

San Diego City Schools

Staff Bulletin – June 16, 2004

San Diego City Schools 2004-05 Teachers of the Year

On Tuesday, May 11, at the 23rd Annual Day of the Teacher Celebration, San Diego City Schools honored our teachers and publicly announced the district's Teachers of the Year for 2004-05.

During the ceremony, the Board of Education and Superintendent recognized the contributions of the district's 9,240 dedicated teachers that support the educational success of our students and encouraged parents, students, and community members to do the same. School site Teachers of the Year were introduced and commended, and each received a copy of the Board Resolution and plaque, graciously donated by the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of San Diego.

The San Diego City Schools 2004-05 Teachers of the Year are:

- Elementary Level: **Michael Miller**, McKinley Elementary School
(*Runner-up: Colleen Crandall, Rosa Parks Elementary School*)
- Middle Level: **Sheila Weiner**, De Portola Middle School
(*Runner-up: Linda Whinnery, Bell Jr. High School*)
- Senior High Level: **Stanley Murphy**, San Diego High School
(*Runner-up: Ray Brandes, School of Creative and Performing Arts*)

Mike, Sheila, and Stan went on to represent the district in the county Teacher of the Year competition in May. Decisions at the county level will be announced in October 2004. Keep your fingers crossed!

The Day of the Teacher and Teacher of the Year ceremony was attended by a number of elected officials' representatives, including the offices of Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congresswoman Susan Davis, Lt. Governor Cruz Bustamante, Senator Dede Alpert, Assemblymember Christine Kehoe, Councilmember Toni Atkins, and Councilmember Jim Madaffer, and each provided certificates to the three Teachers of the Year. Senator Barbara Boxer, Mayor Murphy, and Councilmember Zucchet, although unable to attend, also provided certificates of commendation to each of the three Teachers of the Year.

Representatives from five local companies were also in attendance to congratulate our Teachers of the Year. Coca-Cola Bottling Company of San Diego, California Coast Credit Union, Mission Federal Credit Union, Boise Office Solutions, and SYSCO Food Services all donated prizes to the Teachers of the Year, including cash, dinner gift certificates, and zoo passes. The district and our teachers are very appreciative of their support of education at San Diego City Schools.

If you have any questions regarding the Day of the Teacher Celebration or the Teachers of the Year, please contact Lisa Jaycox in the Communications Department at (619) 725-5598 or ejaycox@sandi.net.

Michael Miller-McKinley Elementary School 2004-05 Teacher of the Year-Elementary Level

Even after 37 years of teaching, Physical Educator Mike Miller's enthusiastic energy continues to spark widespread excitement for everything he endeavors. During his 12 years at McKinley Elementary School, Mike has pioneered a unique and extremely successful health and physical education program that focuses on the importance of physical activity for a sound mind, healthy body, and social confidence.

K-6 students benefit before school, at lunch, during classes, and in their everyday lives from programs Mike has developed. Every morning, "Run for Your Life" encourages students to run around a marked course and earn recognition awards for miles completed. At lunch, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders play "Capture the Football" and "Team Ball" during the Intramural Program, with 95-percent participation in all three grades. "Mr. Miller is one of the only teachers who can safely host Team Ball games because of his excellent sense of judgment, safety and leadership," notes Samuel Taylor, sixth-grade student at McKinley.

Students are not the only ones who benefit from Mike's leadership. Mike brings physical education off the field and into the classroom by providing his colleagues with specially designed curriculum. The Circuit Physical Activities Center

involves continuous physical activities that all teachers can use with their classes on a daily basis to develop positive attitudes toward body fitness, cardiovascular strength and body weight. His knowledge and ideas benefit the entire school community. Through the Golf Tournament fundraiser, Mike, in conjunction with McKinley's PTA and long-time friend Phil Mickelson, Sr., raises thousands of dollars each year and pushes his school into both the media's spotlight and community members' hearts.

Mike's engaging example and vibrant teaching style promote student awareness of health issues on and off campus. "Teaching students the fundamental skills to play games and activities that are lifelong, fun, release stress, and contribute to better emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing are all part of my program," Mike explains. Lessons learned during Mike's classes and programs provide lasting positive effects on the lives of his students.

Mike's applicable words of wisdom and life-changing emphasis on healthy habits traverse beyond his school to inspire McKinley parents as well. Mike recounts the effects of a lesson he taught to students on the potential harm of smoking and breathing secondhand smoke. Following the lesson, "several parents shared that they stopped smoking as a result of their son or daughter coming home and asking them to stop," Mike relates.

McKinley students apply the information supplied by Mike to activities in their homes, on the playground, and even at the movie theatres. Upon discovering that certain types of unhealthy oils were commonly used when making movie theatre popcorn, educated students and parents not only refused to purchase it, but proactively suggested to managers to change to a healthier oil.

Mike equips students at McKinley with the tools they need to be good citizens, healthy humans, and fair sportsmen and sportswomen. He applies the importance of physical education to all aspects of learning, including literacy, science, and math. His passion for teaching and physical education motivates his students and all who know him to follow his example. "Mike has dedicated his life to providing a quality physical education program to the students at our school," expounds McKinley Principal Julie Ashton-Gray. "Mike is an excellent role model, and practices what he teaches on a daily basis in his own life. These wonderful opportunities wouldn't be possible without Mike's sincere commitment, dedication, and genuine love of young people, for their fitness and wellbeing. It will be a very sad and dismal day when he retires from education, as there will be no one that can ever replace him and the unique gifts he brings to our school."

Sheila Weiner-Gaspar de Portola Middle School 2004-05 Teacher of the Year-Middle Level

At the roots of Gaspar de Portola Middle School is Sheila Weiner, an engaging educator who has helped the de Portola community grow and flourish since it began 18 years ago. The charismatic sixth-grade Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) teacher of English and Social Studies and Associated Student Body (ASB) advisor has spent most of her 24-year teaching career working with the students, staff, parents and community members of Tierrasanta to ensure that de Portola's students receive the best tools for future success.

High-quality education requires teachers to guide students toward the realization that perceived limitations exist to be surpassed. "Sheila prides herself in gently pushing every student to their highest potential," explains de Portola Principal Listy Gillingham. "No student can fail in Ms. Weiner's class. If a student is having difficulty she immediately goes into action, calling parents, creating contracts, and getting the students to come in for tutoring after school so as to not fall behind." Sheila's methods work wonders. Each year her student's test scores are consistently high, and students, staff and parents remember her thoughtful, personalized attention years later.

Former student Blake Nelson confirms, "I felt that I was actually accomplishing things. I was actually grasping new levels of understanding and being able to express them. The things I can do with ease now, the things I love to do, can be traced back to what she taught me in sixth grade. Ms. Weiner made a serious effort to become human to us— to make the class human. Ms. Weiner stands as a landmark mentor on my road to college."

A wearer of many hats, Sheila has excelled not only as an inspiring teacher, but also as GATE chair, mentor teacher, substitute vice principal and ASB advisor. She is involved in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Site Council (SSC), and every year she coordinates and chaperones 50 eighth-graders on a trip to Washington D.C. and New York, a time-consuming yet extremely rewarding task. The leadership Sheila provides contributes immeasurably to her school community. "Her presence on campus is something like the heartbeat of our school," says Carmen Munnely, de Portola Humanities Co-chair. Her energy pulses through the campus and keeps the limbs— students, staff, parents, and community members— working together.

Junior high can be a challenging time for teenagers. As students wrestle with their image and placement in the world, it is important for them to have a role model that they can have fun with and respect. The enthusiasm Sheila radiates involves both students' academic minds and social yearnings. She unites students through ASB activities, such as "Chill on the

Hill,” a Friday event that allows de Portola students to gather on a grassy hill to hang out, listen to music, and compete in games; and she surprises students with applicable classroom lessons, such as her history project on clay pots and ancient civilizations.

During a study of archeology, student groups designed clay pots to tell a story from a prehistoric civilization. Groups planned to exchange the pots and decipher others’ civilizations, but Sheila had something else in store. At 3 a.m. in the morning before the exchange, Sheila realized, “An archeologist would never find a whole pot in the ground!” That day, she took a hammer and smashed the pots. “The students were squealing with glee!” Sheila relates. To conclude the lesson, students glued together each other’s pieces to recreate the pots and then interpreted the civilization’s history, while learning the realities, frustrations, and epiphanies of archeologists.

Sheila’s sincere love for teaching and her students, as well as her aptitude for providing enriching education in a safe, fun-loving environment, leave lasting impressions on everyone involved in the de Portola community. Debra Walters, de Portola parent, proudly emphasized the effect that Sheila had on the lives of her two children. “I personally know, without a doubt, that my children are better students – and, more importantly, better people – because of Ms. Weiner’s handprint on their lives. Sheila Weiner is a gift to the profession of teaching.”

Stanley Murphy-San Diego High School 2004-05 Teacher of the Year-Senior High Level

From modest beginnings to global impact, Stan Murphy is a teacher who never underestimates the power of the phrase, “I can do it,” originally impressed on him by his mother. His emphasis on the idea that all things are possible has transformed the way his students and colleagues view themselves and the world, from San Diego to Moscow to Argentina to Austria.

As an ambitious first generation college student, Stan’s leadership blossomed at the University of California, Berkeley where he worked to ensure that a balanced view of history for under-represented students was adopted in place of previous curriculum. Thirty-three years later, in his position as an eleventh-grade Social Studies teacher at San Diego High School, Stan leads his school in innovative and wide-reaching ways.

“I have attempted to be the type of teacher who provides students with meaningful experiences inside and outside the classroom,” explains Stan. Interaction with foreign students and group trips across the state and the world, along with thoughtful classroom instruction, help Stan achieve this goal for an overwhelming number of students.

Led by Stan, the History Club/AVID college trip gives high school juniors a unique chance to visit California universities and engage in discussions with San Diego High graduates who are now college students. “Many San Diego High students not only don’t envision themselves attending college, many have never been outside of San Diego,” Stan contends as he emphasizes the importance of these trips.

Stan has made vast contributions to San Diego and the world through international interaction and understanding. Programs such as *World Classroom*, connecting San Diego High with foreign schools via email, and the *International Friendship Club* (IFC), providing a platform for students from San Diego, Moscow, Argentina, and Austria to engage in meaningful cultural and educational exchange, identify Stan as an extremely innovative educator. In 1988, Stan pioneered secondary educational collaboration between the United States and Russia with IFC and traveled to Moscow with several of his students for a two-week stay.

These life-changing experiences would not be possible without Stan’s continued support and unique capabilities. “Organizing a trip for 50-60 students from four cultures with varying languages and customs presents a formidable task,” declares Fira Vainer, Vice Principal for Student Affairs at Moscow School #23 in Russia. Stan’s patience, flexibility, organizational skills, ability for conflict mediation, understanding of cultural differences, and sense of humor make him the perfect candidate when dealing with the complexities of international exchange.

Stan’s leadership is strong on the home front as well. He is a role model for colleagues, volunteering to demonstrate small group instruction strategies on film, and acting as a mentor teacher for over ten years. He has actively participated in numerous volunteer activities and professional educational committees, including the San Diego Youth Involvement Project, the Association of African American Educators, Toastmasters International, the College Board Advanced Placement American History Committee, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Committee, the Educational Testing Service’s SAT II Committee, and the Golden State Exam Committee. Stan has also served as the chair of the Site Governance Team and of the History Department, as well as a sports coach and academic competition advisor.

Amidst all of his active involvement in the educational community, Stan maintains his ability to leave a positive lasting effect on his students. For years, he remains on their minds as one of their most inspiring educators. Former student and current UCLA School of Law student Merhawi Keflezighi affirms, "For many reasons, I feel Mr. Murphy is the best and most influential instructor I have had in my ongoing academic career. Mr. Murphy personifies the success that is possible when one works hard, takes advantage of available resources and pursues goals with a good attitude."

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Update on Health and Welfare Benefits

Employee groups and the district continue to work to maintain quality programs while addressing the rising costs of health and welfare benefits. The unions and the district have agreed to share responsibility for maintaining quality benefits while reigning in the increase costs. In accordance with contracts signed by several employee groups, we are working aggressively to keep expenditures for these programs as close to 2003-04 levels as possible while still allowing for fluctuations in the number of district employees.

SDCS Offers Comprehensive Benefits

San Diego City Schools (SDCS) offers a comprehensive fully paid benefits package to eligible employees and all of their eligible dependents, including:

- a choice of three (3) medical and three (3) dental plan options;
- vision coverage;
- district-paid employee basic life insurance equal to one times annual salary;
- chiropractic care;
- voluntary employee life insurance; voluntary dependent life insurance; and
- voluntary accidental death and dismemberment coverage.

The district has no desire to take any benefits away from employees. The district however does intend to honor the intent of our agreed to and signed contracts with employee groups.

Cost of Health Care Rising

The cost of health care (medical) benefit plans has increased an average of 64% from 2000 to 2004 and is expected to increase an additional 10-15% in the coming year. The district's revenue sources have not kept up with these increases and, in fact, were reduced in 2003-04 due to state action.

The cost of health and welfare benefits per SDCS employee is \$6,712.09. If premiums increase by as much as 15%, the cost per employee could be as high as \$7,530.70 for 2004-05.

Health and Welfare Benefits Committee

The Health and Welfare Benefits Advisory Committee is a joint district-employee group committee (with two representatives from each employee group and four from the district) that:

- reviews health and welfare benefit programs,
- makes recommendations regarding modifications to the programs, and
- works aggressively to keep expenditures for health and welfare programs as close to 2003-04 levels as possible.

Insurance carriers have not yet established or provided the rates for next year (2005). Therefore a final calculation of exactly how much must be saved is not possible at this time. However the committee has not yet completed all of its goals. Although they have discussed numerous suggestions and options for addressing the cost of health care for 2004-05, final decisions have not been made. Recommended changes to the benefits structure will be addressed through negotiations with the employee unions.

More information will be provided as available online at <http://www.sandi.net/staff/benefits/0304.html>.

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San Diego City Schools to Participate in Summer Reading Achievers Program

This summer, San Diego City Schools (SDCS) students in grades K-8 at many of our schools will participate in the federal Summer Reading Achievers program. They will join thousands of students at 10 locations nationwide and benefit from a summer reading program under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Superintendent Bersin and U.S. Department of Education General Counsel Brian Jones announced the district's participation in the program at a press conference held at Juarez Elementary School on Monday, May 3, 2004.

The Summer Reading Achievers program encourages students to read actively during the summer months and avoid the loss of reading skills that often occurs during summer vacation. The program was piloted last year by the Atlanta Public Schools, with nearly 18,000 students participating.

To participate in the program, students must read 10 age-appropriate books during the summer months. Students will be required to briefly describe each book they read by completing a simple form. In addition to free, new books for all students, prizes and certificates will be awarded to successful students, and special recognition will be given to schools with the highest percentages of participating students.

More information is available online at http://www.sandi.net/programs/summer_reading/index.htm. If you have any questions, please contact the Communications Department at (619) 725-5578 or communications@mail.sandi.net.

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Proposition MM Update: Elimination of Eighth Area Elementary School and Rebuilding of Sherman Elementary

On May 25, the Board of Education approved that the Eighth Area Elementary School not be built due to declining enrollment. The Eighth Area Elementary School was one of thirteen new schools called for under Proposition MM (Prop. MM), the \$1.51 billion bond measure passed in 1998.

The Eighth Area Elementary School was originally to be built in Sherman Heights to relieve overcrowding at the existing Sherman Elementary. However, Sherman Heights is a declining enrollment area, so the Board directed district staff to study whether the school was needed elsewhere in the district to relieve overcrowding. Staff members determined that enrollment projections do not support the need for an additional new elementary school, middle school or high school to accommodate forecasted growth beyond those already being built under Prop. MM.

The Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) which oversees Prop. MM fully supported the decision, stating, "The ICOC's charge is to ensure the responsible expenditure of funds. It would be irresponsible to build a new school that is not needed."

The original budget of \$30 million will be placed in a reserve account to be allocated toward future priority needs within Prop. MM. The funds can only be allocated upon recommendation of staff and the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee and final approval by the Board of Education. These future needs could include a new middle school to relieve overcrowding at the existing Memorial Academy, the offset of escalating land costs, construction costs and raw material costs, or other to be determined costs.

In a separate decision on April 27, the Board approved the demolition and rebuilding of the existing Sherman Elementary through the use of \$18 million of state facility funds and \$3 million of Prop. MM modernization dollars. Thus, Sherman Heights will still receive a high-quality, new facility. While under construction, Sherman Elementary will close in Fall 2005 and will reopen in Fall 2007. The Design Task Force for the rebuilding of Sherman Elementary is underway.

For more information on this and other Prop. MM projects, please visit <http://prod031.sandi.net/propmm>. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Wilgenburg in the Communications Department at (619) 725-5602 or ewilgenburg@sandi.net.

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Ground Broken at Herbert Ibarra Elementary School

On May 4, students from Euclid Elementary and members of the Ibarra family helped break ground on the new Herbert Ibarra Elementary School. The new school is scheduled to open on September 6, 2005. It will relieve overcrowding at Euclid Elementary and other nearby schools. Euclid Elementary, only three blocks away, enrolls 951 children and busses 400 neighborhood children to other schools due to lack of space.

The new school is named for the first Latino principal in San Diego. When Herbert Ibarra was first appointed in 1971 at Memorial Junior High, only 11% of the district's student population was of Hispanic/Latino origin. When Herbert Ibarra Elementary opens in September 2005, it is expected that 77% of the 630 students will be of Hispanic/Latino origin. Herbert Ibarra passed away in 1993 and continues to be highly regarded in educational circles for his leadership role. Lila and Drew Ibarra as well as many relatives and friends of the Ibarra family attended the groundbreaking ceremony.

At the event, students read essays about why a new school will be important in their neighborhood and what Herbert Ibarra's leadership means to them. A photo album is available online at <http://prod031.sandi.net/propmm/NewSchoolWebAlbums/HerbertIbarraWebAlbum/>.

The new school will be located on an eight-acre site bound by Orange, Estrella, Polk and Winona. It will include 32 classrooms over two stories, a multipurpose room, library, media center, lunch shelter, 90 trees, 68 parking spaces and joint-use fields for soccer and baseball.

To make way for the new school, about 212 residents were relocated. Of those, 18 were able to reallocate their relocation funds to become first-time homeowners.

The project is funded by Proposition MM, the \$1.51 billion bond measure passed by San Diego voters in 1998. Proposition MM pays for critical repairs and modernization at 165 existing schools as well as construction of 13 new schools and 3 rebuilt schools to alleviate overcrowding in the city's most densely populated areas.

For more details, please visit the Herbert Ibarra Elementary webpage, available online at <http://www.sandi.net/propmm/HerbertIbarraElem.htm>. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Wilgenburg in the Communications Department at (619) 725-5602 or ewilgenburg@sandi.net.

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Mental Health Resource Center Success Story

For the past year and a half, the district's Mental Health Resource Center (MHRC), a part of the Student Services Department, has been providing mental health treatment to students in order to reduce violence and substance abuse, reduce emotional symptoms, improve behavior, raise achievement, and increase attendance. Currently MHRC operates in 22 schools, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and is grant-funded. Below is an example of one of their success stories.

Although he looked like your typical middle school boy, "David" was noticeably withdrawn from his peers and had a difficult time relating to people. His grades were average and his attendance fair, so he really didn't call much attention to himself. However, school staff did notice that "David" seemed to have issues with depression. Since his school is a partner with MHRC, "David" was referred for mentoring services.

During group mentoring with his assigned volunteer mentor, it was learned that the boy's primary caregiver, his mother, was terminally ill. Also adding to his grief, his father was no longer in his life. During weekly individual counseling sessions and participation in a grief support group provided by MHRC at his school site, "David's" emotional wellbeing improved. "David" came out of his shell, exuding greater confidence when speaking, willingly participating in group activities, and making several new friends. "David's" demeanor changed, and it was obvious that he not only felt happier, but had gained self-assurance as well. His better self-esteem also resulted in more successes at school.

This is just one of many examples of how MHRC works to help students and their families and supports teaching and learning in the classroom. If you would like more information on programs at the Mental Health Resource Center, or to find out if your school is one of the participating sites, please contact Shirley Culver, Program Manager, at (858) 725-5578 or visit the MHRC website at <http://www.sandi.net/depts/mhrc/index.html>.

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Getting to Know Ron Zappala, Program Coordinator/Head Counselor for the CONNECTIONS Dropout Recovery Program

By Maria Johnson

What is your education background?

I went to college in Los Angeles and graduated from Cal State Northridge with a bachelor's degree in Child Development. I left Los Angeles and enrolled at United States International University (currently Alliant University) in 1982 to pursue my master's degree in Marriage, Family, Child Counseling (MFCC) and worked as an intern in various social service agencies from 1985 to 1988. After completing 3,000 hours, I became licensed as an MFCC in 1988. After starting a family, I pursued a Pupil Personnel Services credential at San Diego State University (SDSU).

What was your first position and where did you work?

In 1988, I became interested in opportunities with the district as a counselor in alternative education and began working with San Diego City Schools at Twain Jr./Sr. High School. I worked at various Twain sites until 1996.

When did you become the program coordinator for CONNECTIONS?

In 1996, I became the coordinator of a dropout recovery pilot program called CONNECTIONS. The program was based on the novel concept of pursuing students who had left school and finding their whereabouts. The pilot program was developed from the ground up since there was no one else doing this kind of work.

What obstacles did you encounter with the program?

The first few years were difficult as we developed and implemented procedures for an idea that had never before been attempted. CONNECTIONS had to find an identity as a viable program in order to service students who get lost through the cracks. Now, after 8 years, our mission is very clear. We understand that students who have been out of school are a very special population. Many students have to be reminded of the reasons for returning to school. They have to be shown that they belong and that they have something to offer.

How do school sites make a referral to your program?

Our program has developed a Student Locator Request Referral that can be ordered using Stock No. 41-G-0300. This referral assists sites with locating students (grades 7-12) who have not attended school or an educational program for 25 consecutive days. In addition to pursuing out of school youth referred to us by district school sites, CONNECTIONS is also contacted by the Department of Social Services, Probation, San Diego Police, and SANDAPP.

What happens after the referral is submitted to your program?

The referral is reviewed and approved, and then the case is turned over to a special group of CONNECTIONS staff, Outreach Consultants, who go out and locate the student. Outreach Consultants use all available resources and various means to locate students. Once located, students are contacted by Outreach Consultants in order to make arrangements for enrollment into the CONNECTIONS program, which usually leads to enrollment in regular classes.

What credits can a student earn while in your program?

All students receive basic skills instruction to raise their skill level and help ensure that they are successful when they return to permanent school. Students complete a vocational assessment, and if they are interested, vocational training and placement. CONNECTIONS students learn adjustment skills through a counseling seminar that teaches decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, communication skills, and drug and alcohol awareness.

Ron Zappala has been the Program Coordinator and Head Counselor of the CONNECTIONS Dropout Recovery Program since its inception in 1996. For more information on the CONNECTIONS program, please call (619) 574-0535 or view the fact sheet at <http://www.sandi.net/comm/factsheets/index.html#5>.

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ETS Testing Advertising Campaign in San Diego

On April 22, 2004, ETS (California's STAR Program Test Contractor) began a print and radio advertising campaign in San Diego to encourage students, parents, teachers, education and community leaders to visit a website specifically designed to provide information about student testing and achievement.

The website, <http://www.ets.org/letstalk>, offers extensive information regarding testing and student achievement in the state of California and includes print materials including tips for students, parents and teachers; frequently asked questions and answers; how tests are developed and used; and a glossary of testing terms.

Visitors to the site can also choose to submit questions to ETS staff regarding testing, and they can also provide input and feedback on the materials to assist in efforts to improve materials and make them easier for parents to understand and use.

San Diego City Schools (SDCS) is working on a collaborative project with ETS and The Grow Network to provide more access to valuable information. This information is designed to assist parents to better understand their child's

performance. The project will provide an opportunity for SDCS and ETS/The Grow Network to develop more effective communications materials for students, staff, parents and the community.

If you have any questions about the ETS advertising initiative, please contact Mike Crepeau at ETS at mcrepeau@ets.org.

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PacifiCare Behavioral Health (PBH) Daily Insights: Get Organized, Clutter-free and Refocus Your Life!

Courtesy of Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Provider, PBH

If you're like many people, you've looked around your house and wondered, "Where did all this stuff come from—what a mess!"

Clutter is stuff that wastes time and space and can get in the way of getting organized. Most people hold onto clutter because they think they may need it someday. But it's more likely that it will just continue to take up space and essentially drag you down. Clutter can even make you feel tired, depressed, stressed and irritated.

Now that Summer is right around the corner, it's the perfect time to put a clutter-free plan into action. Change begins one step at a time:

- **Make Priorities and Sort** — Identify what's important to you. Ask yourself—do I use this item? If so, when was the last time I needed it? For items like clothing or shoes—ask the question, "Have I worn this in the last 9 months and does it fit?" If your answer is no, then it's probably time to get rid of it.
- **Purge** — Decide what you can live without and get rid of it (e.g., donations, sales, storage, garbage). This is a great time to make contributions to local homeless shelters or fundraising events. Put items that you want to purge in one area. It may be emotionally difficult at first, but as the pile grows higher and higher, you'll be surprised and excited about all the items you don't need in your life.
- **Assign** — Decide where the items you keep will go. Make sure to assign them spots that are logical, accessible and safe.
- **Containerize** — Grouping items and putting them in containers allows you to locate them quickly and easily. It also prevents items from "going astray" into areas where items don't belong.
- **Maintain** — You've spent time organizing your life, now you must integrate this habit into your daily routine. Spend 15-25 minutes a day organizing. Since you are now clutter-free, organizing will be much easier.

Getting rid of clutter and organizing your life can free you up to be more focused —creating new opportunities to do the things you really want to do. Do you need help getting organized? If so, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help with numerous resources and referrals. Your EAP is available to help you be the best you can be. Call your EAP toll-free today at 1-888-625-4809. For your convenience, we're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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CalPERS Newsletter, Spring 2004

Courtesy of CalPERS

CalPERS Offers Several Coverage Options for Long-Term Care

The CalPERS Long-Term Care Program continues to draw an increasing number of individuals because of the high cost of care associated with long-term care needs. Individuals who take a long-term care plan are protecting their families, income and resources from financial hardship in the event of a long-term care need.

On May 1, 2004, and extending through August 31, 2004, all California public employees (including non-CalPERS members), retirees, their spouses, parents, parents-in-law, and siblings (age 18 and over) will have the opportunity to apply for long-term care coverage.

CalPERS Long-Term Care (LTC) coverage pays for the extended care that would be needed when, due to a chronic illness, injury or frailty of age, help is required for basic activities such as dressing, bathing, or eating. LTC plans can help

pay for extended care at home, care in an assisted living facility, adult day care center, or in a nursing home. Today, without a LTC plan, the cost for one year in a nursing home averages over \$53,000 per year.¹

Financial Planning: Avoiding the Void

Retirement planning is an important part of protecting tomorrow. Although most people plan for the future through 401k plans, savings accounts and/or investment portfolios, they often overlook a different kind of financial protection: long-term care coverage. Without long-term coverage, there could be a void in your financial plan.

As you know, retirement plans are most successful when you start preparing early. Long-term care coverage is an integral part of a well-rounded retirement plan. Applying early gives you the security of having adequate coverage. Because your health insurance and Medicare do not cover long-term care, no other benefit can help protect assets, maintain choice and add peace of mind in the same manner.

If you need help due to a serious accident or an extended illness, not only will you need emotional and physical help, you will need financial assistance as well. By having CalPERS Long-Term Care coverage, you won't have to worry about using the assets that you have put aside for retirement.

Siblings Can Now Apply!

Did you know that 40% of the 13 million Americans receiving long-term care today are between the ages of 18 and 64?¹ Accidents and chronic conditions — both of which can happen to working-age adults — often require care at home or in a nursing facility. How would your siblings pay for long-term care if they needed it?

You may already know that your spouse, parents and parents-in-law are eligible to apply for The CalPERS Long-Term Care Program, but did you know your siblings (age 18 and older) are eligible to apply as well?

Many people mistakenly believe their health insurance pays for long-term care. After an accident, health insurance typically pays for short-term hospital care or up to 100 days in a skilled nursing facility. If someone you love needed care for a longer period of time for a condition such as Parkinson's disease or muscular dystrophy, they would need to cover the cost of their care. If they were unable to pay for their care, they would need to turn to someone, perhaps even you, to help them financially. Long-term care (LTC) coverage was designed specifically for this situation; it pays for care at home, in an assisted living facility, or in a nursing home. Long-term care plans also pay for care if you have a severe cognitive impairment like Alzheimer's disease.

To request a free CalPERS Long-Term Care application kit, call 1-800-266-1050 or visit www.calpers.ca.gov. You must apply before the deadline of August 31, 2004.

1. California Partnership estimate based on data from California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, 2000.

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News You Can Use

New Districtwide Safety Committee

The Safety/Health Action Committee, a joint association comprised of union and district representatives and formed in compliance with OSS, PARA, and OTBS contracts, has been recently established to monitor, review and make recommendations on safe and healthy work conditions and to hear staff member concerns. If you have a safety concern, please remember to contact your supervisor first, and in the event that your supervisor is unable to adequately address your concern, you may contact the Risk Management Department at (858) 627-7345, which works in conjunction with the committee to resolve issues. If you have suggestions for improving employee safety, please contact your committee representative online. A list is available online at <http://prod031.sandi.net/risk/safety.htm>. Scroll down to "Safety/Health Action Committee Members." Remember - safety is everybody's responsibility!

Employee Discounts

Many local, state and national organizations and businesses provide discounts to San Diego City Schools employees. A list of these opportunities is now available on the district website at <http://www.sandi.net/staff/benefits/discounts.html>. If you have any questions or know of additional discounts, please contact Lisa Jaycox in Communications at (619) 725-5598 or ejaycox@sandi.net.

Employee Recycling Contest

The district's Recycling Office, in conjunction with Keep California Beautiful, is conducting a contest to help promote recycling. This contest is open to all staff members, including volunteers, who pledge to recycle paper in San Diego City Schools facilities. Every month on the 15th, two names will be drawn from the pledge cards submitted. Prizes include gift certificates from local businesses such as Peet's Coffee, Hornblower Cruises, San Diego Zoo, and El Torito. All administrative sites have pledge cards in their lunchrooms, and school sites can obtain pledge cards by contacting Andrea Calbow at (858) 627-7376 or acalbow@sandi.net.

Discover Program Seeks Instructors

The Discover Program is seeking instructors to teach classes for the summer and fall sessions, from July to December, in all areas, including Science, Math, Literacy, Fine Arts, Social Studies, Second Language, Technology, Guidance, and Staff Development. Discover courses provide opportunities for teachers to learn from other practicing professionals while earning district salary enhancement credit. Instructors are paid \$39.04/hour for teaching time and \$26.34/hour for preparation time. Consider offering a course through the Discover Program as a way of sharing your knowledge with other professionals in the district. To submit a course proposal, or if you have any questions, please contact Debi Giolzetti at (619) 725-7255 or dgiozlet@mail.sandi.net.

ArtsBusXpress Makes Art Field Trips a Reality

The San Diego Arts Education Partnership (SDAEP), an association between the district's Visual and Performing Arts Department (VAPA) and the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, is proud of its collaboration with ArtsBusXpress, which has made it possible for over 4,800 San Diego City Schools (SDCS) students to attend 25 different arts activities in San Diego during this school year alone. This community program, now in its second year, has provided the district with bus transportation funds for 80 bus trips to the San Diego Symphony, San Diego Opera, Museum of Photographic Art, The Old Globe Theatre, California Ballet, Museum of Making Music and many more. Funds are still available, and ArtsBusXpress will approve funds on a first-come-first-served basis. To apply or learn more please visit <http://www.artsbusxpress.org> and click on "teachers." If you have any questions, please contact Fran Carrillo at SDAEP (858) 539-5354.

Field Trip Opportunity: Fore-Edge Paintings at the San Diego Public Library

From September 19, 2004 through January 2005, a special exhibit will run at the downtown San Diego Public Library, featuring fore-edge paintings (books) from the library's extensive collection. Self-guided tours of this exhibit are free. The opening reception on Sunday, September 19 will include a guest speaker, hors d'oeuvres, and a harpist. For more information, please contact Vera Miller at (619) 291-8800 or v-miller@cox.net or Rick Crawford at (619) 236-5807.

Calling All Muralists

King Elementary is looking for an artist to create a mural of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in celebration of his great contributions to humanity. The 21' x 53.75' mural will be located on the exterior of the school auditorium and will ideally be completed by December 2004. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Cathy Lopez at (619) 525-7320 or clopez@mail.sandi.net.

Mathematics Specialist Certificate Program at SDSU

San Diego State University (SDSU) will soon start both primary and intermediate sessions for the Mathematics Specialist Certificate program this summer. Reduced tuition and materials are provided. Earn six units of mathematics and six units in pedagogy to be used toward the mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. For more information, please visit <http://pdc.sdsu.edu> or contact Jane Gawronski at (619) 594-3858 or jgawronski@projects.sdsu.edu.

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Hall of Fame

Chargers Champions Grants Awarded to District Schools, Educators and Students

On Wednesday, June 3, the San Diego Chargers recognized San Diego City Schools (SDCS) sites, educators and students as the recipients of more than \$156,000 in scholarships, grants, and computers. The Chargers Champions Program, presented by Wells Fargo Bank, honors students and educators for "making a difference" in their communities and in people's lives.

The Chargers honored four district schools dedicated to improving physical fitness and nutrition programs, including Darnall Elementary, \$20,000 for a "Worldfit" fitness trail course; McKinley Elementary, \$20,000 to create a community fitness center; Bell Junior High, \$25,000 for a fitness trail; and Crawford High, \$50,000 to upgrade their fitness facilities.

The Chargers also awarded each of five SDCS students a \$7,000 scholarship and laptop computer. Recipients included Kristen Buono of Henry High School; Feisal Hussein of Crawford High School; Brian Jensen of Mira Mesa High School; Bethany Minick of the School of Creative and Performing Arts; and Sirena Ung of the Preuss School, UCSD.

Three district educators were honored for their positive influence in students' lives. Ronnie Olsen of Scripps Ranch High School, Patty Peisner of Kearny High School, and Dennis Pugh of Mission Bay High School will each receive a \$2,000 grant for use in their classroom or athletic department.

Biliterate Teachers Honored

On May 27, two San Diego City Schools biliteracy teachers were honored at the 6th Annual Leadership in Biliteracy Symposium, sponsored by the County Office of Education, at the Hilton San Diego Resort. Kennedy Elementary teacher Leticia Negrete-Reyes and Euclid Elementary teacher Veronica Esparza were recognized for their significant contributions to promoting biliteracy for our students beyond the normal scope of their responsibilities.

California Championship School Bus Rodeo Awards

On Sunday, May 30, seven of our district's bus drivers competed in the California Championship School Bus Rodeo at the California Highway Patrol Academy in Sacramento and took home a number of awards. Daniel Gilbreth won the top prize and trophy, as well as the title of California State School Bus Safety Rodeo Champion. He was also awarded a VCR/DVD recorder donated by Allison Transmission, and will travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota in July for the international competition. The Special Needs Team Champions were also SDCS employees: Driver Lauren Murphy and her assistant, Rebecca Kiperts. Lauren and Rebecca will represent California at the National Special Needs School Bus Rodeo in March 2005 in Phoenix. Third place overall was awarded to Corey Patton. For more information, please check the California Association of School Transportation Officials website at <http://www.castoways.org/>.

Communications Department Receives Two CalSPRA Awards

On May 14, the California School Public Relations Association (CalSPRA), a statewide organization of education public relations professionals, awarded the Communications Department with two Awards of Merit, one for the Kid's Choice Cafe video and another for the district website. CalSPRA honored several school districts for creating outstanding communications materials that effectively communicate with staff, students, parents and community members. The video was produced by the Communications Department's Video Services team, including Ursula Kroemer, Victor Vargas, and Barry Ladwig, in collaboration with Food Services, and featured students from Dingeman Elementary School. The website, managed by the district's webmaster, Joy Muehlenbein, relies on the collaboration of many departments to disseminate large amounts of information to a variety of audiences.

Congressman Filner Visits Freese

On Friday, May 14, at Freese Elementary, Congressman Bob Filner presented a check in the amount of \$100,000 to the Parent Institute for Quality of Education (PIQE). The funds will be used to support PIQE's program enabling parents to partner with the school system to help their children get the best possible education.

Exceptional Performance Citation Awarded to Officer Tony Gonzalez

Officer Tony Gonzalez was awarded an Exceptional Performance Citation for his acute observations and quick actions at Scripps Ranch High School. Tony is a true professional who clearly demonstrates his belief that kids come first, and is well deserving of this special honor.

Heart of Courage Award Presented to Webster Principal

On June 5, 2004, Jennifer White, Principal of Webster Elementary was presented the Heart of Courage Award by the Association of African-American Educators (AAAE). This first, and to-be-annual, award honors non-African-American educators who do courageous things to improve the achievement of African-American students in keeping with the goals of AA AE and the district.

Penn Awarded Title I Honor

Penn Elementary was recently honored with a Title I Academic Achievement Award, a distinction awarded to Title I schools that met very selective poverty level and test score improvement specifications for the 2002-03 school year. Principal Godwin Higa and teachers Sid Smith, Lyle Bomsta, Ellen Fabrikant, and Barbara Dils attended the Beacons of Light Conference in Sacramento on April 27-29 to present on the topic of Assessment and Accountability and to receive the award from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell.

Reading Plaques of Merit Awarded to Four SDCS Teachers

Four Greater San Diego Reading Association Plaques of Merit were presented on May 21 to Jennifer Clark of Birney Elementary, Aida Hernandez of Euclid Elementary, Allison Kenda of Gompers Secondary, and Elizabeth Larkin of Serra High. These four San Diego City Schools teachers were recognized for their excellence and superior contributions to reading and language arts teaching. Plaques were awarded during the San Diego Reading Association's 25th Annual Recognition Dinner and Celebration of Stars.

Teachworth Receives Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence

On May 4, the Amgen Foundation selected Martin Teachworth, science teacher at La Jolla High, as a recipient of the 2004 Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. He received a plaque and DNA model in appreciation of his leadership in the classroom.

Two Teachers Honored for Academic Excellence by Radio Shack

In April, Kate O'Connor and Martin Teachworth were among 110 educators nationwide who received a Radio Shack National Teacher Award. Ms. O'Connor, a science teacher at San Diego High, and Mr. Teachworth, a science teacher at La Jolla High, were chosen to receive a \$3,000 cash award for their commitment to academic excellence in science and technology and their implementation of innovative classroom teaching methods. For more information about the Radio Shack National Teacher Awards, visit <http://education.RadioShack.com/TeacherAwards>.

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Scenes from Schools

Proposition MM Library Dedications Feature Art, Music, Book Characters and Globetrotters

Students at Oak Park Elementary, a music conservatory magnet, dedicated their new library with songs and music. Students in the band, orchestra and choir performed for the entire student body and parents. An inspiring speech was delivered by Lincoln Principal Wendell Bass.

During a full student assembly at Darnall Elementary, students, parents and staff dedicated their new library building. Students sang several songs from different ethnic traditions. The students were inspired by a visit from Assemblymember Shirley Horton, who spoke to the students about the importance of reading and learning.

Jefferson Elementary celebrated the opening of their new library with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and community open house. In honor of Thomas Jefferson, who once told John Adams, "I cannot live without books," the event and library's theme is on literacy and the love of books. Volunteers, including Clifford the Big Red Dog and the Berenstain Bears, read stories to children in the library.

Students at Juarez Elementary are enjoying their brand new library. At the dedication ceremony, Board Member Fran Zimmerman helped cut the ribbon. Then parents toured the facility and reviewed the spring exhibition of art and writing. The library is of modular construction and was manufactured off-site. This method saves time and money and minimizes construction disruption to the campus.

Students at Torrey Pines Elementary were treated to a performance by a Harlem Globetrotter at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for their new library and classroom building. The event was attended by parents, students and community leaders. It also included a Cinco de Mayo dinner and the annual Spring Open House.

These new buildings are funded by Proposition MM.

Author Visits Wangenheim

On April 28, approximately 100 students from Wangenheim Middle School ate dinner with one of their favorite authors, Darren Shan, who writes the *Cirque du Freak* book series. Students had the unique opportunity to ask a celebrity author their questions and hear what it's like to be a successful writer.

Dingeman Students Send Letters to Iraq

On May 24, students in grades 5 and 6 at Dingeman Elementary participated in a unique event that included writing letters to soldiers in Iraq. Guest speakers from the Marines outlined the importance of Memorial Day and the background of the Marines and instructed students on how to write friendly letters to soldiers. The students' letters were sent immediately to soldiers from San Diego and Camp Pendelton who are currently stationed in Iraq.

Friends of Ruffin Canyon

Did you know that several of our district's students from Taft Middle School have been participating in activities every Wednesday afternoon with the "Friends of Ruffin Canyon"? They have been cleaning the canyon and removing the trash while discovering the different plants and animals that live in the area. With the help of Mrs. Mary Johnson and Mrs. Monica Fuentes, these students are learning a very valuable lesson: They too can have an impact on preserving our natural resources!

Food Services Shows that We Love Our Teachers!

The Food Services Department honored the hard work and dedication of our classroom teachers on California's Day of the Teacher, Wednesday, May 12, by giving each teacher a chocolate chip super-cookie. At Montgomery Middle School, Mary Martinez baked several trays of the 8,500 cookies baked throughout the district for this event.

Hearst Students Visit State Capitol

Fourth graders from Hearst Elementary School made a special trip to the State Capitol on April 22. Assemblywoman Shirley Horton arranged for the entire group to be seated in the Gallery of the Assembly Chambers. While there, they were able to observe lawmakers in action during a Legislative Session. In honor of this occasion, Assemblywoman Horton had three U.S. flags flown over the Capitol for each of the fourth grade classes. Thank you to Assemblywoman Horton and her hospitable staff for making it a special trip!

Madison Students Get Firsthand Look at DUI Tests

During Alcohol Awareness Month in April, the San Diego Police Department, in conjunction with the Pacific Safety Council, brought the DUI Prevention through Awareness and Cooperative Education (P.A.C.E.) Car Program to Madison High School. This program is designed to educate students on the risks of driving under the influence. On Monday, April 19, 120 Madison High students strapped on Fatal Vision goggles to simulate drunken vision, and took their best shot at passing sobriety tests and driving through the P.A.C.E. car course—a traffic cone obstacle course traversed by participants driving golf carts.

Pershing Mixer Brings Parents, Students and Staff Together

On Friday, May 7, Pershing Middle School hosted a mixer for incoming 6th grade students, parents and siblings. The social event provided a relaxed, casual atmosphere for parents to meet one another and learn more about the school from Principal Sarah Sullivan. Students enjoyed spending time with friends and meeting other students during organized games. Students and parents won prizes and feasted on pizza and dessert.

Red Ribbon Activities at Farb Include Helicopter and Hummer

Due to the fires in October, the Builders' Club at Farb Middle School postponed Red Ribbon Week, typically held in October, to the week of May 3-7. Red Ribbon Week, held in honor of Enrique Camarena, a Mexican-American immigrant and DEA agent who died in the line of duty, encourages students to say no to illegal drugs and alcohol. Farb students, especially those with Hispanic heritage, related to the retelling of Enrique's life story. Students participated by wearing a red ribbon, signing a pledge, and attending an assembly organized by the Farb Builders' Club and PTA, in collaboration with the San Diego Sheriff's Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The Friday presentation took place on the field. As students watched, a DEA helicopter flew overhead, and a Sheriff's Department Hummer delivered Principal Susan Levy to the assembly.

Senator Alpert Visits Jackson

On Friday, April 30, Jackson Elementary held a press conference with IBM and Senator Dede Alpert. Principal Rupinder Boyd thanked IBM Representative Louise Andres for IBM's recent donation of five laptop computers and education software, which will be used in the school's new Media Center. Senator Alpert presented an assembly resolution commending IBM for its corporate citizenship and technology donation to help drive education opportunities and positive learning experiences for Jackson Elementary students.

Wilson's New Mural Brightens Lunch Arbor

In the lunch arbor at Wilson Academy of International Studies, a new mural, developed and painted by custodian and artist Tawnya Aburto and other custodial staff members, artistically reminds us that, "The future is in (our student's) hands." Following a recommendation by Philip Teates, B.S.S. III, at Wilson in October 2003 for the replacement of the previous and faded 12-year-old mural, this new mural took form, and after many hours of Saturday paint sessions and a generous donation by Frazee Paint, the newly colorful wall was born.

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Student Salutes

Union-Tribune Features SDCS Top 1%

In the Thursday, June 3 *San Diego Union-Tribune*, an advertisement recognized the top 1% of San Diego City Schools students and valedictorians with a photo of the students and a list of where these students will attend college in the fall. This announcement followed a Salute to Excellence event, held on May 26, which honored these students, their families and the schools that they attend. The district's Community Relations Department organized the event and secured sponsorships from various Partners in Education to cover the cost of the ad in order to recognize these students publicly.

Student Achievements Honored by Board of Education

On Tuesday, May 25, 704 of the district's outstanding students were recognized by the Board of Education, Superintendent, parents, friends, district staff and community members. Students were noted for their achievements in a variety of contests and competitions. They excelled with first place and sweepstakes awards in athletics, color guard, dance teams, and JROTC competitions, art and writing contests, and music tournaments. They excelled in math and

science competitions, and in scholarship contests. Many dedicated their time and energies to community service and to other civic endeavors. All students honored received certificates of recognition, and all in attendance at the ceremony received applause and commendation for their accomplishments. The next Student Recognition Ceremony will be in January 2005. Please keep an eye out for an Administrative Circular in October 2004.

Food Services Essay, Poetry, Rap Contest

Congratulations to the winners of the Food Services Essay, Poetry, and Rap Contest! Over 1,200 entries were received from students at all grade levels in response to, "Why should you eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day?" The contest ran during National Nutrition Month, March 1-31, 2004. First place winners received Sea World Adventure passes, courtesy of Sea World, and a \$100 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble, courtesy of the Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service. Second and third place winners received \$100 and \$75 gift certificates respectively. Sea World also donated a copy of "The Commerson's Dolphin Story" to each of the district's elementary schools, along with bookmarks/coupons for every student. The Food Services Department and the district would like to thank Sea World, the Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service, Project LEAN, California 5 a Day and Pizza Hut for their support of the contest and education. Pictured here are the first place winners in each level: Tylea Eison of Garfield Elementary (Grades K-2), Megan Gallear of Tierrasanta Elementary (Grades 3-5), Kevin Samii of Marshall Middle (Grades 6-8), and Dorian Mattrey of La Jolla High (Grades 9-12).

Bikes for Kids Gives Rowan Student New Bike

Christina Luu, 5th grade student at Rowan Elementary, recently won a "Bikes for Kids" award from the Salvation Army. Teachers and staff at Rowan nominated her for her excellent attendance, (She was only absent five days in her total six years at Rowan and had perfect attendance this year!), as well as her aptitude as an outstanding student and positive role model.

Border Voices Fair Names 22 SDCS Winners

On April 24, 22 students from San Diego City Schools (SDCS) were honored for their entries in the 11th Annual Border Voices Poetry Fair, sponsored by the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and San Diego State University (SDSU). Two students, Tyler Maskiewicz of Spreckels Elementary and Riley Guza of University City High (shown here), won first place in their level, and were followed by a number of outstanding poets from other district and county schools. For more information on the fair, please visit the Border Voices website at <http://literature.sdsu.edu/bordervoices/home.html>. For more information on the Border Voices anthology, available for \$12.95, please call (619) 293-2546.

Clairemont Student Receives College Scholarship

Jackie Buas of Clairemont High School has been selected to receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Superintendents of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 18. Jackie's selection was based on her excellent academic record and extracurricular involvement, as well as her aspirations for becoming a teacher. The scholarship will be used toward tuition at the college of her choice.

Councilman Lewis' Walls of Excellence Honor SDCS Students

On Saturday, June 5, Councilman Charles Lewis acknowledged the academic achievement and community involvement of 12 graduating seniors from San Diego City Schools by placing their names on the "Walls of Excellence." "Placing their names onto the Walls of Excellence will hopefully encourage other students to strive for the best education possible," said Lewis. Students from Gompers Secondary, Morse High School and the School of Creative and Performing Arts were recognized by having their names etched in a glass brick. They also received a certificate of commendation from Councilmember Lewis for their demonstrated commitment to education by earning a high grade point average and for their community involvement.

Farb Student Honored for Tennis

Alexandra "Al" Weiss was awarded the Chabot Family Leadership Award: Outstanding Girl, in the After School Tennis Program. Al received the award on Sunday, April 18 during the 2004 Annual Junior Tennis Awards Banquet. Eighth grader Al is involved in the After School Tennis Program at Farb coached by Physical Educator Caryn Maroni.

Library Contest Winners

Two Muir Alternative students were grand prize winners in 7th Annual San Diego Public Library Essay Contest last month: Sashieana Scott (middle school category) and Owen Spiva (high school category). These two students and other winners read their essays aloud to a crowd of three hundred at a gala ceremony in Balboa Park on April 29. Owen and Sashieana received cash awards, Padres tickets, and other prizes for their efforts. The San Diego Public Library Essay Contest supports the district's literacy initiative and encourages collaboration between schools and the San Diego Public Library. Each year, all students in grades 4, 8, and 10 are invited to participate. The essay prompt to which Owen and Sashieana responded was, "Dear Mayor: Libraries are important because..." Their actual responses were sent to Mayor Murphy.

Marshall Choir Receives Gold Rating

For the fourth year in a row, the Marshall Middle School Choir received a gold rating at the Knott's Berry Farm Forum Music Festival in Orange County, under the direction of Lorraine Palmer. Following the competition, the students enjoyed a day of rides at Knott's Berry Farm. Pictured here are the beginning choir and advanced choir members.

Serrandipity Newspaper Wins National Best of Show

During the 2004 JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention on April 1-4, Serra High School journalism students received some of the best news all year. Out of 1,850 students in 48 different contests, their school newspaper, *Serrandipity*, competed in the Best of Show Newspaper Contest and won First Place, Best of Show for mid-size newspapers. Editor-in-Chief Charles Nguyen, senior, also received an excellent rating for his sports feature story. Just under 5,000 students attended the conference, visiting from almost every state, from Maine to Hawaii to North Dakota to Florida.

Sleep Doctor and Nanoclotterator Projects Win National Science Awards

Two San Diego City Schools student science teams, one from Holmes Elementary (coached by Diana Celle) and one from La Jolla High (coached by Martin Teachworth), recently won first and second place in the national and regional 2004 Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association ExploraVision Award competitions. Students were asked to propose scientifically valid technologies that could exist twenty years from now. La Jolla High students, Kylise Hare, Elizabeth Evans, Dorian Mattrey, and Josh Shorestein created a project called *The Nanoclotterator*, which would dissolve blood clots with nano-bots, and won first place in both the regional and national competitions. Courtney Dunar, Olivia Litsey and Kyle Plum, students at Holmes Elementary, won first place regionally and second place nationally for their project, *The Sleep Doctor*, which may be used to combat nightmares in the year 2024.

Student Cyclist Achieves Dreams

Over the past 6 years, Iggy Silva III, competitive racer and student at Roosevelt Middle School, has competed and placed in numerous bicycle races. An ambitious student and athlete, Iggy has won second place in two state championships, first place as a regional champion in Mexico, and is rated in the top five in the nation for his age group in both road and track racing, while maintaining a 3.0 GPA in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Iggy is a testament to the positive effect that sports can have on youth in America. He will be competing again this year at the national championships in Houston.

Students Win Awards at History Day 2004

On March 20, six San Diego City Schools students from Vista Grande Elementary School and Mt. Everest Academy won top honors at the San Diego County History Day 2004. Representing Vista Grande, Eric Stinson and Cristen Enge won in the Individual Poster category, and Cristen received an award for Outstanding Economics Research. Aaron Kurek, also of Vista Grande, received an honorable mention in the Individual Poster category. Palmer Hayward and Bradley Trousdale received honorable mentions in the Group Poster category as well as Outstanding Economics Research Awards. Julie Gantz from Mt. Everest Academy won in the Junior Paper category and received an Excellence in Writing Award. She was also selected as the winner for the state in the Historical Paper category.

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Save the Date

Goodbye Y.O.U.!

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U) will be closing on June 30, 2004. If you are interested in attending Y.O.U.'s final celebration on **June 19**, please contact Luz Garcia or Norma Prado at (619) 525-7372.

Parent Involvement Training Opportunity

On **June 24-25**, the California PARENT Center of San Diego State University (SDSU) will present, "Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Success and Academic Achievement" at the Orange County Office of Education. This leadership development conference will offer training in a research-based model for family, school and community partnerships and is designed to increase student achievement. One unit of university credit is available for a fee. For more information, please contact the California PARENT Center at (619) 594-4756 or ckaufman@projects.sdsu.edu.

Safe Routes to School Project Grand Opening at Euclid

On Saturday, **June 19**, from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., the City Heights Planning Staff and Euclid Revitalization Action Program Committee will celebrate the completion of their first Safe Routes to School Project (SR2S), which includes street improvements located next to Euclid Elementary. Councilmember Jim Madaffer and a representative from Councilmember Toni Atkins' Office will cut the ribbon during the grand opening ceremony. Mayor Murphy may also be in attendance, but has not yet confirmed. In support of the Mayor's Urban Forest Initiative, People for Trees will plant 50 trees along Orange Avenue that day. This event is open to the public. For more information, please contact Jim Varnadore at cityheights92105@yahoo.com.

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Retiring Types

- After 13 years with the district at Wilson Academy, **Shirley Dudeck**, AVID Coordinator, has retired. She plans to move to Canada to be with her family. There will be a retirement party on Friday, July 16 starting at 4:45 p.m. at Shelter Island. For more information, please call Leslie Gunstad at (619) 280-1661 ext. 129.
- After 34 years with the district, **Wilma Kozai**, Instructional Leader, is retiring. There will be an evening of celebration, including dinner and dancing, on June 30 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Navy's Admiral Kidd Club. For more information, please contact Pam Dowling at (858) 278-5917 or pdowlin1@mail.sandi.net. If you have any photos of Wilma, please send them to Vincent Riveroll at Keiller Middle School.
- After 30 years with the district and 28 years at Serra High School, **Linda McCreight**, will be leaving. To say "Thank you and Goodbye," a party will be held on Thursday, June 10 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the patio of 94th Aero Squadron. Finger food will be provided for \$7. Please RSVP to Chi Seo at (858) 496-8342 ext. 234 to reserve your space.

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In Memoriam

- **Sharon Abrams**, whose service with the district began in December 2000, passed away on February 6, 2004. Ms. Abrams was a noon duty assistant at Hardy Elementary School at the time of her death.
- **Lisa Chanover**, whose service with the district began in January 1995, passed away on March 23, 2004. Ms. Chanover was a teacher at Mason Elementary at the time of her death. She is survived by her mother, Alice.
- **Paula Roberts-Dunbar**, whose service with the district began in November 1990, passed away on April 18, 2004. Ms. Roberts-Dunbar was a teacher at Mason Elementary at the time of her death. She is survived by her husband, Howard Dunbar.