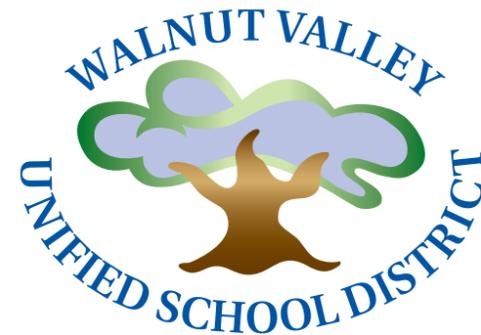


Outlook



Issue 36 SPRING 2017

Mark of Excellence

Chaparral, Suzanne Honored as Schools to Watch



The California Department of Education has named Chaparral and Suzanne Middle Schools “model schools” in the 2017 Schools to Watch – Taking Center Stage (STW-TCS) program. Only 11 high-performing middle schools in California, out of nearly 1,300, received the award this year.

Schools to Watch are recognized for demonstrating academic excellence, responsiveness to the needs of young adolescents, and social equity. Chaparral and Suzanne are now among an elite group of 90 schools in the state and more than 450 around the nation selected as Schools to Watch.

Additionally, every WVUSD middle school is now a School to Watch, with only six in the state earning the distinction.

Students, parents, community members, and education leaders came together during award presentations on February 15 where Chaparral was recognized for its 21st century classroom movement.

“We feel that this designation is a testament to the

work of our learning community and our commitment to developing the whole child in a complex learning environment,” said Principal Ron Thibodeaux.

Suzanne received the Schools to Watch award for its whole child focus through academics and social emotional programs.

“It illustrates that we want every child that goes through our school to achieve academic success and to have high morals, good character, and resiliency to overcome life’s challenges,” said Principal Les Ojeda.

Chaparral and Suzanne will be recognized at both the state and national level, and become examples for middle schools across the country.

The STW-TCS program is sponsored by the California League of Middle Schools and California Department of Education, in partnership with the California Middle Grades Alliance.

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley family,

Let me open by saying “Thank you!” I am so appreciative of the people that are within and surrounding our nationally recognized school district.

As I read through this publication and review story after story about the accomplishments

of our students, staff, and schools, I cannot help but to reflect on the wonderful people that make this all possible. Congratulations to our three middle schools...we are now one of only 22 school districts across the country who has all of their middle schools recognized as National Schools to Watch. Additionally, our high schools, once again, rank in the top 3% of more than 19,000 high schools in America. While our academic program and accountability results are some of the best in California, our teachers and staff continue to focus on developing the whole child. Teachers working to assist cancer patients, elementary school students developing and demonstrating skills relative to kindness and empathy, parents volunteering at all of our schools, athletic teams exuding sportsmanship while winning titles, programs in the arts conducting spring musicals and also doing charitable work throughout the community...it’s truly a culture of developing well-rounded young people.

I also want to thank the community for your overwhelming support of our recent successful “Measure WV” bond initiative. Your generosity will positively impact our schools for decades forward. Architects are in place for multiple projects and you’ll begin observing significant construction projects getting underway on several of our campuses.

Finally, as we move into spring and start rapidly approaching the end to another fabulous school year, I want to congratulate the students and their families who will be moving on to the next chapter of their lives whether it be school promotions, graduations, etc. Enjoy the well-deserved festivities and celebrations!

Sincerely,
Dr. Robert P. Taylor

Presenting our...

Presidential Scholar Candidates



Five WVUSD seniors are among 497 students in California chosen as 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholar Program candidates. The honor, established in 1964, recognizes the country’s most distinguished seniors for superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character, and involvement in community and school activities.

A total of 4,000 candidates in the country were selected from nearly 3.5 million students set to graduate this spring.

Semifinalists will be announced in April; winners will be chosen in May and recognized with medals in Washington D.C.

Congratulations to Ameer Alameddin, Benjamin Y. Chen, and Sabrina Tseng – Diamond Bar High; Cynthia Lu and Inez Zung – Walnut High.

Culture of Kindness

Every elementary and middle school joined the national Great Kindness Challenge held the week of January 23-27.

Students received a checklist with 25 acts of kindness they could accomplish during the course of the week. The challenges were as simple as helping a younger student, recycling trash, or giving a friend a high-five.

Many schools also hosted kindness-themed events. South Pointe offered a Nothing Beats Kindness Day with a fast-paced marshmallow relay race at lunchtime. Vejar promoted kindness during its Peace and Kindness Week, Westhoff students saluted soldiers with heart-shaped kindness grams, and Evergreen kindergartners donated food and toys to children at City of Hope.

Suzanne held its annual 6th grade Friendship Summit and Walnut Elementary hosted a Mix It Up Lunch to encourage students step out of their social bubbles and learn about other classmates.

WW What are the next steps for Measure WV?
Details on page 3!

Best Public High Schools in California

Diamond Bar, Walnut Rank Top 100

Diamond Bar and Walnut High are once again among the highest achieving schools in California. The latest “Top 100 Public Schools” report card compiled by Niche is based on a rigorous analysis of academic and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education along with test scores, college readiness, and reviews from students and parents. Additionally, all nine elementary schools made the Top 100 listing for public elementary schools in the state!

Giving from the heart BFF Teachers help cancer patients



Castle Rock Elementary teachers are making a difference for women undergoing chemotherapy.

Beanies, Food & Friends (BFF) is an initiative started by 2nd grade teachers Jill Wilson-Fairbanks and Rosemarie Alvarez, who thought it would be nice to make beanies for women battling cancer.

Since January, the new group has been gathering each Monday afternoon to laugh, loom, share techniques, and enjoy snacks.

Wilson-Fairbanks has happily taught each volunteer to make the colorful knit hats.

"I have always wanted to find a way to give back and I feel like I was called to do this!"

The compassionate and crafty girls have completed over 35 beanies for the University of California Irvine infusion center.

Teacher Feature



Never Fear 'Indiana Algebra' is Here!

Math teacher Dena Lordi knows what it takes to help students succeed in a 21st-century classroom. The 29-year veteran educator brings a keen expertise of her subject and an approachable teaching-style to her Diamond Bar High algebra students. She also helps guide her Algebra II-Trigonometry Honors classes through uncharted math territories using an alter-ego she created from the Harrison Ford action series, Indiana Jones.

"Never fear, Indiana Algebra is here!" she says to students who might be having trouble understanding an exponential or logarithm function concept.

Lordi uses the character to help the students get over their fear of trying and to help them see mathematics as a problem-solving adventure.

"Classroom references to Indiana Jones reflect the character's perseverance as well as his reliance on what he has learned in the past to help him move forward," she explains.

"He is a good, and surprising, role model for students!" Last month, the creative educator was awarded 2nd place and \$10,000 in the 2016 Rosenthal Prize for Innovation in Math Teaching competition. The National Museum of Mathematics recognizes innovative, hands-on math lessons geared toward elementary and middle school students.

Lordi collaborated with Chaparral Middle School 7th grade math teacher Denise Loera and students to implement and videotape the "Where Can I Find a Weightless Stick?" lesson for the contest.

Top Classified Employees Honored

Walnut Valley paid tribute to 12 outstanding employees during the 18th annual "A Class Act" Cornerstone Awards on February 2. Classified (non-teaching) employees work with dedication and commitment to help students succeed every step of the way. The Cornerstone Award recognizes exemplary classified employees who have gone "above and beyond the call of duty" in providing outstanding customer service to the District and community. Congratulations to the 2016 honorees!

Juan Cruz, Custodian I - Castle Rock Elementary

Robert Alvarado, Custodian I - Quail Summit Elementary

Gabriela Aguilar, Instructional Aide II Special Education- Suzanne Middle School

Steve Ruvalcaba, Custodian II - Castle Rock Elementary

Luz Chavez, Instructional Aide II Special Education - Suzanne Middle School

Jennifer Hsu-Chen, Instructional Aide II Bilingual/Bicultural - Suzanne Middle School

Robin Carmon, Program Evaluation Assistant - Educational Services

Mike Bromberg, Carpenter - Maintenance & Operations

Debbie Manjarrez, Instructional Aide II Physical Education -Vejar Elementary

Wayne DiMascio, Custodian I - Walnut High

Angel Morgan, Instructional Aide III Special Education - Evergreen Elementary

Debbie Sinopoli, Attendance Clerk - Walnut High

2016 Classified Employee of the Year

Mike Bromberg

Three years ago, Mike Bromberg joined the Maintenance and Operations team as a carpenter and electrician. Prior to that, he taught ROP woodshop classes at Diamond Bar High School, his alma mater, for a decade. In January, he was named the school's new operations manager.

Mike shared his talents while helping Vejar Elementary prepare for its 50th anniversary celebration last year. He spent several weeks preparing the campus for the milestone event - going above and beyond to make sure everything was perfect. The talented artist also designed and created a four-foot-tall anniversary boot logo from wood. He worked on the project for months before presenting the gift to the school.

"I feel honored to represent Walnut Valley!" he said. "We all work hard every day because we have a passion for the District and want to do our best for kids."



Fundraiser Fun!

Principal gets duct-taped to library



Principal Robert Chang and parent volunteers Jennifer Mendoza (with daughter Penny), Nancy Hwang, April Alvarado, Molly Mendoza, Angie Yung, and Lily Eibert at Colt Campaign celebration.

Walnut Valley principals have been known to participate in fun incentives during school-wide fundraisers, like kissing a pig, sitting on a rooftop, or even becoming a human hotdog. Walnut Elementary's leader, Robert Chang, has been putting it out there for the kids for the past decade.

During his tenure at Collegewood Elementary, he wore a dress and high heels for an entire school day, was taped to a playground ball wall, and even bravely allowed a student to buzz his hair into a Mohawk.

He recently continued his "sticky" tradition at Walnut Elementary by volunteering to get duct-taped to the school library as a reward for the fall fundraising campaign. All 675 students got a chance to join the shenanigans by placing strips of tape to help attach the school leader to the door. The parent volunteers even made Mr. Chang a duct-tape tie for the special occasion.

"We expect a lot from our students each and every day at school. Once in a while we need to change things up and have them experience something outrageously fun!" Chang said.

Next Steps

Measure WV Master Plan

Now that the results of the Measure WV have been certified, activity has begun to kick off the \$152,880 million bond program.

“The passage of Measure WV will impact our schools, students, and community for generations to come,” said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

“We are very excited to begin this process and see WV projects launch.”

The District has contracted with architects to begin preliminary designs on several projects. Additionally, pre-planning meetings are held to determine the design and layout needs of each campus. The master facilities plan will include work at all 15 of our schools.

Valuable input from Walnut Valley parents, teachers, staff, administrators, students, and community helped shape the approved project list which is available on the

District website at www.wvUSD.k12.ca.us.

In February, WVUSD received applications from interested community members for consideration to appointment on a Citizens Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC). An active oversight committee is part of the accountability and auditing process to ensure that a check and balance system is effective. The committee consists of a minimum of seven members appointed by the Board of Trustees based on criteria established by Prop 39.

In addition to the Board action, the Business Division is preparing budgets and working with other state agencies to ensure the District can obtain matching funds for eligible projects.

We will continue to update the community of Measure WV progress in upcoming editions of this newsletter!

Volunteer Transforms the Hallways of Chaparral



An 84-year-old grandfather is transforming the hallways of Chaparral Middle School by painting elaborate murals on campus. Cornelis Greive has logged more than 1,000 volunteer hours with sable brushes and acrylic paint in hand.

“Cor has added a lot of color and really brightened up our campus. He’s a gem,” said Principal Ron Thibodeaux.

His works include portraits of Leonardo da Vinci, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Jane Austen, Albert Einstein and Amelia Earhart. Greive has also painted national and state award logos as well as a majestic mural of a cougar, the school’s mascot.

His artwork typically graces indoor hallway walls, but his handiwork can also be seen on school signage and outdoor walls. He usually finishes a piece in just one session, which lasts about two hours and says it excites him to see his work “come to life.” The resident artist recently completed the portrait of Anne Frank inside the classroom of humanities teacher Sherry Robertson.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for my students to witness a stunning piece of artwork blossom from a blank canvas,” she said.

Greive said the goal of his artwork is to help make students, staff and parents proud of the campus.

To date, his favorite paintings at Chaparral are of Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman.

“They have a lot in common. Both were denied higher education, but they stayed grounded. They never had any money but were always giving to others,” he said.

During the previous two years, Greive painted several murals at Maple Hill Elementary when his grandchildren, Grace and Louis Ramirez, attended the school. Grace now attends Chaparral. Greive has pledged to continue painting at Chaparral for two more years. He then plans to “graduate” to Diamond Bar High School.

“I enjoy it here at school - I’m painting the walls and they let me get away with it!”

Imagination & Innovation

STEAM Focus Expands in WVUSD Schools

Walnut Valley is laying the foundation for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) success across the District with the expansion of the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) in four additional elementary schools this year. The transformative learning is now taking place at Quail Summit, Vejar, Walnut, and Westhoff, in addition to Evergreen and Maple Hill.

PLTW is helping students develop 21st century skills by providing hands-on learning opportunities to think critically while solving real-life problems.

Westhoff 2nd graders in Suzana Tran’s class begin each PLTW lesson with a chant she created. The children leap out of their seats eager to join their teacher using clever hand motions.

“This is the engineering process,” they chime in pointing to their brain. “First, ask what, then explore, model, evaluate and explain,” they recite in unison.

The class is completing its first four-week module - Properties of Matter. During the “Save the Ice Pop” activity, students are challenged to build a cooler to insulate a frozen ice pop for an hour. They would later measure how much had melted. Selecting just three items, the seven and eight-year-olds work in small groups to sketch, brainstorm, and finally construct the insulated containers.

Principal Denise Rendon has already observed a change around the Westhoff campus. With PLTW, the children are using iPads, measuring, recording, communicating, problem solving, and are fully engaged in the process of learning.

“There’s less teaching and more doing,” she says. “The STEAM focus is shifting from having a product to learning and experiencing a process and a deeper understanding. Projects are relevant and cross-curricular.”

The program is also meant to encourage students to pursue STEM careers. “I want to be a mathematician,” Audry Khuu said, jotting down results in her notebook. “We’re going to be engineers!” said tablemates June, Regina, Oliver, Andrew, and Kristie. PLTW is bringing collaboration and deeper connections in the classroom.

“Students take turns, encourage, and persevere toward a common goal,” Rendon said.



Commercial Music Program Rocks!

Diamond Bar High ROP teacher Daryl Hernandez is dedicated to helping guide his students toward careers in the professional music industry. The Commercial Music Program, now in its 4th year, serves students who are singer/songwriters, instrumentalists, producers, recording engineers, disc jockeys, and electronic dance music composers.



Junior Cheyenne Fox (pictured above in center), is very involved in Commercial Music and plays double bass in the symphony orchestra. She’s been a member of several bands and received a coveted invite to last summer’s Grammy Camp where students from around the country meet with industry professionals, guest artists, and record original music. It’s no surprise that she already has her sights set on a career in the music industry.

“Music is a huge part of my life and I can’t wait to see where it takes me!” Fox said.

Walnut High Alumni Bid Farewell to Retiring Maestro

Three decades of Walnut High students, parents, and staff surprised retiring music director Buddy Clements during a farewell concert in December. Guests lauded the teacher who has been at the school since 1984 for his generosity, kindness, and for giving students “gentle nudges” in the right direction.

“He’s been like our second dad,” said organizer Jennifer Santillan-David, Class of 2000, who spread the word about the event through a secret Facebook page.

Alumni musicians dusted off their instruments to perform several pep and holiday songs during the show. At the finale, Clements came to the stage to conduct the grads performing his favorite song, *The Magnificent Seven* – in a nod to the movie *Mr. Holland’s Opus*.

Parents Lou and Joan Simonelli, Blue Thunder Band Boosters since 2001, have remained loyal volunteers long after their two children graduated.

“It’s a very successful program that teaches students to go do their best,” Lou Simonelli described.

During his tenure, Clements introduced his teenage musicians to several big-name performers and directors including Maynard Ferguson, Bobby Shew, Ricky Lawson, Glenn Miller Band, and Elmer Bernstein.

“I’m overwhelmed and humbled. This has been a super surprise!” Clements said.

News CLIPS...

Save the date!

Tee it up at WVEF Golf Tourney

The Walnut Valley Educational Foundation will host its 20th annual Golf Tournament on June 30 at the Vellano Country Club in Chino Hills with a 1:30 p.m. shotgun start. Funds raised will support Walnut Valley USD sports programs. More information at: www.walnutvalleyfoundation.com.

All-State Musicians

Ten talented Diamond Bar and Walnut High School singers were selected to join the All-State Choir Conference in San Jose held February 16-19. Students were selected for the elite group by earning high scores during the regional honor choirs in November. "Although there were no trophies because the event was not a competition, the final concerts were an incredible accomplishment of teamwork, spirit, and musicianship," said director Lisa Lopez. Additionally, 20 elite musicians performed with the All-State Concert Band, Orchestra, and String Orchestra.

We love our veterans!

Vejar Elementary students wrote personalized messages to over 100 veterans on cards displayed during a Veteran's Day assembly. A total of 14 military family members were honored for their service with a "We Love our Veterans" banner and patriotic decorations. Second grader Abigail Cordova performed the national anthem as her father, a member of the Army National Guard, stood proudly behind her on stage.

Science Olympiad stars

Congratulations to WVUSD Science Olympiad teams for a stellar performance at the regional contest held February 18. Division A teams from C.J. Morris, and Quail Summit won gold medals; Castle Rock and Vejar took home silver medals. Division B teams from Chaparral, Suzanne, and South Pointe, along with Division C teams from Diamond Bar and Walnut High qualified to advance to the State Tournament on April 8. "These kids worked hard, had team spirit, and learned that science is fun!" said CJM parent Karen Motus.

DLI Students Celebrate Lunar New Year

It's the Year of the Rooster! Walnut Elementary kinder through 5th grade students in the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program rung in Lunar New Year with 30 songs and skits for schoolmates and parents. Groups performed the musical story of Cat and Mouse, Nian, Chinese zodiac, and even a hip-hop dance. Parent volunteers helped create the numerous props and costumes for the show. Next year, 6th graders will have the opportunity to continue learning Chinese language and culture as the DLI program launches at South Pointe Middle School.



Walnut Valley Unified School District
880 S. Lemon Ave.
Walnut, CA 91789-2931
(909) 595-1261; (909) 839-1214 (fax)
www.wvusd.k12.ca.us

Dr. Robert P. Taylor
Superintendent

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IMPORTANT DATE: Last Day of School – May 25

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Ready, Set, Build!

South Pointe Girls Experience Engineering at Cal Poly



Twenty South Pointe Middle School 8th grade girls were exposed to the fascinating world of engineering at Cal Poly Pomona on February 27.

Introduce a Girl to Engineering day is a national movement that shows girls about the creative and collaborative world of engineering and how engineers are changing our world. Cal Poly's Women in Engineering club led hands-on activities aimed at generating an excitement about pursuing future careers.

The middle school students worked with their college mentors during four rotating sessions that introduced electrical, mechanical, civil engineering and binary coding skills. In the civil engineering session, the girls clustered around tables to design and build pint-sized bridges from wooden sticks that were strong enough to hold 20 pounds. In the adjacent classroom, students learned electrical engineering skills to build a simple motor.

Brianna Yang and Chelsea Woo collaborated while threading brass pins through a safety pin, wrapping with fine wire, and attaching to a battery pack.

"I like solving problems and being able to design!" Yang said.

In another class, Nina Ouchi and Melissa Robeiro created binary coding bracelets.

"Now we know the codes for our initials!" Robeiro beamed. "Dark box, light box, dark, dark, light, dark, light, dark – that's an M."

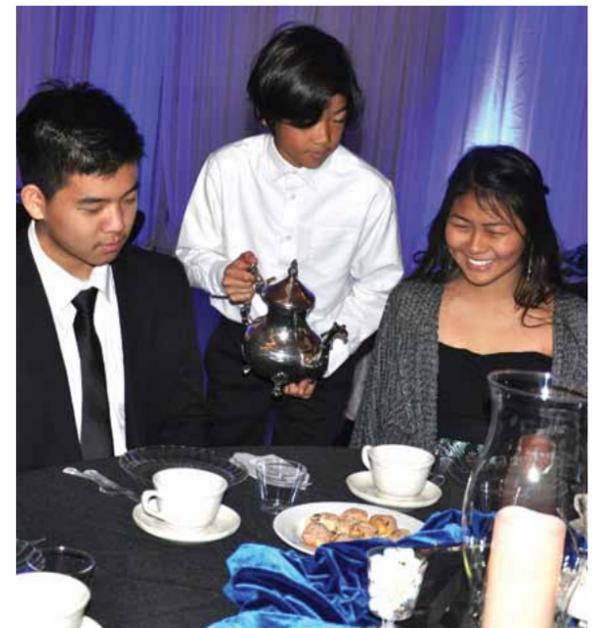
Other groups worked with a stack of parts, wires, batteries, and glue guns to build tiny electric cars. If the students seemed comfortable with the tasks at hand, they were.

The South Pointe students are involved in STEAM III and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) classes on campus.

"This has been a great day for our girls!" commented PLTW science teacher Kellie Muragishi, "It showed our girls that science, math, and engineering isn't just for boys. And girls are just as good, if not better at it!"

Tea is served

Manners Matter



Suzanne Middle School presented its Blue and White Tea on Feb. 17, giving 8th graders a chance to dress up and show off their best manners.

The traditional tea has been held on the Walnut campus for over three decades. Over 450 students participated during five high tea services while the Challenger Orchestra, under the direction of Ami Garvin, provided music. Also for this occasion, the dress code required girls to wear dresses, and boys to sport shirts and ties.

The 8th graders were prepped for the tea during several days of etiquette classes where students learned how to pull out a chair for their partners, pass food in a counterclockwise direction, stir cream and sugar in their tea using a six and twelve motion, and select the correct silverware. And there no elbows on any tables in sight!

"We don't want to mess up!" said Eliana Lu, age 13, who explained that students would receive a pass or fail grade for their performance.

Winter Sports Highlights

Diamond Bar High: Both boys and girls basketball qualified for the CIF playoffs. Congratulations to Coach Frierson and Coach McCabe on another successful season. Boys soccer also qualified for the CIF playoffs where they knocked off the #1 seed. Wrestlers qualify for CIF including Michael Cardiel who was named lower weight Palomares League MVP. In just their 3rd year of existence, girls water polo qualified for CIF playoffs and marched through opponents to the championship match. Special congrats to Coach Matal and Coach Hammond on an outstanding season and being named a CIF Finalist.

Walnut High: Boys & girls basketball, boys & girls wrestling, boys & girls soccer, girls water polo teams participated in CIF playoffs. Boys wrestling competed in CIF semifinals for the first time in school history. Individual league champions Daniel Mc Nicholl, Collin Hayes, Salvador Rodriguez, Christian Elias, Andres Solano, and Vincent Narvaez. Girls wrestling individual league champions: Justine Barredo, Mia Dow (also Hacienda League MVP), Madyson Dow, Alyssa Gomez, Brianna Harrison, Dominique Morales, Alexis Coronado, and Janelle Venegas. CIF individual champions: Jeselle Corpus, Mia Dow, Brianna Harrison. Mia Dow will compete at the state championship.