



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 2015

2015-16 School Year Begins for All PSUSD on August 13

Palm Springs Unified School District opens the 2015-16 school year on Thursday, Aug. 13. All students are expected to report to classes on that day. This is the first time in more than 20 years that the entire District is on one calendar.

While the school year begins a few weeks earlier than many are used to, students and their families can look forward to a full week off at Thanksgiving, completion of the first semester for high school students prior to winter break, three weeks off for winter break and two weeks off for spring break.

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 upon the number of students who qualify for the program, regardless of whether students choose to use the services.

District Welcomes New Administrators

As the 2015-16 school year begins, some PSUSD administrators have changed roles and some new administrators have joined the PSUSD family.

Upon the retirement of Cielo Vista Charter Elementary Principal **Lynda Lake**, the new Co-Principals at Cielo Vista are **Devlin Clinton** and **Jennifer Geyer**. Clinton was previously the school's Assistant Principal. Geyer returns to Cielo Vista after serving as Assistant Principal at Cabot Yerxa Elementary School during the 2014-15 school year.

Cabot Yerxa Elementary Principal **Mike Grein** has moved to Desert Hot Springs High School, where he is serving as an Assistant Principal. Desert Hot Springs High Assistant Principal **Elizabeth Ramirez** has relocated to Julius Corsini Elementary, where she is serving as that school's Principal. Julius Corsini Principal **Wendy Meka** is now the Principal at Landau, and Landau Principal **Blanca Luna** has moved to

All Palm Springs Unified School District students entering the 7th grade this school year, and all new PSUSD students entering 7th through 12th grade, must show proof of an adolescent whopping cough booster (called "Tdap") to attend school. District officials are asking that students be immunized as soon as possible and present proof of immunization at their school site immediately.

The state Legislature also recently passed a new law requiring all students, other than those with a medical waiver signed by a physician, to be fully immunized in order to attend school. The law goes into effect January 1, 2016. Students who are not in compliance by that date will be required to enroll in an independent study or home schooling program in order to receive a public school education.

For more information on immunization requirements, contact your individual school site or the District Office at 416-6000.

Vista del Monte Elementary as that school's Principal. Vista del Monte Principal **Joe Scudder** is the new Principal at Two Bunch Palms Elementary.

Mark Arnold, who previously served as Katherine Finchy Elementary Principal before relocating to northern California a few years ago, has returned to PSUSD to be the Principal at Cabot Yerxa Elementary. Two Bunch Palms Elementary Principal **Jim Feffer** is now PSUSD's Director of Assessment and Data Analysis.

Dr. Todd Reed, who most recently implemented Temecula Unified's first virtual school, will be PSUSD's first Virtual School Principal and lead the implementation of the new Desert Learning Academy. **John Hermanson**, who has served as a substance abuse therapist, bilingual therapist and, most recently, mental health services supervisor, joins PSUSD as its Mental Health Director.

CCHS Academy Students Producing Radio Show, Podcast

Palm Springs Unified School District's weekly radio show, *You Learn Something New Every Day*, has evolved into a student-produced endeavor. The show airs on a new day and time, is broadcast from a new setting and is available as a podcast for those who can't listen on the radio or prefer that format.



Supt. of Schools Christine Anderson, second from right, and Board of Education President Karen Cornett, right, recently visited the DATA Academy to record the Aug. 8 show. Also pictured are, from left, Host Joan Boiko, DATA instructor Tom Buck and student producers Norma Vazquez, Rosa Rodriguez and Janett Tirado. Missing from photo is producer Rio Chacon.

PSUSD's Communications Manager Joan Boiko has hosted *You Learn Something New Every Day* each Wednesday evening for the last two years on Progressive Talk 1450 KPTR AM. The show features guests from PSUSD and community organizations who share information on activities and events of interest to District students, families and local residents.

Last spring, the show began recording in the Digital Academy Technology Academy (DATA) DS (Digital Storytelling) studio at Cathedral City High School. The show is now being produced by a team of 11th grade DATA students including Rio Chacon, Rosa Rodriguez, Janett Tirado and Norma Vazquez, under the direction of DATA instructor Tom Buck. These students recently competed in the Audio/Radio Production category at the state SkillsUSA competition in San Diego, and Vazquez was elected as a state SkillsUSA officer. Last year Chacon and Vazquez made it to the national competition in this category.

(Continued on page 4)

District Digest



Student Board Members Honored: The Board of Education honored its outgoing student board members at the end of the school year. Pictured, from left, Board of Education President Karen Cornett; Zane Martin, DHSHS; Connor Erb, CCHS; Chris Tellez, Mount San Jacinto; Mariah Ferrer, RMHS; and Board Clerk Shari Stewart. Missing from photo is Ricky Wright, PSHS.



Administrators Honored With Regional Awards: Seven Palm Springs Unified administrators and two graduating seniors were among the honorees at the recent Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region XIX Administrator of the Year Awards ceremony at the Hilton in Palm Springs. Pictured, from left, are scholarship winners Sophia and Isabella Castrodale, Louisa Castrodale, Central Office administrator; Julio Omier, Valuing Diversity; Omar Tinoco, Secondary Co-administrator; Dr. Milt Jones, Continuation/Educational Options administrator; David Vogel, Partners in Education; Board of Education member Shari Stewart; Denise Fenton, Elementary Co-administrator; Board of Education member John Gerardi; and Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson, Missing from photo is honoree Classified Leader Dr. J.M. Evosevich.



Teachers of Year Honored: The PSUSD 2015-16 District Teachers of the Year were honored at the recent We Honor Our Own (WHOO) staff banquet at the Renaissance Resort in Palm Springs. Pictured, from left, Supt. Dr. Christine Anderson, Board of Education President Karen Cornett, Board Members James Williamson and Shari Stewart, Elementary Teacher of the Year Rebecca Santana, Middle School Teacher of Year Jennifer Dean-Knapp, High School Teacher of Year Martha Hunter and Board members Richard Clapp and John Gerardi.



First PSUSD Public Art Sculpture Unveiled: Charlie Ciali, a printmaker and artist, who has served as an Artist-In-Residence at Bella Vista Elementary School, donated this sculpture, "The Story Teller," which was recently unveiled. It is the first sculpture donated to our schools, joining 70 murals created by various artists at our 27 school sites. Several more sculpture pieces are being donated over the next few weeks to be placed at schools throughout the District. Pictured, from left, are: DHS City Councilman Scott Matas, PSUSD Board of Education Member John Gerardi, DHS Councilman Russell Betts, Assistant Supt. of Education Services Dr. Mike Swize, DHS Councilman Joe McKee, Bella Vista Principal Lisa Arseo, Ciali and PSUSD Arts Coordinator Louisa Castrodale.



Students Get Streets Named in Their Honor: Three PSUSD graduating seniors were recently honored with street namings for the next year. Pictured clockwise, from top left, Cathedral City High School's Chai Arnold with city and school officials in front of his street at Dave Kelley and Date Palm; Mount San Jacinto's Priscilla Lara at her sign at McCallum and Landau in Cathedral City; and Desert Hot Springs High's Reyna Tejada unveiling her sign at Pierson and Cholla.

History Comes Alive: Martha McDevitt's 5th grade students at Cathedral City Elementary made history come alive with their depictions of their favorite historical characters at the school's annual Living History Museum held just before the end of the 2014-15 school year. Pictured above Chelsea Gomez shares artist Mary Cassall's story with students.



Two PSUSD Students Go to State Science Fair: Two PSUSD students, Sasha A'Hearn, a Raymond Cree 6th grader, left, and Eden Burkett, a Cielo Vista 6th grader, right, took top honors in the Riverside County Science Fair earlier this year, earning them a spot to compete at the California State Science Fair held at the California State Science Center in Los Angeles in May. Sasha received an Honorable Mention at state in the Junior General Microbiology category.

PSUSD Board of Education

Karen Cornett Shari Stewart
President *Clerk*

Richard Clapp John Gerardi James Williamson

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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PSHS Students Receive WLF Scholarships: Palm Springs High School students Xochtil Rodriguez and Angelique Bueno, pictured with Women Leaders Forum Founder Mary Roche, received \$5,000 scholarships for WLF at a recent luncheon at the Hyatt Resort in Indian Wells.



Mentors Honored For Service: The 18 mentors for last school year's Digital Arts Technology Academy (DATA) junior class program were honored at a luncheon at the Classic Club in Palm Desert. Students wrote letters or presented videos to thank their mentors for giving of their time and wisdom throughout the year and assisting them with goal-setting, preparing for interviews, college preparation and more.

Podcast

(Continued from page 1)

Producing a weekly radio show is great experience for the four DATA students, who will continue to work with Boiko through their upcoming senior year as well as train some underclassmen to take over before they graduate. The DATA students also produce a podcast version of each episode, available for downloading on iTunes after each show airs. Listeners can subscribe to the podcast so that they get automatic downloads when a new show posts.

"I am so impressed with our team," said Boiko. "I truly think we are breaking new ground here. It is a wonderful collaboration. We are grateful to R&R Broadcasting for supporting us in this endeavor and allowing the flexibility to produce the show in this manner.

"These young women are extremely talented," Boiko continued. "What I bring to the table is content and the gift of gab. Our producers bring the rest. Many think you just sit down and press the record button. There is a lot more to it, and these students know how to do it right and are perfecting the craft even more as we go. I am already learning a lot from them, and I am so excited to be working with them on this project."

You Learn Something New Every Day can be heard every Saturday beginning from 3-4 p.m. on Progressive Talk 1450 KPTR AM or on iHeart radio. Subscribe to the weekly podcast, by visiting <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/you-learn-something-new-every/id983829745>. To suggest future show topics, contact Joan Boiko at jboiko@psusd.us or (760) 416-6010.

District Programs Awarded \$97,000 in Grants from Anderson Foundation

Palm Springs Unified School District schools and departments have received nearly \$97,000 in grants from the Anderson Children's Foundation to fund a variety of programs during the 2015-16 school year. The awards are among a total of \$610,000 awarded to 55 non-profit agencies, schools and school districts by the Foundation last month.

DIGICOM, a partnership between the PSUSD and community which includes extensive student and staff training and the DIGICOM annual film festival, was awarded \$22,178 to fund the "DIGICOM Cross-Age Mentorship Program (CAMP) beginning this next school year in Desert Hot Springs at Bella Vista Elementary, Painted Hills Middle and Desert Hot Springs High. Funds will support a DIGICOM after school club at both Bella Vista and Painted Hills where students will learn techniques for creating meaningful digital stories while collaborating and creating videos that share their learning, issues and personal narratives. Twenty students from DHSHS video production classes will serve as DIGICOM mentors and work with Painted Hills and Bella Vista students. DIGICOM faculty will provide ongoing, on-site training and support for all students and teacher facilitators, including high school mentor and mentee training.

Grants of \$10,000 each were awarded to the James Workman Middle School Band, Raymond Cree Middle School Band and Cathedral City High School Band for

the replacement of worn instruments. The Palm Springs High Instrumental Music Boosters received \$10,000 for music instrument "consumables" (such as mouthpieces and mutes), replacement of auxiliary percussion instruments and funding for professional musicians to provide musical instruction.

Palm Springs Unified's Health Services department received \$16,772 for special equipment to assist with vision and hearing screenings for children with special needs in pre-school and kindergarten. PSUSD's Educational Services department received \$12,000 for its "Art With Heart" program, which provides innovative art classes for teens who are at-risk, with a focus on gang intervention and prevention. Classes include teens that have been: bullied, beaten, physically or sexually abused, outcasts, resorted to violence or trapped by the hopelessness of poverty.

Rancho Mirage High School's math department received \$5,000 to purchase a class set of graphing calculators.

A total of 85 grant requests totaling just over \$2 million were submitted to Anderson this year. The Foundation funds projects to serve unmet needs of children in the Coachella Valley, as well as creative and innovative projects to enrich the lives of children in the community. Since 1992, Anderson Children's Foundation has funded 740 projects totaling \$10.1 million to non-profits and schools in the Coachella Valley.

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the 2015-16 School Year!



We are looking forward to a great year starting with a single District calendar for the first time in more than 20 years.

Please note that school begins for ALL PSUSD this year on Thursday, Aug. 13. All of our families will enjoy a full week off for Thanksgiving, three weeks for winter break and two weeks for spring break.

I would also like to remind all of our parents that our Parent Center is up and running at full speed, and

there are many courses and resources available to assist you in helping your child to get the most of his or her education. All of the services are free, our director is bilingual and bi-literate, and we even offer free babysitting services during our courses. Visit <http://parentcenterpsusd.weebly.com/> or call (760) 416-1374.

We are excited about the new programs being implemented for the first time this school year. Please watch for further information as we move forward in new endeavors including: our Desert Learning Academy virtual

school, our Language Academy at Vista del Monte Elementary, the International Baccalaureate program at Cathedral City High, reinstatement of freshman sports, the doubling of the number of physical education teachers at our elementary schools and expanded digital literacy emphasis across the entire District.

As we launch the new school year, please remember to slow down in school zones and take the time to talk to your children about safety precautions while traveling to and from school. Remind them to: never walk alone, not to

stray from the direct route to and from school, not talk to strangers, and report any suspicious activities or people to a trusted adult.

I wish all of our students and families a wonderful 2015-16 school year. Thank you, as always, for your support of the Palm Springs Unified School District.

Christine J. Anderson, Ed.D.

Christine J. Anderson
Superintendent of Schools