

Toluca Lake Times

Toluca Lake Elementary School: An Arts Prototype School / 818.761.3339

<http://toluca.weebly.com>

“School Clean-Up Day”

by – Emily Marquez, Alejandra Silva, Emmanuel Martir, & Daniel Hernandez



Our school just held its annual school clean-up day. Lots of students, families, and teachers volunteered to help make our campus more beautiful. Ms. Karin Grigsby organized the big day. She coordinated everything. She found a job for each person, got all of the necessary equipment, and ordered supplies.

Ms. Grigsby said that her favorite part of the clean-up was seeing all of the families working together to make our school more stunning and clean. She said that everyone did a fantastic job. For example, Crystal Snow and her dad did a great job cleaning up around the bungalows, and Alejandra Silva’s family worked hard on the potted plants near the cafeteria. Ms. Grigsby said that she was very thankful to all of the people who helped (even though we don’t have space to mention everybody in this article). Ms. Grigsby added, “With so many hands, the school looks magnificent!” The day reminded Ms. Grigsby of a saying, “Many hands make light work.”

Ms. Grigsby said, “Before the school was so dirty and with so many leaves on the ground.” But now, after the clean up, the school looks great. At the end of the day, Ms. Grigsby and all of the volunteers felt tired, but “tired in a good and healthy way.” She thinks that this day helped children learn that “it takes everyone’s help and cooperation to make Toluca Lake Elementary School the best looking school ever!”

Ms. Grigsby has an important message for the parents and students, “We couldn’t have had such a successful clean up day without the participation of the PTA, the parents, the students, and the teachers who gave generously of their time to support the school for the good of our students.” Thanks to all the volunteers!

December 3, 2009
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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



Principal's Message

December is a month full of activities here at Toluca Lake Elementary. On December 7th we will begin our Parent conferences for the first semester. The teachers will be sending out schedules for you to come and discuss your child’s progress. Conferences will continue for the entire week ending on **December 11th**. Please take advantage of this special time to be able to ask the teacher any questions or concerns you might have about what is happening in the classroom, as well as ways you can further assist your child at home. Also, please make a special effort to come at the agreed upon time because the teachers need to keep on schedule in order to meet the needs of all the students in the classroom. Remember, **early dismissal at 1:09 every day** for Parent Conferences.

Also during December, the PTA is planning to hold their annual Boutique sale for the students. More information will be coming closer to the starting date of December 14th in regards to this event.

Our annual Holiday Program will be held on December 18th for the Parents. Please try to set aside some time on this day to see our inspiring and festive program. We will then celebrate our Winter Break starting on December 21 through January 8, 2010. We hope that all of you and your families will enjoy a wonderful holiday break and do lots of fun filled activities together. See you next year!

New Auditorium

by - Sharis Galeano, Lemise Saeed, & Alexandra Morales

Our principal, Ms. Carol Reo Bove, has been overseeing the remodeling of our school auditorium. It was remodeled because it was very old and needed modern equipment. When it's completed, our new auditorium will have darker chairs, blue and white colors, and beautiful blue curtains.

Mr. Jeff Daniel, our school's coordinator, came to school during the summer to install a new overhead projector to watch movies on rainy day schedules. He's also done work to improve the sound system so it'll play ipods. The auditorium was finished this fall ... just in time for the Geffen Playhouse to present the play "Ferdinand the Bull" to our upper grade students.

Ms. Bove spent weeks making sure all of the workers did a good job. She's had to work with painters, electricians, floor installers, and carpenters. All of these changes were planned and approved years ago, before this bad economy hit our country. Mrs. Bove made a bond (that means a certificate issued by a government or private company which promises to pay back with interest the money borrowed from the buyer of the certificate) for the parents for them to use some of their taxes to repair the auditorium.

Ms. Bove, the school faculty, and the PTA have also worked to raise money for other improvements at our school. One of the most exciting of these is that our computer lab has brand new computers. It looks like a space station in there! We're very happy about all of the improvements taking place on our campus.

Featured Faculty: Ms. Hinton's Heroic Life

by - Alejandra Silva, Destiny Garcia, Danielle Pedroza, & Vannia Gutierrez



We interviewed an important member of our faculty, Ms. Hinton, to learn more about her heroic life and interests.

She began teaching and working at Toluca Lake Elementary School in 1996. That means she's been teaching here for 13 years! Ms. Hinton needed to get a college degree and a teacher's credential to become a teacher. Ms. Hinton says that her proudest professional accomplishment is completing college and participating in many organizations that improve the lives of people in underserved communities. She really likes to help others. Some obstacles that Ms. Hinton had to overcome to achieve

her goals were that she had to work two jobs to pay for her college degree, and still needed to find time to study and achieve at school.

Ms. Hinton likes her job. She says, "I love seeing all of the smiling faces: students, a great staff, and great parents. I think that is the best part of my job." She added that "the toughest part of my job is to get kids to complete their homework, have self-respect, and take pride in what they do."

We also asked her what she'd like to change about our school. She said she'd like to see more art activities after school, and more music programs. "I believe that art and music open the minds of children," said Ms. Hinton.

Ms. Hinton's interests are to exercise, read, tell jokes, laugh, go to the beach, and travel all over the world. One of her heroes is Barrack Obama because he is the first African-American man to become president of the United States. Her other heroes include any strong and successful women like the writer Maya Angelo.

Awesome Alumni: Natalie Montemayor

by - Alan Hernandez and Bryan Perez

Natalie Montemayor is this month's "awesome alumni." She was an excellent student at our school until her graduation in 2002.

Her favorite memory from our school was being in a class play called "The Wizard of Paz." It was sort of a take-off on "The Wizard of Oz" using the characters Don Quixote and Sancho Panza from "The Man of LaMancha." It was lots of fun singing and performing during the play. The kids even got to do their show at the NoHo Arts Festival.

Natalie's heroes back then were Mr. Reidman and Mr. Hagen-Smith because of the cool experiences in their classes. She remembers learning a lot from them, and all of her other teachers, too. Her favorite subject was English because she likes to read and write.

After graduation, Natalie attended Walter Reed Middle School, North Hollywood High, and East Valley High. She just graduated from East Valley High, and is going to go to college. Also, she works at Tilly's. One big obstacle she had overcome to achieve her goals was time management because she had to balance work, extra-curricular activities, and school.



Natalie has many fine professional accomplishments. She earned good grades in school, won first place in talent shows with her friends, and passed all of her Advanced Placement classes. Some advice Natalie would give to our current students is to "stay focused, keep your priorities straight, and have respect for everybody." She also says, "JUST BELIEVE!" Natalie sure is an awesome alumni!

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. 4 = Geffen Playhouse workshops for upper grade students
- Dec. 4 = Toluca Lake Open House featuring the Toluca Lake Elem. Drill Team
- Dec. 5 - 11 = Parent Conferences / Report Cards (early dismissal)
- Dec. 7 = Awards Ceremony (K-2)
- Dec. 10 = Human Rights Day
- Dec. 14 = Awards Ceremony (Grades 3-5)
- Dec. 14 = PTA Holiday boutique begins
- Dec. 15 = Bill of Rights Day
- Dec. 17 = Holiday Program for students
- Dec. 18 = Holiday Program for parents
- Dec. 21 = World Peace Day
- Dec. 21 = First day of Winter Break
- Dec. 26 = First day of Kwanzaa
- Jan. 8 = Back to school
- Jan. 18 = Dr. Martin Luther King, jr.'s Birthday (school closed)

Urban Poetry!

Some third grade students have been learning to write poetry about city life. These fine samples from Room 28 are sure to lift your urban blues.

My City

I live in the city.

My city has enormous skyscrapers that seem to poke the sky.

My city has numerous schools that kids learn at.

My city has many squirrels that steal birdseed.

My city has lots of restaurants that people eat at.

I love my city.

by:
**Tyler
Kovacs**



My City

I live in the city.

My city has a fancy beach house on the beach that I live in.

My city has an art studio that gives me art lessons.

My city has an awesome bike shop in front of the beach that sells beach-cruiser bikes.

My city has a peaceful music studio that lets you put your written songs on a CD.

My city has the Hollywood sign that is very beautiful.
I love my city!

by:
Danielle Heflin

My City

I live in the city.

My city has an awesome library where I can read books.

My city has a marvelous school where I can learn.

My city has amazing parks where I can ride my bike.

My city has a fancy restaurant where you can serve yourself.

My city has a magnificent mall that I can buy clothes at.
I love my city!

by:
**Caitline
Molina**



Toluca Lake Website Contest

Have you seen our school website? Now is your chance to explore it and possibly win a contest as well. Our website is <http://toluca.weebly.com>. The contest is: **Find the link on our school website that tells about the original boundaries of Toluca Lake.**

The first ten (10) students to:

1. submit the correct four boundaries
2. name the link where you found the information
3. tell which page on the Toluca Lake website where you found this link

will win a free kid's meal to HomeTown Buffet! [HINT: The page where you find the link is one of the pages in the green menu bar across the top.]

**** Students must submit their answers in writing to Mr. Daniel no later than December 17th. The first ten students to submit the correct answers to all 3 criteria listed above will win. Students must put their first name, last name, and room number on their paper. Good luck ... and happy searching.**

Toluca Lake Student Wins Writing Contest!

by – Javier Favela, Albert Rivas, Michael Flores, Xavier Gacula, & Eder Meza

This week a student in Mr. Hagen-Smith's class won a scary story contest for the entire East San Fernando Valley. The Burbank Boys' and Girls' Club sponsored the contest as part of the National Endowment of the Arts' *The Big Read* of the works of Edgar Allan Poe. The student that won the contest, Alejandra Silva, is very proud of her suspense story, "The Screeches of the House of Dolls." Alejandra said that she was very surprised that she won because she's never won anything before. She won four tickets to the AMC theater and an illustrated hardcover book by Edgar Allan Poe.

We asked her if she liked the Edgar Allan Poe stories that she read to prepare for the contest. She said that she thinks that Edgar Allan Poe stories of mystery & suspense are "incredibly fantastic."

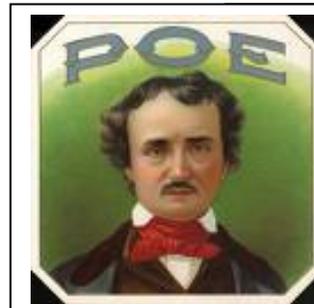
We asked Alejandra if it's fun to write creatively. She said it is fun to be creative because you get to use your imagination, and you never know where it will take you. Another question was how did you come up with the story. She said that she really doesn't know how she came up with it. It just "popped" into her head.

Alejandra said that it took her about 3 and 1/2 hours to write the story. She said that no one assisted her with her story. It all came from her own imagination. She said that her favorite part about writing the story was that she got to use her imagination & ideas.

After we asked her what inspired her to make her wonderful story. She said that her older sister, Maghali, and Stephanie Meyer inspired her to write the story. "My sister always wrote amazing poetry, and Stephanie Meyer has written the amazing incredible "Twilight" saga. We asked her what makes her think of crazy and exciting ideas. She said, "I don't know. They just pop into my head."

Finally, we asked Alejandra about her favorite Edgar Allan Poe story. She said her favorite story was the "Masque of the Red Death" because it taught that no matter rich or poor, you can never get away for the outside world. She also liked it because she could picture the intruder who had the red death.

Alejandra's mom must have been so proud of her. They were both surprised when she won the contest. Now, whenever Alejandra reads Edgar Allan Poe's stories, she'll remember that she won this contest ... and hear her heart beating with excitement!



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 50th 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!
- **The Japanese American National Museum** in Little Tokyo is hosting a free Target Saturday on December 12 from 11:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.. Visitors may create a beaded pipe cleaner snow flake, design their own wrapping paper, make an ornament using a variety of materials, create decorative origami, watch live improvisation by *Cold Tofu*, make a homemade edible menorah or Christmas tree, listen to live music, and meet a Japanese American Santa Claus. Call (213) 625-0414 for more information.
- See the special article on page 8 for information about the **Toluca Lake Holiday Open House**.

The Geffen Playhouse Presents
"Ferdinand the Bull"

by - Daisy Chaidez, Javier Favela, Destiny Garcia, &
Xavier Gacula

This month actors from the Geffen Playhouse came all the way from their home in Westwood to visit Toluca Lake Elementary School. They performed the incredible play "Ferdinand the Bull." It was a very hilarious play. A lot of people lost their breath laughing so hard that they started crying. After their performance, we student reporters asked the cast some questions about their work.

The first question we asked was if it's exciting to be an actor. They said, "It's exciting going into schools because we can teach the students about good, bad, and to follow your dreams." They said that they also enjoyed making "hilarious jokes" because all of the kids laugh so much. When asked about what inspired them to become actors, a cast member answered, "When we were young, we saw a lot of actors in plays. Soon, we got interested and wanted to join and get really into it, too."

When we asked them how they memorize such a large script, the actors said, "We try to take as much of time as needed to say the the script over and over again until it's memorized." That sounds like good advice for studying for a test in school, too! We also asked them if they use much improvisation (that means making up stuff during the play that wasn't planned ahead of time). They all agreed with the actor who said, "Yes, improvisation really helps us improve our theater arts."

They did an amazing job presenting "Ferdinand the Bull" to all of our upper grade students. This was a play that took us to a new level of theater. They performed this play to teach us that "WE THE PEOPLE" don't have to bully other people to get what we want. And that it's important to always follow your dream, even if it's different than what somebody else wants you to do with your life. Finally, the play taught that it's very important to really listen to other people to better understand them.

Once the played ended we wanted to see it all over again and this time we could join them. They hoped we enjoyed the play. We are very thankful to the Geffen Playhouse for bringing this play to our school and sharing the magic of live theater with each of us!



Central Avenue Exhibit at the Huntington Library

by - Chelsea Logo & Alejandra Silva

Fifth grade students in Room 17 just went on a fantastic field trip to the Huntington Library. We went to a special exhibit called, "Central Avenue and Beyond: The Harlem Renaissance in Los Angeles." We received a special guided tour from the curator of the museum, Sue Hodson.

In this exhibit, we learned about many different African Americans who faced and overcame adversities. The exhibit showed African Americans who succeeded at a lot of different jobs. There were actors, airplane pilots, ballet dancers, opera singers, attorneys, writers, composers, musicians, singers, newspaper editors, and many other important individuals.

After seeing all of the pictures of African Americans, we asked Sue Hodson some questions. She said that she choose the items for this exhibit from the Huntington Library's collection and from the collection of a former librarian named Mayme Clayton. Avery Clayton, Mayme's son, let the Huntington use the items for this exhibit. He plans to put them all on display in the new Clayton Library that's going to open in Culver City. She decided to print the poetry of Langston Hughes on the walls all around the exhibit because he tells the story of that time so well.

Hattie McDaniel was the first African American actress to win an Academy Award (Best Supporting Actress in "Gone With the Wind" in 1939). She was very talented, but the main role she was given in movies was that of a mammy. She said, "I'd rather play a mammy and get \$750, than be a real mammy and only get \$7." We saw a photo of her as a mammy. Then we saw another photo of the *real Hattie McDaniel all dressed up and sophisticated*. That photograph is Sue Hodson's favorite at the exhibit.

There were photographs of great jazz musicians like Duke Ellington, actors like Paul Robeson, and writers like Langston Hughes. We saw a photograph of the singer Lena Horne. She was an African American actress, but since she was light-skinned, she got to play a main character in a movie. It's really sad that people were so racist back then.

Another photograph showed a beautiful woman named Marie Dickerson. She was a very talented performer, but then went on to become a pilot. It was very rare for women, especially African Americans, to fly airplanes back in that time. She must have had a lot of courage to fly airplanes in those days. She really must have loved the freedom of flying.

The exhibit also showed that some African Americans published their own newspapers so that their point-of-view could be heard. Others made "race films" so that African American actors could have a chance to play heroes in films. One man, Loren Miller, was a lawyer who fought against segregated housing laws. The exhibit showed African Americans achieving in many ways.

When we asked Sue Hodson about changes in African American culture, she said that, "Racism has not gone, but the worst of it has." She said that it's important for all people to learn about the history and accomplishments of African Americans, and that the people shown in the exhibit can be great role models because they overcame so much



Toluca Lake
Elementary
School:
An Arts
Prototype
School



Principal:

Carol Reo Bove

Assistant Principal:

Joyce Miles

Coordinator:

Jeff Daniel

Lead Teacher:

Steve Reidman

Newsletter Editor:

Dennis Hagen-Smith

We're on the Web!

See us at:

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



Have
yourself
a very
happy
holiday!

Toluca Lake Holiday Open House

On Friday, December 4, the Toluca Lake community is hosting its annual Open House. This special free event takes place on Riverside Drive from 5:30 - 9:00 p.m.. There will be free food from merchants, holiday treats, a double-decker bus, an old-fashioned trolley, face painting, continuous musical groups on stage, and the lighting of the Toluca Lake Christmas treed with Fritz Coleman. Among the celebrated performers will be the acclaimed Toluca Lake Elementary school drill team! And, last but not least, be on the lookout for a visit from that jolly fellow in red, Santa Claus!

- Linda Hawkins, school librarian

Riddle me this...

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



- What is blue and white and seen all over? - **Albert Rivas**
- What is black and white and read all over? - **Javier Favela**
- Imagine you're on a one-way street. There are walls on each side of the street. There are two groups of people about to attack you. They have dangerous weapons, scary faces, and bad breath. What do you do?
- **Michael Flores**
- Why was the tomato red? - **Myriam Orocio**
- What is always free? - **Zachary Miles**

\$ 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

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Brought to you by the Toluca Lake Elementary PTA.
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