



A supplement from the ...

Palm Springs Unified School District

Serving Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage & Thousand Palms — August/September 2011

New Administrators Named

PSUSD begins the 2011-12 school year with some administrative changes.

Dr. Christine Anderson, formerly Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for four years, is the District's new Superintendent of Schools. **Dr. Mike Swize**, most recently Director of Elementary Instruction and Director of English Learners, is the new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. **Tony Knapp** is the District's new Director of Elementary Education. He joins PSUSD from Moreno Valley Unified where he served as an elementary principal for 11 years. **Dr. Tony Signoret**, former Principal at Raymond Cree Middle School, is the District's new Director of Certificated Human Resources. Prior to Cree, Signoret was Principal at Cathedral City Elementary and Assistant Principal at Landau Elementary. **Dr. Tracy Piper** is the new principal at Raymond Cree Middle School. Previously, she held posts as Assis-

tant Principal of Desert Hot Springs High, Mount San Jacinto High and Desert Hot Springs Alternative Center. **Elizabeth Ramirez** is a new Assistant Principal at Desert Hot Springs High School. An educator for 18 years, Ramirez has served as a teacher, assistant principal, elementary principal and middle school principal. **Ryan Saunders**, former Principal of Desert Springs Middle School, is the first principal for Painted Hills Middle School, which opens this fall. **Cheryl de Alva Sousa**, who was Assistant Principal at Desert Springs Middle School, is the new Assistant Principal at Painted Hills. **Dr. Kiela Bonelli**, former Principal of Julius Corsini Elementary, took over as Principal of Desert Springs Middle last spring. **Wendy Wangerin**, who previously served as Assistant Principal at Corsini and then Desert Springs Middle School, is now Principal at Corsini.

PSUSD Traditional School Year will Begin Aug. 29

Palm Springs Unified School District opens the 2011-12 traditional school year on Monday, August 29. All students are expected to report to classes on that day.

Bus schedules and bell schedules for each school are posted on the District's website at www.psusd.us.

Parents are urged to fill out the application for free and reduced lunch when they receive it at the start of the school year. The district receives federal funds based on the number of students who qualify for the program, regardless of whether students use the service.

All PSUSD students entering the 7th through 12th grades this fall must show proof of an adolescent whopping cough booster (called "Tdap") within the first 30 days of school. District officials ask that students be immunized as soon as possible and present proof of immunization at their school immediately.



Tdap protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (pertussis). California implemented the requirement following a whooping cough outbreak in 2010. Children 18 years or younger who are uninsured or underinsured may qualify for Vaccines for Children. To find a provider for that program, call 877-243-8832 or visit <http://eziz.org/vfc/provider-locations>. Riverside County Public Health Department (800-720-9553) also provides the service through local clinics.

For more information, contact your school or call the District Office at 760-416-6000.

Retiring Superintendent Feted

PSUSD's Foundation, The Pinnacle Fund, recently renamed its Classroom Grant Program



Greg Rodriguez, Pinnacle Fund president, announced the renaming of the Fund's Classroom Grant Program to honor retiring PSUSD Superintendent, **Lorri McCune**.

to honor former PSUSD superintendent, Lorri McCune, who retired this summer.

Pinnacle Fund President Greg Rodriguez announced at a June 10 reception for McCune that the program would now be called "The Pinnacle Fund's Dr. Lorri S. McCune Classroom Grant Program."

The Foundation presented McCune with three pieces of original art from students representing Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs and Palm Springs High Schools.

Upcoming for The Pinnacle Fund is a fund raiser set for Oct. 18 at Hotel Zoso in Palm Springs. For more information, visit the Fund's website at www.pinnaclefund.org.

\$179k in Grants are Awarded

A total of eight Palm Springs Unified School District programs are set to receive a combined total of nearly \$179,000 in grant funds from the Irene W. and Guy L. Anderson Children's Foundation for the 2011-12 school year.

The district awards are part of an overall \$850,000 the Foundation is awarding to 37 local non-profit applicants this year, of the 110 applications received.

Palm Springs High School receives \$4,800 for its Advancement Via Individ-

ual Determination (AVID) program and \$15,000 for sports equipment. **Katherine Finchy Elementary** receives \$20,000 for counseling. **The Ramon Alternative Center** receives \$16,000 for its Marathon Runners program and \$41,431 for its teen therapy program. **James Workman Middle School** receives \$20,000 for musical instruments. **PSUSD's Student Services Department** receives \$49,985 for drop out prevention. **Cathedral City High School Band Boosters** receives \$12,000 for musical instruments.



RUN FOR IKE: The Palm Springs Marathon Runners team at Ramon Alternative Center, along with the Lions Club of Palm Springs, sponsored last spring's "Run for Ike" in memory of the Palm Springs K-9 dog, Ike, who was killed in the line of duty in April. The goal is to raise \$6,000 for the purchase of another K-9 dog. With 213 runners/walkers, the event raised over \$15,000 to fund the purchase of the dog and assist with training and handling of the new Palm Springs Police Department team member. The 2nd Annual Run for Ike is slated for April 21, 2112.



CHAMBER HONORS STAFF WITH 'GOLDEN APPLES:' The Cathedral City Chamber of Commerce honored the three valley school district's Teachers of the Year and Staff Members of the Year at its annual Golden Apple Awards dinner at the Doral Resort last spring. PSUSD honorees included District and County Certificated Administrator of the Year Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson, left, receiving her award from Debbie Yorba of award sponsor Keenan & Associates.



OPERA FOR ALL: The Palm Springs Opera Guild once again provided Opera Outreach to thousands of PSUSD students last spring. Developed by PS Opera Guild member and Raymond Cree Middle School choir director Andrew Eisenmann, this year's vocal line-up featured Jacquelynne Fontaine, soprano; Tracy Cox, mezzo-soprano; Joshua Guerrero, tenor Douglas Carpenter, baritone; Gabriel Vamvulescu, bass; and Bruce Mangum, piano accompanist.

District

WATT INDUCTED ONTO PSHS

'WALL OF FAME:' Former Palm Springs High School teacher and PSUSD administrator Ralph Watt was recently inducted onto the Palm Springs High School "Wall of Fame." Watt, who passed away on Aug. 17, 2010 at the age of 88, began his teaching career at Palm Springs High School in 1953 where he taught chemistry and physics and coached varsity basketball. He was appointed assistant principal at Palm Springs High in 1963 and served as the first principal at Nellie N. Coffman Junior High School and then principal of Raymond Cree Middle School. He spent his last year in education back teaching at Palm Springs High because he wanted to finish his career in education in the classroom. Upon his retirement, the Palm Springs High School Football Stadium was re-named Ralph Watt Stadium. Watt's family, pictured with Palm Springs High Principal Ricky Wright, right, attended the tribute ceremony.



PSUSD'S 'BULLDOG': Riverside County Probation Supervisor Lorie Nicholson was among the honorees at PSUSD's annual School Attendance Review Board (SARB) recognition luncheon. During the 2010-11 school year, a total of 577 students were referred to the District Attorney for a large group mediation. A total of 279 students went through the formal SARB process, and 59 students were referred to DA Family mediation with 12 students prosecuted in juvenile court.

WORKMAN STUDENT

EARNs FITNESS

AWARD: James Workman Middle School student Elizabeth Williamson was one of 14 students who excelled in a special fitness class at the school and won the drawing to receive a Wii and Wii Fit from the



city of Cathedral City. The class, led by Eric Hershberger, left, was established through a grant from the Desert Healthcare District a few years ago. This year, 92 Workman students participated. Presenting the Wii to Williamson is Cathedral City Mayor Kathy DeRosa.

PSUSD Board

Justin Blake
President

Richard Clapp Karen C

PSUSD Adm

Christine J. Anderson, I
Mike Swize, Ed. D., Assistant Supe
Mauricio Arellano, Assistant Sup
Ron Fortson, Interim Assistant Su

This Palm Springs Unified School
is published bimonthly by the Palm
980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 101, Palm
Phone: 760-416-6010 • Email: jboiko

t Digest



LIVE HISTORY AT CCE: Martha McDevitt's Fifth Grade class presented its annual Living History Museum in June culminating over three months of research and preparation. Students read a biography of a famous American, wrote a speech telling the character's life story in the first person and donned a costume that represented their character and painted a background depicting an event from that character's life. The entire student body as well as members of the community had the opportunity to tour the "museum" and watch and listen to the presenters as they told their stories.



DEMOS DONATE BACKPACKS, SUPPLIES: The valley's 10 Democratic clubs held a summer campaign to collect backpacks and school supplies for students in need at Cathedral City Elementary School. Representatives from the organization, pictured above, recently presented CCE Principal Jessica Arduini, center, with over 150 backpacks and supplies.

STAR SCHOOLS: Four PSUSD Elementary Schools are among 1,315 state schools named to the 2010 California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE) Honor Roll for demonstrating consistently high student academic achievement and making significant progress toward closing achievement gaps among all their students. CBEE Star Schools are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students who have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency over four years and are exceeding expectations for every subgroup of students. The principals of the schools were recognized at a recent Board of Education meeting. Each received a special banner. From left, Rio Vista's Mike Long, Cielo Vista Charter's Linda Lake, Katherine Finchy's Mark Arnold, and Sunny Sands Assistant Principal Debbie Paneris.



of Education

Gary Jeandron
Clerk
Cornett Shari Stewart

Administration

Ed. D., Superintendent
Superintendent, Educational Services
Superintendent, Human Resources
Superintendent, Business Services

District report to the community
San Springs Unified School District.
San Springs, CA 92262 • Editor: Joan L. Boiko
@psusd.us • Website: www.psusd.us



ENERGY STARS: Members of the PSUSD Maintenance and Operations and Facilities teams were recently honored at a Board of Education meeting for their efforts resulting in three District schools earning the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's prestigious Energy Star rating. Accepting the awards for Katherine Finchy Elementary and Mount San Jacinto and Desert Hot Springs High, are, from left, Director of Maintenance and Operations Gregg Shoemaker, Executive Director of Facilities Julie Arthur and Energy Manager Specialist Keith Posthuma.

education meeting for their efforts resulting in three District schools earning the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's prestigious Energy Star rating. Accepting the awards for Katherine Finchy Elementary and Mount San Jacinto and Desert Hot Springs High, are, from left, Director of Maintenance and Operations Gregg Shoemaker, Executive Director of Facilities Julie Arthur and Energy Manager Specialist Keith Posthuma.



CREE LAUNCHES 'HALL OF FAME:' Raymond Cree Middle School recently honored its first "Wall of Fame" inductees at a ceremony near the end of the 2010-11 school year. Pictured, from left, are inaugural inductees Kristen Goerzen, Fran Chapman, Bob Worswick, Dorothy Bowens, Tim Bradley and Ernesto Gutierrez. Missing from photo is inductee Sam Harris.

More Tech Career Opportunities

Palm Springs Unified School District begins the 2011-12 school year with the launch of a new career pathway opportunity at Desert Hot Springs High School (DHSHS).

DHSHS's Law Academy will be PSUSD's sixth California Partnership Academy (CPA) and is part of the District's Career Technical Education (CTE) program. Students enrolled in this Academy will take various related courses through their four years, including law enforcement, forensics, and a course focused on serving as a security guard or corrections officer. Other Academies include one on health, offered at Palm Springs High and Cathedral City High; a business academy at Palm Springs High; a digital arts academy at Cathedral City High; and an alternative energy academy at Desert Hot Springs High. CPAs are programs that combine traditional academic classes with CTE courses and are primarily funded by the state Department of Education.

Data collected on students in some of these Academies indicates that the programs are having a positive impact on participants. As an example, 100 percent of students enrolled in Cathedral City's Health Environmental and Learning Academy graduated from high school and 50 of the 62 students

enrolled in a four or two-year college. At Cathedral City High's Digital Arts and Technology Academy, 50 of the 73 students in the program enrolled in a two or four-year college.

Palm Springs Unified also offers several career pathways as part of its CTE program. Pathways are a sequence of courses leading to a degree, certificate, licensure or gainful employment in a particular field. PSUSD pathways include: Digital Media at Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs High; Welding at Palm Springs High; and Architecture and Engineering and Accounting at Cathedral City High. The District's newest high school, to open in Rancho Mirage in 2013, will include a culinary pathway with possible other pathways in digital media, automotive/transportation and/or the arts.

Some middle school programs that feed into the pathways or academies at the high school level are also in place in the digital media and medical professions. Pilot programs will begin this year in the pre-engineering arena at Desert Springs and Nellie Coffman Middle Schools.

For more information on the District's CTE program, call 760-416-6073 or visit <http://bit.ly/CTEinfo>.



PSUSD EDUCATOR NAMED COUNTY TEACHER OF YEAR: Cielo Vista Charter Elementary teacher Jeffrey Ballew, third from right, was recently named one of Riverside County's three Teachers of the Year and is now vying for state honors. Ballew, Nellie N. Coffman Middle School teacher Maria de Lange, second from right, and Desert Hot Springs High School teacher Danyel Grandmain, right, were chosen as District Teachers of the Year last spring and were among the honorees at the May We Honor Our Own (WHOO) banquet at the Marriott Renaissance Resort. Congratulating the winners are Board of Education members, from left, Karen Cornett, Gary Jeandron, Shari Stewart and Richard Clapp. State teachers of the year will be announced in November.

Message from the Superintendent

New Superintendent Views 2011-12 School Year

It is a great honor and pleasure to serve as the Palm Springs Unified School District's new Superintendent of Schools. I welcome all of you to the 2011-12 school year and look forward to the opportunity to meet and/or work with as many students, parents and community members as possible in the coming months. Success takes collaboration, and it is only through the support of our staff, parents and community that we can achieve our goal of academic excellence for each of our nearly 23,000 students.

As Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services for the past four years, I, along with other members of our Cabinet and Educational Services team, have worked closely with our school principals and teachers. We have focused on five instructional priorities: purchase and use of up-to-date curriculum;

data-driven decision making; teacher use of instructional strategies that assist English Learners; prevention and intervention opportunities; and parent involvement. The growth we've seen is quite remarkable, and I am so very proud of the progress that is being made, thanks to the efforts of our teachers, administrators, classified staff and, of course, our students!

Improved student academic achievement will continue to be our top area of focus. Along with that, we plan to expand our arts programs including creation of a district-wide Academy of the Performing Arts at the high school level. We also will be focused on



continuing to integrate technology into our classrooms so that all students have access to technology regardless of their income level. Nutrition and physical fitness also remain a top priority within Palm Springs Unified.

We have endured extreme budget cuts for the past few years, and it appears very likely that there will be even further reductions over the next couple of years. While trying to deliver the very best educational program possible, we have had to reduce the number of staff members and increase class sizes. Our elementary classes are the largest they have ever been. Just a few years ago, almost all of our first, second and third grade teachers had a maximum of 20 students in their classroom. This year, many of these classrooms will have 31 students. Along with the fiscal constraints comes the accountability at

both the state and federal levels to meet academic achievement targets, which increase each and every year.

Despite these challenges, academic achievement levels continue to climb, and our students are moving forward. I have no doubt that this positive trend will carry forward due to the strong commitment of our teachers, administration and classified staff, the perseverance of our students and the support of our parents and entire community.

Thank you all for your continued support of the Palm Springs Unified School District.

Christine J. Anderson, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools