

# Staff Bulletin

For the employees of San Diego City Schools



Vol. 77

March 12, 2003

No. 4

## New Directions for Food Services: Transforming School Lunch

The old version of what “cafeteria food” was like possibly included a mystery meat and limp vegetables. But that’s all changed today in San Diego City Schools! School lunch is now something students (and staff) can look forward to, thanks to some major innovations in food service and a focus on customer service.

“Our first major move toward improvement was finding out what kids wanted for lunch and then figuring out a way to make it happen,” says Food Services Director Gary Petill, who joined the district in September 2002. Surveys and interviews with students, parents and staff showed change was clearly needed and long overdue.

Food Service staff not directly involved with food preparation also began, at Petill’s direction, visiting school sites on a regular basis to have lunch with students, meet and talk with staff, and bring back observations and ideas for collaborative team work, and project and menu development. “This one-on-one contact gave us some very important information about how the organization was running, and how students felt about our



food,” says Petill. “Plus, it was exciting for staff who didn’t have regular contact with students to see and hear for themselves what students were and are experiencing.”

Getting that kind of feedback is no small task, given Food Services’ workload on any given day. Food Services prepares and services over 105,000 meals and snacks per day. The food is prepared in 24 preparation kitchens throughout the district, involving the work of more than 1,300 food service employees. The volume of food served is staggering. As an example, approximately 100,000 half-pints of milk and 71,000 apples

*(Continued on page three)*

## Getting to Know You:

**Lolita Harrison,**  
Food Services Mgr,  
Montgomery Middle  
School



**Tell us a little about your career with SDCS.**

I started out 13 years ago as a two-hour cafeteria helper at Pershing and then moved into a permanent food service worker position. I also worked at Mann, Serra, Zamorano, Wilson and Marston before I moved up into a senior cook position here at Montgomery. This is my first year as a manager and I love it.

**What was your background before coming to SDCS?**

I was born in Arkansas, but have lived in San Diego for 21 years. I graduated from Lincoln High School. I’m a single mom of three wonderful children. I worked at Sharp Hospital before coming to the district, but I really like working for the schools. The hours are good for me, and the opportunity for advancement is there, too.

**How would you describe your job?**

Hard work! You know how hard it is to put one meal on the table at home and get every thing prepared properly on time and served

*(Continued on page three)*

## Parent Outreach on the Budget Situation

While San Diego City Schools continues to deal with a critical budget situation shared by districts throughout California, the district remains committed to keeping the classroom our number one budget priority. We are also committed to providing ongoing, accurate information about the budget situation to district staff, but also to the parents of our 140,000 students.

By now, you will have become familiar with the Budget Situation page on the district website, [www.sandi.net/budget](http://www.sandi.net/budget).

As a way to provide parents outreach on the budget situation, a new Budget Information for Parents page is now online at <http://www.sandi.net/budget/forparents.htm>. It’s accessible from the front page of the district website, and school sites are encouraged to share this information with their parents at meetings and through individual school newsletters.

The page provides an overview of the budget situation to parents, including an

*(Continued on page two)*

## Future Staff Bulletins

In response to the budget situation and in an effort to maintain the districts’ focus on classroom instruction, we are discontinuing printed editions of the Staff Bulletin, effective with this issue. All future editions of the Staff Bulletin will be available online only. All-staff emails will be sent to those employees with active Quickmail accounts to notify

*(Continued on page four)*

## Close up on Curriculum: Science

Wanna-be scientists are popping up all over San Diego City Schools these days, as hundreds of students have had opportunities to hear from, spend time with and be impressed by both locally- and nationally-acclaimed scientists. Here's a snapshot of recent activities in San Diego City Schools:

More than 50 district schools were recently part of an extensive collaborative program, "Journey through the Universe," which brought eight researchers and scientists from the Challenger Space Science Center, NASA, Jet Propulsion Laboratory and CalTech to five different school districts countywide. The program was sponsored by San Diego City Schools, the County Office of Education, the University of San Diego, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center and the San Diego Science Alliance. The special guests made more than 100 presentations in fifth grade classrooms, plus provided special teacher training sessions and conducted three Community Science Nights.

At Rolando Park Elementary, the visiting researcher was Dr. Aprille Ericsson, an aerospace engineer from NASA and the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Engineering at the Goddard Space Flight Center. Ericsson was born and raised in Brooklyn and shared stories of her upbringing and her

career with an enraptured group of students from Bill Guth and Ruthie Murray's classes. Cameras were rolling in the classroom as well, to document the special visit for an upcoming "Education Spotlight" on the ITV channel.

More and more schools are developing Family Science Nights to introduce families to the science curriculum and activities. Balboa Elementary is hosting its upcoming Family Math and Science Evening as a joint event with the San Diego Supercomputer Center and will focus on grades 4-6. The evening will begin with a family pizza feast, then families will receive their Passport to the Future to experience a variety of science and mathematics activities, culminating with a Make It/Take It project and goody bag. Last year's science evening at Balboa drew more than 300 participants. Similar Science Nights are planned at La Jolla and Franklin elementary schools, as well.



## Parent Outreach on the Budget

*(Continued from page one)*

outline of the principles in place to guide our budget decisions:

- ◆ Protect the instructional core that contributes to student learning and improves student achievement
- ◆ Protect direct services to the classroom and students
- ◆ Continue to streamline systems
- ◆ Ensure safety of students, teachers and staff
- ◆ Maintain lifecycle maintenance plans (major maintenance and repairs)

We welcome and are actively seeking input from parents and employee groups about ways to reduce costs for the 2003-2004 school year. Several parent-centered meetings are scheduled to provide parents this opportunity and summaries will be posted on the web. For those parents who are unable to attend these meetings, an opportunity to provide input is available through an online budget development input section.

Since the budget development process is a complicated and confusing one, special materials have been developed to help parents understand issues including how enrollment affects funds and what we mean when we talk about restricted funds. These materials include:

- ◆ Budget Update Presentations for Parent Congress
- ◆ A Fact Sheet on the district's sources of revenue and funding
- ◆ A Fact Sheet on the costs of district managerial administration
- ◆ A Budget Process and Budget Cycle chart from the state's Assembly Budget Committee.

Additionally, the Parent Outreach section includes a Q&A section to respond to commonly asked questions about the budget situation, including the process the district must follow in notifying teachers and principals about possible layoffs. Additional information will be added to this page on a regular basis, so please have parents check back frequently.

For more information, please visit [www.sandi.net/budget/forparents.htm](http://www.sandi.net/budget/forparents.htm).

## Hall of Fame

San Diego City Schools' efforts for the nationwide gun-safety observance, **Day of**

**Concern**, held last October have been highlighted in the **National Day of Concern Newsletter**. The district's program, which put together a series of age-appropriate videos along with curriculum and web-based parent outreach, was one of seven programs spotlighted from around the country. Other districts spotlighted included those from Washington, D.C., Honolulu, Boston and Chicago. The district was commended for putting its materials on the web, so parents could have access to materials their children would be discussing in school. The overall program was led by **Counseling Services**, which worked with the district's **Video Services** and **Web Services** teams and the **Tariq Khamisa Foundation**, to develop the videos and specialized curriculum.



## Transforming School Lunch

(Continued from page one)

are served daily. For some students, meals at school make up the bulk of their diet. More than 53% of the district's students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

With the results of survey and interview feedback, and after studying ways to streamline business operations, Kid's Choice Cafés were introduced at three elementary schools (Penn, Doyle and Rolando Park) and will continue to be implemented at about three schools per week until all elementary schools have Kid's Choice Cafés. For the first time elementary students have the choice of five entrées, including a salad bar each day. Entrées include student favorites like chicken nuggets and hamburgers and also include spaghetti and shrimp poppers. The salad bars offer fresh fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks such as sunflower seeds and dried cranberries. The salad bars are also used at breakfast to offer fruit. Soon additional items will be added at breakfast including granola, dried fruit and yogurt.

Students are choosing what they eat and eating what they choose. Very little food is thrown away.

Changes are also occurring in secondary schools. New menu choices and new methods of service are being introduced on selected campuses. Campbell's soup, salad and sandwich carts have been placed at Scripps Ranch High School and soon will be at Clark Middle School and San Diego High School. Talks have started with the Soup Plantation restaurant chain to work on the possibility of bringing soup and salad bars into our secondary schools to encourage students to make healthy choices. Ideas for other theme carts and possibly traveling kiosks are being explored as well.

Another key initiative involves the promotion of healthier eating habits among students, including helping students switch from eating high fat and high sugar snacks to more fruits and vegetables. Roosevelt Junior High and Memorial Middle Schools are part of a LEAF (Linking Education, Activity and Food) grant and will work with Food Services on developing healthy, life-long eating habits.

All student menus are written following strict nutritional guidelines as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The

(Continued on page four)

## Lolita Harrison

(Continued from page one)

hot. Multiply that times the 3500 meals per day being prepared in our kitchen for 11 different serving locations and that is a lot of hard work for all our staff. We prepare meals for young children in child development centers to high school students and staff.

### Tell us about your staff.

We have an awesome team and we have to work as a team to get everything done each day. These ladies are great to work with. We often play the radio in the kitchen and sing along with it. It creates a fun atmosphere and good morale, and the kids like it too. At our monthly production meetings, we emphasize the team approach. The staff is encouraged to make suggestions and solve problems.

### What do you enjoy most about your job on a daily basis?

The best part of my job is being with the kids. I love talking to them and encouraging them to eat healthy foods. Choosing an apple may be the only piece of fruit they eat all day. Even if they don't eat it at lunch, they will have it in their backpack to eat on the way home from school.

### What are your biggest challenges as a food service manager?

It is a never-ending challenge to maintain cost control and still serve appetizing,

delicious food. Being a new manager and directing the activities of my co-workers used to be a bigger challenge that it is now. I've learned so much from my mentor and boss, Etter Elliott. She is so patient and such a good teacher and role model, I can't help but get better at my job every day.

### What changes have you made to improve the meals at Montgomery?

We are trying to encourage more students to eat breakfast. There are so many kids who don't eat breakfast at home or at school, it is really sad. We are trying to adjust our serving times, introduce new menu items, and just get the word out. We have also improved the teacher's line. Mary (May) Martinez has done a great job there. We work with the Food Services staff at Revere Center and try new things whenever we can. We introduced an ice cream service this year.

### What suggestions do you have for students and parents about the school lunch program?

Take advantage of it! This is such good healthy food. Many students could qualify for free or reduced meals but their parents don't fill out the form. Sometimes students forget their PIN numbers. That's not a problem, we will look it up for them. Even if they have to pay, it is only \$ .50 for breakfast and \$1.50 for lunch. What a great deal!

## SDCS Students Dedicate SeaWorld Education Complex

Several San Diego City Schools students participated in a recent hard-hat tour and groundbreaking ceremony at SeaWorld San Diego as it begins construction of a new, state-of-the-art education complex, "Adventure Camp San Diego." The new campus, due to open this summer, will include three classrooms, a multi-use auditorium and a two-story dormitory, complete with eight rooms that will sleep a total of 128 campers. The complex will also include food service areas, storage for wet suits, and a grassy area for games, crafts and picnics.

"For more than 30 years, our education programs have been the hallmark of the park's mission to entertain, amaze and educate," says SeaWorld general manager Dennis Burks. "Participants immerse themselves in fun, hands-on, marine-life interactions that leave them with a greater appreciation for life in the world's oceans."



SeaWorld San Diego's education outreach programs have benefited more than 13,000 students at more than 40 district schools. It's also one of the original SDCS "Partners in Education" and celebrates a 21-year relationship with Clairemont High School this June.



## Future Staff Bulletins

(Continued from page one)

them the Bulletin is available.

In response to staff who requested an easier and faster way to print out the online edition, a link will be included on the front page of each online Bulletin that allows you to print out a copy in its entirety. For those employees who wish to print out a specific page or column, you can continue to do so by hitting "control-P" or hitting the "print" button at the top of the targeted page.

Since not all staff has regular access to a computer or Quickmail, please help ensure Staff Bulletin reaches all employees in one of the following ways:

- Designating a site employee to print out each edition for posting on a common bulletin board
- Arranging times for employees without computers to use yours for viewing the Staff Bulletin

All Staff Bulletins will continue to be available on the front page of the website, and will be archived on the For District Staff page of the web at <http://www.sandi.net/indices/staff.htm>. Additionally, the weekly electronic Newsline will also continue to be available via the website, and is archived on the For District Staff page.

Your continued feedback regarding Staff Bulletin, Newsline and the website is welcomed and encouraged. Please send your comments via the school mail to Communications Office, Ed Center, Room 2145, or email [sdcinfo@mail.sandi.net](mailto:sdcinfo@mail.sandi.net).

**The next Staff Bulletin will appear Mar. 26. Deadline for submissions is Mar. 20. Please note that deadlines are final and cannot be extended. Staff Bulletin is on the web site.**

### Staff Bulletin

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

Send news items and classified ads to:

Staff Bulletin  
Education Center, Room 2145  
phone: (619)725-5578; fax: (619)725-5576  
e-mail: [communications@mail.sandi.net](mailto:communications@mail.sandi.net)

### Board of Education

Ron Ottinger, President  
John de Beck, Vice President  
Edward Lopez  
Katherine Nakamura  
Frances O'Neill Zimmerman  
Superintendent of Public Education  
Alan D. Bersin

## Scenes from Schools

Serra High School has nifty new look to its entryway corner, thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Serra High Foundation. The "Serra Corner," located at the corner of Tierrasanta Blvd. and Santo Rd., is a prominent entry into the Tierrasanta neighborhood. The Foundation recently raised funds to have a monument built and new fencing and sidewalks installed. The entire area is also fully landscaped now. A dedication ceremony held February 25 included a variety of special guests, including San Diego City Councilmember Jim Madaffer, who contributed \$20,000 toward the project.



## Transforming School Lunch Menus in SDCS

(Continued from page three)

elementary and secondary lunch menus are computer analyzed to insure they provide one-third the Recommended Dietary Allowances for calories, protein, vitamins A and C and the minerals calcium and iron. They also meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans of 30% or less calories from fat and 10% or less calories from saturated fat.

What's the response been to the changes so far? "Student, staff and parent feedback

has been overwhelmingly positive and the number of meals being eaten has skyrocketed," says Petill. "We've also made improvements to the cafeteria environment itself, including really colorful, animated food murals with their school's mascot incorporated into them.

"All the students know is....lunch just got a lot more fun."

For more information, please visit [www2.sandi.net/food/](http://www2.sandi.net/food/).

## News You Can Use

The San Diego chapter of the **California Chicano News Media Association (CCNMA)** is accepting applications for its annual **Multi-Cultural Journalism Workshop**. This year's workshop will be held June 22-July 3 at Point Loma Nazarene University, but will also utilize the facilities of the San Diego Union-Tribune and NBC7/39. Between 20-24 students will receive an intense education in journalism from local

professionals and will publish a newspaper and produce a television and radio news broadcast. The workshop is free for students. Students must currently be high school juniors and seniors. The application deadline is March 21. For more information, or to download an application, please visit [www.ccnma.org](http://www.ccnma.org). You can also leave a voicemail message at the CCNMA offices at (619) 303-6892.

## 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:** Computer desk, wood, \$100, 619-280-2906; Packard Bell computer, monitor, printer, 6 yrs. old, \$200, 619-280-2906; Two identical shelving units, very good cond., \$100/obo, 619-795-6127; Oster food processor/mixer/blender, all in one, \$100/obo, 619-795-6127; '02 Harley, FXDL, EX, warranty, loaded, \$15.5K/obo, 619-464-5454; '02 GMC Sonoma truck, bed liner, CD player, \$13,500, 619-934-3198; Sofa, xlr. chair w/ottoman, excel. cond., \$375, 619-267-2090; Leather sofa, and chair, light beige, good cond., \$500/set; 619-470-8277; Bike, Huffy, green, brand new, \$75, 619-667-3492; '95 Mustang GT, 5.0L engine, auto, all power, nice, \$7,400/obo, 619-602-6316; '71 Honda motor cycle, collectable SL70, runs good, no papers, \$500/obo, 619-203-6378;

**For Rent:** Share lrg. condo, La Costa, 3br/2.5 ba, pool, tennis court, \$650/mo., utils inc., 760-753-2971.