

# Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



## PUMA NEWS

# January

2009

*A publication of Pine Valley PTA*

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### Dates to Note:

Date	Event
Jan. 9	7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Dance, 7-9 pm in the MPR & Courtyard
Jan. 12	District Community Forum, 6:30-8 pm at SRVHS
Jan. 15	District Community Forum, 6:30-8 pm at Cal High
Jan. 16	Last day of Recycled Cell Phone Drive
Jan. 19	Martin Luther King Holiday - No School
Jan. 20	District Community Forum, 6:30-8 pm at MVHS
Jan. 22	Staff Appreciation Lunch District Community Forum, 6:30-8 pm at DVHS
Jan. 23	Semester Ends
Jan. 26	Teacher Work Day - No School for Students
Jan. 28	Special Needs Program - Navigating the Emotions of Parenting a Special Needs Child, 7-9pm at Iron Horse.
Feb. 2	PTA Meeting, 7 pm in the Library
Feb. 4	Deadline to submit entries to Dublin/SR Women's Club Student Art/Photography Contest
Feb. 7	She's All That conference, 9 am-3pm at Gale Ranch Middle School
Feb. 28	Parenting 2009 & Beyond, annual parenting conference

## Community Forums to Discuss Budget Impact on Local Education

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District is encouraging parents and community members to attend one of four forums scheduled in January to discuss the impact of the current State budget crisis on local education.

"The state of California is in a very serious financial crisis, and as a 'ward of the state' this school district and this community face an extremely grim financial situation," said Superintendent Steven Enoch. "The district also has the added challenge of a parcel tax election this spring. The combination of the state economic meltdown and the prospect of a failure of the parcel tax will result in a drastic reduction in the quality of education in our district. It is for these reasons that we need to talk with our community."

The forums will provide the district with opportunities to share more details about these challenges and to hear community input related to the preservation of local public education. The Board of Education will most likely act in late January to place a parcel tax on the ballot in the spring, so the forums will give parents and community members an opportunity to help shape the measure before it goes to the voters. The district's existing parcel tax is set to expire in June 2009.

"We are also strongly encouraging community members who do not have children in the district to attend the forums, as the quality of our schools has a direct impact on property values and the overall quality of the communities our district serves," said Enoch.

The forums are designed to last approximately 1-1/2 hours, and will include information about the district budget and financial projections, as well as time for community input and small group discussion. Each forum will be identical in content so parents and community members can attend the forum that best fits into their schedule. Registration is not required, but would be helpful to have an idea of how many people to expect. To register, please follow this link - choose the appropriate session - and fill out the fields.

<http://www.srvcouncilpta.org/ParentEd/Survey/TakeSurvey.aspx>

#### **Community Forum Nights 6:30-8 PM - In School Libraries**

- January 12, 2009 San Ramon Valley High School, 501 Danville Blvd, Danville
- January 15, 2009 California High School, 9870 Broadmoor Drive, San Ramon
- January 20, 2009 Monte Vista High School, 3131 Stone Valley Rd, Danville
- January 22, 2009 Dougherty Valley High School, 10550 Albion Road, San Ramon

## President's Message - by Collette Ricks & Lani Bari

Happy New Year! We hope that you enjoyed the holiday break. Now that our students have returned back-to-school, we would like to remind you that our cell phone recycling drive is coming to an end. Perhaps after the holiday break, there may be more unused phones that can be turned in. The PTA is working with Pace Butler Corporation on this project. We will send the cell phones (working or not), and they will look them up on a list and compensate our PTA for the phones accordingly. It's a win-win situation! You'll feel good about disposing of your old cell phones properly and helping to keep toxic chemicals out of our landfills, at the same time raising some funds for the Pine Valley PTA. **Please go through your drawers and turn in those unused cell phones to the Pine Valley office before January 16<sup>th</sup>!**

We would like to thank Ron Graham and Tom Larson for the time & energy they volunteered to help install the new rims and nets on Pine Valley's 16 outdoor basketball courts. Thank you both so much! Our parent volunteers are very important to the success of our Pine Valley community. On that note, we will be electing a nominating committee at our February PTA meeting. The job of the nominating committee will be to put together a slate of candidates for the PTA Board for the 2009-2010 school year. If you are interested in learning more about the nominating committee, or Pine Valley PTA in general, please let us know and feel free to attend our next PTA meeting on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00pm in the library.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> dance of the school year will be held this Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00pm. On behalf of Chris Brady (refreshment coordinator) and Amy White (chaperone coordinator), we would like to thank the parent volunteers that have offered to chaperone the dance and/or provide refreshments for our 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade attendees. Here is another example of how our Pine Valley volunteers make a difference! As a quick reminder, January 23<sup>rd</sup> is the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. There is no school on Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, or Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. That makes two 4-day school weeks in January to help us all ease back into the swing of things! As always, feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns.

Collette Ricks

Lani Bari

## Principal's Message - by Jason Law

I sincerely hope that 2009 has greeted you warmly. Though students would never admit it, I think they always grow a bit tired of these extended breaks and look forward to the routine of school. I know parents always enjoy when students go back, or at least the sense of calm that returns to the household.

Since we last communicated, I wanted to give you an update on a couple of things. We recently completed our 2009 California Distinguished School application. Thankfully, the process was streamlined a bit more this year and was not as cumbersome as in the past. Qualifying to apply was the hurdle to overcome and with a 19-point API jump, that was not an issue for Pine Valley. Thank you to all the staff, parents and district personnel who contributed. A special and heartfelt thank you goes especially to Core teacher, Vicki Rowland and librarian, Gerri Petersen who lead the writing process. We will be getting a validation visit in early March and find out if we have been selected in the spring. Regardless of the outcome, the programs offered at Pine Valley to support student success make us "distinguished", not a formal application process and a one-day visit from a group of strangers. Personally, I found the application process extremely valuable because it allowed me to become even more familiar with Pine Valley and the wonderful things that our staff does to help your kids. I am confident that the validation committee will reward their hard work.

With the end of the semester approaching on January 23, we have made some decisions in regards to Honor Roll. I asked last month for parent input and was pleased that so many of you responded. I also asked for input from both PTA and School Site Council. Overwhelmingly, parents supported a change to the policy fearing that the Honor Roll had lost its "Honor." After discussing things further with staff, the new Pine Valley Honor Roll will be as follows:

Bronze:	3.5 - 3.74
Silver:	3.75 - 3.99
Gold:	4.0

Students will be recognized within these new parameters. Also, students who are currently teacher's aides will receive a grade of pass/fail rather than a letter grade. Again, these changes were made because the percentage of students being recognized as Honor Roll students was approaching 70%. Using this new format, approximately 50% of Pine Valley's students will be recognized while motivating the students who did not make it to work harder. Getting a better understanding of what is expected academically in high school is extremely important for our students. I do not want students leaving Pine Valley and their middle school experience with a false sense of security. Based on the numbers we see for the semester, we will revisit this issue if necessary.

Finally, I want to make sure that the Pine Valley Community is aware of how the State budget crisis is affecting public education in California, especially schools in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Please read the first article in this newsletter that was shared with the community in a recent SRVUSD press release. **The financial crisis and its impact on education that is gripping this State cannot be overstated. Please plan on attending one of these community forums** to share your thoughts. I, and many other PV staff members, will be attending the Cal High forum on January 15. Please bring a neighbor and/or a friend and join us!

## Counselors' Corner - by Julie Damgen

In an effort to raise the visibility of school counselors in this district, I wanted to let everyone know that **National School Counseling Week** is coming - February 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>. One might ask "Why Middle School Counselors?" I hope this information helps answer the question.

Middle school students are characterized by rapid physical growth, curiosity about their world and an emerging self-identity. Through a comprehensive, developmental school counseling program, counselors work as a team member with school staff, parents and the community to create a caring, supportive climate and atmosphere

whereby young adolescents can achieve academic success. Middle school counselors enhance the learning process and promote academic achievement. School counseling programs are essential for students to achieve optimal personal growth, acquire positive social skills and values, set appropriate career goals and realize full academic potential to become productive, contributing members of the world community. The professional middle school counselor holds a master's degree and required state certification in school counseling. Maintaining certification includes on-going professional development to stay current with education reform and challenges facing today's students. Professional association membership is encouraged as it enhances the school counselor's knowledge and effectiveness.

## Teacher/Staff Appreciation - by Teresa DeHope

Now that we're into January and school has resumed, we thought it would be nice to host another luncheon for the teachers to kick off the new year, let them know how much we appreciate them, and boost morale in the midst of this budget crunch. This luncheon will be Thursday, January 22 (the day before the first semester ends). It will be a soup and salad luncheon. If anyone would like to help out, I can be contacted at [tdehope@gmail.com](mailto:tdehope@gmail.com). Even if you don't want to help out food wise, I could use help the day before with decorating the staff lounge. Thanks in advance.

## Navigating the Emotions of Parenting a Special Needs Child - SRV Council PTA Special Needs Committee

Wednesday, January 28, 2009 from 7-9 pm at Iron Horse Middle School

Come to an educational evening designed to explore the emotions surrounding raising a child with special needs and put a road map together for understanding and moving through these emotions. Lori Crowley, Mentor Life Coach in Bereavement & special needs parent, and Libby Palomeque, Grief Recovery Specialist & Level II Degriefing Practitioner, will lead a discussion as well as exercises around these topics.

To view the flyer for this event, [click here](#).

To register to attend, [click here](#). Locate the event title in the event drop-down box and complete the fields. Your registration ensures that we have enough hand-outs.

## She's All That Conference

"She's All That" is an exciting annual conference for middle school-aged girls and their parents. It is presented by Soroptimist International, San Ramon Valley, a local service club. The conference includes an inspirational keynote presentation and a choice of three of the seventeen available workshops for girls. Our popular "Live Your Dream!" Expo will include numerous informational exhibits again this year. The parent workshop offerings have been expanded, and parents may attend two of the four offered. [See the full flyer](#) to see the list of workshops for students and for parents. This year's conference is

Saturday, February 7, 2009

Gale Ranch Middle School, San Ramon

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is required

\$25 before January 15, 2009, \$30 after January 15, 2009

For more information and registration visit [www.soroptimist-sr.org](http://www.soroptimist-sr.org) or call 925-355-2442

## Dublin/San Ramon Women's Club Student Art Contest

The GFWC Dublin/San Ramon Women's Club is sponsoring their 2009 Student Art Contest. This is their 17th year of sponsorship. The contest is open to all students in the cities of Dublin and San Ramon. The artwork and photography must be completed as an individual effort, and should be mounted on stiff poster board. The student art/photography may be exhibited to the community. Art/Photographs should be no larger than 24"x30". Frames are NOT necessary. No entry with glass will be accepted.

Categories for this contest are as follows:

**Student Art**

Grades K-1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7-8, Grades 9-11, Graduating Seniors  
Special Education K-8, Special Education 9-12

**Photography**

Grades 7-8 and Grades 9-12

All photography must be matted. Size with matting must be at least 10"x12" & no larger than 24"x30". Photo must have been taken during contest year (Jan 1, 2008-Dec. 31, 2009). Back of photo must have an arrow drawn indicating the top. NO GLASS.

- Entries need to be in the School Office NO LATER THAN 12 NOON on Feb. 4, 2009.
- All entries must have the following information on the reverse side of the piece: **Student's First & Last Name, Grade Level, Teacher and School Name**
- All entries will receive certificates
- Each 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place entries will receive a cash award and a ribbon presented at the Student Art Reception on March 29. Families, teachers & friends of the student winners are invited to attend.
- A letter with details on the art reception will be mailed to the winners.
- Winners move onto Mount Diablo District Competition held February 12th, 2009.
- All 1st Place Mt. Diablo District winners will be entered in CFWC State Contest in April 2009.
- For more information, please email Joanne Ellgas at [jellgas@comcast.net](mailto:jellgas@comcast.net) or call 925-830-9758.

## A College Night for Middle School Students

Save the date for a new exciting event, COOL Nights (College Opportunity; Opportunities for Life) that is happening on March 4, 2009 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Alhambra High School, 150 E. Street, Martinez, CA. For the first time there will be a countywide College and Career Fair for middle school students and their parents to provide information about transition to high school and opportunities for college and careers. Admission is free and food will be available for purchase. Event flyers with registration will be distributed to school sites soon. Please contact Liz Rusk at [erusk@cccoc.k12.ca.us](mailto:erusk@cccoc.k12.ca.us) with questions. [Click here](#) for the Save the Date flyer.

## Creating Lasting Family Connections

The Discovery Counseling Center is offering two upcoming groups as a part of their Creating Lasting Family Connections program.

- **After-school Student Group**, held on Tuesdays, 2:45-4:30 pm from February 5 thru May 7 at Pine Valley. Participants will improve communications skills, learn stress management, increase self-esteem, make new friends, and have fun!
- **Evening Parent Group**, start date and time to be determined. Participants will improve communication skills, increase family bonding, provide an opportunity to network with other parents, and help parents navigate thru the teen years.

[Click here](#) for the flyer. To register a student, please contact Jennifer Davis at (925) 837-0505 x 329 or [jdavis@discoveryctr.net](mailto:jdavis@discoveryctr.net).

## Programs for Teens – by Adam Chow, City of San Ramon

The City of San Ramon Parks & Community Services Department offers a variety of programs and classes. Visit [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org) for a complete listing of what's going on for teens in San Ramon. To register for classes or other programs stop by the San Ramon or Dougherty Station Community Centers or you can register online at [www.SanRamonRecGuide.com](http://www.SanRamonRecGuide.com). If you have questions or need more information please call 973-3200.

### Teen Centers

The City of San Ramon is pleased at the success of the Teen Centers for students at Pine Valley, Gale Ranch, and Windemere Ranch. The Teen Centers provide supervised and structured academic and recreational activities from after school until 6:00 p.m. every school day. For more information on registration, fees and policies please visit [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org) or call Adam Chow at 973-3362. Registration is now open!

### Upcoming Events

#### **Glow-in-the-Dark Capture the Flag** (Saturday, February 28)

Play capture the flag as you've never done it before - in the dark! We'll have black lights and glow necklaces. Come check out our variations of game and enjoy and friendly competition. The event will take place at the Iron Horse Gym from 7:00-10:00 p.m. Admission is \$5.

### Upcoming Trips

#### **Snowboarding** (Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>-Sugar Bowl or Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>-Northstar)

Join us for an awesome day of snowboarding or skiing. We'll provide transportation, lift ticket, and breakfast. Rent your own equipment prior to the trip. There is a mandatory parent/participant meeting at 6:00 pm on 1/21/09 at the San Ramon Community Center. Registration for the Sugar Bowl trip must be completed by 5:00 pm on Thursday 1/22/09. Cost is \$85 for San Ramon residents.

## Student of the Month – by Shannon Maser & Wendy Pomeroy

Each month Pine Valley Middle School focuses on a life skill, such as caring, organization, effort, and respect. The Student-of-the-Month program recognizes students who exemplify the particular month's life skill. Teachers nominate one student from any of their classes. The students are rewarded with an ice cream sundae or other special treat during their lunch period on the last Friday of the month. A professional photographer takes their pictures, which are sent home in a keepsake folder.

Congratulations to the November/December Students of the Month who are recognized for exhibiting the life skill of **Respect**. The featured life skill for January is **Responsibility**.

<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>(Selected by)</u></b>	<b><u>Student</u></b>	<b><u>(Selected by)</u></b>
Shayden Adams Hart	(Mrs. Nair)	Sam Klopstock	(Mrs. Locke)
Sarah Augello	(Miss Ciriaco)	Nicole Krauchun	(Mr. Miller)
Samantha Austin	(Miss Gault)	Elijah Langdon	(Mrs. Marohn)
Rishika Baral	(Mrs. Schluntz)	Fred Lewis	(Miss Martin)
Monica Bari	(Mr. Munson)	Cameron Marek	(Miss Clarkson)
Mari Carlson	(Mrs. Rowland)	Tess McConnell	(Mr. Law)
Reyna Casique	(Miss Krummes)	Nina Merkur	(Mr. Bellomo)
Alex Chung	(Mrs. Moore)	Michael Min	(Mr. Reeves)
Karin Claudia	(Mrs. Loughery)	Kevin Murphy	(Miss deSilva)
Jonnathan Contreras	(Mrs. Marchese)	Shelbie Nix	(Miss Damgen)
Lexie Curran	(Mrs. Rosenberg)	Ali Nunes	(Miss Meredith)
Cassidy Davis	(Mrs. Fleshman)	Claire Pamintuan	(Mrs. Johnston)
Alysha DeLange	(Mrs. James)	Nancy Perez	(Miss Pappas)
Faith DeSaboya	(Mr. Liebow)	Shea Reynolds	(Mr. Wulff)

Mischa Fritz	(Mrs. Hegarty)	Corey Robinson	(Ms. Huff)
Jessica Gonsalves	(Mrs. Knudson)	Jacob Rubio	(Mrs. White)
Warren Goodson	(Mr. Boyd)	Jasneet Sahota	(Mrs. Peterson)
Richa Goyal	(Ms. Phillips)	Cameron Santos	(Miss Myers)
Morgan Ham	(Mrs. Irvin)	Megan Thomas	(Mrs. Svoboda/Gross)
Lauren Holden	(Mrs Barks)	Amanda Tran	(Dr. Grame)
Madeline Hurd	(Mrs. Kontilis)	Ander Venierakis	(Mr. Vespi)
Tiffany Jeong	(Mr. Cooley)	Kayla Webster	(Mr. Cepeda)
Katie Kellogg	(Mrs. Shivitz)	John Webster	(Mr. Erbez)