

Staff Bulletin

For the employees of San Diego City Schools



Vol. 76

October 25, 2002

No. 22

School Bus Safety Making the Grade

The San Diego City Schools Pupil Transportation Department transports more than 22,000 students each school day in some of the most modern and best cared for buses in the state. National School Bus Safety Week, which runs from October 20-26, 2002, is a fitting



time to examine the innovative programs and safety conscious service provided by the department, as well as to spotlight the important role school bus drivers play in supporting teaching and learning.

The district's 620 bus drivers and monitors log over 11.5 million miles per year, making 13,564 active daily stops (defined as a California Highway Patrol certified location for student pick up and drop off). Aided in their work by 80 support staff and led by Alexandra Robinson, who was named *School Bus Fleet Magazine's* 2002 Administrator of the Year, bus drivers are at the helm of one of the newest and best-

equipped fleets in California. The district's buses are outfitted with the latest in engineering technology, including a two-way radio system that runs on three different channels, and ergonomically correct designs to reduce on the job injuries to bus drivers, who are extensively screened and trained before joining the fleet.

SDCS owns over 500 school buses, which are kept for 6 years before being sold as part of a nationally recognized bus replacement program. Top of the line maintenance is provided at a facility that operates for 19 hours daily, where district

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2002-2003 Parent Congress Underway

It was a nearly overflow crowd at the school year's first Parent Congress, providing parent participants a chance to hear firsthand about the latest STAR results and other current issues affecting students. The first Congress, held October 9, opened to an audience of more than 350, including parent delegates, PTA presidents, principals, district staff and community guests.

Dr. Karen Bachofer, Standards, Assessment and Accountability executive director briefed participants on the results

of the state's 2002 STAR program. The STAR Programs includes the Stanford Achievement Test, which compares our students' performance to that of a national sample of students and the California Standards Tests, which reflect how our students are doing in meeting state academic standards.

Superintendent Bersin also provided an update on the state of the budget and efforts to put cost-saving measures into effect. The district is committed to keeping

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GETTING TO KNOW YOU: Leigh Freeman

A San Diego native and herself a product of San Diego City Schools (Bay Park Elementary, Marston Junior High as it was then called, and Clairemont High School), bus driver Leigh Freeman is eminently qualified to transport district students across America's finest city.

Leigh was looking for a part time job while a student at Mesa College and was wooed by a friend's descriptions of his work driving buses. She went through the rigorous application process, first driving during the 1978-

79 school year. Marriage took her to Plano, Texas, a small city north of Dallas, where she again drove a school bus and found that her time driving for SDCS had prepared her



exceptionally well. "If you can drive in San Diego, you can drive anywhere, especially given the intense training we received and continue to receive," she says.

Moving back to San Diego, Leigh, an animal lover who has owned horses, snakes, birds, dogs, and all sorts of other creatures, took a break from her career as a school bus driver to indulge her passion for animals. She took a Regional Occupational Program (ROP) class in veterinary assistance and began a job with the Humane Society, but funding cuts necessitated layoffs. In 1987, Leigh returned to San Diego City Schools and has been with the district since. Now,

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Next Issue...

- * Prop MM 4th Anniversary
- * Administrative Directives
- * DWA Update

Serra Students Playing The Part

An ordnance awareness video recently distributed to school sites bordering the former Camp Elliott, including some in Tierrasanta, Scripps Ranch and Allied Gardens, has some familiar faces in it. Several students from Serra's cross-country track team served as on-camera actors and actresses, demonstrating the right thing to do if you find pieces of ordnance that



still surface in the canyons and greenbelts of the former military base.

The ordnance awareness video, produced by the district's Video Services Department for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, explains that unexploded ordnance may still be discovered in the greenbelt areas of Tierrasanta where it meets Mission Trails Regional Park. The area was used as a tank, anti-tank and artillery practice range from World War I to the Korean War. Even though it was practice or training ammo that was used, some of it was highly explosive and dangerous. Detailed searches or "sweeps" of the area have been conducted several times, recovering literally thousands of pieces of ordnance, but old shells and pieces of mortars and munitions can still be found.

The video shows students from Serra High's cross-country team 'discovering'

some ordnance and demonstrating the appropriate steps for contacting authorities. Local authorities, including several firefighters pitching in on their off time, helped fill out the cast.

"Having the school system and students involved in the video is true public involvement. It also promotes greater awareness of the issue because people they know and trust are part of the video. Knowing someone who is in the video or helped make it makes it much more interesting and personal to the community," said Brad McGowan, project manager for the Huntsville Center Ordnance and Explosives Design Center, which oversees the Corps' recurring reviews of ordnance and explosives projects.

"We knew that in order for the students who'd be viewing it to be connected to it, we had to feature students

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Junior League Gives Out "Education Toolboxes"

At Edison Elementary's *Back to School Night*, first graders and their parents couldn't wait to pick up their very special gifts. An air of excitement buzzed around thousands of other first graders and their parents at Baker, Balboa, Chavez, Emerson-Bandini, Jackson, Logan, Kimbrough, King and Sherman. Junior League volunteers were out in force (with the help of each school's Parent Academic Liaison –see story next page) to distribute an "Education Toolbox" to each lucky first grader and his or her parent at all ten Focus Schools. "Education Toolboxes" are kid-sized backpacks filled with educational materials (in English or Spanish) that contain:

- ◆ a video outlining practical tips for parents to assist their children in reading, writing, math and homework
- ◆ a copy of the first grade standards booklet, *Home Learning Activities for Families*, developed by the Parent Involvement Department
- ◆ school supplies donated by various



businesses and organizations

At the *Back to School Night* presentations and in the information in every backpack, parents were encouraged to read with their child for twenty minutes a day for one year. If accomplished, at the end of the year, parents and their child will have read one million words together and increased the child's vocabulary by 1,000 words. Each backpack features the logo of a star-filled open book floating above the motto, "One Million Words."

"The smiles of the children when they pick up their backpacks is what makes this so worthwhile," declared Junior League committee member Nicole McClymonds as she distributed backpacks at King Elementary.

Patricia Macedo, a first grade teacher at Logan Elementary, appreciates the backpacks. "I think they're great and the kids are very excited about them. The parent video is very informative and we are so pleased it was produced in Spanish as well as English." *(Continued on page four)*

2002-2003 Parent Congress Underway

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cuts away from the classrooms to ensure that teachers and students have the support they need to continue to increase achievement.

A particularly well-received part of the evening was the feedback session. "Many of the evaluations from parents indicated that they especially enjoyed the discussion at their tables with principals," said Jeana Preston, Parent Involvement program manager. "They also enjoyed being able to hear from [Instructional Leader] Kari McVeigh, who talked about the diverse instructional strategies aimed at both increasing the achievement of struggling students and

challenging our high achieving students."

Over the next couple of weeks, parent delegates will survey parents at their schools to gather ideas for developing the meeting topics for the remaining Parent Congress meetings. For more information about the Parent Congress, including schedule, summaries and documents from past meetings, visit the district website at www.sandi.net. There is also a new Fact Sheet on the Parent Congress, which can be posted at school sites and distributed at parent functions. It's available in the Fact Sheet directory on the website.

Partnerships in Education Kick-Off Honors Exemplary Partnerships

The Partnerships in Education 21st Annual Kick-Off event was held on October 10, 2002, at Sea World San Diego, where approximately 1,100 guests were in attendance. Morse AJROTC Color Guard opened the program, followed by a moving rendition of the National Anthem performed by Liske Taylor, a senior at Scripps Ranch High School. Speakers included keynoter Dr. Bruce Stevenson, vice president of academic affairs from The Salk Institute, and Chief of Business Operations Ronne Froman, who shared the district vision. The student speaker, Michael Bento, a 12th grader from La Jolla High, talked about his experience as a summer intern in Salk's Science Enrichment program. Michael worked in the Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology Department. "I realized the vast influence businesses have over the preferences and ideas of high school students. I believe it is important for these



partners to provide what will be most beneficial to the students' education and learning process and I thank The Salk Institute for providing me with such an opportunity," he said.

Fifteen exemplary partnerships awards were presented, as well as three Mentor Awards. One Mentor recipient, San Diego City Councilmember Brian Maienschein, was recognized for providing an office internship to Tiffany Boatner, a student in the High School Diploma Program, who said the experience helped her "learn to stay organized and be more efficient."

Over 1,000 copies of Partnerships in Education Annual Report were distributed, documenting the program's 20th anniversary and highlighting exemplary programs in a creative scrapbook-style format that drew rave reviews. Copies of the annual report are available by calling the Community Relations Office at (619) 725- 5592.

What Is A Parent Academic Liaison?

The *Blueprint for Student Success* recognizes the power of parent involvement in increasing student achievement. The Parent Academic Liaison (PAL) program places certificated teachers known as PALs in full-time positions at the ten Focus Schools to create partnerships between parents and teachers in order to increase student achievement. Their goal is to build a *family learning community* that promotes a school culture of academic achievement.

PALs report to principals but receive ongoing training and coaching from the Parent Involvement Department. In addition to building the capacity of school staff to establish and maintain positive relationships with parents, PALs help parents help their children become more powerful learners. They do this by systematically assisting parents to understand what their children know now, what they need to know, and what parents can do specifically to help them at home and in school. Strategies include:

- ◆ increasing information to and communication with parents about students' academic performance, and practical ways parents can support student learning.
- ◆ increasing information and supportive materials for teachers to help parents support student learning.
- ◆ planning and implementing strategic activities designed to help parents increase students' literacy skills (including Family Fridays and Community Based English Tutoring Program).
- ◆ initiating efforts to ensure schoolwide understanding of and support for a *family learning community*.

For more information about the PAL program, please contact the Parent Involvement Department at (619) 725-5605.

Scenes from Schools

Students at **Ross Elementary** got a surprise October 8 as they filed out to the playground during the school's fire drill. The **San Diego Fire and Life Safety Services** brought a fire engine and truck onto the playground. In recognition of **National Fire Prevention Month** and **San Diego Fire Prevention Week**, district schools were asked to participate in a citywide fire drill that day, and Ross Elementary was the media stop. Students knew exactly what to do, clearing out of their classrooms in 45 seconds, with the whole drill being completed in 2 minutes, 45 seconds.



Boone Elementary is making parent involvement a major focus of ways to improve student achievement. The school has started a **Parent Institute**, which will include nine workshop sessions covering topics such as home and school collaboration, communication and discipline, academic standards, understanding the school system and getting children started on the road to higher education. Sessions will be offered in both the morning and evening and will include refreshments and childcare. Parents completing the Institute will receive a certificate of completion and be part of a special graduation after the last session.

Ellen Browning Scripps Elementary was presented with a check for \$7,000 from **Doug Dawson, executive director of the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation**, October 17. The gift is for building a library collection around famous women from San Diego and California. The gift was made during Ellen Browning Scripps Days at the school – a week full of events marking the birthday of "Miss Ellen" on October 18.

In Memoriam...

Socorro Cameron, whose service with the district began September 1956, passed away September 21, 2002. Ms. Cameron was a food service worker at the time of her retirement June 1976.

Alberta F. Nacke, whose service with the district began April 1978, passed away October 2, 2002. Mrs. Nacke was a teacher at University City High School at the time of her death.

School Bus Safety

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mechanics- named one of the top ten operations in the country by *School Bus Fleet Magazine*- perform comprehensive inspections at frequent intervals. This is in addition to daily inspections by bus drivers and periodic ones by the California Highway Patrol.

Before getting behind the wheel of an SDCS bus, drivers must pass an intense battery of background checks, medical examinations, drug tests, written and road exams, and licensing and certification by the California Department of Motor Vehicles, California Highway Patrol, and the district, which has strict driver requirements. SDCS requirements for driver training exceed those of the state, requiring that candidates successfully complete an orientation process that includes a minimum of 60 hours of training on school bus safety and procedure by Department of Education certified instructors, 20 more than required by the state. The close scrutiny faced by drivers is one of the reasons SDCS has such an excellent safety record. Our drivers consistently win awards at state and national Rodeo Safety Competitions, and the district has not had a bus-related fatality since a 1996 incident that was not attributable

to the school bus driver. In fact, there were only 67 bus accidents in the 2001-2002 school year, and only 30 of them were found to be the bus driver's fault. This is especially impressive considering that more than 480 buses run each day.

"School bus drivers are our front men on the line," said Frank Klepach, transportation safety and training supervisor. "Our drivers are the first contact with the school that students and parents have each day and are



Alexandra Robinson
Director,
Transportation
Services

the last contact, as well. It is vital that we have drivers who get students to and from school in a safe and timely manner so that they are best able to learn."

Bus safety is a main focus of the Pupil Transportation Department, which instills in its drivers the importance of their job. "Being a bus driver is a position of trust. Not only are you responsible for a \$92,000 piece of equipment, but also for up to 84 lives, and all in the complexities of San Diego traffic," said Klepach. Therefore, drivers learn how to evacuate vehicles and what to do in the event of an emergency, and students participate in annual bus safety drills through middle school.

Pupil Transportation is working to help students in other ways, too. A recent pilot of a special "green" diesel fuel in retrofitted buses found that clean diesel buses showed no significant performance or mechanical problems, thus resulting in an efficient and effective solution to state and federal regulations that increasingly require diesel trucks and buses to be virtually exhaust free. By retrofitting 20 late-model existing diesel buses to accommodate clean fuel technology rather than buying new natural gas buses, the district could pay for as many as 16 computers, 1300 new textbooks, or the salary of a teacher.

With exciting new pilots in environmental safety and a focus on providing safe and friendly service, it is no wonder that San Diego City Schools is winning kudos from a variety of officials across the state and nation. However, none of the praise is as ringing as that from Director of Transportation Services Alexandra Robinson. "I work for an outstanding organization with a great staff," she said. "I learn something new every day."

News You Can Use!

The **University of California Family Nutrition Program** offers nutrition and gardening curriculum to educators at no charge. *Eating Right is Basic* and *Nutrition to Grow On* are curriculums offered to educators and include lessons on the food guide pyramid, healthy eating recommendations, choosing low fat, low sugar foods, reading food labels and the importance of eating breakfast. Materials

are available for all grades K-12. Please contact Stella Taylor at (858) 694-2122 or email stetay@ucdavis.edu for more information.

San Diego State University has launched web pages for Spanish-speaking parents – the first university in California to bridge the information gap between Spanish-speaking parents and the higher education community. The pages, available at

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Educational Toolboxes

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This project is an ongoing collaboration between the Junior League of San Diego, part of an international organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of well-trained volunteers, and representatives from the Parent Involvement Department.

The idea for an "Education Toolbox" began as an animated conversation between two Junior League members when the League decided to focus their charitable efforts on educational issues and was initially outlined on a napkin in a restaurant. It has come a long way since then!

After a year of research and development which included surveying hundreds of teachers, the Junior League called the Parent Involvement Department to discuss the project and ideas for implementation. The collaboration resulted in the "Education Toolbox" project being rolled out to the first grade teachers and principals at a special "Lunch and Learn" event held in August.

Stephanie Ward, president of the Junior League, was on hand to greet the attendees with a motivational message about the power of volunteerism. Instructional Leader Linda Trifon and Chief Business Officer Ronne Froman also offered their personal perspectives and words of praise. Teachers enjoyed lunch, received an Education Toolkit, and previewed the kit's parent video.

"We wanted to honor teachers for their hard work and dedication," said Kristin Siyahian, committee chairperson for the project. "Plus, we wanted to do something really practical and helpful for parents, as well as fun for students."

For more information on the program, please contact Melissa Whipple in the Parent Involvement Department at (619) 725-5605.



At Sherman Elementary's recent *Back to School Night*, 1st grader Jessica Cisneros proudly posed with her new backpack. "I love it," she giggled. "Muchas gracias."

Ordinance Video *Getting to Know You: Leigh Freeman*

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on-camera as role models. And with Serra High being one of our target audiences, it only made sense to use Serra students," said Ursula Kroemer, Video Services manager and producer of the video. "We had them really think about ways to influence the re-enactment so it felt real to them, including what they said and how they said it, and they did a great job."

The student cast included Thomas Caswell, Amy Lang, Lauren Lynaugh and Amy Montgomery. Thomas Haakma, a creative services specialist with the district, posed as the "coach." Barry Ladwig and Shane Parmely handled videotaping duties. Parmely is now, coincidentally, a teacher at Serra.

The city's fire department took the need to create a legitimate scenario seriously, providing not one, not two, but three fire department vehicles including a battalion truck and the bomb disposal unit. Firefighter "cast members" included Captain Jeff Carle, Captain Glenn Cheek, Firefighter Tim Okey, Engineer Eddie Peterson, Investigator Russ Steppe and Firefighter-Paramedic John Wilson. The city's Airborne Law Enforcement Unit (ABLE) also graciously consented to helping secure aerial footage of Tierrasanta, taking Video Services photographer Victor Vargas up for a bird's eye view.

"It was truly a collaborative project. We had the Corps' involvement with ZapataEngineering. We had the Police Department's help through ABLE. We couldn't have made it without the firefighters and the Metro Arson Strike Team (MAST) – the bomb squad. Councilmember Jim Madaffer taped our closing, and Serra couldn't have been more helpful with the students. There were so many people involved and participating in some way that it made it a really a fun project to put together," added Kroemer.

The video was distributed to Serra, Scripps Ranch and Patrick Henry high schools; De Portola, Farb, Marshall and Wangenheim middle/junior high schools; and two schools in the Santee area: West Hills High and Carlton Oaks School. Copies were also sent to the Tierrasanta Community Council. Schools are encouraged to show the video at community functions and to share with parent-teacher organizations to increase community awareness of the issue.

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when she's not behind the wheel, Leigh spends time with her husband, Michael, who she met while driving for the district, children, Sharla and Anthony, and her pets, which include a show whippet.

Tell me a little bit about your average day.

A typical day at work for me at about 5:35 a.m. when I clock in. I check out my bus and fill out a report and make my stops until about 9:20. I then have a long break that I use to do errands, including taking care of my animals. I report back to Transportation at 1:40 p.m. and do my routes, usually returning at about 5:30 p.m. Of course, that all depends on traffic! On my routes, I drive wheelchair-equipped buses and like to do routes that serve special needs children. I feel that it gives me more one-on-one time with parents, school staff, and the children.

What do you like about your job?

I enjoy being trusted and relied upon to do my job without direct supervision. It gives me a greater sense of responsibility and professionalism. It's also a great way to enjoy the diversity of San Diego.

How has the job changed since you began in 1978?

Traffic problems and the flow of traffic have gotten much worse since I began. Safety is our number one priority and we never hurry, but being in stop and go gridlock all day gets to you. The stress of traffic is amazing.

What innovations and changes have you seen during your career?

I've been working as a bus driver for so long, I've had a lot of time to see the styles of buses change. When I started, we drove vans, which were horrible. Now buses are more ergonomically friendly, plus they have safety features like stop arms, amber lights, and compartmentalized seating. This type of seating eliminates the need for seat belts because the seats are made close enough for kids so that in the event of impact, the kids don't fly and get injured. It's better for everyone- students, parents, and drivers.

What are some of the challenges of driving a bus?

Bus drivers have to be prepared to work from 5:15 in the morning to 5:45 in the evening, which requires being fit both mentally and physically. Also, we have to know the city, from as far north as Poway, as far south as Chula Vista, and as far east as La Mesa.

How are you aided in your job?

The mechanics here and the safety and training department do an excellent job. We're in good hands when we go out, the buses are very well maintained and we're very well trained.

What would you suggest parents do to keep their children safe around buses?

The most annoying and worrisome thing I see is parents who drop kids off and

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People & Places

Executive Director of Student Services Joanne Wall has been



TKF mission to Stop Children from Killing Children

honored by the **Tariq Khamisa Foundation** with the **Gandhi Non-Violence Award**. The award, presented at TKF's annual benefit luncheon, is named for Sunana and Arun Gandhi, founders of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence. Arun Gandhi is the fifth grandson of India's late spiritual and political "Mahatma" Gandhi. Joanne was recognized for her life-long dedication to education and for her support of youth violence prevention programs. The Khamisa Foundation also recognized Joanne for her diligence in identifying funding to conduct Violence Impact Forums at ten campuses with the highest expulsion and suspension rates in an effort to reach youth most in need.

Chavez Elementary School principal Cecilia Estrada was honored as an outstanding educator at the **La Raza Lawyers Annual Scholarship and Awards Dinner** at the San Diego Convention Center. The evening's theme was "Inspiration to Children." Cecilia brought as her guest a student she felt really fit that criterion - **6th grader Jonathan Ramos**, a student who inspires others with the grace and courage with which he deals with a physical disability.

Classified Ads

ADS RUN ON SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS
- Send to Communications Office, Room 2145, Eugene Brucker Education Center.
Limit to 10 words (not including phone) or ad not accepted. Include work location and phone (for ID purposes only).

For Sale: '92 Mazda MPV van, excl. cond., 10 CD chngr., \$3,950, 619-246-9392; **Sectional** couch, forest gr., sofabed, recliners, heat, massage, \$500, 619-251-4784; '87 Honda Accord, wht, 2dr, hatchback, 194K, great shape, \$2,000, 619-475-0419; **Full size**, pillow top bed, 3 yrs. old, 858-453-1978; **Dachshund**, male, black/tan, 8 mos., \$150, 619-934-3770; **For Rent:** **Condo**, Chula Vista, 2br/2ba, all appl., patio, gated comm., \$1,100/mo., 619-269-0855; **Wanted:** Donate unwanted, unused exercise equip. for Adapted PE prog., Tony @760-749-7868.

Leigh Freeman

(Continued from page five)

almost encourage them to jaywalk. We bus drivers park bumper to bumper so that people can't squeeze between the buses, but they still try, and that's incredibly dangerous. I would say the most important thing a parent can do is to instill pedestrian safety in their children from a young age.

Have an idea for a district profile? Send your suggestions to Staff Bulletin Profile, Education Center, Room 2145.

The next Staff Bulletin will appear November 6. Deadline for submissions is October 24. Please note that deadlines are final and cannot be extended. Staff Bulletin is on the web site at www.sandi.net.

Staff Bulletin

Published for employees of San Diego City Schools twice monthly except during school holidays, and monthly in July.
Editor: Ursula Kroemer

Send news items and classified ads to:
Staff Bulletin

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Free Flu Shots Provided for District Employees

Free flu shots are again being provided by Aetna Health Care to all benefited employees of the district, regardless of the employee's health coverage. Clinics will be held:

Monday, November 18, 2002 – Crawford High School - 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Monday, November 18, 2002 – Mission Bay High School – 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Tuesday, November 19, 2002 – Education Center – 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 20, 2002 – Gompers – 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Wednesday, November 20, 2002 – Morse High School – 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Thursday, November 21, 2002 – Maintenance & Operations – 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Friday, November 22, 2002 – San Diego High School – 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Friday, November 22, 2002 – Mira Mesa High School – 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Questions regarding the clinics should be directed Cindy Johnsen at (858) 627-7586. The district extends thanks to Aetna for this valuable health service.



News You Can Use!

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www.sdsu.edu/espanol, concentrate on information that parents need to know to help their children qualify for admission to the California State University system and to SDSU. They cover required core high school courses and other eligibility requirements, parent and student orientation events, application information, financial aid and other resources available to help students and parents, and related information.

Looking Ahead



It's Proposition MM's four-year anniversary! The \$1.5 billion bond measure, which funds the modernization of 165 schools and construction of 16 new/rebuilt schools, was overwhelmingly passed by 78 percent of voters in November 1998. Sequoia Elementary will host a celebration on Monday, Oct. 28, at 10:30 a.m. to commemorate the anniversary and dedicate its new Prop. MM library. Feel free to stop by Sequoia and join in the festivities.

The **Community Service Association (CSA)**, the employee contribution club, is holding its annual **membership drive kickoff meeting** on Wednesday, October 30, at 8:30 a.m. and again at 3:30 p.m. at the Balboa Park Recital Hall. CSA site representatives need attend only one of the meetings. The membership drive runs from October 30 – November 22, 2002. During the 2001-2002 school year, San Diego City Schools' employees contributed \$300,000 to the Community Service Association. It will be disbursed to local nonprofit charities at the end of October. For information, contact Mary Bartholomew at (619) 465-2210.

The deadline for submitting names for the **San Diego Union-Tribune's Fall Sports All-Academic Prep Team** is

Thursday, October 31, 2002. Only 11th and 12th grade, varsity athletes with cumulative GPAs of 3.0 or better are eligible. The All-Academic Prep Team recognizes outstanding high school student athletes who have demonstrated both athletic ability and academic prowess. For information, contact Debbie Perger at the Union-Tribune, (619) 293-1807 or email debbie.perger@uniontrib.com.

Applications are being accepted for the **Team America Rocketry Challenge**, the first national model rocket competition for high school and junior high school students. Five winning student teams will share a total prize pool of \$59,000. In addition, three of the top ten teams are eligible to win \$2,500 grants, including travel expenses, to launch an advanced rocket with NASA and to attend Space Camp. Each of the top 25 teams' schools will be able to send one teacher on an all expenses paid trip to an advanced NASA rocketry workshop. The event is sponsored by the **Aerospace Industries Association** and the **National Association of Rocketry**. Application deadline is November 15, 2002. For more information and an application, visit www.RocketContest.org.

