “Reindeer Jive.”

Talented fourth and fifth graders performed “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” and “Snow Snow Snow” featuring dance, gymnastic, scooters, and skateboard solos.

At the conclusion, student council members presented a \$3,000 check from proceeds of holiday gram sales and donations to Bithiah’s Family Services.

Walnut High School teacher and coach Keith Thompson and wife Michelle founded the non-profit organization that provides resources and support for foster and adoptive families and those working with vulnerable children.

“You have no idea how special this is!” Thompson said of the Westhoff gift that will provide diapers, toys, clothes, and school supplies.

Learn more at www.bithiahsfamilyservices.org.

Outlook WALNUT VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Spring Break April 3-10
 Last Day of School May 25
 First Day of 2023-24 School Year August 14

Let’s Talk! – We want to be responsive to your needs and invite you to send questions, comments, and suggestions to www.wvusd.org.

WVUSD Middle Schools Re-designated as 2023 ‘Schools to Watch’

All three Walnut Valley USD middle schools have been re-designated by the state as California Schools to Watch. Chaparral, South Pointe, and Suzanne had their titles renewed after reapplying for the distinction – and demonstrating sustained progress.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond announced on February 10 that 77 high-performing middle schools have been recognized for 2023 by the California Schools to Watch program. All together, there are now 186 California Schools to Watch.

“Congratulations to these schools for building systems that support all students from all backgrounds and who bring a wealth of individual and family assets,” Thurmond said.

“These middle grades students attend programs that help them believe in themselves, discover their interests, and work toward their academic, life and career goals. These middle schools are exceptional role models of how educational innovation and an enthusiastic school community can keep students engaged and learning through a critical stage in their K-12 journey.”

Winning schools can be redesignated every three years. This year’s honorees will be recognized at the California Schools to Watch Celebration in Monterey on March 9.



Happy 100th Day of School!

Vejar Elementary Students Celebrate with Day of Counting Activities



Vejar Elementary students and staff marked the 100th day of instruction with fun counting activities and costumes on January 23. Irene Carter’s transitional kindergarten (TK) class created neat rows of 100 tiny jelly beans, cereal rounds, fish crackers, marshmallows, and chocolate chips to practice their counting skills. And of course, there was happy munching on the sweet treats after the lesson!

At another learning table, students crafted and decorated golden paper crowns in honor of the milestone day.

Lisa Gomez’s first graders applied their counting knowledge while stringing necklaces with colorful macaroni, paper shapes, and beads. Second graders in Susie Winter’s classroom made counting collections using M&Ms and Skittles grouping by 5s, 10s, colors, and then creating math problems.

Several youngsters and staff around campus transformed into 100-year-olds with gray spray-painted hair, wigs, glasses, bushy eyebrows, mustaches, and hand-drawn wrinkles. Many youngsters donned sweater vests, caps, pearls, and cardigans to complete their looks. Carter played up the part of a centenarian for her giggling TK students wearing a shawl while wobbling with a cane.

“One hundred is a big number to digest when you’re four and five years old!” she said of the activities that helped the young children gain perspective on what 100 or a century means.

“The best part of the day is seeing the joy they find in each activity.”



A SNOW DAY!



Best Buddies, Special Needs Students Take to the Slopes

Suzanne Middle School Best Buddies Club members recently partnered with 15 students with special needs for a wonderful day of snow activities, skiing, social emotional learning, and fun at Bear Mountain.

Technology teacher Vicky Silcock organized and led the February 8 excursion with the help of Diamond Bar High School psychologist Inger Turner, parent volunteers, ASDI teacher Monica Balmelli, and SELPA aides.

“This opportunity brought general population and students with disabilities together to bond in a unique way - they had great social interactions on the bus, during lunch, and throughout the day!” Silcock said.

Despite physical and developmental differences, all participating students learned a new skill and loved it.

“There was nothing but smiles!” she added.

One student with diverse learning and behavioral needs found success and discovered a natural talent for skiing.

“He was a natural!”