

Highwheeling Highlights

March 2009



Principal's Message:

For Northwood Elementary, It is the Best of Times

Charles Dickens began his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with the words, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Although written in the 1800's, these words characterize much of what we are seeing today. It is the worst of times for many reasons: real estate has lost value, the stock market has significantly declined, layoffs continue to occur across the nation, and the California state budget deficit has led to record cuts in public education spending. Indeed, all the indicators are pessimistic and the outlook appears disconcerting.

Not so, however, for Northwood Elementary School. **For Northwood, it is truly the best of times.** To say this is the best of times without support or confirmation of facts would be nothing more than an optimistic opinion, so I will lay out the empirical evidence that indicates how well Northwood Elementary is doing:

Exhibit A: In September 2008, the California Department of Education released our Academic Performance Index (API). The results indicated that

our scores had jumped 22 points to an API score of 911. This was due to the phenomenal efforts of our teachers and support staff in creating an environment that fosters higher order thinking skills and offers a challenging curriculum. Additionally, we provided after-school support to students who needed extra help with their learning goals. Put another way, the staff at Northwood is dedicated to doing whatever it takes to make learning meaningful and help your child succeed.

Exhibit B: In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Education named Northwood Elementary one of the nation's best schools by declaring Northwood a National Blue Ribbon School. This award was due to all our hard-working teachers who are extremely committed to high levels of learning for all of our students. This prestigious award was also the outcome of our dedicated parent community whose continued support makes Northwood a truly outstanding school.

Exhibit C: School-wide and IUSD assessments indicate that our students are flourishing with respect to reading, writing, and reasoning. As a consequence of being immersed in a rigorous curriculum that challenges students to think and problem solve, this year we've experienced a five-fold increase in the number of students identified as Gifted and Talented (GATE) at Northwood. It is also noteworthy that many of our students this year have significantly raised their reading lexile levels due to our Reading

Olympics incentive program, increasing our Reading Counts titles from 5,000 books to 39,000 books, and creating opportunities for students to get their hands on new books at no cost through our PTA Book Swap program.

Exhibit D: This month, the Orange County Register published a ranking of all public elementary schools in Orange County. The OC Register endeavored to create their rankings based on which schools provide the richest academic experience and strongest environment for learning. In the overall rankings, Northwood ranked 12th out of 388 schools and was named a Gold Medal School. In the area of school environment, which takes into account factors such as cultural diversity and students' physical fitness, Northwood was ranked 1st in Orange County.

To summarize, we have many reasons to appreciate our truly remarkable community of learners! Again, the staff and I would like to commend you all for your continued support in making Northwood Elementary a truly special place to send your child. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our students.

Dr. Stuart Payne, Principal

Kindergarten News

With the nation's schools facing increasing budget shortages each year, there is often little funding for field trips. The Target Field Trips Grants Program distributed 5,000 grants totaling \$4 million in funds this year to education professionals to help fill this gap, so that teachers may continue using the valuable experiential learning gained from field trips to enhance students' classroom studies.

Target awarded an \$800 grant to our kindergarten classes for a trip to Home Depot at Woodbury Town Center in March. Students will participate in a tour of the store and then experience a

hands-on woodworking workshop. This trip will be an extension to the kindergarten science unit on wood and paper. Students have been learning about various kinds of wood and its properties in class.

Second Grade News

January and February were exciting months, with the second grade classes jumping right back into the swing of things. Our classes celebrated Chinese New Year, making hats, reading poems, and wishing each other "Gung Hay Fat Choy!" In February, each student wrote a three paragraph President Report on a president. We also had a special District Art activity where our classes created colorful animal, insects and flowers. Each class had a Valentine's Day Party, where the students got to show off the boxes they decorated as well as shared Valentines. The second graders are looking forward to spending the day in pajamas reading favorite DR. SEUSS books with each other on Read Across America Day.



Fifth Grade News

In fifth grade, we have been studying about the early colonies of England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Students have been utilizing a system of Cornell notes where they ask questions prior to reading. This increases their purpose for reading and encourages them to find the answers to their questions. Students are learning about

the early foundations that our country stands upon today. It is an exciting time to be learning about how our country was formed and why we have certain practices in place today.

In addition, students are learning to write persuasive essays. One task is to pretend they are an early colonist, and they must persuade someone to move to their colony. They must give evidence relating to location, economic and societal concerns. They have written other practice persuasive essays about school lunches as well as whether they prefer to watch a movie at a theater or at home with a DVD. We are amazed at how convincing they can be!

In math we are learning all about geometry with many hands-on activities. We recently found the surface area for a small cereal box and are also measuring the volume of many different sizes of boxes.

In science we are studying about the solar system and just finished a wonderful unit all about the water cycle. In April, we will attend the Orange County Water District's Water Festival and be engaged in many hands-on activities that supports our content standards in science.

Sixth Grade News

The sixth graders at Northwood Elementary have had a fun year so far! All sixth graders have recently finished their science fair projects and had a successful Science Fair Night in January. Ten students have been chosen to participate at the district fair held at Northwood High School. We also started D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance education) last month with Officer Frei and Officer Bees. We learned about staying away from drugs such as cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol. We are also excited about our next field trip to the Getty Villa on March 12th. The sixth graders cannot wait for

Outdoor Education in May, which is just around the corner!

Even though we are able to participate in a lot of cool activities, we are still working hard in class. Over the second trimester we have learned about ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Ancient Africa, India and China. We just finished a unit on volcanoes and earthquakes and will be starting a new unit on weathering and erosion with our science teacher, Mrs. Lund. The sixth graders took a compare and contrast essay test last month after weeks of learning and preparation. In math, we have been learning about percents, simple interest, proportions with variables, and are now learning about range, median, mean and mode. We are having a great year and we are sure it'll continue this way!

By: Deanna Pyeon, Sixth Grader in Mrs. Walsh's class

Why Mom Deserves a Diamond Writing Contest

Congratulations to the following Northwood Students who were winners in the 17th annual "Why Mom Deserves A Diamond" writing contest. 19,734 students submitted entries. The winners will recite their essays at Plaza Newport Shopping Center on April 22nd.

Catalano:

Clara Choi, Serena Junejo, Hak Min Kim, Nicole Lewis, Curtis Nava, Jane Park, Jared Ruffin, Brandt Heflin, Lia Kang, Julia Lee, Hannah McIlrath, Sidney Ocampo, Emily Quitoriano, Yessenia Virgen

Mroch:

Dylan Brine, Samantha Hornyak, Matthew Jou, Moojim Kim, Monica Leys, Angel Medina, Corinne Swigart, Julia Chung, Samuel James, Virda Khalid, Denny Lee, A.J. Lockridge, Nathan Navarrete, Alex Thiem.

Levy:

Anthony Cao, Mira Pranav, Eric Li,
Blaysen Varnadoe

Amazing artists

The following amazing artists had their work on public display at the district office during the months of November '08-February '09:

Zalla Osman (Mroch), Ariana Lockridge (Peters), Kallel Lord (Morgan) On display at the IPSF office: Yuji Takai (Kretsinger), Laura Park (Gray) On display at the Schools First Credit Union on Alton Parkway: Tyler Duong (Levy) and Miranda Mell (Gagnier).

Current student art work is displayed all over Irvine.

Madison Limburg –

IPSF office on MacArthur Blvd

Erina Sugiyama & Leif Satermo –

School's First Credit Union

**Chloe Boulard, Marilyn Cordero,
Jasmin Coultrip, Samuel James,
Sammy Koujah and Juan Franco
Valderama**

IUSD district office on Barranca Parkway until May.

Irvine Honor Chorus 2009

We'd like to congratulate Northwood 5th grade student Samuel James for making the IUSD Honor Chorus! Samuel will perform with the IUSD Honor Chorus on Tuesday, April 28, at the Orange County Performing Arts Center. Way to go Samuel!

Active Kids

From Vicki McRobbieralls, RN School Nurse

Spring is almost here bringing more after school light to play outside. Being active is essential in the elementary years for strength, coordination, and self

confidence. The National Association for Sports and Physical Education recommends children ages 6-12 yrs. get 60 minutes of activity daily and avoid inactive periods of 2 hours or more. There are a variety of activities that meet this need. It is important the activity is fun to build lifelong habits of being active.

Here are some ideas for incorporating physical activity into home life in addition to school and organized sports:

**A daily family walk

**Set aside daily time for free play--running around after school burns up calories and can help students to be more effective when they settle down to homework.

**Keep inexpensive play equipment available—balls of assorted types, jump ropes, hula hoops

**Be active with your kids—Keeping everyone healthy

**Limit time spent in sedentary activities, like computer games and watching TV

Adapted from Kidshealth website

Box Tops for Education

Check out the winner for Dec/Jan Box Tops. Great Job!

Dec/Jan 09 winners Total 1143

Mrs. Fritsch 121 box tops

Mrs. Catalano 319 box tops

4406 box tops mailed in Oct 08

2850 box tops mailed in Feb 09



Prizes go to one class in grades K-3 and one class in grades 4-6.

Upcoming Events

Complete Calendar available

www.iusd.org/nw

March 18	Kindergarten field trip – Home Depot Family Night Out – Northwood Pizza 5:00- 8:00pm
March 19	PTA Executive Board Meeting 7:00pm
March 20	Kindergarten Field trip - Home Depot Second Trimester Ends
March 23	4 th grade field trip – Mission San Juan Capistrano
March 23-May 22	Reading Olympics
March 23-27	Parent Conferences – Minimum Day all week
March 26	Report Cards go home
April 2	Spring Picture Day School Site Council Meeting 3:00-4:00pm
April 3	School Tour – Reservations Required ELAC Tea 10:30- 11:30am Family Lunch Day Book Swap 7:00- 8:00pm
April 7	Kindergarten field trip - Farm
April 9	PTA Executive Board Meeting 7:00pm PTA General Meeting 7:30pm
April 10	Minimum Day
April 13-17	Spring Break – No Students