



Staff Bulletin

San Diego Unified School District

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Getting to Know

Vickie Gambala
Indian Education
Community Liaison

November is National American Indian Heritage Month, the ideal time to recognize the district's Indian Education Program, established in 1976. Since its inception, the federally-funded program has provided tutoring, career guidance and cultural enrichment programs to thousands of American Indian students in the district. For the past 25 years, the program has been in the capable hands of native Oklahoman and Cherokee, Vickie Gambala, with the help of a Parent Advisory Committee.

Staff Bulletin recently met with Vickie for an update on the Indian Education Program. She is quick to point out that the program is family-focused; not just for students.

see **GtK** pg 4

District Schools Provide Shelter for Evacuees

Around 10 p.m. on Sunday, October 21, while most residents of the Scripps Ranch neighborhood were keeping an eye on the brush fires to the east, one was keeping particular watch.

Jeff Olivero, principal of Mira Mesa High, knew what might happen. He and his staff had been through it before...in 2003.

So when the call came that the Red Cross had asked to use his school as an evacuation shelter, he went to work.

"You come to learn that you're on call for your site 24 hours a day. In this case, on the one hand, you have the responsibility as a prin-



The Quad at Mira Mesa High School was "home" to hundreds of evacuees during the recent firestorms.

cipal. On the other hand, you're glad you can serve a role in supporting and building connections with the community and help out others in need."

Unlike 2003, when flames destroyed hundreds of homes in San Diego Unified's Scripps Ranch neighborhood, homes

of our students were spared in 2007. But when the Witch Creek Fire spread into Rancho Bernardo, Ramona and Poway, their residents found a safe haven at Mira Mesa High, as did evacuees from Scripps Ranch.

In addition, 500 residents and staff of the Mount See **Evacuation** Pg 3

Becoming America's Best School Nurses Honored

In case you're thinking the only duties performed by school nurses are cleaning and bandaging cuts and scrapes, think again. Two district nurses have recently been honored for outstanding nursing skills that extend far beyond simple first aid.

Clairemont High School Nurse **Cathy Brugman** was honored as an American Red Cross Hero for her rapid response and professional skills in responding to a medical emergency. When Glen Sawade, a member of the school's custodial staff, went into apparent cardiac arrest, she performed CPR and directed others to call 911. According to the physician, "The help received at the high school made all the difference in the world. When someone goes down - with no pulse or respiration - the first few minutes are crucial. Thanks to Cathy's immediate response and assessment expertise, Sawade has fully recovered and is alive today.

Hamilton Elementary School Nurse **Jessie Wallace** has been chosen as California's School Nurse of the Year for 2007 by the California School Nurses Organization. Selection for this award was based on her commitment to school children and impressive leadership skills. Among her recent activities, Jessie organized a community Health and Wellness Fair this past summer and was instrumental in helping her school receive a \$1,000 mini-grant for its wellness policy implementation, furthering their efforts to create healthy environments and programs to reduce childhood obesity.



Clairemont High School Nurse Cathy Brugman

FALL of FAME

STEVEN NGO...

a tenth grader from the Invention and Design Educational Academy (IDEA) at **Crawford High Educational Complex**, was selected as the October Inspirational Student of the Month by the San Di-

ego County Office of Education and KNSD-TV Channel 7/39.

KNSD Reporter Rory Devine surprised Steven with the award that recognizes his achievements in academics and community service.

CLAUDIA DUNAWAY...

the district Lead Speech Pathologist, has received the 2007 Rolland J. Van Hattum

Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The prestigious Van Hattum award is made to "one individual in recognition of exemplary commitment and contribution to the delivery of audiology and/or speech-language pathology services within a school setting." Claudia received her award at the national ASHA conference held in Boston.

Connect-ED Reaches Thousands During Fires

The mass communications tool, Connect-ED, played a vital role in providing timely updates during last month's firestorms. Nearly 138,000 families and more than 22,000 employees received information about school closures and re-openings with phone calls and e-mails generated through Connect-ED. Superintendent Carl Cohn used the tool to send personal messages of support and thanks to district families and employees.

Connect-ED is a web-based outbound voice messaging tool that can broadcast thousands of personalized phone calls and e-mails in a matter of minutes. Funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation Grant, Connect-ED was launched as a pilot program in 39 district schools and up until the fires, was primarily being used for parent outreach and attendance calls. With its proven success during an emergency, an amendment to formally expand the program was recently approved by the Board of Education. All district-run school sites, departments and child development centers will have access to Connect-ED by the end of 2007. Funding will be supported by the central office.



Connect-ED is coordinated by the Communications Department. A series of trainings for new users will be held prior to the end of the year. For information, contact jbreister@sandi.net or (619) 725-5578.

The Every Day Counts! Initiative is supported by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

CLOSED DOORS Opened Hearts

Work didn't stop during the school closures. District employees opened their hearts and rolled up their sleeves during the fire storms.

-- More than 200 teachers and other staff members volunteered to work with children evacuated to Qualcomm Stadium. Together with SDEA, the effort included receiving supplies donated by Lakeshore Learning. Staff also helped organize and run the shelters at Mira Mesa and San Diego high schools, and the Serra High School Red Cross center.

-- School police went to 12-hour shifts, activating the District's Emergency Operations Center and coordinating efforts with the City of San Diego and County of San Diego. They responded to more than 100 facility alarms and made more than 900 security checks.

-- De Anza, Dewey, Fletcher, Logan and Salomon Child Development Centers were kept open to provide child care for district employees, emergency workers, and anyone else who needed child care during the crisis.

-- Physical Plant Operations staff started school clean-ups on Thursday, October 25. Outdoor paved areas and walls were power washed. Classrooms were dusted of ash. Air conditioning systems were checked and ready



NEVER TOO OLD FOR PB & J: Volunteers prepare lunches for evacuees during the 2007 Wildfires.

to go when school re-opened on Tuesday, October 30.

-- A dozen San Diego Unified buses were made available to help with evacuations.

-- Counseling staff met together on Monday, October 29, to review ways to help students cope and to discuss crisis management and other issues related to the fires.

-- Air quality was monitored. A toxicology expert was available to check individual school sites, if needed.

-- Financial staff worked with the County Office of Education to make sure the state gave ADA credit for the cancelled week of classes.

-- A webpage was created with fire-related resources for parents, students and staff. Eight staff members lost their homes in the fires, several others suffered fire-related damage.

--Support continues as school sites and departments hold fundraisers and events to help with fire relief efforts.

Our Schools as Jewels: SD Unified School Gardens: From Farm To Fork

Grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 were awarded last week to 98 district schools to help expand and sustain campus gardens. Campus gardens help students learn about habitats, plants and the food chain. Students plant, weed and care for the gardens; some grow flowers, others grow vegetables. At harvest time, some schools invite chefs from neighborhood restaurants on campus to cook the food grown by

students. There are a wide variety of gardens around the district, including Bay Park Elementary (see photo), which specializes in native and Mediterranean plants, with each classroom having its own plot.

For Site Garden Guidelines and more information on how to start a school garden project, contact Landscape Services Manager Greg Reynolds at greynolds@sandi.net or (858) 627-7210.



Garden boxes at Bay Park Elementary School allow students to cultivate their growing skills and learn sustainability.

Evacuation from Pg 1

Miguel Covenant Village in Spring Valley took refuge at San Diego High School, while Serra High School was used as a Red Cross Volunteer Center. Taft and Bell middle schools were at one time considered for shelters while several huge fires burned throughout the county.

The Mira Mesa shelter replaced one at Poway High School, deemed too close to the flames as the fire moved west and south. Olivero said he was surprised at how fast evacuees arrived. Within a few hours, there were more than 1,000 residents on his campus, along with a wide assortment of animals including dogs, cats and even goats. The gym was full of cots, tents lined the quad and a senior-citizen home was set up in three bungalows. Others slept in their cars in the overflowing parking lots.

Not to mention Jeff, his wife and son, residents of Scripps Ranch who were also evacuated. They spent three nights in his office. "My son slept on a cot, my wife slept on my office floor and I slept on the conference table," he said. Several students were evacuated to the school as well.

Support from his staff, the rest of the district and his Mira

Mesa High School students helped Olivero through the crisis. Unaware that school had been cancelled, some staff members showed up for work on Monday. Teachers and others arrived about the same time as the evacuees from the Poway High School. Mira Mesa's administrative team pitched in to "direct traffic," Olivero said.

Hundreds of students arrived later in the day, pitching in to register evacuees, walk pets and provide any support needed. Plant Operations Supervisor Bob Lowry organized custodial staff to provide 24-hour service, with at least two on campus at all times. Later in the week, custodial staff made sure the school was ready to open with the rest of the district.

Superintendent Carl Cohn lauded the work of employees on school sites and throughout the community.

"I want to thank everyone for going above and beyond the call of duty this last week," Superintendent Carl Cohn told the Board of Education at its October 29 meeting. Work by staff was "an extraordinary coming together in support of our students, our families and our community."

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Deadline to Submit Changes to Benefits is November 30

Open Enrollment is the time when eligible San Diego Unified employees can make changes to their benefit plans. The deadline to submit changes is Friday, November 30. No enrollment forms are necessary unless making a change. (FSA plans must be renewed each year.) Any changes will go into effect January 1, 2008. If you have not received the

information or have questions, contact the Employee Benefits Office at (619) 725-8130, option 6.

CSA Celebrates 50 yrs. of Employee Giving

Join the Community Service Association (CSA), the employee charitable organization, and help make a difference in our local community. Becoming a member is a fast and convenient way to make charitable contributions. District employees can join

by enrolling in the voluntary payroll deduction plan or by making a one-time contribution by personal check. All donations are tax deductible. Payroll deduction and donation designation forms are available at school and work sites or by contacting the CSA Membership Coordinator at (619) 465-2210.

Crime Prevention Unit Focuses on Safety

To continually enhance the services it provides, the

San Diego Unified School Police Department has established a Crime Prevention Unit (CPU). A team, consisting of a sergeant and four community service officers, is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining district safety, security and preventive programs that cater to the needs of individual school sites. For information about available programs and services, call (619) 725-7000 or (619) 725-7013.

Classifieds

For Sale

Beautiful 2418 sq. ft. house in La Mesa. 3 bd/2.5 ba. Move-in ready. FSBO. Call (619) 813-7035.

1 Kenmore washer, and 2 Kenmore gas dryers; \$50 each. Call (619) 414-3711.

Five (5) nearly new SDUSD polo shirts. Size 2XL. \$15 each. Call Kris Rucker at (619) 725-7767.

Misc. furniture (book-cases, oak daybed w/ trundle, 2 TVs, cabinets, credenza). \$20-\$150. Excellent cond. Call Donna at (619) 255-5539, aft. 5 p.m. or lv msg.

For Rent

Vacation getaway in Idyllwild. 4 bedrooms. Mountain views. Seasonal river. Peace and quiet. Weekends/Weekly/Monthly. Call (800) 297-1410 and ask about property # 23292.

Wanted

Students, teachers of the Hearst Elementary Classes of 1972 - 1976, for an upcoming reunion. Call Lisa Guth-Sheldon at (619) 725-7265.

Fellow teacher to commute from the Temecula area to the Mira Mesa/Scripps Ranch area. Call (951) 378-3622.

Housemate to share elegant, spacious, 2-story Craftsman home. Balboa Pk/Hillcrest. \$1290/mo. For more info, photos, call (415) 299-1848.

Staff Bulletin accepts classified ads from district employees only. Submit ads by e-mail to communications@sandi.net or send to Communications Office, Room 2145, Education Center. Limit to 15 words (not including phone number). Include work location and phone number (for ID purposes only).

Getting to Know from Pg 1

This year, more than 400 students and their extended family members are participating in the program. Several times a month, participants attend a Cultural Awareness Class at Oak Park Elementary. Multi-generations, representing more than 50 tribes, come together to present and preserve their cultural, traditional and spiritual values. Activities include arts and crafts, essay writing, and sharing family stories. The program leads parents to get more involved at schools.

What are some of the changes you've seen over the years?

One of the most significant is the increasing emphasis by our families on the importance of higher education. Parents and grandparents are now pushing their children to go to college. The result has been a decrease in the drop-out rate and increase in the high school graduation rate. Many more of our American Indian students are now entering post-high school educational institutions.

What is one of your fondest memories?

The success stories are the best. Years ago, there was a young man in our program who had lots of problems in high school. Through the Indian Education Program, he was able to get tutoring, graduate from high school and go on to Mesa College. He joined the Navy and eventually became a SEAL. He still comes to visit me and after all these years, still credits the program for his success.

What are you most looking forward to this year?

Continuing to emphasize to parents the importance of getting involved at their child's school. Every school has a job that a parent can do. The benefits are invaluable to the school, the parents and most importantly, the students.



In Memoriam

Michael Calamar
District Counselor with Diversity,
October 6, 2007.

Shirley Fontnette
Special Education Assistant at Hawthorne Elementary, October 13, 2007.

Kelly Moulton
Teacher at Wilson Middle School,
September 24, 2007.

Out and About Out and About Out and About



A picture says a thousand words. **Edison Elementary School** students spell out their gratitude to the employees of SC Design for their recent donation of school and art supplies. (photo above)



De Portola Middle School students, pictured with the crew from the Miramar Fire Station, take pride in helping others when disaster strikes. After the recent fires, the school's Builder's Club, ASB, and staff decided to sponsor fundraisers to support the fire fighters who lost their homes while saving others. To date, the students have raised more than \$4,200.



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Send all news items and classified ads to communications@sandi.net, Education Center, Room 2145
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Superintendent of Schools

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