



Richardson Middle School

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Richardson Rattler

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February & March 2012

PTSA President's Message

Welcome to the 2nd Semester!



Happy 2012! We started January off with Firefighter Appreciation Week thanks to Debbie Tippin, Firefighter Appreciation Chair, and all of you for bringing in your "change" in order to "change" a young burn survivor's life! Your donations of "change" filling the firefighter boots in the office went to the Alisa Ann Rusch Burn Foundation. On January 24th, we hosted a Parent Education Night about the important topic of Safety in Technology. Detective Lucas Ryono enlightened us on what is possible, both good and bad, on the internet and ways to be safe and watchful of what our kids do online. Our Parent Education Nights have important information and I hope that you all will attend our future events. Thank you to Juliet Babros, Community Partners Chair, for bringing Yogurt Me Mine on Wednesdays to our school! Be sure to bring your \$3 on Wednesdays! Look for more notices about pay it back dining in this newsletter.

As I stated in the last newsletter, the budget crisis is a huge problem for California schools. As technology advances, and money is continually cut, our students lose the benefits of funding for better services in the classroom. We applaud and appreciate the tremendous effort so many have made for our kids, yet we are only halfway to meeting our budget for the year. This will be a critical budget as we are exploring options to move Richardson Middle School students into a 21st Century learning environment. With the generosity of our community, RMS is in the planning stages of obtaining the first set of iPads for our students' science classes, but we need your help. Your tax deductible direct donation dollars will see



(Continued on page 3)

Inside this Issue:

- 2. Principal's Message
- 7. Announcements
- 13. Calendar

Chad Mabery, Principal • Justine Lang, Assist. Principal • Donna Jo O'Brien, PTSA President • Betsy Delurgio, Editor • Torrance Council Of PTA's • Thirty-Third District • California State PTA

A Message from our Principal, Mr. Mabery



What is a 21st Century Learner? By Chad Mabery, Principal

It's hard to believe that we are about to begin the 3rd Quarter here at Richardson for the 2011-2012 school year. I am excited to take this opportunity to reflect on what we have already done and what we are looking to do to help all Richardson students become successful 21st Century Learners.

What is a 21st century learner? There are several different definitions to this increasingly trending education term, none of which are less than complex. Probably the first thing necessary to answer that question is to define 20th century learning. To me, this is how we learned when we were in school...listening, reading, writing, and remembering...in other words, passive learning. Today, in the technology age, the way students learn is changing. We know active learning is the most effective way to increase knowledge. Most of the jobs our middle school students will hold after college have not been created yet, but the skills they will need to be successful will not be new. Students will need to have the abilities to assess and synthesize information from multiple resources, create new representations of their comprehension of information, communicate the knowledge orally, adapt and learn from other cultures, especially globally, and collaborate effectively with peers. Students with the most initiative and persistence in being lifelong learners will have the highest mastery of these skills. These skills are also highly emphasized in the new Common Core content educational standards that all schools in California will be transitioning into in a couple years. (I will share more on this topic in the next PTSA newsletter.) The future of learning will be less about what information you know and more about how proficient you are at finding information.

In November of this past year, I visited China for ten days with a delegation of educators to learn more about each others' culture and educational systems. The Chinese culture is a prime example of how quickly and globally our world is changing. A recent Smithsonian magazine featured an article on Shanghai, the "economic engine" of China. The city now boasts 200 skyscrapers in an area that encompassed 200 acres of farmland 20 years ago. In 2003, China had about 11 million students in higher education or college. They are projected to pass 50 million in 2020. The United States currently has about 20 million students enrolled in colleges and universities.



We visited about six schools – all high-end middle and high schools in Beijing and the ancient capital of Xian. A couple things stood out. First, class sizes are huge. Most classes packed in 50 or 60 students sitting in rows. Second, kids spend about ten hours a day at school versus our seven hours in the U.S. The teachers stand at the front of the classroom with a head microphone to amplify their voice. Most teaching and learning in China remains traditional. The teachers present information. The students respectfully write down answers or call out responses in unison. This is how school learning has looked in much of the world for the last 100 years. But education research – and the reform movement in the U.S. – is pressing for change. Our ability to facilitate 21st century learning for our students is vital for our continued success in our increasingly small and global society.

(Continued on page 4)

A Message from our PTSA President (cont'd)

to it that our budget is met and that we can fund this amazing leap in technology which will help us to keep up with other South Bay schools which already utilize iPads. There will be more discussion on this topic and a vote on reallocating money for this project at our February PTSA Association Meeting on February 21st at 6:30 in the RMS Cafeteria. Please plan on attending! Your input and support is valued.

A few more reasons to attend the February PTSA Association Meeting are the election of the officers for next school years PTSA Executive Board 2012/2013, Honorary Service Awards and our Talent Show!

The RMS Running Club is still going strong on Thursdays, and beginning on Tuesday, March 6th, your child has the opportunity to go out for our Track Team and learn and practice with our fabulous coach, Richard Egan, every Tuesday! Look through this newsletter for more information on the Awesome RMS Track Team!

Looking ahead to March, we have our Rattlesnake Run on March 2nd, this is a great day for the kids and a fun fundraiser for our school! Our RMS vs. Calle basketball game will be on March 6th - Come join the fun at South High School! The 6th, 7th and 8th grade field trips are all in March and another Parent Education Night on March 27th. Keep watch for the topic, it's bound to be excellent!

Remember, communication is key at the middle school level so be sure to check our website often www.richardsonmiddleschool.org. You should also be receiving in your email inbox our eblast, every Monday or every other Monday. This publication put out by the Principal and PTSA President comes to you through your e-mail with important information regarding RMS and its upcoming events. If you are not receiving the eblast, please let me know via email and I will make sure your email address gets added to the distribution list. And be sure to read through this bi-monthly newsletter for more information!

Thank you so much to all of our involved parents, teachers, administration, and the incredible PTSA team that works tirelessly and efficiently to bring so much to the students and families at RMS.

Donna Jo O'Brien
PTSA President
timanddj.beachlife@verizon.net

A Message from our Principal (cont'd)

This past December, our 8th grade science teachers visited the GM Advanced Technology Center in Torrance. The concepts related to fuel cell technology directly connects to many of our 8th grade science standards, such as motion, acceleration, force, and energy. Just as important, the collaboration, communication, and creativity skills used in effective engineering teams is exactly what our students need now and in the future. This collaboration between 8th grade science teachers and local engineers is a wonderful example of how schools and communities can work together to build these skills in our students.



In January, students in Mr. Petito's Applied STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) classes have worked with GM Advanced Technology Center engineers to build and design a working model car. The project culminated in a team competition, where two student teams were chosen to demonstrate what they had learned to the Society of Automotive Engineers and Jay Leno in his infamous garage. Members of the two winning teams were Rachel Barrow, Jessica Boldt, Elizabeth Donagrecia, Regina Mettey, Keana Stromer, and Danielle Yee.

Richardson Middle School continues to push forward with online learning through Etusd as well as the purchase of two sets of 20 classroom iPads for our science and ELD classrooms. This purchase of iPads was made possible by our PTSA and school categorical funds. In the short time of their existence, multiple research studies have already shown an increase in learning with iPads and SMART technologies in the lower elementary grades, as well as student engagement at all levels.

Our school partners, South Bay Security and Larry Krueger, are helping to get our school newspaper and Journalism Club back up and running with a \$1000 donation that will go towards purchasing new, up-to-date newspaper design software and a compatible journalism computer. We are hoping, with community support, to purchase more classroom iPads sets and computers for academic support and enrichment activities, like journalism, so that these 21st century learning tools can be accessible in all classes everyday. Please continue to support and donate to the Richardson PTSA. We want to reach beyond our annual fundraising goals, so we can get more 21st century technology into the hands of our students.

As we hit the mid-point of the school year, I want to take a minute to thank all of our amazing parent and community volunteers. Providing art enrichment for all students through Adventures in Art, lunch supervision with Parent Eyes, the RMS vs. Calle Mayor games, Talent Show, grade-level field trips, Rattlesnake Run, Red Ribbon and Firefighter's Appreciation Weeks, our school website, and all of our fundraising activities, are just a few of the many vital programs and activities that would not be possible without the support. Parent Education Nights are also programs put on by our PTSA. Hopefully, you were

(Continued on page 5)

A Message from our Principal (cont'd)

able to attend our more recent workshop on Internet and Online Safety presented by the Torrance Police Department. Ms. Lang has written a follow-up article on that topic for those of you who were unable to attend. This other side of technology growth is serious and something all parents need to be aware of.

With the end of Quarter 2 upon us, continue to stay active in supporting your student. Contact teachers if you have concerns or need clarifications. During the last week of January, all 8th grade students will be getting their first taste of subject-area final exams. Ms. Lang and I recently met with all 8th grade students to discuss the Richardson Middle School academic and behavior expectations necessary to be successful. With these expectations come many privileges and activities, including the 8th grade picnic, end-of-year dance, and promotion ceremony. Some of the fun and memorable events coming up during Quarter 3 are the Talent Show, RMS vs. Calle Major Basketball Game, Rattlesnake Run, 6th grade field trip to the California Science Center, 7th grade field trip to Medieval Times, 8th grade field trip to the Museum of Tolerance, and multiple off-campus music program performances. In March, we will also be having some activities to get students to start thinking about what it means to be college and career ready. The next Parent Education Night will be on this topic in early March. In the later part of March, South High will be hosting parent information nights for any middle school students that will potentially be taking classes there next year. Please be sure to check the Richardson PTSA website and EBlasts for upcoming dates and times for these events.

Have a great start to Quarter 3!

Chad Mabery, Richardson Middle School Principal

A Message from our Asst. Principal, Ms. Lang



Internet Safety for Kids and Families

By Justine Lang, Vice Principal

On Tuesday, January 24th, the PTSA sponsored a parent night here at Richardson entitled, "Internet Safety for Kids: Don't Be in the Dark." Detective Lucas Ryono from the Torrance Police Department spent an hour and a half educating parents on some of the common threats associated with internet use and how parents can protect their kids. We all know what an amazing resource technology and the internet is for both students and adults. It is a valuable source of information, an efficient and effective form of communication, and a portal to visit places that would never before have been possible. But like any powerful tool, one must be careful when using it. We would never think to hand a power saw over to our kids without making them wear protective gear, explaining to them the proper way to use it, and providing supervision until we felt they were able to handle it on their own. This same thought process should occur when approaching our children's internet use, whether it is on a computer, a cell phone, an iPod touch, or any other device that has wireless internet access. Here are some simple, yet important tips to help make sure your child remains safe while using the internet:

(Continued on page 6)

A Message from our Asst. Principal, Ms. Lang (cont'd)

1. Become a net-savvy parent

The best safeguard against online dangers is being informed. Jump in and learn the basics of the internet—read articles, take a class, and talk to other parents. You don't have to be an expert to have a handle on your child's online world.

2. Talk with your kids

- Communicate, communicate, communicate!
- Develop an open dialogue so that you can talk with your kids about the benefits and dangers of the internet. Cultivate an interest in their online activities—their favorite Web sites, online games, and interests. And don't be afraid to ask your children who they are talking to online and what they are talking about.
- Explain to your kids that while the internet is a fabulous resource, it can also be dangerous in the hands of the wrong people. Remind them to never give out personal information or share pictures with anyone that you, as their parent, have not met. Tell them that if anyone ever contacts them and makes them feel uncomfortable, they should inform you at once.

3. Place the computer in a visible location

- The ideal location for the computer is in a family room or other shared space so that parents can always see what is going on and families can use the computer together.
- Clear, simple, easy-to-read house rules should be posted on or near the monitor. Create your own computer rules or print ones that you find on the internet. Discuss the rules as a family so that they are clear.

4. Monitor your child's internet use

- Internet accounts such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, Bebo, and others, should be in the parent's name with parents having the primary screenname and controlling passwords. Be aware of the blocking and/or filtering devices on these accounts and make sure they are set to the most private settings. Go on the accounts regularly to check posts and see who your child is friends with. While this may seem intrusive at first, remember that you are trying to keep your child safe.
- If the history is always empty after your child has used the computer, you may want to ask why it is being cleared out. There should be no reason for kids to clear out the history if they are only visiting appropriate sites.
- Remember that many hand-held devices allow internet access. Be sure to check the settings on those so that your child does not have access to sites or applications on those devices that you would not want them using at home.

5. Notify authorities of any suspicious internet behavior and stay informed

- Torrance Police Department: (310) 328-3456
- CyberTipline, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: (800) 843-5678 or www.missingkids.org
- Netsmartz.org – provides great resources for parents, kids, and educators on topics such as Internet Safety, Cyberbullying, Social Networking, Webcams and more!

This generation of students is fortunate to have the internet as a resource, something that we as parents and educators did not have in middle school. While it is critical to protect children from possible dangers, as a parent, there is no need to be afraid of this tool as long as you remain informed and actively involved in your child's internet use.

Announcements

The Richardson PTSA Presents The 2012 Talent Show



Rattlesnakes Live in the Pit

Reminder for all Talent Show participants:

Tech/Dress rehearsal will be February 17th in the Cafeteria directly after school.

Show: February 21st at 6:30 in the Cafeteria (be there at 5:45)

Show at school: February 22nd during school hours

Lisa Alpi, Producer

Richardson Middle School Track Team

Practices on Tuesdays 3-4:15pm

- First practice -March 6th
- Richard Egan has coached at the high school level and has volunteered to coach the team again.
- Most practices are at Richardson and a few practices will be held at South High School
- No experience needed – just show up and sign up
- Events will include sprints, relays, long jump, shot put, and high jump
- We will participate as a team in the All City Track Meet – Saturday, May 5th, 2012 at West High School and will participate in a meet with Miraleste and Chadwick in May
- T-shirt info handed out soon
- PICK UP PERMISSION SLIPS IN THE FRONT OFFICE

Parent volunteers needed!

Please contact Melina Symons tmmasymons@msn.com or come to practice to help.

RMS v. CMMS Basketball Night

- Join us the evening of March 6th as our Richardson Rattlesnakes take on the Calle Mayor Bulldogs!
- Our 8th grade boys and girls teams will fight to keep the trophy where it belongs...at Richardson.
- New this year...you'll get to cheer for your favorite staff members as they compete against Calle Mayor staff in a shootout contest.
- Be sure to purchase your Richardson spirit wear (black-out t-shirts, pom-poms and tattoos) as well as game tickets, on campus, beginning the week of February 27th. (more info to come)
- Pizza, snacks and drinks will be available for purchase at the South High School gym during the game.
- Support our Rattlesnakes and bring your school spirit!

Parents...if you are interested in volunteering before, during or after the event, please contact Deanna Diederich at dcdiederich@aol.com.

Announcements



Hello Richardson Parents and Students,

We are kicking off the new year with our second of three Box Tops For Education contests! Our last contest earned our school \$323.70 but with your help and generosity we can do better!

This second contest will run from **Wednesday, January 18th** until **Friday, March 30th**. Please trim your Box Tops and put them into a Ziploc baggie or an envelope labeled with your homeroom teacher's name on it. Drop them off in the basket in the office and they will be picked up weekly and tallied.

The class that collects the most Box Tops by the deadline of **Friday, March 30th** will be given a prize for the students and teacher.

******* PLEASE NOTE *******

Check the expiration dates! We cannot count any Box Tops that have reached their expiration date, or ones that have the expiration date missing!

Also, the Box Tops website (www.boxtops4education.com) has several contests that can earn as many as 500,000 bonus box tops for our school (that is a value of \$50,000.00) So, please visit their website, register with them and enter every day. Some lucky winner is going to get those credits, and it would be fantastic if it was Richardson Middle School!

Thank you for your continued support and Happy 2012!
Debra DeLuca – Ways & Means 2011/2012



Announcements

Reflections 2011-2012

Thank you to all the participants in this year's PTA sponsored Reflections Program.
We did not have any of our Richardson students move on to the next level.
Once I receive the returned entries I will notify the students.
I hope everyone had fun with this year's art program.

Melina Symons, Reflections Chair



Richardson Middle School Rattlesnake Run! Friday, March 2nd

Dust off your running shoes and get ready to run for Funds! Support our annual PTSA Rattlesnake Run which promotes healthy habits and raises money that directly supports PTSA sponsored programs.

A volunteer letter will be coming out soon for those of you interested in volunteering for the event. We need your help and can't do it without you.

If you have any questions, please contact:
Debra DeLuca at dd3@socal.rr.com
or Tiffany Mickley at tiffanymickley@aol.com

Announcements

The Student Store

The Student Store is open every Wed. at lunch time.

We sell school related items, like school supplies, so parents can save time and maybe a little money. For example, some of the fun school related items include: scented erasers, animal/food looking erasers, and sports logos on supplies.

Most items range from under \$1.00 up to \$3.00.

Come talk to Jamie and Kathy!!



Direct Donation Request

"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little – do what you can." – Sydney Smith

Thank you to all the Richardson families who have donated to our Direct Donation Drive. To date we have raised \$14,856.75 and with your help we can reach our budgeted goal of \$25,000.00.

The money we are raising as you may remember is not for new programs or a special event. We are simply raising money to continue the great programs we have been able to offer our students in the past including some of the upcoming field trips.

100% of your donation dollars go directly to the school and are 100% tax-deductible! A single donation, no matter what size, can make a world of difference.

Make your check payable to RMS PTSA. Put your student's name(s) and grade(s) on the check and then turn it into the office. You may also donate online by going onto www.richardsonmiddleschool.org and clicking on the direct donation button.

Thank you for supporting the Richardson Middle School PTSA and making it a great place to learn.

Debra DeLuca and Tiffany Mickley

Ways & Means 2011/2012

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Announcements

Community Partners Newsletter Items

February 2012

YOGURT WEDNESDAYS AT RICHARDSON

Every Wednesday, Yogurt Me Mine is on campus after school selling frozen yogurt for \$3 a cup in four flavors – chocolate, vanilla, cupcake and mango. 20% of all sales will be donated to Richardson's PTSA. Don't forget to bring your \$3 on Wednesdays to buy frozen yogurt! It's a cool way to support our school!

BURRITO MONDAYS AT RICHARDSON – STARTING MON., FEB. 6!

Need a quick after-school snack? Mexican Riviera Restaurant will be at Richardson on Mondays after school starting on Monday, Feb. 6 selling \$2 bean and cheese burritos, \$2 mini flautas and \$1 cupcakes. A percentage of all sales will be donated to Richardson's PTSA. Another great way to enjoy a snack while doing something good for our school!

SAVE THE DATE! THE LOFT RESTAURANT FUNDRAISER **ON TUES., FEB. 22 AND WED., FEB. 23**

The Loft will be donating 20% of all proceeds to Richardson's PTSA for dine-in and take-out meals purchased with a flyer on Tuesday, Feb. 22 and Wednesday, Feb. 23. Flyers will soon be available on the web site and in the school office. Enjoy a meal at The Loft either day and help raise money for Richardson!

ARE YOU SIPPING TO SUPPORT RMSPTSA?

Our Jamba Juice Program is under way. Please make sure you have a key chain Jamba Card so you can swipe to earn 10% of your purchase for RMSPTSA. Pre-registration is not required! Cards are available in the office; please pass them out to family and friends!

Announcements

HAVE YOU REGISTERED YOUR GROCERY CLUB CARDS YET?

It's not too late to register for the Community Partners Program!

The Community Partners Program is designed to raise funds for our school without costing you a penny. Each time you shop at Ralph's or Vons stores, Richardson Middle School PTSA can earn up to 4% of your total purchases.

As a shortcut to registering your Ralphs Card online, you can pick up a flyer containing a bar code in the office and bring it with you to Ralphs the next time you shop to automatically enroll at the grocery checkout. Ralphs requires participants to re-register each year, so even if you've registered in the past, please have them scan this flyer next time you shop, just to be sure!!

Don't forget to also activate or update your **eScrip** registration to automatically earn money for your Vons and other credit card purchases. The complete instructions are available online at www.richardsonmiddleschool.org. Simply print out the instructions and register your cards today.

It does take a few minutes to register each card, but the effort is well worth it when you consider that you are raising money for Richardson with no money out of your pocket. Spread the word to grandparents, neighbors and friends. They can just as easily register their cards to support our school. Have children at other schools? Vons and Escrip allow you to designate more than one organization to receive your contribution.

Questions? Contact Juliet Babros, Community Partners Chairperson, juliet@julietbabros.com or (310) 375-9915

Relay for Life

Join Richardson's team and help fight cancer
April 28-29
at South High School

Contact Shannon at s.cpereira@verizon.net or 310 375-4811 for more info.

School Calendar

FEBRUARY

2	Thu.	End of Quarter 2
3	Fri.	STUDENT FREE DAY
7	Tue.	School Site Council Meeting - 3:15 PM PTSA Executive Board Meeting - 6:30 PM
10	Fri.	Report Cards Go Home
13	Mon.	Lincoln's Birthday – NO SCHOOL
20	Mon.	Washington's Birthday – NO SCHOOL
21	Tues.	PTSA Association Meeting/Honorary Service/Elections/ Talent Show – 6:30

MARCH

2	Fri.	Rattlesnake Run
6	Tue.	STAR Writing RMS vs. Calle Mayor at SHS
11	Sun.	Daylight Saving Time begins
13	Tue.	School Site Council Meeting - 3:15 PM PTSA Executive Board Meeting - 6:30 PM
20	Tue.	7th Grade Night @ SHS - 7:00 PM
27	Tue.	Parent Ed. Night
28	Wed.	8th Grade Parent Night @ SHS - 7:00 PM

REMEMBER – EVERY TUESDAY IS LATE START – 9:25am