

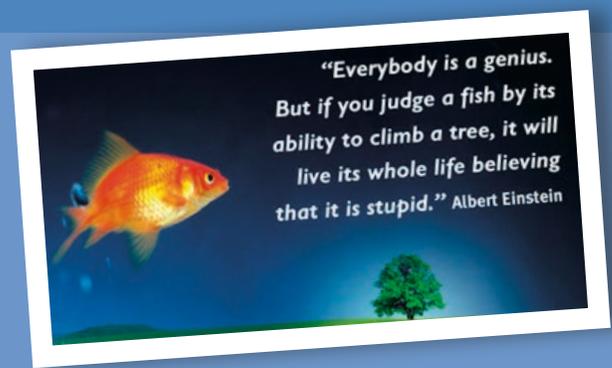
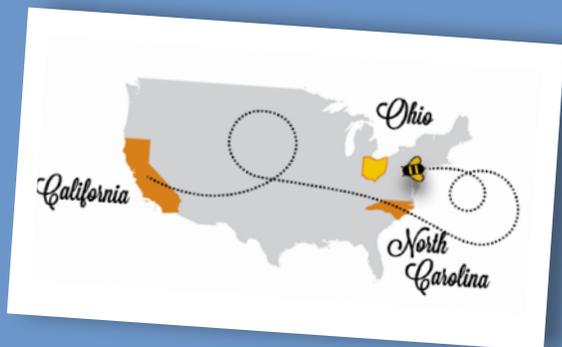
# SCHOOL WATCH

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016 Edition

## EARTH WEEK IN OAK PARK SCHOOLS

This year the Environmental Education and Awareness Committee has selected the theme of Beneficial Bugs to focus our Earth Week activities on. Beneficial Bugs are insects that help our food grow by eating pests on plants to eliminate pesticide use and pollinating them at the same time. We will be focusing our education on ladybugs for K-2 and honeybees for 3-5. Ladybugs love to eat pests like aphids and help fight plant disease. Bees pollinate 75% of food crops in the US. We can thank honeybees for one in every three bites of food we eat.



## A FISH IN A TREE?

Please join us in reading this wonderful book by Lynda Mullaly Hunt over the summer and then participate in a book club discussion when school is back in session. If you have children, please consider reading it as a family. The author of the beloved *One for the Murphys* gives readers an emotionally-charged, uplifting novel that will speak to anyone who's ever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn't fit in.

It is available as a free ebook through [vencolibrary.org](http://vencolibrary.org). The process for downloading is pretty easy depending on which publisher provides the ebook. The Ventura County Library website gives a good description at [www.vencolibrary.org/faq/how-do-i-download-books](http://www.vencolibrary.org/faq/how-do-i-download-books).



## ALL 3 OAK PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EARN GOLD RIBBON

Congratulations are in order to Brookside, Oak Hills, and Red Oak Elementary Schools for being selected for the California Gold Ribbon Schools Award this month. Schools applied for the award based on a model program their school has adopted that includes standards-based activities, projects, strategies, and practices that can be replicated by other local educational agencies. The award recognized middle and high schools in 2015.

The Gold Ribbon awards recognize California schools that have made gains in implementing the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education. These include the California Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, California English Language Development Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards.

Each school had to select a 'Model Program/Practice' in addition to demonstrating overall excellence. Each school selected a different aspect of our work toward implementation of the New California Standards (Common Core).

BROOKSIDE: Student-centered learning via collaboration, community, and critical thinking.

OAK HILLS: Inquiry Based Learning

RED OAK: Using the Power of Technology to Enhance Achievement

## OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL ROCKET TEAM MAKES IT TO THE NATIONAL FINALS



The Oak Park High School Rocket Team has qualified to compete in the national finals of the 14th annual Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC). The team will face 99 of the top rocketry teams from across the country to claim the title of national champion. The TARC Final Fly-Off will take place May 14 at Great Meadow in The Plains, V.A., outside of Washington, D.C. On Friday, May 13, the team will display their rocket at a Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill. TARC is the aerospace and defense industry's flagship program designed to encourage students to pursue study and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association, the National Association of Rocketry, NASA, and the U.S. Dept. of Defense, and more than 20 industry partners, TARC is the world's largest rocket contest. Now in its fourteenth year, TARC has inspired more than 60,000 middle and high school students to explore education and careers in STEM fields. This year, 789 teams representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands designed and built model rockets in hopes of qualifying for the National Finals.

The Boeing Company and Friends of Oak Park Schools sponsor Oak Park's team.

For more information about TARC 2016, please visit [www.rocketcontest.org](http://www.rocketcontest.org).

Team website: [www.oakparkrocketry.org](http://www.oakparkrocketry.org)

This is the second time Oak Park's team has made it to the National Finals. In 2012, the team finished 17th in the United States and then was invited to participate in the NASA Student Launch Initiative the following year, where they built a large 11-foot rocket that was launched from the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL. Those students are now juniors in college and attending some of the most prestigious universities in the U.S.

### Students on the team are:

Team Captain:  
Jonathan Laifman

Zachary Tescher  
Katherine Murray  
Andrew Esmay  
Salman Muntazir  
Andrew Wells

Daniel Esmay  
Jennifer Esmay  
Vinay Adabala  
Utsav Anantbhat

Team President: Aviv Maish

Advisor: Dr. Tony Knight

## WALK FOR THE DOGS!

Bring your pooch and join us for the 3rd Annual Oak Park community Walk for the Dogs. Each year the humans have a great time, but the DOGS have a truly AWESOME time!

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL GREAT LAWN  
SATURDAY, APRIL 23

\$10 requested donation per dog. Checks or cash accepted. Checks can be made payable to the Beagle Freedom Project.

There will be two courses – the short course for smaller and older dogs and the long course for larger or younger dogs.

Funds raised this year will go to:



Beagle Freedom Project works to release dogs and other animals (cats, rabbits, and others) from laboratory situations and find forever homes for them. Beagles are the breed of choice for laboratories because of the docile and friendly nature of the breed. Most of the animals used in labs are



used for testing of cosmetics and personal care products and many feel that this is a cruel and unnecessary practice. You can avoid purchasing such products by looking for the words NOT TESTED ON ANIMALS or the 'bunny' logo on products.



The Oak Park High School SPAE Club - Students Protecting Animals and the Environment, sponsors this event.

For more information and to fill out the liability waiver form in advance you can visit [www.oakparkusd.org/spae](http://www.oakparkusd.org/spae)



## ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

Oak Park is in its second year of competing in the Odyssey of the Mind tournaments and doing quite successfully in terms of placing in the tournament but also in teaching creativity and problem solving to students. The Odyssey of the Mind teaches students to learn creative problem-solving methods while having fun in the process. For more than twenty-five years, this unique program has helped teachers generate excitement in their students. By tapping into creativity, and through encouraging imaginative paths to problem solving, students learn skills that will provide them with the ability to solve problems — great and small — for a lifetime. The Odyssey of the Mind teaches students how to think divergently by providing open-ended problems that appeal to a wide range of interests. Students learn how to identify challenges and to think creatively to solve those problems. They are free to express their ideas and suggestions without fear of criticism.



The creative problem-solving process rewards thinking "outside of the box." While conventional thinking has an important place in a well-rounded education, students need to learn how to think creatively and productively.

This tournament season we had 9 teams in our district, 5 at Medea and 5 at the elementary schools,

that all were finishers at the regional tournament. That is the greatest success of all, to successfully complete the challenge. Four of those teams advanced to state and one of the Medea teams placed third at the state level. This is the second year for this team who also went to state last year. This team competed in the No Cycle- Recycle problem challenge, which you can read about on <http://www.friendsofoakparkschools.org>

## MEASURE C PARCEL TAX INFORMATION

The Oak Park Unified School District is accepting requests for Senior Exemptions for the Measure C Parcel Tax. Senior citizens 65 years old or older, or anyone turning 65 during 2016, who live in their home in Oak Park may go to the District's Support Services Office at 5801 E. Conifer Street, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to get an exemption form, or you may call to request a form be mailed to you by calling 818-735-3206.

Seniors must bring to the Oak Park Unified School District Support Services Office the completed and signed form along with your 2015-2016 tax assessment bill with parcel number and address shown and proof of your age. Accepted forms of proof of age are drivers license/State I.D. card, passport or birth certificate. This must be your primary residence; rental properties are not eligible for exemption. All exemptions must be submitted and verified by June 4, 2016. This exemption must be renewed annually in order to maintain eligibility.

## YOU ARE INVITED TO OPEN HOUSE

All of your Oak Park schools will feature an Open House in April or May. The whole community is invited! Here are the dates:

April 27 Red Oak Elementary School 6:00 pm  
4th and 5th Grade

April 28 Medea Creek Middle School 5:30 pm

May 5 Oak Hills Elementary School 6:00 pm

May 11 Brookside Elementary School 6:00 pm

## LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

We have a new progressive school calendar this year, which ensures that the first semester ends before winter break and gives our high school students a true two-week, break from school. Since we started the second Tuesday in August, the last day of school is May 27 – before Memorial Day Weekend! The first day of school for next school year is August 9.

## BIG SUNDAY

The OPUSD Community Outreach Committee is joining the Big Sunday organization for the 5th year of "Giving Back." We are amassing 100's of volunteers to work together to clean, organize and beautify our community. If you are looking to give back to your community and meet your amazing neighbors please join us on Sunday, May 1st for our annual event.

In the past 4 years we have painted curbs, planted trees, bushes and flowers, cleaned up our hiking trails, painted "Drains to the Beach" at storm drains, organized emergency sheds, cleaned-up at all of our school sites along with many, many more projects totaling close to 300.

This year, in addition to cleaning up our schools, we will be planting trees at Red Oak Elementary as well as planting gardens at Brookside and planters at Medea Creek Middle School. Our libraries and computer labs will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Our hiking trails will be rid of all trash, and curbs will be painted to make our schools and community safer.

We welcome families young and old to come together for breakfast at the High School where they will receive a Big Sunday T-Shirt, be included in our group picture and then be off to complete their assigned project. All projects will be completed by 12:00 noon!

To Register and for more information go to: [www.oakparkusd.org/bigSunday](http://www.oakparkusd.org/bigSunday)



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## OAK PARK TURNS 50!

We are so excited to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Oak Park! The OPUSD Community Outreach Committee is working on a special commemorative game board, Oak Park-Opoly! The community at large has sponsored properties on the board and the game will cover the history of Oak Park and highlight many families and businesses throughout the area.

You can pre-order a game board today at: [www.oakparkusd.org/oakpark-opoly](http://www.oakparkusd.org/oakpark-opoly) As of May 1st prices will increase. All proceeds will benefit our Big Sunday events for years to come. Game boards will be produced over the summer and available for pick up at our 50th Anniversary Celebration on September 18th.

