

Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary: An Arts Prototype School <<http://toluca.weebly.com>>

April 8, 2010

Vol. 3, # 5



Words of Wisdom

At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, [that] if it ever reach us, it must spring [from] amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we [ourselves must] be [the] author[s] and finisher[s]. As a nation of free men, we must live through all time[s], or die by suicide.

- Pres. Abraham Lincoln
(1809 - 1865)



*Mrs. McDuffey's Class at the
Walt Disney Concert Hall.*

*Fifth graders as seen through
the compound eyes of a
mosquito!*



Principal's Message

Toluca Lake Elementary has officially declared that we have the best, supportive parents of the entire Valley! Our candy sale was a huge success. We made over \$7,000.00 in sales, and almost half of that will come back to the students. In this time of budgetary problems, we are so grateful that all of you worked so hard to make this drive a success. The funds are used every year to pay for our fifth grade trip to the Channel Islands. This trip is the highlight of the year for our graduating class and a culmination of many activities they work on throughout the year. With the hard work of our Parent Representative, Lucy Gonzalez and her Parent Support Group, we have been able to count and distribute all of the candy. We still have some left and will be selling those on Friday after school along side our regular Jamba Juice sale. Toluca Lake Parents "Rock"!

- Ms. Carol Reo Bove

Fifth Grade Students Gear-up for the Fitnessgram!

Every Spring, students in grades 5, 7, and 9 are given the Fitnessgram, an assessment that evaluates a student's overall fitness. The Fitnessgram uses Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZs) to evaluate fitness performance. These zones are criterion-referenced standards and represent minimum levels of fitness that offer protection against the diseases that result from sedentary living. The California Department of Education considers a student who meets or exceeds a HFZ as meeting the desired performance goal.

Fifth grade students at Toluca Lake Elem. are evaluated in six categories. In addition to measuring their height and weight, students will need to do a trunk lift, push-ups, curl-ups (similar to a sit-up), and a one-mile run. The passing range for a fifth grade student is a 9 to 12 inch trunk lift; 8 to 20 push-ups for boys and 7 to 15 push-ups for girls; 15 to 29 curl-ups; and a 8:30 to 11:00 minute mile for boys and a 9:00 to 12:00 minute mile for girls.

Last year, Toluca Lake Elem. had thirteen students (eight boys and five girls) that ran the mile in under ten minutes, with the top time of 7:26 by Maxuael Tomas. This year we hope to have even more students finish in under ten minutes. On your mark ... get set ... go!

SHRUB Comic Book

by - Alejandra Silva, Sharis Galeano, Omar Perreira, & Javier Favela

This year our fifth grade class has been participating in Project SHRUB. SHRUB stands for *Students Helping Restore Unique Biomes*. This project is something that is really happening now. Invasive plants are taking over our hillsides by taking away water and space from native plants. We students in Room #17 have been going to Headwaters Corner in Calabasas each month. It's part of a special grant paid for by Boeing Corp. & the Mountains Restoration Trust. During each visit, we pull out invasive plants and plant native ones.

As part of this program, we've been making a comic book with the UCLA ArtsBridge program, and a documentary film with the Annenberg Center for Multi-Media Literacy at USC. Our comic book, SHRUB Saves the Day! was just published last week. Ms. Lauren Silva, a UCLA art student helped us with the book. The students in our class created all the drawings and captions.

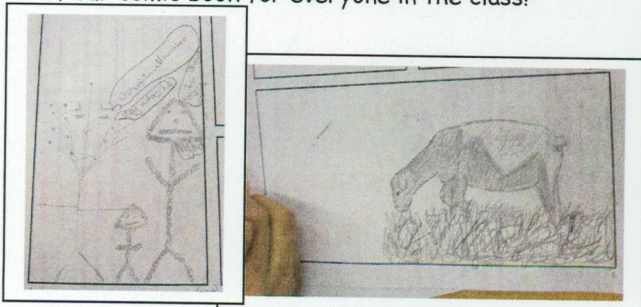
The story starts off over 500 years ago. We introduce the main characters: native plants and invasive species who we've personified as heroes and villains. The Chumash people use the resources in the area, but they never destroy them. Then, the Spanish men arrive and the Chumash's culture is being taken away to missions set up by the Spanish. The Spanish bring cattle, sheep, and other plants and animals that are completely new to the local environment. That's where the fight between native and invasive species begins.

Later on, Calabasas becomes part of Mexico, and then the United States. Throughout this time, people keep bringing invasive species to the area and hurting the environment. In the 1890's, William C. Masson brings his family and sets up a homestead on the land that's now Headwaters Corner in Calabasas. His sons, Percy and Stanley, go to the nearby school. They start to grow crops and send them through Topanga Canyon to Long Wharf in Santa Monica to sell them.

While living on the homestead, the mom, Violet Dunkerly dies due to complications from her pregnancy. Having babies back then was more dangerous than having them now because there were only a few hospitals and less medical knowledge. Masson gives up the American Dream of owning his own land and moves to the city. He works a couple of different jobs, a streetcar driver and a gardener, in his later years.

The next couple of pages in the comic book show the native and invasive species fighting for space, water and nutrients. Eventually the invasive species win the fight and the native species retreat. Then urbanization begins. More buildings and houses are made in the area, the Los Angeles River gets polluted and cemented, and plants have less room to grow. The native plants are struggling to survive when the students from SHRUB come and save the day!

Come by our room and check out our comic book. We had a great time making it, and think you'll like it, too. Also, we'd like to thank Ms. Miya and her brother for making it possible to make color copies of our comic book for everyone in the class!



Featured Faculty: Fantastic Mr. Finks

by - Alejandra Silva, Daniel Hernandez,
Jesus Rodriguez, Bisu Bantu, & Kaylee Elijah

This month's *Featured Faculty* member is our amazing custodian, Mr. Damion Finks. He took some of his time with us after school so that we could do this interview.

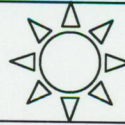
Mr. Finks told us that he began working at our marvelous school, Toluca lake Elementary, in January 1988. That is 22 years ago!! That sure is a long time! To achieve his career, Damion had to go to high school, get a diploma, and prove that he's always reliable and dependable. This took a lot of time and effort, but Damion thinks that it was all worth it and enjoys his job and his family. In fact, his wife gave birth to a brand new baby earlier this year!

Mr. Finks enjoys lots of fun hobbies during his free time. He likes to play basketball and going to the World Champion Lakers play at the Staples Center. Damion told us that his main hero is his own mother because she taught him so much in school (like math and history) and even more out-of-school advice about being a good man. When Mr. Finks was a young child, he had a lot of trouble in math, but his mom taught him everything he needed to know ... especially to never give up!

He says that the toughest part of his job is maintaining the dirty restrooms because some kids forget that a person has to clean up their mess. He doesn't like it when there are lots of papers on the floor, or a mess all-around. We think that people should remember to respect others by cleaning up after themselves.

Mr. Finks is proud of his high school diploma because it shows his success and hard work. He says that some obstacles to that he had to overcome to achieve his goals were to stay out of trouble and stay focused on what he had to achieve. He really likes working here because he likes to see the results of the school after cleaning, and seeing kids working and learning in a cleaner environment.

He says that he would like to see more sports and games after, and maybe even during, school. He believes that athletic groups and activities are very good for kids. Damion has some good advice to give to the children of Toluca Lake Elementary. He says, "Stay focused on whatever you're doing, stay out of trouble, and make your goals complete for yourself." We're lucky to have such a kind, hard working, and focused man working to make sure that we learn and play in a clean, healthy environment. Thank you, Mr. Finks for all of your hard work!



Teacher's Tips

As we head into the final part of the school year, some students find themselves more easily distracted by thoughts of summer and the joy of becoming young adults. It is very important for parents to talk with the children about their feelings, and to remind them to stay focused upon their academic development. Some specific recommendations for students include:

1. Studying for exams
2. Using their criteria chart to assist them with writing
3. Rereading their written work prior to turning it in for a grade
4. Using the text to clarify information when responding to questions
5. Using the key words "by" and "because" to help them write complete, convincing responses
6. Practicing math skills and concepts at home with family members
7. Reading for pleasure for at least 30 minutes each day
8. Remaining focused upon academics rather than social concerns
9. Remembering that they are capable of excellence and should always strive to achieve that excellence

Remembering not to be afraid of failures because you can learn a lot from them; and that "around here ... we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths." — Walt Disney (excerpted from "Meet the Robinsons").

Awesome Alumni: Erika Garcia

by - Destiny Garcia

This month's greatest alumni is Erika Garcia from the class of 1995. When she was younger she came to this school. Now she's all grown up and has a daughter of her own (me!). I asked her some questions about her own amazing life.

She attended Toluca Lake Elementary School for four years, from 1992 - 1995. In those days, they used to have sixth grade here at our school. Way back then, Mr. Hagen-Smith was her teacher. She liked being in his class. "He was strict, but also funny and had patience"

Erika's favorite subjects in school were mathematics and history. "I was really good with numbers, Erika remembers, "and, I enjoyed learning about ancient times in sixth grade."

The fourth question I asked her was, "Who is one your heroes? Why do you admire that person? She answered, "One of my heroes is Mr. Hagen-Smith because, thanks to him, I became smart and hard-working. He showed me how to be secure about myself. For example, he taught us about softball and I was one of the best ballplayers at our school! Thanks to him I am the person that I am today.

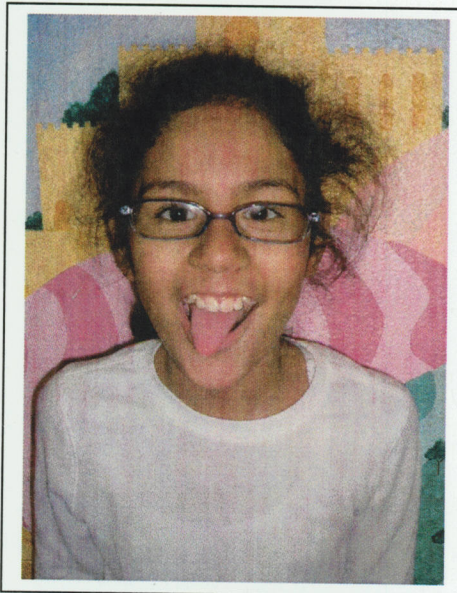
April 22nd is the 40th anniversary of Earth Day! Toluca Lake is sponsoring its Third Annual Earth Day Arts Contest!

This year's theme is "The Beauty of Nature in Our Neighborhood."

All entries need to be two-dimensional.

Winners will receive cash prizes & have their artwork displayed at Trader Joe's on Riverside Drive in Toluca Lake.

All submissions are due to Mr. Reidman in Room 10 by Thursday April 15.



*Destiny Garcia,
proud daughter of
Awesome Alumni,
Erika Garcia*

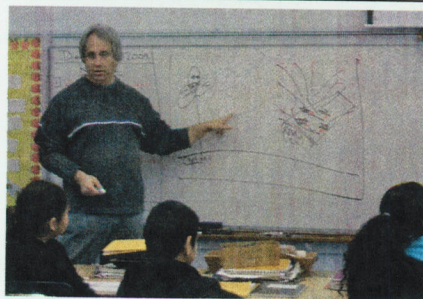
Mr. Hagen-Smith Wins Distinguished Teacher Award by - Chelsea Logo & Sharis Galeano

Mr. Hagen-Smith, one of our great fifth grade teachers, just won *The O' Flaherty Distinguished Teaching Award* for excellent teaching in the area of social studies. This award is "the highest honor that the Southern California Historical Society can give a K-12 teacher of history!" As part of this award, Mr. Hagen-Smith will get his name added to a permanent plaque with the names of previous winners, and a cash honorarium.

Mr. Hagen-Smith won the award because of his creative work with fifth grade students. For the last two years, he's successfully applied for a "Living History Grant" from Azusa Pacific University to pay for resources to use with his students as part of *The National Endowment of the Humanities' Big Read*. Last year, his students completed activities and field trips related to Jack London's "The Call of the Wild." This year, Mr. Hagen-Smith's students are learning about Westward Expansion while removing invasive species and planting native species in the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. The director of the *Living History Grant*, Professor Thomas Andrews, likes the work so much that he nominated Mr. Hagen-Smith for this special award.

Mr. Hagen-Smith said that he was very happy when he received word of the award. It made him proud to work as a teacher. It also made him feel proud that our school provides a supportive environment making it possible "to teach students in a creative manner that encourages students to become more involved in their studies, and more excited about their learning." He also says that we students make all the work worth it when we show our enthusiasm and dedication to our work. Finally, Mr. Hagen-Smith compared teaching to planting seeds of knowledge in young people's minds. He said that he hopes those seeds take root, and that we students have very successful lives.

Mr. Hagen-Smith will receive this award at a special ceremony held at the historic Lummis Home in Pasadena. We are very happy that a teacher from Toluca Lake Elementary won this award because that means we have great teachers here!!!



Around the Town

- On April 10 at 11:00 a.m. Burbank will be renewing its **annual parade**. This year's theme is "Celebrates the Big Top" so come out to the circus and join in the free family fun!

- **The Buena Vista Library** in Burbank is featuring a number of free family events this month:

April 14 = The Golden Age of Model Airplanes features vintage and current models along with an indoor air show. (7:00 p.m.)

April 17 = Family Day at the Library featuring Gwendolyn and the Good Time Gang at 2:00 p.m.

April 21 = Screening of "The Princess and the Frog" at 4:00 p.m.

Call 818.238.5551 for more information about any of these events.

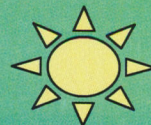
- April 24 -25: **The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books at UCLA**

This annual free event celebrates the written word on the UCLA campus. There are many panels and discussions. Some require free tickets (free at Ticketmaster). Parking costs about \$7.00 on campus).

Attention Writers!

*In honor of Earth Day,
our April writing contest asks
students to write an expository
essay about taking care of the
earth.*

*Please turn in all entries to Mr.
Murphy by April 23, 2010!*



My Lucky Day Writing Contest Winners (Part One)

The Day I Found a Penny Right-Side Up!!

by
Alejandra Silva (5th Grade)

Today, was the day of the test, a history test: a tough, very hard, and long test. It covered everything from all human history: Martin Luther King, Jr., Queen Elizabeth of England, the Declaration of Independence, George Washington, the Native Americans, the Pilgrims, Abraham Lincoln, the Great Migration... Everything! Well, you get the general idea. We had to do all that work, and my teacher is very good at making difficult questions. He's especially good at making questions that make your brain go through an obstacle course. Taking a test in his class is like going through a field of cactus and lions until you get the right or wrong answer. I was afraid of getting a wrong answer. Terrified!

When I approached the gate into Toluca Lake Elementary, I took a deep breath and walked cautiously. Before I entered, I stopped and found a small, shiny penny in front of my blue converse. I saw Lincoln's face on it, sunny-side up. It looked like a crystal worth a lot of money and full of hope. I managed a smile and picked it up. It was brand new and shined like gold in the sun. I put it in my jacket pocket and told myself I would not take off this sweater until I finished the test.

After recess, it was so hot that I wanted to take off my sweater, but I said *no*. When I saw the sheet of paper, I prayed. There were 30 questions. I held the penny tight in my hands and told myself I would get a four on this test and would not fail. I told myself that if I fail, I'd become as mad and angry as a tiger who hasn't eaten food in a week. I said positive thoughts in my brain. I kept thinking the word, "Four." On question number eight, I held the penny so tight my hands were red. On number nineteen, my hand became sweaty from holding the penny so tightly. On number twenty-five, my hands were burning like charcoal. When I had finished the test, I gave the paper to my teacher who was already correcting some other tests. I kissed the penny in my hand and then gave it all my hope and knowledge.

After lunch, I received my paper back and closed my eyes. When I had opened my eyes, I saw the score on my test: a 4!! I almost cried at that sight. I was so happy I started skipping and kissed the penny again. But then I thought, "Maybe it wasn't the penny that gave me luck. Maybe it was all the time I had dedicated to studying the material. Maybe it was my knowledge that *earned* me a four, not a little penny!"

From then on, I learned that I don't need a penny in my hand to face life's challenges. All I need to do is to study and be prepared to face those challenges!! ☺

More Lucky Story Contest Winners!

My Luckiest Day

By - Emily Marquez (5th Grade)

Today I was walking down the street. My hands were as cold as if I was holding a piece of ice for an hour. My knees were wrestling with each other as I trotted down the sidewalk. I shouted, "Squirt! Where are you?!" This wouldn't have happened if I'd locked the door. I felt a drop of cold rain fall on my hand. It was starting to rain' rain hard.

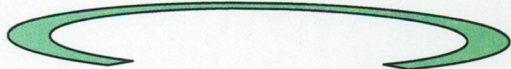
I kept running, splashing through the water. I needed to get back home! As I ran, I fell on a rock. It hurt, but I managed to get back up and get home. I opened the door to my house. It was as warm as a bakery. I was glad to be home, especially during such a cold, black night. Maybe I'd go look for my dog tomorrow. I slumped on my bed. I kept staring at the pictures of him. Losing him was the worst thing I'd ever done.

The next morning, I went to look around at the park near my house. It seemed hopeless. I decided to make a flier. "DOG LOST: Name is Squirt, brown Chihuahua with pointy ears." I put my number at the bottom of the page. Then, I skipped home, waiting & hoping that the phone would just ring! "It's been three hours now...." I wondered, maybe I should just forget it.

The phone rang. Could it be the call of Squirt? I picked up the phone. I sounded upset when I answered. "You found my dog?!" I hung up the phone and ran down the stairs. Then I heard a knock on the door. I was hoping it was Squirt. I opened the door, and it was Squirt!

Just before he ran inside, I burst into tears. Then, he jumped on me. I wrapped my arms around him and gave him a big hug. I thanked the person and gave him his reward. It was the best day of my life. I was very happy! I decided to spend the rest of the day with Squirt.

We decided to wrestle with each other. I taught him to do tricks. "SQUIRT! Ill never lose you again!" I hugged him as if I'd barely adopted him at the shelter. Finally, it was time to go to bed. We went to bed together. He came and laid right on my bed. Good night Squirt!



Luckiest Things in Life

By - Ali Freas (3rd Grade)

The luckiest things in life are
the things we cherish most.

One of the luckiest things in life is love.
Loved ones help and take care of us.

One of the luckiest things in life is laughing.
When we laugh with someone, it makes us feel good.

One of the luckiest things in life is our friends.
True friends are people who you can trust.

One of the luckiest things in life is our family.
Your family loves you no matter what.

This is what "luck" means to me.
What does it mean to you?

My Lucky Day

by - Ben Robel (Kindergarten)

My lucky day was when I was three. I found a lucky penny at Sea World. It was at the water park in San Diego. Then, I put it on my head. Then I put my hat on my head and my penny stayed right there. I've had lots of good luck since that day.

Leprechaun

By - .Joseph Whiteman (1st Grade)

If I saw a leprechaun, I would chase after it, try to catch it, and ask for his pot of gold. I would see what's at the end of the rainbow. And, if the Leprechaun tried to escape, I would put a ball and chain around his leg so he can't run off. That's what I'd do if I saw a leprechaun!

Chili Pod

by

Crystall Snow, Georaina Zamora, & Chelsea Loao

Mr. Hagen Smith and Ms. McDuffey's class recently went on a special field trip to the Gene Autry Museum. They were invited there to see a new play entitled "Chili Pod". The playwright, Rhiana Yazzie, wrote the play because she wanted to explain life for an immigrant girl from Oaxaca, Mexico who's having a difficult time getting used to life in the United States.

The protagonist, Carmen, is trying to adjust to life in Linda Vista, California. At first she didn't fit in, but towards the end of the play, she loved it there. That's after she's gone through many interesting events in the story.

This play was very entertaining because it showed the meaning of *Chilena* music. The music inspired Carmen to feel her grandmother's powerful music. Carmen learns that, "on the other side of the wind" she can express her feelings and share her music with the Chilena musicians, Chilolo and Ixchel. When Carmen forgets her traditional music, everything disappears, including Chilolo and Ixchel. Towards the end of the play, she remembers her music again, and learns how wonderful her grandmother's music is, and that it's her responsibility to keep that part of her grandmother's spirit alive in the future.

When the play was over, we interviewed the actors, Judy Mora (as Marta and Ixchel), Dan Pacheco (as Max and Chilolo), and Steve Limones (as Tio Apuleyo). The actors had to rehearse for six hours each day for three weeks. They had a lot to learn! As a result of all of their good work, the play was very exciting to the audience.

This was an original play because Rhiana Yazzie came up with the play from her Navajo cultures. We are all so glad that we were able to go to this play because it was so funny and very informative!!!!



Toluca Lake
Elementary
School:
An Arts
Prototype
School



Principal:

Carol Reo Bove

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Parent Representative:

Lucy Gonzalez

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith

818.761.3339



We're on the Web!

See us at:

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

Riddle Me This ...

The answers to these amazing riddles may be found on our fabulous new web page: <http://toluca.weebly.com/>

- What breaks when you say it? - Sharis Galeano
- Where do polar bears keep their money? - Alejandra Silva
- Why did the duck cross the river? - Zachary Miles
- Why do seagulls only fly over the sea? - Omar Perreira

Calendar

- 4/8 = McDonald's Fundraiser Night
- 4/11 = Jackie Robinson Day
- 4/12 = Awards Assembly (Grades 3-5)
- 4/13 = Local Leadership Council Meeting
- 4/15 = PTA Meeting
- 4/15 = Leonardo da Vinci's Birthday (1452)
- 4/16 = Fossil Fiesta (2nd Grade)
- 4/17 = Daffy Duck's Birthday (1937)
- 4/19 = Earth Day Poster Contest Deadline
(All submissions to Mr. Reidman)
- 4/20 = Emergency Preparedness Drill
- 4/21 = "Be a Buddy" anti-bullying assembly
(5th Grade) in auditorium
- 4/22 = Jay and E and the Zig Zag Sea
K-2 Literacy Assembly
Presented by Kaiser-Permanente
Educational Theater
- 4/22 = Earth Day
- 4/23 = Earth Day Writing Contest Deadline
(All submissions to Mr. Murphy)
- 4/23 = CST Awards Assembly
(Presentations by Mr. Daniel)
- 4/24 = Earth Day School Clean-up
(Organized by Ms. Grigsby)
- 4/24 = Festival of Books (UCLA)
- 4/25 = Festival of Books (UCLA)
- 4/26 = First day of School Book Fair
- 4/27 = Open House
- 4/27 = Tell-a-Story Day
- 4/30 = Last day of School Book Fair
- 4/30 = Arbor Day (Plant a tree!)
- 5/5 = Cinco de Mayo - school festival
- 5/10 = First day of State Testing
- 5/20 = Last day of State Testing



Toluca Lake Elementary

PTA

MEETING

Thursday, April 15, 2010

6:30pm - 7:30pm in the auditorium

Do You Have 1 Hour for Your School?

*Don't Miss This
PTA Meeting!*

- Free Childcare
- Refreshments
- Door Prizes
- Homework Pass for kids

Support The

Toluca Lake PTA

4840 Cahuenga Blvd.

N. Hollywood, CA 91601

PTA HOTLINE: (818) 870-0448

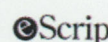
Email: tolucalakepta@gmail.com

\$ 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! Real

- 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!"
- Julane Kurtz, 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.
TolucaLakePTA.org