

# Outlook



Issue 38 FALL 2017

## Ring the Bell!

### Diamond Bar High Wins Golden Bell Award

Diamond Bar High is a well-established leader in student achievement throughout the state and nation. But, the quest for greatness isn't always academic. Last year, the campus launched a Wellness Center to provide an extra layer of counseling support and wellness education services. And in just 15 months, the school's pioneering efforts have been validated.

The California School Boards Association (CSBA) selected Diamond Bar High to receive the prestigious 2017 Golden Bell Award for its innovative efforts in addressing the wellness needs to over 3,000 students on campus.

The heart of the Wellness Center is helping students learn to cope with everyday problems, according to coordinator Sandy Davis.

"The educational services and resources provided promote student responsibility, resiliency and efficacy in students' own wellness decisions," said Davis.

The center services approximately 30 students weekly with the motto "Empowering Student Wellness from Within."



This year, the growing program is staffed by 23 student interns who can relate peer-to-peer on the most challenging teen issues. These wellness consultants receive an additional 30 hours of intensive training, as well as earning a Mental Health First Aide certification.

The center offers stress and anxiety relief, progressive relaxation exercises, and guided meditation designed to help students reduce stress. Weekly therapy dog visitations are among the most popular of the services offered to students and staff.

The Wellness Program also garnered the 2017 California Gold Ribbon and the 2016 Inspired Changemaker awards by Facebook and Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence.



## Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley family,

As the calendar year comes to a close and the holiday spirit fills the air, I cannot help but to reflect on the people and events that have made this such a memorable 2017! I am truly thankful for our Walnut Valley community. This time of year also marks the

halfway point of what has been a fabulous school year, thus far. Our school district, once again, has been awarded an overall "grade" of "A+" through the prestigious Niche study ... and, once again, we have been recognized as one of the most outstanding school districts in California (out of nearly 1,100 districts). Our academic successes are unmatched anywhere, our teachers and staff are award winning, and our parents are more involved and supportive than ever. Most importantly, our students are excelling in a well-rounded education.

I was so pleased and very appreciative for the nearly 1,000 parents who attended our first Parent Symposium in September and grateful to our various parent leaders who have been participating in the Leadership Development discussions through our Coordinating Council. I am thankful for our students ... again this year, I have the pleasure of meeting on a regular basis with representative students who participate in our Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, giving us an opportunity to share information and ideas.

The ARTS continue to grow as 3rd grade DANCE is added at all of our schools. Not many (if any) schools in California offer dance to every 3rd grader, music instruction to every 4th and 5th grader, and physical education for all elementary students taught by highly-qualified instructors.

Thanks to the generous support of our community, similar to our existing band building at Walnut High School, our new music facility at Diamond Bar High School is being designed and prepared for groundbreaking. (The planning process for the new middle school music facilities will begin before you know it.) The District is extremely thankful for the opportunity to enhance the facilities at all 15 of our schools for years ahead.

While this is a time of year for celebrations, I realize it is also busy, hectic, and often stressful. On a personal note, I can empathize with our parents who have Seniors this year ... my middle child just recently completed her college applications ... so, now the waiting game begins and all of the emotions that go with this process. Whatever age your kids (or grandkids) may be, make sure to take time this season to slow down and enjoy family and friends.

I look forward to a fantastic 2018!

Happy Holidays,

Dr. Robert P. Taylor

## The Parent Symposium Message: Raise Kind Kids



Sometimes it can be a good idea to spend time and effort focusing on students' social-emotional learning needs.

Moral intelligence expert Dr. Michele Borba did just that while addressing 1,000 Walnut Valley USD parents at the 1st annual Parent Symposium held Sept. 23.

"Parents, we need to be intentional about raising nice kids! Stop focusing on GPA and more on developing kind kids," the globally recognized parenting expert and best-selling author said. Borba focused her 90-minute keynote on raising "UnSelfie" kids, her newest title that offers practical strategies to teach children to nurture empathy.

"When was the last time you saw a bumper sticker that

read "Proud Parent of a Kind Kid"? she asked.

Borba was so impressed at the full-house audience in the gymnasium that she told the group to give themselves a round of applause just for showing up to the 8 a.m. event.

"I have never, ever seen a turn out on a Saturday morning like this. Walnut Valley has done something extraordinary here!"

How do we raise empathetic and kind kids in a self-absorbed world? One way is turning down the "plugged-in" mentality, Borba said. She suggests creating sacred, unplugged hours, such as breakfast or dinnertime, by getting in the routine of placing cell phones in a basket on the table. Another empathy habit is practicing kindness. One strategy is developing a family mantra and reminding children to say two kind things each time they walk out the door.

"It helps them develop a kind and caring mindset," she said.

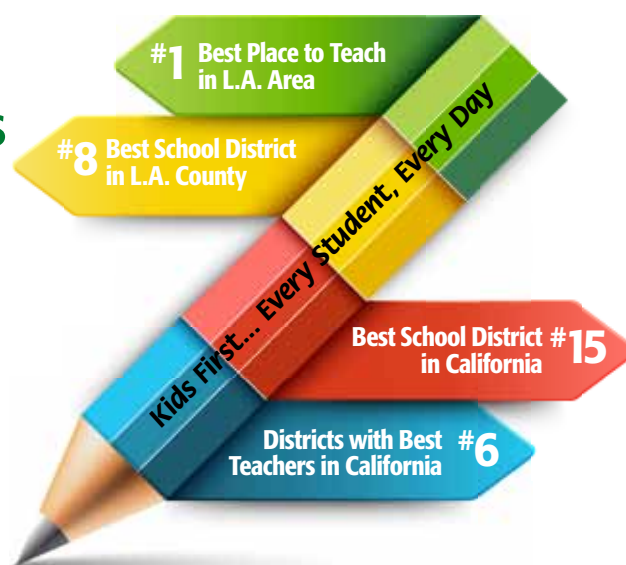
The Parent Symposium also featured over 20 breakout classes led by WVUSD educators after the general session. The engaging and thoughtful sessions ranged from Technology and School-Age Kids to Preparing for College While Maintaining Your Sanity.

The District also provided free child care to 500 children while the moms and dads attended the premier event.

## WVUSD awarded overall grade of A+ Walnut Valley Ranks Among Top 100 Districts in the State

Walnut Valley USD is ranked the #1 best place to teach in the Los Angeles area, the #8 best school district in Los Angeles County, #15 School District in California and #6 for Districts with the Best Teachers in California according to the 2017-2018 report released in August.

Walnut Valley was awarded an overall grade of A+, earning an A+ in academics, a B in diversity, and an A+ in teachers and college prep and B+ in clubs and activities; and A- in health and safety. Niche assigns a standardized score for each factor, which is then weighted before an overall score is calculated for each school district.





# 2017 District Teacher of the Year

Digital photography teacher William "Bill" Foley has a sincere and genuine passion for his craft and demonstrates a tremendous amount of care to every student that walks into his classroom.

"Being named District Teacher of the Year has been the greatest honor of my life," said the 34-year veteran educator who was recognized during Salute to Teachers on October 18.

Bill is a firm believer in embracing the use of technology each day. Along with giving students the basic photography tools, the popular educator also promotes creativity by "getting out of the way" so the teens can add their own unique vision to their work.

He supports his students by celebrating their creativity. He shares their photos that decorate the campus, posts them on the school website and social media, and publishes them in the school yearbook.

Bill has taught in Walnut Valley for the past 17 years and is in his eighth year at Diamond Bar High. He can often be found on the sidelines at all types of extra-curricular and sporting events working with his students to capture amazing moments of the school community.

Additionally, he has established an ongoing articulation with Mt. San Antonio College which allows his students to attend fieldtrips to the college photo lab, construct photography portfolios, and complete the articulation exam for college credit.

"My goal each year is for students to develop a passion for photography, have the tools to produce good images, and to never be content with average, boring images again!"



## Our Classroom Heroes 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

Congratulations to the following top teachers who represent Walnut Valley's outstanding educators with exemplary dedication, classroom practices, and commitment to excellence.

**Jill Wilson-Fairbanks**, Castle Rock Elementary

**Jennifer Hildebrandt**, Chaparral Middle School

**Elisabeth Jones**, Collegewood Elementary

**Rochelle Mortensen**, Cyrus J. Morris Elementary

**William Foley**, Diamond Bar High

**Alice Oldag**, Evergreen Elementary

**Rebecca Rogers**, Maple Hill Elementary

**Tamara Schlachter**, Quail Summit Elementary

**Johann Aaron**, Ron Hockwalt Academies

**Annie Kim**, South Pointe Middle School

**Alexis Lujan**, Suzanne Middle School

**Giselle Cordova**, Vejar Elementary

**Stephanie Kalscheuer**, Walnut Elementary

**Chiara Morgan**, Walnut High

**Margaret Hamel**, Westhoff Elementary

# 2018 National Merit Semifinalists

Walnut Valley is proud to announce that 14 seniors have been named 2018 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.

These students will continue to compete for some 7,400 National Merit Scholarships that will be offered in the spring. More than 1.5 million students entered the Merit Program as juniors by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. High scorers were designated semifinalists, representing less than 1% of the state's graduating class.



**Diamond Bar High:**

**Ruiyan Cao, Brian Chang, Alex Cheng, Matthew I. Ho, Sungloo Jeon, Alvin Lee, Eric Peng, William Shao, Crystal Song, and Amy Xia.**



In total, just over 16,000 talented seniors qualified nationwide. Congratulations to the teens who have been recognized for demonstrating exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

**Walnut High:**

**Renee Hua, Eugene Y. Lo, Ransom M. MacLeith, and Amanda L. Taing.**

## Students Experience the Great American Eclipse

From Oregon to South Carolina, the total solar eclipse darkened skies across the continental U.S. for the first time in 99 years on Aug. 21.

Wearing protective ISO glasses, 10-year-old Eli Gerhardt peered outside his Walnut Elementary classroom window at just after 9 a.m. on Monday morning where the Great American Eclipse was in progress.

"It looks like the moon took a bite out of the sun!" the fifth grader exclaimed as the moon began casting its shadow.

South Pointe Middle School received a generous donation of 300 eclipse glasses from Mt. San Antonio College. Beginning at 10:05 a.m., each grade level, about 900 students in total, rotated going outside for viewing parties.

"It looks like a crescent moon, but it's the sun!" exclaimed sixth grader Emily Lee.

Vejar kindergarten teacher Lisa Gomez made the "big event" memorable with crafts and fun snacks including Moon-shaped pancakes, Sun Chips, and Sunny Delight. Many classrooms around the District also watched the historic event during a live NASA broadcast.

"My students were in awe," shared Diamond Bar High physics teacher Angela Jensvold after the morning's celestial celebration. Most of her students used ISO glasses, while some created their own eclipse viewers.

At Walnut High, chemistry teacher Jeri Burnside brought her class out to see the sun at maximum coverage for the area, about 67% at 10:21 a.m.

"We saw the daylight around us fading and felt the temperature cooling as over half the solar energy was blocked."

The next total solar eclipse in the U.S. will occur on April 8, 2024, and this time from Texas to Maine.

"My students will be around 22 to 23 years-old then, so hopefully they will be able to travel and see a total eclipse if they so desire!" Burnside said.



## DBHS Athletic Trainer Receives CIF Award

Diamond Bar High School athletic trainer Chase Paulson was recently recognized for giving athletes tools for success on the playing field and in life.

Paulson was awarded the Jim Staunton CIF-Southern Section Champions for Character Award during the 14th annual awards dinner held at The Grand Conference Center in Long Beach on Sept. 25.

The award recognizes athletes, coaches, administrators, and schools for displaying exemplary character and sportsmanship on the field, on campus, and in the community, that exemplify the core values of Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Sportsmanship, and Servant Leadership.



Respect, Responsibility, Sportsmanship, and Servant Leadership.

## Fall Sports Update

**Walnut High** Mustangs had a great fall season with girls and boys cross country, girls golf, boys water polo, girls volleyball, and girls tennis teams winning league championships. Girls golf won the CIF title and took 3rd Place at the CIF State Tournament. Boys water polo finished the season as CIF Runner-Ups.

**Diamond Bar High** The talented young girls golf team led by coach Tony McCabe displayed their potential by earning league and CIF titles through an amazing undefeated season. Volleyball advanced to the CIF quarterfinals and girls tennis competed in the first round of CIF playoffs.





## Thundering Herd takes home \$10,000 from LACF

After three years of making it to the finals, the Diamond Bar High School Thundering Herd marching band took home the 1st place trophy and \$10,000 at the annual L.A. County Fair competition. The prize money will be added to their budget, which covers transportation, food and other expenses.

## Students show compassion

Quail Summit Elementary's Character Crew organized a schoolwide "Socktober" drive during the month of October to bring warmth to area homeless. The caring students donated hundreds of socks through the project inspired by Kid President. Over 3 million people nationwide joined the 5th annual drive that aims to prove that even the smallest act of love, like donating a pair of socks, can make a big difference.



donating a pair of socks, can make a big difference.

## Mustangs named to honor choir

Seven Walnut High choir members have been named to the Southern California Vocal Association Honor Choir. Congratulations to Sammi Su, Vio Zhu, Hannah Carreon, Eugene Lo, Jocelyn Chow, and Laurence Chau from Chamber Singers, and Pauline Crelencia from Rhapsody In Blue. Thank you for representing Walnut Valley Arts!

## Walnut High students virtually tour U.S. Capitol

Special education students in Dr. Bob Van Setten's civics class at Walnut High have been studying the Legislative Branch of government. About a month ago, the teacher contacted an elected official in Washington D.C. to explore the possibility of partnering for a Skype field trip. After receiving permission from Capitol security for the first-ever school request, a virtual tour commenced on Oct. 27 in the classroom using an iPad, Apple TV, and LCD projector. During the tour, the aide interacted and shared fun bits of trivia that helped boost the students' experience. "The kids enjoyed seeing cat paw prints in the cement glaze in the crypt, known as the Capitol Ghost Cat," Van Setten said.

## Suzanne students experience "All Means All" at summit day

Suzanne Middle School focused on Walnut Valley's "All Means All" theme during an 8th Grade Summit held on Sept 15. During the 9th annual event, the entire 8th grade class – over 430 students – had an opportunity to break down the walls of stereotypes during several activities including *Stand Tall*, *Think Big*, and the *Change Poem*. This year, a *Finding Balance* session was added to provide students with coping skills using breathing exercises, painting, coloring, and therapy dogs.

"Our goal is for students to take a look at their personal story, embrace their lives, and discover ways to live to their fullest potential," said teacher Marla Rickard.

Forty-three student leaders from Walnut High facilitated many sessions during the day.

## Chaparral Wind Ensemble tapped to perform at educational conference



The 74-member Wind Ensemble from Chaparral Middle School, under the direction of Leslie Schroerlucke, were the featured student entertainment during the 2017 California School Board Association Annual Education Conference held in San Diego on December 1. Talented performers from around the state vied for the coveted invitation to perform before thousands of members of the education community.

# Arts Access Expands to Include Elementary Students



This year, all WVUSD 3rd graders are participating in a new ten-week World Dance Residency taught by members of the former Ahman Dance Company.

Visiting artists are working with each 3rd grade class, by teaching dances from various world cultures as well as the history, culture, and language of each dance's origin.

The dances chosen for study relate to the 3rd grade social studies curriculum. Teachers also receive professional development in techniques for incorporating dance and movement to enhance and

deepen their curriculum.

The program is made possible through a generous grant from the Los Angeles Arts Ed Collective which is matched by the District.

The Dance Residency project is part of a continued commitment to expand WVUSD arts access to elementary students.

Each ten-week session will culminate in a Family Sharing Day, and parents will be invited to attend a class performance.

## Chaparral students dig into archaeology to experience prehistoric times

Teacher Gary Imai's students recently learned what it's like to be an archaeologist, carefully sifting and brushing through sand for prehistoric artifacts.

"Here's a leg, I think it's from a saber-tooth!" exclaimed 11-year-old Sophia Hayes holding up a three-inch synthetic dinosaur bone.

Students taped string into quadrants on trays before carefully removing skulls and skeleton parts using shovels, screens, and brushes. After locating several pieces, they sketched pictures to help discover what kind of animal had been unearthed. Working in pairs, students rotated through six activity stations carrying field books to record their findings.

"My aim is for students to be able to touch and experience archaeology and prehistoric times beyond the textbook," Imai shared.

At one table, the young archaeologists, used a mortar and pestle, just like early humans did to crush rock before painting prehistoric cave art animals.

Tiny Stone Age man models were displayed at another table where students matched the early hominids with time period and cultural achievements.

The curious students identified tools in an



archaeologist field kit including a compass, trowel, caliper, photo cards, and variety of brushes.

"The compass helps us navigate and the caliper measures treasures," one boy wrote in his journal.

"A trusty trowel is the archaeologist's best friend," the teacher said.

At another simulated dig site, classmates sifted through sand in search of arrowheads. As each student located a tiny artifact, they were directed put it in a plastic bag.

"It's my gift to you!" Imai said.



## Minecrafting California Missions

Students have long studied the 600-mile California Mission trail which connects 21 missions from San Diego to Sonoma. If you attended public schools in the golden state, you probably have memories of constructing a replica of one of these missions using cardboard, sugar cubes, or Styrofoam.

In several Walnut Valley elementary schools, the project has evolved to include the integration of technology. Using MinecraftEdu, the education version of the popular game, students create interactive, three-dimensional models of California missions.

"The kids are so engaged when they're doing Minecraft. It's digital storytelling!" said technology coach Wendy Cadima.

During a weekly lesson with teacher Sally Lee's class at Evergreen Elementary, the energy and excitement in the computer lab was palpable.

"They love Minecraft," she said. "A lot of my students have a background in it, so they knew how to build."

Within the simulated walls, students replicate features that existed in the actual missions including the church, kitchen, padre's quarters, and garden. The young architects used the tool bar feature to choose the building blocks, colors, and textures. They put personal touches on projects by adding people, equipment, furnishings, decorations, livestock, and even planting fruits and vegetables.

"It's fun to build things I think in my mind," added Ryan Amoudi.

Minecraft is sparking collaborative learning, critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity in the classroom. All nine elementary schools now use the MinecraftEdu software to create projects or missions.



## Save the Date! Arts & Technology Showcase

Walnut Valley USD will present an Arts and Technology Showcase on Saturday, February 24 from 12-6 p.m. at Walnut High School.

The event will feature visual arts exhibitions and music ensembles across all grade levels, drama and theatre performances, dance teams, student films and digital media, and a technology maker's fair. Food trucks will be on site, along with face painting, instrument petting zoo, scavenger hunt, live art demonstrations, giveaways, and other fun activities.

The event is free and open to the public. Additional information will be available on our website.



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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR – 2018 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS:

Martin L. King Day – January 15 • Presidents Day – February 19 • Spring Break – March 30 to April 6



## Developing Student Kindness, one drop at a time

After Vejar Elementary 2nd graders read the bestselling book, "How Full is Your Bucket? For Kids," students learned how their interactions can help keep each other's metaphorical bucket filled during the school day.

The children began writing simple, uplifting messages to each other like, "You are good at math," "Thank you for being a good friend," and "You have a nice smile," and placed them in tiny buckets created from paper cups and pipe cleaners as a visual reminder.

"I'm trying to teach them to pay attention to people that have empty buckets so they can fill them," said teacher Giselle Cordova. "They are very eager to make each other feel good because it makes them feel good too!"

"I saved all my notes in my pencil case because they make me feel special," shared 2nd grader Sophia Sanchez.

Cordova integrated the bucket theme into a recent Language arts lesson, having students practice complimenting each other using sentence frames.

"It's awkward at times, but they enjoy giving and receiving compliments," she said.

"We talk about how our classroom, school, and even world would be a better place if everyone's buckets were full."

Now, when the class gathers during Monday Meet-Ups, each student is asked to share something good that happened over the weekend.

"We start our week with a positive thought and practice filling our own buckets!" said Cordova.

## Students collect supplies for Hurricane Victims

After watching news coverage of the devastating floods caused by Hurricane Harvey, C.J. Morris Elementary stepped up to the plate to help victims in Texas. The school's leadership group teamed up with the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim to send a truck with supplies on September 7.

"We knew we had to do something," shared Principal Shehzad Bhojani about the two-day collection drive of items including diapers, toothbrushes, batteries, flashlights, and cleaning supplies. "We wanted to show Texas how much we care!"

Along with the supplies, every student on campus, over 500 in total, colored rainbow cards and wrote personal words of encouragement. A bag of Skittles candy was attached to each card that read, "After every storm comes a rainbow. Sending all our love to Texas." Two weeks later, a video circulated on social media explaining that the letters and candy were sent to aid Hurricane Irma relief efforts in Naples, Florida.

"Please tell the teachers and students at C.J. Morris in California that their sweet gesture of kindness and generosity will be going to young children," said volunteer Paul Getter.



## Ribbon Cutting Events. . .



### New Brahma gym floor is a slam dunk

Diamond Bar High hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of a new gymnasium floor on Nov. 1. The new gleaming hardwood flooring features a gold brahma logo at center court with purple-shaded key areas. Principal Reuben Jones thanked district leaders, staff, and parents for their support during the 10-week construction project. After the official ribbon cutting, the winter sports teams took to the court for demonstrations.

### WHS tennis courts feature a new blue hue

Students, staff, and district leaders celebrated the grand re-opening of the Walnut High tennis courts on Aug. 29. Over the summer, the courts were re-surfaced and repainted a blue hue - the signature color of the U.S. Open. The project also included the installation of new fencing with wind screens, sound system, and lighting. Players and coaches said they are proud of the new facility and are ready to kick off the new season.



## Students Pledge Drug-Free Futures

Walnut Valley USD schools participate in Red Ribbon Week, an annual national awareness campaign that teaches students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

This year, Maple Hill Elementary students participated by dressing up in costumes with drug free slogans such as wearing crazy socks to 'sock it to drugs' and donning sunglasses to 'shade out drugs.' The school also hosted 'I'm drug free because this is what I want to be' career day, with 13 parent volunteers visiting classrooms and speaking about their careers.

"Our students were also encouraged to dress up in what they want to be when they grow up," said elementary learning specialist Kim McNeil.

All across the campus, there were pint-sized astronauts, dancers and baseball players during the day and professionals shared their passion for chosen careers during 20-minute presentations.

The youngsters said they would be able to reach for their dreams by "staying healthy, never giving up, practicing, and staying drug-free."