



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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### Franklin Elementary School Hosts Annual Multicultural Fair



Franklin Elementary School students and parents were invited to travel the world at Franklin's fourth annual multicultural fair. Attendees smiled from ear to ear as they visited different countries trying unique foods, learning interesting facts and even getting their event passports stamped.

"At the fair, children can learn about different types of food, music, dancing, costume or geography from each country, as well as something about cultural traditions," said Franklin parent and multicultural fair coordinator Rosa Davalos. "This year we had a trivia quiz from Australia, face painting from India, coffee tasting from Colombia, sushi from Japan and much more. Each 'country' works really hard to showcase an important aspect of who they are."

Davalos along with Franklin Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, Melissa Steelman and Lauren Sullivan, serve as co-chairs of the multicultural fair. They coordinate logistics with the school and the PTA. Additionally, Davalos, Steelman and Sullivan work diligently to reach out to parents, encouraging them to participate and represent a country relevant to their family heritage and culture. They help participants plan what aspects to highlight, coordinate the food, costumes or activities they will present.



"The multicultural fair is a really good way to understand the diverse cultural makeup of the school and for families to share more about themselves and their ancestors and backgrounds," said Sullivan. "The children always come so interested and ready to learn about the cultures and they end up leaving the fair prouder and more open and interested in the world around them."

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When the pandemic hit in 2020, the multicultural fair had to be canceled. In 2021, Davalos, Steelman and Sullivan had to get creative and find a way to safely host the fair. Therefore, it was reimaged as a scavenger hunt around the neighborhood.

“Last year, the fair was the first in-person schoolwide event to take place and I have to admit, we thought of canceling several times since we were not able to hold it on campus,” said Steelman. “Rosa came up with the great idea of having a scavenger hunt. We

were able to set up a few countries on the front lawn at Franklin and the other countries set up at volunteers’ homes. All participants were given a map of the neighborhood, clues that related to the country and a passport to have stamped when they reached the home or country.” Franklin families enjoyed seeing each other at the outdoor event.

The multicultural fair is a long-standing tradition at Franklin Elementary. It was started in 2006 by the PTA, as a fun and educational event for the Franklin community. It resulted in such a success that the PTA decided to host it again the following year. The multicultural fair was again successful and became one of the school's most loved traditions. It allows for students, parents and community members to bond with and learn about each other.

“We see our multicultural fair as more than another school event,” said Franklin Elementary School Principal, Cynthia McGregory. “We all get together to celebrate each other, our cultures and our school community as a whole. As we take trips around the world together, it becomes a learning opportunity for all.”



*Written by Diana Bouchaaya, Communications Specialist*

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