

SYCAMORE RIDGE



Round-Up

April 2010

Vol. 5, Issue 4



Principal's Message

Congratulations Stallions!

Spring has sprung and our campus is alive with a plethora of enriching learning activities and programs! During the visitation by the California Distinguished School team, we received high commendations for the dedication of our teaching staff, and the wealth of opportunities we provide to reach each and every one of our learners. We are thrilled to have received recognition as a California Distinguished School. I am so very proud of our entire Village community. Congratulations to all!

State of the Budget and ESC: Got ESC?

Recent articles on the California state budget indicate there will be a 2.6 billion dollar reduction in K-12 funding for the 2010-2011 school year. In addition, the second interim report by the Del Mar Union School District (presented 3-10-10), indicates that the school district is operating in a deficit spending mode, and must reduce spending for the upcoming school year. A Financial Task Force is currently reviewing the district's budget, and will recommend reductions to the Board by the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

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A Note from the PTA President...

Did you know that 11 teachers here at Sycamore Ridge have been issued preliminary lay-off notices? (For more information about the pink slipped teachers, please visit our website: www.sycamoridgepta.com). This is because our school district is facing a projected deficit of over \$3 million for the 2010-2011 school year. The Del Mar Schools Education Foundation (DMSEF) is working hard to raise additional funds to rescind as many of those layoff notices as possible. Basically, without the donations

contributed by our district parents and surrounding community to DMSEF, the district will have to make cuts specifically to our Extended Studies Curriculum program. The Board of Trustees has decided that every child in grades 1-6 in the district will receive additional instruction in the areas of science and technology, which will be funded by the district's general fund. If additional funds become available, (i.e. DMSEF raises enough money to donate back to the district to cover additional teaching positions) then each school can decide to bring back art, and/or music and/or PE. This means that if and when cuts are made to the ESC program, they will come first from Art, Music and PE. The PTA is supporting the DMSEF by contributing the proceeds (about \$2200) from the grade level art projects auctioned off at RidgeRaising as well as donating the proceeds from our 5th Annual Jog-a-thon held on March 17th to help bring back the programs in our schools.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

2nd
Spirit Day - College Sweatshirt Day

5th-9th
Spring Break-NO SCHOOL

13th
Kindergarten Field Trip to Flower Fields
8:15am-12:15pm

2nd Grade Field Trip to Whole Foods
8:30am-11:00am

14th
"No Hands-No Arms-No Problem!" Assembly
9:15-10:15am (K-2)
10:30-11:30am (3-6)

15th
Coffee with the Principal/ PTA General Elections
8:05am (staff lounge)

Dad's Movie Night
"Cloudy w/ a Chance of Meatballs"
5:30pm (MUR)

16th
School Supply Kit Orders Due

19th
2010-2011 Kindergarten Visitation
10:30am (MUR)
(adults only)

20th
2010-2011 Kindergarten Visitation
10:30am (MUR)
(adults only)

21st
Kindergarten Registration
1:00-6:00pm (office)
*Must bring two proofs of residency

22nd
2010-2011 Incoming 1st-6th Grade
Tour & Registration
10:30am (front office)

23rd
1st Grade Musical
"Sounds A Little Fishy To Me"
8:15am (MUR)

27th
Science Night K-6th Grade
5:00-6:00pm

28th
Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30pm (Del Mar Hills PAC)

MAY

3rd-10th
STAR Testing (2nd-6th grade)

4th
Barnes & Noble/ Red Robin Night

10-14th
Staff Appreciation Week

14th
Spirit Day - Hippie Day

17th
Kindergarten Musical
"E-I-E-I- Oops"
8:30am (MUR)

18th
Dad's Day Lunch
11:30am

19th
Open House & ESC Showcase
5:30-7:15pm

19-21
Used Book Sale
Sycamore Ridge Library

24th-28th
6th Grade Camp

26th
3rd Grade Field Trip to San Elijo Lagoon
8:15am-12:15pm

31st
Memorial Day Holiday (No School)

JUNE

3rd
4th Grade Field Trip to Cabrillo
National Monument
8:45am-1:45pm

4th
1st Grade Field Trip to San Diego Zoo
8:30am-1:30pm

Spirit Day - Dress Alike Day

8th
Spring Band Concert
5:30pm (MUR)

11th
5th Grade Field Trip to BizTown
TBA

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon
TBA

16th (Wednesday)
Full day of instruction
Kindergarten Dismissal- 12:40pm
1st-6th Grade Dismissal- 2:30pm

Field Day (all grades)
(upper grade field)
TBA

17th (Thursday)
6th Grade Promotion
8:30am (MUR)

Last Day of School
12:30pm Dismissal
ALL GRADES

Volunteers Needed

- The PTA is currently looking for volunteers to serve on the Executive Board or to Chair events and programs next year. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Nicole Baril: NDBaril@aol.com or 858-204-4270.
- Are you an accountant or do you know one? The PTA is in need of an accountant to prepare our tax returns. Please contact Maia Starling if you can be of assistance: maia_starling@yahoo.com or 858-354-1183.
- We are looking for interested volunteers to help out the week of May 10th - May 14th for Staff Appreciation Week. Help us show our teachers and staff just how much we value them! Please contact Raquel Dixon: raqueldixon@gmail.com or 858-436-4075 or Trisha Klimisch: trishak7@yahoo.com.

Field Trips and Fun in Fourth Grade...



With the help of our ESC Science teacher, Miss Dumoff, the fourth graders have just finished up their science unit on Magnetism and Electricity. As a culminating activity, we went on a field trip to the USS Midway Museum. Students enjoyed a first-hand look at how operating an aircraft carrier is very much the same as operating any community - only a carrier needs electricity in the middle of the ocean. Through the "On Board with Electricity and Magnetism" Lab, students explored the power of magnets and even generated their own electricity using a hand-held generator! Here is what some of our students had to say about the trip:

"On Monday, March 15, 2010, we (the fourth graders) visited and explored the USS Midway. At the USS Midway, we learned about

magnetism, the rooms of the ship, and facts about the ship. Also, we got to explore the airplanes and do some experiments. Overall, it was an exciting and fabulous field trip."

-Andrew H.

"I liked the USS Midway field trip because the tour was fun and educational. We got to visit the places on the ship where sailors worked. For example, we visited the galley, where chefs cooked and served food. The electricity experiment was also fun because we got to use the generator and crank it."

-Kathy Z.

"Today, I went to the USS Midway Museum. First, we went on a tour with a tour guide. We saw the galley, the emergency generator and more. Then we went to a classroom and experimented. After, we ate lunch and explored the rest of the museum with a chaperone. Our group went to the flight deck and the brig. The brig was super cool because there were a lot of corridors to go through before we actually got there. When we reached our destination, there were realistic mannequins that freaked me out!"

-Katie J.



"Inside the meat storing room was amazingly awesome. I was happy when they turned off the lights and showed us how the navy would use the "battle lantern" if the electricity went out. "

-Bryan K.



"On 3/15/10 we went on a field trip to the USS Midway Museum in downtown San Diego. It was really cool. It was like nothing had changed during the long period of time. It was really cool because we got a private tour and got to do experiments about magnets and electricity. During the tour we visited lots of things like the galley (the kitchen) and got to see a lot of model planes that they used in World War II. We learned about the electricity and things they used there. I hope I can go again soon."

-Sumin H.



Ridge Raising 2010

A SYCAMORE RIDGE PTA EVENT

RidgeRaising was held on March 6th, 2010 and was a huge success. Thank you to the RidgeRaising committee, the Sycamore Ridge teachers and staff, the room parents who worked so hard on the class baskets, and all of the community and family members who donated items for the auction. Special thanks to Ms. Gilbert, ESC teacher, for collaborating with our children on their beautiful works of art, and to the Grand Del Mar for being so accommodating with such a beautiful venue. Due to the generosity of our school and community "village", we have raised over \$20,000 to benefit the Sycamore Ridge PTA and the DMSEF.

Huge thanks to our generous underwriters:



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Preschool News

The Preschoolers are keeping busy and learning each day. March has been a fun month for the preschool. We began by talking about Weather and Rainbows. The preschoolers enjoyed Wind, Rain, Snow and Sun stories. We also learned music and songs that went along with the weather unit. Rainbow art projects helped the students learn about colors.

We have been going to the Library for Circle Time with Mrs. P. The students are very motivated by the stories and enjoy checking out library books.

Next week we have a fun-filled curriculum planned for our unit on nursery Rhymes.

A few highlights include:

*acting out various rhymes with puppets that represent different characters from familiar nursery rhymes.

*creating Little Miss Muffet spiders in the art area.

*taking turns being nimble and quick as we jump over a candlestick to dramatize the rhyme "Jack Be Nimble."

This is a big year of growth for the Preschool and we are excited to be a part of it. Sycamore Ridge is a great place to learn and grow!

The Preschool Team



Please join us for
"Coffee with the Principal"
and

PTA General Association Elections

Thursday, April 15th
8:05 am in the Staff Lounge

Please join us for our PTA Elections

Mrs. Morris will update us on our CA Distinguished School Status &
Anna Pedroza, Earl Warren Middle School Principal will give a brief presentation

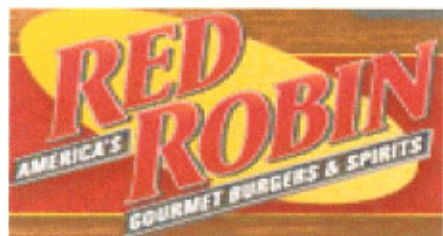
Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA

Still Need a School Directory?

Extra copies are available for purchase for \$15/ each. Or receive a complimentary copy of the directory if you join the PTA.

Have you checked out our website?

If not, please take a look: www.sycamoreridgepta.com . Thank you to Holly Kolman and Christy Mohler for their work getting the website up and for continuing to keep it updated.



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

**Enjoying 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**

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Red Robin: 5:00-8:00 pm (10% proceeds to SR)

Book Fair: 3:00-10:00 pm (15% proceeds to SR)

Special Guest Readers will be Mrs. Morris and SR Teachers

Remember to Bring Your Flyer !!

Jog-A-Thon

The 5th Annual Jog-A-Thon was held on Wednesday, March 17th and was a huge success! All of the students did a great job and showed their true Stallion spirit by running to save the ESC programs. The kids ran a total of 5,856 laps and over \$6,000 was pledged. The proceeds of the Jog-A-Thon will be donated to the DMSEF to help save our ESC programs.

Thank you to all the parent volunteers: Toni Fisher, Nicole Baril, Donna O'Rourke, Lien Phuong, Debbie Rosenfield, Carrie Nydahl, Branden Belford, Ron Johnson, Jen Ernst, Christy Mohler, Jill Waalen, , Miranda Giurgiu, Mehrnoosh Moazzam, Nagesh Vattikonda, Shannon Cary, Jen Varela, Orna Wittenburg, John Taylor, Tiffany Wickham, Carlota Altamirano, Meaghan Gardiner, Sandy Blackstone-Gardner, Kristina Haymes, Sandy Dreisbach, Debbie Romine, Janet Ross, Carrie Goldman, Sawsan Atiya, Nissrine Habhab, Brooke Cortese, Darcy Buchanan, and all those who came out that day to pitch in and cheer the kids on!

Thank you to our 5th grade parents and teachers: Ms. Stanton, Mrs. Solowczuk, Mrs. Schwab, Karen Ettouati, Victoria Shoushtari, Nelar Wine, Ann Maas, Sinyien Du, Sylvia Wahr, Su-Ling Wong, and Tim Blazer for planning the 5th grade Jog-A-Thon on March 10th. We were so glad the 5th graders were able to participate in the Jog-A-Thon and their scheduled field trip!

Special thanks to Coach John Sink for setting up the track and kicking off both Jog-A-Thons, Chris Ray, all of our teachers, and Principal Morris.

Thank you to Primo DJ who played great high energy music to keep us all motivated while we jogged. Thank you to Atlas Lithograph (Chris Cary) for the donation and printing of the collection envelopes. Thank you to Debbie Romine, Donna O'Rourke, Carrie Nydahl and Lisa Becker for the donation of sugar free popsicles that each student received.

If you missed the deadline to turn in your pledges, it's not too late! We will be donating the proceeds to DMSEF in April! Thank you again for supporting this wonderful event!

-Shelley Aberle and Maia Starling, Jog-A-Thon Co-Chairpersons





Library News

Mrs. Kathy Pechtimaldjian

Spring Greetings! The weather's been warming up, but we have been chilling out in the library with the CHILL OUT and READ reading incentive program. I'd like to thank Cathleen L. and Jamie L. (4th graders) for their wonderful penguin artwork that was used for the reading passports. Congratulations to all of the students who completed at least one passport (see the following list). They will be receiving a reading certificate and be included in the Reading Hall of Fame 2010. A special recognition goes to Emily C. (5th) for completing 12 passports. We had many students who completed more than one passport. I want to thank all the students for doing a great job of reading, discovering new genres and authors, and filling out their passports. It has been a lot of fun. As of press time, we are still calculating which grade level read the most books. These students will be treated to a popcorn and movie party. Way to go everyone! Thank you PTA and parents for supporting this program!

California Young Reader Medal: The votes have been counted and the winning books for our school are as follows:

Picture Book: Millie Waits for the Mail by: Alexander Steffensmeir

Older Reader Picture Book: Owney the Mail Pouch Pooch by: Mona Kerby

Our school's vote has been sent to the main office and the official winning titles will be announced in May.

Library Class Time

The 5th and 6th grade students have just finished competing in the Library Olympics. All the students participated in one of the following events:

Speed Reading, Dramatic Reading, Library Trivia, and Slalom Research Relay. It was great fun and all the students will be receiving a medal.

After reading Library Mouse by Daniel Kirk, the kindergarteners are trying their hand at writing their own books. Some students are writing fiction stories, some nonfiction, a few autobiographies, and a few Star Wars sequels. I will be adding a writing center to our Library Club on Mondays and Fridays so that all the students can try writing their own books. In the other grades, we have been reading a variety of genres and playing games to practice library skills.

Used Book Sale

The Used Book Sale will be held May 19-21. More information will be forthcoming about the times. Donations are greatly appreciated. I would love to get adult books as well as children's titles. Drop off your donations in the office or the library. Be sure to include your name and your student's name on your donation so that I can give you a receipt. I will also give your child a coupon for a free book from the book sale. Thank you for supporting this fundraiser. The profits from the book sale go directly back into the library to replace worn out titles.

As always, I want to thank you for supporting your child in being a responsible library patron. Most of our students do a great job of returning their books on time, bringing books to the library for renewal, and taking responsibility for replacing lost/damaged books.

Have a wonderful spring break!

Congratulations to the following students who completed their Chill Out and READ passports. If a student completed more than one passport, it is indicated in parenthesis. These students will be inducted into the Reading Hall of Fame 2010.

Kindergarten

Helen B.G. (2)
Benjamin F. (3)
Aimee H.
Ryan H.
Demir K.
Andrew M. (2)
Ellen Y. (2)
Daniel Z.
Keanu A.
Shaina C.
Lucas M.
Crystal Z.
Ivan C.
Jonathan D.
Ali G.
Arysse G.
David W.
Cindy L.
Bellal K.
Andrew N.
Ryan V.
Daniel L.
Sebastian P.
Austin Y. (2)
Ashmeen M.
Baylee B.
Cooper B.
Ryan H.
Justin V.
Claire S.
Isabel W.

1st Grade

Jasmine D. (2)
Christopher G.
Ryan H. (2)
Christian L.
Riley M.
Emily R. (5)
Wanda Y. (2)
Kevin C.
Catherine D.
Duncan H.
Joseph H.
Irene H.
Yuki S.
Kylin T.
Casey W.
Martha C.
Evelyn C.
Brian H. (6)
Matthew J. (2)
Emily K.
Sai N. (2)
Shaun P.
Justin R.
Sophia Y.
Adam J.
Shaun K.
Sean N.
Dhylan P. (2)

1st Grade (cont)

Jessica P.
Nishitha V. (3)
Clare G.
Kaili A.
Evelyn C.
Joseph C.
Max C.
Rae S.
Caleb P.
Grace Y.
Michael M.
Malak A.
McKenna B.
Ashley B.
Jon Jon H.
Neha P.

2nd Grade

Thomas A.
Vitush A. (2)
Eli H.
Alex H.
Lily W.
Matthew B.
Natasha C. (2)
Ben A.
John B.G.
Anya E.
Aaron N.
Debora J.
Anna L.
Ryan L.
Matthew N.
Zoe S.S.
Jim X.
Hafsah A.
Bella L.
Allison R.
Tobias S. (3)
Noa W.
Sebastian T.
Justin W. (3)
Sofia A.
Justin F.
Adelle V.
Ethan W.
Brian L.
Faith Z.
Andrew S.

3rd Grade

Chloe B.
Nader H.
Anjali H.
Sofia M. (2)
Jack S.
Natalie W. (3)
Brandon A.
Emily D.
Esther G. (3)
Katie H.
Charlotte M. (2)
Lika M.
Amanda T. (2)
Taylor W.
Emma Y. (3)
Chan Mi O.
Maria B.
Addison B.
Daniel L.
Sophie P.
Daniel G.
Isabel J.
Carson M.

4th Grade

Brent B. (2)
Andrew H. (3)
Sumin H.
Cathleen L. (2)
Jamie L.
Ashley L. (2)
Liza S.
Marcelo A.
Sara A. (2)
Sean L.
Mariangela N.
Alyssa R. (2)
Steve S.
Niharika V. (3)
John Y.
Kathy Z. (2)
Nicole K.
Sophia L.
Kaitlin M. (3)
Matthew R.
Michael T.
Hailey Z. (4)
David J.
Matthew A.
Brian B.
Samantha C.
Rohan D.
Claire H.
Katie J.
Andrew N.
Margaret M. (2)
Liya Y.
Hannah A.
Maxine B.
Woo Jin L.
Noah M.
Chloe R.
Grace G.

5th Grade

Jacqueline F. (2)
Noah J. (4)
Sueann L. (4)
Mona R. (7)
Jake W. (2)
Lisha W. (4)
Emily C. (12)
Omar D.
Ethan E. (2)
Michelle H. (2)
Mary M. (2)
Mihika N.
Priscilla R.
Aaron T.
Keaton B.
Daniel D.
Elizabeth G.
Keely H.
Jordan K.
Sara S.
Andrew Y.
Marina B.
Anthony K.
Jinmook (3)
Madina K.
Shayan M.
Quan N.
Kalyani R.
Zachary S.
Alexandra W.
Madi W.
Madison W.

6th Grade

Lynn C.
Sarah D.
Sameen M.
Olivia F.
Sydney S.
Brian T.
Arthi H.
Bianca H. (9)
Hyewon S. (8)
Seung L.
Elizabeth H.
Jahanny A.
Colby B.
Sierra C.
Danielle E.
David K.
Eve L.F.
Marikit M.
Jena R.
Anthony T.
Louie Z.
Ocean Z.
Miranda A.
Tegan A.
Wasef A.
Sarah C.
Rene C.
Jason (JJ) H.
Ashley J.

6th Grade (cont)

Shahdin K.
Jason K.
Seung L.
Gabrielle L.
Rubia L.
Eddie M.
Karthik N.
Megan P.
David V.
Wesley W.
Ryan W.
Kevin X.
Sesang Y.
Matthew Z.
Mike Z.

REFLECTIONS

"Beauty is..."

The 5th Annual Reflections Reception was held the evening of February 4th for an incredible celebration of the students' creations. The evening started with viewing all of the art that was beautifully displayed by our volunteers. Principal Emily Morris emceed the evening and announced the award winners who were called onto the stage for a group photo.

Students whose literature pieces were selected to move up to the district level read their articles on stage to our audience. Each of their readings were so touching and amazingly well presented - it really was a proud and exciting moment!

The music composition winners, Noah and Adelle, also played their pieces beautifully, and then our music judge, Janice Kirstein performed the "Valentine" by Jim Brickman.

The evening ended with the attendees sharing some refreshments together.



We would like to congratulate the following artists whose submissions went forward to the NCCPTA level: Dance: Maria B., Anjali H., Sophie P. and Sarina S.; Literature: Sarah C., Justin F., Jacqueline F., Alex H. and Andrew H.; Visual Arts: Vijay D., Elizabeth H., Irene H., Jamie L., Brittany J. and Wesley W.; Photography: Vitush A., Danielle D. and Sara S.; Music: Noah J. and Adelle V.

Entries by the following artists went forward to the 9th district Level: Dance: Maria B., Anjali H., Sophie P. and Sarina S.; Literature: Andrew H.; Music: Noah J. and Adelle V.; Photography: Danielle D. and Sara S.; Visual Arts: Jamie L. and Brittany J. **Congratulations to Sara S.**

(Photography) and Adelle V. (Music)! Their submissions went all the way to the state level!

Sycamore Ridge PTA would like to thank:

- All of our young artists who spent so much time creating the masterpieces; we appreciate all of your efforts and are thankful to you for making this program possible!
- Principal Emily Morris and the Sycamore Ridge staff for their support of this program.
- Artists and members of our community who generously donated their time and expertise to judge the Reflections entries:
 - Jennifer Luce- Visual Arts
 - Phillip Serrato- Literature
 - Louis McKay- Dance Choreography
 - Janice Kerstein- Musical Composition
 - Arash Moghaddam - Photography
- Our community supporters:
 - Dr. Babak Shoushtari at La Jolla Endodontic & the Karam Family at Shell Car Wash in Carmel Valley
- Sycamore Ridge PTA 2009 Reflections volunteers for their countless hours preparing this incredible program: Eileen Lundquist, Chair, Shannon Cary, Janet Ross, Rachel Yang, Carrie White and Victoria Shoushtari

Sycamore Ridge collected more entries than any other school and had the most entries being forwarded on to the next level. We had so many spectacular submissions! The Reflections program limits the numbers that can move on to the next level so if you weren't selected this year don't be discouraged. Keep creating!



Next year's theme will be "Together We Can...", so get ready and we look forward to seeing you next year!

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

As you are aware, one critical component of our children's education being considered for reduction is the ESC program. The DMUSD Foundation has raised roughly \$810,000. Combined with the district's requirement to fund a portion of ESC, this is not enough to sustain the current level of programming throughout the district. It would also mean reducing the ESC program at Sycamore Ridge by 1.5 teachers for the 2010-2011 school year. Our second campaign "Got ESC?" is in full swing with a fundraising deadline of April 30th to save our programs and our teachers.

My hope is that all parents throughout the district will do their part in making a contribution to the Foundation by April 30th. This is the only way to avoid reducing ESC teachers and classroom teachers at Sycamore Ridge. I very much appreciate your support and commitment to your child's education.

Stranger Awareness

Every parent worries for his/her child's safety. As a school administrator, student safety is of the highest priority. It is hard to let go of the natural protective instincts we have. It is tempting to want to place our children in protective bubbles. That will not help them grow or teach them about the world and so, as we let go, we also let others in. Many people will teach, nourish, and support our children - people such as you in our Stallion community, who demonstrate love and support for our learners each day. You are well-intentioned, nurturing individuals. Our kids, though, may encounter dangerous people in their lives. Fortunately, there are resources and programs at hand that can help our children distinguish between a nurturer and a predator.

As a staff, we have been discussing Stranger Awareness, and how we as the secondary teachers of our students (parents are the first and life-long teachers) can help them to become more aware of stranger safety. During the last weeks of March and into April, our teachers along with our technology teacher will deliver focused lessons on the topic of Stranger Safety and Stranger Danger. Below you will find a list of resources that may be helpful to you in guiding and teaching your learner at home about stranger awareness.

Kids and Safety Videos:

http://www.ehow.com/articles_4661-kids-safety_videos.html?f=hasvideo%3atruer%2ctag%3adefense%2ctag%3akids

How to Teach Kids About Stranger Awareness:

http://www.ehow.com/how_4856022_teach-kids-stranger-awareness.html

Stranger Awareness Resources:

<http://www.owensoundpolice.com/page.php?PageID=30>

Stranger Danger- What do you tell your kids?:

<http://www.motherinc.com.au/magazine/kids/kids-education/321-stranger-danger-what-do-you-tell-your-kids>

This is just a sampling of the many online resources that can be found by a simple Google search for: "Stranger Awareness".

Over the next few months, Coach Sink will be incorporating some simple self-defense skills during his specialized PE lessons with our students. I came across a good article that provides a few key instructions on making children better aware of strangers. This article is included in this edition of our Stallion Newsletter.

As always, thank you for your involvement, time, effort and generous contributions to our school!

Best wishes, Emily Morris

How to Teach Kids About Stranger Awareness

By an eHow Contributing Writer

Children are being preyed upon more than ever in today's world. The statistics of missing or murdered children are staggering. Safety education must go far beyond the "don't talk to strangers" admonition that has dominated parents' vocabulary for decades. This is primarily because many parents aren't sure what else to do. Here are a few key instructions on making children more aware of strangers that should help parents sleep easier at night.

Step 1

Start with the first rule of safety--Never walk or play alone. Children should always have friends with them at the playground or walking with them to the bus stop or school. It is easy for a predator to grab one child, but it is true that there is safety in numbers. Other children serve as witnesses to an attempted abduction, or they will provide the necessary alert to area around them by calling for help. A person looking to harm a child is not going to want the added risk of other children being there to identify him.

Step 2

Provide children with a specific definition of a stranger. The definition is simple: A stranger is someone your children do not know, period. It is not someone who is dressed in dark clothing and looks menacing. It can be anyone, even a person who looks like someone's sweet grandmother. Children need to understand that if they do not know the person, the person is a stranger and therefore potentially dangerous.

Step 3

Explain the power of the voice. Kids are told all the time by their parents to quiet down or lower their voices in the house. That is because voices are distracting and draw attention like any other noise. In the event a child is approached by a stranger, the child should be ready to employ the loudest possible voice in order to bring attention to the fact that someone could be attempting to harm him. Teach kids that their voices are a weapon that can save their lives.

Step 4

Demonstrate verbal boundaries. Children will be approached by potential predators in many ways. The first thing they must understand is that a predator will try to lure them with something irresistible, such as candy. The stranger may be on foot or in a car, but ultimately the goal will be the same--to get the child within arm's reach. Teach children that whenever a stranger approaches, no matter what the reason, to hold up both hands in front of them and yell, "STOP" as loudly as possible. If the stranger continues to come forward, the child should yell again, "STOP!" and "I DON'T KNOW THIS PERSON!" If the child is not within arm's reach of the stranger at this point, he or she should then turn and run, yelling as loudly as possible, "Help me, help me, stranger, stranger!" Naturally, this will alert any other adults or parents in the area to the situation and further ensure the safety of the child and possibly the capture of the predator.

Step 5

Practice these tips regularly. At least once or twice a week, it is a good idea to refresh kids' memories on stranger awareness and verbal boundaries. The more they practice, the more confident they will feel if they are ever threatened. Remind them that a stranger will use lots of different, seemingly attractive ways to get their attention and lure them away from safety. Strangers can look like anybody, not just someone with a mean face. They can blend in well with any other person in public, but when they approach a child that doesn't know them, they should immediately be considered a threat to that child.

Tips & Warnings

Children should not wear identifying clothing that has their name showing. Predators commonly use this to establish familiarity with the child, confusing him or her into believing they might know them. Parents and children should establish a "code" or safety word, in the event the parent needs to send someone else to get the child from school. If the person does not know the family code, the child will know to alert a teacher or nearby staff member of the danger.

Additional Resources:

Talking to your children about stranger danger isn't ever easy. However, as adults it's our job to both protect and educate our children. Often a good children's book is helpful in answering questions and addressing the tough questions children ask. Below are several books that might be useful to preview beforehand, or have on hand as an introduction or follow-up to a discussion:

Never Talk to Strangers by Irma Joyce (ages 3-7)

The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers by Stan & Jan Berenstain (ages 4-8)

Not Everyone is Nice by Frederick Alimonti and Ann Tedesco (ages 6-12)

Extended Studies News



Technology

Mrs. Jennifer Oliveira

"Quiet on the set! We're about to start recording!" What are we recording?? You name it! Podcasting, videos and PowerPoint are keeping the lab active!

Second graders recorded their voices with a story they typed and illustrated in Kid Pix. Teachers created a class "movie" with everyone's stories strung together.

Third graders have created videos about Earth, the Water Planet. Each group asked and answered a question about how our planet is special because of the water we have. Students created 2D props to illustrate their point, then wrote scripts around the question and answer. Teachers created a video in iMovie of each group into one important learning tool!

Fifth graders created podcasts to help solidify their knowledge of Fourth Grade (yes Fourth Grade) science standards. With upcoming STAR Testing, students could review science standards using a podcast created by their peers.

Sixth graders are singers, songwriters, podcasters and filmmakers! Mrs. Ilkhanipour worked with the students to teach them how to create a song from poetry and students recorded their Grammy winners in the Computer Lab. Next, students worked with Ms. Dumoff to create visuals and scripts about biomes, then teachers created videos in the lab from their work. Currently, students are working on podcasts about their Polis and will eventually create a podcast about environmental issues.

Whew! We've been busy!

THANK YOU PARENTS FOR YOUR ABSOLUTE SUPPORT FOR OUR AMAZING PROGRAMS AND TEACHERS. WE LOVE WORKING WITH YOUR KIDS!



Music

Mrs. Stephanie Ilkhanipour

Well, looks like we had another awesome year here at Sycamore Ridge. The talent and work ethic that these children have never cease to amaze me. I could never accomplish all of this in one year without these amazing students. I feel so very fortunate!

The plays have, again, been a hit this year. The kids just love doing them and there is nothing like seeing a child perform on stage. 101 Dalmatians was amazing. Thank you to all of the kids who performed, painted sets, sold treats... It was a great event. Thanks also to Mrs. Cat Gilbert for the set designs and to Mrs. Jennifer Oliveira and the Student Council for their support.

The 6th graders finished turning their poetry into songs. I have been enjoying listening to their creations. What a creative bunch of kids. They will be greatly missed next year. If you are interested in hearing your child's song, or the whole class, I will be happy to burn CD's.

Events scheduled for the remainder of the year are as follows:

- April 23, 2010: 1st Grade musical: Sounds A Little Fishy To Me!
- May 17, 2010: Kindergarten Musical: E-I-E-I Oops!
- May 19, 2010: Open House/Spring Band concert 5:30 p.m.

Thank you so much for another incredible year. I feel very blessed to be at Sycamore Ridge!



Science

Miss Kelsey Dumoff

This month I will be highlighting the 5th graders. The students have been learning so much about body systems in the past couple of weeks! Last week, the students constructed a life size model of our digestive system. They were shocked to see how long our intestines really are! The 5th graders also recently learned how the blood circulates through our heart and delivers oxygen to all of the cells in our bodies. Next, they will be learning about the excretory system and will discover how our body removes wastes.

Other Science News:

- Congratulations to all of those students who participated in the Invention Showcase. What wonderful young inventors we have here at Sycamore!!
- Please visit my blog on the Sycamore Ridge website! I will have current information about specific projects grade levels are working on as well as fun science websites. I am also working on posting upcoming community science events that you can attend with your families.



5th graders holding our life size model of the digestive system



Physical Education

Coach John Sink

The past month in PE, students have been working hard preparing for Sycamore Ridge's first Jr. Olympics Skills Competition (JOSC). On Wednesday, April 14th, students will have the opportunity to compete in a free local grassroots skills competition that provides both, boys and girls ages 8 to 13, the opportunity to showcase their athletic abilities in four (4) sports - basketball, soccer, tennis and track & field. The Del Mar Jr. Olympic Skills Competition encourages youth participation in sport and emphasizes fair and friendly competition. Youngsters can participate in any or all of the individual sports and advance through two (2)

levels of competition, a District Qualifying event and a District Final. Each sport is scored individually and the boys and girls compete separately. At the District Qualifier students will be able to earn a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place ribbon while competing against their peers at their school. The top scoring athlete in each event, age group, and gender will advance to the District Finals where they will have a chance to become a District Champion in the event for which they qualified. Please tell your son or daughter to come out and give it a shot and to turn in his/her permission forms ASAP.

Great job to all the students who ran in this years Jog-a-thon. Students in grades K-6 ran hard, completing laps to help raise money for ESC programs at Sycamore Ridge. Students this year completed 5,856 laps!!!!

Extended Studies News



Art

Mrs. Cat Gilbert

5th Grade Stallions Get the Blues

This past week, students from Sycamore Ridge joined 5th graders from throughout the district for a morning of music, folk art, and history at the San Diego House of Blues. In past years, the field trip was put on by the School House Blues, a non-profit organization that recently lost its funding. This year, DMUSD art and music teachers worked hard to keep the field trip alive, as it offers students a first hand experience with American folk art and a live Blues concert.

The field trip experience began in the classroom, as an interdisciplinary collaboration between music, art, and social studies curriculums. In the Stallion Studio, students were introduced to American Folk Artists and their role in art history, before creating some folk art of their own.

Upon arriving at the House of Blues, students began an art tour and scavenger hunt, in which they explored the House of Blues' extensive folk art collection. They examined different mediums, such as the work of Alabama mud painter Jimmy Lee Sudduth and the funky found objects used in Mr. Imagination's artwork. Students were also able to see themes reflected in certain pieces of art – struggle, oppression, celebration, social commentary, family, and identity. In these particular pieces, the social studies curriculum from classroom textbooks came to life before their eyes.

After the art tour, Sycamore Ridge students joined 5th graders from Ashley Falls, Carmel del Mar, and Torrey Hills in the concert hall. They were treated to a live concert, in which the history of Blues music was covered in an interactive, fun atmosphere. Students stomped, clapped, and swayed their way through the 20th century, as the band demonstrated how Blues music influenced all other genres of American music, including modern rock, rap and R and B. It was difficult to find anyone in the concert hall who was not moving or dancing, as the music and the spirit of the Blues filled the room.

DMSEF

got ESC?

On March 15th, pink slips were issued to a number of our ESC teachers.

Did you know?

To date, your donations equal 11 FTE teacher salaries (district wide)
(last year your donations paid for 16.75 FTE teacher salaries)

To date, family participation is 55%
(last year your participation was 65%)

Only YOU can change those numbers. got ESC? Campaign ends April 30th.

To learn more please visit our website at: delmarkids.org

Kids Korp

On February 22nd, the Sycamore Ridge Kids Korp chapter volunteered at Feeding America San Diego. Feeding America San Diego distributes food and other grocery items to those in need in San Diego County. In 2009, the organization distributed over 1.2 million pounds of food out to San Diego schools and shelters. During our shift, we filled almost 1000 individual bags with grapefruits, and these bags of fruit were going to be distributed to 3 different schools in San Diego. For some of those kids, that will be the only fruit they might get for a few weeks.

A huge thanks to our members that attended the project!



Last Chance to Order Yearbooks

We're excited... the Sycamore Ridge 2009-2010 yearbook is about to go to print! There's still time to order your child's yearbook (\$35 each), and we encourage you to do so right away as we do not anticipate having any extra copies available once our final order is placed. No additional order forms or reminders will be sent home with students; however, there ARE forms available in the school office for you to fill out. Yearbooks will be distributed in early June! Questions? Contact PTA Historian Lisa Blazer at ldblazer@san.rr.com or 945-6920.



Student Council News

Sycamore Ridge has had so many activities in the past couple of weeks! First of all, we have a new, 2nd semester student council, eager to help and continue the high standards of our school! Next, Sycamore Ridge also conducted a used book collection for the St. Vincent de Paul Center, sponsored by our student council. They had so much fun making posters and flyers to spread the word, and we collected a total of 211 books! All of our students and staff were glad to contribute to the cause. Thank you to everyone for your donations!

Finally, on March 5th, everyone's favorite cat in the striped hat came back! Sycamore Ridge had a spirit day that celebrated "Read Across America Day" and Dr. Seuss' birthday. Students came to school wearing their pajamas, robes, and red and white hats, or dressed up as their favorite storybook character. Children gathered to listen to Dads (and Moms) read aloud their favorite books in class. Even teachers came to school in their pajamas!

All in all, Sycamore Ridge has continued to be a great, peace-building school! Keep up the good work Stallions!

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

Another cost saving measure that is being considered at the district level is raising class sizes. Last year the district negotiated with the teachers for a one year class size increase from 20:1 to 21:1 in grades K-3 and from 27:1 to 28:1 in grades 4-6. The district is looking at bumping those class sizes up again and negotiating a longer term that these larger class sizes would be effective. I would encourage all parents who have opinions on these issues to get informed by checking out the school district's website at www.dmusd.org and either emailing our Board of Trustees (remember to copy all of the board members on your thoughts-their contact info is on the district's webpage) or go to the school board meetings, which now are almost every other Wednesday, and speak out. The Board meeting schedule is posted on the district website as well. Please know that the Superintendent and district staff are working hard at trying to find long term solutions to the financial problems facing our schools. Lots of research, time and effort have gone into coming up with a multitude of suggestions of ways to keep the cost cutting out of the classrooms. The Board of Trustees decided that school closure is not an option to close our budget gap and now has to make some tough decisions to keep our district as strong financially as it is the classrooms.

On a more positive note, the PTA has celebrated some wonderful events in the past few months. In February, thanks to the outstanding efforts of Eileen Lundquist and her committee, our Stallion community enjoyed a beautiful evening viewing all of the wonderful works of art that were submitted for entry into the National PTA's Reflections program. Many of our student's entries moved on from the Council level to the District level and we had two student's submissions (one in photography and one in music) move on to the State level of competition. Congratulations to all of our Stallion artists on their terrific creations and thanks to everyone for supporting this program. Next year's theme is "Together we can..." Put on your thinking caps now!

On March 6th, our 3rd Annual RidgeRaising event took place. Thanks to the incredible efforts of Christy Mohler and Eileen Johnson, they and their team of volunteers put on a beautiful evening at the Grand del Mar for our school's parents and staff featuring some amazing auction items up for bid and a special opportunity to socialize with each other. It was a very successful event, raising over \$20,000 to support the PTA! Thank you to all who supported this year's event, whether it was through your contributions to the grade level baskets, buying tickets for staff members to attend, participating in the opportunity drawing, volunteering and/or through your attendance. I also would like to extend a special thank you to our ESC art instructor Catherine Gilbert, who helped the children create all of the special and unique art projects that were auctioned off at the event. It all made for a special and memorable evening!

Students gathered on March 17th on the upper grade field to run laps in our 5th Annual Jog-a-thon. As I mentioned earlier, this year the PTA will donate the money raised from the pledges to the DMSEF in support of our ESC programs and teachers. Our students ran almost 6,000 laps and over \$6,000 was pledged. Thank you to all of our students for putting out such a great effort in running all of those laps and thanks to all of the parents who came out to help during the event and afterwards to tally laps. And last, but not least, thank you to Shelley Aberle and Maia Starling for chairing this super fun event!

Again this year, the PTA is offering a chance to buy next year's school supplies early and have them delivered to your child's classroom on the first day of school, saving you the frustration of driving from store to store looking for everything on the grade level supply list over the summer. Order forms were sent home in March, but additional copies for each grade level are available in the office. This year you also have the option of purchasing backpacks if you are interested. All orders are due April 16th.

The PTA's nominating committee is currently seeking volunteers to fill a variety of positions in the PTA. If you are interested in becoming more involved in our school, we can find a spot for you that will fit your interests and time constraints! Please call or email me if you are interested. My contact information is listed at the end of this article and I would love the chance to talk to you about getting more involved.

We have a couple of events coming up in April that you will want to put on your calendar. On Thursday morning, April 15th at 8:05am, we will have a PTA General Association meeting and Coffee with the Principal in the staff lounge. The PTA will be conducting its elections for next year's board and Mrs. Morris will give us an update on the school's status of becoming a California Distinguished School as well as sharing other important district information with us. Additionally, Anna Pedroza, the Principal at Earl Warren Middle School, will be giving a brief presentation on the programs available at Earl Warren, which is one of the two middle schools available to our students as they leave Sycamore and move onto middle school.

Also on April 15th, the Dad's Club is hosting its 2nd Annual Dad's Movie Night starting at 5:30pm. As always, if dad is not available another special adult is welcome to enjoy the evening with their student(s). "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" was chosen by the Student Council as the movie to be shown and many thanks to Mark Belford for organizing this fun, no-cost event for our families. Grab a blanket and come join us!

I am excited to tell you that the PTA has launched its own website! The web address is www.sycamoreridgepta.com and we ask for your patience and feedback as we continue to develop it. For RidgeRaising, we offered the option of being able to purchase tickets through it and, additionally, yearbooks and memberships are available for purchase as well. We also are moving toward using e-blasts that will help inform our families through email instead of through paper flyers. Paper flyers will still be available to those families who would prefer them and we are working on an opt-out system for next year where you can let us know how you want to be informed. For now, as we transition to becoming less paper oriented, you will continue to see paper flyers and forms coming home in the Wednesday folders.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy and restful Spring Break!

Shannon Cary
shancary@gmail.com
(858) 481-5489

Dad's Club

Mark your calendars- Family Movie Night is back! Student Council has selected, "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" to be shown in the MUR starting at 5:30pm on Thursday, April 15th. Please note: the movie is rated PG. Popcorn and water will be sold by Student Council at the event.

The next Dad's Lunch will be Tuesday, May 18th at 11:30am. As always, if Dad can't attend, other family members are welcome!



"The Human Calculator"



"What's 75×38 ? What's 567×921 ?" Excited students at Sycamore Ridge School were treated to the amazing Scott Flansburg, "The Human Calculator", Thursday, February 11th, in an afternoon assembly. Flansburg, who is the global chairperson of World Math Day held on March 3, 2010, wowed the crowd with his expertise at fast math calculations and tricks to solve math conundrums. After a brief history of numbers, and how numbers evolved, he taught the students some of his secrets to solving double-digit addition problems and about the mystical number nine. Completely engaged, the students solved the problems with the Human Calculator and he confirmed for them, they, too, were able to solve tricky problems. His message reminded students you don't have to

be a math wiz and kids don't have to be afraid of math or basic computations.

Scott Flansburg has appeared on Oprah, the Discovery Channel, and Ellen.

<http://scottflansburg.com/thc/>



REMINDERS FROM THE FRONT OFFICE:

LOST & FOUND: Have you checked the Lost & Found lately? It is overflowing with jackets, lunchboxes, water bottles, etc. Please check it right away! **All items will be donated to charity, Friday April 2nd!**

VOLUNTEER BADGES: Please return all volunteer badges to the front office. The school is charged \$5 per badge to replace them.

The Sycamore Ridge Round-Up is provided by the



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THE SYCAMORE RIDGE PTA, DEL MAR UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A MEMBER OF THE NORTH COUNTY COASTAL COUNCIL AND NINTH DISTRICT OF THE CALIFORNIA CONGRESS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS (CCPTS).



Keep up the good work Stallion families! We submitted another \$130 worth of BoxTops in March! Every BoxTop helps the PTA continue to run our programs and support our students.

Please note: BoxTops expire. Many will be expiring June 2010. Please be sure the expiration date is visible or we won't get credit for the BoxTops.

Questions? Please contact Maia Starling:
maia_starling@yahoo.com or
858-354-1183.

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 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.