

Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary School: An Arts Prototype School / 818.761.3339

<http://toluca.weebly.com>

Principal's Message

STUDENT ATTENDANCE is a problem at Toluca Lake Elementary! Discussions around this problem are happening at all of our parent meetings. Many parents have suggested that perhaps some parents don't understand the importance of daily attendance. One parent stated. "If a child doesn't come to school and the teacher teaches a very important skill on that day, how are they ever going to catch up?" Another parent told us that she heard about a student staying home from school to go to Disneyland because it was his birthday! On that day the teacher had taught an extremely important lesson showing the children how to add. The child had a very hard time understanding what to do the next day. It is essential that our youngsters attend school every day. Please contact the school if you have any questions in regards to our attendance policy.

February 4, 2010
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Words of Wisdom

Imagine ... ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly.

— Isaac Asimov
(American Scientist & Science Fiction Writer
(1920 - 1992))



Science Lab Opens at Toluca Lake!

by - Xavier Gacula, Kimberly Del Cid,
Javier Favela, & Daisy Chaidez

This month is the inauguration of the science lab at Toluca Lake Elementary School. Our Math coach, Ms. Lisa Ward, has created this lab "for all kids to see it and experience the true nature of Earth science."

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (N.A.S.A.) sent her samples of lunar rocks and meteorites, as well as ideas about how to test them. Coach Ward loves science. She says it's "Math in action."

Her inspiration was the voyage of Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin to the moon. This was the Apollo launch in 1969 that sent the first men to the moon. Neil Armstrong said this famous line when he landed on the moon, "One small step for man, and one giant leap for mankind."

In the science lab, students do experiments to learn what space is like. They use microscopes and study real meteorites and lunar rocks. They even test how craters are made. They do this by dropping rocks at different heights into a type of liquid to see the impact. It's a very cool learning experience.

The science of space, astronomy, is all about discovering new ideas. Space has so many mysteries that are beyond what we see. Science provides experiments that teach us about things people haven't even tested yet. If we put these two in action we can unlock the biggest mysteries of all! As we learn and study, we can even create our own mysteries and make them into reality.

The science lab is where the students of Toluca Lake start to discover our new reality. Come on by the lab and make it happen! This is the beginning of your adventure!

Featured Faculty: Ms. French Teaches Kids to Love School!

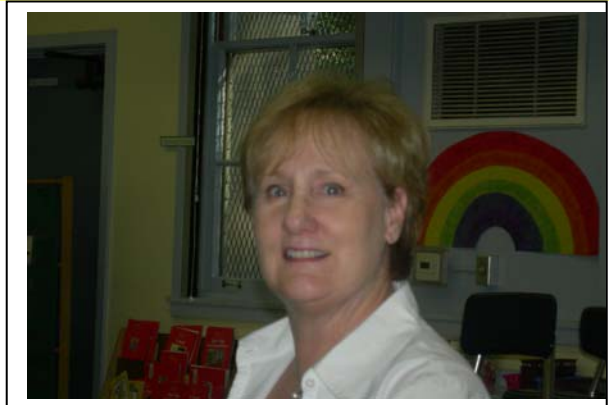
by - Emily Marquez, Cristina Jercan, Cory Rangel, & Sharis Galeano

We interviewed one of our wonderful kindergarten teacherw, Ms. Cindy French. She began working at Toluca Lake Elementary School in December 1998. In order to become a teacher, she needed to earn a Bachelors Degree and a California Teaching Credential. It was a lot of hard work.

Ms. French's hero is Eleanor Roosevelt because she had the courage to make the world a better place. Mrs. French says, "The toughest part of my job is thinking of new and fresh ways to teach concepts to my kindergarteners." Her favorite professional accomplishment is teaching her students to love school and to love learning new things because if they carry that with them, they will always love school.

Ms. French had to overcome many challenges to become a teacher. One of the obstacles she's faced is learning how to break concepts down to the smallest idea possible so five-year olds can understand them.

Ms. French enjoys architecture, redecorating



her house, reading, and being with her family. She likes the people she works with and the students because they're all nice. She would like to see even more parent participation at our school because when the kids see the parents are involved, they know learning is important. In the future, Ms. French would like to see our school community become stronger with more parents encouraging their kids that learning is fun. Mrs. French is an amazing teacher!

Drill Team Experiences

by - Chelsea Logo and Nharelyn Mancias

drill team leaders, Ms. McDuley and Ms. Miya. They help us the whole way through to make sure we get the dances right. That's why the audience is always so happy when we dance!

We make up dances for drill team in groups. Then, we put all of the parts together to make one big dance. We practice during recess and lunch to get the dance right. Drill Team participates in many parades and shows. We take our time to practice and satisfy the people who are able to watch us. Although it's hard to memorize our routine, we still have fun doing our performance.

Recently, we gave a performance at our holiday show.

At the Granada Hills Parade, we marched. When we passed the judges, we saluted at the end of the parade, w

to stop giving out the trophies, we earned 2nd place! That award really means a lot to us our hard work ha

proud to Elementary School on the Drill Team!



Awesome Alumni: Cali Sotham

by - Emily Marquez

This month's Awesome Alumni is Cali Sotham. She attended Toluca Lake Elementary School from 1986 until her graduation in 1992.

Cali enjoyed many good times at our school. Her favorite memory was when she went on a week long field trip with her 6th grade class and Mr. Hagen Smith to Camp Clear Creek in the mountains between La Canada and Palmdale. She had lots of fun doing crafts, hiking, looking through a telescope, seeing a raccoon, sleeping in cabins, and learning science.

Cali's favorite subject in school was English because knowing different languages provided a strong structure of vocabulary for her future. She also enjoyed music and dance. Cali remembers Mrs. Sturges because, "She was not only my Kindergarten teacher, but she was also my drill team instructor for three years." Cali's also admires Mr. Hagen Smith. "He has been at Toluca Lake when I was there and 17 years ago. He was my sixth grad teacher and he's still there. That takes a lot of dedication and loyalty, which are great traits."

After Toluca Lake Elementary school, Cali attended Walter Reed Junior High School, North Hollywood High, and Los Angeles City College. Right now, Cali is working independently at home as a recruiter for Human Networx LLC. She always takes care of her beautiful family. One obstacle Cali had to overcome during her life was being a young mom and having fulfilling a career. Doing both of these tasks takes a lot of perseverance and patience. Fortunately, Cali's kids are amazing, wonderful, and very helpful☺!).

Cali has a lot of accomplishments to be proud of in her life. She always earned good grades in school, and graduated high school with high marks. Cali advises current students to, "Remember who you are, and don't listen to anyone who says you can't achieve something. The sky is the limit! Work hard and life will fall into place." Cali sure is an Awesome Alumni ... and an awesome mom, too!

Teacher's Tip

Organizational skills are paramount to a student's academic and social success. Teachers and parents need to think about which organizational strategies work best for students. Some helpful techniques include:

Prioritizing Tasks:

- Provide assignment pads monitored by parents & teachers
- Provide a desk or wall calendar
- Play games (example: estimate how long an activity will take)
- Use checklists
- Create and maintain structured routines
- Use timers for deadlines
- Use Post-Its to remind students to complete tasks

Backpacks:

- Empty once a week.
- Implement a system for deciding which items are important to keep in the backpack and which need to be left at home

Bedrooms:

- Need to be kept organized
- Designate specific areas for specific functions (ie; study area)

Involve the student in finding solutions to the problems.

UCLA ArtsBridge Program Visits Toluca Lake

**by - Brian Reyes, Melissa Saracoglu, Annie Escamilla, Javier Favela,
Alejandra Silva, & Kimberly Del Cid**

Throughout this school year, some of our fifth grade students have been participating with the U.C.L.A ArtsBridge program. As part of this program a graduate art student from UCLA, Ms. Lauren Silva, has been working with students on some projects. First, she helped us create mobiles showing regional differences between Native American tribes. Then, she helped us design "Never-Before-Seen Edgar Allan Poe art museums." Now, she's helping us create comic books about native and invasive species in local ecosystems.

Ms. Silva teaches us all about art for each of our projects. She says that she first knew that she wanted to make art when she was around four or five years old. "My family always supported my interests, and always encouraged my paintings and art making. As long as I didn't get paint on our tables, my parents didn't mind my creative messes too much either," remembers Ms. Silva. As a grown-up, Ms. Silva has made over 40 paintings; the largest one was 8 feet by 14 feet.

We've enjoyed making art projects and doing activities that were joyful and entertaining. The best one yet was when we played charades. We liked working with the comic books and the mobiles because we combined what we learned in class with art. Art is a great way to express our feelings, ideas, and emotions. We've had a great experience working with Ms. Silva and are very happy to participate in UCLA's ArtsBridge program!



Kindergarden Dreams

Kindergarten students in Ms. Steele's class have been inspired to dream by the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, jr.'s birthday. Here's a few of their special ideas:

"My dream is for all kids to be happy." - Ben Robles

"My dream is that I can read." - Alyssa Mora

"My dream is about holding hands." - Britney Flores

"My dream is that we are all friends." - Rita Kharadjian

"My dream is in my heart." - Xithlaly Rodriguez

Dr. Tara Gomez Visits from Cal Tech!

by - Chelsea Logo, Alejandra Silva, Destiny Garcia, and Brian Reyes

Dr. Tara Gomez, a biologist from Cal Tech, visited Room 17 to teach us fifth grade students about pollination and co-evolution. We got to do hands-on experiments with her learning about native and invasive species, as well as examining some flowers to see which pollinators would pollinate that type of plant.

Dr. Gomez gave each of us our own bowls that had three medium sized holes in it. Then, we were given different sized red and white beans. The bowls represented an environment, and the beans were different species. The red beans represented black sage, a native plant, and the white beans represented, Russian thistle, an invasive species. We had to hypothesize which size bean would fall out of the holes, and which would stay in the bowl. The beans that remained in the bowl represented species that were able to reproduce in that environment. They were the best at adapting and surviving. The other beans represented species that weren't able to survive and reproduce in that environment (the bowl). When we shook the plastic bowl, we found out that the invasive species was replacing the native species in this environment.

After that experiment, Dr. Gomez gave each of us a different flower. We examined the flowers to see which pollinator would most likely pollinate that flower. When we thought we figured it out, we wrote it down and gave the reasons for our predictions. Next, Dr. Tara Gomez picked some flowers to look at with a digital microscope. We got to see the magnified flowers projected on the big screen. The flower parts and pollen made really amazing patterns.

When the session was over, we interviewed Dr. Tara Gomez to learn more about her amazing life. She went to U.C.L.A for four years to receive her Bachelor's degree. Then, she earned a Masters degree at Cal Tech. Now, she's finishing her Ph.D. there. She has been a scientist for eight years, and loves every part of her work. She says that the best part is presenting her experiments to other scientists so they can share ideas. "I have lots of fun doing my job," reflects Dr. Gomez, "and my favorite part is interacting with other scientists and solving problems in a team."

Dr. Gomez was inspired to become a scientist because her father was a biology teacher and had his own plant nursery. Dr. Gomez feels that studying pollination and co-evolution is important because plants lived on this planet before people and animals, and are our main source of food. She says that teaching others about science is important to make our world a better place. And, even though she's a teacher, Dr. Gomez is still learning lots more about science. She says, "It's exciting to learn something new everyday!" For example, she is now studying bakers' yeast in a laboratory because it's teaching her about ways to prevent cancer. Curing cancer would help a lot of people who get sick from this deadly disease.

We had a great time with Dr. Tara Gomez, and hope to see with her again someday ... maybe when we're students at Cal Tech! That would really be a wonderful experience!



Attention Writers!

In honor of Valentine's Day, we are having a writing contest! Please submit an original song, story, or poem on the topic of Friendship. All writing needs to be given to your teacher by Thursday, February 11. Winners will be honored and receive a special prize. Good luck, good effort, and good friends! - Mr. Murphy

Around the Town

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

- The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society hosts a free family bird walk on Sat., Feb. 13 at the **Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area**. Bring the whole family, borrow binoculars, and see the awesome wildlife. Call Muriel Kotin at (310-457-5796 for more information.
- The **Buena Vista Library** in Burbank is hosting a free family night on Thursday, Feb. 4. John Abrams will be bringing his terrific show, "Animal Magic" to thrill old and young alike!

Calendar

- Feb. 5 = Coffee with the
Principal
- Feb. 8 = Awards Assembly
(upper grades)
- Feb. 9 = Local Leadership
Council Mtg.
- Feb. 14 = St. Valentine's Day
- Feb. 15 = Presidents' Day
(School Closed)
- Feb. 16 = School Site
Council Mtg.
- Feb. 18 = PTA Meeting
- Feb. 26 = Black History Show



MEETING

Thursday, February 18, 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, Pavillions, 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!"

- 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@aol.com

Toluca Lake
Elementary
School:
An Arts
Prototype
School



Principal:

Carol Reo Bove

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Parent Director:

Lucy Gonzalez

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith



We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://toluca.weebly.com>

The Naturalists from Camp Clear Creek

by: Betty Lopez, Chelsea Logo, Omar Perreira, and Javier Favela

Naturalists from LAUSD's outdoor education branch visited students in Room 17 to teach us about ecosystems. We learned about biotic and abiotic components in each habitat. We did fun activities while learning about science.

Alex, one of the naturalists, led lots of lessons about ecosystems. We learned animals must use energy, respiration, be able to reproduce, and respond to stimuli in their natural habitat. Some animals are not able to survive outside of their habitats because of the weather and terrain.

Later, we made our own creature to fit in a unique biome. We chose what our animal ate, and did to survive in that biome. After writing it down, we used everyday materials to construct our creature. Later, when we finished making our creature, we shared it with the class. We talked about every single detail from our animals.

Before they left, we interviewed the naturalists. One of them, Ty (Wyomia Tyus), said, "We try to make science fun by giving students hands-on experiences." Another naturalist, Judi added, "I love teaching children science in the outdoors." We're glad they like to teach us because we're able to learn things we never knew before. They said that it was important for them to teach us about ecosystems because they're so important to the life sciences. They said that the best way to learn about ecosystems is to observe, listen, read, and ask questions. We're really glad they came to our class because now we know how to learn more about science.

Another cool thing about their visit was that one of the naturalists, Ty, was actually an Olympic star. She won three gold and one silver medal in track in the 1964 & 1968 Olympics. At that time, she was the fastest woman in the world! She said that being a successful scientist is like being an athlete - both require hard work and dedication, and both can offer new insights and lots of pride. We're proud that we got to learn science from such a terrific group of people!



Camp
Clear
Creek
Visits!

← Gold
Medalist
Wyomia
Tyus →



Riddle Me This ...

- A father and his son are driving, and soon get into an accident. The father and son get transported to two different hospitals. When the son gets to the hospital, the doctor comes into his room and says, "I can't operate on him. He's my son!" How is this possible?
- Xavier Gacula
- What is as big as an elephant but doesn't weigh anything?
- Alejandra Silva
- What is the longest word in the world?
- Emmanuel Martir
- What is "h-i-j-k-l-m-n-o"?
- Zachary Miles