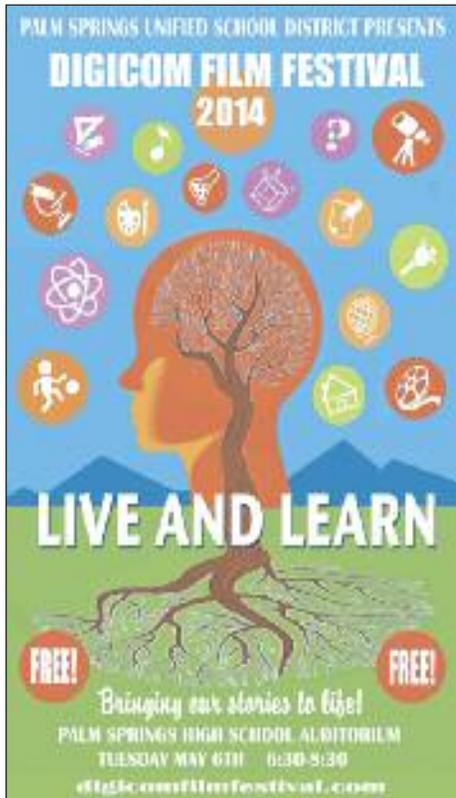




A supplement from the ...

Palm Springs Unified School District

Serving Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage & Thousand Palms — April/May 2014



District Film Festival May 6

The 6th Annual DIGICOM Student and Teacher Film Festival is slated for Tuesday, May 6 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Palm Springs High School Auditorium.

This year's theme is "Live and Learn," and over 30 short videos will be screened.

Hundreds of students, parents, teachers and community members are expected to fill the auditorium, and all are invited to attend, free of charge.

To get a glimmer of what you can expect, view the trailer from one of the past programs at www.digicomfilmfestival.com or visit the DigiCom Facebook page.

Palm Springs High School Auditorium is located at 2248 East Ramon Road in Palm Springs.

Patty and Arthur Newman, Newman's Own Foundation Donations Facilitate Program 'Backpack' Feeds Needy Students on Weekends

A donation from Patty and Arthur Newman and the Newman's Own Foundation has launched a program that is providing weekend food to some needy Cabot Yerxa Elementary students. The backpack program, administered through Family Services of the Desert/Food Now in Desert Hot Springs, is funding two breakfasts, two lunches and two snacks (the same food the children receive during the week) to 18 Cabot Yerxa students each Friday. An additional second-year donation from the Newmans and Newman's Own plus some community donations, the program is expected to serve more students next school year.

"We are pleased to be able to provide the funds to launch this much-needed program in Desert Hot Springs," said Patty Newman. "We hope that Food Now will be able to secure grant funding from additional sources so that this program can expand to meet the needs of even more children in our community."

Dana Johnson, who is in charge of resource development for Food Now, said that a reduction in food costs and the launch of a donor campaign that includes financial and in-kind donations will make it possible to feed about 30 students next year. He said it costs

Weekend backpack includes 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 snacks.

about \$250 to feed each child for the 36 weeks of the program.

"We are excited about expanding the program and are appreciative for the support we have received from the Newmans as well as from the Jewish Federation," said Johnson, adding that Food Now has also applied for a grant from Wal-Mart to expand the program.

A weekend backpack includes two servings of protein, two of grains, five of fruit, two

of vegetables, three of dairy and two snacks. The backpacks also contain flyers to help parents find community resources; nutrition, health and fitness tips; plus fun and informational materials. Food Now does all of the shopping, stores the food, fills the backpacks and delivers them to the school. School staff members distribute the backpacks prior to school dismissal on Fridays. Students bring the backpacks back on Mondays, and the Food Now volunteers pick them up to refill for the following week.

"The program is really making a difference in the lives of the children we are able to reach," said Cabot Yerxa Principal Mike Grein. "The students receiving assistance have responded extremely favorably to the quality and variety of the 'kid friendly' food provided. We are grateful to Food Now and Newman's Own Foundation for funding this much-needed program."

For learn more or to donate, call 760-288-7878 or visit www.foodnowinc.org.

Students Treated to Play at McCallum Theatre

Sunny Sands Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher Kelly Hughes is a huge Peter Pan fan. When the McCallum Theatre announced its season line-up last summer, and Hughes saw that "Peter and the Star Catcher" was on the roster, she contacted Kevin Walters, an education coordinator for the McCallum Theatre Institute, to see if she could get discounted tickets for her students. The students, who started school in August, had just read the novel.

Walters worked with Michael Flannigan, another McCallum educational coordinator, and had the support of Kajsa Thuresson-Frary, the McCallum's educational director. While Hughes was seeking discounted tickets, the McCallum team did them one (Cont'd on page 4)



Mary Lou and Jack Area, standing right, visit with Sunny Sands Elementary students, teacher Kelly Hughes, fourth from right, and student chaperones prior to the performance of "Peter and the Star Catcher."

District Digest



TECH HEROES RECOGNIZED: Three Coachella Valley teachers, one librarian and seven principals were honored as Technology Heroes by the Technology Training Foundation of America (TTFA). Each honoree received 16 refurbished desktop computers for his/her school complete with LCD monitor, keyboard and

mouse. The equipment comes through TTFA's long-time partnership with Southern California Edison. SCE provides surplus computers that TTFA screens, refurbishes and installs new operating systems on to ensure that they meet school technology standards. Jeanette Roache, TTFA president/founder, third from left, also presented the honorees with a refurbished laptop computer. PSUSD honorees, included, from left, James Workman MS Principal Brad Sauer and teacher Michael Cloutier, Raymond Cree MS Principal Dr. Tracy Piper and teacher Julie Barda, Rio Vista Elementary Principal Mike Long and teacher Michelle McMullen, Desert Hot Springs HS Librarian Laronda Hutchison, Communications Manager Joan Boiko and Cielo Vista Charter Elementary Principal Lynda Lake (represented by Cielo Vista teacher Jen Geyer).

ARTISTS AT WORK: Middle School students in the District participated in a series of Saturday art classes this year thanks to a partnership with the Desert Art Center in Palm Springs who provided 11 volunteer teachers to lead classes in clay, drawing, printmaking and watercolor, free of charge. The project is funded by a grant from the Regional Access Project Foundation. Plans are under way for next fall's program.



BUSY SPRING AT MIDDLE SCHOOL ASES PROGRAMS:

Students enrolled in the After School Education and Safety (ASES) programs at PSUSD's middle schools, have been quite engaged this spring. Operated by the Family YMCA of the Desert, the ASES program provides homework support, enrichment and physical activities each day after school. Enrichment activities range from art to music to drama and more. A few examples: at Nellie Coffman, the ASES art room is a visual walk through gallery displaying student projects including creative mirrored self-portraits, wood architectural designs and other works of expression. At Painted Hills, one of this year's offerings is a hands-on culinary arts program where students are learning everything from menu creation to measuring ingredients, preparation cooking and food sampling. At Raymond Cree, ASES artists with the help of instructor Timothy Kroe, completed another colorful wall panel entitled, "Road to Success." And at Desert Springs Middle School, students and staff continue their creations each week in the "K'nex Program," where they construct through different pieces that can interlock at different angles and directions. Students are often asked to use concepts learned in their math and science classes to make their creations come to life. Pictured above at DSMS are, from left, staff member Jason Quinones and students Devon Williams, Kimberly Flores and Marlena Mendoza. Missing from photo is DSMS teacher Bill McIntosh, who directs the "K'nex Program."



NEW HOME AT BELLA VISTA:

The students and staff of the former Edward Wenzlaff Elementary School in Desert Hot Springs, moved into the new Bella Vista Elementary School, home of the Bulldogs, following winter break. A dedication ceremony for the new school was held in March. Cutting the ribbon at the ceremony are, from left, bottom, Principal Lisa Arseo, Board of Education President Richard Clapp and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson; second from, Desert Hot Springs Mayor Adam Sanchez, Board of Education Member Shari Stewart, Congressman Ruiz' Director of Operations and Outreach Elizabeth Iannone; and Assemblyman Manuel Perez; Back row, from left, Desert Hot Springs City Councilmen Joe McKee, Scott Matas and Russell Betts.



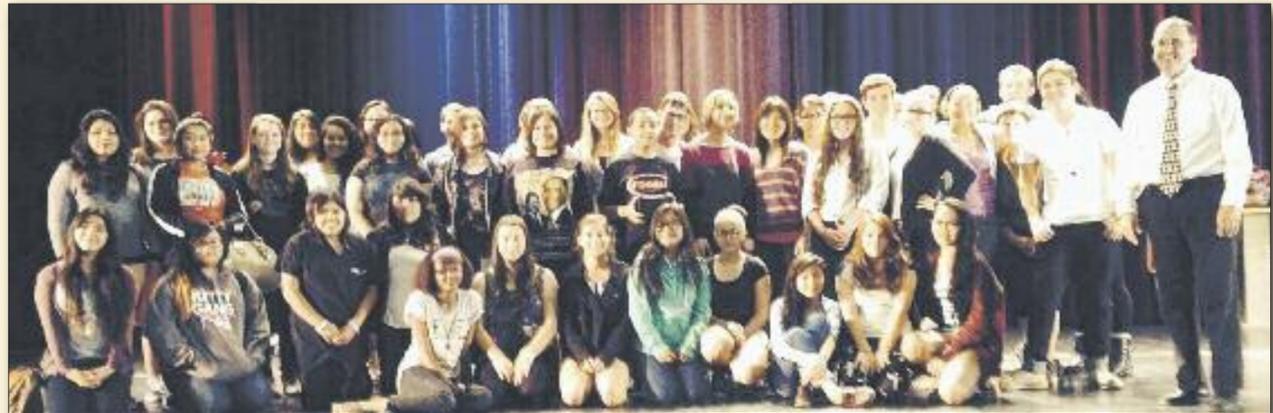
BUG LADY' AT SUNNY SANDS: Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert Area recently sponsored a traveling insect and arthropod program for elementary students in the Coachella Valley including six first-grade classes at Sunny Sands Elementary School. "Dr. Sue's Traveling Insect and Arthropod Zoo" features Dr. Susan E. Van Vorhis Key, pictured with students, an entomologist who brings her insects and teaching tools into classrooms. The League provides educational tools for students through its Read and Discover Program and new clothing to needy children through its Operation School Bell program.



STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR KIDWIND NATIONALS: The Board of Education recently honored students in the Desert Hot Springs High Renewable Energy Academy of Learning for receiving first, second and third place in the Fourth Annual KidWind Regional Competition in February. The students recently represented the school at the national KidWind competition in Washington D.C.. The KidWind program helps teachers learn about wind energy technology and provides curriculum and materials for integrating wind energy instruction into their classes. Pictured are, from left, Desert Hot Springs High Principal Dr. Anne Kalisek, Board of Education President Richard Clapp and winners Abraham Fuerte, Jarrod Trollope, Jenyfer Mendoza, Joseph Facer, Sergio Ulin, Morgan Baxter, David Moody, Instructor Mike Phelan, Jose Gonzalez and Jairo Salazar.



MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM HONOR: The Palm Springs Unified School District's Mental Health Program, pictured below, has been selected to receive the "Outstanding School and Agency Award" from the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT). The award will be presented at the CAMFT annual membership meeting on May 3 in Indian Wells.



PS NOON ROTARY SUPPORTS COMMUNITY CONCERTS: The Palm Springs Community Concert Association provided another four-concert series this season at the Palm Springs High School Auditorium. Thanks to a \$3,000 donation from the Palm Springs Noon Rotary Club, PSUSD students were able to enjoy two special daytime performances of Jesse Lynch's Jazz 101 in January and mezzos-soprano Laurie Rubin (pictured above, center, with PSHS Choir Director Robert Hekel's class), in February.

PSUSD Board of Education

- Richard Clapp, President
- Gary Jeandron, Clerk
- Donald T. Aikens
- Karen Cornett
- Shari Stewart

PSUSD Administration

- Christine J. Anderson, Ed. D., Superintendent
- Mauricio Arellano, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
- Brian Murray, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
- Mike Swize, Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

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WELDING STUDENTS CREATE NEW LIBRARY BIKE RACK:

Students in the advanced welding class at Palm Springs High School recently created a custom 14-foot bike rack for the Palm Springs Public Library. Under the direction of instructor Steve Fabian, rear left, student welders included, front, from left, Chris McCall, Eric Fernandez and Josh Meza along with Javier Soria and Thomas Elme (not pictured). The students took about 40 hours to construct the rack. Pictured at the dedication ceremony are, from left, PSUSD Director of Linked Learning Dr. Diana Lamar, Board of Education member Donald T. Aikens, Palm Springs Public Arts Commissioner Anne Rowe, PSUSD Coordinator of Fine Arts Louisa Castrodale, City of Palm Springs Public Arts Coordinator Jennifer Henning, PS Library Board of Trustees President Ron Willison, Public Arts Commission Chair Patrick Sheehan, Palm Springs Library Director Jeannie Kays, Library Board of Trustees Member Linda Futterer, Palm Springs City Clerk Jay Thompson, and PS Library Board of Trustees member David Gray.



PSUSD Staffers Receive State, County Honors

PSUSD's Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Dr. Mike Swize has been named the Curriculum and Instruction Administrator of the Year for the state by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). PSUSD's Mental Health Program Manager Dr. J.M. Evosevich was recently named Riverside County's Classified Administrator of the Year.

Swize, who has been with the District for his entire 24-year education career, was recently



Swize

honor. Other PSUSD Region XIX honorees included Superintendent Dr. Christine Anderson, Director of Student Services Jane Mills, Director of Career Technical Education Dr. Diana Lamar, Raymond Cree Middle School Principal Dr. Tracy Piper and Cielo Vista Charter Elementary Principal Lynda Lake.

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Swize, who has served as a teacher, elementary and middle school principal, Title I coordinator, Director of English Learners and Director of elementary curriculum and instruction, will receive his state award at the ACSA state conference in San Diego next fall.

Evosevich was chosen from among all Classified Administrator of the Year candidates from Riverside County.



Evosevich

He joined PSUSD as a counseling therapist in 2006 and was named the District's first Mental Health Program Manager with the establishment of the program in 2010. He manages a staff of 14 mental health clinicians, four rehabilitation specialists and a mental health case worker who serve 425 students with individual, family and group counseling; behavior analysis; and case management.

Evosevich will be honored along with other county and district educators of the year by the Riverside County Office of Education on May 6 in Riverside.



ENDOWMENT GROWS LARGER: Rancho Mirage resident and local philanthropist Helene Galen, right, presents the second installment of \$250,000 toward her \$1.5 million endowment for the performing arts at Rancho Mirage High School to PSUSD Foundation Executive Director Ellen Goodman. The Helene Galen Performing Arts Center and Helene Galen Theatre at Rancho Mirage High hosts school and community productions and performances throughout the year.

Students Meet Cast from Play

(Cont'd from page 1)

better. They approached local donors Mary Lou and Jack Area who generously agreed to pay for 30 of the best seats in the house. At a March 30 matinee performance, the students and their chaperones enjoyed the show for free.

The McCallum provided a photographer for the event, which also included a post-performance reception where the students got to meet their hosts and members of the cast. The reception was held in the McCallum Founder's Room, which is reserved for special events, and

included punch and snacks. Mary Lou Area also presented a souvenir tote bag to Hughes, which was made from the actual Billboard from the "Peter and the Star Catcher" production on Broadway, along with a poster signed by all the cast members for Hughes' classroom.

"My class and I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Area and the McCallum Theatre for their generous support in making this adventure a reality," said Hughes. "Words cannot describe the amazing day we had and the impact this made on all of us."

Message from the Superintendent

Smaller Classes, Other Positive Actions Planned

Following several years of extreme challenges and budget cuts, California's school districts are finally in a better place and are able to make some positive fiscal changes.

As the Palm Springs Unified School District administration and Board of Education begin to review our budget for next year as well as prepare our Local Control Accountability Plan for submission to the state, we are moving forward in several areas.

Our staff members have not received an increase in overall compensation for several years. We are pleased that we were finally in a position to negotiate a pay raise with our employee bargaining units to provide a 4.25 percent total compensation



package retroactive to July, 2013. In addition to the salary increase, we will also be able to reduce class sizes in the 2014-15 school year by adding 28 teachers to our staff. In kindergarten through third grade, staffing targets will decrease from 29 to 27 students. At the middle level, all sixth through eighth grade staffing targets will decrease from 29.5 to 28.5. At the high school level, staffing targets will decrease from 28.5 to 27.5. This is the second consecutive year in which we decreased class sizes at middle and high schools.

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In addition, we will be adding six counselors to support our students in the 2014-15 school year. Our middle schools will now have two counselors each to support our students' emotional and academic needs.

In order to better meet the service needs of our schools, we will be adding 16 classified staff positions in the areas of maintenance and operations, custodial, special education, security, risk management, benefits, technology and fiscal services.

Finally, our plans include adding six assistant principals for the 2014-15 school year. Four assistant principals will be added at our elementary schools with the highest levels of enrollment, poverty and community crime. These schools include Bella

Vista, Bubbling Wells and Cabot Yerxa Elementary in Desert Hot Springs and Cathedral City Elementary. Painted Hills Middle School and Desert Springs Middle Schools in Desert Hot Springs will each have an additional assistant principal, replacing the Dean position at those sites.

I am so proud of how our staff, students and parents weathered the fiscal storm over the past several years. I am certain that the next few years will provide the opportunity for our district to plan for a bright future.

Christine J. Anderson

Christine J. Anderson, Ed. D.

Superintendent of Schools