

# SYCAMORE RIDGE



October 2011

## Round-Up

Vol. 7, Issue 1

### Principal's Message

Dear Sycamore Ridge Families,

As the proud Principal of Sycamore Ridge School, I would like to welcome the entire learning community to the 2011-2012 school year! The staff and I are enthused about our seventh year as a school community with 455 kindergarten through sixth grade students.

The staff and I are excited about the year ahead, and we are honored to have the opportunity to educate your child. Every new school year begins with the excitement of seeing familiar faces and meeting new ones! I feel truly fortunate to work each day with what I consider to be a truly gifted and exceptional team of teachers! As I embark upon my 25<sup>th</sup> year in education (17 as a classroom teacher and staff developer, 8 years as an administrator), I am increasingly aware that schools can only be as good as the people in them! If truly effective learning organizations require a coordinated and collective effort, rather than a series of isolated individual efforts, then schools and families must partner together to develop the collective capacity of all members to meet the needs of students.

At Sycamore Ridge, our commitment is to 'walk our talk' by creating a balanced educational program with the focus on the whole child, academic rigor and lifelong learning. This commitment is exemplified in our school's mission statement and in our belief that "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child."

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### A Note from the PTA President

Welcome back and a warm welcome to our new Stallion families! I am very excited to serve as PTA President this year because Sycamore Ridge is such a wonderful place of learning and community. As I write this, we have just finished our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Stallion Stampede. What a fun night! I always love the Stampede since it feels like the best way to celebrate the new school year—a fun family event where the kids can enjoy all the activities while the parents get to re-connect after the summer.

Thank you to our Stampede Chairpersons, Lori Dreisbach Hawe and Cristina Campisano for organizing such a wonderful event.

Thank you, also, to their families and the amazing group of volunteers! From bandana and hat sales to crazy hair and face painting, from ticket sales to the set-up and clean up crews, we really could not have done it without you!

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- ▶ Boo Hoo Breakfast
- ▶ Red Ribbon Week

. . . and much more!




# Calendar of Events

## OCTOBER, 2011

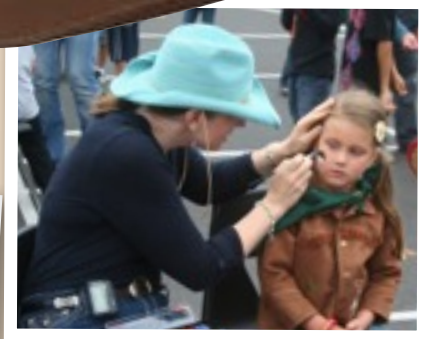
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- 10/3 - 10/7 6th Grade Camp Week (at Camp Marston)
  - 10/5 International Walk to School Day @ 7:40 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.
  - 10/10 - 10/14 Red Ribbon Week
  - 10/10 First Kids Korps Meeting @ 11:30 a.m. (in MUR)
  - 10/12 Jog-A-Thon @ 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. (on Upper Grade Field)(wear RED for Red Ribbon Week)
  - 10/12 Restaurant Night @ 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (at Souplantation)
  - 10/13 "Team Up & Get Healthy" Sports Jersey/Shirt Day
  - 10/14 Deadline to Submit Information to be Included in the Sycamore Ridge Directory
  - 10/20 Reflections Submissions Due @ 8:00 a.m.
  - 10/26 DMUSD Board of Trustees Meeting @ 5:45 p.m. (at Del Mar Hills Academy)
  - 10/28 Halloween Parade @ 8:15 a.m.



## NOVEMBER, 2011

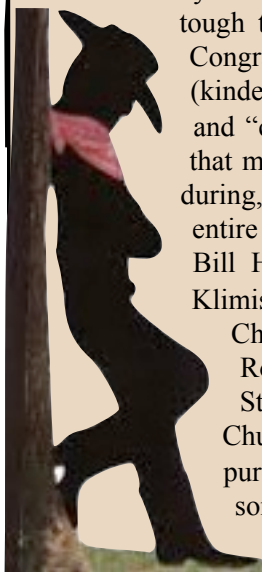
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- 11/10 PTA General Association Meeting/Family Movie Night @ 5:45 p.m. (in MUR)
  - 11/11 Veteran's Day Holiday -- **NO SCHOOL**
  - 11/14 - 11/18 Parent/Teacher Conference Week -- **12:30 P.M. DISMISSAL FOR ALL GRADES**
  - ALL WEEK**
  - 11/14 - 11/18 Book Fair
  - 11/15 Bagels and Books @ 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. (in Library)
  - 11/16 DMUSD Board of Trustees Meeting @ 5:45 p.m. (at Del Mar Hills Academy)
  - 11/17 Mad Science Family Night/ Book Fair Evening Shopping Time  
@TBA (in Library)
  - 11/21 - 11/25 Thanksgiving Break -- **NO SCHOOL**

## Seventh Annual Stallion Stampede a Huge Success



Wow! What a great night. The weather was perfect to say goodbye to summer and to welcome in the new school year. At least 600 people attended the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Stallion Stampede and we actually sold out of tickets for the first time ever! The kids had a great time dancing to music, having their faces and hair painted, getting tattoos and balloon creations, and eating some great BBQ. We hosted a hat decorating contest, judged by our amazing teachers and principal.

Everyone who entered the contest was a winner and the judges had a very tough time deciding who would win the top prize in each category. Congratulations to Sonia (4<sup>th</sup> grade), Duncan (3<sup>rd</sup> grade), and Sophia (kindergarten), whose hats won, "most creative," "most school spirit," and "cutest," respectively. A hearty thank you to all the volunteers that made the Stampede run so smoothly by lending a hand prior to, during, and following the event: Lisa Blazer, Darcy Buchanan, the entire Campisano family, Shannon and Chris Cary, Raquel Dixon, Bill Hawe, Chris Hendrickson, Eileen and Ron Johnson, Trisha Klimisch, Eve Lambert-Fliszar, Eileen Lundquist, Jill Meltzer, Christy Mohler, Richard Moon, Erin Reid, Debbie and Chris Romine, Lori Ruegger, Ritu Singla, Nelda Soltero, Maia Starling, Jen Varela, Carrie Nydahl White, and Emily and Chuck Morris. Finally, we would like to thank everyone who purchased a ticket to attend the Stampede, as this helps defray some of the costs of this PTA sponsored welcome back to school event. Hope to see you all at the 8<sup>th</sup> Stampede!



2011 - 2012  
Sycamore Ridge Grade  
Level and Department  
Teams



Kindergarten Team



1<sup>st</sup> Grade Team



2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Team



3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Team

## Principal's Message

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### Sycamore Ridge Mission Statement

*The mission of our school is to ensure high levels of academic achievement as measured by assessments that are aligned with state standards. We are committed to a comprehensive system of support and intervention to assure this outcome. We are dedicated to maximizing the individual potential of each learner by offering programs that foster creative and critical thinking, as well as social and emotional growth.*

The following article from the Wall Street Journal (October 2010), "A Teacher Quality Manifesto," is being shared with you in my first "Principal's Message" because it pays tribute to the value I place on teamwork, the benefits of collaboration and the power of a positive culture.

### A Teacher Quality Manifesto

By: Deborah Kenny

The documentary "Waiting for 'Superman'" (hitting theaters this Friday) and President Obama's Race to the Top competition have focused the national education debate on one question: How can we ensure a quality teacher in every classroom?

So far the answer has centered on accountability: standards, testing, data and evaluations. Accountability is critical. Without it, children's lives are ruined, and as educators we should not be allowed to keep our jobs if students aren't learning.

But accountability alone misses a more fundamental issue. If we want to elevate teacher quality in our country, we need to stop treating teachers like industrial-era workers and start treating them like professionals.

For the last seven years at Harlem Village Academies, we've been obsessed with teacher quality. Our strategy from the start was to attract talented people, create an environment where they could develop into great teachers, and hold them accountable. We were confident the results would follow.

Our teachers have indeed produced outstanding results, with test scores that rank our schools among the best in the country in math, science and social studies. Visitors see smart, driven, caring teachers in every classroom and ask us all the time: How do you do it? The answer: culture.

Culture—how people feel at work, how they are treated, and the values exhibited by their colleagues—determines the caliber of people who are attracted to an organization. Once hired, culture determines whether people will do their best work.

There are three aspects of culture that attract and develop effective teachers. The first is ownership. We need to trust teachers, affording them the freedom to do their jobs. Instead of mandating curriculum and micromanaging, we need to be clear about the goals, then get out of the way.

In our academies, teachers choose their text books, work closely with principals to make important school-wide decisions, and are not overly bothered with administrative work. A culture of ownership inspires teachers with an entrepreneurial spirit to turn on a dime and solve problems quickly. (One of our tenets: "If we ever become a bureaucracy, please shoot us.")

When a teacher has an idea, we say run with it. A math teacher took his fifth-graders on a 14-hour bus ride to Notre Dame University, where they became fired up about college. Ownership engenders passion and commitment in teachers, which inspires the same in students. In one classroom, a writing teacher is motivating students with a wacky song about homework, while another is leading a Socratic-style seminar with 28 students engrossed in "To Kill a Mockingbird."

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# Principal's Message

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The second element is teamwork: helping one another, having fun together, and treating each other as we would want to be treated. Gestures of camaraderie—a cupcake on your desk with a note of appreciation, or an email from a colleague to join a Saturday football game—create a sense of family that makes teachers happier and more productive.

For teachers, teamwork also means the principal has your back in difficult situations, and the operations director works tirelessly to support you. We've learned the hard way that culture does not happen by itself. It's like marriage: It has potential to be the deepest kind of love, but you need to really listen to the other person and nurture the relationship.

Finally, schools need to elevate learning by creating a rich intellectual environment where teachers are treated as scholars and everyone is passionate about continually growing. The most profound professional development comes from teachers observing each other's lessons, doing a play-by-play analysis, and sharing ways the instruction could be even tighter the next time.

Our culture of learning means that we are relentless about ensuring that every child succeeds. Walk into the teachers' office on any day and you see teachers looking at student work together and using data to create tutoring groups. Some even individualize homework.

When a culture supports teachers to do their best work, students' lives change. "I used to get Fs and Ds on everything," a seventh-grade girl told me, "and I thought I would never make it. Now I get As and Bs, and I've learned that you can do anything if you put your mind to it."

Adult culture sets a powerful example for children. When an observer commented that he had never seen middle-school students showing so much kindness to each other, a special-education teacher explained, "I think they can tell that we're all a little bit in love with each other." The reason our kids are nice to each other is because their teachers set a tone of kindness and respect.

What happens to bright teachers stuck in schools that don't have the right to hire by performance, provide teachers with freedom, and build a culture of excellence? They quit.

Teachers who were underperforming in their old schools become rock stars in a positive culture. One outstanding math teacher said recently, "I was merely competent until I came here. Now I have clear goals and my good ideas are recognized and valued." A veteran art teacher said, "The culture changed my entire attitude." And last summer, a science teacher said, "I used to feel stagnant at work, but here our physical needs are met so quickly and our emotional and intellectual needs are taken so seriously. I get more done in a day than I used to accomplish in a month."

As the chief executive, I've made many mistakes over the years, but nothing has changed my reverence for teachers. The only way to fundamentally change public education is to build a culture in our schools that attracts talent, brings out passion, and holds teachers accountable for results. The task is urgent—children's lives are at stake.

*Ms. Kenny is the founder and CEO of Harlem Village Academies. She is writing a book about her life and the founding of the schools.*

## Academic Performance Index Report

Once again, we can be proud of our students' achievement with the recently released Academic Performance Index (API) report for the 2010-11 school year. The California Department of Education provides API reports as a part of its Accountability Progress Reporting system. California's integrated accountability system is the cornerstone of California's *Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999*, which measures the academic performance and growth of schools on a variety of academic measures.

## 2011 - 2012 Sycamore Ridge Grade Level and Department Teams



4<sup>th</sup> Grade Team



5<sup>th</sup> Grade Team



6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team



Resource Team



## The Jog-A-Thon is Coming!

The Sycamore Ridge PTA is sponsoring the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Jog-A-Thon on Wednesday, October 12, 2011. The proceeds from this year's Jog-A-Thon will go toward the PTA's community building programs and the technology needs of the school. Please consider sponsoring your child in this event. It's a wonderful way for the children to stay active and feel they are contributing to their school. Pledge sheets went home in the September 28<sup>th</sup> Wednesday folder and are due back to school on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>.

We are also in need of volunteers to help operate the Jog-A-Thon. This is such a fun event for the students and staff and the kids love seeing their parents and/or grandparents supporting their school. Set up should begin approximately 8:15 a.m. and the event will wrap-up around 12:30 p.m. There are many time slots available, so please give some time that morning or even stay for the entire event. We will be sure to find a place for you! If you have any questions or comments, please contact Shelley Aberle at [saberle@san.rr.com](mailto:saberle@san.rr.com).

## Principal's Message

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The API is a single number, ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000, which reflects a school's performance level based on the results of statewide testing. The API is used to rank schools. A school is compared to other schools statewide and to 100 other schools that have similar demographic characteristics.

Our newly released API score for the 2010-11 school year is **954**. We met every subgroup target and are pleased to recognize the academic achievement of our students. Most importantly, the released data will help us to identify our students' areas of growth and need as we continue to make it our collective responsibility to ensure all students learn the grade level standards with the implicit assumption that all students, no matter what their needs or backgrounds, can achieve success. More information about Accountability Progress Reporting is available online at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/index.asp>.

### Developing Strong Learners and Citizens

Implementation of a comprehensive character education program that fosters inclusion and respect for all students is the focus of the CHARACTER COUNTS and PEACEBUILDERS curriculum at Sycamore Ridge. We encourage and teach our students to demonstrate qualities of good character across school environments (in the classroom, on the playground, in ESC class) and in the community. "I pledge to: praise people, give up put-downs, seek wise people, notice and speak up about hurts I have caused, right wrongs, and help others." We believe good character, like good academics, does not just happen. Students are encouraged to be problem solvers through conflict resolution strategies. PEACEBUILDERS and CHARACTER COUNTS provide a common language and guideline for discipline at our school. Please partner with us by modeling what it means to take personal responsibility for our actions and words. **TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A PROFOUND DIFFERENCE FOR OUR KIDS!**

### Traffic/Valet Information

As our school community continues to grow, we would like to remind everyone about some important parking and safety issues. Please remember to **follow all traffic laws**, including the one-way signs in the parking lot, and avoid double parking, even while remaining in your vehicle. If you are dropping off, take advantage of our wonderful valet service provided at the front entrance to the school. It is quick, easy and efficient. Remember to stay inside your vehicle, as school personnel will help load and unload your children and backpacks. **Please use the front of the school valet service, if possible.** This will help us with student safety and congestion at the back of the school. Also, remember that you must stop at the stop sign in front of the school on Old Carmel Valley Road. *It is the law!*

I look forward to a rewarding and exciting year ahead. Please know your thoughts are always welcome!

Most sincerely,  
*Emily Morris*  
Principal, Sycamore Ridge  
*A California Distinguished School*

## A Note from the PTA President

(continued from p. 1)

We started the year off with two special events—the Welcome Back Teacher and Staff Luncheon and the Boo Hoo Breakfast. Thank you to Janet Ross and her volunteers for creating an elegant lunch for our teachers and staff. It set the tone for a wonderful year! Food and drinks were graciously donated by Souplantation, Vons, and Ralphs. Kindergarten families were invited to enjoy some treats and shed some tears (if they wanted to) at the Boo Hoo Breakfast. Thank you to Carrie Nydahl White and her group of volunteers for the warm welcome to our Kindergarten parents.

The PTA Board is hard at work planning enriching events for the year. I would like to thank Carrie Nydahl White, Eileen Johnson, Christine Nizet, Sharry Zubrod, Lori Dreisbach Hawe, Shannon Cary, Nelda Soltero, Richard Kaleta, Jen Marchese-Ernst, and Nelar Wine for volunteering to serve on the Board this year. They are a great group of people to work with and I encourage you to get in touch with any of them if you have ideas or questions about the PTA. We still have one opening on the PTA Board, VP of Programs. If you would like to join the Board, please contact me at [maia\\_starling@yahoo.com](mailto:maia_starling@yahoo.com) or (858) 354-1183.

October and November look to be fun and educational months. Christine Nizet, our VP of Health and Safety, and Shelley Aberle, our Chairperson for International Walk to School Day and Red Ribbon Week, have put together a great week of events focusing on healthy choices, exercise, and saving our environment. Our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Jog-A-Thon will be held on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Please encourage your children to wear red that day in support of Red Ribbon Week!

Reflections submissions are also due in October. For those who aren't familiar with Reflections, it is sponsored by the national PTA and is designed to encourage students to participate in the arts. Students may submit entries in the following categories: Visual Arts, Photography, Music Composition, Literature, Dance Choreography, and Film Production. This year's theme is "Diversity Means . . ." Encourage your child to get those creative juices flowing. You'll be amazed at what they come up with! For more information, entry forms, and rules, please visit the PTA website.

In November, we will have our Family Movie Night (November 10<sup>th</sup>) and Book Fair (November 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>). Both are really fun events, so keep your eye out for eblasts and flyers as the events get closer.

Did you know your PTA Membership dues help us keep the cost down for Stallion Stampede? We also use PTA funds to support our lunch clubs: Zoo Crew, Yearbook Club, Drama Club, Garden Club, Science Club, and Stallion Sprinters. These are just a few examples of how the PTA uses funds that we raise. Have you joined the PTA or renewed your membership? It's not too late! Membership forms are available in the school office or online at [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com). Membership has its perks . . . you will receive a LegoLand coupon and a complimentary copy of the school directory.

I am looking forward to a great year and hope that you will enjoy the activities the PTA has planned. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in getting involved, please feel free to contact me. We have many volunteer opportunities that can be flexible in terms of the time commitment required. I am happy to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

Maia Starling  
PTA President  
[Maia\\_starling@yahoo.com](mailto:Maia_starling@yahoo.com)  
(858) 354-1183

## Kids Korps Encourages Youth Volunteerism

Kids Korps is a national organization which involves young people, ages 5 through 25, in community service. Our goal with our Sycamore Ridge chapter is to introduce the concept of volunteerism to our students and to get them actively involved in our projects throughout the year. The Sycamore Ridge Chapter of Kids Korps will kick off its new year of volunteer projects on Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup> during Lunch Recess in the MUR. We welcome all returning members and invite new members to join us for exciting community projects throughout the year.

Last year some of our projects included: making blankets for Soldier's Angels, an organization that supports injured soldiers overseas; working at Feeding America, a food bank that supplies food to needy schools and shelters across San Diego; hosting a holiday party for a family shelter in Oceanside; making dinner and feeding the homeless at Bread of Life in Oceanside; hosting a Valentine's Day cookie decorating party for a women's shelter in Oceanside; and spending a day at TERI, an equestrian program for people who have autism, mental retardation, and other disorders.

We invite you and your children to join us. Membership forms came home with your child in the September 28<sup>th</sup> Wednesday folder and can also be accessed on the school website. If you have any questions, please contact Marie LeRose at [marielerose@gmail.com](mailto:marielerose@gmail.com).

## Failure, Consequences, and Learning

My 14-year-old son initiated the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Cathedral Catholic High School this fall. Like any first-time high school student, he is faced with new and more difficult demands than those he experienced in junior high school. He also has recently joined a local Carmel Valley competitive soccer club. There are practices (2 to 3 times a week), school activities, and increased academic responsibilities. He is required to leave our house in Carlsbad by 6:30 a.m., with his lunch, backpack, and soccer gear in hand. He has done pretty well these first couple of weeks. However, today he made his first error. He forgot his soccer bag. Our plan was for him to bring his gear to school, I would pick him up, bring him back to my school to spend the 3 hours prior to practice, snacking, reading, studying, and resting. At the same time, I intended to spend the time getting ahead in the work that I do at Sage Canyon and Sycamore Ridge. My wife called me to let me know that Nolan had left his soccer bag at home and my first reaction was to drive home and pick up his gear for him (I would do this after giving him a lecture on being responsible and threatening punishment if it happens again). My wife suggested that he wear his school tennis shoes and shorts, but in my initial thought that idea was not suitable. After all, he'd be slipping without cleats, he'd be hot, he'd be embarrassed, he wouldn't do as well, and his coach would not be happy! Then it dawned on me--while it was true he would experience all of the above-mentioned consequences, he would not be psychologically scarred for life, he would survive the inconvenience, and, just maybe, the natural consequences he reaped would help him learn and retain a valuable lesson. Stifling my impulse to rescue him and allowing him to experience the results of his actions, or lack thereof, was actually the most loving and helpful choice I could make in this instance!

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## Fall. Football. Friends. Family. FOURTH grade!!

Ms. Money and Mrs. Jackson would like to extend our congratulations to our current fourth grade students for an exceptional start to the 2011-12 school year. The beginning of the year went off without a hitch, and the students have already proven that this year is going to be special.

Students have been earning Ms. Money and Mrs. Jackson bucks for showing good character and being responsible with their classwork and homework. Some students like to spend their money weekly at the classroom market, while others tend to be savers for a bigger prize or perhaps a day with the teacher at the end of the year.

The current fourth graders are working as team units to move up the classroom football fields. Teams that display teamwork and responsibility are dashing toward a TOUCHDOWN!

Fourth grade students are now enjoying the upper grade playground (see photos). After a few days of adapting to playing on the "big kid" side, they all agree that it is much more fun!



## Here's to the Graduating Class of 2024!



Our Kindergarten classes are off to a great start! The kindergarten teachers are impressed with how well our students are showing us that they can follow classroom and school rules. Kindergarten students are making new friends and working hard each day.

Our Extended Studies Curriculum has begun and we are so excited to be going to Science and Technology each week.

Extended Day started on September 19th. Our students will have small group instruction with their teacher one day a week. We are looking forward to this special time to work with our students in a small group setting.

Kindergarten is a special year to build friendships and a love for learning. We look forward to watching our students bloom and grow. It's going to be a great year in Kindergarten!

Mrs. Litt, Mrs. Fletcher, and Mrs. Wojtkowski

### Everyone A Reader Program Needs Volunteers

Everyone A Reader is a program where students receive additional literacy support in the form of individualized reading practice and instruction sessions. These trained volunteers work one-on-one with first through third grade students using research-informed instructional methods to improve students' reading strategies. Volunteers are asked to commit to giving 30-60 minutes a week for the months of October through May. If you would like to be part of a dedicated team helping to make a difference in the lives of children, please consider joining the Sycamore Ridge EAR team. Contact Lisa Blazer, Sycamore Ridge Site Coordinator, at (858) 945-6920 or [ldblazer@live.com](mailto:ldblazer@live.com) to have any of your questions answered.

### Raise Money for Sycamore Ridge While Shopping at Vons

Do you want to help raise thousands of dollars for Sycamore Ridge just by shopping as usual? It is so easy--just register for eScrip! eScrip is a free program through which VONS donates a percentage of your purchases back to the school.

To get started, go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com). There, you need to identify Sycamore Ridge as the school you would like to support. Our group name is "Sycamore Ridge PTA" and our Group ID # is **500002133**. You must also register your VONS card number. If you don't know your VONS card number, please call (877) 723-3929 and VONS will supply you with the number. If you don't have a VONS card, sign up for one today!

If you have any questions, please contact Alyson Coons at [alysoncoons@yahoo.com](mailto:alysoncoons@yahoo.com).





Sam Ung

## Students to Learn About Living Things in the Stallion Science Lab

Welcome to the crazy world of Sycamore Science! My name is Mrs. Ung and I am so excited to be back for a second year teaching science. Bugs, worms, crickets, a lizard, a tortoise, a chinchilla and plants are just some of the tools we're using as we study living things. Kindergarteners are exploring the world of goldfish, snails and worms while first graders will plant different types of seeds. Brave second graders are using the scientific method to investigate mealworms and third graders will explore adaptations and some crabby crawfish. Fourth graders are learning about the chain of energy and terrariums while fifth graders will learn how our bodies work. Sixth graders will be learning about our Earth and the many layers beneath it.

In connection with our unit on living things, we also have a Garden Club and Zoo Crew. In Garden Club, we plant, water, weed, harvest and eat plants we grow in the garden. It's open to all grades, so if your student is interested, we meet in the Stallion Learning Garden on Thursdays at lunch. Parent volunteers are also welcome!

In Zoo Crew, students in fourth through sixth grade have the opportunity to love and take care of our classroom pets--a chinchilla, a leopard gecko, and a tortoise. Students even have the opportunity to take an animal home during break! Students can come by the science lab Fridays at lunch to meet and learn about these sweet animals.

Please come by the science lab if you have any questions! If you want to see and get the most up to date information about the lab, please visit my website at <http://sandbox.dmusd.org/teachers/sambatung/>





## Box Tops for Education is an Easy Way to Earn Cash for Sycamore Ridge

The Box Tops for Education program is an easy way to earn cash for our school. It's as simple as 1, 2, 3.

**1. Clip Box Tops.** Box Tops coupons are on hundreds of products you probably already buy, including General Mills cereals, Totino's, Green Giant fresh produce, Juicy Juice, Betty Crocker, Hefty, Ziploc, Kleenex, Britta, Hanes, Avery office supplies, and others (see [www.BTFE.com](http://www.BTFE.com) for a complete list). Each Box Top coupon is worth 10 cents.

**2. Send Box Tops to School.** Attach Box Tops to collection sheets from Wednesday folders or just send them in a baggie or envelope. Hand them in to a teacher or drop them in the box in the front office.

**3. Sycamore Ridge Earns Cash.** That's what it's all about! All those Box Tops really add up. We have already earned \$222 for Box Tops submitted over the summer.

Visit [www.BTFE.com](http://www.BTFE.com) for other ways to earn even more, like registering for the Reading Room, which credits Box Tops directly to our school for purchases you make from Barnes and Noble. Other retailers participate in the Marketplace program, giving Box Tops credit for online purchases at stores such as Target and OfficeMax. All Box Tops funds go directly to the Sycamore Ridge PTA. Thanks for supporting this great program!

## Family Movie Night\* & PTA Meeting



Save the Date for

Sycamore Ridge's Family Movie Night

on

Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

at

5:45 p.m. in the MUR

The PTA General Association Meeting will begin at 5:45 p.m. followed by an introduction by the Dad's Club Chairpersons. The Movie will begin at 6:15 p.m. and will be a G-rated film chosen by the Student Council.

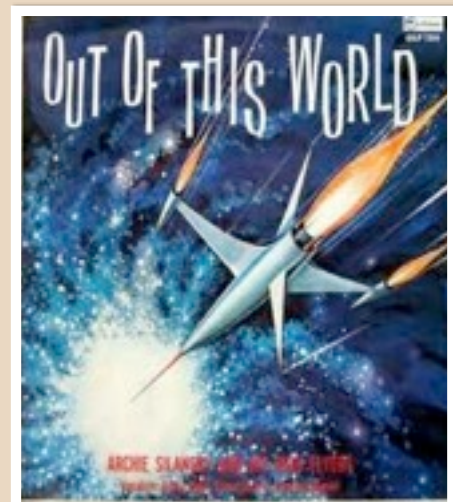
\*Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge Dad's Club, a program of the Sycamore Ridge PTA: [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com)

## Scholastic "Reading is Out of This World!" Book Fair Coming

Mark your calendars for the annual Scholastic Book Fair, taking place on November 14 through November 18, 2011. A portion of the proceeds from every book sold will go directly to the Sycamore Ridge library to buy new books for our students to enjoy.

The event is sponsored by the PTA and will include the popular Bagels and Books with Dads and a Family Night event. This is the library's biggest fundraiser, so be sure to stop by and stock up on some great books for your family!

If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer for this event, please email Jackie Niznik, [jackieniznik@gmail.com](mailto:jackieniznik@gmail.com).



# PTA<sup>®</sup> Reflections unleashes your artistic talents

Dance Choreography

Photography

Film Production

Musical Composition

Literature

Visual Arts

2011-2012 Theme: **“Diversity Means...”**

Reflect on the theme. Create an original work. Be recognized.

**Deadline for entries: Thursday, October 20, 2011**

For details, contact **Ian Allen**

[africaandbeyond@aol.com](mailto:africaandbeyond@aol.com)

\*Please read Entry Rules carefully! Entries with picture frames, paintings on canvas & 3-dimensional displays will not be eligible for judging. For further information see:

[www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com)

\*\*Sponsored by the Sycamore Ridge PTA\*\*

National Media Sponsor of PTA Reflections Program

**parenting**  
school years

  
PTA REFLECTIONS



## May 2011 Sycamore Stallion Superstars



The following students were chosen by their teachers as May's Sycamore Stallion Superstars as persons of excellent character.:

### Kindergarten

*Mrs. Fletcher:* Lauren  
*Mrs. Jones:* Natalia  
*Mrs. Litt:* Kate  
*Ms. Wojtkowski:* Morgan

### First Grade

*Mrs. Bonaguidi:* Rachael  
*Mrs. Howell:* Aerin  
*Mrs. Saunders:* Ethan  
*Ms. Waxman/Mrs. White:* Ellen

### Second Grade

*Mrs. Chung:* Diego  
*Mrs. Kowieski:* Emily  
*Mrs. Schengel:* Kylin  
*Mrs. Shea:* Grace

### Third Grade

*Mrs. Hanna:* Aidan  
*Ms. Johnson:* Justin  
*Mrs. Rex:* Jinwoo

### Fourth Grade

*Mrs. Blazer:* Anjali  
*Ms. Money:* Maxim

### Fifth Grade

*Mrs. Mackie:* Chloe  
*Mrs. Schwab/Mrs. Solowczuk:* Justine  
*Ms. Stanton:* Grayson

### Sixth Grade

*Mr. Dahl:* Mary  
*Mrs. Mokiao:* Miguel



## June 2011 Sycamore Stallion Superstars



The following students were chosen by their teachers as June's Sycamore Stallion Superstars as persons of excellent character.:

### Kindergarten

*Mrs. Fletcher:* Lauren  
*Mrs. Jones:* Landon  
*Mrs. Litt:* Avery  
*Ms. Wojtkowski:* Joanna

### First Grade

*Mrs. Bonaguidi:* Ricky  
*Mrs. Howell:* Jocelyn  
*Mrs. Saunders:* Claire  
*Ms. Waxman/Mrs. White:* Tabrezia

### Second Grade

*Mrs. Chung:* Riley  
*Mrs. Kowieski:* Ryan  
*Mrs. Schengel:* Trevor  
*Mrs. Shea:* Lily

### Third Grade

*Mrs. Hanna:* Brian  
*Ms. Johnson:* Sam  
*Mrs. Rex:* Se Young

### Fourth Grade

*Mrs. Blazer:* Rebecca  
*Ms. Money:* Dillon

### Fifth Grade

*Mrs. Mackie:* Justin  
*Mrs. Schwab/Mrs. Solowczuk:* Hallie  
*Ms. Stanton:* Claire

### Sixth Grade

*Mr. Dahl:* Anthony  
*Mrs. Mokiao:* Lisha

# CONGRATULATIONS!



**Sycamore Ridge  
Teachers & Staff  
Welcome Back Luncheon**

August 26, 2011

**Volunteers & Sponsors**

Maia Starling, Nicole & Meaghan Baril,  
Jen Ernst, Lori Hawe, Shelly Yeager, Kellie Church,  
Shannon Cary, Shelley Aberle, Branden Belford,  
Sandy Blackstone Gardner, Darcy Buchanan,  
Nelar Wine, Miranda Giurgiu & Erin Reid

Souplantation \* Ralphs \* Vons \* Kinkos Fed-Ex

*A big thank you to our wonderful volunteers  
who donated their time and delicious desserts!*

*And thank you to all the local sponsors  
who made the luncheon possible!*

*With Much Gratitude,  
Chairperson, Janet Ross*

**PTA and School  
Information Available via  
E-Blasts**

Sycamore Ridge and the Sycamore Ridge PTA send out e-blasts every Wednesday with the latest school news and information on upcoming events. If you would like to receive an e-blast, please sign up at [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com).

**Love Your Planet, Help Our  
School, by Donating Old Electronics**

Sycamore Ridge continues to participate in the Cartridges for Kids program -- a recycling program that pays schools **CASH** for used inkjet cartridges, cell phones, PDAs, digital cameras, laptops, iPods, calculators, GPS devices, DVDs, video games and video game consoles. You may drop items off to Jennifer Oliviera in the tech lab. For more information, please contact Jennifer Oliviera at [joliviera@dmusd.org](mailto:joliviera@dmusd.org) or check out the Cartridges for Kids website at [www.cfktoday.com](http://www.cfktoday.com).

Join us for Sycamore Ridge Restaurant Night at

**Souplantation**  
salads • soups • bakery



3804 Valley Centre Drive  
San Diego, CA 92130

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Souplantation will donate 20% of sales generated by Sycamore Ridge families purchasing a meal and a beverage and presenting a flyer (to be sent home in Wednesday folders)!**



## Smiles Reign at Boo Hoo Breakfast

The Annual Boo Hoo Breakfast was held on the first day of school to welcome incoming kindergarten parents to the Sycamore Ridge community. There were a few tears shed, but smiles were mostly in fashion as the parents sent their little ones on their way! The upper grade lunch area was decorated in bright yellow with balloons and happy faces. The parents were treated to a wonderful breakfast including croissants, muffins, pastries, bagels, fresh fruit, coffee and juices that were kindly donated by the generous families at Sycamore Ridge.

While parents enjoyed their breakfast, Principal Morris welcomed them and helped provide some of the ins and outs of kindergarten and Sycamore Ridge. In addition, PTA President Maia Starling and DMSEF Representative Debbie Romine gave brief presentations on their respective organizations.

Many thanks to Nicole Baril, Meaghen Baril, Delaney Baril and Maxine Baril, Scott White, Hallie White, Casey White, Nelar Wine, Nelda Soltero, Christa Eilers and Maia Starling for their help in set up, organization and clean up. Thanks also to Jen Ernst for capturing beautiful photos of the event.

## Study Smarts

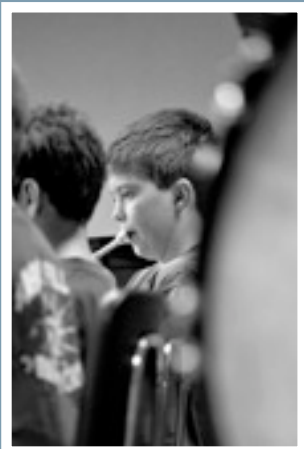
From a history test at the end of each month, to a spelling quiz every Friday, studying is a skill youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Help your child study with these tips.

**Start a Habit.** Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something he does the evening before a test. For example, he might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After he finishes his regular homework, he can spend a little time reviewing his notes and handouts.

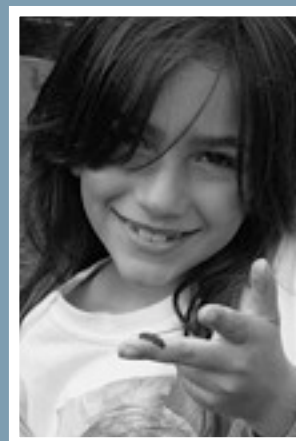
**Tackle Textbooks.** When your child has a chapter to study, have him “preview” it to increase his understanding. He should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words. *Tip:* If he finds a section hard to grasp, he could read a picture book on the topic. For a science unit on matter, for instance, he could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

**Mix It Up.** If your youngster reviews information in several ways, he’ll be more likely to remember it. He might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, he can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that he spell each word or recite each fact aloud.

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Please  
GIVE



The Del Mar Schools Education Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that was established to raise the necessary funds to provide Del Mar Union School District students with enrichment programs such as science, music, art, technology, and physical education. But the Foundation can’t do it without YOUR continued support and generous contributions to YOUR school.

If EVERY family could make a contribution to the Foundation, it will make its goal of raising enough money to fund Science, Music, Art, Technology and Physical Education teachers at all schools. Keep in mind that ANY size contribution will make a BIG difference to ALL the children at Del Mar schools.

Del Mar students — your kids — are some of the brightest in the nation. The Foundation’s goal is to keep them motivated and challenged by nurturing interests that go beyond math, reading and writing. Help keep Del Mar schools strong! Consider writing a check to DMSEF today or donate online to help DMSEF partially fund your child’s enrichment programs.

**Mail your check to:**

Del Mar Schools Education Foundation  
13030 Ashley Falls Drive  
San Diego, CA 92130

**Remember:**

Most companies provide **Corporate Gift Match** programs to their employees.

**Donate online at:** [www.delmarkids.org/donate](http://www.delmarkids.org/donate)



Kathy Pechtimaldjian  
(Mrs. P.)



Hello Stallion Parents and Students! The 2011-2012 school year is off to a great start in the Sycamore Ridge Library. The students have begun checking out books and sharing some of the exciting titles they read over the summer. Congratulations to all of the kids who completed the Catch the Reading Wave summer reading program. These students were honored with a certificate and prize.

At our school, all classes visit the library once a week for thirty minutes. During this time, students hear a story, learn library skills, and check out books. Kindergartners and first graders can check out one book and second through sixth graders can check out two. Grades K-4 have a one-week check out period and grades 5-6 can check out for two weeks. Please encourage your children to be responsible for their own library books. Students with overdue books may not check out a book and must pay for lost/damaged books. Please note that replacement costs are as follows: hardcover books, \$20-\$30; and paperback books, \$10-\$20.

Library Club is on Mondays and Thursdays during lunch recess. During this time, students may come to the library to return and check out books, read, play quiet board games, or do arts and crafts. Donations are always needed for games and craft supplies.

Please support our annual fundraisers that generate much needed money for our library. These include the Stallion Birthday Book Club, the Scholastic Book Fair and the Used Book Sale. The Stallion Birthday Book Club takes place all year long. Students who are in the Birthday Book Club will choose a new library book as their special book. A commemorative label is placed in the book and the student has his/her picture added to the Birthday Book Club wall. This is done as close as possible to their actual birthday. August and September birthdays will be honored immediately.

The Scholastic Book Fair will be held on November 14th through 18th this year. This is our biggest fundraiser and most popular. Volunteers are always needed to make this a big success. More information will be sent home in October. The Used Book Sale is held in May. Also a popular event, the used book sale is a great opportunity to pass along books you no longer need and stock up on new reading material for the summer. Donations will be accepted starting in April. THANK YOU to everyone who has already supported these programs.

Volunteers are always needed to keep the library running smoothly. If you have a little time to spare and love children's literature, this is a great opportunity. Volunteers can check out books, too. If interested, email me at [kpechtimaldjian@dmusd.org](mailto:kpechtimaldjian@dmusd.org).

Thank you for your support. It's going to be a fantastic year.

## Students Encouraged to Participate in Reflections Program

The national PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a pre-selected theme, while increasing community awareness on the importance of the arts in education. This year's Reflections Program theme is "Diversity Means . . . ." All children in our school are encouraged to create works of art in six areas: dance choreography; film production; literature; musical composition; photography; and visual arts.

Entry forms are available at [www.capta.org/sections/programs/downloads/reflections-form\\_student-entry.pdf](http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/downloads/reflections-form_student-entry.pdf) and consent forms for images of people used in submissions are available at [www.capta.org/sections/programs/downloads/reflections-form\\_fillable\\_consent.pdf](http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/downloads/reflections-form_fillable_consent.pdf).

Last year, 23 students from Sycamore Ridge had their artistic entries selected by the judges to represent the school at the North Coastal Council level. Eight of these students went on to represent Sycamore Ridge at the District School level--twice as many students as all the other schools in the Del Mar Union School District combined! This is something of which we should all be proud. Let's try to do even better this school year! As further incentive, a wonderful prize will be awarded to the class that submits the most entries this year for the Reflections Program. So, come on everyone, unleash your artistic talents and be sure to participate in this year's Reflections Program!

For further information, contact Reflections Chairperson, Ian Allen at [africaandbeyond@aol.com](mailto:africaandbeyond@aol.com).

**I pledge to make healthy choices!**



**October 10–14, 2011**

Sycamore Ridge will celebrate Red Ribbon Week through a week of fun activities designed to promote healthy choices. Throughout the week, Coach Wells will incorporate physical activities that will focus on educating kids about the heart, blood, arteries, veins and cholesterol. She will also have kids exercise and then breathe through a straw to demonstrate how lungs are affected by tobacco use. Other Red Ribbon Week activities will include:

Monday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>: Students will pledge to make healthy choices by signing the pledge board in their classroom and receiving Red Ribbons to put on their backpacks.

Wednesday, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>: Sycamore Ridge PTA's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Jog-A-Thon. Run, walk or skip to get some exercise and raise funds for our school. Wear RED to show your support of Red Ribbon Week!

Wednesday, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>: Enjoy a healthy salad at Souplantation for our first Restaurant Night of the year. 20% of proceeds will be donated to the PTA.

Thursday, Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>: Please encourage your kids to wear their favorite sports jersey or t-shirt and have fun with the theme "Team Up & Get Healthy."

Friday, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>: Teenagers from the local high schools, prescreened and trained by the San Dieguito Alliance for Drug Free Youth, will come to speak to our 6th graders about their choices to be drug-free and alcohol-free.

We look forward to a very informative and fun week. If you have any questions, please contact Shelley Aberle at [saberle@san.rr.com](mailto:saberle@san.rr.com).



**Red Ribbon Week**

# Sycamore Ridge Frequently Asked Questions



## What is the PTA and what do they do?

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a non-profit organization run completely by volunteers. The PTA provides multiple programs throughout the year to help build the Sycamore Ridge community. Please check our website: [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com) for information about ongoing programs and upcoming events. The PTA is always in need of parents willing to volunteer even an hour of their time to help us continue to provide quality programs for our school.

## How does the school library work?

Each class goes to the library once a week with their teacher and your child will be able to check out books from the library during that visit.

## What are ESC classes and how often do kids have ESC?

Extended Studies Classes (ESC) are taught by certificated teachers with a specialization in a subject area. The ESC courses at Sycamore Ridge are: Technology, Music, Science, Art and P.E. We are able to offer this specialized instruction that goes beyond the California state requirements through funding from the Del Mar Schools Education Foundation. Students will have the opportunity to participate in some or all of these specialized courses during the regular school day while at Sycamore Ridge. The amount of ESC time students receive is dependent on educational funding and parental donations and may change from year to year based on funding.



## What are Villages?

At Sycamore Ridge we believe "it takes a village to raise a child" and we have created our own school Village program. A Village is a group of students grades K-6 and a credentialed teacher who meet together in a group for 30-45 minutes every other Wednesday. Students remain in the same Village the entire time they attend Sycamore Ridge. In Villages, students discuss PeaceBuilders topics and participate in different activities. Upper grade students are responsible for helping the younger children and serving as good role models. The goal of the Villages program is for students to bond, connect, make new friends and form friendships across grade levels.



## What is the Del Mar Schools Education Foundation?

The Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization. The Foundation's primary goal is to raise funds to support our music, art, science, technology and physical education programs at each of our Del Mar schools. Contributions made during the current school year are used to fund the following year's ESC programs.

## How does the hot lunch program work? Where do the kids go?

Hot lunches must be ordered and paid for in advance. Lunch forms can be found on the District website. In the beginning of the year, kindergarten children walk over with their teacher to get their hot lunches and then join the rest of the children in the lunch area.

## How does the milk program work? Is it for lunch or snack?

The milk program allows children to get a carton of regular or chocolate milk at lunch. Prepayment is required and is paid either for the whole year or for half a year at a time. Order forms are available in the school office.

## What is the Wednesday folder?

The Wednesday folder is the means by which you will receive many communications from the school. Flyers will be put in the Wednesday folder for upcoming school events, fundraisers, etc. If you have more than one child at the school, your youngest child will be the only one to receive the Wednesday folder information. You will also have the option to receive all flyers electronically rather than via the Wednesday folder.

## What is PeaceBuilders?

PeaceBuilders is a character education program which focuses on teaching students responsibility and good judgment through friendship, praise, good modeling, and peace. Children recite the PeaceBuilders pledge during morning announcements. The Pledge is: "We pledge to: Praise people, Give up put-downs, Seek wise people, Notice and speak up about hurts we have caused, Right wrongs, and Help others."



## How do I keep up to date on school events?

Please check the Sycamore Ridge school website at [www.dmusd.org/sycamore](http://www.dmusd.org/sycamore) and the PTA website at [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com) regularly. The calendar continues to be updated as programs, field trips, etc. are scheduled. Additionally, please read the materials that come home in the Wednesday folder. The PTA also publishes a school-wide newsletter five times a year.

"A teacher affects  
eternity; he can  
never tell where his  
influence stops."

- Henry Brooks  
Adams



ESC Teachers at Back to School Night.

The Sycamore Ridge Round-Up is provided by



Sycamore Ridge School  
5333 Old Carmel Valley Road  
San Diego, CA 92130  
Phone: (858) 755-1060  
Fax: (858) 755-1258  
[www.dmusd.org](http://www.dmusd.org)

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Principal: Emily Morris  
PTA President: Maia Starling  
Photographers: Jen Ernst, Christine Nizet  
Newsletter Editor: Christa Eilers

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THE SYCAMORE RIDGE PTA, DEL MAR UNION SCHOOL  
DISTRICT IS A MEMBER OF THE NORTH COUNTY COASTAL  
COUNCIL AND NINTH DISTRICT OF THE CALIFORNIA  
CONGRESS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS (CCPTS)

## Directories are Coming!

The PTA directory will be distributed via the Wednesday folder by the first week in November. If you would like your family's information included in this year's directory, the deadline for submitting information is Friday, October 14th. If you would you like to receive a complimentary copy of the directory, simply join or renew your PTA membership. Membership forms are available in the school office or via the PTA website at: [www.sycamoreridgepta.com](http://www.sycamoreridgepta.com). Please contact Richard Kaleta at [Richard.Kaleta@Teradata.com](mailto:Richard.Kaleta@Teradata.com) if you have any questions.





## Hello Wonderful Sycamore Ridge Parents!

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Eileen Johnson, and I am the Chair of RidgeRaising again this year and the V.P. of Ways and Means for the Sycamore Ridge PTA. As a parent of a Sycamore Ridge 1<sup>st</sup> Grader and 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, I am quickly learning the importance of our fundraisers. Without these events, our children would not have the wonderful things available to them at our award-winning school.

RidgeRaising is a dinner and silent auction, and Sycamore Ridge PTA's largest fundraiser of the year. If you haven't attended in the past, the event is a super-fun, adult's-only evening where you can meet other parents in a social environment. The tentative date for RidgeRaising 2012 is **March 10<sup>th</sup>**. MARK YOUR CALENDARS SO YOU DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS GREAT EVENT!

We are starting to plan now, as this event takes a lot of time and energy to make it a success. That is why.....

## I NEED YOUR HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am currently putting together my committee and seeking volunteers. I have listed below the positions needed. Please fill out the form below or you can email me directly. We will be having our first meeting in a couple of weeks. This is a very fun event to be involved with and a great way to meet other parents. I would like to have 20 people total to help with the event. I welcome as much or as little help as your time allows! Every bit counts! The **committees** I need help with are listed below:

- |                                 |                              |                       |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| •Donations of Auction Items     | •Teacher Feature Coordinator | •Check-Out/ Financial |
| •Party Venue-Logistics          | •Administration              | •Ticket Sales         |
| •Set Up/Clean Up                | •Graphic Design              | •Website/Blog         |
| •Grade Level Basket Coordinator | •Advertising Coordinator     | •Decorating           |

Last year our theme was Disco. The event was held at Santaluz Country Club and we raised \$22,000. This money purchased printers, projectors, docu-cams and a portable sound system for our school. The scrapbook with pictures from last year will be in the office in a few weeks, so make sure you stop by and check it out. Everyone that went had a fantastic time!

We are also currently seeking ideas for a location and theme. We are going to have a contest for the best ideas and themes. If you have been to a party at which you had a great time, or know of a great location that would accommodate 150-200 people that is not too far from Carmel Valley, let me know. And, most importantly, if you have any friends/colleagues or family that own a business that would be willing to donate for this wonderful event, PLEASE let me know so I can contact them with our donation letter and tax information. Every donation counts no matter how large or small!!!!

Feel free to email or call me if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your help in making RidgeRaising a success!

Eileen Johnson-Chair  
[ejohns@san.rr.com](mailto:ejohns@san.rr.com)  
(858) 243-1900

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**Please fill out and return to your teacher or leave at the front office with my name on it. You can also email me directly.**

Location Idea: \_\_\_\_\_ Theme Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation I may be able to receive: \_\_\_\_\_

Interested in Volunteering: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Failure, Consequences, and Learning

(continued from p. 8)

The concept of “natural consequences” is not new, but seems to be even more topical today than when it was introduced over 50 years ago by Rudolph Dreikurs. As the above example points out, I’m right there with each and every one of you who, on a daily basis, “save” your children from experiencing the consequences of their behavior and, as a result, prevent them from learning valuable lessons of life. If the kindergartner slides down a wet slide after being told not to by the teacher, the child will get his/her clothes wet. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> grader forgets their lunch, she/he will be hungry. If the 6<sup>th</sup> grader forgets to bring a book home to study, he/she may earn a less than suitable grade. As parents, we can jump in and rescue our children in every one of these and thousands of other instances in an effort to make sure they will not be the “victim” of what really are natural consequences (e.g., being wet and uncomfortable, being hungry, or being disappointed by a bad grade). Perhaps I’m being picky here, but in the above examples the subtle message we give by saving our children from experiencing these consequences is that they don’t have to listen to the teacher, they don’t need to remember to take their lunch, and it isn’t important to remember the books needed for studying because in each instance mom, dad, or a teacher will step in and make it right! Allowing natural consequences to teach our children how to accept responsibility for mistakes and misbehavior is a parental gift that will pay dividends for the future and will result in self-sufficient, confident, and pro-social children.

Now, you may be asking yourself, how do natural consequences apply when a child is proceeding in a line of behavior that has possibilities of disastrous consequences, e.g., running into the busy street? Additionally, what about behaviors that do not appear to have a natural consequence such as walking into the just cleaned house with sand all over his/her feet? In these cases, and in the thousands of other situations like them, logical consequences should be the appropriate response. Logical consequences are predicated on a foundation of respect, the development of a reasonable response, and the application of a response that is related to the behavior. In the example of sand tracked into the house, the response is obvious. The child is directed in a respectful manner to right what he/she has wronged. He/She will need to clean the floor, returning it to its original state. If a child runs into the street, they lose their privilege of playing in the yard or outside for a period of time. So, when a natural consequence is not appropriate try to find a logical consequence.

This short introduction to the concept of natural and logical consequences is offered as a jumping off point for those who are interested in changing or developing their parenting skills. I have to admit that I am hitting the books once again in this area, as it is obvious I have fallen into the “rescue trap.” For parents and teachers interested in the subject of natural and logical consequences, the following references may be useful: Children: The Challenge, by Rudolph Dreikurs with Vicki Soltz; and The Shelbys Need Help: A Choose-Your-Own-Solutions Guidebook for Parents, by Dr. Ken West.

Postscript: It has been four years since this article was written and Nolan is now off to college. Over his four years in high school, he encountered many more “learning” consequence experiences. In each case, my wife and I had to control our impulse to save him. Over the years he became much better regarding taking care of himself and his responsibilities and we became more comfortable letting him do so. He’s not perfect by any means, but we are confident that he is better prepared to accept increased and much more serious responsibilities of college life and beyond.

(Submitted by Rich Griswold, Ph.D., DMUSD School Psychologist, Sycamore Ridge and Sage Canyon Elementary Schools)

