

Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary School: An Arts Prototype School / 818.761.3339

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Words of Wisdom

"Study the science of art. Study the art of science. Develop your senses - especially learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else."

— Leonardo Da Vinci

Toluca Lake Elementary
Celebrates the
Arts Prototype program

Student Scores Soar on State Test!

The entire staff and community of Toluca Lake Elementary are very excited about some wonderful news. Our school has achieved an Academic Performance Score of 796! The students' improvement marked one of the greatest increases in the entire school district! This amazing growth is a result of the continued effort from all stakeholders; the community, parents, students and of course, our wonderful teachers. All of these groups have focused on our goal to provide our children the best possible program to enable them to reach their highest potential.

The wide array of outreach programs offered to our Fourth and Fifth Grade students is another important vehicle that supports this goal. We are also an Arts Prototype School. This additional resource has given our students the opportunity to express their learning in a variety of modalities, as well as inspire their oral and written language skills.

We feel sure that with the persistent hard work of the entire community, we will continue to show excellent progress and empower our students to achieve to their highest potential.

- Ms. Carol Reo Bove

Toluca Lake Elementary's Interactive Website!

By: Mr. Jeff Daniel - Coordinator

Toluca Lake Elementary School has remodeled its web page! The web site is now interactive ... awesome, and amazing! It offers a live calendar of events, a list of parent committee members, our school's performance goals, and much, much more. There are also numerous resources including a list of high frequency sight words as well as the California State Standards. Please be sure to save the website in your browsers favorites for easy access. You can type in our site address:

<http://toluca.weebly.com> or find our link from the **<http://www.lausd.net>** website. The website is constantly being updated so be sure to view it often.

youTHink comes to Toluca Lake

by – Chelsea Logo, Alejandra Silva,
Brian Reyes, & Emmanuel Martir

YouTHink is a special program from the Zimmer Children's Museum. We interviewed their educator, Ms. Melinda Mann Rivera, to learn more about this program.

Melinda visited all of our fifth grade classes to help us learn about our heritage and express our ideas artistically. She helped us make cultural art projects. We got to learn more about our family heritage and traditions. It was a lot of fun because we got to express our ideas through art.

Melinda has been working for youTHink for four years. She decided to become an art teacher because her mom was an artist, and had a lot of art in her house growing up. She always wanted to be a teacher and enjoyed art, so she decided to become both. "I enjoy colorful, cultural, and meaningful art," reflected Melinda. Some of her favorite artists were Jacob Lawrence, Frida Kahlo, and Pablo Picasso. Her 4th grade teacher, Ms. Balaban, inspired her to become an art teacher because she was very creative and did a lot of art projects in her class. Melinda is a great art teacher; we all enjoyed her work with us.

Melinda was 26 when she began teaching art. She really enjoys it, because she likes working with children of all

ages. She says that children have lots of creative ideas, and they're waiting to be share them. Our whole class enjoyed her being here because it was interesting to express our ideas and cultures through art. After the youTHink projects, we were able to write an essay, that helped others understand what we were trying to explain.

Working with Melinda was great. We hope we'll be able to do more projects again.



Featured Faculty: Meet Our Principal, Ms. Carol Reo Bove!

by - Betty Lopez, Emily De Paz, Destiny Garcia, & Bryan Perez

We interviewed our principal, Ms. Bove, to find out more about her. She became our principal over four years ago. Before she became principal of this school, she went to go to college, became a teacher, and earned a Masters Degree, and worked as an Assistant Principal.

Besides being our principal, Ms. Bove has lots of cool interests. She likes to play the piano, read a lot, dance to country music, and talk with her family.

Ms. Bove had to overcome some challenges on her way to becoming our principal. She had to earn her Masters Degree by studying hard each night while teaching during the days. And, she did all of that while she took care of three children!

Ms. Bove's hero is a principal she worked with seven years ago. Ms. Bove admires her because she cared for all of the children, took responsibility when things went wrong, and was interested in any program that helps the children.

Ms. Bove said the hardest part of her job is when

the children misbehave and don't listen to their teachers. Sometimes, she even has to call their parents. But, being the principal of our school makes her proud because all of the teachers work together and care about the children very much. Her favorite part about working at Toluca Lake Elementary is every morning when she says, "Good morning," to all the students, and they say, "Good morning," to her.

Ms. Bove has many plans for the future of our school. She says she'd like to have a brand new library for the school so the children have a great place to read. Ms. Bove's advise is to listen to your teachers, read as many books as you can, and go outside to play as much as you can. Ms. Bove is a very cool principal!



Awesome Alumni: Milton Henriquez

By - Georgina Zamora, Alexandra Morales, Daniel Hernandez, Jamie Nukpese, Frank Gonzalez, & Michelle Huerta

This month's "Awesome Alumni" is Milton Henriquez. He attended Toluca Lake Elementary School during fourth and fifth grade, from 1998 - 2000.



His favorite memory at Toluca Lake was doing a project called "Community Treasure" in Mr. Hagen-Smith's class in 2000. Doing this project, Milton learned about the history of our community, took photographs of his favorite locations, did interviews, and wrote an article for the Community Treasures book.

Milton's favorite subject in school was English because he's good at memorizing vocabulary and spelling. He remembers his fourth and fifth grade teachers, Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Hagen-Smith. Two of his greatest heroes are his parents because they taught him to always be educated.

Milton attended Walter Reed Middle School and North Hollywood High School. Currently, he attends California State University at Northridge, and works at a theater. When he was younger, he had trouble speaking, learning to be confident, and believing in himself. Playing for his basketball team was challenging because he was shorter than most of the other kids, but he stuck with it. The advice that Milton gives to current students is to always do your homework and always concentrate on your studies. Milton is a magnificent alumni!



Teacher's Tip

There is a free program in our area called "Story Line" from Book Pals. Students may call (818) 239-3111 seven days a week to hear a 10-minute story read to them by a professional actor (from the Screen Actors Guild Foundation).

There is no charge for this local phone call! After students listen to the story, have them practice dramatic readings of the books that they are reading. When possible, encourage students to make a recording of themselves and listen for ways to increase the drama by changing their pitch, adjusting their speed, or extending pauses. They can even share their recordings with the class at school!

The kids will have a lot of fun with this activity, while improving their reading fluency and comprehension. Remember, reading together, we all achieve!

Calendar

- Nov. 10 = Local Leadership Council Meeting
 - Nov. 11 = Veteran's Day (School Closed)
 - Nov. 17 = School Site Council Meeting
 - Nov. 20 = The Geffen Playhouse presents "Ferdinand the Bull" to upper grade students
 - Nov. 25 = Early dismissal
 - Nov. 26-27 = Thanksgiving Break
 - Dec. 1 = Local Leadership Council Meeting
 - Dec. 7 - 11 = Parent Conferences
- Report Cards



**Toluca Lake Elementary School's
Third Annual
Scary Story Contest**

The Tears of the House of Death

By - Chelsea logo (5th Grade)

During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Death!

I had seen someone in the window, a very dark figure staring at me. His eyes were dark red. I hopped off my horse and I stepped onto the pathway. I took step by step. Every step I took, I saw a shadow. Not just an ordinary shadow. It was very small, and it looked like it had someone in its hands. I glimpsed behind me. Someone was standing there. I turned around, very slowly. All I could see was darkness. Suddenly, I was forced back by a strong wind. I fell back into the House of Death!

Three hours later, the house was pitch black. I awoke very drowsy. Everything I saw was blurry and unfocused. It was then when I saw the figure again. He approached slowly, step by step. He came close to me. I couldn't see his whole face, but what I could see was not pretty. He had snakes on his pants, hissing snakes. He stated to me in a very serious voice that if I wanted my mother to live, I had to go through many courses. All I had was until 12:00. He then trudged along, not saying anything else.

I was trembling. My heart was beating faster. I couldn't stand up. I heard the clock. Tick-Tock. Tick. Toek. Dock. I got up slowly. My legs shaking. I walked forward and I saw a green door. I strutted to it. My hand was shaking. I touched the doorknob. It was as cold as ice. When I opened it, the door squeaked. I went inside. I heard crying coming from the end of the room. I darted across the room, but suddenly fell into a deep, dark hole.

It was at least five minutes until I got up. I saw this broken mirror. I shuffled over to it. There was glass all around it on the floor. I questioned the mirror. Then the broken pieces moved. They opened to a new door. I opened it. I saw a woman sitting down. Her hair was long and wet. I stepped up to her. She had tears in her eyes and was locked up in chains. She turned her head slowly, and looked at me. Her face was blue, and her body was cold. She talked to me and said a few words. Could this really be my mom? I never thought she would end up this way. I just knew I had to save her.

When I unlocked all the chains, the figure came out again. He whispered to me that all he wanted was kisses from women to make him handsomer, and then after three seconds, they would die. Then he squeezed my arm. I fell to the ground with a thump. The next thing I knew, I was at home in my bed. Was that the end of it?

Scary Story Contest (Continued from Page 4)

The Screeches of the House of Dolls

By - Alejandra Silva (Fifth Grade)

During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing lone in horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length I found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on within view of the melancholy House of Dolls! My brown mare stopped and neighed as soon as she heard the sound of the owl flying right on top of us. I climbed off my terrorized friend, Spheres.

I started walking in the diminutive path made out of petite pebbles. While I was walking closer to the black, gloomy, soundless house, my legs began to hit one another as if they were wrestling, and my teeth were chattering quickly, and my heart was beating in panic, so frightened that it could probably jump out of my body. Suddenly, something hit my head and I was unconscious.

When I had awoken, my surroundings were towering over me. I reached the wooden door's golden, freezing, smooth doorknob, and slowly opened it. I could not trust my very own eyes.

The house looked fresh and charming from the inside. The walls were decorated with pink with many paintings by Talousse-laree. But then, I heard footsteps and got scared. I knew it was coming from upstairs, so I went up there to investigate. I searched every room upstairs and downstairs. Suddenly, I noticed that there was absolutely no one in any of the gorgeous rooms. I was getting frightened. Then I entered a room and it was pitch black. The sun was beginning to become afraid of us, hiding away, but the moon seemed valorous as it rose up into the sky.

I walked slowly and hushed steadily to the bed with the blue covers. When I touched the covers, they were soft. A gust of wind suddenly pushed me onto the bed. Then I heard a frightful screech coming from the wall on the left. I opened the door and slipped on a glass doorknob. Thank God it didn't break! I hit my nose and it twisted. I also hit my funny bone and it felt all fuzzy. I picked up the doorknob slowly and looked at every door in the room. Then I was touching a wall and saw a little hole in the middle of it. I put the knob in, and it fit. I opened the door frantically. "Phew!" It was only clothes the a sign that warned "BEWARE OF THE DOLLS!" I thought it was a rumor. Then there was a box next to it that I opened. It had clothes and a doll. I picked it up. It had red cheeks, a purple dress, small shoes, and blond, curly hair.

Surprisingly, I heard more screeches and my heart started pounding frantically. It felt as if I couldn't breath. Then the doll head MOVED. It's lips were moving and it repeated the words on the chart. I stood up and looked in front of me. There were dolls my size.

I screamed at the top of my lungs. These dolls were Barbie dolls. I had always hated these Barbie dolls and now they hate me! They were wearing yellow bikinis and blue tank top shirts. They chased me downstairs into kitchen. It felt as if my mother was going to pinch me and I was running away but this felt much worse. I opened a door and closed it. Next, I saw a cage, turned on the light on and saw a poor girl (my age) who had chains on her legs and neck. I gasped in panic. I tried letting her free, but couldn't. Then I remembered I had a nail file and started scratching the chains until she was free.

We ran to where I first entered this House of Dolls, but the door was locked, at a time like this, when you're in the middle of a Halloween night and murdering Barbies are chasing you!? You've got to be kidding me! I frantically asked the girl if she had any ideas... but she could not talk. The big, bad Barbies got us and chained us up in a dark and gloomy room next to the kitchen. I sighed wretchedly. Then I jumped at the sound of a knife cutting something. I looked out the window on the door and saw the shadow of a... OMG!!!! It is that thing I saw in Paris, France! It cut off Marie-Antoinette's head, a guillotine! OOOhhh, how I loathe Paris. The girl then ran to the door and kicked the door with her left leg, luckily, she had a black belt in karate. I was amazed. I had an idea. Since dolls are made out of rubber, they would melt in a fire. We both made a fire from the broken pieces of the door. The Barbies tried getting us, but they melted into a tan wet puddle. It oozed around. Then we ran to the door, and the girl kicked the door again. We got away from the house just before it exploded. It smelled like ink and fire. The ooze stopped oozing in front of us and I spelled up the words, "GO AWAY." We sure did!

Around 2:00 a.m., we arrived at my cottage and into my room. Then I saw a doll lying on my bed and it was smiling.

Happy Halloween everybody!

Scary Story Contest Winners! (continued from Page 5)

Ella the Good Witch

by - Alicia Freas (3rd Grade)

Once upon a time, there was a family of evil witches, except for the young, but powerful witch named Ella. Her sisters who were jealous of her goodness and great power teased her. They would sing in a mean, disgusting way. "You're a goody two-shoes!"

One day when she was wiser and more powerful, her best friend, Melina, was a human who wanted to be a witch. However, there was a war between the mortals and the witches going on near Williams Palace where the wise wizard Bravedon Williams lived. The war started because the mortals wanted to live peacefully with the witches and the warlocks of Ella's country, but the witches and the warlocks wanted to be separate from the mortals.

Ella said, "I need to make a complete stop to this violent nonsense in order for everybody to live in harmony together no matter if they are a witch or a mortal. This is the only way Melina can become a witch. We will need to go to the wise wizard Bravedon at Williams Palace. He'll know what to do." Melina and Ella went off to stop the war with her thick, dusty, hundred year old spell book tucked tightly under her arm. As they arrived at the palace, they could hear banging, crashing, shrieks, and evil spells being recited.

They went through the open doors of Williams Palace slowly, but not carefully. As a result, Ella and Melina walked directly into a giant, sticky, gross web. After being stunned by the web, they accidentally bumped into a 20-foot tall monster with holes for ears, hairy arms, thorny legs, a scaly stomach, and a mouth bigger than its head. The monster drooled blue, gooey drool on them. "Ewww!" they screamed as they ran to the highest floor in the palace.

"We need to be more careful," suggested Melina. Ella went to the open window in the room and with a strong voice, recited this spell looking down at the fight. "Witches and mortals go through the portals, we will now remain one in peace from now on!" All of a sudden, the world became still. Time froze. No one spoke a single word or made a single move until a giant, purple door appeared in front of the palace. Everyone went through the door into a newer dimension where they lived together in a new world of harmony and peace. "Now I'll make you a witch," Ella told Melina. Ella recited the spell. "Alakazoo, alakazam, make Melina a witch just like I am." Wizard Bravedon stood in the room the whole time watching Ella recite those powerful spells without her knowing.

"I could feel that you were coming for help. You brought to everyone and didn't need my assistance after all," commented Wizard Bravedon. Now, Ella knew how to use her true power: to solve problems. The three of them went through the portal to the new, peaceful world. I doubt that this will be her last time doing something magnificent like this. But that is a different story.

What is in My Closet

Aubrey Armes (Kindergarten)

There is something green in my closet! I hope it is NOT a monster. Should I run into my mom's room? Should I? What am I going to do? Could I shut the door? Oh, I am so scared. What about the window? Can I go out there? I feel better. But I still need help to find where to get out. I will go out the window. I peeked out the window and I saw it was just my brother's frog!



Headwaters Corner in Calabasas

by - Javier Favela, Omar Perreira, Liliana Tovar, Michael Flores, & Sharis Galeano

Mr. Hagen Smith's class recently went on a field trip to Headwaters Corner in Calabasas. They got to go as part of a special grant funded by Boeing Corporation. It pays for seven field trips to the site of the William C. Mason Homestead. We're going to learn a lot about science and history during this project.

On our first trip, we learned a lot of interesting facts about native plants and animals that live in our Mediterranean biome. For example, we saw a plant named purple sage that has a scent called "cowboy cologne." We worked in teams of two to plant native walnut and oak trees. It was lots of fun planting them. First, we dug a hole for the saplings. Then, we put protective wire inside of the hole. Next, we planted the saplings and put soil inside the wire with them. Then, we put another protective wire, made a berm around, and added mulch. Finally, we carried a bucket and watered the saplings.

After we planted the trees, we got to learn all about the chaparral ecosystem. Then, we made bookmarks by getting five leaves from five different chaparral plants. Then, we wrote their name and adaptations on a piece of construction paper. We stuck the leaves and information on a piece of plastic, and put another piece of plastic sealing the bookmark so the leaves won't fall off. Finally, we took a photo of us with the bookmarks.

It was really fun learning a whole lot of new things during on the field trip. It made going to school lots of fun today. That's the fantastic experience Room # 17 at Headwaters Corner.



Around the Town

This section of our newsletter features free or inexpensive activities happening "around the town." We encourage you to extend your child's learning by exploring the many cultural activities available in the greater Los Angeles community.

- **The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society offers free, family bird walks at the Sepulveda Wildlife Area** on the second Saturday of each month. Come and see white pelicans, great blue heron, egrets, cormorants, and so many other species. These popular walks are designed especially for beginning birders and school-age children. **Directions:** exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer for more information (818) 885-7493 (before 7 p.m., please). All walks begin at 8:30 am. Rain cancels the walks.
- The Magnolia Park district of Burbank is hosting its annual "Holiday in the Park" on Magnolia Blvd. (east of Hollywood Way) on Friday, November 20 from 5:30 to 9:30 pm. This free event includes two stages of entertainment, holiday treats, merchant giveaways, choirs, a double-decker red bus shuttle, and, of course, Santa Claus!

Toluca Lake
Elementary
School:
An Arts
Prototype
School



Principal:

Carol Reo Bove

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith

Parent Representative:

Lucy Gonzalez



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This is, by far, the easiest fund-raiser that our school has. Our monthly contributions continue to gradually increase. Last year our school received close to \$10,000!

-Julene Korte, PTA President, Blossom Valley, El Cajon, CA

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The Big Read: Edgar Allan Poe

by - Javier Favela, Alejandra Silva, Xavier Gacula, & Chelsea Logo

The Big Read is "an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to revitalize the role of literary reading in American popular culture. Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America, a 2004 NEA report, identified a critical decline in reading for pleasure among American adults. The Big Read addresses this issue by bringing communities together to read, discuss, and celebrate books and writers from American and world literature."

A great book sparks your interest, grabs your attention, and makes you want to ask questions or talk to somebody about it. It awakens your imagination and makes you want to connect with other people. Sometimes, books make you think about things in a new, different way. That's exciting! That's what *The Big Read* is all about.

Some Toluca Lake fifth graders read four Edgar Allan Poe stories for *The Big Read*. We read "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Raven," "The Oval Portrait," and "The Tell-Tale Heart." These stories were very interesting and enjoyable.

"The Masque of the Red Death" is about a disease that "shut its victims out from the help of his fellow man." This man, Prince Prospero, made a fortress-like castle to keep the Red Death out. After a few months, Prince Prospero held a masquerade ball. All of his friends from the castle came in their fancy clothes and masks. During the ball, an uninvited guest comes into the ball. The author describes him as a "corpse-like figure". This guest has a lesson for people who think they are better than others.

"The Raven" is a poem about a lonely man. He tries to escape some loneliness by reading books. One night while he's reading, a raven enters his chamber room. He thought the raven had come to give him a message. Poe told the raven his sadness about his lost love, Lenore. The raven only said, "Nevermore." The protagonist started to think the raven was just the devil in disguise. He prayed to God to make the raven go away. Again, the raven just said, "Nevermore." It was like that bird just wanted to fill his heart with sorrow ... forever.

"The Oval Portrait" is about a man who's painting a portrait of his new wife. The wife thought of the painting as a rival because it took all of her husband's interest. Even so, she was "obedient to the artist and his work." The painting seemed to take the place of his beautiful wife. It took all of his attention for weeks and weeks. When he finished the painting he exclaimed, "This is indeed life itself!" But, when he turned to his wife ... well, you'll see when you read the story!

"The Tell-Tale Heart" is about a murder. The protagonist is actually the murderer so you're seeing the story from his point-of-view. He plans to kill an old man because of his evil eye. After his crime, the protagonist talks about how smart he is because he thinks he won't get caught. Then, he starts to hear something "beating" under the planks of the chamber floor!

We really enjoyed all of Edgar Allan Poe's suspense and detective stories. We think you'll enjoy them, too. Why don't you give them a try? They're really great stories. *The Big Read* was a magnificent opportunity for us to read the suspenseful stories of Edgar Allan Poe. We even got to design our own "Never-Before-Seen Edgar Allan Poe Art Museums. You can visit our museums outside of Room 17. "You can visit, but you can't go in," warns fifth grader Albert R.!

Riddle Me This ...

1. Javier Favela asks:

A man goes to a hotel on his horse Friday. He stays for two days then leaves on Friday. How did he do it?

2. Victor Blanco asks:

There is a man who has to get home to his sick wife. He has a boat that can hold two things and himself. He has a baby, medicine, and a dog. What does he take across the river?

3. Michelle Huerta asks:

What can be in water but can't get wet?

4. Zachary Miles asks:

The rope that the horse is attached to is 15 feet long. The bale of hay is 20 feet away. How does the horse get the hay?