

# Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary School: An Arts Prototype School / 818.761.3339

<http://toluca.weebly.com>

## Students Visit Tree People

by- Diego Gutierrez, Cynthia Elias, Christian Escobar, & Karisma Molla



Back in the 1970's, a 13-year-old boy named Andy Lipkus was upset about air pollution, so he decided to do something about it. He started a group, "Tree People," that organizes people to plant trees in Los Angeles, and other parts of the world. Recently, some of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students met him during their field trip to visit Tree People. We are thankful to his organization for all of their hard work helping the environment, and for providing us a scholarship & bus to go on this field trip.

During our trip, we learned many lessons about taking care of our natural environment. We learned that we could reuse our lunch boxes to reduce the amount of natural resources used each day. If just one of us does it, it makes a very small difference, but if lots of us do it, we can make a big difference. And, if we get our friends at other schools to do it too, we can create a movement that makes a huge difference! We had fun learning about how powerful we can be at helping to preserve the natural environment.

*Tree People founder  
Andy Lipkus engulfed  
by young naturalists  
from Toluca Lake EL.*

On the field trip we also learned many new ideas about understanding our world. We learned that a tree needs water, sunlight, carbon dioxide, nutrient-rich soil, and love. We also found out that plastic is made from oil, glass from sand, paper from trees, and aluminum from mountains. Conserving natural resources helps save all of those places. Finally, we learned that our docent's phrase, "suicidal rattlesnakes," is a joke. Learning about our environment is important because we like getting to explore nature.

We liked what we saw and did on the field trip. We enjoyed walking up a tall mountain because we got a magnificent view of the city. Each of us enjoyed planting an Italian Stone Pine tree. Then, we each got to take a seedling home to care for and plant near our home. The funniest activity was making mulch with Dr. Dirt because he was hilarious.

Toluca Lake  
Together  
We Achieve!  
Elementary

December 16, 2010  
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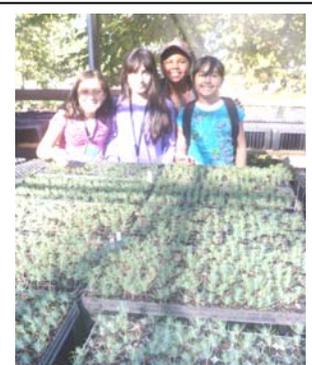
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### Words of Wisdom

*Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged  
bird  
That cannot fly.*

- Langston Hughes  
American author & poet



## PTA Writing Contest!

Are you interested in showing what you can learn? Participate in the PTA's writing contest! PTA is proud to present its first Toluca Lake Writing Contest. Following the amazing success of Mr. Murphy's annual Halloween Writing Contest, the PTA is starting a fantastic new writing contest of its own! The contest is open to all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled at Toluca Lake Elementary school!

If you would like to participate in this big event, write at least one paragraph about an African American who is a role model to you and other students. Each submission must have a title, correct spelling and punctuation, and describe why you admire the role-model you chose, giving examples of what they did to inspire you. We are encouraging students to choose from a diverse list of role models (see below).

*Our next PTA meeting will take place in the auditorium on January 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Please join us, and make a positive difference at our school!*

Contest winners will receive **cash gift certificates** to Border's bookstore. The winners will also have an opportunity to read their entry at the Black History Month assembly at the end of February. Submissions are due February 16<sup>th</sup>. Please give all entries to your teacher. There will be six winners, two from each grade. Good luck and have a happy holiday season

\*\*\*\*\* Write on! \*\*\*\*\*

### Inspirational African Americans

Benjamin Banneker, Maya Angelou, Mary McLeod Bethune, Linda Brown, Duke Ellington, Bobby Seale, Guion Bluford, Jr., Aaron Douglas, Ralph Bunche, Paul Robeson, Louis Armstrong, Jackie Robinson, Shirley Chisholm, George Washington Carver, Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Shelton Johnson, Charles Young, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Olaudah Equiano, Alex Haley, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Miles Davis, Malcom X, Mae Jamison, Langston Hughes, Stokely Carmichael, James W. Johnson, Dr. Martin Luther King, jr., Carter Woodson, Sidney Portier, President Barack Obama, Nat Turner, Alice Walker, Hiram Revels, Dr. Charles Drew, Thurgood Marshall, Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Sojourner Truth, Matthew Henson, Phyllis Wheatley, Wyomia Tyus, Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Gordon Parks, A. Phillip Randolph, Arthur Mitchell, Jacob Lawrence, Barbara Jordan, Matthew Henson, Ralph Ellison, Lula Washington, John Coltrane, Marian Anderson, Arthur Ashe, Rafer Johnson, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Elijah McCoy, Madame C.J.Walker, Garret Morgan, Rebecca Cole, Scott Joplin, Toni Morrison, Loren Miller, Robert M. Glass, and so many more amazing Americans!

### Principal's Message

It has been a pleasure to see all of you coming for the parent conferences. We are a Learn school, so we focus upon cooperation and teamwork. As parents, you are an essential part of the team, and vital to your child's success. We hope that during the upcoming three-week break you will encourage your child to read and practice his/her math facts.

We will celebrate our winter break from **December 20** through **January 7, 2011**. We hope that all of you and your family will enjoy a wonderful holiday break and do lots of fun filled activities together. See you next year!

- Ms. Carol Reo Bove

## Second Graders Bring Biographies to Life!

by - Mystery Writer, Joe Jemison

If you were to walk around Room 2, looking at the second grade students' artistic projects for their biography reports, you might jump back in surprise. Why? You might think for a second that Abraham Lincoln's actual stovepipe hat was on display. Unfortunately, it's not true, but Julian Jercan's replica of Lincoln's hat is one example of the excellent projects turned in by students when they completed their reports.

Students had to complete three parts for their report: a written report, an oral presentation and an artistic project. Students did their reports on such American figures as Henry Ford, Mae Jemison, Clara Barton, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Walt Disney, Harriett Tubman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Schulz, and Ruth Hendler.

Jameson Stengel demonstrated how a light bulb works, using a model he prepared with his parents, to demonstrate one of Thomas Edison's important inventions. Londyn Harris, for her project, completed an extremely beautiful and creative bust of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman to serve in the U.S. Congress. Monica Johnson taught the class about Shirley Temple Black, concluding her presentation by singing Shirley Temple's most famous song, "The Good Ship Lollipop."

If you had come earlier in the school year, when students did their reports on Greek mythology, you would have seen Monica dressed as the Greek goddess, Athena, explaining the goddess' amazing birth. You could have seen Alejandro Jimenez's posterboard which showed the ancient Greek belief about the soul's journey into the underworld after death.

And you also would have seen Fale Hunter's original (and scary!) bust of the horrific Medusa. Fale took a Styrofoam model of a human head and used different colored gummy worms, which he put into the head, to represent the snakes on Medusa's head. (Some students say that Mr. Murphy was afraid to be in the room alone with "Medusa.")

It's not sure what the next project will be, but Mr. Murphy says, "I can't wait to see what these stellar students bring through the door. It's going to be amazing, I bet."



*What is the true identity of mystery writer Joe Jemison?*

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**Featured Faculty: Coach Ward**

by - Cristina Jercan, Kaylee Elijah, Cindy Ortiz, & Jonathan Lozano

Coach Ward is this month's Featured Faculty member. She began working at Toluca Lake Elementary School, in 2006. Before working here, she earned Bachelors and Masters degrees in theater and philosophy, as well as a teaching credential. She loves to teach, especially in our new science lab.

Coach Ward's favorite hobbies are reading, hiking, music, and traveling. She likes to go away to go to science camp every summer to learn something new, like forestry, technology, or geology. She has many heroes. She admires individuals who "overcame great personal adversity to make a difference in the world: people like Helen Keller, Nelson Mandela, and Corrie Ten Boom." Helen Keller learned to communicate, even though she couldn't hear or see. Nelson Mandela craved freedom for all people in South Africa. He stood up to the racism of Apartheid for many years, and is now the president of South Africa. Corrie Ten Boom hid Jewish people escaping Nazi persecution during World War II.

Coach Ward says that the toughest part of her job is squeezing the amount of material of math and science instruction into the amount of time we have. There's so much to learn, but never enough time to teach it all. We need two more hours of school each day! Her most rewarding professional accomplishment was being awarded an Earthwatch Fellowship that allowed her to spend a month in Tanzania, Africa, doing an archaeological expedition, looking for evidence of Early Man.

The most challenging obstacle that Coach Ward had to overcome to achieve her goals was going back to school while raising two kids. Both of her kids are older now, and doing a great job with their education. These days Coach Ward dedicates lots of time to the kids at Toluca Lake Elementary school. She runs the science lab, helps students with math, and even co-hosted our recent Astronomical Star Party. The things she likes best about at Toluca Lake El. are the hard-working

students and faculty. She has a dream that one day our school will be a *parent participation charter school*. That's a school where parents and teachers work together in the classroom to help students. She believes that parents have so much to offer their children and the school that this would be a great way to improve learning here. She feels that all schools should make children their priority by working together to make the best possible environment for learning.

The advice she gives to our current students is to read everyday for two hours, go play outside, and to be in nature everyday. She says that students need to "play music, dance, act, be alive, and live life fully." We're very happy to have such a talented instructor as Coach Ward at our school!



## Teacher's Tip

*Most students are very interested in learning more about their family's history. The students may enjoy creating a family scrapbook in which they celebrate family traditions. They can begin by taking photographs of some aspect of the family's holiday celebration. They may interview parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or friends of the family to learn more about when the family began this tradition. Students may write captions in the scrapbook explaining what they've learned about their family's traditions. They may also enjoy decorating the scrapbooks to help bring these special memories to life!*

## Calendar

- Dec. 13-17 = Parent Conferences / Report Cards (early dismissal)
- Dec. 15 = Bill of Rights Day
- Dec. 15 = Holiday Program for students
- Dec. 16 = Holiday Program for parents
- Dec. 20 = First day of Winter Break
- Jan. 2 = Science Fiction Day
- Jan. 4 = National Spaghetti Day
- Jan. 10 = School resumes at Toluca Lake El.
- Jan. 11 = Amelia Earhart Day
- Jan. 14 = CST Awards Assembly
- Jan. 14 = Super Sleuth Contest deadline
- Jan. 17 = Dr. Martin Luther King, jr.'s Birthday (school closed)
- Jan. 18 = Big Prize Raffle
- Jan. 21 = Squirrel Appreciation Day

## Awesome Alumni: Elias Perez

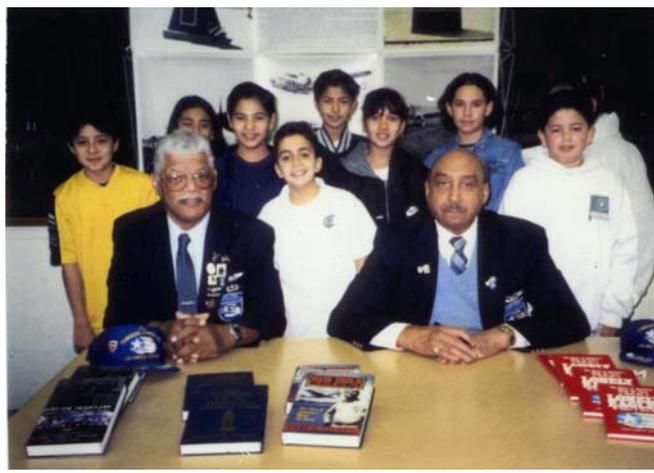
by - Amani Cummings, Briana Madera, Jasmin Johnson, & Brandon Tamazian

On November 1, 2010, we interviewed this month's Awesome Alumni: Elias Perez. He attended Toluca Lake Elementary school between from 1993-1999. Since that time, he has continued his studies, worked to earn money to help his family, and just last month married one of our staff members, a paraprofessional, Ms. Geraldine Murillo!

Mr. Perez met Ms. Murillo right here at Toluca Lake Elementary school. In fact, they were both in Mr. Hagen-Smith's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class during the 1998-1999 school year! Following elementary school, Elias attended Walter Reed Middle school, Jordan Middle school, and Burroughs High school in Burbank.

Elias remembers Mr. Arrellano, Ms. Olortegui, and Mr. Hagen-Smith from his days at our school. He is very proud of the high grades he earned as a student, and advises current students to avoid "avoid bad influences," and "to study and stay in school!" Elias' favorite subject in school was English because he got a lot better at reading and writing. He says that Mr. Hagen-Smith helped him with it a lot. His favorite memory as an elementary student was when Mr. Hagen-Smith used creative ways to stop his friend, Armando, from talking all of the time. He remembers how hard they all laughed when Armando was taped to a rocket ship and sent to Mars!

Elias' hero is his father. He says, "He's my hero because he's always there to help me with financial and moral support ... whatever I needed to keep me going." He also gives Ms. Geraldine Murillo credit for making him so happy. He says that she makes him smile, laugh, and feel full of love all the time. We're very happy to learn about such an Awesome Alumni, and hope that Elias Perez and Geraldine Murillo have a very happy life together!



*Elias & Geraldine in fifth grade with  
the Tuskegee Airmen (February 1999)*

*Elias Perez & Geraldine Perez*

*Elias & Geraldine at their wedding (Nov. '10)*

## Holiday Wishes

by - Autumn Murray, Trisha Terry, Ashley Godoy, & Adelaida Rivas

It's that time of year again. Every child seems to be thinking of gifts. Many kids want toys, but a surprising number of kids want a gift for the world. We interviewed kids from different grades and they told us what they wanted for Christmas. We were amazed of how many gifts they wanted for the whole world. Here's a look at some of their wishes.

Jacob Perez (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for the whole world to recycle. Melanine Flores (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for presents and fun for the whole world. Juscin Carmona (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for everyone in the world to have a house. Laureline Terry (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for the whole world to have food. Aman Molla (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for world peace. Mario Rivas (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for no more wars or global warming. Kaylee Elijah (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for a better economy because people are struggling for a better opportunities. Briana Madera (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for everyone to have a family that loves and respects them. Kevin Romero (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished to donate money for people who need it the most. Cindy Ortiz (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished to donate clothes and food to the poor. Rebecca Nomura (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for love for kids with no parents. Robert Magee (4<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for no litter in the world. Brennen Lamb (4<sup>th</sup> grade) wished for the whole world to stop robbers. Dolores John (5<sup>th</sup> grade) wished that her family would come back together. Stephanie Hernandez (4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Sabrina Tamazian (1<sup>st</sup> grade) wished to get better grades. Jenny Lix (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished her dad would have more money. Yamile Flores (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) wished for her brother to be nice. Fourth grade students Caitline Molina, Aries Montoya, and Moses Flores all want to do well on tests and earn better grades. Ben Robel (1<sup>st</sup> grade) wished to do his chores to make his mom happy. *We* all wish everyone a Merry Christmas!

## The Money Machine

by - Nathaniel Duarte, Ashley Godoy, Diego Gutierrez,  
Alondra Gongora, Christian Escobar and Leanne Anderson

On December 10, 2010 at 11:00 am, some students at Toluca Lake Elementary School won an opportunity to get inside of *The Money Machine*. in Room 14. Students earned this special opportunity by selling the most Entertainment books in our recent fundraiser. The people who hosted this event were the PTA's Marine Davtin, and Nicole Wieliam. A lot of students got to participate at the money machine. One lucky boy, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student Christian Escobar, won \$111 in the machine! The students had lots of fun and give thanks to the principal, PTA and the coupon book company for giving us an opportunity to get money and to enjoy our selves.

## 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 51<sup>st</sup> annual **Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration** is an admission-free, six-hour seasonal music and dance show. More than 40 performing groups from throughout L.A. County - including choirs, music ensembles, and dance companies represent the diversity of cultures across Southern California. The concert takes place from 3:00 – 9:00 p.m. on December 24 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at 135 N. Grand Ave. Parking is free, too!
- You can view beautiful holiday lights at **Christmas Tree Lane** in Alta Dena (on Santa Rosa Ave., between Woodbury Ave. and Altadena Dr. throughout December. This is the oldest lighting attraction in the area, neighbors string over 10,000 [Christmas lights](#) to the long lin of [Christmas trees](#) that run down the block, or on **Candy Cane Lane** in Woodland Hills (between Lubao Ave. and Oxnard St.).
- Downtown on Ice at Pershing Square in Los Angeles (532 S. Olive) features an outdoor skating rink throughout the holidays.

## Astronomical Star Party

by  
Brandon Vielman & Diego Gutierrez

A few weeks ago some of our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students returned to school ... at night ... to see some really big stars! Actually, they saw the moon and some planets, too. It was our first annual Astronomical Star Party. Mr. Hagen-Smith, Ms. Miya, and Coach Ward welcomed Mr. Joel Harris from Rocketdyne to our school. Mr. Harris is a rocket scientist and astronomer. Before working at Rocketdyne, he worked at the Griffith Observatory. He brought his super telescope, wisdom, and knowledge to Toluca Lake Elementary school for this big event.

Wow! What a great nighttime adventure we had with Mr. Harris! The evening was a brilliant success. Mr. Harris arrived at our playground and set up his telescope to get ready for the big event. He received assistance from two helpful 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, Jerry Chaiyasid and Christian Carrera. One student, Brandon Vielman, came dressed with a coat and tie ... and brought his own telescope to assist Mr. Harris! Mr. Damien Finks made sure the lights were turned down low and we had a blast viewing the night sky!

Students and their parents enjoyed seeing Jupiter, its four moons, and our moon. We also watched a funny Bill Nye video about our moon's phases. It was like our brains traveled through space! We had so much fun learning about outer space! Did you know that one million earth-sized planets! We also learned that Jupiter's four brightest moons are called "Galileans" because Galilei Galileo was the first one to spot them using a telescope about 400 years ago! Finally, we learned that Jupiter's Big Red Spot is actually a gigantic storm.

We are very, very thankful to Mr. Harris for volunteering his time, telescope, and expertise to open up the heavens for us to see! He even told us about some books we could read to get us started as astronomers. Someday, maybe we'll become astronauts and send Mr. Harris a gigantic thank you card from outer space! We've just got to keep reading, studying, wondering, and using our imagination. Here we go .... 5...4...3...2...1... Blast off!



*Jupiter and four of its moons:*  
*Europa, Io, Ganymede, and Callisto.*

## Toluca Lake Expands Recycling Program

by - Alex Hodeib, Brennen Lamb, Robert Magee, Autumn McMurray,  
& Trisha Terry

Toluca Lake Elementary has expanded its recycling program to include aluminum and plastics (along with paper). The Recycling Across Los Angeles Program (RACLA) seeks to help kids help the Earth. Ms. Karla Ramos from RACLA brought us recycling bins for the materials. The program also picks-up the recyclables. We are thankful to Ms. Karla Ramos for helping Toluca Lake be more "green." Recycling is important because it conserves natural resources and reduces waste and pollution. Now, we kids have another way to make the planet a better place, that can make new things for a better world Please bring your recyclable plastics and aluminum to help our school help make the world a better place!

# Riddle me this...

Answers may be found on our school web page at: <<http://toluca.weebly.com>>

- What do you call a bear without socks? - Diego Gutierrez
- What has a head and a tail, but no body? - Karisma Molla
- What gets lighter the more you darken it? - Nathaniel Duarte
- What does Snow White say while waiting for her photos? - Zachary Miles



## Super Sleuth Quiz & Scavenger Hunt

The Toluca Lake Times is happy to announce the start of an exciting new contest for kids: **The Super Sleuth Quiz & Scavenger Hunt**. Here's how it works:

Find the answers to the **Super Sleuth Quiz** by reading this edition of the Toluca Lake Times. Look around school to find the location of the **Scavenger Hunt** items. Write the answers on this sheet of paper and give it to your teacher by Friday, January 14, 2011 to be entered in Toluca Lake Elementary school's **monthly raffle for big prizes!**

Principal:

Carol Reo-Bové

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Parent Representative:

Lucy Gonzalez

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith

### Super Sleuth Quiz & Scavenger Hunt

Name - \_\_\_\_\_; Room # - \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the name of the founder of Tree People? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is famous for singing "The Good Ship Lollipop"? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which faculty member spent a month studying in Tanzania? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which planet was observed at the Star Party? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who did this month's Awesome Alumni wed? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where is this image located on our campus? (Hint: Computers are the key to the future, so look near a special room in the main building.)

This image is located \_\_\_\_\_

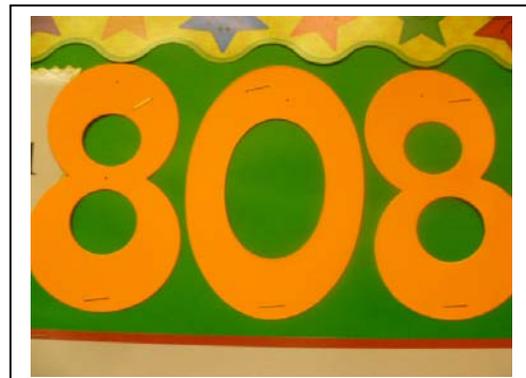
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### We're on the Web!

See us at:

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



### Free MONEY for our school!

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

- Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and click on "Sign Up".
- Enter our Group ID# 16439468
- 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 Kuro, 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