



Partners



The Santa Monica-Malibu USD Special Education Parent Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2009

Greetings from the Special Education Department!

We hope you enjoy our first monthly newsletter for Staff and Families. This newsletter is designed to highlight some of the amazing happenings in our schools as well as provide other information from within the District.

Meet the New Staff in Special Education

Francis Costanzo – Elementary Coordinator
Bekah Dannelley – Preschool Coordinator
Darci Keleher – Secondary Coordinator
Brian Murray – Non-Public School Coordinator
Tina Bulchand – District Office Staff
Kathy Staib – District Office Staff (Temporary)
Jorge Quinones – Samohi Psychologist
Tammy Okada – SDC Teacher, Franklin
Anne Schmid – SDC Teacher, Grant
Anne Murphy – SDC Teacher, McKinley
Jaclyn Wiseman – SDC Teacher, McKinley
Wynn Sherman – RSP Teacher, Lincoln
Tammy Okada – SDC Teacher, Franklin
Christina Greathouse, SDC Teacher, Rogers

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UPCOMING EVENTS

TOWN HALL MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH 6:15 – 8:00 PM

Santa Monica Main Library,
601 Santa Monica Blvd. in the Multi-Purpose Room

Sponsored by the Special Education Collaborative. Please come to hear the recommendations that the Working Group has drafted for Superintendent Cuneo. Your feedback is welcome.

PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH 5- 8:30 PM

Culver City High School – Multipurpose Room
4601 Elenda St., Culver City 90230

For parents and for students who are clients of the Westside Regional Center.

From the School Sites...

Good things are happening!

Muir Elementary School

Mr. Davies, SDC Teacher

To meet the inquiring minds of the science students in Mr. Davies' class, they are currently developing projects that are three dimensional and easy to build. This engages all students in a different form of learning. Whether they are building cells, solar systems or atoms, the students are beginning to approach the world of science with a new perspective. Their Science Club has focused on flying radio controlled helicopters this year. The students' have been demonstrating their knowledge for the other classes.

John Adams Middle School

Ms. Schopflin, SDC Teacher

Ms. Schopflin has started a lunch program called, "Hang Time." This is a friendship group for both students in special and general education. The group meets every other Thursday where they work on team building activities, as well as social skills development. On the Thursdays the group is not meeting, the students find a buddy to eat lunch with on their own. This friendship group has proven to be successful and fun.

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Partners is a monthly newsletter for the Special Education Community of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Comments or questions may be addressed to:

Tim Cuneo, Superintendent
Sally Chou, Chief Academic Officer
Ruth Valadez, Director of Special Education
(310) 450-8338

New Staff, Continued:

Heather Mayer – SDC Teacher, Lincoln
Cathy Tangum – SDC Teacher, OCLC
Pam Sever – SDC Teacher, Samohi
Beth Bitner – SDC Teacher, Samohi
Chris Borkgren – RSP Teacher, Samohi
Jo Dee Moen – RSP Teacher, Samohi
Tina Ustation – RSP Teacher, Samohi
Carolyn Collins – Speech, Grant
Robert Turner – Speech, Edison
Michael DeNoya – Speech, Various Sites
Danielle Walker – Speech, Preschool
Pamela Pietrafesa – Speech, Preschool
Rachel Birdsall – Speech, Lincoln
Susan Morrison – Speech, John Adams
Miriam Brock – Speech, Samohi
Liana Kogan – Speech, Roosevelt
Tejal Chokshi – Physical Therapist, Various Sites

Welcome, Everyone!

Young students can have fun, independent reading experiences at home. Log on to starfall.com for engaging interactive activities to bolster the reading instruction your child receives at school.

Highlight on Staff

A staff member will be showcased in each edition of *Partners*

Please meet: Luz-Stella Smith

Luz is the translator for the Special Education Department. Although most people have not met Luz, she is an integral part of the Special Education team. She is employed 4 days a week to provide Spanish written translation for IEPs and other related documents. Luz has also served as a translator at IEP meetings. She has been with the District for 8 years, is originally from Colombia and is a mother of two sons. She enjoys reading, dancing and traveling. Please say hello to Luz when visiting the Special Education Department.

From the School Sites...

Continued:

Preschool

Lisa Cogan, Lisa Berezowsky, Laura Collin and Susan Marshall

Hollywood has come to Preschool! A drama and theatre program is being provided for the special day classes at Pine Street Preschool and Lincoln Child Development Center. Olivia Karaolis, UCPlay Project Coordinator for United Cerebral Palsy, will be working with students ages three to five in dance, movement, and puppetry. The eight week project will provide new strategies and opportunities for the students in expression, socialization, and other pre-academic goals. Ms. Karaolis has had many years of experience in working with young students with disabilities in the United States and in Australia.

Look for updates in each edition of Partners on the great things that are happening in our classrooms.

An Update from our Audiologist...

Mr. Louie Interiano reports that our students who are deaf or hard of hearing continue to receive state-of-the art technology to access the core curriculum. The District has invested in amplification technology that can be recycled, as needed. Because the District Office support staff has become familiar with the products and vendors used, the turn-around time for ordering and receiving repaired equipment has been minimal.

Thank you Parent Network Volunteers!

The following are the dedicated volunteers who will be available to provide support and information on resources at five pilot school sites. Please drop by and say hello!

Linda Ellrod, Cabrillo Elementary
Kim Moran, Grant Elementary School
Wen Chen, John Adams Middle School
Paula Reynold, John Adams Middle School

Mindy Sterling, Lincoln Middle School
Amy Brunell, Lincoln Middle School
Hilda Urena, Santa Monica High School