

Conejo Valley Unified School District

2007 Annual Report

Building

Bright

Futures



One Student at a Time



A Look at Some of
the District's Most
Inspirational Kids

On the following pages are stories to inspire us

Within this report, in addition to test scores, facilities updates, and enrollment figures, you will find several real-life stories about our school district and the outstanding programs and people that are building the future one story at a time. Many of these meaningful stories are about students who have overcome tremendous obstacles to achieve excellence in school and in their personal lives. They make our future look very bright.

We are tremendously proud of all of them and their achievements. Unfortunately, there are many more stories that the space in this report will not allow us to tell. We hope you enjoy these stories and find them inspiring. Together we are building futures, one story at a time.

Sincerely,
Conejo Valley Unified School District
Superintendent Mario Contini

"Her soul must be overflowing"

National group recognizes teen for her good works

Lauren Beeder, a junior at Newbury Park High School who has devoted her young life to helping children with cancer and seniors in convalescent homes, was one of six teenagers nationwide honored for their good deeds by the Caring Institute during a gala ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 16.

"It was an awesome experience," said Lauren, who attended the event with her parents, Kerry and Renee, and her sister, Lindsey. "I got to meet some amazing people."

The Caring Institute is a nonprofit organization founded in 1985 to honor and promote the values of caring, integrity and public service. Inspired by the example of Mother Teresa, the institute believes that the solution to most problems is the caring of one human being to another. In Lauren's case, she has touched several lives.

Volunteering since the age of 9, Lauren is a certified volunteer at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles where she brings joy to pediatric cancer patients and their families by blowing up balloons, babysitting or organizing festive parties.

Lauren also founded "kidsCANCERvive," a non-profit organization that raises funds for research and fosters online support groups among children with cancer and their families. So far, "kidsCANCERvive" has



Newbury Park High junior Lauren Beeder met Sen. Bob Dole during a gala ceremony in Washington, D.C. put on by the Caring Institute. She was one of six teenagers nationwide honored for their good deeds.

raised over \$35,000 for Children's Hospital.

Lauren, whose family has a history of pediatric cancer, insists she receives more from the young cancer patients than she gives. "It's unexplainable," she said. "They just bring you so much joy."

Lauren was 10 when she noticed that most people at Ventura Estates Convalescent Care did not have a family to give them company and gifts for Christmas. She decided to fill the gap by making weekly visits to patients there, often accompanied by her little dog.

"Lauren believes that in caring for people you feed a part of your soul that goes unnoticed," the Caring Institute says in its awards ceremony program. "Her soul must be overflowing."



Nathali Patlani works with a patient at the Westminster Free Clinic in Thousand Oaks.

Gift for medical work just comes naturally

What started as a volunteer job has become a passion for 16-year-old Nathali Patlani, one which will almost certainly guarantee her a career in the future.

Nathali, a junior at Newbury Park High School, started volunteering at the Westminster Free Clinic in Thousand Oaks two years ago.

"She is always the first one at the clinic and she is always the last one to leave," said Teen Program Coordinator Veronica Ramirez. Moreover, while student volunteers are only required to work every other Wednesday, Nathali is there every week like clockwork, Ramirez said.

The clinic, which provides basic health care, mental health and other services to the homeless and working poor, also serves as a training program for East County teens interested in the health care field.

Students are trained in basic intake activities (vitals signs, patient histories) by healthcare professionals, and learn basic medical terminology and health education information.

Nathali has a natural gift for working with patients, her supervisors noted. She was selected as one of the clinic's student managers because of her dedication and compassion.

"We have over 72 student interns," explained the clinic's Executive Director Lisa Safaeinili. "There are only a few special ones who stand out and show the promise and potential of doing great things."

Nathali was born in Mexico and came to the United States as a toddler with her mother, who does not speak English. She attended Sequoia Middle School before starting at NPHS. She gets good grades and is also taking classes in Chinese and American Sign language. On Saturdays, she goes to Oxnard College for classes.

But the highlight of the teen's week is walking through the doors of the clinic every Wednesday. She loves working with the patients. "It's a connection between people, the trust that you have with them," she said.

Nathali dreams of attending medical school on the East Coast and eventually becoming an emergency room surgeon. She would also like to help raise the standard of living for her mother and younger brother.

"If I progress well in school I can get them a better house to live in," she said.

Safaeinili hopes to locate a full-ride scholarship to college for Nathali through some of the groups who support the clinic's work. "Because of who we are," Safaeinili said, "we have funders who come to us all the time."

As one of the clinic's bilingual student helpers, Nathali also participates in additional community outreach efforts which target low-wage earners who work two or three jobs, Ramirez said. She is paid a small stipend for this work.

For now, the ambitious 16-year-old is just happy making an impact locally. "She'll go shopping at the markets and she gets patients coming up to her all the time thanking her," Ramirez said.

ON THE COVER: At top, from left, are Newbury Park High junior Lauren Beeder (center) with Makenna Brown and Glen Armer at Banyan Elementary; and Marilyn Rabe of Thousand Oaks High. At bottom, clockwise from left are Colina Middle School ASB President Paul Hairston; Thousand Oaks High student Abraham Mora; Nathali Patlani of Newbury Park High; and Lang Ranch third-grader Teagan Stedman (center) and friends Laurel and William Lyman.

National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists named

Twenty-three outstanding CVUSD high school students are semi-finalists in this year's National Merit Scholarship Program out of more than 1.3 million contestants nationwide.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and college scholarships. About 16,000 students who enter the program around the nation become semi-finalists who continue in the competition for Merit Scholarship awards offered this year.

The competition began with the 2006 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which screened entrants initially. The semi-finalists are the highest scoring entrants in each state. They now advance to the final competition which concludes this spring.

The 23 CVUSD semi-finalists are:

Newbury Park High School

• **Michael Alland** — Michael wants to attend UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego or USC. He is an International Baccalaureate scholar, a member of the California Scholarship Federation and participates in the Mock Trial competition.



Michael Alland

• **Heather DeCamp** — Heather hopes to attend either UCLA or Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in the fall and study science or engineering. She is a member of the GSA Club and is a library aide at NPHS.



Heather DeCamp

• **Kevin LaRosa** — Kevin wants to attend UCLA, UC Berkeley, or UC San Diego. He is an International Baccalaureate scholar and an Eagle Scout. He is a member of the California Scholarship Federation and the National Honor Society.



Kevin LaRosa

• **Lingmiao Wang** — Lingmiao plays violin in the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestra and is a volunteer at the Los Robles Medical Center. She is the Associated Student Government secretary and is involved with the National Honors Society. She hopes to study engineering and business in college.



Lingmiao Wang

Thousand Oaks High School

• **Kathryn Baumgarten** — Kathryn hopes to attend California Lutheran College and major in computer programming. She's active in tennis, the Girl Scouts and plays the piano. Kathryn serves as a junior docent at the Stagecoach Inn Museum.



Kathryn Baumgarten

• **Stephanie Bonds** — Stephanie would like to major in economics at UCLA or UC Berkeley. She is a member of the TOHS marching band, drum line, wind ensemble, American Red Cross club, Girl Scouts, and the California Scholarship Federation.



Stephanie Bonds

• **Young Kim** — Young is Editor-in-Chief of The Lancer, on the Link Crew, California Scholastic Federation, and volunteers at Westminster Free Clinic. He is hoping to attend Stanford and major in pre-medical studies. He also plays violin for the CSUN Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and is the co-captain for the TOHS tennis team.



Young Kim

• **Annelise Mah** — Annelise hopes to attend Stanford and study biology. She enjoys playing the piano and is a volunteer at the Westminster Free Clinic. Annelise is involved in the American Red Cross Club, Rubik's Cubing Club, Academic Decathlon, Knowledge Bowl, and the TOHS Dance team.



Annelise Mah

• **Brian Moon** — Brian hopes to attend Dartmouth and major in pre-medical studies and business. He participates in the Mock Trial competition, varsity tennis, and the California Scholarship Federation.



Brian Moon

• **Karly Noblitt** — Karly wants to attend Westmont College and major in law, political science or medicine. She's a member of the Link Crew, California Scholarship Federation, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.



Karly Noblitt

• **Abigail Sasson** — Abigail is involved in the band, Theater Department, Free Verse Club, Academy Program, and the California Scholarship Federation. Her top college choices are UCLA and Columbia and she wants to major in political science. She is the TOHS Band Drum Majorette.



Abigail Sasson

• **Kenneth Wang** — Kenneth's top college choice is the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School where he plans to major in actuarial science. He is The Lancer news editor and Key Club Publishing Officer. He is on the Link Crew and California Scholarship Federation.



Kenneth Wang

Westlake High School

• **Michael Chen** — Michael wants to major in business at UC Berkeley. He participates in volleyball and plays violin in the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestra. He also speaks Chinese.



Michael Chen

• **Dominic Insogna** — Dominic has applied to USC, UCLA, Stanford, Penn, Columbia and Yale and hopes to major in business and philosophy with a minor in music. He plays in the jazz band also plays tennis.



Dominic Insogna

• **Ben Liu** — Ben hopes to major in astrophysics and/or chemistry at CalTech, Harvard, or Stanford. He recently created a model to determine the mass of a black hole based upon the speed of propagation and electron and positron pair formation.



Ben Liu

• **Kathleen Lo** — Kathleen will attend one of the UCs or Duke with a major in biology or engineering. She plays clarinet in the marching band.



Kathleen Lo

• **Victoria Lou** — Victoria has applied to UC Berkeley, UCLA, Dartmouth, and New York University. She hopes to major in business or finance. She plays volleyball and participates in the Conejo Valley Youth Orchestra, where she plays viola.



Victoria Lou

• **Andrew Maleki** — Andrew wants to attend Stanford, UCLA, or UC Berkeley. He is considering an economics major. Andrew is involved in the mathematical club at WHS and plays on the tennis team. He is also a docent at the Ronald Reagan Library.



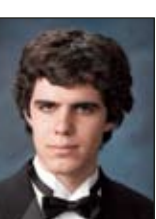
Andrew Maleki

• **Linda Peng** — Linda hopes to major in pre-medical studies at one of the UC's, Pomona College, or Yale. She is a Junior State of America president, involved in the Red Cross Club and plays doubles tennis. Linda plays the piano and violin.



Linda Peng

• **David Richardson** — David's top college choices are Stanford, UCLA, and UC Berkeley. He plays the french horn in the band and is a member of the Philosophy Club.



David Richardson

• **Phillip Shao** — Phillip has applied to Stanford, Yale, Princeton, and UC Berkeley. He wants to major in economics and/or physics. He is president of the Magic and Chess clubs and is on the Academic Decathlon team.



Phillip Shao

• **Aislinn Smalling** — Aislinn has applied to Princeton and Harvard and hopes to major in history or science. She's been on the swim team for four years, which won a CIF championship in 2007. She takes voice lessons.



Aislinn Smalling

• **Danni Xie (Shay)** — Danni wants to major in biomedical engineering at Yale, Stanford, or UC Berkeley. She's been a Junior State of America president, Academic Decathlon president, and a Mock Trial attorney. She plays the piano and violin.



Danni Xie

Instruction

Immigrant's rapid progress inspires all she meets

New to the United States, its foreign culture and equally foreign language, 13-year-old Guatemalan native Marilyn Rabe knew she needed to fast-track her English skills. Two years later, boosted by an incredible work ethic, Marilyn is now a straight-A freshman student at Thousand Oaks High School. Her favorite subject? English.

In 2005, Marilyn, now 15, and her sister Melisa, 19, were sent to live with their aunt and uncle in Thousand Oaks. Their mother is Guatemalan, but their father is an American citizen.

"I think my father wanted us to stay here because he wants a better life for us," the shy and soft-spoken teen explained.

But their aunt and uncle spoke little Spanish and the girls would soon be enrolled in local schools. Marilyn began at Redwood Middle School knowing only a few phrases in English, and she admits to being more than a little nervous.

"It was scary ... The language was so hard and the culture so different," she said.

Right off the bat, she amazed her teachers with her ability to quickly master English.

"She is very highly motivated," said Janet Pooley, who teaches a structured English Language Immersion program at Redwood. "That kind of dedication to her own education and learning is

what's remarkable about Marilyn."

The teen worked hard both during and after school, Pooley said, and went out of her way to thank her teachers for their help.

"I think you have to appreciate whatever you have and you have to try hard," Marilyn explained.

Some students in Marilyn's position would still be struggling in specialized programs at this point, Redwood Middle School Principal Lou Lichtl said. Her rapid movement through the ELL program "inspired us as a staff," he said.

While Marilyn at first set about learning English as a survival tool, she grew to appreciate the art of writing for itself. She composed a poem in both English and Spanish about the flag of Guatemala and submitted it to Redwood's literary magazine. It was published, Pooley said, adding that the magazine is selective in what it chooses to use.

The heartfelt composition reveals a longing within Marilyn for her native country, especially for the rest of her family and friends. But Marilyn sees a brighter future for herself in the United States. College is in her future, although she has no idea yet what her major will be.

Pooley predicts great things for this dedicated teen. "Her success will grow in the future."



Marilyn Rabe has quickly moved from an English Language Immersion program in middle school to a straight-A student at Thousand Oaks High.

Schools Attuned helps break through academic barriers

Every student has a unique learning profile with specific strengths and weaknesses. Students who struggle in school need teachers who recognize their learning differences and help frustrated students break through barriers to academic success.

That's the idea behind the Conejo Valley Unified School District's Schools Attuned Program. Since 2003, nine CVUSD elementary schools – Acacia, Cypress, Lang Ranch, Madrona, Manzanita, Sycamore Canyon, Westlake, Westlake Hills and Wildwood – have employed the program developed by Dr. Mel Levine, a renowned developmental behavioral pediatrician. It trains teachers how to structure their classes to address the different learning styles of struggling students.

The Schools Attuned Program provides the following:

- Interventions for the regular education classroom;
- A thorough study of the eight neuro-developmental constructs (attention, language, memory, fine and gross motor function, spatial ordering, temporal-sequential ordering, higher order cognition, and social cognition) and their roles in building – and, for many children, disabling – the foundation for learning;
- Comprehensive observation instruments designed for teachers, parents and children.

Cosaro said each of the nine elementary schools has a teacher, psychologist and administrator who have undergone Schools Attuned training, and they share the program's methods with other teachers and staff on campus to build effective strategies in meeting a particular child's learning needs.

"Teachers may say, 'We've tried X, Y and Z, and it's still not working for this student,'" said Janet Cosaro, assistant superintendent of Instructional Services. "This program is effective in narrowing down the problem and determining what does work."

AP programs make gains

District passage rate exceeds state

More and more CVUSD students are enrolling in Advanced Placement classes, which allow top-performing students to challenge themselves by taking college-level courses. The AP program also provides students an opportunity to earn college credit if they pass nationally standardized AP exams.

In 2006-07, 1,559 CVUSD students took 3,023 examinations in 29 different courses. That represents an increase of 142 students and 258 examinations from 2005-06. Additionally, 71 percent passed the tests, which is a higher percentage than the county and state averages.

The district's AP program has grown dramatically in the last decade. In 1997-98, just 694 students – 865 fewer students than in 2006-07 – took 1,196 AP exams, representing a little over a third (39 percent) of the number of tests taken in 200-07.

In addition, many of these students won extra honors from the College Board, which recognizes four categories of AP achievement:

- AP Scholar: a student who completes three or more AP exams with a grade of 3 or higher.
- AP Scholar with Honor: a student who completes four or more AP exams with at least a 3 grade on each exam, and an average grade of 3.25 or higher.
- AP Scholar with Distinction: a student who completes five or more AP exams with at least a 3 on each exam, and an average grade of 3.5 or higher.
- AP National Scholar: a student who completes eight or more AP exams with an average grade of 4.00 or higher.

Summary of school results:

Newbury Park High: Fifty more students (439 vs. 389) took AP examinations in 2007 than in 2006, and 77 more examinations were administered in 2007. The percentage of students achieving a score of 3 or higher in 2007 was 62 percent, a decrease of 1 percent from the prior year. The mean score was 2.89.

Thousand Oaks High: Ten more students (441 vs. 431) took AP examinations in 2007 than in 2006 and 40 more exams were administered in 2007. The percentage of students achieving a score of 3 or higher in 2007 was 76 percent, a decrease of 1 percent from the prior year. The mean score was 3.30.

Westlake High: Eighty-two more students (679 vs. 597) took the AP examinations in 2007 than in 2006 and 141 more exams were administered in 2007. The percentage of students achieving a score of 3 or higher was 73 percent, the same as the prior year. The mean score was 3.23.

Showcases highlight stellar high school science offerings

If you don't like smelly, don't come in here," cautioned Westlake High School anatomy instructor Nancy Bowman while ushering a group of visitors into her classroom on the first night of the Conejo Schools Foundation's new Science and Technology Showcase.

Displayed for the evening were large, meaty bones, ready for dissection by Bowman's anatomy students.

Bowman's classroom was just one of the highlights of the October Showcase titled, "How Far can We Dream?" The evening was also repeated at Newbury Park High School and Thousand Oaks High.

According to Cindy Goldberg, the Foundation's Executive Director, the showcase took a many-pronged approach. Since the group is concentrating its efforts on fund-raising for science and technology programs in the schools, sponsors were invited to the showcases. The evenings were also designed to spread the word to parents and the community about the good things that are happening inside the



Westlake High teacher Nancy Bowman explains the dynamics of her anatomy class to visitors at the Science Showcase in October.

high schools' science classrooms.

"It's the first time we've tried this," Goldberg explained. "We want to make sure the parents are aware of how you can best prepare your child for the global marketplace."

Bowman's popular class at Westlake does more than its part in helping to prepare students for careers in medicine. With its cadaver program, and "state-of-the-art" autopsy tables, Bowman said students get a first-class lesson in anatomy.

Two other science classrooms were also on display, including a physics lab with a robotic demonstration. The evenings also featured a panel discussion on science education.

The Conejo Foundation's emphasis on science and technology was developed in response to the growing demand for updated facilities, Goldberg said. "The needs change faster than we can keep up."

The District recently received a big boost from Amgen, Inc., with a \$115,000 grant last year to help kick off its science and technology campaign for district schools. Science staff development, in-service training for science teachers, and the funding of college-age science lab specialists are being funded through the Amgen award.

NPHS's AVID class helps jumpstart college plans

At Newbury Park High, 51 students who are planning to attend college but are in need of a little extra help getting there are taking advantage of the school's AVID Achievement Via Individual Determination - program.

Many enrolled in AVID may be the first in their families to make college. Others have academic potential but they lack confidence or the social support they need to succeed in school.

"They're mostly middle-of-the-road students who want to succeed, but have never been taught how," said Darrin Carr, Newbury Park High's AVID coordinator.

AVID, started in 1980 by a high school English teacher in San Diego, is a growing international program serving 300,000 students in 45 states and 15 countries. It provides students with rigorous academic instruction, with an emphasis on accountability and writing skills.

In its second year at Newbury Park, AVID is a four-year program. For freshmen, AVID strategies are incorporated into their English class. As sophomores, they take an AVID social science class, and as juniors they will take an AVID science class. The AVID class for senior year has yet to be determined, Carr said.

Students are required to keep daily journals to reflect on what they have learned as well as what they still struggle with. They must keep their binders in order, by section, with no loose papers.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, students receive tutoring from AVID-trained college students from California Lutheran College and California State University Channel Islands. Also, Carr arranges for guest speakers from a variety of career fields to come to talk to his students.

"We've had a fireman, a lawyer, a counselor, even someone who works in the movie industry," Carr said. "They



Darrin Carr, Newbury Park High's AVID coordinator, goes over work with students.

just don't talk about what they do, but also what it takes to get there. The focus is what you should do now."

Carr plans to take AVID students on three college field trips, and each student is required to research a college and share the information with others. With 51 students in the program, they will be exposed to 51 different colleges.

AVID, Carr stresses, is not for everyone. Potential students are identified by counselors, and then undergo a screening process. Carr said that enrolling in AVID has to be a student's own choice and not one advocated solely by the parents.

"There is a lot of work involved, but AVID is a proven program that gets results," Carr said.

Special children thrive at innovative preschool

After four years of careful planning, Director of Special Education Margaret Saleh and her staff are supervising the start of a new type of preschool program, one that blends mainstream children with high-functioning special needs children.

Way to Grow preschool, housed at the Conejo Valley Adult School campus, opened Jan. 15. Developed for children ages 3 to 5, the classes have about 15 general education children and five high-functioning autistic children.

"It's a way for us to have a solid curriculum for those (general education) students and they become role models for students with autism," said Janet Cosaro, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services. "When you have autism, one of the primary needs is language development. Having those typical (general education) peers is good for modeling language skills."

The preschool charges a competitively priced tuition for its general students. It is operated in conjunction with Neighborhoods for Learning. NFL is a county-based program aimed at helping children ages 0 to 5 years and their families.

Saleh said there is a strong need for inclusive preschool programs. Because there is no universal preschool, special education preschoolers are generally separated from general education preschoolers as the programs are often run by different entities.

"When a child has any type of special needs in kindergarten and first grade, he's in a class with children of all kinds of strengths and weaknesses and it's a rich learning environment. Because preschool is not mandated, the (special education) child is only in a class with children with other struggles," she said.

Way to Grow will give those students a chance to be around all types of kids at an earlier point.

"We're a program for any preschool children," Saleh said. "The idea is that we know that children learn best and their learning is accelerated when they have typically developing peers that are learning with them. It's an inclusive environment. We want to do something outstanding for all of our little ones."

Preparations for the new classes included classroom modifications and the hiring of new teachers to lead the classes, Saleh said.

"The teams of teachers have brought in specialists from the state," she said. "We had to make physical changes to the site to make sure we were ready for this. We've spent almost one day a week for the past year and a half sitting as a team to figure out how to change something that is already good into something that's great."



Facilities

Facilities upgrades improve learning environment

The past year was both busy and very productive for our Planning and Facilities Department. More than \$23 million in construction projects were completed, with much of the work taking place during the summer.

The decade-long process to modernize all 30 district campuses entered its final phase with the beginning of two large modernization projects at Los Cerritos Middle School and Westlake High School, the last two schools in this process. The modernization effort was funded with an \$88 million school bond approved by Conejo voters in 1997, supplemented by more than \$65 million in State Modernization Grants the district has successfully secured. Los Cerritos will benefit from the replacement of underground utilities, remodeled restrooms, renovation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC), as well as new doors and hardware, and a completely new counseling center.

At Westlake High School, projects also included the replacement of many underground



The TOHS science labs were modernized.

utilities, restroom remodels and a completely new HVAC system. Additional work will continue at both schools through the summer of 2008.

The past summer also witnessed the beginning of a process to upgrade and modernize all of the science lab facilities at Thousand Oaks High School. The walls in six classrooms were eliminated to allow the construction of four "super-labs," science classrooms that include both lecture and laboratory facilities. This comprehensive

renovation will be completed in summer 2008, and the resulting science lab facilities will be the envy of all Ventura County high schools.

Construction of the gymnasium at Sycamore Canyon School in Dos Vientos Ranch was completed in fall of 2007. The \$4.5 million, gymnasium/locker room facility was made possible by a generous \$1 million grant from the City of Thousand Oaks, and a \$1.5 million grant from the state. The gymnasium will support Sycamore Canyon School's physical education, competitive athletic and assembly programs by day. The Conejo Recreation and Park District will coordinate and supervise the use of the new gym for community sports, education and activities programs at night and on weekends.

During the summer of 2007, the interior plaza of Sequoia Middle School was completely replaced and landscaped. What was once an unattractive space featuring narrow sidewalks, sparse grass and overgrown trees was transformed to an open and eye-catching space.



Sequoia Middle School's new interior plaza easily accommodates school assemblies.



Sycamore Canyon School has a new gymnasium.

Master plan guides renovations

In the mid-1990s, the Conejo Valley Unified School District documented a need, and developed a plan to systematically renovate and modernize its increasingly aging school facilities.

This plan was the basis for a successful \$88 million Measure R Bond campaign in 1998. The district has successfully leveraged local bond funds to obtain more than \$60 million in State Modernization grants, and nearly \$5 million in City of Thousand Oaks grants to supplement bond funding.

Over the past 10 years, the district has used these funds to replace underground utilities, repair roofs, install or renovate heating and air conditioning systems, install technology infrastructure, and renovate restroom facilities at all schools. These funds have also supported the construction of upgraded science lab facilities, as well as pool and gym renovations at Newbury Park and Thousand Oaks High, a pool/tennis complex at Westlake High School, the complete renovations of all three high school stadiums, and five middle school gyms.

A major renovation and modernization of the Westlake performing arts center is planned in 2008-09. It is projected the district will complete all Measure R Bond and State Modernization projects, and expend all remaining funds by 2009, over a decade following the genesis of the original renovation plan.

In 2003, the superintendent established a Facilities Strategic Planning Committee to chart the course for the next generation of school facility improvements in the District.

Members of the committee recognize that

while efforts in the past decade have succeeded in restoring the basic infrastructure of our schools to good working condition, we still have schools that look and feel old, and lack many of the instructional support facilities common in new schools.

After many hours of discussion, and consultation with architects specializing in school facility design, the Facilities Strategic Planning Committee has developed a multi-step Master Plan to guide a second, more comprehensive phase of school facility modernization and improvement.

Because our 30 schools are, in many cases, very different in age, design and size, they have very different strengths and needs. No single development plan can address these unique needs. Therefore, the committee decided to develop Education Facility Standards that detail the type, number and quality of facilities necessary to support outstanding student instruction, and achieve the committee vision for all schools.

These standards will be used to conduct a Gap Analysis at each school site — a documented assessment of where each school is deficient, meets or exceeds the standards.

Using the results from the Gap Analysis study, a plan to improve identified deficient facilities at each school site, with attendant construction cost estimates, will be developed.

A significant challenge will remain to develop a funding strategy to support the renovation and construction of school facilities identified in the Master Plan. This will almost certainly include asking the Conejo community to support a second school bond.

District taking steps for the environment

The Conejo Valley Unified School District has initiated two programs intended to reduce our impact on the environment, save money and improve student and staff health. The district has contracted with Energy Education Inc., a Texas firm that works with more than 1,000 school districts to significantly reduce the use of electricity, natural gas and water in daily operations.

A big component of the program is a system-wide effort to shut down lights, computers and other appliances, and heating and air-conditioning systems at night, on weekends and holidays, and when school is not in session. Florescent fixtures, pool covers, and more efficient air conditioning and heating systems have been installed.

It is estimated the district will save from \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually, above and beyond the cost of the program, and 100 percent of the documented savings will be returned to schools in the form of per-student instructional support grants.

The custodial staff has also been using Green Seal Certified cleaning products. These products are evaluated to insure no pollutants are formed or released in their production, and are completely biodegradable and harmless to the environment when entering sewers or storm drains.

Small steps, admittedly, but positive ones that improve our environment, without sacrificing support for students and staff.

Academic achievement

Academic Performance Index (API)

School	School-wide	English Language Learners	Socio-economically disadvantaged	White
Acacia	856	761	771	885
Aspen	880			895
Banyan	916			925
Conejo	781	693	721	905
Cypress	919			925
Glenwood	766	703	702	838
Ladera	866			887
Lang Ranch	924			917
Madrona	909			915
Manzanita	740	702	697	
Maple	874			878
Meadows	879			881
Park Oaks	787	763	753	866
Sycamore Cyn	923			920
University	879			894
Walnut	846		756	868
Weathersfield	905			918
Westlake	908			917
Westlake Hills	910			904
Wildwood	905			904
Colina	886		703	919
Los Cerritos	863			871
Redwood	884			900
Sequoia	864		720	893
NPHS	809		628	829
TOHS	827		665	842
WHS	835		671	851
District	853	697	706	875

API scores show solid gains over past 5 years

Starting in 1999, the State of California began using an Academic Performance Index (API) as a means of measuring and reporting educational quality within and among schools throughout the state. The API is based on student performance on various state tests. The state considers scores of 800 or better to represent a high level of educational performance and quality.

All (100 percent) of the district's comprehensive high schools have API scores above 800 and were in the top 6 percent of high schools statewide. All of the district's middle schools have API scores exceeding 800 and were in the top 9 percent of middle schools statewide. At the elementary level, 80 percent of the schools have API scores exceeding 800 and nine of the elementary schools have scores above 900.

The state has used different tests each year to construct the API. Therefore, caution must be used when attempting to evaluate any "trends" in API scores.

Our achievement data shows significant gains over the past five years. However, as all students have made growth, it is apparent that there are groups of students whose achievement lags persistently behind. Closing the achievement gap, while maintaining the growth, is a top priority in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

The achievement gap between white students and other ethnic groups as well as between English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and students with disabilities, challenges us as educators to find solutions so that all students may be successful.

California English Language Development Test 2006-2007

Performance Level	Percent of Students	Total
5 Advanced	9.0%	152
4 Early Advanced	27.0%	472
3 Intermediate	40.0%	692
2 Early Intermediate	15.0%	277
1 Beginning	9.0%	154
Total	100.0%	1,747

Three purposes for the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) are specified in state law: Identify pupils as limited English proficient, determine the level of English language proficiency (ELP) who are limited English proficient, and assess the progress of limited English proficient students in acquiring the skills of listening, speaking, reading,

and writing in English.

The CELDT Form F results administered in 2006-07 are being reported using a new common scale. Beginning with these results, the common scale will allow year-to-year comparisons to be made in the future. Summary results for Form F are not to be compared with any CELDT results of previous years.

Conejo students surpass county peers on the SAT

Scholastic Assessment Test 2006-07

	District	County
Students Tested	1,019	3,812
Percent of Seniors Tested	59	35
Average Critical Reading Score	555	523
Average Math Score	579	540
Average Writing Score	558	523
Average Total Score*	1,692	1,586

* Rounding differences may occur

The majority of college-bound students in California take the SAT college admissions exam, now called SAT Reasoning Test. Prior to 2005-06, the scores on the two tests ranged from 200 to 800, for a maximum of 1600. As of 2005-06, the test now contains three sections with scores of 200 to 800, for a new maximum of 2400. The students in CVUSD have increased not only the scores in all three tests, but also the number of students taking the test.

California High School Exit Exam 2006-07

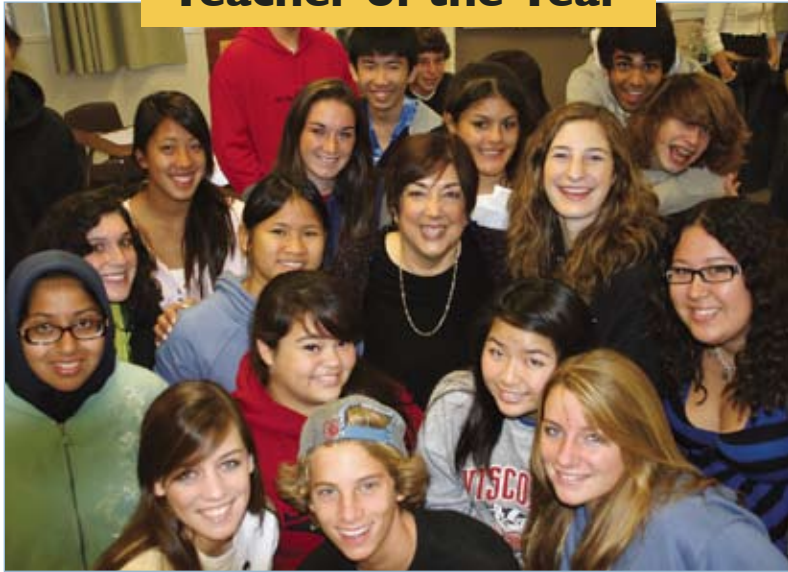
	Subject	All Students
Number Tested	Mathematics	1,882
Passing		1,719 (92%)
Number Tested	English-Language Arts	1,873
Passing		1,717 (93%)

State law, enacted in 1999, authorized the development of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), which students in California public schools would have to pass to earn a high school diploma. The purpose of

the CAHSEE is to improve student achievement in high school and to help ensure that students who graduate from high school can demonstrate grade-level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics.

People

Teacher of the Year



2006-07 Teacher of the Year Amy Reed LeBeau teaches Spanish at Newbury Park High School.

NPH Spanish teacher honored for life's work

Amy Reed LeBeau never played house when she was a little girl. Instead, the Newbury Park resident played school, and she, of course, was the teacher.

There was little doubt, LeBeau said, of her future career path.

"I think I was born wanting to teach," LeBeau said.

Now 60, LeBeau was honored for her 35-year teaching career when she was named Conejo Valley Teacher of the Year for 2006.

"It will stay with me forever," said the Spanish teacher from Newbury Park High School. "It was the most amazing thing professionally that's ever happened. There are so many teachers in this district that could have had this recognition. But this is my life's work. To be rewarded for it is just fabulous. It's been a wonderful, wonderful career."

LeBeau's bachelor's degrees are from California State University, Northridge in English, Spanish and reading. She holds a master's in curriculum and instruction and has applied her training to her beginning and advanced placement Spanish classes.

The longtime chair of the school's language department has coached the speech team, Academic Decathlon and has been the advisor for the senior class, California Scholastic Federation, Girl's League, Interact Club and Student

Equal Rights Association.

What sets her apart, said Athol Wong, principal of Newbury Park High School, is LeBeau's ability to provide expert instruction and caring support to her students.

"We have many teachers who love their jobs and their students, who genuinely have a passion for teaching. And we have many teachers who are experts in their content fields. But Amy is one of those who combines the level of excellence in both, and I think her students recognize that genuine depth of concern for them as well as her concern for their academic excellence. She is one who leads by example and the kids just respond."

It was her own teachers that inspired LeBeau to become a teacher, she said.

"I had some absolutely wonderful teachers who inspired me to do this and I also had some really terrible teachers who made me want to make up for them," she said. "That's the truth. The bad ones stand out even when the good ones are there."

Next year LeBeau plans to retire from full time teaching, a decision she's already feeling sad over. But, she said, she'll be starting a tutoring business to allow her to continue working with her young charges.

"It's just been a really long time (teaching) and I kind of want to retire before I get too old or sick to enjoy it," she said.

Extraordinary instructors singled out for their efforts



Amy Beuthel



Grace Brunsell



DeDe Burke



Amanda Haver



Kris Lopez

Each month, the Conejo Valley Unified School District honors a teacher whose positive influence on students extends beyond the classroom. The 10 teachers recognized during the 2006-2007 school year were nominated by their principals and peers, and then selected by a committee of District representatives.

2006-07 Teachers of the Month

- **September** — Amy Beuthel
Walnut Elementary School
- **October** — Grace Brunsell
Wildwood Elementary School
- **November** — DeDe Burke
Colina Middle School
- **December** — Amanda Haver
Park Oaks Elementary School
- **January** — Kris Lopez
Walnut Elementary School
- **February** — Dr. Nikki Malhotra
Thousand Oaks High School
- **March** — Randy Porter
Newbury Park High School



Randy Porter



Allen Saute



Moira Sauve

- **April** — Amy Reed
Newbury Park High School
Teacher of the Year
- **May** — Allen Saute
Sequoia Middle School
- **June** — Moira Sauve
Cypress Elementary School

Three receive top staff honors

From using his native language to help teachers speak to parents to voluntarily recycling construction materials from renovation projects around the Walnut Elementary School campus, Gonzalo Alfaro always goes behind his job description of school custodian.

It's why Alfaro was named one of the three classified employees of 2006 for the Conejo Unified School District.

"He gets along with everybody," said Linda Hensley, Walnut's principal.

"He sincerely wants to help. He'll find a way to make something work. He's always calm and goes the extra mile for anything. He has good ideas for problems."

Hensley said Alfaro, who just became a citizen in October, is a favorite with the students, some of whom come back to visit the beloved custodian years after they leave Walnut.

"He's really good with the kids. They look up to him," Hensley said of Alfaro, who has worked for the district for more than 15 years and has four children.

Ken Baldwin and Lynn Stroud of the district's copy center share the distinction of being employees of the year with Alfaro.

The co-workers who help run the copy shop, are known for the customer service and for lending a hand even when not asked.

"I think it is unusual for two people from one department to be named as employees of the year, especially from such a small department," said Laura Rounsaville, their supervisor. "They are very hard working individuals and they go out of their way to take care of people in a customer service way."

Stroud's and Baldwin's duties include making programs for all of the school functions, taking care of the district's printing, and preparing the school board packets used in the twice-monthly meetings, a huge undertaking which led to their nomination from the superintendent's office.

"If there's something they can see to do to make a job better, they do it," Rounsaville said. "They're both that way."



Gonzalo Alfaro



Lynn Stroud and Ken Baldwin help run the District's copy shop.

Character drives Colina ASB president

Colina Middle School principal Mike Waters knows a good thing when he sees one.

Watching new seventh grader Paul Hairston last year during Associated Student Body (ASB) activities, he knew there was something special about the friendly young man with the wide grin.

“He started to stand out with spirit activities. He had the kind of appeal that attracts others to get involved,” Waters said.

He encouraged Paul to run for ASB president for this school year and he easily won. “He spoke to the whole school and he just captivated them,” Waters remembered.

Paul admits to a bit of an epiphany last year, inspired by his father who lives in Ohio. “He gave me wisdom,” Paul said. “I took all that in and decided it was time to play serious.” The well-raised eighth-grader was born in Ohio, but relocated with his mother, Sharon, to Oxnard when he was a toddler. He moved to Thousand Oaks in the fifth grade and attended Conejo School. At Colina, he’s known for his courteous manner and self-effacing sense of humor.

Colina has one of the largest ASB programs in the county, Waters said, with 105 students participating in three separate groups for Spirit and Dance, Sports and Yearbook/Renaissance. Paul leads all three groups. He is also on the School Site Council and lends a student point of view to the proceedings.

“It’s a big burden to be the kind of person who can lead,” Waters said.

Colina’s ASB helps with everything from school fundraisers to campus cleanup. It also motivates students to act as examples for others.



Colina Middle School ASB President Paul Hairston consults with Meghan Hunt, middle, and Giuliana PeBenito on a project.

A recent project is “Rachel’s Challenge,” Paul explained. It was inspired by the first student to die in the 1999 Columbine High School shooting in Colorado. It is a nationwide program which teaches students compassion.

Paul is also an athlete who plays both basketball and football. He may also take up track when he goes to Westlake High School next year. He loves to cook, and his mother often finds a meal waiting for her when she comes home from work.

The popular student gets good grades and his favorite subjects are science and English. He plans to continue his education. “College would be a first for my family,” Paul said.

Waters is encouraging Paul to reach for the stars.

“My main mission is to show him what his character brings to him,” Waters said.

Passion for science inspires Steve Latshaw

Steve Latshaw, a fifth-grade teacher at Westlake Hills Elementary School for 17 years, was one of just 30 across the United States and Puerto Rico to receive the 2007 Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence.

The award is designed to recognize extraordinary science teachers in K-12 public and private schools in areas where Amgen, the largest biotechnology company in the world, operates. Those selected and their schools both receive \$5,000.

Visitors to Latshaw’s class see whiteboards filled with mathematical equations, bulletin boards covered with grids, planets hanging from the ceiling, microscopes and computers competing for counter space and robots following programmed course.

Visitors also will meet an anatomical model named Fred.

In his more than 36 years of teaching – all at CVUSD schools – Latshaw has encouraged students to respect the scientific method, analyze data, conduct meaningful research and, for years,

use the Internet. He also takes his students on field trips to science museums, observatories, student science fairs and invention conventions.

“Success in the classroom comes from motivation,” Latshaw said, “I’ve always enjoyed science, and over my years of teaching I’ve found that science is a way to get students motivated.”

Latshaw says he often is asked why he doesn’t teach at a middle school or a high school where he can concentrate solely on science. He answers that he enjoys the challenge of integrating science into all areas of the curriculum that include social studies, English and math. And besides, “I love having the same 36 students every day, all year. And fifth-graders are just reaching the point where they’re asking, ‘Why does this happen? How does this work? Why is the sky blue?’ I love this level.”

Latshaw earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology and teaching credential from California State University Northridge, and in 1969 took on his first teaching assignment at Conejo Elementary School. He also holds a master’s degree in counseling as well as a school psychology credential from CSUN.



Amgen Teacher of the Year Steve Latshaw with, from left, fifth-graders Simrah Siddigui, Jahleane Dolne and Jake Andl.

Robotics Club has impressive start

Teamwork doesn’t just win athletic competitions. It also comes in handy in robotics contests.

The Conejo Valley Robotics Club, comprised of students from Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park and Westlake high schools, proved that by joining together to win the 52-team Rookie Division at the FIRST Robotics Competition’s Los Angeles Regional last March.

FIRST – For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology – is a national organization that encourages students to pursue technical and engineering careers.

After winning in L.A., Conejo Valley Robotics members and their robotic creation named “Charlie Hustle” boarded a flight to Atlanta, where they placed third among rookie teams at the FIRST Nationals.

How impressive is the feat? Well, about 1,300 rookie and veteran teams from the U.S. entered the FIRST competition in 2007. Each team had six weeks to build a robot from a kit of parts provided by FIRST.

Conejo Valley Robotics students came up with their own design and put the robot together with guidance from Thousand Oaks High metal shop teacher Abel Magana, Newbury Park High math



The Conejo Valley Robotics Club works with one of their latest creations.

instructor Michael Weingarden and Westlake High automotive tech teacher Alan Grant. Haas Automation and ITT Technical Institute sponsored the project.

The object was to build a robot that could pick up air-filled plastic doughnuts and place them on a rack as other robots tried to prevent it from scoring. “Charlie Hustle” made like Shaquille O’Neal in his prime by blowing away the competition.

Since “Charlie Hustle” was their first creation, club members didn’t know what to expect. “We had no idea,” Magana admitted. “When we won in L.A. we were floored, completely in awe.”

But by the time they reached Atlanta, Magana

said, they were a confident bunch. “That’s because the L.A. area teams are so strong. Teams have sponsors like Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, so the competition was very fierce. It really prepared us for the nationals.”

This year’s club members soon will be hard at work putting together their 2008 entry – robot to be named later – and are seeking sponsors. Magana said anyone interested in mentoring his budding young scientists or donating equipment to Conejo Valley Robotics, can do so by calling him at 495-7491, ext. 2021.

Athletics

Conejo students continue sports achievements

Sports play an important role in the lives of thousands of CVUSD students, and Thousand Oaks, Westlake and Newbury Park high schools consistently turn out among the best teams and athletes in Ventura County.

There have been many banner seasons through the years, but 2006-07 may have topped them all, with CVUSD laying claim to the top two athletic programs in the county, according to the Ventura County Star.

In June, the newspaper awarded Thousand Oaks High with its 2007 Star Cup for athletic excellence. It marked the second year in a row, and the third time in the last four years, that the Star rated the school's athletic program No. 1 among large schools countywide. Ranked right behind the Lancers at No. 2 was Westlake High.

To determine the county's best athletic programs, the Star compiled varsity won-loss records, league finishes and CIF post-season results. Thousand Oaks won eight championships in the highly competitive Marmonte League in 2006-07, while Westlake earned seven. Newbury Park, meanwhile, won one league title.

CVUSD produced one CIF-Southern Section

team champion, the Westlake High girls' swimming team (Division II). The Warriors were led by **Jackie Brousseau**, who won the CIF-SS 50-yard freestyle and anchored the Warriors' first-place 200-freestyle relay team.

Camille Duckett of Thousand Oaks was CVUSD's other individual CIF-SS swimming champion, winning the 100-freestyle (51.66) and also finishing second in the 200-freestyle (1:49.32) – both personal bests. **Alex Sullivan of Newbury Park**, meanwhile, placed second in the 100-freestyle (52.03) and was fourth in the 200-freestyle (1:50.89).

The most outstanding individual effort of 2006-07 was again turned in by **Westlake High track middle and long-distance runner Cory Primm**. Primm, who is attending UCLA on an athletic scholarship, had the nation's best time in the 800-meter run last year in one minute and 48.63 seconds. He won his second consecutive CIF-SS and CIF-State championships in the 800, and also earned first in the CIF-SS 1,600-meter run.

Track & Field News selected Primm to its High School All-American Team and the magazine placed him 10th on its National Boys' Athlete of

the Year list.

Thousand Oaks High's Hank Yan placed third in the 100-yard freestyle at the 2006 CIF-SS Division II swimming finals, and met National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association All-America time standards as well as USA Swimming National Top 16 lists. He was selected the Ventura County Star's Boys' Scholar-Athlete of the Year and was his class valedictorian. He is attending Harvard.

Other individual highlights include:

- **Newbury Park's Anthony Leonardi**, the Ventura County Football Coaches Association's Receiver of the Year who also was his team's place-kicker.

- **Westlake High's Kevin Critchlow**, a CIF-SS finalist in swimming and a High School All-American.

- **Westlake High's Kate Edwards**, an All-CIF soccer player and an All-Marmonte League tennis player.

- **Thousand Oaks High's Victoria Boden**, the Marmonte League's Volleyball Most Valuable Player.

Westlake girls are swim champs

Of all the varsity teams – boys and girls both – representing Conejo Valley Unified School District schools in 2006-07, the biggest splash was made by the Westlake High girls' swimming team.

Led by sophomore Jackie Brousseau, the Warriors scored 157 points to capture the CIF-Southern Section Division II championship at the Belmont Plaza Pool in Long Beach.

Sacred Heart High of Flintridge came in second place with 147 points, followed by Valencia High with 139.

Brousseau placed first in the 50-yard freestyle in 23.81 seconds, was third in 100-breaststroke and combined with Iris Yan, Marisa Dewames and Aislinn Smalling to win the 200-freestyle relay in 1:39.53.

Brousseau also teamed with Smalling, Meagan Norling-Christensen and Nora Darago to place second in the 400-freestyle relay – the meet's final event – in 3:35.54 and clinch the team title.

"I felt we had a chance of winning going into prelims," said Westlake coach Todd Irmas, "Once we got through them, I definitely knew we had a good shot at the



The Westlake High girls' swim team, shown here with the boys' team, won a CIF championship in 2007.

CIF title as long as no one disqualified.

"I didn't tell that to the girls, though," Irmas added, laughing. "Not until the final event."

Smalling, a junior, also turned in an outstanding individual performance by placing third in the 200-freestyle (1:49.88) and 500-freestyle (4:52.82).

Winning a CIF championship is an accomplishment in itself, but what made Westlake's feat even more remarkable was that of the six girls who swam in the meet, none were seniors. Still, Irmas stopped short of predicting a repeat in 2008.

"We get everyone back," Irmas said, "but so does Sacred Heart and so does Valencia. So it's likely going to be dogfight again."

Respected TOHS student inspires by quiet leadership

Abraham Mora isn't the highest achieving student at Thousand Oaks High. He's not the best athlete at the school, either.

But you will have a difficult time finding a student on campus who is more popular and respected – by students and teachers both.

"He's just a great kid,"

Catherine Kanney, Mora's counselor, says. "He's humble, he's a hard worker and he's always doing the right thing – even when someone's not watching."

"He's like a lot of kids we have here who just plug away, and those kids don't get the attention they deserve."

The son of Mexican immigrants, Mora isn't accustomed to the luxuries that many of his peers take for granted. But his parents Julian and Flora instilled in him a strong work ethic, inside the classroom and out.

"My parents have worked hard for me and my sister and brother, so it's not asking too much for me to work hard, too," Mora said, shrugging.

Mora has taken his mother and father's values to heart. He is enrolled in Thousand Oaks High's rigorous Business and Technology Academy, where he carries a 3.3 grade-point average, and is a member of the Lancers' varsity soccer team. But even with his busy school and extracurricular schedule, Mora still works 20 hours a week as a grocery clerk at Vons.

Best of all, Mora plans to attend college, and has applied to California Poly San Luis Obispo. He wants to major in business or accounting. If accepted, Mora will become the first member of his family to attend a four-year university. "To me, that's huge," Kanney said.



Abraham Mora

2006-07 Marmonte League Champions

2006-07 CIF-Southern Section Champions

Westlake High School
Girls' swimming (Division II)

Thousand Oaks High School

Girls' volleyball
Boys' basketball
Girls' soccer
Wrestling
Baseball
Softball
Boys' swimming
Boys' volleyball (tie)

Westlake High School

Football
Girls' golf
Boys' track and field
Girls' swimming
Boys' tennis
Boys' volleyball (tie)

Newbury Park High School

Girls' basketball

The Arts

Visual arts help build foundation for greater learning

The Conejo Valley Unified School District encourages students – from kindergartners to high school seniors – to express themselves through visual and performing arts.

In kindergarten, first- and second-grade classes throughout the district, students are building art portfolios that are tied to the state content standards and inspired by Caldecott Award-winning children's books. Cynthia Hall, a first-grade teacher at Lang Ranch Elementary School, helped develop the standards-based curriculum.

In Hall's classroom, students begin with the basics like drawing lines and exploring primary and second-

ary colors. By the end of the school year, they will bring home to their parents an impressive portfolio filled with the art projects that will include a self-portrait. The portfolios also include students' journal entries that chart the progression of their writing skills.

Before they go into the students' portfolios, many of the works are put on display in Lang Ranch's hallways for visitors to enjoy. A recent display, "The Artist's Hand," was inspired by the book "Harold and the Purple Crayon."

"Visual arts are the inspiration behind writing and science," Hall said, "so it is important to expose students to them as much as possible at an early age."



Cynthia Hall reviews shades of the colors orange and brown with her first-grade students at Lang Ranch Elementary.

Lively Los Cerritos Choir quickly gains popularity

Classical works, folk songs, show tunes, Big Band music, pop standards. You name it, and the Los Cerritos Choir will sing it.

The high-energy choir is only its second year of existence, but it is already gaining a reputation as one of the



Janice Hague directs her middle school chorus. The group now numbers 90.

finest middle school choirs in the state. At last spring's Music in the Park competition at Disneyland that drew more than 20 middle school choirs from throughout California and Nevada, Los Cerritos won its division – based on school enrollment – and was also judged best in show.

The secret to the choir's success starts with Janice Hague, its director, and her assistants Michelle Cooley and Lorna Thomas. They make singing fun, say their students.

"I love to sing, and coming to class brightens my day," said eighth-grader Jenna Wooster.

"I like it because we don't sing any lame songs," added classmate Maggie Darago.

Boys like it too. Just ask Kyle Aidukas and Josh Rose. "It's cool; you get to learn new things every day," Aidukas said as Rose nodded in agreement. Both are in their second year with the choir.

Los Cerritos had been without a choir for a number of years before Hague, who also directs the Lang Ranch Elementary School choir, undertook the challenge of reviving it in the fall of 2006. About 50 students – a mix of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders – signed for the elective course the first year.

Word spread, and in less than two years the choir has nearly doubled in size. More than 90 students are now enrolled.

The Los Cerritos Choir's concerts are more Broadway show than recital. In addition to singing, they include dance numbers and acting parts. Last year's mini-musical was a salute to Cole Porter and songs of the 1920s and 1930s. This year's mini-musical in March, "The Day the Music Jived," features rock 'n roll, rhythm and blues and jazz numbers from the 1950s. The year-end spring concert will showcase 1960s songs.

"I want them to experience all different types of music so that when they get to high school they can choose between joining a show choir, or a more traditional type of choir," Hague said.

"But it's not all about the music," Hague added. "I want the choir to feel like a family. We're all in this together creating something special. Everyone contributes, and one voice missing makes a difference."

The fine art of giving

3rd grader organizes benefit

In his seven short years, Teagan Stedman never realized there were kids like him who didn't have yards to play in or families to love them, until he heard a presentation at school about Casa Pacifica.

The Camarillo-based residential facility and day school serves abused, neglected and emotionally disturbed children. When Teagan learned about the organization, he knew he wanted to help it by raising money to donate to the facility.

"It makes me feel like I'm doing a favor for the world," said the third-grader from Lang Ranch Elementary School in Thousand Oaks.

After debating various fundraising possibilities, Teagan and his mother, Kelly, settled on holding an art show where kids would offer their work for sale in a public place.

In came Coffee 'N Dreams in the Janss Marketplace. The local coffee shop immediately took

to the idea of hosting the show. "They had one stipulation," Kelly said. "The art had to be presentable. Someone had to take the time to make the art and it had to be framed."

Teagan made up 50 fliers about the Aug. 4 event and circulated them at his school's summer classes and around his neighborhood.

About 15 kids donated 36 paintings, drawings and sculptures. They each submitted a \$3 entry fee, but were given a \$3 coupon to the coffee shop for a kid's drink. Teagan awarded two \$25 gift certificates for the best work of art in two age groups. He paid for the gift certificates from his allowance, Kelly said.

And at the end of the day, \$661 was raised and given to Casa Pacifica.

"I just wanted to help a charity," he said. "I didn't know that I was going to make so much money."

Kelly Stedman said Teagan was very proud of both his effort and the turn-out from the community.

"All of the paintings were sold except for four which we ended up buying and donating to Casa Pacifica and they put them in their halls. It was really successful," she said.

Teagan said he plans on doing something next year to help Casa Pacifica again and he's working on self-publishing a book whose proceeds would all be donated to the children's home.

Teagan's principal, Brad Baker, said what was so special about Teagan's project was that it was done outside of school, during the summer on his own.

"He's a real sweet kid," he said.



Teagan Stedman works on a painting for his art show, held last summer to benefit Casa Pacifica, a home and school for children.

The community's generosity helps maintain quality programs

Every month, our Board of Education approves a listing of items that are received through the generous donations of parents, employees, community members, and local businesses. Various items such as computers, office furniture, paper, playground equipment, and copy services are offered and gratefully received. It is impossible to list them all in this report, but we want to give our thanks to those who have made contributions that positively affect so many students.

This year, one of our newest contributors, **Haas Engineering**, helped establish a robotics club for high school students. This club, led by a science teacher from each of our high schools, won first place as the "rookie" entry and overall 13th place in national competition in Georgia. Thank you, Haas Engineering!

Major donors often provide enough to maintain an educational program, a facility, a scholarship, staff development opportunities for teachers, and much more. Many thanks to **Boeing, The City of Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications and Corwin Press, Verizon, Rockwell Scientific, and Amgen** for their remarkable support through grants and/or donations.

Remarkably talented and supportive parents man our PTAs, PFAs and Booster Clubs. They work tremendously hard to raise money for specific needs and enhancements at the schools.

Our **Conejo Schools Foundation** has worked with a number of donors. The Foundation's efforts have provided support programs such as "Hop into Kindergarten" at Conejo Elementary, the elementary Summer Enrichment Program, All-District Band Festival, school mini-grants, science and technology programs, improvements to facilities, and scholarships. The Foundation has been working with **Amgen** this past



Scott Holloway's science classroom at Westlake High was a highlight of the Conejo Schools Foundation's Science and Technology Showcase in October.

Endowment Fund is established

Thanks to the generosity of the Power family in memory of Julie P. Power, through their grant from the Ventura County Community Foundation's Kenrose Kitchen Table Ventura County Fund, and that of Renee and Bob Nunn and other community members, the Conejo Schools Foundation has opened its Endowment Fund designed to create an income stream to be used for future grants to the CVUSD schools.

year in developing stronger science programs at each of the high schools, and has already held Science and Technology Showcase Nights at each the schools, with presentations and tours through the science labs and classes.

Our district thanks each and every donor. Without your help our students may not have the same quality programs they currently enjoy.

District's Strategic Plan sets goals for three key areas

Without good planning, the best hopes, dreams and expectations remain nothing more than ideas. The Conejo Valley Unified School District has developed a Strategic Plan that reflects those ideas and sets forth specific strategies to make them real.

Three committees totaling more than 60 staff and community members, parents and students have worked steadfastly to develop, monitor, and support the implementation of the plan. Each committee has focused on one of three major areas.

• Instruction: Raise the bar and close the achievement gap. This focus area includes improving the use of student performance data for most effective instructional planning, enriched professional dialog, a staff development master plan, the use of proven curricular programs and best instructional practices that will move both the most advanced and the most underachieving stu-

dents to higher levels of performance.

• Facilities: Support excellent instruction with excellent facilities. Address declining enrollment. This focus area includes goals and objectives pertaining to the establishment of facility standards and a Facilities Master Plan to ensure excellent instruction in a safe and healthy learning and work environment, declining enrollment and school closure, and pursuing facility-related partnerships with governmental and private organizations.

• Governance-Funding: Align policies and resources to goals. Grow a Culture of Leadership. This focus area includes goals and objectives pertaining to the promotion of broadly-based leadership among students, staff and parents, community and business partnerships, board policy revisions, improving technology, and aligning the budget to major goals.



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Dorothy L. Beaubien,
Vice President

Dr. Timothy G. Stephens, Clerk
Michael A. Dunn, Member
Patricia H. Phelps, Member
Superintendent
Mario V. Contini

School Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6 p.m. They are televised on Channel 20.

CVUSD Enrollment

School	Honors	Enrollment
Elementary Schools		
Acacia	Distinguished School 1995	386
Aspen	Distinguished School 2002	439
Banyan	Distinguished School 2002	494
Conejo		518
Cypress	Distinguished School 2000	472
Glenwood	Distinguished School 1998	370
Ladera	Distinguished School 1997	419
Lang Ranch		744
Madroña	Distinguished School 1997	562
Manzanita	Distinguished School 2004	418
Maple	Distinguished School 2000	343
Meadows	Distinguished 2000, Blue Ribbon 1997	270
Park Oaks	Distinguished School 1998	305
Sycamore Canyon		914
University	Distinguished 2000, Blue Ribbon 2001	328
Walnut	Distinguished School 2004	386
Weathersfield	Distinguished School 1997	320
Westlake	Distinguished School 2002	524
Westlake Hills	Distinguished 1998, Blue Ribbon 1999	543
Wildwood	Distinguished School 1995	334
Total Elementary Enrollment		9,089
Middle Schools		
Colina	Distinguished 2001, Blue Ribbon 2002	1,151
Los Cerritos	Distinguished 2003, Blue Ribbon 2004*	1,103
Redwood	Distinguished 1999, Blue Ribbon 2006*	1,164
Sequoia	Distinguished School 1996	1,098
Sycamore Canyon		441
Total Middle School Enrollment		5,114
High Schools		
Century	California Model School 2001	30
Conejo Valley	California Model School 2001	190
Newbury Park	Distinguished 1999, Blue Ribbon 2006*	2,351
Thousand Oaks	Distinguished 2001, Blue Ribbon 2002	2,522
Westlake	Distinguished 2003, Blue Ribbon 2004*	2,405
Total High School Enrollment		7,498
Special Education		499
Independent Study		138
Total District Enrollment		22,040

* No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School

The following Character Education Traits are incorporated into classroom curriculum and campus activities:

- Perseverance
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Integrity
- Kindness