



*Serrania's motto;
Inspiration,
Imagination,
Innovation*

November 2013



How To Prepare for Effective Parent-Teacher Conferences

Believe it or not, parent-teacher conferences are just around the corner – your first real opportunity to meet your child's teacher and ask about their progress and how they are doing so far in the school year. If you're like most of us, you probably have lots of questions but are challenged by the need to balance all you'd like to cover with just how little time there seems to do it! Well, fear not... we're ready to help! Read on to learn how to make the most of these important meetings.

First, it's important to know that most conferences are about 20 minutes in length, and the better prepared you are going in the more beneficial the meeting will be for you and your child's teacher. Here are some tips you can do before, during, and after your meeting.

- Ask your child how things are going at school, and what he or she would like you to ask the teacher. What does your child like best about school? Are there any subjects he/she is having trouble with?
- Write down your questions beforehand and take a notepad and pen with you to the meeting to jot down any notes in case you may forget something.
- Inform the teacher of any relevant information, such as changes at home. A new baby, divorce, etc. can all affect the way your child behaves in the classroom.
- Size up the social scene. How well your child fits in socially can affect how well he learns. Ask the teacher how he gets along with the other students. Does he always hang out at recess with the same kids? Who are they? Is anyone picking on him?
- Lastly, find out the best way to follow-up with the teacher. Review any decisions you've made together, and follow-up! If you feel it's necessary, request another meeting.

Some sample questions you can ask during the meeting:

At what grade level is your child performing? Is the teacher concerned about your child's ability to get along with others and participate in class? How is your child doing in relation to the rest of the class? What special help can you or I offer my child to get him on track?

According to Mrs. Austin, a kindergarten teacher at Serrania for over 25 years, the most important aspect in getting your child on the right track is teaching them good school habits early on. A lot of students come to class tardy, which can affect their overall performance. At this age they need consistency and a stress free environment. Working with them for ten minutes a day, and reading to them at a higher level can make all the difference in the world!



PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



MISSION: *At Serrania Charter for Enriched Studies, our mission is to provide our students with an engaging educational experience that supports intellectual, social/emotional, and physical development.*

VISION: *We are a community of students, staff, parents, and community members committed to working together to develop life-long learners who value themselves, contribute to their community and succeed in a changing world. Serrania Charter for Enriched Studies provides an integrated core curriculum focused on independent thinking, decision making, problem solving skills and creativity, with an emphasis on community and global attitudes. Our educational plan allows students to achieve according to their individual abilities and learning style.*

When did you last look at Serrania's mission and vision statements? You're not alone if it's been a while. Recently I paused to stop and really think about them. When I did, I was inspired! These statements reflect that in addition to academic excellence, as parents and teachers, we know it is critical to focus on nurturing the social and emotional development of our students - helping them learn to value themselves and contribute to their community.

To attain these goals, we will focus on expanding some of our most meaningful charitable programs in our larger community. We are also adding a number of exciting student-led support initiatives in our Serrania community. Following are some examples of what we are doing!

The **Peer Mediation Project**, led by 5th grade teacher and GATE Coordinator, Ms. Sperber, will get select 4th and 5th grade volunteers trained in conflict resolution to help their fellow students find positive resolutions to playground conflicts. In addition to the obvious benefits of a safer, happier playground, this is a tremendous opportunity for all of our students to be leaders and learn from peer role models.

We are pleased to announce the return of **SCES Student Council** led by Ms. Czigler and Ms. Vassallo. Student Council will work together to transform Serrania with an eye on the students' perspective. Their first goal is to start a "peace team" as part of the October Anti-Bullying Month.

This past September we were lucky enough to have **Shane, a severely handicapped wheelchair basketball player**, visit with our 2nd - 5th grade students. Shane spoke about respect, celebrating diversity in each of us, and including those with special needs. Many students were moved by how Shane opened their minds to the value each and every person can contribute.

In its 2nd year, our **Kids in the Community** program gives students a direct opportunity to give back to their community through events like the "Halloween Costume and Candy Drive" and the "Thanksgiving Food Drive." Giving back to their own community can have a profound impact on our kids' self esteem and appreciation for all that they have.

The **Serrania Stars!** program is a school-wide effort to teach students the value of our own Serrania community, and the need to build respect for each other. We are working together to take better care of our environment and clean up after ourselves in the lunch area. Additionally, at each Friday morning assembly, we will recognize students who have made a difference or have done a good deed. We will also recognize students who want to perform and share their own culture. Once a month, each teacher presents citizenship awards for his or her class.

I hope you'll take a moment to learn about these exciting initiatives... and that you'll make a point of discussing them with your family and think of ways you can contribute. Together, the students, parents and staff at *Serrania Charter for Enriched Studies* (SCES) can make a positive difference in the lives of people throughout our community!

At Serrania, every day we work hard to create an environment that meets the social and emotional needs of our students and helps them make worthwhile connections to their community.

MOVIE NIGHT

I hope you all had a chance to join us for Movie night under the stars. If not, you missed out on a fantastic event! We watched a great movie, snacked on great food and had fun outside on our beautiful campus! Not only was this a community building event, but *Friends of Serrania* (FOS) raised over \$1,000 for the school. A special thank you to all of our volunteers: Jim Riley, Amy Klosterman, Amy Lichtenstein, Tim Jones, Asia Mape, Barrie Kirkwood, Yevette Peterson, Ellen Golla, Amanda McCord, Oksana Korneenko, Jazzlyn Baker, Michelle Hsiao, Jill Williamson, Laura Valentine, Karla Severance, Michelle Bolotnik, Ilisa Pasternak, Karen Solari, Lucia Downey, Heather Olsen, Lorrie Hazell and Shannon Hall. A special 'Thank You' goes out to all those who helped with this event yet we didn't get your names on the volunteer roster. Your time is very much appreciated!

Be sure to join us at our next event... we look forward to seeing you there!

GLOBAL CARDBOARD CHALLENGE



On Saturday October 5th kids and parents at Serrania joined in the *Global Cardboard Challenge* and had a great time creating amazing projects -- giraffes and horses, ski-ball and whack-a-mole, huge forts, trains, food trucks, robots, creatures and more! The imagination, ingenuity and spirit of community was truly inspiring!

In the weeks leading up to the Cardboard Challenge, families at Serrania collected and donated their recyclables and cardboard boxes. Victor, our custodian, was instrumental in collecting many boxes from school supplies and daily life at Serrania for donation to the cause. By the time the day of the challenge arrived, our garden was overflowing with building supplies - just waiting for the kids to come and create.



Students also came in with some pre-built projects that were truly remarkable -- a vending machine, a diorama of the tortoise and the hare, and others.

The Global Cardboard Challenge is a worldwide event intended to inspire kids to create and learn together. While numbers are still trickling in, there were sites in more than 34 countries -- including Mexico, Thailand, Finland, Kenya and Viet Nam, and well over 100,000 kids took part. We were all so busy building and having fun at Serrania it was impossible to get an accurate count, but it was a great crowd of kids and their families!

A Special thanks to Iggy (student), Christine Sibul (parent) for initiating this project on campus and to Mrs. Tenzer.

We hope you'll all join us next year!



BEHIND THE SCENES AT SERRANIA!

Ever wonder what goes on ‘Behind the Scenes’ of our special school? Well you’re not alone... so we thought this would be a great opportunity to highlight some of Serrania’s fantastic teachers and staff – the people who work so hard every day to make sure SCES remains the wonderful place we all love. In this issue, we’re going to visit with Rosalinda Gil and Susan Rodwig who work tirelessly in the Main Office. Thank you Rosalinda and Susan for everything you do!!!

Susan Rodwig –

Office Technician

Susan has worked for Serrania since 2008, coming to us from Litton Data Systems where she worked as a Secretary for 20 years. In August of 2001, Susan started with LAUSD working part time at Miller Special Ed High School (now Miller Career and Transition Center).

A Day in the life.....

As an Office technician, Susan is expected to fix a lot of things! Her typical day is usually a hectic one, full of non-stop phone calls, taking care of the kids whenever they need something, or helping them when they come into the office and are sick or hurt - anything from small scrapes to bloody noses. Although the frantic pace may require her to take many deep breaths throughout the day, most of her day is full of fun and laughter!

Best part of the job....

“The students of course! And I love working with Rosalinda. No matter how crazy it gets, we always support each other” Susan says.

What she does in her spare time....

Susan spends time with her husband John, daughter, son-in-law David, and granddaughter Nina. She also loves spending time with her three dogs, Tsunami, Lola, Georgia, and her cat, Benga. Susan loves to read and enjoys needlework, knitting, cross-stitch and quilting.



Rosalinda Gil –

Administrative Assistant

Rosalinda has been with Serrania for 3 years and has been with LAUSD for 14 years. Her work days at Serrania are often unpredictable and always VERY busy, with virtually no time to spare! Rosalinda’s day consists of handling the budget, payroll, accounts receivables and payables, and of course, taking care of the little ones. Even with her busy schedule Rosalinda is still able to put a smile on a student’s face! For example, if someone just lost their tooth, she is always ready to give them a tooth necklace to help them save their tooth, if they’ve hurt themselves, she’ll give them a bandage, a soothing word and an ice-pack if they are not feeling well. Sometimes kids come into the office just to chat with her and Su-

san, and of course Rosalinda makes time for them. Rosalinda feels very lucky to be a part of Serrania along with the great staff, principal, and students that are here!

Best part of the job....

“The best part of my day are my students, and of course, my other half, Ms. Susan!”

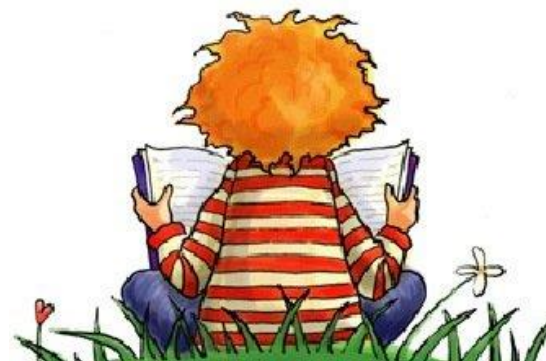
What she does in her spare time....

When Rosalinda is not working, she loves to read, go dancing, and play softball. She also enjoys gardening; cooking and keeping her two German Shepherds busy – otherwise, she says they’ll drive her crazy, just like her husband!

A quote to think about....

One of Rosalinda’s favorite quotes is by H. Jackson Brown, Jr. - “Our character is what we do when we think no one is looking.”

Accelerated Reader



Accelerated Reader (AR) is our *Friends of Serrania* (FOS) funded on-line reading comprehension program that develops fluency, vocabulary, and a love of reading. Students read a book, take a quiz at school, and earn points for awards and prizes. This past September, more than 75 students met their AR point goal!

Each month, the class with the highest percent of students meeting their AR goals will be recognized. Congratulations this month goes to Ms. Williams and her first grade class. In September, **92%** of the class, that's 22 out of 24 students, met their AR goals! Read a book, take a quiz, and race to reading success! Points will be counted on November 20th, so be sure to get reading and take your quizzes!

Parents, if you're looking for books for your child to read, visit ARbookFind.com. Books can be sorted by title, author, topics and reading level. Visit SerraniaAvenue.org for highlighted books each month. For information on your child's AR quiz progress, click on Accelerated Reader Home Connect.

For November, let's focus on Helping in the Community. Here are a few titles that can help get us into the Giving Season.

| Title | Author | Reading Level |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| Danny Likes to Help | Coulton, Mia | 0.5 |
| We Can Help! | Richards, Melinda | 0.5 |
| Being Helpful | Amos, Janine | 1.3 |
| A Busy Week | Graves, Sue | 1.5 |
| The Berenstain Bears' Neighbor in Need | Berenstain, Jan | 2.4 |
| Amelia Bloomer: A Photo-Illustrated Biography | Lickteig, Mary J. | 3.5 |
| The Berenstain Bears Lend a Helping Hand | Berenstain, Stan | 3.5 |
| Improving Communities | Cohn, Jessica | 4.5 |
| The Hungry Year | Crook, Connie Brummel | 4.5 |
| Caring (Raintree) | Doak, Robin | 5.4 |

The computer lab is open after school for quizzing Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday until 3:00 pm and Tuesdays until 2:00 pm. Students need a signed permission slip (available on the Serrania website) in order to log-in visit the computer lab after school.

A Reader today, a Leader tomorrow! Happy Reading!

How Do You Spell Serrania Spellathon? S-U-C-C-E-S-S!

Back by popular demand, we are happy to announce that our annual Serrania Spellathon is scheduled for December 2nd. Sponsorship forms and information will be going home in a flyer soon, so there's plenty of time to raise money and qualify to win individual and class prizes!

This great event is always fun for the students, puts a spotlight on all our talented kids and raises money for the school that helps fund our terrific enrichment programs, including; Music, Ballroom Dancing, Accelerated Reader, Technology-Labs, PE, and more!

Be sure to ask your friends, family and neighbors to join us for in this great event!



ARTIST VOLUNTEERS AND DONATES NEW SIENCE LAB MURAL

As many of you know, our *Serrania Science Lab* opened its doors for the first time this year. But what you may not know is just how fortunate we were to have our dear friend, Don Noble, volunteer his time and talent to create such powerful murals in the lab. His art work has created an educationally inspiring environment that helps our children connect science and art. It is a place where learning and achievement are both supported and welcomed. His murals are decorative and yet powerful learning tools to inspire all of our science lovers!

Don has been serving the Ventura and Western Los Angeles counties since 1995, specializing in custom-designed murals, trompe l'oeil, faux finishes, super graphics, painted furniture, signage and more!

We would like to give a big 'thank you' to Don for his generous and continuous support!

Don Noble
Imagine Decorative Painting & Murals
Newbury Park, California
805-558-9492
www.imaginedecorativepainting.com



Don Noble Creating a Mural

2013 Thanksgiving Food

Please join us as we help those who are less fortunate by giving to Serrania's annual *Thanksgiving Food Drive*, November 11-22. Collected foodstuff will be donated to the West Valley Food Pantry, which distributes food to over 1,400 West Valley families in need. Let's work together to stock their shelves for the holidays!

We will be collecting dry and canned goods, including:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Instant mashed potatoes | Pork and beans |
| Canned sweet potatoes | Rice (and rice mixes) |
| Stuffing mixes | Dry pinto beans |
| Cranberry sauce | Macaroni and cheese |
| Gravy mixes | Canned soups |
| Pumpkin pie mixes | Canned and dried fruit |
| Canned milk (condensed, evaporated) | Canned tomatoes |
| Pie crusts | Spaghetti sauce |
| Peanut butter (18-24 oz) | Cereal, oatmeal |
| powdered milk | Canned or bottled juice |
| Canned meat, tuna, Spam | Coffee, tea, cocoa |
| Canned/jar pasta sauce | Pudding and Jell-O mixes |
| Canned chili, canned stews | Canned corn, green beans, peas |

Pasta (& pasta mixes)
 Muffin & pancake mixes
 Spices
 Drink mixes
 Oil, vinegar, packaged dressings
 Dishwashing detergent
 Toilet paper

Please bring your donations to the Food Drive Collection Area in the school auditorium from November 11 - November 22.

Thank you for helping our neighbors in need!

Happy Holidays to you and your family!

Sponsored by 'Friends of Serrania.' Together, We shine!



FREE PARENTING SEMINAR SERIES

Don't forget to attend these FREE Seminars.

Seminars are open to everyone and feature volunteer professional facilitators at every meeting. The seminars are a place for parents to discuss relevant topics and share ideas and strategies.

• 8 a.m., Wed, Nov. 6

Active Bodies and Healthy Brains:

Children's Exercise, Eating and Sleeping Habits

• 8 a.m., Wed, Dec. 4

Best Friends, Frenemies and Socialization

• 8 a.m., Wed, Jan. 22

Divorce, Separation and Healthy Parenting

• 8 a.m., Wed, Feb. 5

How to Work with Forgetfulness

• 8 a.m., Wed., March 5

Raising Happy, Healthy Children without Siblings

• 8 a.m., Wed, April 2

When Do I Need to Seek Help for My Child's Speech, Language, or Hearing?

• 8 a.m., Wed, May 7

Raising Confident, Respectful, Happy Children

Any Questions?

Andy Weisser:

aweisser@earthlink.net

Serrania Needs YOU!

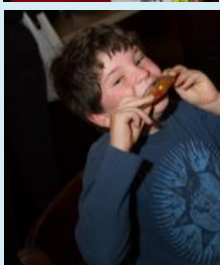
Building a great school like Serrania takes the skill, effort and enthusiastic teamwork of every member of its staff, students and families. We all know what a great job our teachers are doing and how wonderful our kids are – the final part of the equation is us. So, if you're looking for a way to get involved, here are just a couple of projects that could use additional help.



- Pizza Tuesday and Popsicle Friday need your help! The “Snack Shack” opens in the afternoon on Tuesdays to sell snacks and pizza to the students and families on campus. Pizza Tuesday sets up around 1:10 and sells items until around 2:00. Popsicle Friday sets up around 2:10 and sells items until around 3:00. If you can volunteer an hour of your time once per week after school– we could use the help! The job includes helping set up and take down, monitoring the line, and helping sell items.
- Do you have time between 1:30 to 2:30 p.m on Monday afternoons? If so, we could use your help creating flyer packets for the Tuesday afternoon folders. The job is simple – collating the flyers for the week and stapling the packets for classroom distribution.
- Have time during the week? The office always needs copy work done. Teachers need copies, flyers need to be copied, FOS needs copies done. If you have an hour to give (or more) one day during the week, please think of helping in this area. Training will be arranged if needed.

If you can help in any of these areas, or interested in learning about other ways you can help, please email FOS@SerraniaAvenue.org

THANK YOU TO ALL THE FAMILIES WHO SUPPORTED RESTAURANT NIGHT



OUR NEXT RESTAURANT NIGHT IS AT



Red Robin Topanga Plaza
November 12, 2013 – 4:30 – 7:30
6600 Topanga Canyon
Canoga Park, CA 91303
(818) 883-1060

COME HUNGRY... LEAVE HAPPY!!!!

20% of your bill will go directly to supporting Serrania.

We raised \$158.00 during our last restaurant night at The Corner Bakery.