

# SYCAMORE RIDGE

February 2009

## Round-Up

Vol. 4, Issue 3

### Principal's Message



Dear Sycamore Ridge Families,

Our school year is humming along and as I visit classrooms, I am so proud to see the exciting teaching and learning that occurs in every room: regular classrooms, special education classrooms and extended studies classrooms alike.

When asked to identify what made a school so good, every person, without fail, said it was the people of the school: the children, the families, and most importantly, the **staff**. Nobody said, "We have a really great computer lab" or "a brand new reading book." (Eaker, and DuFour)

At the upcoming parent/teacher conferences held during the week of February 23 – 27, your children's teachers will share examples of student work, report cards and goals for individual students based on their current progress.

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### In This Issue...

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Firm, Fair & Consistent

Important Upcoming Dates  
and much more!

### A Note from the PTA President...



Happy New Year! We are almost half way through the school year and the PTA is off to a great start to the second half of the year. In January, the PTA hosted its first Parent Education night featuring local psychologist, Dr. Dana Fillmore speaking on "Raising Independent and Capable Children". The PTA provided free child care for children in the child care center for parents attending the talk. It was a successful evening and we hope to sponsor another night before the end of the school year.

Before the Parent Education night began, a brief PTA General Association Meeting was held. The Association approved goals for the PTA for the '08-'09 school year. They are posted on the PTA page on the school website if you would like to check them out. Any feedback is welcome. Please feel free to email, call or stop me on campus with your thoughts. We are working on getting a website dedicated to the PTA up and running before the beginning of next school year. If you are interested in getting involved to get this set up please contact me. We could use you!

*(Continued on page 12)*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FEBRUARY

4th

Del Mar Union School Board Meeting  
6pm (Del Mar Hills Academy PAC)

6th

Slipper Day

9th

Coffee with the Principal  
8:10am (MUR)

10th

3rd Grade Vacation on Mars in Room C3  
8:15am (Hasler)  
9:15am (Johnson)  
10:35am (Hanna)

Dad's Club Lunch

11:30am (Lunch Shelters)

11th

Del Mar Union School Board Meeting  
6pm (Del Mar Hills Academy PAC)

13th (Friday)

**No School**

President's Day Observed

16th (Monday)

**No School**

President's Day Observed

20th

"Go West"

4th Grade Musical Performances (MUR)  
10:30am (Money)  
12:30pm (Chung)  
1:30pm (Howard)

23rd-27th

Parent Teacher Conference Week  
**12:30pm dismissal**  
**ALL GRADES ALL WEEK**

25th

Del Mar Union School Board Meeting  
5:45pm (Del Mar Hills Academy PAC)

District Invent Showcase

6:30-7:30pm (Torrey Hills School)

26th

Reflections Art Reception &  
PTA General Association Meeting  
5:30-7pm (MUR)

## MARCH

2nd

5th Grade Field Trip to  
Ruben H. Fleet Science Center  
8:15am-2:15pm

Incoming 2009 Kindergarten Visitation  
(adults only)

10:30am

Sign-in at the front office

3rd

4th Grade Writing Assessment

5th

Incoming 2009 Kindergarten Visitation  
(adults only)

8:15am

Sign-in at the front office

Barnes & Noble/ Red Robin Night

3pm

6th

Read Across America

Bring your stuffed animal & wear your pajamas

Dad's Read-in/Lunch

11-11:30am Dad's Read in Classroom

11:30am-12:15pm Lunch/Recess

11th

Kindergarten Registration

1-6pm (front office)

12th

4th Grade Field Trip to Cabrillo Monument

8:45am-1:45pm

18th

Otis-Lennon School Ability Testing Day  
3rd grade & new 4th/5th graders

19th

School Site Council Meeting

2:45pm (Library)

24th

K-3rd grade Science Night

6:00-7:30pm

25th

"Willy Wonka" Matinee

1:30pm (MUR)

26th

1st Grade Field Trip to San Diego Zoo

8:30am-1:45pm

4th-6th Grade Science Night

6:00-7:30pm

27th

"Willy Wonka"

7pm (MUR)

30th

2nd Grade Field Trip to Spreckels Theater

11:00am-1:45pm

## APRIL

3rd

Spirit Day- Earth Day

4th-10th

**SPRING BREAK**  
**NO SCHOOL**

16th

Dad's Movie Night

5:45-7:00pm

17th

I Love a Clean San Diego  
Assembly for students

20th

Earth Week Recycling Drive

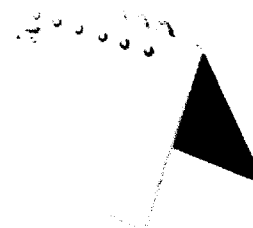
24th

PTA General  
Association Meeting  
8:10am (MUR)

"Sounds A Little Fishy To Me"

1st Grade Musical

8:30am (MUR)



Mark Your Calendars:

Jog-A-Thon

Wednesday, May 20th!

# 3rd Grade News

What a great year we are having in third grade. Our Kumeyaay clan heard an authentic Kumeyaay maiden present information about local Indians and how they lived long ago. This provided a wonderful launch for our new study. It piqued their interest in learning about the Native Americans who lived in this area long ago and today. As a culmination to our study, the parents organized a Kumeyaay Celebration before winter break. Clay pots were made, arrows were constructed and were used in a Native American game, and a stick and rock game was played. Even though it rained, everyone had a great time.

3rd grade children received their very own dictionary from the Del Mar/Solana Beach Rotary Club. The children also enjoyed using their writing skills to write an authentic thank you letter in acknowledgement for this significant gift.

Working with Ms. Oliveira in our Technology Lab, children created their own graphic representation of local landforms using KidPix programming. In Science Lab, Miss Dumoff directed a series of lessons about the States of Matter and Light Energy. In Music, Ms. Lomax will be directing our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in a musical. All ESC (Extended Studies Curriculum) programs support and enhance curriculum taught within our third grade classrooms.

We look forward to our upcoming activities: classroom performances of "Vacation on Mars", a field trip to a model of Columbus' ship, the Nina, and a field trip to explore the newly restored San Diego Lagoon.

We are very thankful to all of our parents and our parent volunteers for their continuing support within our classrooms and at home. We look forward to an eventful school year with our fabulous 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.



# 2nd Grade Buzz

To the second grade teachers it had seemed that there was something happening amongst their students. Their constant stirring, humming to themselves all day long, and buzzing around to talk to their friends was evidence of something unusual. It wasn't until Friday, January 23, when the picture became clear. Second grade has been infested with BUGZ!

While the teachers witnessed nervous excitement as performance day approached, the students were ready when the curtains opened to the second grade rendition of BUGZ! Sycamore's musical expert, Stephanie Lomax, worked diligently with students in refining their singing, dancing, speaking, and transitioning in preparation for their performance. Parents and students alike attended the two showings, both of which lived up to the hype.





Please join us for  
"Coffee with the Principal"  
Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>  
8:10 am in the MUR

Ms. Disney will be speaking on the state of the Del Mar Union School District  
and the future of our programs for the 2009-2010 school year  
Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA



## Get Involved with the PTA

It's hard to believe that we already need to begin the process of electing a new board for next year, but that time is upon us.

There are many board positions that give you the opportunity to contribute and make a difference to the students at Sycamore Ridge, in both big and small ways. The PTA board helps drive decisions of the PTA membership and requires the leadership of individuals to keep the many terrific programs in place, as well as implement new programs. Please check the website [www.dmusd.org/sycamore](http://www.dmusd.org/sycamore) and click on the PTA link for the message from President Shannon Cary which describes many of the wonderful programs the PTA sponsors at our school. To see a list of the board and committee job descriptions, select the PTA Board and Committee List.

Please consider getting involved. The importance of new voices is critical to the success of our PTA. The influx of new people and their ideas help to keep things fresh and new! Consider the impact that you could personally have on your child's elementary school experience. For more information, please contact Shannon Cary: [shancary@gmail.com](mailto:shancary@gmail.com) or Carrie White: [cnydahl@san.rr.com](mailto:cnydahl@san.rr.com).

## Extended Studies News

### Technology

**Mrs. Jennifer Oliveira**



The tech lab has been buzzing with activity. Many projects the students have working on can be found on the Sycamore Ridge web site under the main picture. The students are increasing their capacity in technology in so many different ways, researching new skills and learning new ways to present their learning.

Upcoming activities include:

Kindergarten- Creating sentences and drawings.

First Grade- Creating a seasons book using Kid Pix.

Second Grade- Researching animals.

Third Grade- Earth PowerPoints and a video created by students.

Fourth Grade- Data collection and video projects.

Fifth Grade- Audio recordings.

Sixth Grade- Researching Artitsits in collaboration with Art Teacher.

### Music

**Miss Stephanie Lomax**



Calling all Bob and Bobette the Builders.....We are in full rehearsals for Willy Wonka and are in need of people who can run a good saw or hammer. I have some ideas for sets for these children, but cannot be trusted with these tools myself. Any help will be GREATLY appreciated. Please call or email me in the music room if you have a skill we can use.

Speaking of Willy Wonka...the show will open on Wed., March 25th at 1:30 pm and will show again on Friday, March 27th at 7:00 pm. Tickets will go on sale to the public beginning on February 16th. Please check your student's Wednesday folder for details.

In other news: The 4th graders are working hard on their play "Go West". This will be presented at the end of February. Letters will also be in their Wednesday folders regarding performance times.

The 1st graders and Kindergarteners will be beginning their rehearsals for their spring plays as well. 1st grade will be presenting "Sounds A Little Fishy To Me" in April, and the Kindergarteners will be presenting "E-I-E-I Oopps" in May. Stay tuned for more information.

And, as always, thank you for continuing to support music education in our school. We could not do any of this without your support.

### Physical Education

**Coach John Sink**



All students at Sycamore Ridge have been experiencing a diverse range of physical activities. Students are working toward becoming competent performers in a range of individual, group and team activities. Kindergarten through first grade are working on developing balance, traveling, and locomotor skills. Students in grades two and three are being introduced to team activities, including team sports such as soccer, ultimate football, and hustleball. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students are participating in activities that develop accuracy and power. They are continuing team sports such as basketball and hustleball. Students have also been practicing their Jr. Olympic Skills in preparation for a competition at the end of the year. Students who decide to compete at Sycamore Ridge have the opportunity to also compete at the

Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista against students from all over San Diego. Some students may even make it to the National Championship in Colorado.

Students who enjoy running have the opportunity to compete in the Carlsbad Jr., an incredible opportunity to race against students your own age from all over San Diego. Come join us for a fun day in Carlsbad on April 5th. For updates on Physical Education and ways to get your kids involved in additional activities, please visit [coachsink.com](http://coachsink.com).

## Science

Miss Kelsey Dumoff



Do you know how San Diego gets its water? The fifth graders can tell you! This month the 5<sup>th</sup> graders have been studying the various water sources in the state of California and the importance of aqueducts in delivering water to our community. They also had an opportunity to calculate how much water is used to prepare one meal and reflect on how we can conserve water on a daily basis. On January 22<sup>nd</sup> a representative from the San Diego County Water Authority came to present a lesson about weather and water in San Diego. The students really enjoyed learning more about the scientific reasons behind our beautiful San Diego weather! Soon the 5<sup>th</sup> graders will begin to explore the solar system.

The first graders are beginning to learn about air and weather this month. They are learning how air, although invisible, does take up space. The students have made many discoveries about air and can tell you that it can move things around and is a type of matter called a gas. In a couple of weeks, the students will be learning how to measure the temperature and classify different types of clouds.

The science classes have started planting flowers and vegetables in our wonderful Sycamore Ridge Learning Garden. They are so excited to watch them grow! Please see the volunteering section to learn how you can help Sycamore Ridge maintain their beautiful garden.



1<sup>st</sup> graders use vials to discover how air takes up space and can be trapped underwater.



5<sup>th</sup> graders use syringes and marshmallows to learn more about low and high-pressure systems on Earth

## Art

Miss Jenny Luce



Paper, paint, glue, clay and paper mache have kept the students busy learning in the art room. Sixth graders finished their fabulous masks from around the world and have them hanging in the upper grade hallway. The fifth graders are currently working on their dragon watercolors from our discussions about dragons through many cultures and what they represent. They will be creating in clay in February. Houses and structures, imaginary or real, were created by our fourth graders. The students will then move into working with value, a fourth grade standard. Third graders are experts at the Native American clay bowls, some made by the pinch pot method and other clay bowls made with imprints of leaves using the slab method. The students got very excited about studying the Hopi culture and creating the most amazing kachina dolls displayed in the hall case. Our younger artists have been exploring art elements: color, line and shape, as well as studying certain artists and specific folk art. The second graders learned about Faith Ringgold's painted quilts on her family and, in turn, created their own quilts about the special people in their lives. First graders have been finishing their molas and are now mixing colors and using symmetry in their vase paintings. Our smallest members of Sycamore Ridge, the kindergarteners, have created small Kandinsky abstract paintings and turtles working with watercolors. They are now working on Matisse like paper cut-out collages. We have had a great ending of the year 2008 and are excited about filling 2009 with creative adventures in the art room.



## Library News

**Mrs. Kathy Pechtimaldjian**

Happy New Year! I hope 2009 brings many new and inspiring books into your life. Here in the library we are keeping busy reading the California Young Reader Medal nominees for 2008-2009. These are books that are nominated and voted on by the students in California as the best books in each category. In the library, the K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades are hearing the Picture Books, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades are hearing the Older Reader Picture Books (3<sup>rd</sup> grade gets to hear both). Once all the classes have voted, I will send in our school's votes to the main office and then the winners are announced in May. Visit their website to see all the current nominees as well as past winners. [www.californiayoungreadermedal.org](http://www.californiayoungreadermedal.org)

In late February, we will be starting our annual reading incentive program. Details about the program will be sent home in the Wednesday folders. The purpose of this program is to get the kids excited about reading by setting a goal (completing a reading passport) and exposing the students to new genres. Prizes will be given out weekly and we will be playing games and keeping track of our progress in the library. Donations for prizes are greatly appreciated; the best prizes are gift certificates to local bookstores, restaurants, etc., in increments of \$5-\$15. Thank you for any help. Please encourage your child to participate in this fun program.

We recently received an order of exciting, new books for the library, including a student set of encyclopedias, the newest *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw*, *Inkdeath*, new Star Wars titles, and many more. Come by and take a look.

Thank you for all your support. Keep on reading!

## Mark your calendars for the following Dad's Club events in 2009



- Feb. 10th - Dad's Lunch
- March 6th - Dad's Read In (11-11:30)/Lunch
- April 16th - Dad's Movie Night (5:45-7:00)
- June 2nd - Dad's Lunch (last one for the year)

If you have any questions, please contact  
Mark Belford at [bbelford@san.rr.com](mailto:bbelford@san.rr.com)

## Student Council

A special thank you to the first semester student council for their hard work and diligence in activities such as the Halloween Hallway and Spirit Days. We will be having second semester elections soon. Mrs. Oliviera is looking forward to working with the students to collect used books to donate to the St. Vincent de Paul Literacy Center, as well as continue our efforts for a greener world through ink cartridge collection and recycle projects.

## Volunteer Corner

Sycamore Ridge loves Parent Volunteers! There are lots of ways to get involved, with opportunities that can work around just about any busy schedule! Here are some upcoming and continuing events that need volunteers.

### PTA BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is responsible for filling the positions for the 2009-2010 PTA Executive Board and consists of 5 parents. Committee members do not have to be part of the PTA Board, but are eligible to be nominated for the board themselves if they choose. The nominating committee will meet approximately 2-3 times prior to submitting a slate in March for the April election. There really aren't any qualifications required to serve on the committee, you just need to be willing to help try and recruit people to fill positions - it's very easy! If you are interested in serving on the Nominating Committee, please contact Carrie White at [cnydahl@san.rr.com](mailto:cnydahl@san.rr.com) for more information.

### STALLION SPRINTERS

We are still looking for additional volunteers on Thursdays from 11:30-12:15 to help with running club during recess. As you may know, this is a great activity for our children to run laps, get some great exercise, and earn recognition along the way. Kindergarten parents - if you are picking up at 12:30, we would love for you to come early and help us out before pick up. Please contact Marie Le-Rose at: [mlerose@thetasgroup.com](mailto:mlerose@thetasgroup.com)

### TEACHER/STAFF APPRECIATION COMMITTEE

Want to show Sycamore Ridge's teachers and staff how much you appreciate all of their hard work for our kids? Staff Appreciation Week is coming up this May, and committee members are needed to help make this great week special. Please contact committee chair Carrie Nydahl at [cnydahl@san.rr.com](mailto:cnydahl@san.rr.com) if you are interested in becoming involved.

### RIDGERAISING 2009-10

Did you have a wonderful time at RidgeRaising? Are you interested in being part of continuing this important and special event? Please contact Cristina Campisano at [gmancdub@san.rr.com](mailto:gmancdub@san.rr.com) for more information about becoming a Chair or part of next year's committee.

### JOG-A-THON

The date has been set for our 4th Annual Jog-a-thon! May 20th is the day starting at 8:30 am. We are currently looking for volunteers to help out for a few hours on the day of the Jog-a-thon. This is a fun, high energy event for the students and we can use your help in a variety of ways. Please contact Carol Greenwald at [cgreen102@aol.com](mailto:cgreen102@aol.com) or Alicia Hampton at [ahampton@san.rr.com](mailto:ahampton@san.rr.com) if you can join us for this great event!



*Principal's Message*  
(Continued from page 1)

At Sycamore Ridge School, teachers administer District Benchmark Reading and Writing assessments at least three times a year, or more often if needed, to inform their instructional decisions including grouping techniques and strategies aimed at providing additional support or enrichment. Through ongoing staff development and our District's Professional Learning Community Model, our teachers receive continuous training and opportunities to collaborate with the goal of sharing best teaching practices. In an effort to help all Del Mar Union District students become proficient and remain proficient in Language Arts and Mathematics, our school is implementing an Academic Learning Program to help meet the educational goal of every student demonstrating reading and mathematics proficiency under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Academic Learning program is designed to be an alternative tutorial program to the traditional thirty-day summer school program for regular education students. We believe that by providing students with more time and immediate assistance on the learning of specific standards and skills during the regular school year, greater academic achievement will be realized. We are pleased to have certificated teachers Mrs. Lisa Blazer and Ms. Lindsey VanDeweghe join our teaching staff supporting our students.

**Everywhere I go, I find myself reflecting upon and acknowledging the virtues and power of the Sycamore Ridge teaching staff!**

I'd like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our Extended Studies Teachers who enhance and enrich the learning experiences for our students in the areas of Art, Music, P.E, Science and Technology. These dedicated teachers provide such great value to our school in a myriad of ways beyond their expertise in their specialized fields. As you know, parents, we have asked for your input regarding these programs in the January survey because of the budget shortfall we are experiencing district wide. During the months of January and February, our Board of Trustees will continue to analyze the state of the district's finances in order to make critical decisions about the future of our programs. It is important for you to know that although our ESC programs are subsidized by the generous donations of our families and corporate sponsors, fundraising accounts for only 18% of the ESC program. Over \$3 million dollars of the district's general fund goes to the ESC programs district wide. Please visit the DMUSD website and link on to the Board agenda and minutes to stay in the know. Our school board appreciates input from our schools' parents.

As you know, we have made Character Education an important part of our school curriculum. Teachers have been actively promoting the importance of ethical behavior through classroom lessons focused around the pillars of strong character and peace-building behaviors. The emphasis on good character can be felt and seen all over our campus. Upper grade students working with the preschoolers in our special needs program, PeaceCoaches supporting good choice making on our playground, and our K-6 grade students recycling their lunch trash are just a few examples of the many ways our students demonstrate their strong citizenship at school. Our Stallion Student Council should be complimented for their many contributions to our school climate of caring. Coordination of a food drive and ewaste recycling, along with a campaign to help find a cure for Cystic Fibrosis are shining examples of the respectful, caring and thoughtful attitudes of our students. In an effort to make a school-to-home connection, we have implemented a once a month character homework activity. As much as we'd like to save our children from negative pressures and mistakes, struggles are important learning experiences they can't avoid. The elementary school years are critical in shaping character for a lifetime. We have such a short window of opportunity to help them know, love and do what's right, And so, the very thought of 420 students talking with their families and siblings about the importance of making good choices makes me smile! Collectively, and in partnership, we can most certainly make a difference in the lives of our children and, in this way, positively affect our society and the future.

Thank you all for making this an enjoyable, worthwhile and sincere act in which to devote my career!

Best wishes,  
Emily Disney



**BARNES NOBLE**

[www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)

**Burgers & Books,  
What Could be Better?**

**Enjoy Both While  
Earning Money to Support the  
Sycamore Ridge PTA!!**

**Mark Your Calendars for a  
Joint Family Restaurant Night  
and Book Fair at  
Red Robin and Barnes & Noble  
at the  
Del Mar Highlands Town Center**

**Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Book Fair: 3:00-10:00 pm**

**Red Robin: 4:00-9:00 pm**

**Special Guest Readers will be Emily Disney and SR Teachers**

**Remember to Bring Your Fliers!!**

*President's Message*  
(Continued from page 1)

An update on PTA membership: about 75% of our Stallion families have joined the PTA. Thank you to all of our families who have joined and who support the PTA in its work. If you have not joined, it is not too late! Membership forms are in the front office and are accepted all year long. If you are not sure if you are a member or not, please email me and I can let you know.

There are some programs coming up that you will be getting more information on in the Wednesday folders. There will be a recycling drive that will go to support the Zoo Crew in the Science Lab, the Reflections Art Reception showcasing our students' talents and artwork on Feb. 26, Barnes and Noble/Red Robin Night coming up in March, and several Dad's Club events including lunches, a Dad's Club Read-In and a movie night. To kick off Earth Week the PTA is sponsoring two assemblies for the students presented by I Love A Clean San Diego that will focus on recycling and environmental awareness. And on May 20<sup>th</sup> the PTA will hold its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Jog-A-Thon. Check the Wednesday folder icon on the school website to view flyers for these events as they get closer. The dates for these events are also listed in this newsletter.

Two PTA General Association meetings have been scheduled on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in the MUR and on April 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:10am in the MUR. At the February PTA meeting, the nominating committee that selects and nominates next year's PTA Executive Board will be elected and at the April meeting, next year's Executive board will be elected. We are currently looking for volunteers to sit on the nominating committee for next year. Serving on the nominating committee is not a big time commitment and if you serve on the nominating committee you don't have to nominate yourself to serve on the Executive Board unless you choose to do so. Your help in this process is crucial, so if you are looking for a low-key way to get involved please contact Carrie Nydhal at [cnydahl@san.rn.com](mailto:cnydahl@san.rn.com) for more information.

Finally, I would like to encourage all of you to get informed about the critical budget issues that our district is facing currently. The PTA is sponsoring a "Coffee with the Principal" on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> in the MUR right after drop-off at 8:10am. Ms. Disney will be speaking on the state of our district and the future of the programs offered at our schools. Also, there are three Board of Trustees meetings coming up that are great ways to get informed. They are scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> at 6pm and Feb.25<sup>th</sup> at 5:45. You can check the district website at [www.dmusd.org](http://www.dmusd.org) and click on the Board of Trustees link for more information on these meetings and to view the board packet/agenda for the evening. As always, you can always contact me for information. In these tough times, it is important that we know about the state of our district and the potential changes that may be coming down the pipe so we can take action if needed.

I would like to extend a HUGE thank all of you for a wonderful first half of the school year. Your support of the PTA and its many programs and activities is valued and very much appreciated.

Go Stallions!

Shannon Cary  
Sycamore Ridge PTA President  
[shancary@gmail.com](mailto:shancary@gmail.com)  
858-481-5489



## Do You Love to Garden?

Our ESC science teacher, Ms. Dumoff, is looking for parent volunteers to help with the Sycamore Ridge Garden and the Garden Club. Experienced gardeners are needed to come in weekly to help prune, water, and harvest the garden. Parents are needed to help with the Garden Lunch Club Tuesdays 11:45am-12:15pm. If parents are interested in helping, but unable to come on Tuesdays, other options are available. Please contact Ms. Dumoff at [kdumoff@dmusd.org](mailto:kdumoff@dmusd.org) if you can help.



Mrs. Mokiao's 6th graders planting broccoli in our learning garden.

## Sycamore Ridge KidsKorps Update

Our first KidsKorps chapter has kicked off to a great start at Sycamore Ridge this past fall. The focus of the KidsKorps organization is to teach our young children the importance of being involved in service projects and giving back to our community. We have over 65 children that have joined our chapter and are attending our meetings each month. This past fall our organization was involved in many different activities:

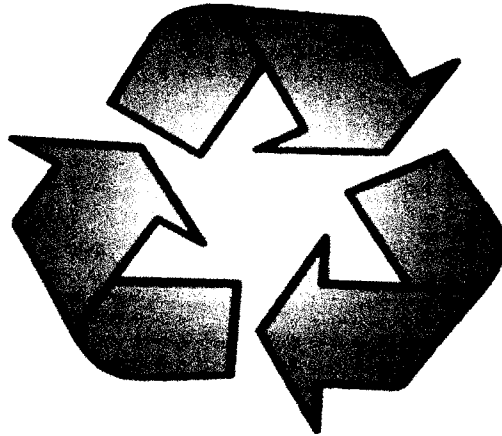
1. We sent holiday cards and made blankets for our troops overseas through the Soldiers' Angels organization.
2. We made holiday decorations and decorated the YWCA in downtown San Diego and the home of Becky's House, a women's and family shelter.
3. We sang holiday carols for a local retirement center in Carmel Valley.
4. Cleaned up the grounds at Sycamore Ridge to focus on the importance of keeping our environment free from trash.

We welcome new members! Please enroll at [www.kidskorps.com](http://www.kidskorps.com), and if you have additional questions, please contact us at [sycamoreridgekidskorps@yahoo.com](mailto:sycamoreridgekidskorps@yahoo.com)



## THANK YOU STALLION FAMILIES!

Thank you to everyone for continuing to clip your BoxTops. We just received our first check from General Mills for \$775!! All of this money goes directly to our school! Keep up the good work!



\*Sycamore Ridge Cares\*

Please help us to celebrate

"Earth Week"

During the week of April 20-24

WE WILL BE COLLECTING



Aluminum cans and glass

At the front of the school from 7:45 to 8:15 am

The proceeds will benefit The Science's room pets



COME TO CELEBRATE  
SYCAMORE RIDGE'S TALENT  
AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL  
"REFLECTIONS"

ART SHOW AND RECEPTION

ON  
February 26

5:30 to 7:00 PM

In the MUR

Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA

January 2008

# Firm, Fair & Consistent®

Sycamore Ridge School

Guiding Students for School Success

## Teach respect by daily example

You want your child to show respect for you, his teachers and people in general—not to mention respect for rules and belongings. Teaching respect is a big job. But thankfully, research shows a specific method to use.

Children learn respect when they are *treated* with respect. So make these simple efforts a daily habit:

- **Communicate with respect.** Listen attentively to your child. Don't interrupt. Make sure you understand what he is saying. Focus on the positive.
- **Practice solving problems calmly.** Use "I statements" ("I feel ignored when you don't answer me") instead of hurtful accusations ("You always ignore me").
- **Take responsibility.** When you make an agreement with your child, stick to it—and expect him to do the same. If something goes wrong, the person responsible should make amends and learn from the experience.
- **Care for belongings.** Cleaning up is a way of showing respect for things around the house. Talk about this with your child. What if no one pitched in? What steps, such as organizing toys, could make the job easier?
- **Be encouraging.** Support your child's interests and strengths. Talk about values, including those your family has passed down for generations. What does your child value? How can he show this? Strong character should be a source of pride.



Source: "What Does 'Strong Character' Mean? II," U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/part5.html](http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/part5.html).

## Teach that all actions have consequences

Children's experiences with the world are limited, so it's hard for them to imagine the possible results of their actions. They need parents' help. So even if your child knows whether a choice is right or wrong, help her consider the pros and cons. What could happen in the short and long term? After talking with you, the right choice may be more clear.



Source: Loren G. Yamamoto, MD, MPH, MBA, "Tidbits on Raising Children," The University of Hawaii System, [www.hawaii.edu/medicine/pediatrics/parenting/c32.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/medicine/pediatrics/parenting/c32.html).

It's a new year, so turn over a new leaf! If you've been a little lax in the discipline department lately, resolve to:

- **Set reasonable rules.**
- **Be consistent** about enforcing those rules.
- **Remind yourself** that discipline is not punishment. Keeping these resolutions just may mean a year of smooth sailing for you and your child!



## Use goal-setting to motivate your child

Help your child set goals and you may help her do better in school.

How? By giving her something to work toward—and achieve. Have your child ask herself:

- **What do I want to achieve?**
- **What am I doing to achieve it?**
- **Are the things I'm doing really helping?**

The more specifically she can answer these questions, the better able she may be to set—and reach—her goals.

Source: "Motivating Your Child to Achieve," Jeffco Public Schools, Golden, CO, [http://jettcoveh.jeffco.k12.co.us/communications/csre/school\\_newsletters/2004.01.09/assess\\_news\\_art.doc](http://jettcoveh.jeffco.k12.co.us/communications/csre/school_newsletters/2004.01.09/assess_news_art.doc).



## Poor behavior: Is it a pattern or a phase?

Will your child's bad behavior last, or is it just a phase?

Ask yourself:

- **Are his actions** age-appropriate?
- **Are many of his peers** acting the same way?
- **Has the behavior lasted** six months or fewer?

If the answer to these questions is *yes*, chances are your child is going through a phase. But if the answer is *no*, look for other possible causes for his behavior.

Source: Russell A. Barkley, Ph.D. and Christine M. Benton, *Your Defiant Child*, ISBN: 1-57230-321-2, The Guilford Press, 1-800-365-7006, [www.guilford.com](http://www.guilford.com).



## Firm, Fair & Consistent®

January 2008

### Share the school's discipline goals

Your child has misbehaved, and the principal calls you at home. Suddenly you're wondering about the school's discipline policy. To avoid this situation, read the policy ahead of time and review it with your child.

It is likely to:

- **Promote** the safety of students and staff.
- **Make** the school a better place to learn.
- **Focus** on respect for others.
- **Explain** ways to resolve conflicts.
- **Define** discipline problems.
- **List** possible consequences.



After reading the policy, write down any questions. Talk with school staff about them. It's much better to prevent problems than to face them later.

Source: "Discipline K-12 at home and school," Partnership for Learning, [www.partnershipforlearning.org/category.asp?CategoryID=11](http://www.partnershipforlearning.org/category.asp?CategoryID=11).

### Questions & Answers

**Q:** My third grader has almost no self-control! I know I should be helping him develop it, but I honestly don't know where to start. What can I do?

**A:** First, don't be too hard on yourself. Chances are you've been nudging your child toward self-control all along—he just hasn't mastered it yet. Even the most well-behaved kids act up (or melt down) sometimes. It's a normal part of childhood.

The key is to help your child develop enough self-control so that he behaves appropriately most of the time—at school, at home and out in public. Just remember: Like discipline in general, learning self-control is a long-term process.

Here are some ways to help your child develop self-control:

- **Be consistent with the rules.** It's critical that your child know exactly what's expected of him. Make sure your rules are simple, fair and consistent.
- **Ignore minor misbehaviors.** Is your child acting up to get attention? Don't reward him by giving him any. This alone might help him rein in his behavior.
- **Point out the positives.** Praise your child when he behaves well. This gives him a huge incentive to continue his good behavior, rather than lapse into bad behavior.
- **Help him succeed.** If your child fusses about being hungry the moment you enter the grocery store, offer him a healthy snack before leaving home. If he's whiny and bored during errands, assign him a fun task to complete while you're running them. In other words, make it easier for him to control himself.



Source: Robin F. Goodman, Ph.D. and Anita Gurtan, Ph.D., "About Discipline—Helping Children Develop Self-Control," NYU Child Study Center, [www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/discipline.html](http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/discipline.html).

### Banish bullying—teach your child to CARE

Nip bullying in the bud! How? By teaching your child to CARE.

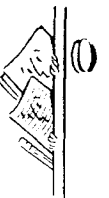
Michele Borba, author of *Parents Do Make a Difference*, suggests responding to your child's unkind behavior by:

- Calling attention to it.
  - Asking your child how she'd feel if she were the victim of the behavior.
  - Recognizing the consequences. Explain how unkind actions make others feel.
  - Expressing disapproval.
- Teach your child empathy today, and who knows? You may prevent full-blown bullying tomorrow.

Source: Michele Borba, *Parents Do Make a Difference: How to Raise Kids With Solid Character, Strong Minds and Caring Hearts*, ISBN: 978-0787946050 (Jossey-Bass, 1-877-762-2974, [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)).

### Don't sabotage your child's attitude toward homework!

You know the old saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Well, it applies to attitudes about homework, too. Studies show that when parents look down on homework, their kids tend to do the same. So don't darken your child's attitude toward assignments. If you think homework is a hassle, keep it to yourself!



Source: Harris Cooper, *The Battle Over Homework*, ISBN: 1-4129-3713-2 (Corwin Press, 1-800-233-9936, [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com)).

#### Firm, Fair & Consistent®

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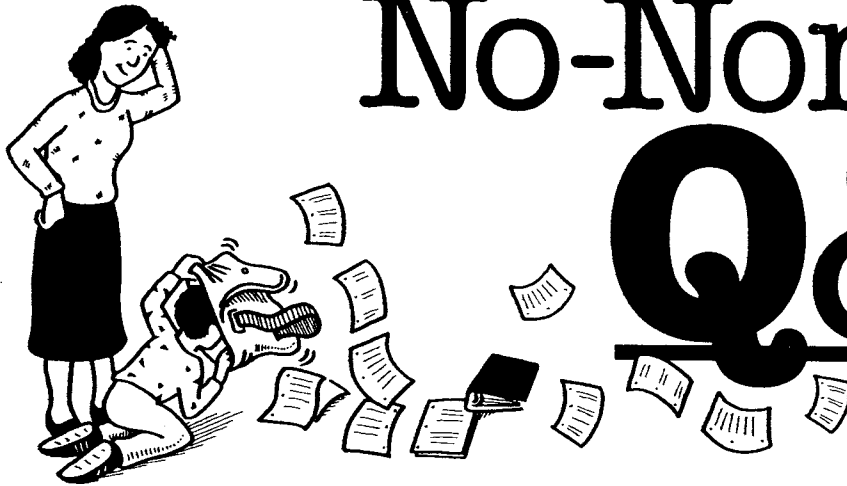
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# No-Nonsense Q&A's

Parents face many challenges. These questions and answers can help you tackle some of the toughest.

## Ending homework hassles

**Q** My daughter often forgets homework assignments and the books needed to do them. Sometimes she says she finished her homework at school, when she hasn't. What can I do?

**A** Your daughter's excuses are fairly common. Many parents have found a homework log very helpful. It's simply a sheet of paper listing your child's homework assignments. Here's how it works:

On the left side of the paper, list all your child's school subjects. Examples: language arts, math, science, reading. Then write the days of the week across the top of the page. When finished, it will look like the one pictured here.

Tell your child the homework log can make it easier for her to keep up with assignments. Ask her to write each homework assignment under the proper day of the week.

Share your plan with your child's

Homework Log					
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Subject					
Reading		✓			
Spelling	✓				
Math		✓			
Soc. Studies	✓				
Science					

teacher. Ask if she can show her teacher the homework log each day. The teacher may want to check the log and initial each assignment to help ensure an accurate record.

When your child remembers to use and bring her homework log home, praise her efforts. If she brings her log and books home all week, celebrate with an outing or special privilege.

## Ready, set, exercise

**Q** How much exercise should my elementary school child get?

**A** The American Academy of Pediatrics says it's important to make exercise part of your child's routine—

just like brushing teeth. In fact, getting regular exercise is the single most important thing your child can do to become fit.

The goal, the Academy says, should be to do some type of vigorous activity every day, or at least three or four times a week. The more enjoyable the activity, the better. Examples: bicycling, swimming, ice skating, playing ball, or taking a quick walk in the neighborhood.



## Parent-teacher team

**Q** I want to develop a good relationship with my child's teacher. What do you suggest?

**A** First, make contact with the teacher as soon as possible. Most schools schedule an evening for parents to visit and meet teachers face-to-face.

Also, consider writing a short note to introduce yourself. You can share a few of your child's strengths and interests, as well as areas where help is needed.

Continue to keep in touch by attending parent-teacher conferences and writing notes. By working together, you'll strengthen your child's chances of success and prevent unpleasant surprises at report card time.

## Sibling rivalry

**Q** My kids seem to be enemies. All they do is argue. How can I cut down on all this fussing?

**A** A certain amount of disagreement between siblings is pretty normal. If it becomes too disruptive, try this. Tell them, "If you're going to fight, leave the room now! I don't want to hear this." Or, if it's better for you, leave the room yourself. Either way, you'll take away their audience.

Or you can try humor. Ask your children to do something really unusual. Example: Tell them to sing their argument to each other. With any luck, it will end in laughter.

Of course, if your kids are hurting each other, send them to separate rooms to calm down. If they insist on blaming each other, ask them to write out their problems—and to suggest possible solutions, too.



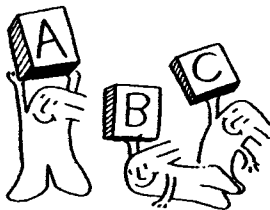
## No-Nonsense Q&A's

Page 2

### Learning is child's play!

**Q** My children spend a lot of time playing games. How can I use their interest to turn playtime into learning time?

**A** Look for games that help children think, remember, or solve problems. For instance, Uno, Dominoes, and Monopoly help kids practice their math skills.



Scrabble for Juniors, Wordsters, and Pictionary are great for developing communication and language skills.

Checkers, Concentration, and other simple games let kids practice planning ahead, remembering, and solving problems. They can also help teach children to follow rules, take turns, and practice good sportsmanship.

Next time you're shopping or at a yard sale, look for games that fit your children's interests and abilities—games that help make learning fun!

### Keeping kids safe

**Q** How can I keep my child from becoming a victim of a violent crime?

**A** The key word is prevention. Start by making sure your child knows his full name, address, and phone number, and how to call 911 in an emergency.

It's important to know where your child is at all times. Leaving youngsters alone in public places, such as malls, playgrounds, and movie theaters, is dangerous. Tell your child to ask the



nearest clerk for help in case you become separated while shopping.

If a stranger approaches your child or offers gifts, have him use the "NO, GO, TELL" approach. How? Shout "No," keep moving, and tell a grown-up he trusts.

It also helps to set clear limits on what's allowed and what isn't. Kids need to know that somebody cares enough to protect them.

A final thought: All this may sound pretty scary to your child. Be sure to point out the good things that happen in the world, too!

### Raising a reader

**Q** I know reading is important for school success. How can I get my children to read for fun and strengthen their skills at the same time?

**A** Reading aloud to your children—no matter how well they read—is a great way to motivate young readers. Try making your own cliff-hangers. Simply stop reading at an exciting part and watch them pick up where you left off—just to see what happens!

Regular trips to the library can increase your children's desire to read, too. The trick is finding reading materials your children will love. Many libraries have a special children's section with books on tape, magazines, records, tapes, CDs, and more.

Librarians can point you toward books and magazines that relate to your youngsters' interests. While you're there, encourage your children to apply for their own library cards. It makes reading seem more grown-up, and most kids love that feeling!



### Handling "smart" talk

**Q** My once obedient daughter is now disrespectful. She's sassy, talks back, and has a "smart" answer for everything. When I correct her, the situation gets worse. Help!

**A** Disrespect is a common problem for many parents. Sometimes children talk back because they feel criticized. If necessary, change the tone of your voice or the way you phrase things. Your daughter's behavior just might improve.

Another strategy is to ask why she's angry. If she tells you, listen without judgment and thank her for sharing. Then, work on the problem together.

If all else fails, time-outs may help. Tell your daughter you don't like to be spoken to rudely. Suggest talking later, when you're both calm.

Like the common cold, "smart mouth" can't be cured, but it can be treated.



The Sycamore Ridge Round-Up is provided by the

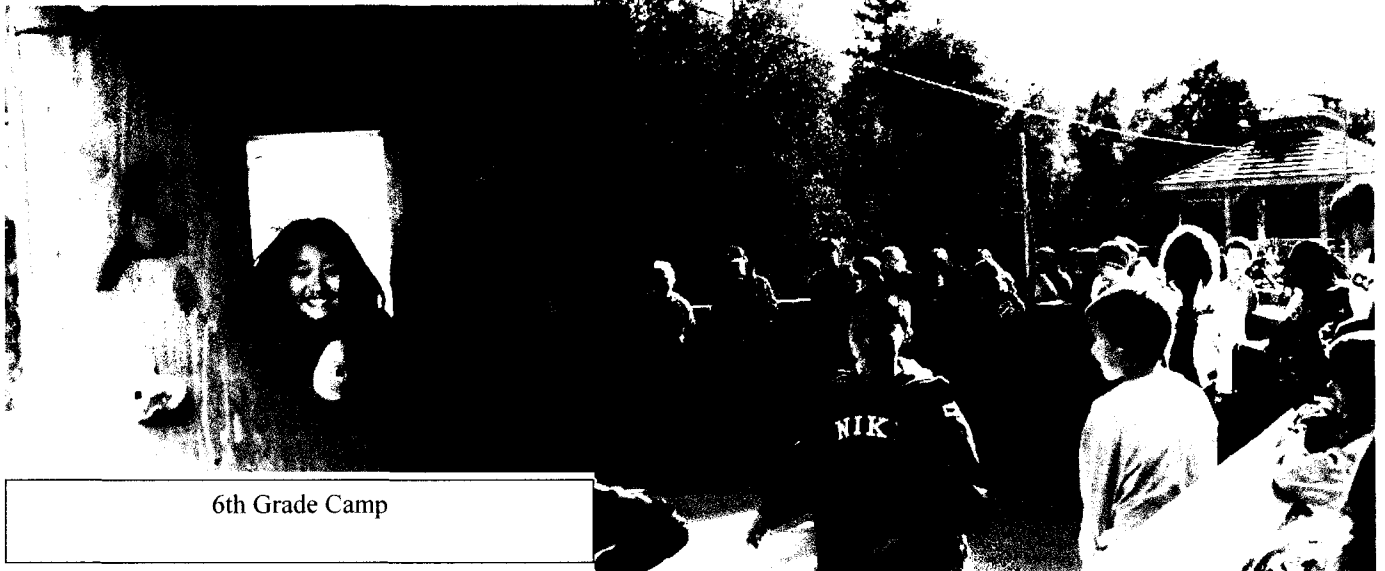
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6th Grade Camp

**Stallion Q & A: Answers for parents about the Stallion way of life.**

Do you have a question about how things work at Sycamore Ridge? Confused about fundraisers, programs, academics? In an effort to better serve parents (new and old), the PTA offers a question & answer column. Simply email your question to Maia Starling at: [maia\\_starling@yahoo.com](mailto:maia_starling@yahoo.com) and she will respond to you in a timely manner. Questions may then be published in the next newsletter (names omitted) to help better inform other parents.