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The changing landscape of high school
education in East Long Beach

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LB908 LONG BEACH



When I considered starting this magazine a little over four years ago, a deciding factor was that it would give me the opportunity to write an article about one of my favorite teachers at Wilson High School, Rick Vandruff, who tragically passed away the year before. I'll give you a short recap of that article since I assume a majority used that first, skimpy looking 16-page LB908 magazine to pad the lining of your recycling bin (or something along those lines).

Mr. Vandruff was almost everyone's favorite teacher. I had him for AP Art History, but he also taught Ceramics, Wood-shop and a lot of other classes at Wilson between 1993 and 2010. Vandruff made learning fun and being involved in school activities cool. "Don't be the student who watches stuff happen," he said every year at freshman orientation. "Be the student who makes stuff happen."

When Mr. Vandruff became too sick to teach and passed away at the age of 55, his former students were shaken. It showed on social media. Thousands of Facebook comments and likes. But it never showed on paper. There was nothing of note written about Mr. Vandruff in a newspaper, or newsletter from the school, or really anything.

My dad in particular convinced me that his story should be written. He was a definite mentor of mine (among many from East Long Beach schools including Paula Riley, page 18). And so, we ended up going through with that first magazine and I wrote a short, but meaningful (to me, at least) obituary for Mr. Vandruff.

I bring all this up now, at the beginning of our "amazing middle school teachers" issue, because teachers are so often under-recognized for the massive, positive impact they have on all of us. Some teachers are definitely nothing to write home about- I'm not unrealistic. But the ones listed in the table of contents to the right are recognized as amazing.

They go above and beyond for their students, and as you and I know, will in the end have an impact on their students that reaches far beyond one year. These amazing people, with stories over the following pages, are worth reading because they are inspiring and encouraging. Whether or not you have affiliation to them or their school, I hope you enjoy their articles and are maybe inspired to remember one of your favorite teachers...or better yet reconnect. If Mr. Vandruff's passing taught me anything, it's that it is better to appreciate people when they're alive than after they're gone. My hope is that we've done that here in this issue.

Enjoy,
John Grossi

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Advertiser Spotlight

For this issue, 908 Magazine Publisher John Grossi sits down with the Rooneys to learn more about their business and to thank them for supporting 908 magazine.



Joey and Shelley Rooney at The Crooked Duck

Hi Joey and Shelley, can you briefly describe your restaurant and the vision behind your business?

We are an American Grill with a little bit of everything on the menu. We wanted something that would be a nice breakfast-lunch coffee shop- then at 5pm dim the lights, get some candles glowing, and make it a dinner house. We also wanted a place where a group can go out together and everyone can choose something for their own taste and price range. You can order a high end \$30 lobster if you want, but the person next to you can have a burger for \$12. You can be comfortable here in sweats or a tux.

How did you get your start in the restaurant business?

I, Joey, started working at a restaurant when I was 15. My older brother worked at a place called Towne Steak House and he called me one day in a panic saying they needed a dishwasher pronto. I started 15 minutes later and kept washing dishes and bussing all through high school.

When I moved out to California I worked at a really nice place called Mirabelle in Hollywood. I learned a lot from the owner there about the front of the house and how to make people feel comfortable.

From there I opened up a place called Café 50's in West LA. I owned that with a partner for 22 years and learned a lot- especially about making a good breakfast. It's a classic 50's style diner, and it's still there today.

Why did you choose to start your business in East Long Beach in the first place and how are you a part of the community?

We've lived here 27 years and love being a part of the community. Our kids Madison and Max went to Minnie Gant, Burcham, Stanford, and Wilson. Both kids have worked here, and Madison was a huge part of our opening here.

We love Long Beach and its small town feel. People are so supportive of small business, and everyone knows everyone. Shelley always tells me not to drive like a New Yorker and flip anyone off because if you upset one person, chances are they know everyone else in Long Beach too!

Name something unique at The Crooked Duck.

We draw a duck in every table-side latte we serve.

The whole water ski theme is something that no one's ever done before but we did it because that's my passion. Water skiing and restaurants.

How has your concept at The Crooked Duck changed since you opened on September 12th, 2011?

When we opened we wanted to be the place we always wished we had within walking distance from our house. A nice breakfast and lunch joint. But dinner has really evolved to be a main part of our business. It started with our daily



Corned Beef Hash



Table-side Latte



Breakfast Biscuits and Gravy

specials, like our wild fresh fish, plates that have evolved into everyday meals. Our wine list is also really good and solid. We actually discount good wines for Happy Hour. Some places just serve cheaper wine.

Are there certain dishes or entrees that have become customer favorites? What is your favorite entrée?

Breakfast customers love the Corned Beef Hash, Chicken Fried Steak, Kentucky Breakfast, and Chile Verde Omelet (weekends only).

For lunch there is our fresh catch of the day on a spinach leaf salad with candy walnuts, feta cheese, mandarin oranges, and raspberry vinaigrette. Also the Rueben Sandwich and, of course, the Monte Cristo.

Dinner- our meatloaf's amazing- it's a comfort food and it's delicious- 100% grass fed beef. We add black coffee to the gravy, sauté it and serve it on the meatloaf and it's amazing with our garlic mashed potatoes and steamed vegetables.

Joey's favorite: Avocado Joe (breakfast) and Fresh Fish for dinner
Shelley's favorite: B.O.B (Boring Old Burger).

What is your favorite restaurant besides The Crooked Duck?

The Abbey in Seal Beach is our go-to place, and EJ Malloys on Broadway for a beer and a game.

What is the best part about owning your own restaurant?

We've met so many people from so many walks of life- you get to know people on a first name basis. I also love being close to my family as our restaurant is so close to home.

What would you like to say to your customers in Long Beach?

Thank you for being so loyal and such a tight-knit community. This is a family friendly restaurant so bring the kids. Mrs. Rooney says come on in! We wouldn't be successful without such loyal support. Long Beach is such a unique community- something like this restaurant could never happen in West LA. I'll be dining in Seal Beach, and someone will walk up to me and say "I love your restaurant." It just rocks to hear that.

Thank you so much for your time and for being such an outstanding business in East Long Beach!



Gorgonzola Bacon Burger



Coyote Chicken Pasta



Fresh Fish Spinach Leaf Salad



Meatloaf with Red Eye Gravy



A Passion for Quality Savings...

Long Beach Grocery Outlet

By John Grossi

I've never met anyone as passionate about a grocery store as Jonathan and Jennifer Lawton, proud purveyors of Long Beach Grocery Outlet. Then again, I'd never met actual hands-on grocery store owners before.

You should meet them too. Jonathan (Jon) and wife Jennifer (Jen) are high school sweethearts from the state of Washington. After high school, Jen worked as a hairdresser in downtown Seattle while Jon enlisted in the Navy, where he served for 6 years including deployment to Iraq. After he returned home, Jon and Jen began their family. They had always dreamt of owning a family business.

During their very first walkthrough, each knew instantly that they wanted to own and operate their Grocery Outlet. "It's the size and selection of a Trader Joes with prices often lower than a Costco," says Jon excitedly. Grocery Outlet sells items for often 50% less than in conventional grocery stores.

Let's take an easy example – a box of cereal. Why does an ordinary-looking box of Cinnamon Toast Crunch sell for \$1.99 at Grocery Outlet when the same product sells elsewhere for \$5-\$6? Jon and Jen showed me the sticker on the top. "The \$1,000 opportunity drawing promotion is no longer active."

About 70% of Grocery Outlet items are "opportunistic purchases," massively reduced in price due to repackaging, overstocks, and pending expiration dates. The other 30% includes such everyday items as produce (delivered 5 days a week), fresh meat and dairy (delivered 3 days a week), and bread (delivered fresh every day). Everything in the store is a bargain. If they can't find an item at a great deal they either drop their profit margin or just don't carry it.

Healthy shoppers love the store's "NOSH" section. "NOSH" at Grocery Outlet stands for Natural, Organic, Specialty, or Healthy. Those who care about natural and organic, or gluten-free products will be astonished at Grocery Outlet's offering. They'll find products normally reserved for high-end, specialty stores at huge discounts.

"Healthy and organic foods can be very expensive in conventional stores," says Jen, "We beat their prices by a lot."

facebook.com/longbeachgroceryoutlet

6436 E Spring St. Long Beach, CA 90815

“It’s the size and selection of a Trader Joes with prices often lower than a Costco,” says Jon

Long Beach Grocery Outlet sells wines for \$3-\$5 that go for \$15-\$20 at a conventional store. How do they do that? One way is that wineries overproduce and need to move into the next vintage year, so they’ll clear out last year’s product at a substantial discount to Grocery Outlet. For the highest quality wines, wineries will sometimes take blank bottles, affix a simple label and allow the store to sell those high quality bottles at under the wholesale price!

The excitement Jon and Jen have for their company hasn’t diminished since the day they first toured a store, after which they began working their way up the ranks: loading shelves, sweeping the floor, and doing general dirty work. Always with the intention of one day owning a store, their hard work and passion moved them quickly up the totem pole.

Within two years the couple moved to open up a very challenging Grocery Outlet in Oroville, California. They turned this very difficult store into one of the biggest Grocery Outlet successes in the country.

“Our job is to know the customers and their needs and to make sure that our ever changing inventory is stocked with what our customers want and need.”

One way the Lawtons learn what the customer wants is by walking the floor. They love getting to know customers personally, as do the six managers who moved down with the couple to work in the Long Beach store.



The NOSH section offers unbelievable prices for the health-conscious



The store offers high quality wines at wholesale prices!



This is a family-owned grocery store. You may see Jon, Jen, and their three children driving around town!

“We’re all super excited to be in Long Beach. Oroville was always a stepping stone for us and not where we planned to live our whole lives. Long Beach is different. The response has already been unbelievably welcoming.”

In recent months Jon, Jen, and their three kids have dived into East Long Beach culture head first. They have loved everyone they’ve met and worked with thus far, from their councilwoman Stacy Mungo, to Millikan High School ASB, to the Assisteens Women’s Club

and the Ronald McDonald House.

“It’s hard to beat Southern California and specifically Long Beach,” they explain. “We plan to raise our kids here.”

It takes a family to know a family, and the Lawtons know what families want when it comes to grocery shopping. The best prices possible without sacrificing quality. This vision excited Jonathan and Jennifer more than a decade ago and their passion has only grown. ■

Spend a day this season 10 minutes west in beautiful...



By Blair Cohn

Greetings from Bixby Knolls! The Bixby Knolls neighborhood is just to the west of East Long Beach and is a bustling community that connects residents to its businesses.

And vibrant it is. Bixby Knolls has a lot to offer you year round- from boutique shopping, to the best in craft beers and wines, to services from auto repair, to swim lessons and opportunities for kids to be involved with music lessons, digital media and theatre.

Additionally, the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association organizes free events each month for all to enjoy. The First Fridays Art Walk is the premier event that kicks off each month. From 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm along the pedestrian zone of Atlantic Avenue (San Antonio to Bixby Road) people are treated to live music, art shows, and everything from stilt walkers to fire dancers. Businesses stay open late and

there is something for everyone. The event's motto is "Expect the unexpected" and you can count on that.

Another fun Bixby Knolls event that brings the community together is the Supper Club. Every first Monday of the month the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association facilitates a program that takes its residents and business owners to different Bixby Knolls restaurants to introduce them to a new dining experience. Come try the great flavors offered here!

The BKBIA also holds a monthly community book club called the Bixby Knolls Literary Society at Elise's Tea Room (3924 Atlantic Avenue). Meeting on the second Wednesday of every month promptly at 7 p.m., the society focuses on current releases as well as the great American Classics of the 20th century.

Most recently, the BKBIA just launched the Bixby Knolls Good

Spirits Club, which provides drink enthusiasts with the best in craft beers and wines.

For the kids, the Kidical Mass Bike Ride cruises the neighborhood every third Sunday for a family friendly bike ride. All ages and ability levels are welcome...and there is free ice cream when the ride is over!

Last but not least, everyone is welcome to the neighborhood walking club, Bixby Knolls Strollers, a group that meets every Saturday morning starting at 7:30 at the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf. The group goes for an hour walk around the neighborhood. The stroll gives Bixby Knolls residents and outsiders alike the opportunity to see what's going on in the Bixby Knolls community and at the local businesses.

All this and more are contributing to Bixby Knolls growing into the thriving community it is today. See what's going on in Bixby Knolls by visiting www.bixbyknollsinfo.com. ■



Here at Church of the Nazarene, we are faithful Christians, committed to following the Lord Jesus and helping others.

Here are just a few things we've been doing to serve Christ and to help the local and global community, because we are in the people business!

Commitment to people in crisis

We work with the City of Long Beach homeless division helping them prepare for crisis by having emergency showers and shelter available in the city. We also have an active missions department, which has helped countless people throughout the world.

In this past year, we've helped repair homes, paint a school, and assist an orphanage. We've also had missionaries in Eastern Europe greet the refugees fleeing from ISIS. We've sent countless mosquito nets for people in Africa to protect against malaria. Finally, we've put together "Banana Boxes," large care packages for the homeless in Long Beach.

Pastor Brad says, "Sometimes, just a bar of soap can be an answer to prayer."

Commitment to Education

Not only are we revitalizing our pre-school, as Pastor Brad and wife Susan are passionate about education (they themselves are obtaining doctorates from Grand Canyon University), but the Church of the Nazarene is also planning to initiate African American and Korean services, plus launch multiple churches for different cultures and languages. We are also currently looking for a college-aged youth pastor to serve at the church.

Commitment to the Environment

One of Pastor Brad's missions is to start a clean-up project for the city parks. "Then we would have cookouts for people of the community and give out ice cream sandwiches," Pastor Brad says. Another sustainable measure the church will undergo this year will be to reroof the entire building with 298 solar panels.

Commitment to Arts and Entertainment

Besides hosting popular Christian Rock bands like Seventh Day Slumber and Disciple, March 4, and continuing the "Jazz at the Naz" concerts, where several members of the Big Swing Band from El Dorado Park play at the church, we are also letting the community use our facilities for various performances like children's recitals.

Commitment to remembering Veterans

We have a ton of veterans in our congregation. In fact, one congregant was there the day the United States raised the flag on Iwo Jima. We're committed to honoring our veterans, not just on special emphasis days like Veterans' Day and Memorial Day, but all year-round.

Commitment to Ethical Business Practices

The First Church of the Nazarene will form its own business council in the near future; we have 17 names from our congregation of business leaders, managers, and owners as a strong base for such a council. We plan to renew our membership in the Chamber of Commerce as well.

Commitment to Sound Financial Practices

This church actually sends more money away from it than we keep. Tithes and offerings go to fund missions work, like the Banana Boxes. We give a complete financial report to everyone in our congregation, and each year, we enlist a CPA firm to audit all our books, ensuring accountable oversight of our donated funds.

Cooperation with other Churches and Congregations

Finally, we want to help launch other churches as well. We believe that Christ and his Church form one body (I Corinthians 12:27) and we are each responsible to help one another because it is our hope that when we all become "in the people business," God will be glorified and the community will be enriched. ■



A person of courage...

Alyson Al-Mulla

By Jonathan Murrietta

Words matter—especially words from courageous people. Nelson Mandela used words to speak out against South African apartheid. Eleanor Roosevelt used her convincing words to elicit change in human rights causes. And Alyson Al-Mulla uses words to encourage tomorrow's leaders.

When she first started teaching, she admits that she didn't feel courageous at all—there were many times she felt completely inadequate. However, over the 17 years that Al-Mulla has been teaching (15 at Newcomb), she has found fulfillment and courage along the way.

The first unit that the seventh graders study in Mrs. Al-Mulla's class is all about courageous people. During the unit, her students make trading cards of famous fiction and non-fiction people. They then play a trading card game similar to "War."

"The students have to state why they think one person is more courageous than another," Al-Mulla said. "The card game often pits the likes of Nelson Mandela against Angelina Jolie. It's interesting to hear the students' thoughts about what defines courage."

Every year, Al-Mulla's students read a variety of works with courageous characters that provide literary examples of courage. Books such as *The Giver*, which she reads with every class.

"I feel such a responsibility to these kids," Al-Mulla said. "What they read



and write has power, so I try to talk about how these people of courage accomplished great things by speaking, writing, and taking action."

"She is a fabulous teacher and extremely dedicated to the students—one of those people you'd want to have as a teacher," said Wendy Sowinski, Newcomb Academy's principal.

Al-Mulla is the English Department Chair at Newcomb and also teaches creative writing as an elective. She is part of the textbook adoption committee and is a scholarship advisor for the California Junior Scholastic Federation (CJSF) at Newcomb for students excelling academically.

"If you work hard, you can do anything you want to do," Al-Mulla said.

"I want to support those successful kids, so that other kids see them being celebrated and will want to join in. I

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Newcomb Academy
- Years teaching at that school:
15 years
- Years teaching total:
17 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Language Arts and Creative Writing
- Something you are known for saying to students:

"You are more than test scores. Your lives and future successes will not be limited by how you do on one particular test."

want to foster the idea that succeeding is good.”

Al-Mulla also appreciates the silly things that happen in class, like the funny way a kid smashed a bug one day. The wings went flying and the bug just bounced on the table. Unfortunate for the bug, but the class broke out in hysteria, spreading their laughter to the teacher.

One year, Al-Mulla had a particularly bright student whose father was a Vietnam War veteran. Unfortunately, the family was homeless. Al-Mulla didn't judge the boy's situation, but encouraged him like she does with all of her students. The boy was exceedingly smart and hard-working, and was able to eventually go to college.

It's success stories like these that make Al-Mulla proud to be a teacher. She may not have the platform of Nelson Mandela or Eleanor Roosevelt, but that doesn't make her words and actions any less important. Mrs. Al-Mulla's words inspire her students to work hard and dream big.

One day, perhaps the next great policymaker or influential voice in the world will remember their seventh grade teacher as the one who taught them how to give breath and action to their words and to be courageous. ■



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Patience and Understanding...

Erin Wright

By Andrea Sampson

Middle school can be tricky. Students are transitioning from kids to young adults, and they are often self-conscious, unsure of themselves, and a bit awkward. To make matters worse, the little things suddenly feel monumental. So, how do we help them through this difficult time? We give them amazing middle school teachers—like Ms. Wright.

Erin Wright is a middle school teacher at St. Joseph Catholic School, where she is loved by her students. They describe her as “helpful and always smiling,” and “really understanding.” They say she “doesn’t yell at us,” and “takes the time to teach us.”

What makes Ms. Wright so special is that she remembers how challenging middle school is for kids. “Middle school is hard, and it was hard for me personally,” she said. “During that time, I appreciated understanding teachers, so I try to give that back to my students. Sometimes that’s all they need to be successful—a little bit of patience and understanding.”

Ms. Wright also knows how to make her classes, like social studies and religion, interesting and interactive. In her social studies classes, sixth graders get to create their own ancient civilization, seventh graders learn about Africa—as if they live there, and eighth graders create their own political party, which means discovering where they stand on current issues.



“My students have to decide how to respond to issues like gun control and foreign policy,” Ms. Wright said. “It’s fantastic watching kids come to the realization that there aren’t easy answers to the issues.”

Although the students learn a lot in social studies, Ms. Wright says that her religion classes are where the most important lessons are learned. “When life gets difficult, the kids aren’t going to use their knowledge of history, but they will turn to religion.”

The students learn about everything from the Old Testament to the New Testament, history of the church, and social teachings. Most importantly they learn that the way they live should reflect their faith.

“It’s the hardest subject to grade because it is about who you are,” Ms. Wright said. “It isn’t about getting an A on a test, but about living what you are learning and what you believe.”

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
St. Joseph Elementary
- Years teaching at that school:
19 years
- Years teaching total:
19 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Religion and Social Studies
- Something you are known for saying to students:

“You don’t just have to know this for the test, you have to know it for the rest of your life.”

In addition to teaching social studies and religion, Ms. Wright is a moderator for student council and the coordinator for the mock trial team.

A team of seventh and eighth grade students from St. Joseph competes against students from all over Southern California during the Los Angeles Mock Trial Program. They are given a fictional criminal case to research and study. Then the kids must develop opening and closing statements, questions, and cross examinations to prove their case.

"We only have about six weeks for the students to prepare," Ms. Wright said. "It can be a stressful process, but when I sit down in the courtroom and watch my students present their case to an actual judge, I am always so impressed."

Ms. Wright was in middle school herself when she decided to be a teacher. "The best part about teaching is that every day is different," Ms. Wright said. "I will never be bored."

And her students won't be bored either, because as they say: "Ms. Wright is cool." "She's a really good teacher and takes time to teach us." "She let's us do interactive group projects." "She's always smiling and doesn't like to yell." "She's really understanding." Ms. Wright is an amazing middle school teacher! ■



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The Music Man...

Kevin Hamilton

By John-Michael O'Brien

Becoming a successful music teacher is no walk in the park. This multifaceted job requires years of musical and theoretical training, practice, passion, and a commitment to music education and the students. Rogers Middle School's music director, Kevin Hamilton, epitomizes what it means to be a quality music educator.

Lakewood native Kevin Hamilton was destined to become a musician. He began playing piano at the age of eight, then honed his skills on the trumpet and French horn while attending Holmes Elementary and Bancroft Middle School.

During his years at Lakewood High School, Mr. Hamilton was deeply involved in the arts. He played in the marching band, symphonic band, and sang in the choir. His innate musical ability eventually landed him leading roles in musicals such as "Bye-Bye Birdie," "Hello Dolly," and "Guys and Dolls."

While earning his Music Education degree at UCLA, Hamilton played in several ensembles such as the esteemed UCLA Marching Band and the UCLA Concert Band. Hamilton marched at a myriad of schools and performed at tons of basketball and football games throughout his collegiate career.

Immediately after graduating in 2000, Mr. Hamilton began his teaching career at Long Beach Millikan High School. During his time as a Millikan Ram, Hamilton directed the marching band, jazz band, and string orchestra before



landing a full time job as the music director at Will Rogers Middle School.

Four years before he arrived at Rogers, Mr. Hamilton says the music program was "barely alive." Under his direction, the program has more than doubled in size—starting with a mere 120 students, the music program now consists of approximately 330 instrumentalists—more than a third of the middle school population.

Mr. Hamilton has turned a once dwindling program into several award-winning ensembles that perform at prestigious music festivals throughout Southern California. This year, students will travel to perform at San Diego State University, Sea World, and Disneyland.

The principal, teachers, and families all agree that Hamilton is not only incredibly positive and outgoing, but he provides students with valuable life skills.

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Rogers Middle School
- Years teaching at that school:
16 years
- Years teaching total:
15 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Band and Orchestra
- Something you are known for saying to students:

"The only way you can fail is by giving up."

Thank You...

Paula Riley

By Jonathan Murrietta

Each year, on the first day of school at Stanford Middle School, incoming sixth graders enter a whole new world—a new chapter in their ever-changing childhood. Young girls wonder if they'll fit in. The boys' voices are cracking, as they begin to transform from kid to young man. It's often an awkward stage of life.

And that certainly fit the mold for a boy entering middle school at Stanford years ago. A bit shy, this short, skinny sixth grader, who struggled to find the confidence to embrace a world where all the girls his age were a lot taller than he, walked into a chorus classroom for the first time. Mrs. Riley, the chorus teacher, sat behind her piano and began to lead first period's all-boy chorus in a vocal warm-up.

The sixth grader tried not to sing very loud so as not to stick out—after all, what middle school boy doesn't feel the need to sometimes hide—from his classmates, from his awkward-self, and even from his own talents?

But Mrs. Riley believed in this boy's abilities, and that made him feel immediately at home in room 601.

Through music, Paula Riley has been creating a home for middle schoolers like this boy at Stanford for 24 years, teaching them confidence, creativity, and instilling faith and care in every individual along the way.

During her own senior year at Wilson High School, Paula had an epiphany about her chosen career path. She realized that having a choral program that



put on a full musical every year was the best way to contribute to her dream of “getting the whole world singing.”

“I really wanted to create the feeling of community and inspire creativity at a school,” said Mrs. Riley about her initial aspirations to become a chorus teacher.

Her high school imagination might not have been able to imagine how much of a reality that dream would one day become. The Stanford Middle School auditorium is packed on show nights. Hundreds come to see the plays, which have included ensemble musicals such as *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *The Music Man*—all put on by Mrs. Riley and her talented middle schoolers over the years.

“Every time I stand in the back of the auditorium and watch 290 kids put on a musical, I am astounded that I taught them to be so independent,” Mrs. Riley

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Stanford Middle School
- Years teaching at that school:
24 years
- Years teaching total:
24 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Choral Music
- Something you are known for saying to students:

*“Get the
Whole World
Singing!”*

said. "During the show, I do nothing. The kids run everything. I am filled with a mix of love and pride so huge that I am always overwhelmed with joy."

That is not hyperbole. Mrs. Riley says her students bring her so much joy that sometimes she has to take a big breath when watching them perform.

"Middle schoolers can do anything if you teach them well, trust them, and give them a chance," Mrs. Riley said. "Kids are proud to be a part of something that's good. The fact that they can perform challenging music with the highest musical standards makes them feel proud and like they have accomplished something great—which they have."

"Where else do you see 100 middle school boys coming together, working that hard, with that much focus and discipline and with so much pride and

attention to detail?" Mrs. Riley said. "That is so rare, and it's precious."

That same feeling of accomplishment also comes during the various choral concerts held each year at Stanford for family and friends. At the end of the year, Mrs. Riley's students visit Festival, where middle school chorus groups compete for the "Gold." Stanford Middle School under the direction of Mrs. Riley has held a streak for years of winning the Gold award at Festival. Winning Gold is the payoff for all the hard work, Mrs. Riley says.

"The secret is, we have so much fun doing the hard work that we don't even feel like it is hard work," Mrs. Riley says with her bubbly personality, which she has shared for decades with her Stanford chorus groups.

As a teacher, perhaps Mrs. Riley's most precious quality, among many that make her an amazing middle school

teacher, is the love and belief she gives to her students.

"Every kid wants to be loved and valued," Mrs. Riley says.

Now grown, returning to room 601 to interview Mrs. Riley for an article in Long Beach 908, that same boy who entered her class as a gawky tween, can look back at his middle school days and cherish those memories, thanks to Mrs. Riley. He'll never forget what Mrs. Riley said to him his seventh grade year when he learned he'd be playing the lead role of Horton the Elephant in all three casts of the play *Seussical*.

"I'm putting a lot of faith in you," she said to him. Words cannot describe how thankful the writer of this article is to Mrs. Riley for putting that faith in him. He is proud to call her his former teacher and a lifelong friend. ■

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Calling all Bruins...

Long Beach Bruin Professionals

By John Grossi

For four (maybe more) years you owned Westwood. You walked Bruin Walk every day and you talked Bruin talk every night. You triumphantly jogged up the Janss Steps like Rocky after a training regimen, and you celebrated each little college victory with a Sepi's sub and a pint. Those were the years.

But now you're a little older and look at you... you haven't done too bad for yourself. After all, you live in East Long Beach and a nicer town along the 405 South your fellow alumni haven't found. You still have a passion for UCLA life, academics, and sports but other things have taken precedent like family and work and paying bills... the list goes on.

One thing is for sure. Between 9am-5pm every day you are a professional. And you attack your job with the same hardworking ambition that got you into UCLA in the first place. Well guess what, you hardworking, motivated Long Beach resident who wants to find time to stay connected to UCLA? You are not alone.

Welcome to Bruin Professionals, Long Beach Chapter.

Bruin Professionals is an official alumni networking group assembled of diverse UCLA Alumni who are well established in a profession or business and are willing to make a commitment to attend its monthly meetings. Through an organized format, Long Beach Chapter Bruins develop relationships and expand their business activities by sharing referrals, resources, ideas and advice.

From the 19th floor on Ocean Blvd, overlooking a beautiful view of Downtown Long Beach, the Long Beach Bruin Professionals get together the third Thursday of every month. Either before work for breakfast, or at lunchtime. What separates Bruin Professionals from other networking groups is their special guest speakers that keynote each meeting. Usually UCLA alum themselves, the guest speakers touch on interesting and informative topics for any Long Beach area business professionals.

All interested Long Beach-area

UCLA-alumni are invited to give the networking group a try and attend the Feb 18th meeting with speaker Ralph Combs. Combs is the principal of the Long Beach based oil production firm, The Termo Company. Attendees will learn about the business of oil production, opportunities within the oil industry, and how world events impact the local oil economy.

It's difficult to explain the dynamic of a guest speaker without trying out a meeting yourself, but I can assure you the speakers are always well-prepared and truly entertaining. Best of all, unlike other sometimes-awkward business networking groups and events, all small talk can center around one thing. UCLA. And that's a pretty wide range subject to help you build relationships across different industries and lifestyles.

Don't think you like talking to strangers? Just say something like, "How about Josh Rosen..." and watch joyfully as someone else takes over the conversation!

All joking and extras aside, in the end

there's one main reason to join this group. It can and will add true value to your business and career. Referrals and networking are everything, and when the small talk and guest speakers are done, there is one thing that keeps your fellow Long Beach alumni coming back every month. Actual closed business from referrals.

At the beginning of the meeting when everyone introduces themselves and identifies their profession—what they do and how they can help, the other members are actually listening. And right afterwards, when members go around the room again and quote all the business they've referred to each other since the last meeting, it's easy to see why UCLA business people love this networking group. Bruin Professionals has real potential to make you money and advance your career. Try new things, have fun, better yourself, and better your career. Isn't that why you went to UCLA in the first place?



Members enjoy the 2015 holiday party for Bruin Professionals

If you are at all interested in joining this Long Beach-based networking group, then contact group leader Matt Winefield to attend a meeting this year for free! It's no obligation and you can shake hands with like-minded local alums. Email Matt at mw@winefieldinc.com or give him a call at 562-618-0037. ■

Meeting Dates
3rd Thursday of each month
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Thursday, March 17, 2016
Thursday, April 21, 2016

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A Place of Our Own Hair and Art Salon is the charming cottage with the welcoming porch tucked in the back of Arbor Village. It is a darling salon where customers can find the perfect little gift to go with their perfect hair.

This season the salon introduced a new line of hair products called Unite, and it is flying off the shelves. "The products do what they say they're



going to do," stylist Briana Davis said. "It leaves hair silky and full of volume, without weighing it down." In addition to a new product line, the salon is adding new merchandise from Grace & Lace, the giveback gifts featured on Shark Tank. Their signature product is a pair of knitted boot socks with a hint of lace, and a portion of all sales goes to building and supporting orphanages. So, treat yourself with silky locks, cozy socks, and sparkly jewelry at A Place of Our Own.



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Teaching from the Heart...

Margaret Kennedy

By Jennifer Newton

Teaching 6th, 7th and 8th grade takes a special soul, some would say “angelic.” Luckily for the students at Our Lady of Refuge K-8 School in Long Beach, one of those Earth angels arrived in the form of middle school language arts teacher Margaret Kennedy.

From the school secretary, to her fellow teachers, to the students, everyone at Our Lady of Refuge couldn’t help but marvel about Mrs. Kennedy. It seems that Mrs. Kennedy has had quite an effect on many different lives.

“Mrs. Kennedy has been one of the most amazing teachers,” gushed 8th grade student Nicholas Romero. “She’s like my second mom.”

“Most of the class calls her mom,” interjected Kristiana Dimitrov, another 8th grade student. “Her heart is made of gold!”

“Not gold, diamonds!” a third 8th grade student, Ariana Cather, said enthusiastically.

However, when asked about her exceptional effect on students, a sincerely humble Mrs. Kennedy tells the story of how growing up as the 8th of 9 siblings helped influence her teaching style.

“There was always an expectation for each child in my family, but the levels for each of us were different,” said Mrs. Kennedy. “Each student I teach is an individual. I recognize where they

are, and I raise the bar from there. It’s about growth – social, academic, personal – it’s all so important to me. I meet them where they are at.”

This personalized approach has also proven to be the catalyst for improved learning and an increased interest in reading by her students.

“When you read on your own, you think ‘Oh yeah, that happened.’ But when you read with Mrs. Kennedy you remember every detail. It sticks with you,” explained Dimitrov. “You don’t want her to stop.”

What’s Mrs. Kennedy’s secret to getting the post-millennial generation, one that is much more comfortable with watching videos, online gaming and immediate digital information, to actually read a paper book? Slowing the pace down, she says.

“Everything for these kids is immedi-



Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Our Lady of Refuge
- Years teaching at that school:
3 years
- Years teaching total:
25 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Language Arts
- Something you are known for saying to students:

***“Not everyone
is an A student
but ALL of you
can make a
solid effort!”***

ate, at their fingertips. But they miss that personal connection,” explained Mrs. Kennedy. “I find that if I slow the pace down prior to diving into a book—by having them research the era, talk about how the author writes, and even reading aloud to the students in class—they have a stronger connection to what is happening in the story.”

Mrs. Kennedy is not only described as a dynamic teacher, but also as a “role model” to her students, a “mother” to her classes, a “mentor” to aspiring teachers, a “confirmation sponsor” for former students, and a trusted advisor to all.

“I want them to feel like they’ve never dug themselves in too deep and they always have the opportunity to move forward,” said Mrs. Kennedy. “Humility. Own your mistakes. And move forward. That’s what I teach them.”

However, Dimitrov seems to sum up the overall feeling for Mrs. Kennedy best saying, “She is sweet, loving, amazing, awesome. If you could combine all those things into one, that would be Mrs. Kennedy!”

Margaret Kennedy is a lifetime resident of the 908. She married her high school sweetheart (she went to Millikan, he went to Lakewood) and has four children, one of whom is studying to become an English teacher. ■

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Training Them up in the Lord...

John Tiersma

By Jonathan Murrietta

In Romans 1:20, Paul the Apostle writes “Since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what He has made, so that people are without excuse for not knowing God.”

Like Saint Paul centuries ago, John Tiersma teaches these same lessons to his seventh grade life science class at Valley Christian Middle School. He is a beloved teacher at Valley Christian, with a fervent love for Christ and a passion for teaching—that’s why he has been recognized as an amazing middle school teacher.

But like Apostle Paul, Mr. Tiersma doesn’t take the credit for being a great teacher—he gives all the glory to his Father in Heaven. Echoing the words of Paul, who said “I’m the chief of sinners,” Tiersma remains humble and says despite his imperfections, God can still use him.

“I’m just as sinful as anyone else,” Tiersma said. “Nobody is perfect, but God can still use you, and thankfully, he uses me as a teacher.”

Ever since age 15, Tiersma has felt called by God to become a teacher. Today, he uses the world around him to teach his students that God created the entire universe.

“I have two goals—that students leave my class with a greater love of science and that they are able to see through



creation that there is a God.”

Tiersma says that when he sees a sunset, he can’t help but think, “God created this.” So when he teaches about different protists, he tells his class about the time he went surfing in a red tide among the glowing bioluminescence of the microscopic dinoflagellates in the water.

He also tells them about the time he snorkeled in Mexico, caught a perfectly symmetrical puffer fish, and in playful jest, threw it at his wife. The students laugh hysterically. Come test time—the students recall the silly stories and the function of a dinoflagellate or the symmetry of a puffer fish.

“I tell stories for a reason,” Tiersma said. “I want them to take note of the science in my stories and to know that science is all around us.”

In recent years, the iPad has also served

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Valley Christian Middle
- Years teaching at that school:
10 years
- Years teaching total:
10 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Science and Bible
- Something you are known for saying to students:

“My favorite science word? Flagella. I just love how it rolls off the tongue.”

as a testament to the concept that if there is a design, there must be a designer. Valley Christian Middle School is one of only 300 schools globally recognized as an Apple Distinguished School. The use of an iPad is now a learning tool for every student.

"That's a big deal," said Valley Christian Middle School Principal Paul Theule. "And Mr. Tiersma has a good technology foundation. He is highly creative and imaginative with the kids and their iPads."

For example, when it's time to dissect a frog in Mr. Tiersma's class, students are first taken through a digital version of the dissection on the iPad. With a swipe of a finger, they are transported through the inside of a frog. It isn't a substitute for the real thing, but it gives the students an idea of what they can expect when it's time for the dissection.

"He is such a great teacher," Nora, an eighth grader and former student, said. "Everybody likes him."

Mr. Tiersma is helping to train up his students in the way they should go, just as the biblical proverb instructs. When they are old, they will remember the lessons learned in Mr. Tiersma's class and that he taught them to see God's invisible qualities in the brilliance of the world around them. ■



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Shining a Light for her Students...

Elizabeth Grace

By Jonathan Murrietta

It's after school the week before Christmas, and the sun has set. At Marshall Academy of the Arts, most students and staff members have left for the day. The hallways are dark in the main school building, and the classrooms are locked. But there is one beam of light still shining from a classroom—it belongs to seventh grade English teacher Elizabeth Grace. Her day isn't over yet.

"The school part is done but the grading is still going on," Grace says peering up from a stack of papers. Despite the long day, Grace doesn't seem at all dismayed. She's been teaching for 32 years—all at Marshall—and yet the vim and vigor in her eyes still lingers. Grace has put in a long day and an even longer career; however, her caring demeanor and passion for teaching shines through. She understands middle schoolers, and she wants to continue to teach and help them.

"When kids are in middle school you still see a little spark when they say, 'I get it,'" Grace said. "I'm so glad that I do what I do because it's meaningful."

Grace teaches seventh grade English Language Arts and creative writing, and she's noticed that seventh graders today are feeling the pressures to get into that superior high school program and keep up in a continuously fast-paced world.

Every few weeks, Grace has her students write in a journal on a topic of



their choice. And more regularly, she has seen stress, worry, and anxiety show up on the pages. To combat this, Grace keeps the mood light and fun in her class and is open to her students whenever they need reassurance that life is going to be okay.

"I try to teach my students not to take things too seriously," Grace says. "They need to make time for themselves."

That's why Ms. Grace never assigns projects or homework over vacations. She wants her students to relax and enjoy the holiday season. That isn't to say that Grace is a lax teacher. She knows that success comes to those who work hard and dream big, and she encourages her students to do both. "At the end of the day, it's the journey that matters," Grace said.

Grace's journey as a teacher had its challenges along the way, but as an ed-

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Marshall Academy
- Years teaching at that school:
32 years
- Years teaching total:
32 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
ELA & Creative Writing
- Something you are known for saying to students:

"You cannot talk and write at the same time. If your neighbor is being 'too friendly,' move away from them."

ucator for over 30 years now, she'll say it was all worth it. Grace still remembers playing teacher with her stuffed animals while growing up in Long Beach. She knew that she was going to be a teacher and she carried that dream throughout her own schooling. When Grace entered junior high at Stanford Middle School, she found a sense of home. Ironically, Beth received a C in English during seventh grade, which her mom never understood, since all Beth seemed to want to do was read.

"I've read about the adolescent brain; it kind of shuts down during puberty in certain areas, so it affects how middle schoolers think," Grace says. "It doesn't fully develop until your mid-20s."

Grace endured her "tween years," and continued her education at Millikan High School. She majored in English in college. And now decades later, her ability to understand middle schoolers

is one of the qualities that makes her an amazing middle school teacher.

Though the curriculum for middle school English can be quite scripted, Grace still finds time for the students to run with their creativity. In the spring her students research an ancient civilization of their interest and create a magazine for the civilization, as if it were coming out in that time period. They create ads, for example, selling tickets to ancient Rome's Colosseum and write articles about famous people from the era.

Grace began teaching English Language Development in the mid-80s when Marshall was attended by many Cambodian students who didn't know English. Many of the families came to America after having gone through the Khmer Rouge conflict, which was happening overseas in South East Asia at the time.

"My students teach me a lot about resilience," Grace said. "It is amazing what people can go through and still turn out fine. Students I had as new immigrants now come back as parents, and their kids are in my accelerated classes. That right there is an illustration of the American dream. Those parents didn't come with a lot, but now their kids are going to be very successful."

Among the chaos the world throws at its inhabitants, there are always those people like Elizabeth Grace who counter the disorder, assuring people that everything is going to be okay.

Take it from a teacher, who even after a long day still finds time for smiling and laughing—therein explaining the source of that light shining from her classroom and through her eyes amidst the dark hallways of an ended school day. ■



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Learning while Laughing...

Lynn Mober

By John Grossi

One way to make Math class fun is to make it funny. That's the Lynn Mober way.

"Everything she says is super sarcastic and funny," said 8th grade student Kamryn. "It makes her class super fun to be in."

The students love everything from her big poster with the 10 Commandments of Math with rules like "Thou shalt not divide by zero," to her homework sheets with funny puns to solve like "How Do You Repair Band Instruments?"

The students then have to solve all their algebra problems to reveal the answer: "With A Tuba Glue."

They also laugh at the funny responses she gives them when they complain about work. "When we complain about calculators she always tells us, 'when you grow up and you're the teacher, you can let your class use calculators,'" explains student Carlo Garcia.

Mrs. Mober teaches sixth, seventh, and eighth grade math to her excited pupils at St. Cornelius TK-8 school, which means the crucial transformative years from arithmetic to algebra.

She loves to see the kids mature over the years. They go from small, shy 6th graders to being the big leaders of the school in 8th grade. From a math perspective, it's great when the 8th graders walk into her classroom and the lower



level lesson is still on the whiteboard.

"They tend to harp over how easy the sixth and seventh grade math is, and it gives me the chance to remind them how much they struggled with those same concepts when they were in sixth grade," says Mober. "This helps show them that math is always hard when you're learning it, but easy once you know it!"

In her 20+ years of teaching, Lynn Mober has become pretty creative and effective at livening up a subject that must be—for the most part—taught in an orderly progression of skills.

Students stay attentive during explanations in order to increase their chances of coming up with a correct answer and earning Smarties- the candy.

Mober has always put helping her students learn the math concepts above

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
St. Cornelius School
- Years teaching at that school:
10 years
- Years teaching total:
22 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Math
- Something you are known for saying to students:

"Make good choices, because the choices you make today will affect you for the rest of your life."

everything else. It was known for years at St. Cornelius that if you had questions about homework or a lesson, her door was always open before and after school for personal attention and help. About 5 years ago she and the principal realized there was a legitimate need for regularly scheduled after hours tutoring.

She now “officially” dedicates 30 minutes, three days a week to “math help”—whatever that may be—to all students. Students can come every day or just when they need help.

Students rave about her care and attention to grading. She really goes through every problem and understands the student’s thought process—giving partial credit to students who are on the right track but don’t necessarily get the right answer.

Eighth graders Erica and Brooke crack up at the way she says “Oooh bummer” any time misfortune befalls a fellow peer such as a misplaced pencil or homework.

However, no matter what their reason, most of her pupils agree with Taylor Ravelo’s explanation of Mrs. Mober’s personality: “When I’m in her class, I don’t want to leave.” ■



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A Rockstar Teacher... David Thompson

By Jonathan Murrietta

While rocking out to “YYZ” at a Rush concert, David Thompson looked over to see Professor Schneeby—a.k.a. Dewey Finn; a.k.a. actor Jack Black—from the movie “School of Rock” standing beside him. Considering this is his favorite movie, Mr. Thompson, a middle school teacher at Tincher, couldn’t resist saying hello.

They exchanged a few words about their shared love for the song and then the star agreed to take a picture with Mr. Thompson. The picture hangs on Mr. Thompson’s classroom wall at Tincher K-8 Preparatory School, where he’s taught for 16 years.

Even before noticing the picture, one is immediately reminded of Jack Black when first meeting Mr. Thompson. Like Black’s character in “School of Rock,” Mr. Thompson is funny. He is cool. And like Black’s character he is a superstar teacher.

Mr. Thompson teaches language arts and history at Tincher, and engages his students with quotes from Confucius to Schneeby. The students love his enthusiasm and sense of humor. Mr. Thompson also heads up several extra-curricular activities.

With a passion for music, he created a guitar club, and he also has coached flag football and soccer. He even hosts a Pokémon club on Mondays called “Poke-Mon-Days.” Thompson also teaches an elective class called Long Beach Scholars to help kids start think-



ing about high school, college, and career goals.

Mr. Thompson says he didn’t choose teaching—it chose him. He wasn’t the greatest student in grade school, but more of a class clown, which often landed him in the principal’s office. Not to mention, he was nervous as a kid when having to present in front of the class.

“I’d get all clammy and dread getting up in front of people,” Thompson says. “I never thought I’d be in front of a classroom as a profession.”

Before teaching, Mr. Thompson worked various jobs in the construction and medical fields. However, he craved something more—a job more suitable to his outgoing, comedic personality. In 1999, while still pursuing his teaching credential at California State University, Long Beach, Tincher hired him. Thompson wasn’t an official teacher

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Tincher Preparatory
- Years teaching at that school:
16 years
- Years teaching total:
16 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
History, Language Arts, and Long Beach Scholars
- Something you are known for saying to students:

“You gotta’ want it!”

yet, but was allowed to finish his student teaching while teaching his own class at Tincher. Jack Black's character in "School of Rock" wasn't an official teacher either—until the very end, of course. Still, everything seemed to turn out more than okay in the film, just like it has for David Thompson, who is now one of the most popular teachers on campus.

Thompson says connecting with the kids and seeing them light up when they understand a subject is the most rewarding aspect of teaching.

"I sleep well at night because I go home and know that I probably made a difference in at least one student that day," Thompson says. "I tell my students every year that I learn more from them than they learn from me. It's true—these kids teach me so much."

Without knowing it, Thompson echoes similar sentiments spoken by Jack Black as Dewey Finn in "School of Rock." "I am proud, just to even know them," Finn says about his students in the film. Mr. Thompson can surely relate, as he is proud to be a teacher, proud to be making a difference in his students' lives, proud to say that he learns from his students, and proud to be a real life version of his teacher hero in "School of Rock." ■

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Teaching Technology with Love...

Kristine Dassero

By Jonathan Murrietta

Technology is a channel that allows a teacher and her students to form an undeniable bond. And that certainly describes what technology does for Kristine Dassero and her elective technology classes at Cubberley K-8.

"I just really enjoy watching a kid light up," Dassero said, with whole-hearted emotion.

That fervent care for her students is immediately felt when entering Dassero's classroom, which looks more like a computer lab than a classroom. Mac computers fill the room, a Wi-Fi network can be seen above, and instead of paper projects hanging from the wall, QR codes (a type of barcode) are on display.

When parents come to Dassero's class for open house, they use their smartphone to scan the QR codes to upload their child's digital work.

The goal in Dassero's class is to learn how to use technology productively. To teach them that it can actually serve a greater purpose than just posting a picture with a hashtag.

Dassero teaches her middle schoolers how to express themselves more creatively through technology, expanding their knowledge of apps and programs and teaching them how to become leaders in digital citizenship. Above all, Dassero is a friend to her students, a figure who identifies with their young



ingenuity and allows their imagination to shine.

"I want my students to see that the computer can really make for interesting, engaging learning, by giving them choice in what they are doing in class," Dassero said.

Dassero obtained her business degree from California State University. She worked at the local telephone company in the finance department. But while teaching Sunday school and vacation Bible school in her spare time, she began to realize her innovative spirit needed a different outlet to shine.

Dassero went back to school to earn a degree in education and a multiple subject teaching credential. She has taught at Cubberley K-8 for the past 15 years.

Her elective technology classes are extremely popular. The sixth graders take introduction to technology, then move

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Cubberley K-8 School
- Years teaching at that school:
15 years
- Years teaching total:
16 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Technology Elective
- Something you are known for saying to students:

***"There's always
more than one way
to solve a problem
...choose the
solution that is
right for you."***

on to intermediate technology in seventh grade, and finally graduate to advanced technology in eighth grade.

Dassero has created a community of passionate kids eager to learn about technology and ingenuity both in her technology elective classes and with the after school club she runs called the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement club (MESA).

“She’s great at expanding everybody’s capacity with technology—even among the other teachers,” says Terri Jarels, the Cubberley K-8 principal.

Dassero is a district technology instructor as well. This year, Dassero will attend seminars about the district’s plan to facilitate learning using Google apps, expanding her own knowledge so that she can in turn teach others.

“She just really likes to share her passion and skill for technology,” Jarels said. “She truly does it for the kids who want to explore new horizons. Her commitment to the kids and the extra hours she puts in makes her an amazing teacher.”

Though technology constantly changes, a teacher’s love for her students remains constant—and that love is certainly seen in Kristine Dassero. ■

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Making her Classroom Home... Cassandra Nixon

By John Grossi

For Cassandra Nixon, inclusion makes everything better.

Many junior high kids begin to extract themselves from group discussions and activities for one reason or another. No teacher likes to see that happen, but some teachers may let it happen—not Mrs. Nixon. She makes sure every single seventh grade English student in her classroom feels included.

“I don’t want to be a teacher that is okay with kids not participating or feeling like part of the group,” Mrs. Nixon said. “I make them work together and include each other because life is just more fun with other people.”

Her seventh graders agree and attest to her success.

“She’s super good at getting everyone involved,” Samantha said. “Like last year, a lot of people in our class didn’t really like each other, but she made us do a bunch of really cool group projects and stuff and now we’re all best friends.”

Many students echo that sentiment. They love the group projects and the class activities that Mrs. Nixon facilitates. They talk excitedly and laugh about the funny class rants and tangents that happen during book discussions.

“But somehow she always brings us



back on topic,” exclaims Frankie.

After teaching for seven years for Long Beach Unified School District, Nixon was laid off due to budget cuts. She then became a long-term substitute until hearing about the job opening at St. Cyprian.

“It was sort of like coming home,” Nixon said. Although she didn’t attend St. Cyprian, she did grow up in the East Long Beach Catholic school system attending St. Cornelius and St. Anthony High School before going on to California State University, Long Beach.

While she enjoyed her years teaching public school, coming back to a Catholic K-8 proved to be something she was missing in her life. “Even though I didn’t plan on this, I feel like I was led here for a reason—this is where I’m meant to be.”

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
St. Cyprian School
- Years teaching at that school:
2 years
- Years teaching total:
12 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
English Language Arts and Religion
- Favorite quote to tell students:

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

-Benjamin Franklin

There are a lot of small things that make teaching at Cyprian a huge bonus. In public elementary school she was not able to celebrate birthdays for some kids because of their religious beliefs. That was tough for someone like Mrs. Nixon who loves making kids feel special—"especially on their birthday of all days!"

It's also nice having full support from the school and parents on issues like cell phones and discipline. When there are fewer distractions, Nixon can focus on what she does best.

One way she connects with her students is by keeping up with their culture and current events. When she first started teaching it was especially easy, as she was fresh out of college and pretty up-to-date on the younger television shows and music. She still is young enough to pretty much "act like one of them," though she has to work harder at it as each year passes.

Ask anyone who knows her and they'll tell you—it's her relationship to students that makes her such an amazing teacher.

"I call them my kids because they are—every single one of them," she said. "I love them all." It's heartwarming to see Mrs. Nixon and her kids running around playing and laughing together on the St. Cyprian school grounds—the place Mrs. Nixon, and her family, now call home. ■

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After the Dust Settles... Russell Canup

By Jonathan Murrietta

In a fraction of a second, sawdust particles are blown about, sprinkle the air, and fall to the floor. For 37 years, Russell Canup has guided middle school woodshop students as they craft wall shelves, wooden boxes, and other construction projects.

His woodshop classroom at Hill Middle School smells of fresh cut wood, and a glass case displays some of the projects made in Mr. Canup's class in years gone by.

Peeking into the classroom after his students leave for the day, you might find Mr. Canup standing with safety goggles on and wearing his woodshop apron proudly. He hasn't changed much since starting at Hill Middle School in 1987. He still has the same Sam Elliot beard and rustic, outdoors-man-type charm.

Canup will retire from teaching at the end of the school year, as Hill Middle School closes and transitions into Sato Academy of Mathematics and Science, an engineering school for high schoolers. Mr. Canup's woodshop will be completely modernized for Sato's high-tech engineering design lab—saws replaced with Apple computers, hand tools replaced with robotics equipment, and wood materials replaced with digital devices.

Canup meanwhile, plans to live out his retirement enjoying favorite pastimes like hunting, fishing, and spending time with family. But the 60-year-old will no



doubt miss the woodshop where he spent so many years teaching kids how to work with their hands, especially because the woodshop will no longer exist at this school year.

"It's sad because when woodshop teachers retire, there is no one to take our places," Canup said.

Canup teaches one of the last woodshop classes in the district. Soon, they'll all be gone and woodshop will officially be a thing of the past, a distant relic of a world now seeping in a hyper-technology age.

Although schools have been phasing out woodshop for years, the district kept Russell Canup, and his woodshop class is still the most popular elective at Hill Middle School—thanks to Mr. Canup.

"That alone speaks to how great he is—the fact that the district kept him

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Hill Classical Middle
- Years teaching at that school:
29 years
- Years teaching total:
37 years
- Subject(s) you've taught:
Woods, Drafting, Metals and Electronics
- Something you are known for saying to students:

***"That's not fair?
Life's not fair,
just look at my
forehead!"***

all these years and that they valued him,” said Hill Middle School Principal Mona Merlo.

Though Merlo has only known “Russ” for a short time, she learned very quickly that Mr. Canup is a rare treasure and that he embodies a venerable soul.

“Mr. Canup is a part of Hill’s history, so it’s fitting that he’s retiring as the school closes,” said Merlo. “He will surely be missed. He’s so good with the kids, he’s committed, and a he’s a team player.”

“He has a lot of patience,” said Janet, one of Canup’s students this year. “He really knows how to give good instruction.”

Seeing his students become confident in using the power tools and watching them create projects like Janet’s is extremely rewarding for Canup.

“It’s life skills that they’re learning,” Canup said. “And the kids are fun to be around.”

One day, a man wearing a school district shirt walked by Mr. Canup’s classroom. He was a former student. He thanked Mr. Canup for being an amazing teacher, and then

told Mr. Canup that middle school woodshop is where he decided to become a carpenter. The man is now a carpenter for the school district.

“That’s the kind of thing that makes you float on air,” Canup said.

Particles of sawdust still float in the air after a full day of teaching woodshop, but the dust will soon settle and be swept away for good. Though his classroom will soon be a memory, Mr. Canup’s legacy as an amazing middle school teacher will continue to live on. ■



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Facilitating Tomorrow's Leaders... Linda Cargile

By Andrea Sampson

Most sixth grade students sitting in world history learn about ancient civilizations, religions, and world cultures, but Mrs. Cargile's students are learning so much more—they are learning to lead.

Linda Cargile sees her sixth grade students at Bancroft as our future leaders. “In my class, I want the kids to learn more than just history,” she said. “I want them to learn leadership.”

She fosters independence and leadership by allowing her students to lead in the classroom. They direct the warm ups, hand out raffle tickets, review questions and record answers. Mrs. Cargile's class is a student-centered classroom full of discussions and debates, where the kids come up with the questions and direction.

“I want to be their facilitator and guide, not the authority,” Mrs. Cargile said. “In my classroom the students are actively interpreting their text books and resources, rather than depending on me for the answers.”

In addition to learning leadership, Mrs. Cargile's students learn history in an interactive, hands-on way. For example, on the Egypt Museum night students' research projects are displayed in the museum—a.k.a. the library—and family and friends are invited to a night at the “museum” to view the projects. Students also create mandalas and



design “wanted” posters while in Mrs. Cargile's class.

“I love to do projects,” Mrs. Cargile said. “So, I am always thinking about what the students would enjoy and what would make history memorable for them.”

Mrs. Cargile earned her bachelor's degree and teaching credentials at California State University, Long Beach. “I've always loved working with people, and I've always loved school, so teaching was a natural fit,” she said. In fact, Mrs. Cargile is also a part-time lecturer at CSULB, teaching a history capstone course to pre-service teachers.

“My favorite thing about teaching is working with the kids,” Mrs. Cargile said. “My students are always very curious. They ask questions that adults wouldn't think of asking, and I get new questions every year.”

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Bancroft Middle School
- Years teaching at that school:
16 years
- Years teaching total:
16 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
6th Grade Ancient World History
- Something you are known for saying to students:

“Students can make a difference in the lives of other students.”

In addition to teaching history, Mrs. Cargile also leads the peer tutoring class, where the top students mentor those who need some extra help. The program empowers students and teaches them how to be mentors. "I love the peer-tutoring program because I get to see kids make new friends, create rewarding relationships, and help each other," Mrs. Cargile said. "Teaching others gives students the skills to be future leaders."

In Mrs. Cargile's classes, students develop critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and leadership. Mrs. Cargile inspires them to become better students and better people.

"I am supposed to inspire my students while teaching them about history, but the truth is they've inspired me more than I could ever inspire them," Mrs. Cargile said. "They overcome adversity and obstacles with maturity and grace, and they show each other enormous amounts of patience. I learn as much from them, as they learn from me."

Mrs. Cargile's warm, open spirit, and her passion for teaching today's sixth graders to be tomorrow's leaders is what makes her an amazing middle school teacher! ■

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Teaching Science in a Fun Way...

Bonnie Neally

By Jonathan Murrietta

Science is fun. Just ask any student in Bonnie Neally's middle school science class at Bethany Lutheran.

"We get to do experiments and labs that are really cool," says Leah, one of Mrs. Neally's students.

From building models of atoms, to constructing the human circulatory system with red licorice representing veins, Neally's students are active participants in their education, keeping engaged and having fun in the wonderfully intricate world of science.

"I make sure the kids can touch and create everything they learn," Neally said. "When kids have fun they have a positive attitude when they learn science in their higher education classes as well."

At least one former student didn't like science before Mrs. Neally's class.

"It's great to watch students who come into class not liking science develop a passion for it," Neally said. "Seeing them explore a newfound enlightenment in the world around them is amazing."

Today that student, who said she hated science, is now majoring in mechanical engineering at Carnegie Mellon University.

"We need more scientists," Neally said. Mrs. Neally's children attended Bethany Lutheran, so when a teaching position



opened at the school, she was quick to jump on it. She's been teaching middle school science at Bethany Lutheran for seven years now.

"She's very creative in her labs and she really captures her students' attention," said Dr. Mary Fink, Bethany Lutheran's principal. "She sets a high standard for her students and understands that kids need hands on learning. She's a treasure for sure."

When middle schooler Leah learned about pasteurization in Mrs. Neally's class, she couldn't wait to share her newfound knowledge with her family.

"You're still drinking dead bacteria when you drink pasteurized milk," Leah says. "I told that to my brother as he was drinking a glass of milk," she says with a laugh.

For Neally's seventh grade life science class, the annual Catalina trip gives

Quick Facts:

•Name of your school:

Bethany Lutheran

•Years teaching at that school:

7 years

•Years teaching total:

10 years

•Subject(s) you teach:

Science

•Favorite quote to tell students:

***"1,500 years ago,
everybody knew that the
Earth was the
center of the universe.
500 years ago, everybody
knew that the Earth was
flat. Imagine what you'll
know tomorrow."
-from "Men in Black" movie***

students the opportunity to kayak, perform dissections, and snorkel, while learning about marine organisms in the picturesque Catalina coves. This year, students got to swim with a pod of leopard sharks, docile, bottom-feeding creatures. The trips are filled with fun and adventure!

One year, Neally remembers watching the fun her students had snorkeling among a giant group of baby jellyfish. Her students emerged from the water that day with tiny red marks all over their skin—thankfully, they couldn't feel the tiny jellyfish stings while in the water!

Neally's sixth grade earth science class learn the complexities of God's Earth through projects like "What's Shakin' This Week?" where students use an app that monitors earthquake activity then plot the earthquakes on a map.

Neally's eighth graders build a strong foundation in the periodic table and atomic structure. They construct models of atoms and learn to understand the building blocks of life. Neally always has former students, in high school and beyond, who come back to tell her how easy high school chemistry is—thanks to her masterful teaching.

"I get to play with the kids all day and they just happen to learn—now that's fun!" Neally says. ■

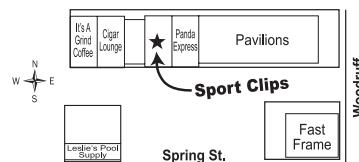
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A Cultural Gift...

James Orihuela

By Jonathan Murrietta

Gifting culture, language, and a sense of identity to his students, James Orihuela has established himself as an amazing middle school teacher at Helen Keller Dual Immersion Middle School.

Mr. Orihuela has been teaching for 24 years. He treats his students like extended family, and they often return years later to tell him how much he meant to them and to thank him for creating a lasting bond with fellow classmates.

“When the kids leave middle school, connections are made,” Mr. Orihuela said. “My students come from all different backgrounds but develop a real sense of community.”

One year, a group of Orihuela’s former students put together a reunion dinner to thank their teacher for the impact he had on their lives—for giving them the gift of identity and family.

That same gift was given to Orihuela from his family, growing up in Colorado. Orihuela’s parents were Cuban immigrants who came to the United States to evade Fidel Castro’s government and find work. Orihuela remembers that unlike other immigrant groups, Cubans were emigrating from their homeland temporarily—until Castro and his regime were finished, so they continued to develop their language (Spanish) and their customs and culture. And this was certainly the case for the Orihuela family.

However, his family also began to learn



English. Orihuela’s mother named him after the neighborhood boy living next door to them in Colorado—a blonde-haired, blue-eyed boy named James.

“It was the first American name my mom learned,” Orihuela says.

When Orihuela got to high school, he really began to think about how he could help native Spanish speakers develop their language and further their academics. He decided he would become a teacher.

Orihuela now has found a platform at Helen Keller that is exactly what he wanted to do—teaching Spanish as language arts.

“His passion for teaching in the Dual Immersion Program is an amazing thing,” said Thomas Espinoza, Keller’s principal. “He is a strong believer in being biliterate and bicultural. All the extra hours he has put in is incredible.”

Quick Facts:

- Name of your school:
Keller Dual Immersion
- Years teaching at that school:
1 year (we just moved the program here this year to have room for expansion!)
- Years teaching total:
24 years
- Subject(s) you teach:
Spanish Language Arts
- Something you are known for saying to students:

“Lo que me importa es que trates.”
(what matters to me is that you try)

Orihuela is passionate about getting his students to use the Spanish language outside of the classroom as well. He has directed full-scale bilingual play productions at Keller, including "West Side Story" a few years ago, and even helped sponsor a weeklong trip to Puerto Rico for his students to further develop their Spanish and broaden cultural horizons.

When he was still teaching at DeMille, Orihuela put together a talent show, where students could show off their talents. He remembers one student in particular, who sang a song- his first time ever performing in front of a crowd. The boy had an incredible voice. He is now a professional musician and living out his dream in Los Angeles.

Orihuela's current students are his biggest fans. "He is so helpful," Sophia said. "He is really a fun teacher," said Nohemi, another student. "Mr. Orihuela goes above and beyond," Audry exclaims. "We do fun projects," Nayelli said. "He even directed us in [Keller's] Christmas pageant," Patrick said.

Whatever the accolade might be, it is undoubtedly clear that Mr. Orihuela is an extremely giving person, a hero to his students, and an amazing middle school teacher. ■

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The Pathway to Success Starts with a CHOICE: The New Long Beach High School Process

By Jennifer Newton

In Long Beach, the days of graduating eighth grade and going to your local high school without a second thought no longer exist. Today's eighth graders are researching schools, talking to counselors, and filling out applications—because it's all about the CHOICE.

If you live in Long Beach (or certain surrounding areas) and have a child, they will most likely be going through the LBUSD High School CHOICE program during their school years.

Students rarely go to their neighborhood school just because it's their home school, but instead choose a school based on academic pathways (small learning communities), sports programs, and extracurricular options that interest them. This fundamental shift in the approach to education is a 180-degree turn from how high schools ran 20, 10 or even 5 years ago.

Will the students be better off for it? That's yet to be seen. But what we can be certain of is that students (and parents) need to set aside significant time

to understand this system, prepare for a complex application process, and start watching their grades very closely in elementary school—yes, I said elementary school—in order to have the best chance at getting into their high school of choice.

“One of the biggest shifts in the school path is linked learning—the fusion of academic content standards and the practical application to a career path,” said Jennifer Brown, Administrator of the LBUSD High School CHOICE process. “If students are

BY THE NUMBERS

Don't get overwhelmed, but there is a lot that goes into the CHOICE process to provide students with the specialized education they desire.

- 5,500 people attend the High School CHOICE information fair in October
- 4,000+ students complete CHOICE School applications online each year
- 180 students (on average) per pathway, per grade level
- 10 CHOICE High Schools currently in LBUSD
- 45 "Pathways" for students to choose from
- 6 Pathway choices students can list on their application
- 4 – 6 weeks of online application submissions (December – January)
- 4 Regional Information nights, one in each quadrant of the city
- 1 NEW CHOICE High School in LBUSD – Browning High School

GLOSSARY

The High School CHOICE program is made up of three major components:

Linked Learning: An approach to education that combines college-focused academics, work-based learning and integrated student supports.

High School CHOICE Program: Opportunity given to all LBUSD 8th grade students to apply to any high school and/or pathway in the district.

Pathways: Pathways are academic and career-focused specialized learning opportunities at each LBUSD high school that connect learning with students' interests and career aspirations.

Browning High School

- Browning will be the 11th high school in LBUSD. Located at Redondo and Stearns in Signal Hill, Browning will be a small thematic high school concentrating on culinary arts and hospitality management. Recruitment for Browning starts for the 2017 8th Grade Class.
- "Browning's Pathway mirrors the shift in Long Beach's industry from Aerospace to travel and tourism," said Brown. "As with all of our Pathway programs, we're working with local industry partners to provide specialized coaching for career success, expert guest speakers and internships for students."

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE TRANSITION

For the best success during the High School CHOICE process, start early, stay informed and follow these seven tips:

1. Early discussion with your children about the High School CHOICE and Pathways programs helps them understand and engage. Explain how their performance now (in elementary school) can positively affect their choices when they go to high school.
2. Good academic skills are key to getting your child into one of their top choice schools. Since the CHOICE process takes the entirety of the 8th grade year, eligibility criteria are based on 6th & 7th grade test scores and grades. So student performance during those years is crucial for qualifying.
3. At your child's back-to-school night, visit the teacher(s) in the next grade level up. Get a feel for how your child's current grade will integrate with the next grade and what you can do to help your child succeed.
4. Register on School Loop & Parent View online. That is the first line of communication for all High School CHOICE information.
5. Get the CHOICE mobile app for your smart phone.
6. Have a good working relationship with your child's middle school counselor or LBUSD liaison at area private schools. Start reaching out to them and having the conversation about high school when your child is in the 6th and 7th grades.
7. Take advantage of all the opportunities during the High School CHOICE process including the CHOICE Fair, open houses and shadow program.



engaged in the learning and it makes sense to them, they are going to be more engaged in school and more excited to learn.”

What does this “shift” mean in layman’s terms? Essentially, Long Beach

high schools are being broken down into smaller learning groups. This includes academic programs, such as the PACE program at Poly and the WAVE program at Wilson, “pathways” that create a “school within a school” like at Millikan and Lakewood, and

career-focused “boutique” programs such as McBride High School, which focuses on engineering, health-medical, and Criminal Justice and Investigation. All the essentials of a high school education (English, math, history, etc.) are still included; however, they are presented with an emphasis on how those skills are used in the pathway focus and ultimately the career industry.

“A diploma is no longer a certificate of completion but a passport of opportunity,” said Brown. “We don’t want to take any option off the table for any one student. They know they have multiple options and pathways they can explore.”

Each schools’ programs are structured differently which can make options tough to compare side by side. For example, a bright child interested in math and engineering must decide if he/she would like to really cultivate that love for engineering at a specialized small school like the new SATO High School and feed off like-minded ambitious engineers, or apply to a more general accelerated program like Quest, WAVE, or PACE at Millikan, Wilson, or Poly respectively.

The bigger schools are less specialized, but they also have the fun bells and whistles associated with a “normal” high school like sports programs. The smaller boutique schools may not offer sports and other extracurricular activities.

Still there are other important fac-

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tors like transportation and where the child's friends are going that may lend toward picking the neighborhood school. Or, are families willing to pay the extra price of a local private school, in pursuit of combining the "traditional" high school bells and whistles like sports and clubs, while also receiving specialized learning?

In LBUSD, students (and parents) get to choose what focus or pathway they want to take based on their interests at the time of application (in their 8th grade year), listing their top three choices on a district application. The High School CHOICE application process mirrors the college application process with guidance counselors, prospective school visits, submission of transcripts and test scores, and filling out an online application. Brown notes that early understanding and family involvement is the key to the success.

Of course the choice that students have to make this early on begs the question; do children as young as 13 and 14 really have any idea what career path they want to take?

"We understand that kids don't know what they want for lunch, let alone what they want to do for a career," said Brown. "We don't assume they will necessarily go into that career [of their Pathway]. It's about what they are 'interested' in."

Proponents of the CHOICE school program say it prepares students for the collegiate level, provides them with knowledge of what goes on beyond

PROCESS

The High School CHOICE application process goes for about six months, beginning in October. Here's what you can expect:

- One centralized CHOICE Fair in October 5,500 people attend.
- Four regional information nights, one in each quadrant of the city. These consist of "back-to-school night style" presentations of the CHOICE program.
- An Open House informational night at each LBUSD high school.
- Students can participate in a optional shadow program at two of the high schools they are interested in. (Reserve dates in advance.)
- The online application process opens in December and closes in mid-January. Students can designate their 1st through 6th school choice in the application.

CONTACT

For more information on High School CHOICE, Pathways or Linked Learning, visit the LBUSD website or call the High School CHOICE office.

Team High School CHOICE

- Family/Parent Hotline: 562-997-8306 (Fluent in English, Spanish, Khmer)
- CHOICE School Information: https://www.lbschools.net/Departments/School_Choice/hs_choice.cfm
- LBUSD School Loop: <https://lbud-ca.schoolloop.com/>
- LBUSD Parent University: https://www.lbschools.net/Departments/Parent_U/

*Source: Linked Learning (<http://interactives.irvine.org/linkedlearning2015/evidence/research>)

the classroom, and gives them a greater awareness of how the principles they are learning in school are applied later in the work world.

But opponents cite that the focus on achieving or over-achieving can be overwhelming for children and puts too much pressure on them at an early age.

"I often wonder if this is just too much stress for little kids," said a

local 908 parent who asked to remain anonymous. "I remember how stressful SATs, GPAs and college applications were when I was 17-years-old. Now we're putting that pressure on a 13-year-old? This is their time to be kids, go outside and have fun with friends. Are these rigorous college-prep standards taking away from that?"

It seems that confusion is still prevalent when it comes to explaining the CHOICE school system and its

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Pathways. But for the foreseeable future, the High School CHOICE Program is here to stay in LBUSD. So, the district is doing its best to help families and students understand the process.

“The High School CHOICE office is here to help. Our goal is clear, consistent communication with every family in Long Beach,” said Brown. “Our intention is to broaden the horizons to make sure students and families are aware of all the options.”

This is still a new and exciting/scary (choose your word) change to high school education in Long Beach. It’s complicated and probably gets even more muddled when you try to blend the school districts’ grand vision with the reality of student involvement and teenage opinion.

On the pages that follow we show you what actual students in the programs at each school are saying. We interviewed a diverse selection of East Long Beach teens from every relevant program and school, public and private. We hope this feature at the very least explains why the five high school kids on your block all come home in different school uniforms, at different times, and from different directions! ■



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- Numerous well-balanced opportunities for participation in the arts, sports, leadership and service



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Small Learning Communities (focus):

QUEST (academics), COMPASS (arts),
PEACE (community service), MBA (business),
MIT (technology), GREEN (environment)



"I think all of our programs offer something special and unique to each incoming freshman. We have six small learning communities (SLC), QUEST being the one that focuses on the higher academics and the other five are focused on an industry sector, which is connected around the linked learning approach. I think the best thing about our small learning communities is that they give the students a family feel; it gives them a community. A school of 3,500 kids can be overwhelming. But when the kids come into an SLC, they have a home, a niche, and a network with students with the same interests."

Grant Robinson, Millikan Linked Learning Pathway Coordinator

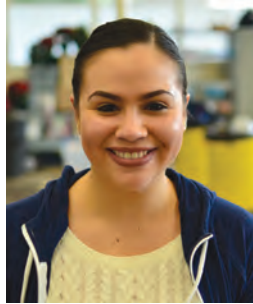
PEACE



Jake Moritz path. My teachers in PEACE really support me in my future goals. I made so many good friends taking part in PEACE."

"I was always interested in the social justice, law-oriented career

MIT



Jocelyn Ramirez would fit my needs and abilities best, until I came across the MIT program. I like technology, and I use it every day."

"When I came to Millikan, I didn't know which small learning community

QUEST



Sabria Harper everyone looks up to. It's a challenge, but QUEST has prepared me for college, as I am graduating with about nine AP classes.

"I wanted to be college ready, so I applied to QUEST. It's that program that

GREEN



Jade Shapperd like you're not supposed to refill a water bottle, because the plastic isn't good for you."

"It's really fun. I've learned a lot in this smaller learning community;

MBA



Josue Martinez favorites. We get to create our own mock businesses. I've learned how to control my money; how to create budgets, etc.

"The Banking and Finance and the Virtual Enterprise classes have been my

COMPASS



Jack Dixon that's really cool. Everybody in COMPASS is very proud to be in the program. Their art comes through their very being."

"Anything we learn about we can show through our art ability, and



Academic Communities:

Distinguished Scholars (DS), WAVE



Macy Jelinowicz, AP Coordinator

“The Distinguished Scholars Program (DS) has existed for 22 years. The program assures that students will be taking vigorous courses. Recently, we developed WAVE (Wilson Academic Vision of Excellence), our most rigorous academic program at Wilson that is similar to Millikan’s QUEST program and Poly PACE. Students in WAVE have to take seven classes and are taking anywhere from six to twelve AP’s in the time they have been at Wilson. We are also in the process of redesigning Wilson’s program to essentially a college model, where students in the future can pick a major and go through high school in a concentrated area of study.”

DS



Angelique Nieto
“I chose Distinguished Scholars because I really like the program’s community. We can take the high-level classes we want, but still be involved with the school’s broader social scene.”

WAVE



Chad Tavares
“I prefer WAVE because it is like Poly PACE but for Wilson. We get grouped in with other WAVE students, and I really like the flow of the program.”

WAVE



Jessica Bixby
“WAVE has gotten me on a great schedule. You can’t just slack off and expect to get things done last minute. The teachers are very involved and want their students to graduate and attend a good college.”

WAVE



Talia Colchico
“I like being in WAVE because of how much we are challenged and being in a competitive environment really pushes us to do better. Even though it is very challenging, you still get to enjoy high school.”

DS



Sydney Wilhelm
“I chose Distinguished Scholars because it works well with my sports schedule. It’s not as demanding as WAVE, but it does challenge more than the Classical program classes.”

DS



Talia Cassel
“I chose to be in Distinguished Scholars because in my opinion DS is more of a one way track toward college than Classical and you aren’t forced to take too many classes like the WAVE program.”

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Steve Rockenbach,
Principal

MCBRIDE

"I think our school is unique because from the beginning, our entire school was designed for pathway learning. The students are getting a chance to apply what they're learning. I think another aspect that makes us stand out is the state-of-the-art technology that the kids have access to. We offer the right types of curricular courses and we stay up-to-date on what skills industry leaders are looking for."



Pathways: Health and Medical, Criminal Justice (CJI), Engineering

Health/Medical



Tim Hokanson

"I want to be a pediatric cardiologist. We have a big lab with hospital beds inside and mannequin that we can physically work with, so we can try to diagnose them and try to fix them."

CJI



Breanna Ith

"The school itself gives you a different feel than any other, with hands-on training. We get a mock case or a crime scene and we'll actually walk through it and conduct an investigation."

Engineering



Dezmin Hemmans

"I've grown up around computers, so I want to be a computer scientist. The Engineering Pathway has helped broaden my knowledge about the other fields in engineering."

ST. ANTHONY



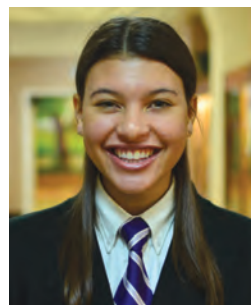
"St. Anthony has been around for a long time. We just celebrated our 95th anniversary. A ton of community and business leaders have graduated from here over the years. Having a small school with small classes is really paying off. About 80 percent of our graduates go to four year colleges. There's a positive peer pressure here, where the students challenge one another to be their very best, while learning the values of the Christian faith along the way."

Mike Schabert, Principal



Jesus Fernandez

"We have a culture of smart people. It's cool to be smart here. In my AP literature class we have deep intellectual conversations about what is the meaning of life and then my classmates and I take that conversation outside of the classroom."



Tayler Bennett

"St. Anthony has a smaller and closer community. I play basketball and I enrolled in the school because I wanted to be a part of a great team like St. Anthony. I am attending Rice University next year on a full-ride basketball scholarship."

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Academic Program: PACE (Program of Additional Curricular Experience)

Dr. Michelle Aberle, PACE Program Facilitator



"I often feel that PACE teachers are looking to college for their students. I think the level of rigor is higher and the expectation is higher. I came here to teach because my own middle schooler wanted to go to Poly. So, I did my due diligence and came here to the campus and looked around and spent the day here and talked to teachers and kids and was so impressed

with what I saw—with the incredible diversity, with the goodwill between different groups of kids and with the level of the PACE classes that I visited. So, I went home that night and my daughter asked me, 'Am I going to Poly?' and I replied saying, 'Yes, and so am I.'"

Academic Program: CIC (Center for International Curriculum)

Jeffrey Inui, CIC Program Facilitator



"I think one of the unique aspects about CIC is that it allows for choice in the kids' selection of their courses. If science is their passion, they can go that route. If history is their interest, they should pursue that. If everything is their interest, we allow for that as well. I've never seen the logic of making a kid who struggles in math take

AP or honors math, when that's just going to create more stress for the kid. I think my driving view of all of this is that high school is the kid's experience. I believe too many programs are dictated by adults, and what they want for their kids."

PACE



Mathias Pettersson

"I've always known that PACE is a great program. The classes are challenging, and the rigor is high. I know a lot of college kids who did come through PACE and they said college was a breeze."

CIC



Emily Knous

"I wanted a program that would allow me the flexibility to play outside sports, along with being able to have challenging classes. With CIC you're surrounded by hardworking students who also participate in sports and other activities."

PACE



Carol Wersbe

"Poly's recruitment process was great. I got to shadow students in the PACE program when I was in 8th grade. The PACE program is like its own school among this huge urban campus. I feel really prepared for college having gone through PACE."

CIC



Frank Wells

"I play two instruments, piano and violin. And I've always known that Poly has one of the best orchestras around. CIC has allowed me to be in music, while at the same time having an academic community as well."

VALLEY CHRISTIAN



"I think what makes Valley Christian unique is that the students are getting a lot more than just science, math, and a core curriculum. They are getting help with navigating life, relationships, and their spiritual journey."

Brian Petteys, VCHS Assistant Principal



Roger Ramos

"I am what they call a 'lifer' at Valley Christian. I have been going here for all 12 years, from the elementary school, to the middle, and now to the high school. My favorite aspect about the Valley Christian program is that

the teachers truly care. Additionally, Valley Christian really makes sure you know what you're doing before you enter college."



Kerryn Harrington

"Valley Christian has equipped me with a strong spiritual perspective. I think what makes this school so special is that the people here, not just the teachers, but the students, administrators, everybody here at the school has Christ in them and they really embody what Christ is, and I feel like faith is something you need growing up, for students in private and public schools alike."

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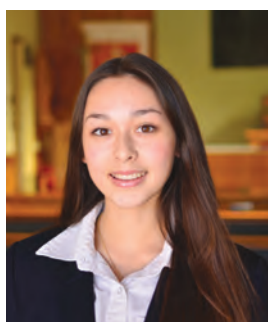


ST. JOSEPH



"We are a college preparatory school, so from the beginning the students are on a track for college and it's a constant theme here at our campus. But we also encourage the students to take part in multiple extracurricular activities as well. We provide them the community support that enables them to meet their maximum potential academically and in leadership, faith development, athletics, and visual and performing arts. Additionally, we have such a huge foundation in morals and values here at St. Joseph. The students start to own their faith at this high school and learn how to apply it to their lives."

Mrs. Elise Gurewitz, St. Joseph Director of Marketing and Admissions



Kateryn McReynolds "When I stepped onto campus for the first time at St. Joseph, I really felt that I was home. Even though I looked into different high schools, I never lost the initial 'falling in love feeling' that I had visiting St. Joseph. All the girls here have a welcoming, enthusiastic spirit."



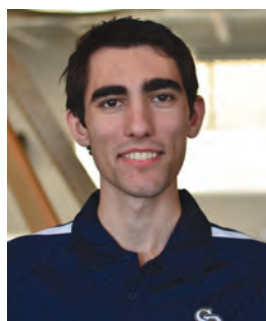
Alexa Gallegos "All the activities we do here, everything that St. Joseph stands for, it's just such a great sense of community here and very welcoming. You can pretty much decide if you want to take an honors track or not coming in as a freshman and the same goes with AP classes as a Sophomore."

ST. JOHN BOSCO

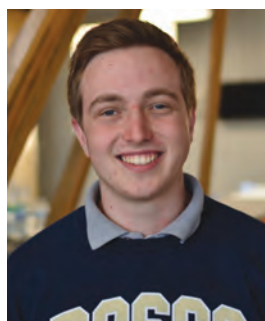


"We foster this idea at St. John Bosco of brotherhood, and of these four key traits of the Bosco man—faith, intellect, leadership and citizenship. We are a college preparatory institution and we really pride ourselves on getting these young men ready for colleges and for life, as we teach them the traits that can't necessarily be taught from a textbook. Citizenship, for example, knowing how to be a good husband, a brother, a friend, is an important trait because when you go out into the real world, you have to be able to work with other people."

Renae Waestman-Furlow, St. John Bosco Director of Marketing and Communications



Adrian Campos "Bosco really cares about its students—and I felt that very early on when I was applying to high schools. They gave me a tour of the school and I saw their music program and fell in love with it. Bosco feels more like a family community than a school."



Kellen Silver "Shortly after I applied to Bosco, I was in a car accident. I was suffering from a concussion, and Bosco was so accommodating to me. I felt the brotherhood and family aspect right from the beginning. The teachers and staff here at Bosco are connected to what the students need. I love Bosco."

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LAKEWOOD



Small Learning Communities (focus):
DMA (digital media), HOSM (health and sports medicine), Odyssey (marine biology), ATM (technology), Merit Scholars (academics)



"Lakewood has had small learning community programs for a long time. We are trying to instill that industry thread throughout the curriculum, so that way, students are using their core classes and are applying them to their interests. It gives students real life opportunities. We definitely have students performing at a high level here in all disciplines."

Ronald Bazer, Learning Pathways Coordinator

Merit



Paige Hankins
"Applying to Merit Scholars was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made because I have had such amazing teachers."

Odyssey



Ava Swain
"We get to shark dive each year off the coast of Catalina. We also get to take part in cool experiments like shark dissections."

HOSM



Madison Norquest
"Lakewood is the only school I know that has sports medicine. By graduation, I'll have completed all pre-requisites for my college major."



**Mona Merlo,
SATO Principal**

"We have the CAMS model of a 'national model of excellence' and are bringing it to East Long Beach. But we're going to take it a step further because so much has changed in the engineering and biomedical fields since CAMS started about 25 years ago. The first two years of study here at SATO are foundational years and then the students really get to explore the different fields when they're upperclassmen. By the time they're seniors, the goal is to get them into internships and job shadow opportunities, where they will actually get a chance to work in the industry."

SATO

ACADEMY OF MATH AND SCIENCE



Kyle Alix
"Everyone here just seems really interesting and enthusiastic. There are only around 100 students, so it gives you a smaller feel on campus. My favorite class so far is the Mandarin class. Our teacher is a professor at Cal State Long Beach."



Ayato Hisanaga
"When I heard it was an engineering and biomedical school, I was like 'oh man I've got to go here,' because I am really interested in going into engineering. And then when she said it was a completely new school, I thought, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!"



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908 Lazy Acres Market
See our advertisement on page 53

Not valid with any other offer,
one coupon per customer.
No cash back.
Expires 03/31/16



BUY 1 SANDWICH GET 1 FREE
BUY 3 CUPCAKES GET 3 FREE

908 Miss Priss Cupcakes
See our advertisement on page 15

With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer,
One coupon per person.
Offer expires 03/31/16



\$5 OFF ORDER OF \$25 OR MORE

908 Naples Rib Company
See our advertisement on page 37

With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer,
discount, coupon or price special
(including happy hour).
One per table or Take-out order.
Offer expires 03/31/16



\$5 OFF Any Purchase

908 Grocery Outlet
See our advertisement on page 8

Valid at Long Beach Grocery Outlet only.
One coupon per person. No cash value.
Excludes alcohol & dairy. Duplicated coupons will
not be accepted. Coupon must be surrendered at
time of purchase. Not valid with any other offer.
Expires 02/29/16

GROCERY OUTLET
bargain market



2 FOR 1 PUBLIC SKATING SESSION

908 The RINKS- Lakewood-Ice
See our advertisement on page 25

Good for one free public skate session
and skate rental at The Rinks-
Lakewood Ice with paid admission of
equal or greater value.
This coupon has no cash value.
Offer expires 03/31/16



10% OFF MEN'S NEW BALANCE
20% OFF ALL OTHER MEN'S SHOES

908 Tenni-Moc's Shoe Store
See our advertisement on page 55

Receive this discount in addition to
our sale prices on in-stock products
with this coupon only. Not valid
with any other offer. One coupon
per person. Offer expires 03/31/16



\$10 OFF SMOG CHECK

908 Bellflower Smog #3
See our advertisement on page 13

With this coupon only.
Not valid on re-test.
Cannot be combined with any
other offer. Tax not included.
One coupon per person.
Offer expires 03/31/16



Real Testimonials for our Advertisers!



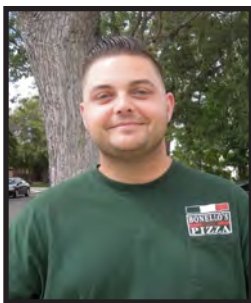
Thank you Family Floors- Family Floors put new carpet into one room of our home. They were upfront about pricing, no hidden fees, and very efficient with everything. The installers were also very quick and clean with the job.

Family Floors- See our advertisement on page 5



Thank you Interior Style Designs - the window coverings look great from the inside and the outside. You treated the job like you were working on your own house and I really appreciate the professional job!

Interior Style Designs- See our advertisement on page 39



Thank you Michele K In one quick week, you helped me sell my house in Torrance and buy one in Los Altos. I think she is so awesome that I have her name plugged into my phone as "Michele K Best Realtor Ever."

Michele K Home Selling Team- See advertisement on back cover



Thank you Sonny Davila We have financed with him 5 or 6 times. Always very responsive and helpful. Sonny is very friendly and just a great person to work with.

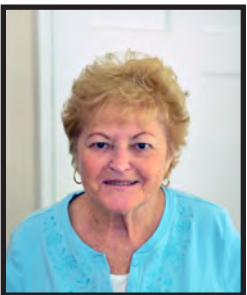
Sonny Davila- See our advertisement on page 21



Thank you Davis Zellmer for being very professional and knowledgeable. We saw great qualities in Davis, he is a compassionate and caring person. He helped us with my mother's trust and estate. We also had him take care of our living trusts.

Davis Zellmer- See our advertisement on page 17

Davis R. Zellmer
Attorney at Law



Thank you Bolt Computer Training - Susan is teaching me everything about the computer, the tablet, and my smartphone. Being a senior citizen, I didn't know much about new technology and she has helped with all of my technical needs.

Bolt Computer Training- See our advertisement on page 35



COUPONS!! CUT OUT AND SAVE.

SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS IN THE 908'!

20% OFF ANY SINGLE ITEM

908 Miyamo
See our advertisement on page 41

With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer,
discount, coupon or price special.
Offer expires 03/31/16



40% OFF ANY ONE ITEM

908 Cinnamon Stik
10641 Los Alamitos Blvd. Los Alamitos,
CA 90720

Bring this coupon in to receive 40%
off any one item with this coupon only.
Not valid with any other discount.
One coupon per purchase.
Offer expires 03/31/16



20% Off Any Retail Item

908 A Place of Our Own
See our advertisement on page 23

Receive 20% off any retail item
with this coupon only.
One per customer.
Not valid with any other discount.
Offer expires 03/31/16



20% OFF ANY SINGLE ITEM

908 The Denim Bar
See our advertisement on page 22

With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer,
discount, coupon or price special.
Offer expires 03/31/16



Any Large 1-Topping & Appetizer Combo

908 Straw Hat Pizza
See our advertisement on page 15

Any Large 1-Topping and Appetizer
combo - \$21.99. With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer.
Tax not included.
One coupon per person.
Offer expires 03/31/16

Web Code L1TAC



\$2 Watch Battery

908 J&L Jewelry
See our advertisement on page 25

With this coupon only.
One watch battery per person.
Not valid with any other discount.
One coupon per person.
Offer expires 03/31/16



100% Car Inspection Only \$34.95

908 Free Lance Motors
See our advertisement on page 45

With this coupon only.
Includes oil and filter change!
\$34.95+tax and crv. Most models apply
Synthetic oil additional charge
Not valid with any other offer.
Offer expires 03/31/16



\$5 OFF ORDER OF \$25 OR MORE

908 El Burrito Grill
See our advertisement on page 35

With this coupon only.
Not valid with any other offer,
discount, coupon or price special.
One per table or Take-out order.
Offer expires 03/31/16



FREE 1 DAY PASS

908 Weingart Lakewood YMCA
See our advertisement on page 27

Bring this coupon in for a 1 day
guest pass.
New members only.
One coupon per person.
Offer expires 03/31/16



\$10 SHIRT OR MUG

908 Life is Great in the 908

To purchase a Life is Great in the
908 shirt or mug, email
office@lb908.com



The best way to support this magazine is to support our advertisers!

\$3 Pint of Craft Beer

908 Brew Kitchen Ale House
See our advertisement on page 29

Bring this coupon in for a \$3.00 pint of craft beer with this coupon. One per customer. Not valid with any other discount. Offer expires 03/31/16



See Coupon on page 43

908 Sports Clips
See our advertisement on page 43



20% Off any purchase on rainy day

908 Elementals
See our advertisement on page 23

Recieve 20% off your purchase on a rainy day with this coupon only. One per customer. Not valid with any other discount. Offer expires 03/31/16



BOGO Breakfast or Lunch

908 EJ Malloy's Los Altos
See our advertisement on page 45

Buy One Get One free breakfast or lunch. Lunch Mon-Fri. With this coupon only. Not valid with any other discount, or coupon. One per table. Dine-in only. Offer expires 03/31/16. No Holidays



20% OFF ANY SINGLE ITEM

908 Flags with a Flair
See our advertisement on page 22

With this coupon only. Not valid with any other offer, discount, coupon or price special. Offer expires 03/31/16



15% OFF ANY ONE ITEM

908 Alternative Surf
See our advertisement on page 35

15% off any one item. With this coupon only. Not valid with any other discount. One per customer. Offer expires 03/31/16



FREE PANGAKE STACK

908 Sideyard Cafe
See our advertisement on page 33

Banana or Chocolate chip pancakes(2). Valid 8am-11am with this coupon only. Not valid with any other offer, discount, coupon or price special. One per table or Take-out order. Offer expires 03/31/16



Dining in the Rain

908 Shenandoah
See our advertisement on page 23

Receive 20% off your entire bill with this coupon. Dine-in only! Patio must be closed due to rain. Not valid with any other discount. One per table. Patio must be closed. Offer expires 03/31/16. Not Valid February 13-15th



Long Beach 908 Magazine

Your quarterly guide to local busines and happenings in East Long Beach
Email office@lb908.com or call 562-682-8846 for info on advertising rates



Thank you Don Gath Insurance Agency - The Gath's are a great family. They take care of all of your insurance needs with efficiency. They really care about you and your low rates!

Don Gath Insurance- See our advertisement on page 33 **Don Gath Insurance Agency**



Thank you Dr. Bill Walton, DDS - Dr. Walton is my dentist and friend for over 15 years. He and his staff are very caring and professional. They have done a great job with all of my dental needs!



Dr. Bill Walton, DDS - See our advertisement on page 48



Thank you Granite Transformations - Every bit of advice you gave was so spot on and perfect I went with it and am so happy. You understood that this kitchen is actually used for cooking.

Granite Transformations- See our advertisement on page 41



Thank you New Light Electric- Jose and his crew were excellent. He saves me a lot of money and is always available to take a call if I have an emergency electrical problem.
-Donnie Nabor

New Light Electric- See our advertisement on page 3

About Long Beach 908 Magazine:

Long Beach 908 Magazine was founded, created, and is run in East Long Beach. We are not owned by any parent media company but instead rely on our great, faithful, hardworking, local advertisers to support us. More so, we count on our readers to patronize these great businesses and let them go to work for you. Every time you call an advertiser or use a coupon, you are supporting our magazine.

We hand deliver our magazines to 24,000 homes in East Long Beach and strive for content that reflects our readers' interests. Our distribution crew is made up of local high school and college students. Our staff all live in East Long Beach. Our magazine releases four times a year, covering all four seasons.

By East Long Beach we mean specifically, 90808, 90815, and 90803, or east of Clark Ave./Park Ave. We generally create content based on a theme, such as education in this issue. We try our best to stay both "real" and "positive" with our content. We also try to mix up the themes to cover different and interesting topics and people. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback, as this magazine is for you- the residents of East Long Beach. We hope this - and all our magazines- are worthy of your coffee table. Thank you so much for reading, and remember...

"Life is Great in the 908!"

Beach **KIDS CLUB**

Dirtbags SEASON STARTS 2/19!

\$20 INCLUDES:

- **ADMISSION TO ALL HOME GAMES**
- **FASTPASS FOR KIDS RUN THE BASES**
- **EXCLUSIVE LUNCH BOX**
- **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**
- **BIRTHDAY CARD**
- **MUCH, MUCH MORE**

FOR KIDS 13 AND UNDER

[LONGBEACHSTATE.COM/BEACHKIDSClub](http://longbeachstate.com/beachkidsclub)



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BETTERLIVINGINLONGBEACH.COM



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\$749,000

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