

SCHOOL WATCH

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014 Edition



WALK FOR THE DOGS

Bring your pooch and join us on Saturday, April 5 from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM starting at Oak Park High School for a community dog walk. Students for the Protection of Animals and the Environment (SPAЕ), a club at Oak Park High School is organizing this event to raise funds for LIFE Animal Rescue of Agoura Hills. The donation fee is \$10 per dog and our walk will take under an hour. A registration form is required to participate and can be filled out at the event or downloaded and simply turned in that morning. You are also invited to join the walk even if you don't have a dog! You can download a form here: www.oakparkusd.org/dogwalk



BIG SUNDAY IS COMING — SENIOR CITIZENS HELP US AND/OR LET US HELP YOU MAY 18, OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL GREAT LAWN

OPUSD's Community Outreach Committee is looking for Senior Citizens to be a part of Big Sunday! Interested in getting out and meeting your neighbors, helping your community and having some fun? Big Sunday, May 18th is the place to be! We are looking for senior citizens in Oak Park and adjacent neighborhoods to join with our over 400 volunteers to enjoy a free breakfast and help complete projects throughout the community. You will also have the opportunity to learn to make survivor bracelets that will be sent out to troops worldwide by Operation Gratitude. We will make sure that the project you are assigned is well within your skill and ability level. The event begins at Oak Park High School at 8:00 a.m. and all projects will be completed by noon. Big Sunday is also looking to give back to seniors by helping with small home projects. If you have something that needs to be fixed or cleaned up, or would like a tree planted on your property, let us know and someone will contact you for further information. Let's all get together and have some fun. If you would like to join us, or would like more information, please contact the Oak Park Unified School District at 818 735-3206, and speak to Linda Sheridan.



CLOTHING AND TEXTILE RECYCLING DURING EARTH MONTH

All of the schools have large bins from USAgain for recycling clothing and all textile products. They also accept stuffed toys. During the month of April we will receive double the amount for your discards. Start spring-cleaning by clearing out those closets and dropping off your items in the bins during April. Thank you!!

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Recycle your **small** electronic items, cell phones, iPads, tablets, digital cameras, ink and toner cartridges, and even household batteries (batteries must be in a ziplock bag) at all of the Oak Park schools and the District Office. Drop-off bins are located in the main offices. Please no appliances such as toasters, microwaves, etc.

**THE WELL-BALANCED STUDENT:
AVOIDING STRESS AND
OVERSCHEDULING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9
7:00 PM OAK PARK HIGH
SCHOOL PAVILION
Dr. Denise Pope, Stanford
University**

Dr. Pope is Director of the Stanford University Challenge Success program that both Oak Park High School and Medea Creek Middle School are taking part in this year. This presentation is appropriate for parents of children of ALL AGES. Dr. Pope's presentation is sponsored by Friends of Oak Park Schools and the MCMS and OPHS PFC's.

Today's high-pressure, fast-paced culture can interfere with healthy child development. When we are too focused on test scores, rote answers and grades, we may deny kids the time and energy they need to develop important skills for success — the ability to be independent, adaptable, ethical, and motivated, critical thinkers. This workshop examines the tensions that can occur between students, parents, and educators over issues such as homework, grades, and the culture of competition. Parents will learn research-based strategies to create healthier home and school environments for their kids. In this presentation, you will learn:

- How students today are coping--or not--with the academic pressure they face
- Ways to reduce school stress without sacrificing achievement or engagement
- Strategies to increase resilience, creativity, critical thinking and well-being for your child



Denise Pope, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at the Stanford University School of Education. For the past fourteen years, she has specialized in student engagement, curriculum studies, qualitative research methods, and service learning. She is co-founder of Challenge Success, a research and intervention project that provides schools and families the tools they need to raise healthy, motivated students. Challenge Success is an expanded version of the SOS: Stressed-Out Students project that Dr. Pope founded and directed from 2003-2008. She lectures nationally on parenting techniques and pedagogical strategies to increase student well-being, engagement with learning, and integrity.

Her book, *"Doing School": How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students* (Yale University Press, 2001) was awarded Notable Book in Education by the American School Board Journal, 2001. Dr. Pope is a three-time recipient of the Stanford University School of Education Outstanding Teacher and Mentor Award, and was recently honored with the 2012 Education Professor of the Year "Educators' Voice Award" from the Academy of Education Arts and Sciences. She has been featured on CNN, World News Tonight, the Today Show, NPR, and several other television and radio programs. Prior to teaching at Stanford, Dr. Pope taught high school English in Fremont, CA and college composition and rhetoric courses at Santa Clara University. She lives in Los Altos, CA with her husband and three children.



SCIENCE FAIR

One hundred seventeen students from Medea Creek competed in the Ventura County Science Fair held on Wednesday, March 19. Medea Creek won 24 awards at the awards ceremony held on Thursday, March 20 and was the number one middle school at the fair. Eleven of our students qualified to compete at the California State Science Fair, which will be held at the California Science Center on April 28 and 29th. We wish them all the best! Great work Panthers! Two students from Oak Park High School also entered and won awards. All of these students will be recognized at the Board of Education meeting on April 8.

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here and that means it is a busy time at the schools in Oak Park. We celebrate Earth Week from April 14-18 and this year our focus is on sustainable food. All children in the elementary schools will have the opportunity to plant an organic tomato seed in a moss-pot to take home and grow some delicious heart-healthy food. Students are learning about sustainable agriculture in the school organic gardens and why it is important to add more whole, plant-based foods to their plates and reduce the amount of processed foods in our diets. We are holding a change drive to raise funds for Sustainable Harvest International, an organization that helps small farmers in Central America learn to grow crops sustainably on their own family farms to provide better nutrition for their families and preserve the environment. We can do this at home as well. With the drought upon us, consider digging up some turf and planting a small garden to replace it. You won't be able to find more locally grown food anywhere! Well-planned gardens use little water and can produce high yields.

You will notice a series of drives and efforts that attempt to engage students in what is referred to as social action learning. Students learn habits of social responsibility and environmental stewardship by 'doing' themselves and by following the examples of others, especially their parents and their schools. We hope you will find a way to participate in some of these events and share your passion for compassion with our students.

Dr. Tony Knight
Superintendent
Oak Park Unified School District

NEWS FROM THE OAK PARK MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (MAC)

Kanan Shuttle in the News!

"There's no doubt about it, free works" was the comment of a member of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors when they approved a recommendation of the Oak Park MAC to allow funding of the Kanan Shuttle for nine more months. The approval means the free popular shuttle loop that carries upwards of 400 passengers daily can continue its free loop up and down Kanan Road at least until the beginning of the next school year.

The Board approval will allow the Oak Park CSA (Community Services Area) to add shuttle service to the list of things it funds. Other services the CSA funds include crossing guards and landscaping in the medians of Kanan Road.

The Kanan Shuttle is particularly popular with students who enjoy a greater degree of independence because they don't have to rely on parents to drive them to and from school and can take the Shuttle to the movies, out to coffee, to the library or to visit friends. It also reduces traffic from out-of-district students on busy Kanan Road and conveniently connects with regional bus service. As many as 800 daily car trips are eliminated by this service.

The Kanan Shuttle is funded by a State transportation grant that requires that a portion of the annual funding must come from local sources. Charging a fare is an option, but studies show when you add a fare or increase fares, ridership drops and people drive (or are driven) instead.

What also makes the Kanan Shuttle successful (besides its attractive size and mountain lion emblem) is the short wait times, from 15 to 20 minutes during school start and stop times, and otherwise every half hour.

To continue this popular free service to the community, it is estimated that the annual cost would equate to \$20 per Oak Park household. An upcoming community survey of residents will help to provide further input on the desirability of the Kanan Shuttle system. A comprehensive review is being undertaken by the Oak Park MAC, Supervisor Linda Parks, and Oak Park Unified School District Superintendent Tony Knight to look at options for keeping the Kanan Shuttle free.

If you would like to provide input, please come to a MAC meeting, which are held on 4/29, 5/27 and 6/24 at 7:00 PM in Room G9 at Oak Park High School or contact chair Mike Green at m.greenop@yahoo.com

DRIVERS BE AWARE!

Your Oak Park Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) wants all drivers to be aware that the CHP and Sheriff Department are aggressively enforcing the "25 MPH Speed Limit When Children Present" area between Oak Hills Drive and Deerhill Road on Kanan Road during the times of morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up on school days. They are also watching the "NO STOPPING ANYTIME" zone on Conifer by the gate to the soccer field and the red curb areas at Oak Hills Elementary so please slow down and don't park or drop your kids off in the wrong place.

COME TO THE 5TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL GALA NIGHT

"To celebrate cultural diversity and promote global citizenship"

Join family & friends at this exciting community event!

The night will feature a variety of international performances by our very own Oak Park students, a fashion show of costumes from around the world, and a raffle ...all while enjoying culinary samplings from around the globe!

It's a night that you won't want to miss!

April 4, 2014

5:30-7:30 pm

at the Pavilion Oak Park High School

for more information or about reserving tickets please contact:

Patty Bleau at pattybleau@aol.com

HISTORY DAY AT MEDEA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

...with its national theme "Rights and Responsibilities," was held Monday, March 17. Seventy-eight 7th and 8th graders created exhibits or documentaries to express their research about various topics in history.

The winners of the 2014 History Day Competition were:

First Place: Sarah Clarke, Serena Yi, and Alyson Hawkins for their exhibit "The Fight and Achievement of Racial Equality for African Americans".

Second Place: Sumedha Attani, Olivia Chang, Kavya Juwadi, and Sophia Tsai for their Exhibit "Women's Suffrage".

Third place, there was a tie: Karisa Toy won for her exhibit "The Banning of the LZR Swim Suit in 2008: How Technology Has Changed Sports" and Rasjot Singh won for his exhibit "A Superior Race: Rights and Responsibility in Nazi Germany."

Congratulations to all students who participated in this year's competition!

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK IS COMING!

Once again, Oak Park USD and Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks are teaming up to bring you Shakespeare by the Sea in the beautiful setting of Oak Canyon Park. This year we are featuring *Hamlet*, *Prince of Denmark* on Sunday, July 6 at 7:00 PM. Mark your calendar! The event is free and you are invited to bring a picnic dinner, lawn chairs, etc.



5801 East Conifer Street
Oak Park, CA 91377

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID

Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
Permit No. 1029

www.oakparkusd.org



FUR DRIVE

Do you have a fur accessory that maybe you inherited or bought a while back that is just gathering dust in the closet and you don't feel comfortable wearing any longer? You may drop off any fur accessory, coat, stole, etc. to any Oak Park school or the District Office, during the month of April and receive a tax deduction. All furs will be donated to Wildlife Care of Ventura County. The furs are used for bedding for wild animals that are rescued after injury or abandonment as part of their rehabilitation. The drive is sponsored by Oak Park High School Students for the Protection of Animals and the Environment (SPAЕ). Please fill out the form at the link below and bring it with your fur when you drop it off. THANK YOU!
www.oakparkusd.org/fur