

Serrania Charter For Enriched Studies Newsletter November 2014

Inspiration

Imagination

Innovation

Spook-tacular Halloween Festival!



Child Traffic Safety...A Serious Concern!!!

Help Keep Your Children Safe: Please Use Crosswalks...Always!!!

As you might have heard, we are continuing to face a very real challenge this year regarding traffic safety around the school. The safety of our students is our primary concern. But like so many other issues, ensuring the safety of all of our students requires the continuing participation of everyone in our school community. Following the traffic rules and directions around the school is critical and, the failure to do so can have terrible, tragic consequences.

In an effort to reinforce that message, we'd like to share the following to real-life accounts. These stories are real; the first coming from a Serrania teacher while the other comes from a Serrania parent.

"It was a beautiful, clear day, and I was once again dropping my 6th grade son off at Woodland Hills Academy. As always, I told him to cross in front of my car and NOT at the crosswalk. I thought the crosswalk was in a particularly bad location, as it was not near the open gate into the school. My son, carrying his backpack and his saxophone, walked in front of my car and waited for me to signal him to safely cross the street. I signaled and he walked. Unfortunately, he never made it all the way across the street. He was about halfway across the street when a Chevy Suburban (a full size SUV) hit him. The impact threw him backwards, his body hitting the ground and his head hitting the curb. I can see it today just as clearly as I saw him fly in front of my windshield 13 years ago. Beside the all too obvious physical toll, there has also been an enormous emotional toll on both of us. It was my fault! I didn't want him to walk any farther than he had to, so I told him where and when to cross. He would have been so much safer in the crosswalk. The crosswalk marks are there for a purpose, to keep all of our children safe. This is certainly a lesson to learn from someone who experienced it firsthand. I never thought it would happen to us, but it did." - Sibyl Sperber, Serrania 5th Grade Teacher.

"Hi -- I'm not sure if you saw my email a couple of weeks ago about how dangerous it is on Quedo after school, but it is truly awful. Among a zillion other things I see over there, "I" almost ran over a kid. It was just after the big pick-up rush was over... There were just a few cars still lined up by the gate. I parked (engine running) right by the gate while my kids loaded in. I had watched a mom (one of many) jaywalk with 2 small kids in between cars and across to the other side of the street. I then looked backwards to my back seat checking that everyone was buckled. I turned back around, looked forward and put the car in drive, moved forward and suddenly slammed on my breaks when I saw the very top of a little head just barely peeking over the hood of my car. I was probably inches from running over him. The mom had actually sent him jaywalking BACK over to the gate side BY HIMSELF right in front of my car. Literally RIGHT in front of it!" - Serrania Parent

These powerful accounts underscore the dangers and potentially tragic consequences that even a seemingly meaningless short-cut or momentary lapse can bring about. Keeping our kids safe requires everyone to play their part. We are all role-models; for our children and for our community. Please ALWAYS respect traffic safety laws, be kind to each other... and remember that arriving just a couple of minutes early dramatically reduces stress and virtually eliminates the need to take the risks and short cuts that put all of our children at risk.

Community Involvement

Serrania Thanksgiving Food Drive

Please join Serrania Charter in supporting the West Valley Food Pantry by donating to our annual SCES Thanksgiving Food Drive, November 10-21. The West Valley Food Pantry is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteer staff and community donations to distribute food to over 1,400 West Valley families in need every month. Help us 'Feed the Need' together by stocking their shelves for the holidays! Students can bring donations to their classrooms. We will also have collection areas in the school auditorium and in the kindergarten yard.

We will be collecting dry and canned goods, including:

Instant mashed potatoes
Canned sweet potatoes
Stuffing mixes
Cranberry sauce
Gravy mixes
Pumpkin pie mixes
Pie crusts
Peanut butter (18-24 oz)
Powdered milk
Canned meat, tuna, Spam
Canned/jar pasta sauce
Canned chili, canned stews
Pork and beans
Rice (and rice mixes)
Dry pinto beans
Canned milk (condensed, evaporated)

Macaroni and cheese
Canned soups
Canned and dried fruit
Canned tomatoes
Spaghetti sauce
Cereal, oatmeal
Canned or bottled juice
Coffee, tea, cocoa
Pudding and Jell-O mixes
Canned corn, green beans, peas
Pasta (& pasta mixes)
Muffin & pancake mixes
Spices
Drink mixes
Oil, vinegar, packaged dressings
Dishwashing detergent
Toilet paper

**Thank you for helping our neighbors in need!
Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!**

Sponsored by; Friends of Serrania. Together, We Shine!



Accelerated Reader's first month of Reader Leaders are on their way to a Sun-Sational start! Congratulations to the 48 students who met their first AR goal. Of special note are Sofia S. in Ms. Luu's class who has already passed the 100 point mark as well as Kevin A. from Mrs. Sperber's class, who has earned over 200 points. Students enjoyed discovering the more than 500 Halloween themed books AR has available, and look forward to the nearly 300 Thanksgiving books offered for quizzing. Search ARBookFind.com to discover new books for the upcoming seasons and holidays.

Remember to Read, Quiz at school with your teacher and become a Reader Leader. Visit SerraniaCharter.Org often for updates and reading ideas.

A Reader Today, a Leader Tomorrow. Happy Reading!



The Gift of Giving!
Donate your hair to children with cancer!
And give the gift of learning to our children of Serrania!



Upcoming Events!

Restaurant Night at the Dog Haus!

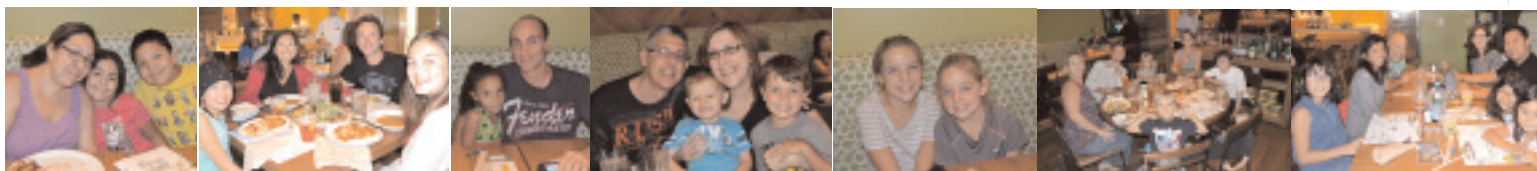
Come join your Serrania friends and family
at our next Restaurant Night!!
Your teachers, Principal and Serrania staff will be
there to help serve you and make it a
night you'll remember!

When: Tuesday, November 4th!

Time: ALL DAY LONG!!!

Where: Dog Haus 6501 Topanga Canyon Blvd,
Canoga Park, CA 91303

Remember - 20% of your entire purchase goes to support
Serrania! So save the date and join us at the Dog Haus...
"The Wurst Dog In Town!"



Serrania Charter Presents: **Frozen**...a Magical Performance!

While watching a great movie with friends can create a special moment, most would agree that there is nothing more magical than experiencing live theater with a loud and enthusiastic audience, unless of course, you manage to combine the two by bringing a live action version of a favorite hit musical film to the stage. And that's just what we've done!

Serrania Charter for Enriched Studies is proud to announce that we'll be PRESENTING a LIVE action version of Disney's timeless hit "FROZEN" Friday, November 14th! For the first time ever! Friends of Serrania has proudly partnered with Beverly Hills Princess, an amazing troupe of singers/actors/dancers, to perform a retelling of "Frozen" as you've never seen it before.

So be sure to mark your calendar for Friday, November 14th, 2014 and pre-order your tickets today as seating is limited. \$10 -Adult, \$10 -First Child, \$5 -Additional Children. There will be two performances to choose from that evening; 5:30pm and 7:30pm

Each performance will feature a photo op meet and greet with Princess Anna and Princess Elsa as well as the amazingly funny snowman, Olaf. So get your cameras ready and your royal costumes prepped. Come early before the show and you'll get the chance to experience special festivities featuring face painting, glitter tattoos, light up toys, a full snack shack with delicious treats and pizza, and best of all, our Grand Royal Serrania Salon where boys and girls can get an icy frozen makeover.



This will be a magical event to remember!
So join us Friday, November 14th, 2014!

www.serraniacharter.org

Serrania Students

Global Cardboard Challenge Returns to Serrania!

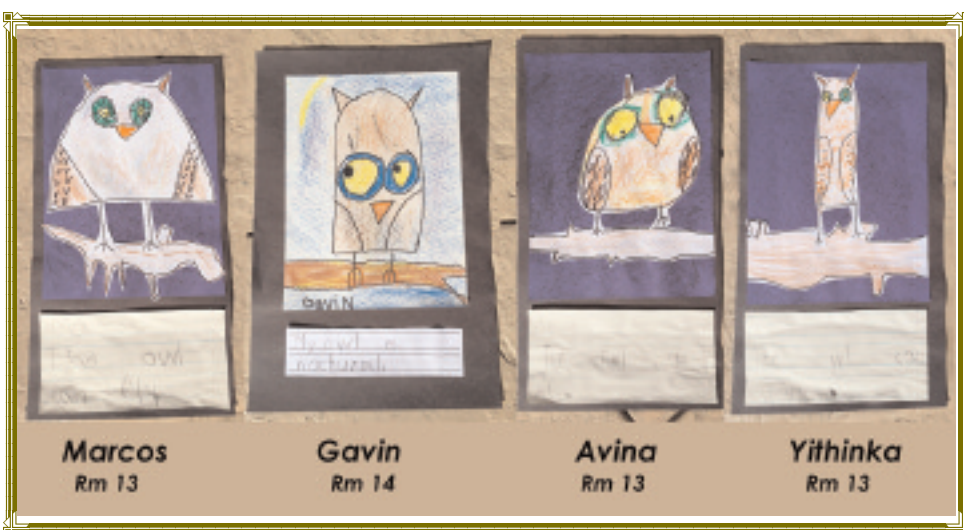
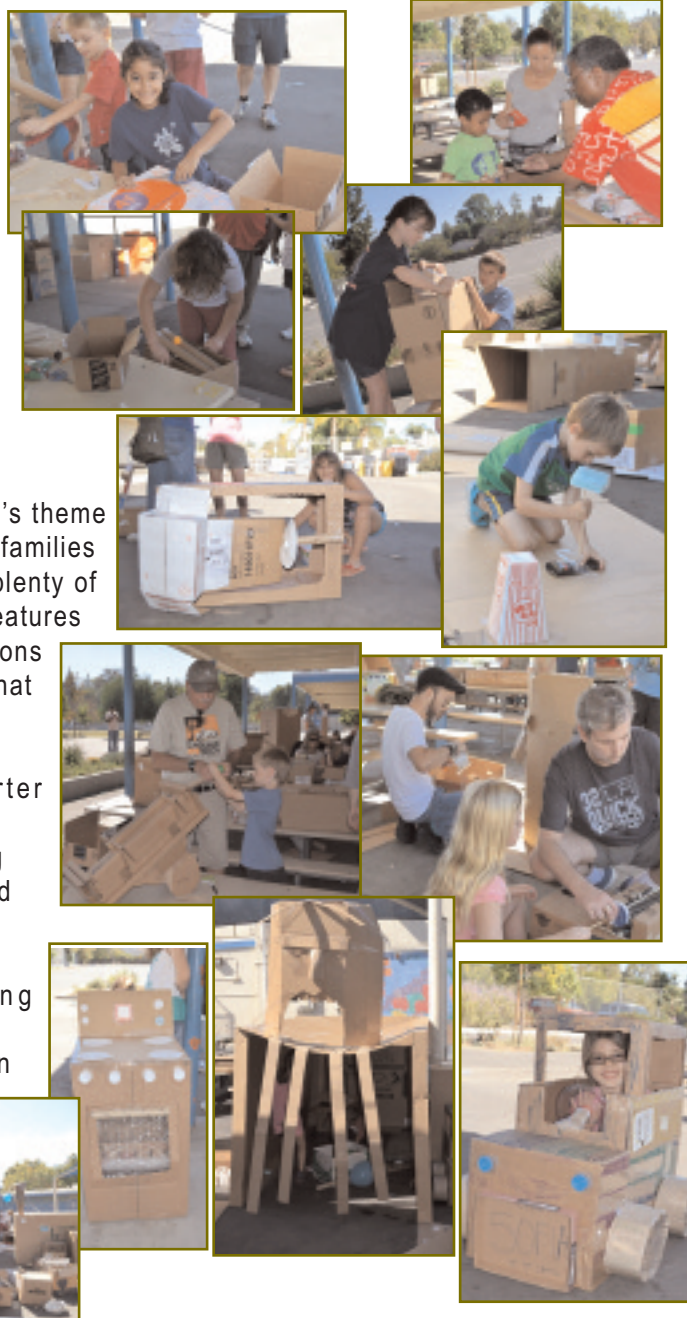
On October 11th families at Serrania participated in the second annual Global Cardboard Challenge. The Global Cardboard Challenge is a day of play celebrating the imagination and ingenuity of kids, where kids and their families are invited to come and build creations out of cardboard and other recycled materials.

The Global Cardboard Challenge is a worldwide event, with over 35 countries including Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Australia and over 130,000 children around the world participating to build and play. Pictures from the global event were shared on social media @ #cardboardchallenge.

In order to foster and encourage more complex engineering, this year's theme for the challenge at Serrania was "Things That Roll." While kids and families could build anything that they wanted, this year's creations featured plenty of vehicles, games involving shooting or balancing a rolling ball, and creatures on wheels – including robots and a rolling hedgehog. Other submissions included a gigantic fort with a stunning Tiki head, a giant caterpillar that could be crawled inside of, a beautiful house and a church.

Our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) charter committee facilitated the event, and Allison Tenzer was the coordinating teacher. Not only did she participate in creating Mr. Prickles, a hedgehog on wheels, but she also encouraged the kids and families to build, engineer and play.

Entire families joined in and worked together – including past and future Serrania students, their parents and grandparents. Not only was it a tremendous celebration of our school's creativity and ingenuity, but also a day to come together as a community. Given the success of this year's event, we're can't wait until next year's Global Cardboard Challenge... be sure to make plans join us!



Kids Corner!

Hey Kids!

Do you have a poem, art piece, cartoon, etc...that you want to submit to the newsletter? If so, please see Debby Dustin or, place it in the suggestion box, in the office along with your name and room number with a note stating it's for "Kids Corner!"

Serrania Parents

Helping Your Child Deal with Gossip

By: Ryan Rosen, Director, Camp Kinneret Summer Day Camp and Volunteer Parent Seminar Series Facilitator

How do we help our children deal with gossip?

We'll get to that, but first, where do children learn it? From magazines, television, and regrettably, us. Nobody likes it, yet we all do it. The question we all need to ask is why is that? It's in our DNA to tell stories. That's how history has been passed down from generation to generation. Stories about where we've been and what we've experienced. But there is also an innate desire to belong and sometimes when these two cross, we gossip as a means to connect with others. It's not that people are trying to be mean; it's usually that they are feeling insecure and it helps the bonding with peers.

While many suggest teaching children to walk away or to tell their peers that they are uncomfortable, which are all reasonable, those are both really hard to do when you don't have the confidence to challenge the status quo. Building self-confidence in your child will help enable them to walk away or to offer an alternative that is more fun. Children (and adults) have to have the confidence to be able to make their own choice and to not worry what the group is saying about them.

To build your child's self esteem without just boosting their ego, try these 6 suggestions from todaysparent.com:

- Allow them help around the house
- Let kids make their own choices
- Over-praising children does more harm than good
- Make clear that your love is unconditional
- Step back and allow your child to struggle
- Offer appropriate praise for your child



Ryan is the owner/director of Camp Kinneret Summer Day Camp and is an active member in the Western Association of Independent Camps, the American Camp Association and the local community. For more information: ryan@campkinneret.com & www.campkinneret.com.

FREE PARENTING SEMINARS SERIES OPEN TO ALL

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. Seminars are held at the school Science Lab, Room 2.

Dates, Topics and Facilitators 2014-2015: All sessions will be facilitated by volunteer Ryan Rosen, executive director of Camp Kinneret, with the exception of our December session.

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, November 4**

"What's The Right Age for Kids to Walk to School, Be at the Mall by Themselves?"

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 2**

"The Parenting Balancing Act: How to Balance Your Own Needs and Priorities with Those of Your Child"

Lauren Appelbaum, PhD, CPCP; Founder & President, LA*PhD

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 20**

"When and How Should We Start Talking about Drugs and Alcohol?"

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 3**

"When Your Child Says They are Being Bullied: All Sides of the Bully Problem."

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 3**

"What Type of Parent Are You?"

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 7**

"The Importance of Playing Outside without Toys"

• **8:00 a.m., Tuesday, May 5**

"Should Parents Be Their Kids' Friends?"

Preparing for Effective Parent-Teacher Conferences by: Lisa Pasternak

Believe it or not, parent-teacher conferences are just around the corner – giving parents their first opportunity to meet their child's teacher and ask about their progress thus far. If you're like most parents, you're likely trying to balance all you'd like to learn with just how little time there is to do it! Well, fear not... we're ready to help!

First, it's important to remember that time is short, so the better prepared you are the more beneficial the meeting will be.

Here are some tips to help you make the most of your conference:

- Ask your child how things are going at school, and what he/she would like to ask the teacher. What does your child like best? Are there any subjects he/she is having trouble with?
- Write down your questions and take a notepad and pen with you to jot down any notes or questions.
- Inform the teacher of any relevant information, such as changes at home. A new baby, divorce, etc. can 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 they learn. Ask the teacher how they get along with the other students. Who are they? Is anyone picking on them?
- Lastly, review any decisions you've made together, and follow-up! If you feel it's necessary, request another meeting.

Some questions you might ask during the meeting: At what grade level is your child performing? Is the teacher concerned about their 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 I offer my child to get him on track? According to Mrs. Austin, a kindergarten teacher at Serrania for over 25 years, the key to getting your child on the right track is teaching them good school habits early on. Too many students arrive late, affecting 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!



After School Playground: Coach Justin Focuses on Respect

By Andy Weisser

Ever wonder what goes on 'Behind the Scenes' of our exceptional school? Well you're not alone... so we thought we'd take this 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 Coach Justin Edwards, playground supervisor for Beyond the Bell Youth Services. Thank you Coach Justin for all you do!

"My basic principles are what my parents taught me," said Coach Justin Edwards, playground supervisor for Beyond the Bell Youth Services, the Los Angeles Unified School District after school playground at Serrania Charter (a program available to every student for free).

Visiting school after the dismissal bell, you can see how Coach Justin's expectations, based on what he learned from his parents, resonate with our students. "Old school. Treat someone how you want to be treated. You have to give respect to get it in return. Simple things like that. Keep your hands to yourselves," he emphasized.



**"My basic principles are what my parents taught me," said
Coach Justin**

His approach integrates well with our school's focus on mutual respect, manners and strong community. Coach Justin said that he always wanted to be a camp counselor when he was a kid. "This (job) was perfect. I could coach, mentor and provide homework assistance."

Parents are impressed with his supervision 'antennae.' Often, when parents arrive to pick up their children, he knows exactly where they are. He operates with 180-degree supervision. Students know that they are not allowed in his blind spot. "Throughout the year, students have a tendency to play in specific areas and games," he added. "Then I know where they are."

On an average day, he supervises 100 students the first hour after school gets out. That number drops by about 25 kids every hour. By end of the day, there are about 30 students and that is when he provides homework assistance. Open communication with parents is important to him. (Parents and students are required to sign an agreement form, available in the front office, before participating.) "The after school program is good for kids instead of playing on the computer," he added, and keep in mind that "the sport that you like, they might not like. Find what they like. Once that happens, they will want to do more of it rather than just playing video games and watching TV."

When students tattle on their friends, Justin jumps right into the situation and asks them questions to help them resolve the problem, which usually happens in about five minutes.

Justin is studying for his mathematics degree at Cal State Northridge (one of his goals is to teach math to middle and high school students), and keeps very active. "My main sport is basketball." He also enjoys soccer, ping-pong, gymnastics, volleyball and the piano. Coach is a terrific role-model for our students, noting "I try to learn new things every year to keep my brain working and keep everything firing correctly."