

# TOLUCA LAKE TIMES

Volume 7, Number 2

<<http://toluca.weebly.com>>

April 25, 2018



## Words of Wisdom

*"Never limit yourself because of others' limited imagination; never limit others because of your own limited imagination."*

*- Mae Jemison*



## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

As our school year comes to a close, we have much to be proud of. Teachers showed their ongoing commitment to students by stepping up to the challenge to "think out of the box". As a result, we were able to offer 14 after school enrichment opportunities this year which over 350 of our Tigers participated. In addition, we provided interventions in Language Arts & Math during our Saturday school. The PTA, staff, community, & advisory councils worked together to have a positive impact on student learning. We are currently in plans to create a STEAM Lab funded by NBC Universal and our PTA to support innovation in a space conducive to project based learning. I am grateful to our many volunteers, parents, and staff for our collective vision towards college and career readiness for our students. It's a new day at Toluca Lake.

## **Black History Month Show**

By: Jazmin Lix and Rebecca Thompson

Black History Month is a very important month because black people helped America grow and develop, and we must honor their contributions during this special month. We interviewed a couple of people so we can find out what Black History month means to them.

We interviewed Mr. Prendez about this topic. He , said, "Black History Month is important because we want to recognize people who made a contribution in history." He also saw the amazing Black History Month performances done by our students. He said, "I was very proud of the students who worked very hard practicing. I could see their hard work in the show. All of the performances were my favorite because they were each different."



According to Mr. Hagen-Smith, "Black History is essential for learning American History. Unfortunately, racism has been a disease in our country since it's earliest days. By understanding more about history, we can

learn more so that we each respect one another. Then, we can make bridges of friendship, instead of walls of hatred."



All of the performances were great. They showed the importance of this crucial part of America's heritage!



## **Terrence Roberts: Little Rock Nine**

**By: Isabelle Singgam, Suchel Camacho, Isabelle Vega, and Anita Saakyan**

Terrence Roberts is one of nine African-American people who enrolled into Central High in the 1950's. These students were called the "Little Rock Nine." They had to overcome lots of racism and prejudice to help desegregate their high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Thanks to Mr. Murphy, we recently had a chance to interview Mr. Roberts by email.

Mr. Roberts said that he wanted to quit the struggle every second, but somehow he found the courage to stay because he knew hundreds of people had died before he had arrived and could not disrespect their efforts by saying, "No". He said his first day of school was frightening since lots of students left the class because they didn't want to stay in a school with African Americans. He was on his guard all day because at any moment a student might push and shove him around, not to mention they also called him names.

Classmates from his old school were concerned about him. They wanted to help out as much as they could. They went as far as asking for the people's address and names so they could, "even the score". The Group of Nine, on the other hand, thought it was crazy to associate with people who hated them. They, as you may imagine, had to use self-defense to protect themselves. One of the nine, Minnijean, was kicked out of school for fighting with white student bullies. According to Terrance Roberts, "The biggest thing was that people would go to great lengths to oppose changes that are not seen as favorable to them."

At this time, the governor had closed all of the high schools for the next year. The students did not have a lot of time to get used to each other. People who Terrance Roberts loved as role models are people who made healthy life choices.

He found the courage to continue his journey was to know that many others suffered just like him. To escape the chaos in that year, Roberts went to a library where the librarian maintained a strict environment: no nonsense was allowed. In his own words, Roberts credits that librarian with helping him to become a successful young man.



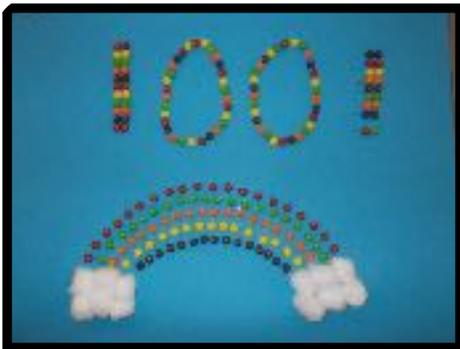
# 100th Day of School

By - Paulina Guzman, Briana Garcia-Solis, Eduardo Santos, and Neriah Ibarra

Wow! Kindergarteners and 1st graders are creative. The 1st and Kindergarten students did something special for the 100th day of school. Some classes, like Ms. Hernandez and Gonzalez-Vargas, had students dress up as though they were 100 years old. Other classes made projects with 100 objects.

Some students who dressed like they were 100 years old painted their hair gray, put wrinkles on their faces, dressed in old people's clothes, and even used fake canes to walk. This was really cool.

Some Kindergarteners were really creative and even borderline overboard with this project! They used a lot of different materials. Some of the materials were Skittles, and even kiss marks! Also another creative project was when in Ms. Grimsby's class there where they melted 100 crayons! Other creative materials used include Cheerios, Gummy Worms, pom-pom balls, Legos, and emojis. This was a really cool project for the kids. We remember doing it in when we were in Kindergarten. We recommend you check out the primary building to see something you've never seen before ... 100's of cool ways to celebrate 100 days of school!



## Harriet Tubman

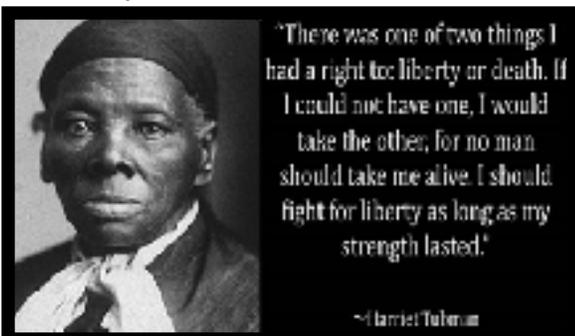
Written by - Jaylene Organista;  
Typed By Dylan Wyke

## Harriet Tubman

By - Sophia Umana

Let's learn about Harriet Tubman! She lived in the 19th Century in the South. She was born a slave, but escaped on the Underground Railroad. She was wanted dead or alive. The reward for catching her was \$40,000 because she helped slaves escape. She was brave. She went back to danger to help slaves escape.

She is my hero.



Harriet Tubman was a Civil Rights Activist and a leader on the Underground Railroad. She is best known for leading nineteen different escapes from the South that helped around 300 slaves to escape.

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in about 1820 in Dorchester County, Maryland. There is no record of her actual birth date because the slave owners did not keep track of that. Her birth name was Araminta Ross, but she took her mother's name, Harriet, when she was thirteen.

Harriet Tubman grew up in a one-room cabin with eleven children. When she was six, she was in charge of taking care of a baby. She would be beaten if the baby cried. At thirteen, she had a horrible head injury because a slave owner threw an iron weight at one of his slaves that hit Harriet. The hit almost killed her and she had dizzy spells for the rest of her life.

Harriet Tubman was important because she helped black people escape slavery on the Underground Railroad. She was inspired to help slaves because she knew about the terrible conditions that they had to suffer.

Harriet Tubman inspires me because she was brave and believed in herself. She was selfless and cared for others. She showed her bravery by risking her life to help others.

## Building Paper Structures

By - Derek Gutiérrez

We built many structures during art class. The structure I am talking about is our paper structures we have built. I was working with Shaysta. What we were trying to build was a tower. We were building a border to make it look more nice. While Shaysta was finishing up the border, I was starting to build the base. When I was done with the base, I wanted to test it out by picking it up. When I did, it worked. Even though the base was a little small, I thought it was fine. It wasn't fine after all. When we were starting to make the tower a little bit taller, it was starting to tilt.

We decided to make it a little smaller. Now it was starting to look a little bit like a farm but I thought it looked pretty good. After we added more to our structure, it looked a lot like a farm.

We put more defense on the side of our structure so it would not fall down on the black paper we were building it on. After we were done building the structure, we wanted to color the borders so we did. I got a black marker and started to color them with it. When we finished the border, it was time for Ms. Crigler to leave. We all said bye to her and waved.

I love to do art. I think it is something amazing that most people should do. You can make almost anything if you choose to be an artist. Your imagination is pretty much all art is about. If you have a great imagination, I think that you should do art. If you don't do art, you should do it, it is fun to do.



## Paper House

by Jimmy Harris (3rd grade)

We built a paper house. It was really, really fun! We glued, cut, and drew. We made a cool house, so I will explain what it looks like.

At the entrance, there is a Songbird Serenade gate door. If you look on one side you can see the good pencil. It has a face on it. Look on the other side and see a vase with flowers and a shelf with dolls. Outside, there is a tree (which is also a staircase). We wanted to add a tree house, but art takes a lot of time and planning. We ran out of time. Climb up and see the wonders of the rooftop. It has Songbird Serenade's room, which has a book, a bed, paperwork (homework), and a pencil. The bed has pillow with a heart on it with Songbird Serenade's bow. On each side are wings, and the blanket has a bow with wings, a hair bow, and her wig. The book has black pages. (Did I mention she is learning spells and telekinesis?) On the other side is a hot tub, and the last detail is an antennae.

Now that you have heard about the inside of the house, it is time to hear about the outside. It has two grass fields and two cars, one on each side. Now it's time for the shapes! We used triangles, rectangles, and cylinders. We made the shapes with paper. (When I say "we," I mean me and my friend Emerson). I made a second character. Her name is Barbara and she is pretty. That's it. You have heard about the whole house.

In conclusion, this art activity with Ms. Crigler was very fun and creative. If you want to make one, go to Toluca Lake Elementary and be in Ms. Harriman's class. There, you will meet Ms. Crigler and get to make your own sculpture.

## Toluca Lake's First Winter Wonderland Dance

By - Rebecca Thompson, Eduardo Diego,  
Yaretzi Castillo, Annette Jones, and Patrick Lima



Can you believe that Toluca Lake Elementary had its first family Winter Wonderland Dance this year? A lot of people enjoyed the decorations, music, and fun.

Did you see the dance floor? Well, if you didn't know, it had projectors that looked like diamonds and there were balloons that looked like snowflakes; kids even got to take them home at the end of the dance. There was some old and modern music to get people dancing. There were lights of all different colors, too! There was also really good food like hotdogs, cupcakes, and burgers. Beverages were served, too! The eating station was very well decorated with snowflakes on the walls, artificial trees with snow, and a photo booth to take pictures with your family. The dance floor was the best. The DJ was on the stage playing music. There was also a dance contest and if you won a prize you would win a burrito coupon or ice cream coupon. The PTA and did a great job setting up this event!

### Women's History Month Essay Winner: Bessie Coleman by - Annette Jones



Bessie Coleman was born on January 26, 1892 in Atlanta, Texas. She lived with her mom Susan Coleman and father George Coleman. She was one of thirteen children. She was raised in a time of segregation with Jim Crow laws. It was hard to have a good life.

Bessie started school at age 6, it was a one classroom and it was 4 miles away from her home. She was good at math and she was the family's bookkeeper. When she was nine her father left to Oklahoma in search for a better life and left his wife and children behind. Susan Coleman tried her best to support her children by working hard. Bessie had to step in and help to pay the bills. Bessie had to pick cotton and wash clothes in order to help her family and save for school.

In 1910 she went to college. She went to Agriculture and Normal University in Langston, Oklahoma, but she couldn't continue because her money running out. So she went back to Texas and returned to washing clothes.

In 1915 she went to live with her bother in Chicago. She didn't want to wash clothes anymore, so she went to a Chicago beauty school. Her first job was as a men's manicurist at the White Sox Barber Shop. She became very good at what she did, but Bessie wanted more.

In 1920 Bessie read newspapers of aviation and heard her brother talk about French woman aviators. This is when she decided to get a pilot license, and nothing was going to stop her, not her gender or race. She applied to many aviator schools in America and they all rejected her. It was her friend Abbott that told her to learn French and save her money and to apply to fly in school. On November 1920 she had enough money and sailed to France. When she arrived she enrolled her self in a seven-month training school to learn to fly.

In June 1921 after passing her exams, she received her pilot license. She was the first African American woman to get her a pilot license. Bessie then decided to keep on practicing and getting better. It wasn't until September 3, 1922 when she first appeared in an American air show. Here she was known as "the greatest woman flier." From here on she continued to fly.

On 1923 she bought her own plane. Days after receiving her plane, she was flying and crashed. Luckily she survived, but had many months to heal. After she healed she continued to fly and also started to give inspirational lectures for young black Americans to pursue careers in aviation. She visited schools, churches, and theaters around the country.

Bessie saved money and bought an old Army plane from the First World War. The plane was flown to from Dallas to Jacksonville, Florida so she could be part of the May Day celebration. In this event Bessie was known as the star. A day before the event Bessie and her mechanic took the plane for a test drive. While on the test drive the plane flipped upside down and Bessie Coleman fell 500ft to her death. Bessie died on April 30, 1926. Her lost was heartbreaking because she dies so young. She made the world a better place because she gave African American woman hope to earn a pilot license. She taught us all to never give up and follow our dreams.

## Smarter Balance Testing

By - Isabelle Singngam, Dylan Wyke, and Neriah Ibarra

Students in grades 3 - 5 at Toluca Lake Elementary school are going to be taking the SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment of California) in May. Toluca Lake's principal, Mr. Prendez, has his own thoughts on this test. He says that students may be excited, nervous, scared, or a mix of all those feelings. Mr. Prendez said that if you're feeling nervous or scared, you can't do much but read all the questions very carefully and study previous lessons on all subjects. Mr. Prendez had his own share of troubles with tests as a kid. He said that he became very nervous, and that became a big struggle for him. Even though he had his struggles, Mr. Prendez likes the state tests because plenty of students are scoring above average. His state testing experiences were very different from ours although it was a different test back then. He said, "State tests are used to determine levels of student proficiency, and to compare our scores with other schools." He used to study for tests by doing practice tests that were timed.

One Toluca Lake student, Suchel Camacho said, "I think the SBAC is great for upcoming life events and college." But others, like Jazmin Lix said they disliked the SBAC and thought it wasn't very useful because it doesn't let you type any words and only insert numbers. She thinks it doesn't prepare kids for any other tests. Two of our fifth graders, Annette Jones and Erik Gutiérrez, both have very similar opinions. Erik doesn't think the test is that hard. Annette hates it because it takes too much time from learning more interesting stuff in class. Another student, Dylan Wyke, thinks that the SBAC is very useful because it let's us see how we react to big tests from the state. Fourth graders Isabelle Singngam and Norah Ibarra think that the test is a "Big Pain," but that it helps kids prepare for upcoming tests in their future. Regardless of all these opinions, we all need to get a good night's rest, eat breakfast, and come to school ready to shine during testing!

## Toluca Lake Dresses Up for Open House!

By: Annette Jones, Fabiya Ahsan, Yaretzi Castillo,  
Rebecca Thompson, Fernando Herrera, and Giancarlo Morales



Did you enjoy Toluca Lake Elementary School's recent Open House?!? Our school looked really great because we had tons of student work on display in lots of different classes.

It is wonderful to see how much the kids have learned and created in each of their classrooms. Every class did a great job. We all saw many beautiful California projects in fourth grade, and lots of other amazing projects in all the classrooms ... there were even gum ball machines! Many classrooms had a lot of artwork and writing on display. It's great to

see the students' creativity on display, and all of their writing really shows lots of hard work going on in their classes. Some of the writing was about student's self-portraits, while other writing explained student's 3D Astronomy projects. Mr. Wyatt's class had amazing quilts made by students and lots of cool projects. Mr. Hagen-Smith's class had stories written by kids pretending to be different kinds of birds. Ms. Gillette's Kindergarten class had a great display of bugs. Other primary classes showed their cool use of recycling. For example, preschoolers reused milk cartons to grow their plants. One room even had a pet fish named Lucy! How interesting is that? Open House was a amazing experience!



## UCLA Project Brainstorm

By - Annette Jones, Patrick Lima, and Yaretzi Castillo

Did you know that UCLA's Project Brainstorm came to our school to teach fifth grade students about neuroscience this year? Well, it's true. Toluca Lake Elementary is one of the only elementary schools in the city to be granted this terrific program. The fifth graders got to do many activities to learn about the brain and its neurons. UCLA brought lots of advanced science students to teach us these lessons in a fun way.

When the UCLA students arrived, they talked about memories in a PowerPoint presentation. There are short-term, long-term, skill, and episodic memories. Short-term memories only last for one minute. Episodic, semantic, and skill memories are all part of our short and long term memories.

Some of the activities including using special goggles that distorted our vision. Then, we had to make a ball in the basket. The purpose of that was to demonstrate that your brain adapts to the new vision after a while. A second activity was observing a real brain and observing its parts from the cross-section. That was amazing! A last activity is when we saw different animal brains such as a pig brain, sheep brain, rat brain, fish brain, and a cat brain. This activity showed that different brains act differently; it was very educational for our human brains!

We interviewed the amazing students from UCLA. One of these students, Tyler Morad, said, "I study the brain because it controls your body." Tyler said he wanted to be what he is right now when he was young. We asked Tyler what he liked besides science and he responded, "I like history and Spanish." Nazaneen Amjadi was asked about college life. She said it was fun because you get to choose what you want to study.

The UCLA students were a huge help in our learning experience. They expanded our brain while teaching us about the brain. We can take this experience and cherish it during middle and high school, college, and even our adult lives. Learning about the brain has inspired some of us to study and have careers in neuroscience. We are grateful to the UCLA students for visiting our school, and to Mr. Hagen-Smith for setting up this awesome day. We hope that the UCLA students come back to teach the future fifth grade students, too!



## Tree People Rocks!

By - Fabiya Ahsan, Mikka Flores, and Fernando Herrera



Toluca Lake Elementary School's fifth grade students took an exciting field trip to Tree People! We learned many new ideas about trees and the environment. For example, we learned that underground aquifers hold nature's water. The second thing we learned was that after it rains, the beach closes for a week because lots of trash gets washed into the ocean. We need to make sure not to pollute or let trash go down storm drains to stop that problem. We learned that Tree People has an underground cistern that holds 216,000 gallons of water! We also learned several ways to save water. One way to save water for trees is to use a water chain so rainwater can slowly fall in the soil for trees to absorb, instead of just washing down the sidewalk. Another way to save water is by using a rain barrel to capture rain water for later use like watering lawns or washing cars. Learning about trees is important because trees give us oxygen, food, and shade. Trees give and give to us helping keep us alive and make our world beautiful.

## **Exploring A New Ecosystem**

### **By - Ben Hastings (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)**

My name is Ben. I was in a cave far away from where I lived. The cave was very confusing and big, but farther down the cave I saw a light. I was thinking if I should go down to where the light was or stay where I already am. I went to the light! There was a crack in the stonewall. I peered through it and saw a lit torch! I got out my pickaxe and made a hole big enough for me to fit through. I finally got through the hole. I looked side to side wondering who could have put up the torch.

I started to hear footsteps, now I was starting to get freaked out. Now I heard talking. I started to think this was all a dream so I tried to feel something. I felt it! It wasn't a dream! The footsteps and talking was getting louder and louder! The talking seemed to be in a different language.

I saw a dark figure approaching. It got easier and easier to see every step it took. Once it got closer it looked like it had three eyes. The eyes were attached to long skinny tentacles sticking out of its head. The heat was unbearable! I wasn't very surprised that there wasn't any water. Then the alien looking animal broke into my thoughts by staring at me. He or she said "bi bo boo ba." I got confused. Even though the animal was smaller than me I was scared of it. I got out my phone to try and call somebody, but the creature snatched it out of my hand and crushed it. I started to run away but the animal grabbed me by the arm and took me to a place that looked like a chamber. Luckily the bars were made of a rubber like item. Before I escaped I waited until the creatures went away. During that time, I thought about what I had found. I may have found a new ecosystem. Of course, there was no weather because I was deep underground.

It was time to go. I squeezed through the bars and ran up to the surface. Once I got up I realized that one of the creatures followed me up. I made it follow me all the way to a scientist's lab. The scientists examined it very carefully. When one of the scientists tried to give it a shot it went crazy and broke out of the glass cage it was locked in. It ran to the door but this time I grabbed it by the arm. The scientists asked, "Where did you find this creature". "Down in a cave where I couldn't handle the heat" I said. "We'll send some scientists down with you to explore." Said the scientists. "Ok" I said. Once we got to the cave I led them down to the hole I made. The hole was somehow patched back up! I told the scientists what happened and luckily they had a spare one.

I finally made a hole but it seemed like the creatures were just waiting for us at the opening. We tried to sneak past them but it was no use. Like they always did they grabbed us by the arm and took us to the chamber. The creatures locked me up in the same chamber so I got my pick axe back. I yelled to everyone that the bars were like rubber. No one responded! I got out of the chamber and found the scientists. "Phew" I whispered under my breath. I told them again that the bars were like rubber and this time they heard me. They got out and instead of running up to the surface we stayed and looked around. The heat was getting hotter and hotter every step we took. Every about ten feet there was a torch

The farther we explored the more we sweat. When I turned around the temperature changed and now it was perfect. At once we all said "These creatures are magic". After a while we finally found something. It was a stone house. We went inside and there looked to be three floors. The second floor had something going on. It looked like the creatures were having a meeting. We snuck to the third floor. The furniture was made out of stone. I saw something that looked like a restroom. If it was the bathtub was filled with lava. We got back up to the surface and told the scientists that they must love the heat.

Later that night at my house I thought about what I saw. What if one followed me into my house!

*To Be Continued*



### Toluca Lake Elementary

An Arts Prototype School  
\*\*\*\*\*

Principal:

Mr. Joseph Prendez

Assistant Principal:

Ms. Dori O'Shea

Coordinator:

Mr. Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Mr. Dan Murphy

Parent Representative:

Ms. Lucy Gonzalez

PTA President:

Ms. Alyssa Rossetti

Newsletter Advisor:

Mr. Dennis Hagen-Smith

Senior Student Editors:

Erik Gutiérrez

Annette Jones

Mikka Flores

Gaby Rodriguez

Nathanson Phothong

Assistant Student Editors

Anita Sakyaan

Isabelle Singngam

Jazmin Lix



**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

<http://toluca.weebly.com/>

# Jokes

**Erik Gutiérrez asks:** Why do we tell actors to break a leg?

**Mayra Macuilti asks:** What can you catch but never throw?

**Fabiya Ahsan asks:** What is as light as a feather, but is something that no man has ever held for more than five minutes?

**Ian Castillo asks:** Why don't you give Elsa a balloon?

**Dylan Wyke asks:** Knock Knock. Who's their? Owl. Owl who?

**Annette Jones asks:** Why does the banana wear sunscreen at the beach?

**Jazmin Lix says:** The rooster laid an egg at the top of the barn. Which way did it roll? North, south, east, or west?

# Super Sleuth Quiz & Scavenger Hunt

**I.** What is the name of the neuroscience event that visited Toluca Lake Elementary from UCLA?

**II.** At what age did Harriet Tubman start taking care of a baby?

**III.** What is one strategy that Tree People taught for saving water?

**IV.** What did the dance floor look like at the Winter Wonderland Dance?

**v.** What did the first graders dress as on the 100th day of school?

**VI.** According to Mr. Hagen-Smith, why is it important for our school to celebrate Black History Month?

**VII.** What is the name of the group that Terrance Roberts belonged to?

**VIII.** What did Derek Gutiérrez build with paper?

**IX.** What did Mae Jemison say to do about your imagination?

**x.** What does *SBAC* stand for?

**XI.** Where can you find this object on campus?

