

# PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2      SEPTEMBER 2011

## *A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL ....*

Dear Plaza Vista Community,

Given that we just completed our goal setting conferences, I wanted to take the time to reflect on one of my professional goals this year: continuing to form relationships with students and parents. At times you'll see me outside during morning or afternoon supervision, on the playground during recess and lunch, and in classrooms. I encourage your children to stop by and say hello, and I'd like to invite you to do the same.

As we near the end of our first quarter of the 2011-12 school year, I just wanted to let you know

how much I appreciate your participation. Everywhere I look, I see parents working in the classrooms, students using equipment purchased through efforts of our PTA, and other evidence of our community's involvement in the daily life of students. The common goal of our community is to enable our children to competently and effectively navigate life's road-blocks.

By providing them with the support systems and relationships that allow them to be successful in school, the power to help children grow into healthy, productive adults is within our

grasp. The strength and integrity of our partnership is what makes us unique. We are so fortunate at Plaza Vista School to have a supportive community of parents who value a quality education for the children of our neighborhood. Everybody works together to ensure the best for our students.

Sincerely,

Heather D. Phillips



## UPCOMING DATES:

- FAMILY LUNCH DAY—9/9
- PTA MEETING—9/14 @ 6:30 P.M.
- LAST DAY OF 1ST QUARTER—9/23
- FALL QUARTER BEGINS—10/18
- RED RIBBON WEEK—10/24
- WALK TO SCHOOL DAY—10/27

STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) annual results and API (Academic Performance Index) have been released for 2011. Plaza Vista's API score remains at 958 and we have met all growth targets.

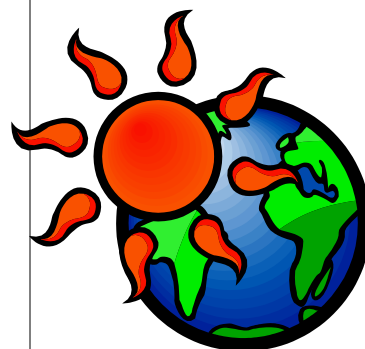
## THE SUN IS SHINNING BRIGHT ON PLAZA VISTA

In recent years, IUSD has engaged in an ambitious campaign to harness solar power, cut electrical consumption, reduce waste and promote sustainability while adding an 18-lesson curriculum on sustainable energy in grades five and six. And these efforts have not gone unnoticed. This past Wednesday, representatives

from the Sierra Club's Orange County Committee on Climate Change lauded the district's solar project and other green initiatives while announcing IUSD as a recipient of its "Solar Energy and Good Practices Award."

Members of the Sierra Club, considered the nation's largest grassroots environmental group, pre-

sented the award during a brief visit to Plaza Vista, where they watched as science specialist Danielle De-Frank walked students through a hands-on lesson on the role of the sun as an energy source for the food chain. The students later showed off smaller solar panel kits that they had personally assembled.





## PLAZA VISTA EMERGENCY & SAFETY

Staff, parents and students, My name is Gary Downes and I have been the emergency coordinator and an administrator at Plaza Vista since the school opened. You have probably seen me out and around asking people not to stop their cars in the middle of the roadway or not to ignore the crosswalks, or perhaps you've seen me outside working

with staff, parents and students during an emergency drill. Safety is a twenty-four hour concept. When we act, we need to consider how it impacts our children. When we get out of our car in the parking lot and ignore the crosswalk, we teach our children to ignore crosswalks. So I would like us all to think "Safety First" for the benefit of our children. Let's

agree to use crosswalks, to only stop where permissible, to drive slowly through the school parking lot, and to cooperate with staff safety duties. We appreciate your support.

Thank you,  
Gary Downes

## CONSENT FOR USE OF STUDENT IMAGES & PHOTOS

### OPTIONAL OPT-OUT PROCEDURES



Each year, students in the Irvine Unified School District take part in engaging lessons and exciting activities, and many are honored for their academic or extracurricular accomplishments. This occasionally draws the attention of newspaper and magazine reporters, photographers, television news crews and other media representatives. In addition, our district often uses pictures of students and video images to highlight local achievements and to

document our history.

While we are pleased to spotlight the deeds of our students, we also recognize that some families may not wish to be the subject of publicity, so we've made it easy for parents to opt-out if they choose.

Those who do not consent to the use of their child's image, name or schoolwork on a school or district website or in another publication should follow these three steps:

**1. Go to [www.iusd.org/enrollment](http://www.iusd.org/enrollment) and click on "Publicity Opt-Out Form" at the bottom of the page**

**2. Fill out, sign and print the brief form**

**3. Return the form to your child's school**

Again, this is an optional form that should be completed only if you choose to opt out of publicity opportunities in connection with the Irvine Unified School District. If you have additional questions, please contact our Public Information Office at (949) 936-5002.

## PTA PLEDGE DRIVE GOAL EXCEEDED!



As of the end of August, Plaza Vista's PTA reached and exceeded their pledge drive and membership budget! What a feat to accomplish this in the first month of school! PTA has raised \$34,763 so

far. We hit this goal with only 242 families pledging or joining PTA out of the 650+ families registered at Plaza Vista. Thank you to all the parents and staff members who have joined PTA and supported Plaza Vista with your generous donations.

Even if you aren't able to

pledge, please consider joining PTA. We encourage all parents to join and participate in PTA. Our next general meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14th at 5:30 p.m. in the media center and we look forward to seeing you there!

## PATRIOT DAY: 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11



While our nation prepares to remember the events that took place a decade ago, many young Americans today may have difficulty relating to what happened on September 11, 2001.

The wars fought today began shortly after the terrorist attacks that used American commercial jetliners in New York City, Washington, D.C., and nearby Shanksville. Historical accounts remind young Americans of the devastating terrorist attacks on our nation that destroyed the World Trade Center's twin towers, the heart of our nation's financial system, in New York City and the vast loss of innocent lives.

History also reminds us of the destruction at the Pentagon shortly thereafter, the heart of our national defense, and the lives lost in that attack.

The near completion of Phase One of the Flight 93 Memorial in neighboring Somerset County at Shanksville is a constant reminder of acts of patriotism, when civilians aboard Flight 93 saved our nation's capital, overpowering terrorists who hijacked the plane, which ultimately crashed in a field in that rural community.

We must continuously remind ourselves of the heroic actions aboard Flight 93 as well as the heroic acts by countless civilians, law enforcement, emergency medical services and firefighter who in their efforts to save lives paid the ultimate sacrifice on that horrific day and immediately thereafter.

Patriot Day—September 11, 2011—is observed in memory of those brave and unselfish men and women, the nearly 3,000 people whose lives were cut short during these terrorist attacks on American soil in New York City, Washington D.C. and Shanksville. On this anniversary of that day of infamy, our nation will pause in observance to remember the devastation and acts of heroism.

## FAMILY LUNCH DAYS ARE BACK!

You are invited to come and join us for **Family Lunch Day** this Friday, September 9th at the PV lunch tables and on the PV field. This is an opportunity for parents to bring a lunch to school and eat with their children. Because seating is limited at our lunch tables, we encourage families to bring picnic blankets and eat on the field. We will be holding a family lunch day each trimester, so mark your

calendars in advance for the next Family Lunch Day on Friday, February 17th.

Family Lunch Day visitation times are as follows:

**Primary Lunch** (1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade): 11:30 am - 12:10 pm

**Middle School Lunch** (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade): 12:00 pm – 12:40 pm

**Upper Grade Lunch** (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade): 12:20 pm – 1:00 pm

*(Please note that Kindergarten students do not participate in Family Lunch Day)*

To get to the lunch tables, simply walk around the main building (use the sidewalk that runs from our parking lot back to CDC) to the back of campus. The sign-in table will be located near the lunch tables.

**We look forward to seeing you!**



## INFORMATIVE ARTICLES FOR PARENTS

### **School Attendance: Issues to Consider**

How important is it for kids to be in school? School attendance is a baseline factor in determining student success.

By Great Schools Staff

*The following are excerpts from the article above.*

How important is attendance?

The attendance rate is important because students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. It's difficult for the teacher and the class to build their skills and progress if a large number of students are frequently absent. In addition to falling behind in academics, students who are not in school on a regular basis are more likely to get into trouble with the law and cause problems in their communities.

A 2008 study conducted by the Rodel Community Scholars at Arizona State University that tracked students from kindergarten through high school found that dropout patterns were linked with poor attendance, beginning in kindergarten. Gregory Hickman, director of the Rodel Community Scholars program and former director of the Arizona Dropout Initiative, notes they discovered that as early as kindergarten, behavioral differences are apparent between those who go on to graduate and those who drop out, with dropouts missing an average of 124 days by eighth grade.

School budgets may suffer when students don't attend. In many states, school budgets are based on the average daily attendance at a school. If many students enrolled at a school fail to consistently attend, the school has less money to pay for essential classroom needs.

How can schools increase their attendance rate?

According to the National Center for Student Engagement, schools are most effective in achieving high attendance rates when parents, school leaders and community members work together to focus on reducing absences and truancy, and keeping kids in schools. The center's Web site provides 10 tips for schools and communities to improve their attendance rates. Among them:

- Make the school a place where parents and students feel welcome.
- Forge a relationship with local law enforcement and make them allies in showing the community, family and students that school is the place to be.
- Forge a relationship with local businesses so that they cooperate in encouraging students to go to school and not congregate at businesses during school hours.
- Call parents - not an answering machine - when their children are not in school to let them know the school is concerned.
- Talks to students about why they were gone and let them know they were missed.
- Plan your family vacations according to the school calendar.

The full article can be found at:

<http://www.greatschools.net/parenting/behavior-discipline/school-attendance-issues.gs?content=644>

