

PALISADES NEWS

SPECIAL SECTION • AUGUST 17, 2016

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VIEWPOINT

Computers Versus Real Learning

By JEFF LANTOS
Special to the Palisades News

In the early 17th century, when Native Americans first saw the gleam and heard the roar of French and English-made muskets, these frightening “fire sticks” became must-have technology. Never mind that the natives’ bows-and-arrows were more accurate and that 10 arrows could be fired in the time it took to load and fire one musket ball. Never mind that an arrow was a silent killer and the archer’s position could be concealed. The musket was new and could tear bark off a tree!

Native Americans began trading for these explosive weapons, and over time became expert marksmen. They stopped crafting bows and arrows and within a few generations their high-performing, artisanal weapon had become a cultural artifact.

Throughout history we’ve seen similar spasms of irrational acquisitiveness. What we’ve learned is that giving up the tried and true for the shiny and new can be problematic, especially in the long term. In the case of the Native Americans, their abandonment of the old ways meant they could be rendered helpless whenever the white man chose to cut off their supply of rifles and gunpowder.

Skip ahead to 20th-century Los Angeles, where a far-reaching mass transit system was gutted in favor of the new car culture. Now the average speed on the freeways is 17 miles per hour and billions are being spent resurrecting a fraction of the old trolley lines.

Now consider the kudzu-like spread of technology in our schools. In the late 1970s, executives at computer companies began convincing policymakers and education bureaucrats that new desktop computers could replace outmoded teaching models and “revolutionize” education in America.

There was no evidence that computers improved student achievement, but like muskets, this was new technology. School administrators spent heavily on them throughout the 1980s.

After Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992, his Panel on Educational Technology recommended that the “federal government spend between \$6 billion and \$28 billion each year on . . . computer infrastructure development, teacher training and research.”

According to Dr. Kirk Johnson at the Heritage Foundation, between September 1984 and September 1997, the number of computers in America’s K-12 schools increased eleven-fold to more than 8 million.

Still, Hewlett-Packard CEO John A.



Jeff Lantos was an innovative Marquez educator who taught history through musical theater.

Photo: Bart Bartholomew

Young and Charles M. Vest, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, urged Clinton to spend billions more. Today there are over 15 million digital devices in our classrooms. That’s about one for every three students.

What do we have to show for all this technology?

According to a 2015 International Student Assessment test, “school systems . . . with fewer computers [saw] larger educational gains, [and] 15-year-olds . . . who used computers more [than their paper-and-pencil peers] had both lower reading and lower math scores.”

In 2000, Dr. Johnson concluded that “Computers may not have the effect on academic achievement in reading that some might expect. Dedicating large amount of federal tax dollars to this technology could crowd out other worthwhile education expenditures on . . . new textbooks, music programs, vocational training and the arts.”

Johnson is no outlier. Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education, says that research to date shows that machine-based instruction is not helpful to children. She adds that, “the most valuable education emerges from live interactions between teachers and students.”

Longtime Yale University professor David Bromwich writes that a classroom that is “working well” is unlike “any other conversation or any other human encounter.” Listening “to the exchange of well-formulated thoughts . . . you learn a good deal that can’t be quantified, packaged or transmitted by

an . . . impersonal medium, no matter how up-to-date, no matter how well engineered.”

Kristina Rizga, a journalist at *Mother Jones* who embedded herself at a San Francisco high school for four years, observed that “Some of the most important things that matter in a quality education—critical thinking, intrinsic motivation, resilience, self-management, resourcefulness and relationship skills—exist in the realms that can’t be easily measured by statistical measures and computer algorithms, but they can be detected by teachers using human judgment.” Her book, *Mission High*, was based on her experience.

There’s no clear link between “computer-inspired engagement and learning,” says Randy Yerrick, associate dean of educational technology at the University of Buffalo. And when told that some school districts are spending five times more on technology than on textbooks, Larry Cuban, education professor emeritus at Stanford University, told writer Matt Richtel, “There is insufficient evidence to spend that kind of money, period. There is no body of evidence that shows a trend line.”

After nearly three decades in the classroom, I have yet to see one example of a digital device doing a better job than I do teaching a lesson, reinforcing a concept, inspiring a student or provoking a discussion. Given that top-performing school systems in Singapore and Shanghai “are cautious about giving computers to students,” isn’t it high time teachers on every campus in this country have discussions about the per-

ceived benefits of classroom technology?

I propose that instead of parking kids in front of glowing screens for half of every school day, we take all digital devices out of elementary classrooms and move them to a lab where students go once or twice a week for typing, research, computer training and coding classes, a lab taught by a geek who actually knows more about the devices than the students do.

At the same time, let’s put books back in kids’ hands and allow time for close reading, discussion, debate and collaborative learning. Let’s put teachers back in front of the class and above all let’s keep in mind that while technology can augment the learning process, we don’t need technology to learn.

And with the billions saved by slashing tech budgets, let’s hire more music, drama and PE teachers, and what about poets, chess instructors and storytellers?

Professor Bromwich writes that public support for teachers “will continue only if—against the allure of the most seductive of technologies—we remind ourselves how much the contact between teacher and student can matter in the physical classroom.”

If we lose that support, creative, dynamic and innovative teachers will go the way of the bow and arrow.

(Editor’s note: Jeff Lantos taught fifth grade at Marquez Elementary for 22 of his 29 years in the classroom. He retired in June. A Brown University graduate, he was known for his innovative teaching methods that included learning American history by performing.)

On the Cover

Canyon School Principal Nicole Sheard snapped this photo of her students as they went through a hula-hoop obstacle course.

Street Performers Wins Awards

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

Most visitors walking along Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade have seen the guy painted silver and dressed entirely in silver. He remains motionless like a statue before finally moving in slow, deliberate gestures. The spectacle is so unusual that parents hand children dollar bills to give to the fellow, who has been performing there for 13 years—and thinks of himself as a mirror.

No one really knows anything about the man's background, but everyone knows of him. That changed when Paul Revere eighth graders Tessa Smigla, Rose Morris, Becca Whitaker, Anna Cooper and Kira Prudente joined Pacifica sophomore Chloe Smigla to produce a short documentary, *Street Performers on the 3rd Street Promenade*.

Their 9-minute film was one of 38 out of 400 selected films to screen at the 11th Annual Santa Monica International Teen Film Festival in July. The selected films were shown at New Roads High School and the Santa Monica Library.

The awards show producers called this “an extraordinarily difficult year to judge because the quality of the films was outstanding.”

The Smigla sisters and their Revere friends were doubly excited when they learned they had won the 2016 Budding Film Maker Award and the 2016 Audience Choice Award.

“We go to the Promenade a lot and we have always wondered about the people who perform there,” Chloe Smigla said. “We thought it would be interesting to interview the performers and hear about their stories.”

Last summer, over four months, the filmmakers

interviewed various street performers on the Promenade.

Tessa Smigla added, “During the interviews we asked the performers questions like: ‘Where are you from? How long have you been performing on the Promenade?’ and ‘Why did you decide to perform there?’”

“I think the hardest part of making this film was the editing,” Morris said. “We had lots of raw footage and we then had to go through all of it and find the best videos. We asked a series of questions to each performer, and during editing, we grouped the answers to each question together. To do that, we had to sort through all of the videos to find everyone's answer to each question.”

“We were very surprised to find that people perform there from all over the world,” Chloe said. “Some of them have been there for decades and they come from various backgrounds. There was a civil engineer getting his master's degree who was a balloon artist and another balloon artist who went to Berkeley.”

Tessa added, “There was a musician from Dubai who is getting his master's degree at UCLA, who played the saxophone. There was an 11-year-old guitar player performing in a band with his 5-year-old brother, who plays the drums. They have been performing on the Promenade for two years.”

The filmmakers also discovered a 73-year-old woman who lost her job as an executive assistant and has been dancing on the Promenade for the past seven years. And they spoke to a partially-sighted blues musician who writes his own songs.

“The majority of the people we interviewed seemed really happy to be performing on the Promenade,” Tessa said.

The students were asked why they thought they won the audience award.



The filmmakers who won two major awards included (left to right) Tessa and Chloe Smigla, Rose Morris and Anna Cooper. Not pictured: Becca Whitaker and Kira Prudente.

“I think this film resonated to the audience because most people in Santa Monica have had a personal experience with these street performers,” Morris said.

“One audience member even told a story about how one performer took a bite out of her friend's sandwich.”

“It gave background into street performers' real lives,” Whitaker said, adding that the most difficult aspect of making the film was “the editing; there were so many different versions before we settled on the final cut.”

The film was accepted into the Marina Del Rey Film Festival and screened at the Cinemark 18 in Westchester on August 13.

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PACIFIC PALISADES PRESCHOOLS

Methodist Preschool of Pacific Palisades

801 Via de la Paz
(310) 454-4600

www.methodistpreschool.com

The Methodist Preschool, situated in the heart of town, begins its 2016-17 school year on September 6. The school, which is part of the Methodist Church, enrolls 82 preschool-aged children under the care of Director Flynn Aldis. This is her second year in charge of the school.

Although the Preschool is called a preschool, it also has a version of Transitional Kindergarten for children ages four and five called the Extended Dayprogram. For these children, school runs from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. instead of 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., the schedule for younger students.

“Within our preschool programs, we include Studio and Tinkering, which aim to promote artistic expression, creativity, problem-solving, innovation, persistence and perseverance,” Director Aldis said.

The school values exploration and play-based experiences to help teach students about learning, nature and the community. They accept applications year round.

Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Preschool

15821 Sunset Blvd.
(310) 454-0737

www.paliprespreschool.com

Palisades Presbyterian Preschool begins its 18th year on September 7 for the Monday to Friday students and September 8 for the Tuesday/Thursday students. The 84 students, ages 18 months to 5 years old, are under the leadership of Director Julie Baczewski.

“As we have done for the past 17 years, we will be opening a new classroom in January for those children who just missed the cut-off for preschool in September,” Baczewski said. “This new classroom offers the community a unique opportunity to have their youngest children start school midyear in a classroom with every child starting a new preschool.”



The STAR program at Palisades Lutheran trains future scientists.

The school’s toddler group will start in September, and will meet once a week. “This class provides families with the opportunity to meet other adults and children who will ultimately be in the same classroom, while giving the children a chance to become familiar with the preschool staff and grounds,” Baczewski said.

The school’s certified outdoor classroom has had some new additions added this summer, including an organic mud kitchen and a water log sluiceway with a water pump.

“Each element of our Outdoor Classroom has been designed with purpose and thought to provide the children we serve with the best opportunity to learn and grow by enjoying the beautiful outdoors,” Baczewski said.

The school will host its Back to School Night on September 6 at 7 p.m.

Palisades Jewish Early Childhood Center (PJECC)

17315 Sunset Blvd.
(310) 454-7781

www.pjecc.org

The Palisades Jewish Early Childhood Center begins its school year on August 22. The school caters to 70 children ages 3 months to 6 years old. There are 50 families under school head Chana Hertzberg.

“The curriculum is designed in a fashion to combine learning through self-discovery and teacher guidance,” Hertzberg said. “This encourages children to gain confidence and experience cooperative relationships with both peers and adults, all in an atmosphere of inspiration and growth filled with joy, laughter, traditional Jewish values, and developmental and academic excellence.”

The school focuses on working with each child to fit his or her needs.

“Our students have so many interests that have helped us to create opportunities to be stimulated and inspired to construct their own knowledge and own their daily experiences,” Hertzberg said. This is achieved through many different programs and activities, including an animal program, photo workshop, gardening, cooking, science, hiking and yoga.

Over the summer, students and parents gathered together to beautify the campus in collaboration with PJECC’s tinkering professional, Hana Wright.

“We believe that the most important goal of our school is to enhance our children’s self-esteem, to respect each child as an individual, to foster social-emotional growth, and to create a sense of community and family,” Hertzberg said.

Palisades Montessori Center

16706 Marquez Ave.
(310) 454-6497

www.palisadesmontessoricenter.com

The Palisades Montessori Center begins its school year on September 7 under the guidance of Director Angela de Silva. This will be her 25th year as head of the school,



Palisades Jewish Early Childhood Center has an animal program.

which enrolls 54 students ages 2 to 6.

The Montessori curriculum focuses on allowing children to explore and grow at their own rates. The Palisades Montessori Center curriculum is divided into five parts: Practical Life, Sensorial exercises, Math, Language and Cultural Studies. The Practical Life aspect of children’s education includes lessons in self-reliance, including potty training.

“Each child learns at his/her own pace in a non-threatening, non-competitive way,” says the school’s website. “Our approach is less rigid and a child’s day at PMC is also filled with fun, creativity and imagination.”

Orientation for the 2016-17 school year will be held on September 6, and Back to School Night is October 7 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

STAR Preschool at PLC (Palisades Lutheran Church)

15909 Sunset Blvd.
(310) 459-3425

www.thepreschoolatplc.com

Starting with the new school year, STAR will be partnering with the Palisades Lutheran Church to provide an all-day full preschool program. The core program will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with extended hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. STAR will also help establish a family center at Palisades Lutheran with a wide array of classes from “Mommy and Me Yoga” to “Family Cooking.”

STAR’s preschool at PLC will be building on its popular Little Dipper’s Pre-K program found at schools throughout the area, including Marquez Charter School. They will be offering the same hands-on experience at the Palisades Lutheran location for children starting at 2 years 9 months to those getting ready to go off to kindergarten.

STAR Preschools are founded on the premise that children learn through the process of experience and play. The children will benefit from experienced early childhood educators, access to a large community

of enrichment educators and a curriculum designed by a team of education specialists, neuroscientists, artists, scientists and enrichment professionals.

Children enjoy opportunities to develop friendships, explore group play and learn together as their social and emotional skills are developing. Exploration is at the heart of all of our lessons; students are encouraged to try everything!

Le Lycée Français de Los Angeles Pacific Palisades Campus

16720 Marquez Ave.
(310) 454-3663

www.lyceela.org/lelycee/ourcampuses/pacificpalisades/index.aspx

No information submitted.



This little pre-schooler visited her big sister at Palisades Elementary.

New Harry Potter Play Stirs Fond Memories of Village Books

By LAURA CARR
Palisades News Intern

Harry Potter made his comeback on July 31 in a new play written by Jack Thorne, based on an original new story by Thorne, J.K. Rowling and John Tiffany. The script, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, was released as a book the day after the play's premiere at the Palace Theater in London.

Having gone to every Harry Potter midnight release party at Village Books as a child, I decided to visit the Barnes & Noble party in Santa Monica on the night of July 30. There wasn't nearly as much fanfare surrounding *Cursed Child* as there had been for the other Harry Potter stories. I had already pre-ordered the script on Amazon, so my attendance at the party was simply a way to re-live the "glory days."

I proudly donned my Hogwarts sweat-shirt and strolled confidently into the store's second-floor event space—only to be met with curious stares from a large group of elementary and middle school-aged children. I was the oldest person in the room who wasn't a parent, chaperone or Barnes & Noble employee. The event paled

in comparison to the parties that Village Books used to throw for each new book in the series.

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child made me miss Village Books and my childhood. Every memory I have of Harry Potter is a fond one, from the palpable excitement in the air as midnight approached during the release party, to the rush of adrenaline that came from cracking open the latest installment. Even now, when I begin my annual re-reading of the series, I still get that feeling.

I didn't have that feeling when I settled down to read the script on August 1, although, to be fair, reading a script is much different than reading an actual book. In the canonical book series, you get a sense of Harry's emotions and the inner turmoil he feels. There are colorful descriptions of the wizarding world. Scripts are dialogue with brief stage directions that rely on the actors to bring the story to life; as a result you are constantly reminded that it is not real.

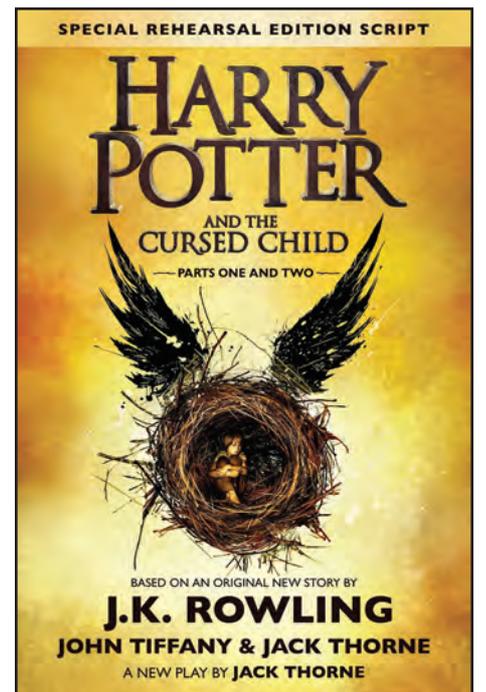
Still, I zipped through the script in one sitting, and I enjoyed it. The play focuses on Albus Severus, Harry's middle son, who is introduced in the epilogue of *Deathly Hal-*

lows, and his close friendship with Scorpius Malfoy, Draco Malfoy's misfit son. Albus is eager to show that he is more than just Harry Potter's Slytherin son, and chaos ensues when he tries to change time to right what he views as the wrongs that Harry committed in his youth.

I got a vivid sense of Harry's tense relationship with Albus, and it was nice to see Draco work together with the original trio (Harry, Ron and Hermione). Professor McGonagall is a constant presence in the story, which was nice.

However, the story lacked many of the characters who were written about in the epilogue. I wondered what happened to Teddy Lupin, the orphaned son of Remus Lupin and Tonks, and how Neville Longbottom and Luna Lovegood were faring. James Sirius and Lily Luna, Harry and Ginny's other children, are featured only briefly in the story. Despite Rowling's Twitter activity over the years that suggested she would have liked to make changes to the character relationships, she doesn't, which was a relief.

At 308 pages, the script is an easy read, and a nice second epilogue to the original books. It's easy to imagine Daniel Radcliffe,



Emma Watson, Rupert Grint and Tom Felton stepping back into their roles as you read through it, and it left me wishing that I could see the play on London's West End. Sadly, it is sold out midway through 2017.

Cursed Child didn't change how I felt about Harry, Ron and Hermione. It certainly didn't feel like much of a continuation of Harry's story, but it definitely stands on its own as an outstanding spinoff of the Harry Potter universe. It is worth the read.

(Laura Carr is a senior at Denison University in Granville, Ohio.)

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ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Calvary Christian School

701 Palisades Dr.
(310) 573-0082

www.calvarychristian.org

Calvary Christian School begins its new year on September 6. Head of School Vince Downey returns for his fifth year at the 420-student campus, grades transitional kindergarten (TK) to 8th grade.

“Calvary . . . is committed to fully integrating technology school-wide to strengthen the core curriculum and further enhance each student’s education,” a press release said. “Students in TK through fifth grade participate in coding and programming curriculum using robots, drones, microprocessors and 3D printers.”

The school focuses on giving all of its students a well-rounded education.

“We develop excellent communication skills as a primary learning objective and provide a multitude of opportunities, at every grade level, for students to perform, speak, debate, sing and play a musical instrument in front of an audience,” the press release said. “In middle school, exploratory classes include entrepreneurship, short-film production, fashion photography, leadership and pastry making, to name a few.”

This year, the school will see two staff changes. Current preschool teacher Brittany Gleason will move to second grade and current technology teacher Chad Martin will also teach eighth-grade history.

Over the summer, TK through third-grade classrooms were revitalized to “provide a stimulating environment for exploration and growth,” according to the release.

The school’s turf sports field also underwent construction to replace the rubber crumb under the turf with cork infill. “There have been some safety concerns regarding the common crumb rubber infill,” said Victory Ludwig, communications and events manager.

The online application for the 2017-18 school year will be available on September 12. Calvary’s annual Christmas Boutique will take place on December 2. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Calvary Christian students at band practice.

Canyon Charter School

421 Entrada Dr.
(310) 454-7510

www.canyoncharter.com

Canyon Charter School began its school year on August 16 under the leadership of Principal Nicole Sheard. The school boasts 400 students from transitional kindergarten (TK) to 5th grade.

Canyon is a public school in the LAUSD system that is proud to have the oldest school building in use by its students in Los Angeles County. The school was originally founded in 1894 and, although it has gone through three reincarnations, it is still committed to its mission to “providing a child-centered and nurturing environment, in which each child develops to her/his potential and becomes a lifelong learner.”

This year, Canyon Charter welcomes back former instructional assistant Zarin Khossoussi as a first-grade teacher.

Corpus Christi School

890 Toyopa Dr.
(310) 454-9411

www.corpuschristi-school.com

Corpus Christi School is excited to welcome its 260 students for the 2016-17 school year. Principal Ryan Bushore said new parent orientation is 7 p.m. on August 29 and first day of school for grades 1-8 is Wednesday, August 31.

Corpus Christi, a transitional kindergarten through eighth grade Catholic school, strives to provide an education incorporating academic excellence and the promotion of personal responsibility within a spiritual-based nurturing environment. Rooted in Catholic tradition, Corpus Christi School focuses on teaching the whole child.

The school’s philosophy is to recognize parents as their child’s primary educator



Kids enjoy time outside reading and drawing.

Marquez Charter School

16821 Marquez Ave.
(310) 454-4019

www.marquezcharter.org

Mr. Benjamin Meritt, principal, began his first full year at Marquez Charter School on August 16 with about 550 students in transitional kindergarten through fifth grade.

Marquez is a unique school supported by outstanding teachers and a great staff. Many of the teachers have taught at the school for more than 15 years and work tirelessly to ensure each child has a great educational experience at Marquez.

Marquez students work very hard to be TRRFCC (Trustworthy, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Caring and good Citizens) all year long. They are eager to learn the Common Core State Standards and utilize the tools afforded them to be lifelong learners in the 21st century.

Parent involvement is high and there are two supportive parent organizations, PTA and Friends of Marquez (FOM). They support the school’s programs through fundraising, volunteering and serving as members of the school’s governance council.

Marquez offers transitional kindergarten, which is especially designed for children who are currently four years old and will turn five years of age between October 2 and December 2. TK is open to families residing in the Marquez attendance area only.

Marquez also offers STAR’s Little Dippers program that is a stepping-stone for kids in transition between pre-school and kindergarten. Little Dippers introduces the necessary kindergarten readiness skills to be successful in school.

STAR is an amazing education program, offering enrichment opportunities, team sports, RockSTAR, tutoring, full service after-school care, and enrichment to all students after school.

School tours are offered throughout the year. The dates of the tours are October 21, December 14, January 27, March 3 and April 20. Please contact the school to make a reservation.

and to create a collaborative partnership between the school and home. Beginning in TK, the school invites parents to participate in the classroom, get to know their child’s classmates and become an integral part of the Corpus community.

At Corpus Christi, we academically prepare our students for the most rigorous high school curriculum with a focus on developing students that possess self-confidence, intellectual curiosity and moral judgment. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum as we believe it is essential that our students are fully prepared to innovate and collaborate using these tools.

Corpus Christi consistently scores as one of the top-tier schools in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Corpus Christi prides itself on the success of its students and graduates as scholars, hard workers, and individuals with strong personal values.

Prospective parents are invited to Open Houses on October 20 and November 15.



Corpus Christi students examine sea creatures during a field trip.

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

(Continued from Page 7)

**Palisades Elementary
Charter School**
800 Via de la Paz
(310) 454-3700
www.palielementary.org

Palisades Elementary Charter School has an enrollment of about 530 students in kindergarten through 5th grade. The school also offers a transitional kindergarten. Joan Ingle is the school's principal. The school year began on August 16.

Palisades Elementary is a California Distinguished School and one of LAUSD's "Top 10" Schools. Pali was an API 900+ Award recipient for the 8th year in a row.

A strong academic environment is fostered through class size reduction and classroom assistants, and is supplemented with music, drama, art, physical education, TRIBES community building & conflict resolution, diversity training, an integrated technology program including a computer lab and dedicated instructor, a sustainable, hands-on Discovery Garden, an award-winning Green Team and Recycling Program, and STAR's after-school enrichment program, according to Ingle.

The outstanding writers' workshop will continue, and the school is "working for greater coherence in all curricula and continuing to differentiate for our diverse learn-



Palisades Charter Elementary holds several events during the year, like Yee Haw Days.

Photo: Shelby Pascoe

ers," Ingle said.

The school is strongly supported by its parents and last year donations and fundraisers made it possible to hire three additional classroom teachers, keeping the class size low. Additionally, enough funds were raised to hire 13 classroom aides, bringing the school wide total to 20.

Revere Charter Middle School
1450 Allenford Ave., Los Angeles 90049
(310) 917-4800
paulreverems.com

Revere Charter Middle School has a total enrollment of about 2,100 students in grades 6 through 8. The school year began on August 16 under Principal Tom Iannucci.

"Since the inception of its charter, Revere has established itself as a pillar of strength within its local community and all of LAUSD. Revere's vision is to provide students with a school environment that allows them to become successful life-long learners who are college and career ready. Revere's goals are: culmination rates of 100 percent, academic proficiency for all students, 100 percent attendance, increased parent and community engagement, and total student safety. Revere has become a role model for the successful implementation of the intent of the charter and for affiliated charter schools generally, as well as for providing its community with an academically high-achieving school that meets the needs of all members of its student population," according to Lori Vogel, parent/community liaison.

Revere's success is due to exceptionally high academic achievement, as reflected by its test scores; 6th grade Personalized Learning Environments (PLE); professional development workshops focused on continuous improvement in academic teaching strategies and the social-emotional development of the middle-school student; long-standing parent involvement in all areas; successful integration of students from racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse backgrounds; award-winning music and physical education departments; and

(Continued on Page 9)



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ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

(Continued from Page 8)

unique elective course offerings, clubs and after-school programs, according to Vogel.

This year, Revere parents are led by PRIDE president Dori Delshad and PTA president Maryam Zar. Other Palisadians on the Board include Carolyn Tetaz, Ellie Haiem, Beverly Jacobs, Laura Diamond, Keri Kraft, Sarah Collins, Renee Rodman and Ivy Silberberg.

“We hope to continue the tradition of excellence in education and enrichment at Paul Revere by supporting our fabulous administrators, led by Tom Iannucci,” Zar said. “We are committed to maintaining the one-to-one students to electronics ratio at the school, and ensuring health and safety for all our students and families. We plan to support a robust arts program and offer parent seminars and enrichment programming throughout the year, beginning with the screening of the film *Screenagers*, on Tuesday, September 13 at 7 p.m.”

Revere, which is celebrating its 61st anniversary, is the only public middle school within the communities of Pacific Palisades and Brentwood.”

St. Matthew’s Parish School

1031 Bienvenida Ave.

(310) 454-1350

www.stmatthewsschool.com

St. Matthew’s Parish School begins its 68th school year on Wednesday, September



Seven Arrows’ Masquerade festival celebrates history, literature, art, music and performance.

7. The 350 students in preschool through eighth grade are under the care of Head of School Stuart Work.

“We had little faculty turnover this year,” Work said. “Jane Young, our long-time principal for preschool through grade four, has retired after 25 years. She will be replaced by Dana Berlin, our current director of admissions.”

In recent years St. Matthew’s has focused

on enriching the ways its students learn. “We have added some exciting ‘maker spaces,’ where students can imagine, design, build and test their ideas,” Work said.

The main space is called the Project and Idea Realization Lab (PIRL), and has thus far been for the use of the older students. However, over the summer the school built a smaller version of PIRL for elementary grade students.

Seven Arrows Elementary School

15240 La Cruz Dr.

(310) 230-0257

www.Sevenarrows.org

Seven Arrows will begin its new school year on Thursday, September 8. School founder Margarita Pagliai is the current head and will welcome 140 students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

This year, there are several staff transitions. “Long-time fifth grade educator Sally Haskell, who just celebrated her 17th year at the school, will transition from the classroom to Seven Arrows Director of Curriculum and Instruction,” said Fiona Farrahi, director of admissions.

Haskell will succeed Evrille Bortz, who has been at the school five years, and who will become the Head of School Emeritus.

The highlight of the upcoming year is a new program called the Global Outreach Program. This is a study abroad Spanish-immersion program that was developed by Pagliai and Andres Ospina, director of arts and environmental programming.

“The program is for the entire family and includes sports, service learning, digital storytelling and much more,” Farrahi said.

The program will debut next summer and is open not only to Seven Arrows families but the entire Palisades community. Visit the school’s website for more information.

(Continued on Page 10)

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ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

(Continued from Page 9)

Village School

780 Swarthmore Ave.

(310) 459-8411

www.village-school.org

Village School offers a strong academic program coupled with an emphasis on social-emotional learning that produces students who are ready to lead in the 21st century.

The 290-member student body is one that is diverse (with more than 30 percent students of color), welcoming and highly cohesive. The school community is characterized by a low teacher to student ratio (1:6.5), which allows each student be known, valued and challenged across all content areas.

The faculty are highly experienced and diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, style, and background but clearly united in their commitment to graduate students who will be successful leaders, thinkers and agents of social change.

This fall, Head of School Nora Malone begins her 20th year at Village. Liz Pacini returns to the school as a kindergarten teacher. Sam Boyd steps in for veteran third-grade teacher Eric Wlasak, who becomes the school's first Outreach Coordinator. Greg Whitmore takes over the helm of the music department.

Village School will also unveil its new play area for its transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students.

The school year begins on Tuesday, September 6. Please contact Village School to reserve a space for Fall Open House and plan to apply by December 1 and become a part of this dynamic community.

The Westside Waldorf School

McComb Campus (Pre-K-8th)

17310 Sunset Blvd.

(310) 454-7064

www.westsidewaldorf.org

The Westside Waldorf School is housed on two campuses: the Waldorf Early Childhood Center in Santa Monica with nursery and kindergarten programs, while the McComb Campus in Pacific Palisades encompasses a full pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade program. The school's total enrollment is 235 children.

In addition, the school also offers parent-child classes for children ages 2 months to 36 months, which serves about 70 families.

Westside Waldorf School is led by a College of Teachers and a Governing Council consisting of members of the faculty and administration. The school year will begin on September 7 for grades 1-8, on September 8 for PK and kindergarten, and on September 19 for parent/child classes.

Westside Waldorf School's mission statement is to "offer students an education that embraces the academic, the artistic, and the



Innovative and creative thinking are stressed at the Waldorf School.

practical. Our mission is to engage the mind, ignite the imagination and strengthen the will within each student. We strive to achieve these goals by bringing to our students a developmentally appropriate curriculum through artful teaching that promotes independent thinking, individual initiative and social responsibility, while cultivating a thirst for knowledge and life-long learning.

"Waldorf education seeks to awaken the true potential of the human being's uniqueness and creativity in thought and expres-

sion and strives to be in partnership with families in raising confident, compassionate human beings.

"The well-rounded, classical curriculum weaves art into every subject, using music, storytelling, drawing and movement to bring academic subjects to life. Thematic learning, concentrated main lesson blocks, and remaining with the same teacher over a course of several years are all Waldorf innovations that are now supported by research as enhancing the learning process."

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HIGH SCHOOL

Palisades Charter High School
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(310) 230-6623
www.palihigh.org

Palisades High learned on August 11 that it was one of 51 California high schools singled out as “Among Nation’s Best” in *Newsweek’s* 2016 rankings. PaliHi was number 164 out of 500 schools selected nationwide.

The school continues to build on a year of achievements. This summer, PCHS was only one of 10 schools nationwide to win a CTE (Career Technical Education) Make-over Challenge prize.

The U.S. Department of Education accepted entries from over 640 schools from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. PaliHi won on the strength of its maker-space, which strengthens students’ career and technical skills. The award is \$20,000 and a share of in-kind prizes that will be used to enhance the Innovation Lab.

Earlier this year, Pali was awarded a CTE Incentive grant of \$320,000 from the California Department of Education to develop new career technical programs for students.

The school received recognition from various other organizations as well. It was named one of “America’s Best High Schools” by *U.S. News & World Report*, the state Department of Education designated Pali a “Gold Ribbon School” and the California Business for Education Excellence



Family members helping celebrate Kendal Lake’s \$40,000 scholarship were (left to right), (aunt) Kellie West, mom Karen, Kendal Lake, (great-aunt) Lena Echols and dad Jay.

Photo courtesy of Southern California Edison

selected it as an “Honor Roll” school.

Pali continues to partner with community groups, including the Rotary Club, the Optimist Club, the American Legion and the Masonic Lodge on programs such as Student of the Month awards, Roads to Your Future (career education), fundraising and scholarships.

Palisades Charter High School has an enrollment of 2,979 students in grades 9-12. The average enrollment per grade is 750

students. Dr. Pamela Magee is the school’s Executive Director and Principal. There are 16 new staff hires this year. The school year began on August 16, following student orientation the preceding week.

Dates of interest for the new school year include Back to School Night on September 8, the College Fair on September 15, Homecoming on October 22, and ongoing visual and performing arts performances throughout the year.

Backpack Drive Seeks Donations

Palisades Cares is sponsoring a backpack and school-supplies drive for School on Wheels, a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides tutoring services and school supplies to thousands of homeless K-12 students in six Southern California counties.

Donated supplies will be taken to the School on Wheels learning center located in Skid Row. While shopping for your children, consider picking up an extra item or two that can be donated. The deadline is August 22.

Palisades residents may leave supplies at CVS, Palisades-Malibu YMCA and Regal Cleaners.

NEW items needed are backpacks; spiral-ring notebooks; crayons and markers; colored pencils and pens; pencil sharpeners; school binders (2 inches or smaller); erasers; homework folders; flash cards (multiplication and division); USB flash drives; mini-staplers and staples; mechanical pencils; subject dividers and arts and crafts materials.

Marie Steckmest, who founded Palisades Cares in 2006, said the goal is for every child to receive a new backpack with school supplies. “Last year, 2,219 volunteers tutored 3,491 homeless students and some of those tutors are residents of Pacific Palisades,” said Steckmest, who was recognized as Citizen of the Year for her volunteer activism.

Visit: schoolonwheels.org.

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College Admissions Spur Self-Reflection

By PEGGY STACY and GAIL E. MEYER

In March, *The Atlantic* published a thought-provoking article detailing the complex and competitive state of college admissions.

Of the process, Rod Skinner, director of college counseling at Milton Academy, an elite New England prep school, is quoted as saying, "Instead of being a wonderful exploration of the future and something that's exciting and dynamic and happy, it's a burden, a thing to be feared, a thing to be endured."

Applying to college in 2016 is generating anxiety and soul searching from a personal, institutional and even a societal level. Yet out of this frenetic quagmire of test scores, grades, and strategic extracurricular activities, the personal statement and supplemental essays emerge as unique opportunities for self-reflection and authenticity.

That girl with a passion for dance, whose first ragged toe shoes still hang from a brass hook on her closet door, might recount the discipline gleaned from hours at the barre, helping her to solve tricky physics problems or ponder the historical significance of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Perhaps the boy who struggled through his parents' divorce can connect his own painful experience to the satisfaction of serving as a peer counselor and his interest in studying psychology.

And when a hilarious family fishing trip goes awry, what are the enduring lessons learned?

We have read wonderful essays on all kinds of subjects—from teaching oneself to play the banjo while recovering from a broken foot to creating gluten-free recipes for a friend—from taking the wrong bus and getting lost at dusk to a shattering brush with racism.

There are currently four different college application platforms and each has its own essay requirements; students must check each school on their list to find out how to apply. Some schools, like Georgetown University, have their own application.

Over 500 colleges accept The Common Application. The University of Wisconsin and Indiana University joined the Common Application this year.

The Universal Application has 44 member colleges. Rice University, for example, accepts either the Common App or the Universal App.

The Coalition for College Access is a newly formed group of 90 colleges and universities that hopes to improve access for underserved college applicants. The University of Washington will only accept the Coalition application.

Many, if not most local students will apply to the University of California. For the first time in nearly a decade, the UC application has changed. Essay prompts have become personal insight questions. Students can choose to write about their favorite subject at school, about creativity or leadership, about challenges faced or the importance of community. Each of four questions (out of a total of eight) is answered in 350 words or less, encouraging a thoughtful, multidimensional response.

It is not uncommon for students to dread writing application essays. We have seen perfectly sane, energetic and accomplished kids lay their weary heads on the desk at the mere thought of them. But when the mystery is removed and our students realize that they can be themselves, most heave a sigh of relief.

Learning to write clear and descriptive narrative essays yields benefits beyond self discovery and a winning college application. The ability to combine critical thinking skills with active verbs, colorful detail and self



Peggy Stacy (right) and Gail Meyer help high school seniors with college applications.

editing translates handily to academic writing assignments—an unexpected bonus.

We like to remind our high school seniors to brainstorm and dream a little, temporarily shutting out the noisy sounds of pressure and expectation.

Think about the things you enjoy, we tell them. What inspires or intrigues you? What concerns you or makes you laugh?

After that, just start writing.

(Peggy Stacy served as the College Center Writing Coach at Palisades Charter High School for nine years. She has a BA in English Literature from UCLA and works as a writing tutor in Pacific Palisades. Gail Meyer, MSW, is a Certified Educational Planner (CEP), the highest level of professional certification for educational consultants. She is on the Board of Directors for the Independent Educational Consultants Association, where for the past two years she served as board president.)

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Developing a Youth Athlete

By SUE PASCOE
Editor

If you talk to parents in Pacific Palisades, many of them will assure you that the best way to have a child play a college sport is to start as young as possible, hire coaches along the way, and play on a club team.

Not everyone agrees.

“Parents think by paying, they are getting better coaching,” said Steve Morris, the long-time AYSO Coaching director and Coast Sports founder, who says there is no statistical data that shows a coach will help a seven-year-old develop into a college athlete.

Christian Chambers, a club coach for Santa Monica United and the Palisades High girls soccer coach, agrees. “I just held tryouts for a [club] team and there were 75 to 80 kids trying out. Many of them had not made their AYSO all-star team or their AYSO extra team, so they tried out for club,” said Chambers, who is simply looking for players with talent. “It goes against logic. They are good kids with good families, but say they are trying out because they don’t have a good coach.”

The harsh reality, of course, is that the vast majority of kids who play a sport will never advance past the high school level, let alone ever sign a pro contract. The few who do



“BJ” Bradford Jamieson (back row, fourth from the right), 19, who now plays professionally with the Galaxy, played with Palisades residents on the U12 Santa Monica United Club team. His speed and talent were already evident as a child.

are exemplified by “BJ” Bradford Jamieson, who started with AYSO on the Westside, joined Santa Monica United, and now plays forward for the L.A. Galaxy II. He was early recognized for his speed and drive to score; by the time he was 15, he was already on the United States U17 National team.

In an earlier interview with the *Palisades News*, former L.A. Kings star Luc Jean-

Marie Robitaille was asked if hiring specialty coaches will help kids become professional athletes.

“All professional players who make it, have a passion,” he said. “There are players who are good, but will not last if it was their dad who was pushing.

“I would ask my dad to spend money to send me to a power skating school to im-

prove. It was my idea,” Robitaille said. “The kid has to want it.”

Coach Chambers said, “The classic line parents hear now is ‘If you don’t go club now, you’ll get left behind.’ The truth is, there’s always a club.”

“And if you’re good enough,” Morris said, “the club will find you.”

Cynthia (Jacobo) Rosa, an assistant coach for Cal State Northridge this fall, holds numerous records at her alma mater, where she earned 33 career wins in goal and helped lead CSUN to its NCAA Tournament appearance in 2012.

She told the *News*, “I didn’t like club much. I played AYSO my whole life and my dad was the coach.” She played in the International AYSO Games in Florida and recalls, “It was so much fun!”

“Parents are falling for the pitch that their kids will be failures [if they don’t play club],” Morris said. “There are so many voices in the ears of parents. They think their kid is the next Messi and if he/she is not competing at U7, it’s over.

“Clubs, because it has become been so diluted, is now what AYSO used to be—only more costly. The kids are now as young as U6 because the clubs are reaching out younger and younger. People realize they can make money on youth sports.”

(Continued on Page 14)

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Athlete

(Continued from Page 13)

Morris, the father of three, decries the loss of perspective, saying that with the emphasis on club sports, recreational sports have taken a backseat.

“AYSO is great for the vast majority of parents and kids because it stresses development,” he said. “It’s a more nurturing environment, kids play in their community, they play with their friends.”

Hannah De Silva, one of the leading scorers at PaliHi during her high school career, now plays for Long Beach State.

“Some of my best friends are from AYSO,” said De Silva, who joined the Westside Breakers when she was 12. “There is less drama, less politics. I would say that AYSO was a better experience and I have better memories.”

Morris commented, “Fifteen years ago club soccer was more elite. Now there are a ‘zillion’ club teams on the Westside. In the last five years, it has gone from four clubs (Breakers, PCSD, Galaxy and Santa Monica United) to 10 clubs. There are now about 75 teams on just the Breakers and Santa Monica combined.”

Morris, whose three kids, Evan, Dorie and Griffey, initially played AYSO, all switched to club around 12 years of age.

“Dorie played until she was U16 and in high school, but dropped out of club because she said it wasn’t fun,” Morris said.

“It was considered more of a job.” Evan followed Dorie’s footsteps, and Griffey, a senior at Brentwood, “is way more focused on his school work. He still plays club but only because of his friends.”

Morris said, “There are parents who are committed to a more holistic environment” for their children. But he admits it is hard for parents who fear that they are not doing the best for their child if they don’t sign them up young for club.

Youth Summer Writing Contest Is Underway

The Friends of the Palisades Library are now receiving entries for their annual Children’s Creative Writing Contest.

This year’s theme, in keeping with the LA Library’s citywide theme and the upcoming Olympics, is “Dream the Possible Dream.” Local residents entering grades 1 through 12 are invited to submit original stories, poems and essays.

Winners in five age categories will be awarded gift certificates to Diesel books: first place, \$100; second place \$50, third place \$25. All participants will receive gift cards. Winning entries will be performed by actors at the awards ceremony this fall and posted to YouTube.

The deadline for submission is Tuesday, September 6. Entry forms are available at the Palisades Library information desk on Alma Real, and online at friendsofpalibrary.org.



Areté teacher Jason Cruze with students Helen Dudeck, Dylan Strickland, Mia Corvino and Nick Witcoff. Photo: Lesly Hall

Areté’s Focus Is Individuality

Areté, a deliberately small (45 students) high school, focuses on critical thinking and philosophy. The average class size is five, and gifted students can finish high school in three years, allowing them a year for research and/or classes at UCLA.

The school emphasizes critical reading, writing and argumentation. The foreign-language programs focus on conversational fluency and academic support, work time is built into the school day and flexible schedules are designed around students’ passions and needs.

“Our school serves a population of bright students eager to participate in shaping their

own education,” said founders Jim and Elizabeth Hahn. “We value curiosity and the desire to explore, rather than the over memorization of facts, and we assess our students by these standards rather than by test scores.”

Students are accepted into top colleges across the country including Vassar, Skidmore, Northwestern, Reed, Columbia, Emory, the University of Chicago and Cornell.

Admissions decisions to Areté are based on a written application, teacher recommendation, and personal interviews with prospective students and their parents.

The school is located at 11500 W. Olympic, between Barrington and Sawtelle. Call: (310) 478-9900 or visit: aretepreacademy.org.



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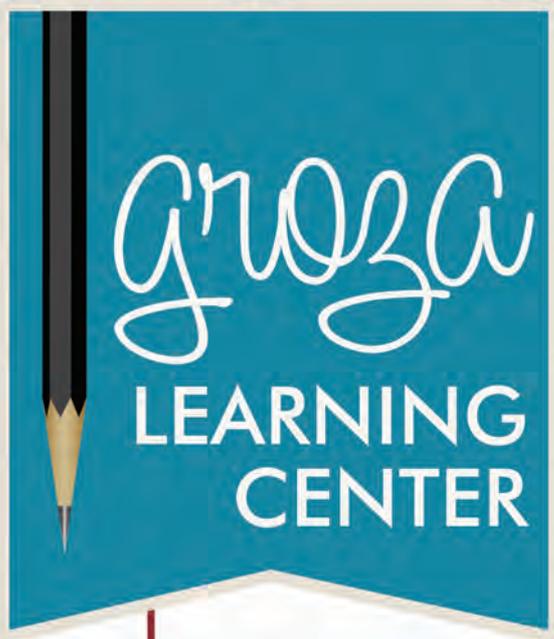
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