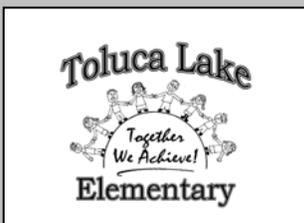


Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary School: An Arts Prototype School / 818.761.3339

October 7, 2011
Vol. 5, # 1



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:

Celebrating our
students continuing
achievements in the
Arts & Sciences

Student Scores Soar on State Test!

Parents, we have had an excellent start to our new school year. The best school news is that our students' scores have once again risen dramatically on the California Standards Test administered at the end of last year. The Academic Performance Index (API) for our school is now up to 846! This great success could only be achieved with the help of all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and community members. We need to maintain our mutual support to continue to attain this remarkable success. Remember, our school motto is: TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE!

The wide array of outreach programs offered to our students is another important vehicle that supports our students' growth. As an Arts Prototype & Science Focus School, we give our students the opportunity to express their learning in a variety of modalities, as well as inspire their oral and written language skills.

We are very proud of the dynamic growth shown by our students and look forward to another exciting school year!
- Ms. Carol Reo-Bové

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.

Our Children



Take a moment to listen today

to what your children are trying to say.

*Listen to their problems, listen to their needs,
praise their smallest triumphs, praise their smallest deeds:*

*tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter,
find out what's the matter, find out what they're after.*

*But tell them that you love them, every single night
and though you scold them, be sure to hold them tight.*

*Listen today, whatever you do
and they will come back and listen to you.*



Help Keep Our PTA #1

Have you joined our PTA yet? There's still time to support your school and be entered into our raffle for a \$100.00 cash prize!

Just send in your membership dues of \$7.00 by November 11, 2011 and you're automatically entered to win!

Visit the PTA online at:

www.tolucapta.weebly.com or

www.facebook.com/tolucalakepta!

Ms. Hall Honored!

by - Alessandra Rugamos & Gabriel Alaniz

Ms. Hall is an amazing person. She was recently honored by the Toluca Lake Community Council for her many years of service to our school community. Ms. Hall has been volunteering at Toluca Lake Elementary School for 17 years. She created our computer lab, and has helped run it since 1994. She began working here as teacher in 1973. In 1994, she retired from teaching, so she's been with our school for 38 years!

Seventeen years ago, the principal at the time, Ms. Yvonne Greene, asked Ms. Hall to put 12 Apple computers in an empty classroom and turn it into a computer lab. Her friend, Ms. Bocarsly, joined her in the task. They set-up the lab and were in charge of it ever since that time. When they had enough computers for two students to share at each station, the computer lab was born!

Ms. Hall really likes this job. The students keep her on her toes to keep up with the new technology. The students are always eager to learn. She likes meeting new people at her job like students and teachers. She loves when teachers come into the lab with excitement and new ideas. She loves to see the older students doing research and writing on the computers.

Ms. Hall's goal was to become a teacher because she wanted to share her enthusiasm and encourage others just like her teachers did when she was a kid. Ms. Hall loves teaching and learning. She says, "I really like the challenge of having to learn new skills."

Her job was difficult in the beginning because she didn't know how to use computers. She was lucky there was a teacher center at the time where she could learn new skills. There were also people who helped her with her problem. After running the lab for 17 years, Ms. Hall has mastered the use of all our computers. She is a generous and kind person. We are very lucky that she has spent so much of her life at this school and helped so many of us.



Awesome Alumni: Katie Holland

by - Ali Freas

Awesome Alumni, Katie Holland, is my aunt and Mr. Hagen-Smith's former student. She is a mother, now. Her daughter, my cousin, is so lucky to have such a great mother.

She attended Toluca Lake Elementary from 1986 until her graduation in 1993. That was seven years. She started in Kindergarten and graduated in the sixth grade. She was in Mr. Hagen-Smith's sixth grade class back then.

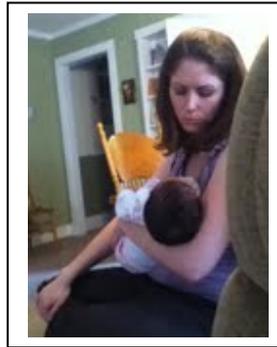
She said that her favorite teacher throughout all of her school years was Mr. Hagen-Smith, and that he was the one that she most remembered. That means that all through Toluca Lake, Walter Reed, North Hollywood High, University of California at Irvine, and California State University, she still remembers him the most. She remembers him the most because he challenges his students and pushes them to work harder. He also makes learning fun. Nothing makes you want to study more than having it be more enjoyable.

Her favorite memory from this school was getting her final sixth grade report card because she finally got good grades and also going to Clear Creek Camp with her sixth grade class. She really liked history when she was in school.

After college, my Aunt Katie became a preschool teacher. The challenges that she faces with her job are the language barrier between her and the people that she works with. But, she is doing exceptionally well as a hard working mother of a four-month-old baby, Abigail Sage Holland.

The advice she has for kids like us is to reach for our goals and follow our dreams. "Don't ever let anybody else tell

you that you can't do something because you can," she says. "Never say, never. If you really want to do something and you give it one hundred percent, you will get it," she adds. Just believe, achieve, and you will succeed ... just like this month's Awesome Alumni, Katie Holland!



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

- Oct. 10 = Awards Assembly (primary grades)
- Oct. 10 = "Biomes of the World" (LA Zoo)
- Oct. 11 = Local Leadership Council meeting
- Oct. 12 = Room 13 & 17 to UCLA
- Oct. 17 = Awards Assembly (upper grades)
- Oct. 17 = Story Pirates arrive (5th)
- Oct. 20 = District-wide earthquake drill
- Oct. 31 = Halloween
- Nov. 2 = Day of the Dead



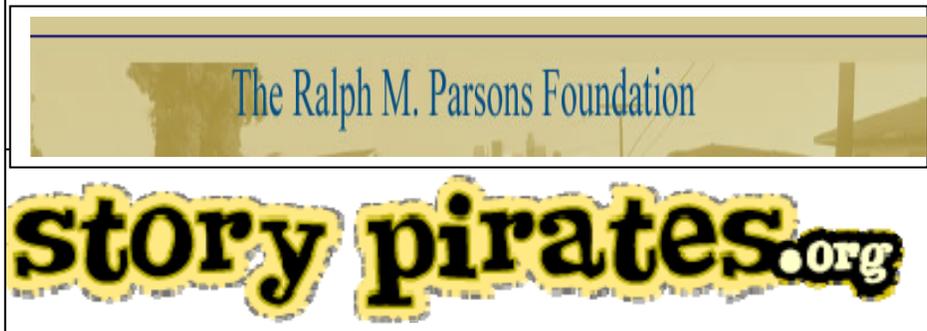
Geffen Playhouse Brings Story Pirates to Toluca lake!

Toluca Lake Elementary School is very happy to announce the continuation of our partnership with the **Geffen Playhouse** in Westwood. In the past few years, the **Geffen Playhouse** has brought a number of performances to our school, including "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "Mukashi, Mukashi," and "Ferdinand the Bull." Each of these plays was very popular with our students. The most popular show was one presented by the Viking Story Pirates three years ago. For this show, the Geffen provided buses to transport our 4th and 5th grade students to their playhouse. For many of our students, it was their first visit to live theater. The trip was a great success.

Centered in New York City, the **Story Pirates** are now expanding to Los Angeles. Toluca Lake Elementary School is one of two schools in Los Angeles to receive this amazing program! The **Geffen Playhouse** is sponsoring 15 workshops with the **Story Pirates** for our 5th grade students! In addition, the **Story Pirates** will be presenting two live performances at our school. Scheduled to take place during the second semester, the second performance will feature our students' writing ... brought to life on the stage by the **Story Pirates**! The **Story Pirates** believe that in kids' ideas, "their words, and their stories are important ... (they) make kid's own stories the basis for a big, loud, outrageous, musical sketch comedy show, because (they) believe kids' imaginations are worth cultivating & ought to be celebrated."

The **Story Pirates** are a respected arts and creative writing organization founded in 2003 to celebrate the words and ideas of young people, to promote literacy as a vital part of early childhood education, and to preserve the spark of youthful creativity often lost in the transition to adulthood. The cornerstone of the company is *the Play/Write Program*, a series of creative writing and drama workshops that lead to a musical sketch comedy show acted by adults and comprised entirely of stories written by our students. The award winning show has been seen by hundreds of thousands of children in live assemblies, recognized by "The Daily Show's" Jon Stewart, invited to present a show at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. in honor of President Obama's Inauguration, and has popular videos on YouTube. Now, the **Story Pirates** will be resident artists at Toluca Lake Elementary School!

We are very grateful to the **Geffen Playhouse** and their supporters (including the **Parsons Foundation**) for providing the financial support necessary to bring this incredible opportunity to our students. Look in future issues of the Toluca Lake Times for more information about this exciting educational program.



Africa's Hero

by Ali Freas, Caitline Molina, Naomi Marquez, & Gianna Carias

Last week, we lost a great woman, Wangari Maathai (1940-2011). She was a Kenyan who dedicated her life to helping others. She was Africa's first female Nobel Peace Prize winner. After a hard fight with cancer, Maathai died on September 27, 2011. She was seventy-one years old.

Maathai's was an amazing woman. She taught her country's women to plant trees to help the environment, and improve their lives. After obtaining her college education in the United States in the early 1960's, Maathai returned home to Kenya. She began working with poor women to help them overcome poverty and injustice. She encouraged them to collect native tree seeds and make a tree nursery. The trees provided shade, food, and a source of income.

In 1979, Maathai was divorced from her husband because he claimed that she was "too educated, too pushy, and too hard to control." Nevertheless, she still kept fighting to make things better for the people of Kenya. Wangari complained about Western *consumer culture* because it was "based on the rich few who were consuming more than usual at the expense of the poor people (L.A. Times)." Her life was always full of challenges.



In the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Kenyan government harassed Maathai because they felt that her pro-democracy stands were threatening their control of the government. They didn't want people to become more educated about their rights. Even though she was beaten in prison, Maathai continued to stand-up for the causes she believed in throughout her life. "Taking a Stand" is the theme of our fifth grade reading unit this month. Maathai is a lot like Dr. Martin Luther King, jr., Cesar Chavez, Ruby Bridges, and Maya Lin because each of them didn't give up when they *took a stand* for their beliefs.

Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her work on *sustainable development*. That means she taught them how to develop a way of life where they could use the environment in a healthy way to help them make a living. Wangari was such an amazing person. We will always remember her as a great hero of Africa! She's also an inspiration for young people around the world!

Oswaldo Diaz, Superstar

by - Robert Magee, Genaro Diaz, and Edward Rodriguez

Toluca Lake Elementary's Oswaldo Diaz, a fifth grade student, performed at Los Angeles City Hall on Friday, September 16, 2011. He played Spanish music on his guitar. The name of the song was "Colas." It was part of the "Sonjar Aochu" program honoring Latino Heritage. All sorts of people, including Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, were in the audience during the show. Oswaldo is very special to selected to perform there.

Oswaldo participates in this program through the Tia Chuca Centro Cultural in Sylmar. He started the program in second grade. He's proud to receive this Latino Heritage Month Award. His younger cousin performed at this special event, too. They both had fun at the performance. We're very proud to have Oswaldo Diaz as one of our classmates at Toluca Lake Elementary!



Toluca Lake
Elementary
School:
An Arts
Prototype
School



Principal:

Carol Reo Bové

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith

Parent Representative:

Lucy Gonzalez



We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://toluca.weebly.com>

Featured Faculty: Mr. Flores, Our Amazing Custodian!

by - Gabriel Alaniz, Hailei Gonzalez,

Mr. Flores, the janitor began working here four years ago. He needed four certificates from four classes to get the position. The toughest part of his job is keeping the school clean at all times. It's hard because there are a lot of trees with a lot of leaves, and sometimes kids forget to clean up after themselves.

Mr. Flores says that the best part of the job is working with the staff and students because he likes being around people and is never shy. One thing Mr. Flores would like to change about this school is to see more sport activities like baseball, soccer, and softball. He says, "Students should always think before they speak." Also, he recommends not talking about other people because they will eventually find out and talk about you, too.

Mr. Flores believes that you need to have self-motivation to achieve your goals. One of his heroes is Armando Montelango. He is a real-estate tycoon. Mr. Flores admires Mr. Montelango because he wants to sell houses someday, too.

Mr. Flores has many interesting hobbies. He likes to play basketball, snowboard, motorcycle riding, soccer, tennis, football, working-out, hiking, bike riding, and reading. That is a lot of hobbies! Mr. Flores will always be remembered At our school because he works so hard, fixes things, gets us stuff we need, and keeps the school so clean! We are proud and happy to have Mr. Flores on our team at Toluca!



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.

- **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 for more information (before 7 p.m. please). Walks start at 8:30 a.m. Rain cancels walks.

Free MONEY
for our school!

Sign up with eScrip and everytime you shop at any of the over 6,000 merchant locations (including Vons, Pavilions, and HOWS!), a percentage of your purchase will go to Toluca Lake Elementary! Really!

- Go to www.escrip.com and click on "Sign Up"
- Enter our Group ID# 164439465
- Ask family and friends to register, too!

"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

It's completely free!
It's easy!
It's powerful!

Brought to you by the Toluca Lake Elementary PTA
www.tolucaparents.com