

Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



PUMA NEWS

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A publication of Pine Valley PTA

Jason Law, Principal

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Inside this Issue:

- President's Message
- Principal's Message
- PVEF Update
- Counselor's Corner
- TRAFFIX is Reducing Traffic Congestion
- Parent Ed. Opportunities
- Special Needs Program
- Advocacy Day
- School Finance 101
- Keep Saving Those Box Tops
- SR Library Programs
- City of SR Programs
- Students of the Month

Dates to Note:

Date	Event
Jan. 15	<i>Prescription Drug Abuse: A Dose of Prevention</i> , 6:30-8:30pm at Iron Horse MS MPR
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Holiday - No School
Jan. 22	1 st Semester Ends
Jan. 25	Teacher Work Day - Students do not attend <i>School Finance 101</i> , 7-8:30pm at Los Lomas HS
Jan. 27	<i>College Planning for Students with Special Needs</i> , 7-9pm at Iron Horse MS MPR
Feb. 1	PTA Meeting, 6:30pm in the Library
Feb. 6	" <i>She's All That</i> " Conference, at California High School
Feb. 17	Advocacy Day annual trip to Sacramento
Feb. 27	<i>Parenting 2010 & Beyond</i> annual parenting conference, 8 to 2 at Dougherty Valley HS.

President's Message - by Kristen Holbrook & Lani Bari

Welcome back! It's hard to believe that 2010 is already here! We hope that you all enjoyed your winter vacations! Thank you to all who volunteered at the Winter Dance before break. The kids had a great time, and this is possible because of the wonderful parents who are willing to help with chaperoning. Please let Amy White, (semedo08@yahoo.com) know if you are interested in volunteering at future dances!

Please come to our next PTA meeting on February 4th, at 6:30 pm in the library!

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Principal's Message - by Jason Law

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season was spent with family and friends. I am sure that Monday, January 4 came quicker than most of the kids wanted. It will take us all a few days to get back into our routines.

I shake my head as I type this, but we are approaching the half way mark of our school year. Remember, the semester ends on Friday, January 22. PTA will be recognizing this semester's Honor Roll recipients with various awards, depending on the student's grade level and grade point average. At Pine Valley, we have 3 levels of Honor Roll; Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The GPA levels break down like this:

Bronze	3.5 - 3.74
Silver	3.74 - 3.99
Gold	4.0

Honor Roll recipients will be recognized by their teachers and peers in their Core classes the first week in February. The informal ceremonies serve as a way to recognize the hard work of students and as a motivational example for those who did not make the list. Students don't make this list by accident. It is through hard work, determination and family support that students achieve this accomplishment.

Last week, I sent an email message about the "She's All That!" conference happening at California High School on February 6. I just want to reiterate to parents of female Pumas what an opportunity this conference is. The empowerment of young women in today's society is so important. Please consider it. Middle school girls from all over the district will be attending. You can find more information at <http://www.soroptimist-sr.org>. Registration fills up quickly, so please don't hesitate to sign up.

In last month's newsletter, I mentioned our new lunch payment program being offered to the parents and students of Pine Valley. From your elementary days, many of you may already be familiar with the Meal Time system. Meal Time allows parents to prepay for student lunches either online or by check. Students can then access those funds to buy their lunches each day by using their six digit ID number. Parents can even track what their students are eating online.

Beginning in February, in an effort to expedite the lunch lines, when students buy lunch with cash, instead of giving change, a credit will be made to the student's account, which they can use another day. (Example: If an entrée is \$4 and a student pays with a \$10 bill, instead of getting \$6 in change, the student will be credited \$6 on their account.) No bills larger than \$20 will be accepted from students and students will be limited to spending no more than \$7 per day. Originally we wanted to start this policy change this month, but families and kids needed more time with the transition. January will be used as an opportunity to further educate our student body and community, as well as an opportunity for students to get another ID card if theirs has been lost. (Replacement IDs are available in the office for \$5). *Also, if you purchased lunches in advance earlier in the year and were issued the blue tickets, we ask that your student turn all those tickets in ASAP and the proper credit will be given to the student's account.*

If you have any questions about this, please contact an administrator at Pine Valley or the Child Nutrition Office at 925.824.1808. Information is also available online at <http://chartwellsschooldining.com/sanramonvalleyusd/>. Parents who wish to prepay for lunches can do so at the same website or they can drop off a check (made out to Pine Valley MS) in the office. Again, the goal here is to expedite lunch lines, create a healthier lunch environment, and make things more convenient for students and parents. Thanks for your patience through this transition.

Finally, as a reminder our school bussing program, TRAFFIX has prorated their rates for the year. Your student can now ride for the rest of the school year for \$150... about \$25 a month. Please consider!

Have a great month! As always, please call or email with any comments, concerns, or questions.

PVEF Update - by PVEF Board

Happy New Year! Out with the old and in with the new.

Thank you to all families for your continuing support. Your donations are helping. However, we still need more families to participate. Together, as a Pine Valley community, we can make the difference in our children's education. We look forward to whatever support you can provide. If you are able to donate please also check for matching funds through your employer. Many companies have matching programs which you may not be aware of.

While class size reduction is still a priority, we as a Pine Valley community need to provide our students the opportunity to excel with the ever demanding changes of technology. As a Pine Valley family we can make great strides in maintaining and updating technology for our Pumas. Please remember that a donation to the Pine Valley Education Fund can be made anytime during the school year. Donations can be dropped off at the Pine Valley office or mailed to the attention of the Ed Fund at the school's address. Or, you can log on to RevTrak at <http://pvef.revtrak.net/tek9.asp> to make a donation.

Great news! We are looking forward to our "Dine for Pine Valley" event. More details and flyers to follow.

Counselor's Corner – by Julie Damgen

This month, I'd like to share the following article.

Quick Click: Stay Connected With Your Changing Child

While it's 100% normal for your tween to act disengaged, deep down she still craves your attention. Here, dos and don'ts for giving it. By Cara Pitterman

It's a fine line when you're raising a tween: You want, and need, to stay close, but you need to give your child enough distance so she can grow and bloom. Allan Tasman, M.D., and Allen Josephson, M.D., psychiatrists and professors at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, in Louisville, Kentucky, offer advice.

Do suggest opportunities to do things together. "By putting the offer out there," explains Dr. Tasman, "you let your child know you're there for her." Whether your middle schooler loves sports or going to the ballet, suggest exploring that pastime together to demonstrate your own interest in her life.

Don't be too hurt when she turns you down. At this age, the idea of hanging out with friends is far more appealing than spending time with Mom or Dad. "Keep in mind," Dr. Tasman says, "that most tweens would rather be caught dead than hanging out with parents!" So don't let rejection deter you, and don't show that it upsets you. Just keep offering. One day, your middle schooler may surprise you with an enthusiastic "Yes!"

Do drive him wherever you can. Your child might be tired and bleary-eyed, but dropping him off at school in the morning provides the chance to make sure he's prepared for the day. It's also a good way to establish a solid routine that the two of you share, and to provide an opportunity to chat. If your morning schedules clash, create other chauffeur-driven connections by offering him rides to sports practice or friends' homes.

Don't expect it to be easy. Dr. Josephson warns that connecting to a middle schooler takes different tactics than younger or even older children. "Spend more time listening rather than taking action," he says. Simply put, pay attention to what your child really likes now rather than doing things she may have enjoyed at a younger age. "Bring home a DVD she's wanted to see," suggests Dr. Josephson, and let her invite a friend over to watch it instead of watching it together. Chances are she'll appreciate it!

Do have dinner together. "Research shows that dinner time together is one of the most important things to keep family relations strong," says Dr. Tasman. But **don't be overly structured.** "Keep dinner simple," he says. What you serve isn't as important as spending time together. "More than anything, the meal provides an opportunity for interaction."

Do allow him to have his own experiences. At this point in his life, you need to step back in order to let your child grow into his own person. "Be *emotionally* connected," says Dr. Josephson, instead of trying to be *physically* in the same place all the time. "Listen to what he is saying about what is important to him," adds Dr. Tasman.

Don't try to like the same things. Again, your child needs to be different and separate from you in terms of likes and interests, Dr. Josephson explains. For example, he says, you may think that listening to the same music will impress your middle schooler — but don't be shocked if she changes the station or says, "This is my music; you have your own!"

Do be "in the know." Ask about what he's reading for school, and pick up that book yourself — you can talk about it in the car or during dinner.

TRAFFIX Bus Service is Reducing Traffic Congestion

Here's what some parents are saying about the TRAFFIX bus system:

- "Convenient, easy, polite drivers, helpful staff, a huge time saver."
- "Cuts down on congestion. Has added an hour to my day which we previously spent in traffic or waiting for pickup."
- "I love the convenience of having my daughter picked up close to our home and knowing she will safely arrive at school on time."

If you haven't tried the bus system, you can start anytime. The pro-rated rate is \$150 for the rest of the year. Go to www.rideTRAFFIX.com or call program director, Aram Boyd at [925-866-8739](tel:925-866-8739) to see if there is a stop in your neighborhood or to sign up.

Parent Ed. Opportunities – by Collette Ricks

Prescription Drug Abuse: A Dose of Prevention

Is your child's first or next high as close as your medicine cabinet? Do you know an estimated 1 in 5 teens have abused prescription drugs? Come to an important evening full of vital information that everyone needs to know.

Friday, January 15, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.

At the Iron Horse Middle School Multi-purpose Room
12601 Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon, CA 94583

Join us to learn about the prescription-drug abuse problem in the San Ramon Valley, as well as the efforts currently underway to educate parents and community leaders about teens who intentionally abuse prescription drugs to get high. Ventura County Deputy Sheriff, Vic Fazio, will be delivering a compelling and dramatic message on prescription drug abuse followed by a panel of local and national experts who will present information and answer your questions about the rising drug trend among our youth.

The program is brought to our valley as a collaboration of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, the San Ramon Valley Council of PTA's, the San Ramon Police Department, CASA (Community Against Substance Abuse), the Center for Human Development, and the Discovery Counseling Center of the San Ramon Valley, in conjunction with and with the leadership and support of The Gracer Medical Group, Purdue Pharma, L.P. and Reckitt Benckiser.

This program is **FREE** to the community. We will also be providing a **prescription drug drop off opportunity** for you to dispose of your old medicine in a safe and secure manner. [View the flyer.](#)

This parent education event is one of three events that will be taking place on Friday January 15th to better equip our community to deal with this rising drug trend among our youth.

- Law Enforcement Training- 9-12 am at the San Ramon Police Department
- Medical Provider Training- 12:30-2:30 at the San Ramon Regional Medical Center

Parenting 2010 and Beyond...

The San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs presents its annual parenting conference on **Saturday, February 27** at Dougherty Valley High School from 8:00am to 2:30pm (check-in begins at 7:30am). This year's keynote presentation is the documentary film *Race to Nowhere* that examines education, childhood and the unintended consequences of the achievement-oriented way of life that exists in American education and culture. Following the film will be a panel discussion and question and answer session. Attendees will then have the opportunity to attend a morning and an afternoon small group seminar of your choice, focusing on current parenting topics. Breakfast and lunch are provided. More information will be posted at www.srvcouncilpta.org.

College Planning for Students with Special Needs - by Kristen DeLaGardie

Wednesday, January 27, 7-9 PM in the Iron Horse Middle School MPR

College planning can be a daunting process in and of itself. If you're a parent of a student with special needs, you have one more layer of complexity to add to it. The SRV Council of PTAs Special Needs Committee has put together a panel of Career Center, Resource, and College Disability Services professionals to speak about the college planning process and key considerations to help you guide your special needs student through the process. There will also be breakout sessions where parents can ask questions related to their individual student. The workshop is geared towards parents of students with special needs. To view the flyer, [click here](#). To register for this FREE workshop, [click here](#). Registration ensures enough handouts.

Advocacy Day: Make Your Voice Heard for Children

Register Now for the 30th Annual PTA Advocacy Day Trip to Sacramento on February 17

Are you concerned about looming catastrophic budget cuts to our schools and children's services? Have you been hearing about new education reform and budget reform efforts and want to understand more about them? Sign up today for the 30th annual PTA Advocacy Day trip to Sacramento. On this trip, you will learn about the issues and make our voices heard to our legislators. With the proposed cuts to education and children's services in the Governor's recently-released budget, there has never been a more important time to advocate for children. Take action and join PTA members from Contra Costa and Alameda Counties on **February 17, 2010**.

Cost is \$65 for registrations received through February 1, and \$70 for late registration through February 10, and includes transportation, box lunch and information packets. Your PTA may reimburse a portion of the fee following attendance (with prior approval). **Click [here](#) for the information flyer and day's itinerary. Click [here](#) to register.** Your presence makes a difference!

School Finance 101 Presentation

Confused about why schools have such low funding?

Concerned about looming cuts to our schools?

Wonder why you are asked to donate money to support school services?

You are invited to attend **School Finance 101** on Monday, **January 25, 2010, 7:00-8:30pm** in the Los Lomas High School Cafeteria, 1460 South Main Street, Walnut Creek. Learn why our schools receive lower per-pupil funding than any other state in the nation, and hear about possible reforms. Please RSVP by January 22 to nmvandell@comcast.net. This program is sponsored by 32nd District PTA's Education & Legislation Committee.

"She's All That" Conference

Soroptimist International's 6th annual conference is scheduled for February 6 at California High School. The conference is an event planned specifically with middle school *GIRLS* in mind. The day will include a keynote speaker and workshops for young ladies and their parents. The event sells out each year, so register quickly... the price goes up after January 15.

Please see the links below for details. This event is a tremendous opportunity for the female students of Pine Valley. Please discuss the event with your daughter and check out the links together. [Click Here for the 2010 Flyer](#) and [Click Here to get to the "She's All That" website and to Register](#)

Keep Saving those Box Tops - by Melinna Gershik

Please keep saving your Box Tops. We will be having a Box Tops contest in January. If you have any questions, please write to pinevalleyboxtops@yahoo.com. Thanks!

SR Library Programs for Youth/Teens - by Nancy Kreiser

Teens Get Knittin' @ the Library

It's cold outside, you need a scarf and we'll teach you how to knit one! Supply lists available at the library.
Tuesday, January 19, 3:30pm, Dougherty Station Library

Tarot

Learn about Tarot, create your own card, and experience a traditional reading.
Saturday, January 23, 2:00pm, Dougherty Station Library

Celebrate "Love Your Library" Month

Show the library some love. Work on a volunteer project, eat, and play library inspired games. If you've thought about volunteering, start here!
Saturday, February 6, 10:00am, San Ramon Library teen area

Be the Beatles

Let Beatles Rock Band transform you and your friends into the Fab Four. Friday, February 19, 6:00pm, Dougherty Station Library

Programs for Youth/Teens - by Adam Chow, City of San Ramon

The City of San Ramon Parks & Community Services Department offers a variety of programs, classes and events. Visit our teen website, 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. If you have questions or need more information please call 973-3200.

Winter/Spring Recreation Guide Now Available Online

Find out all the classes and activities available for the remainder of the school year. Visit our website at www.sanramon.ca.gov/parks or www.srteen.org.

Youth Resource Program

The Youth Resource Program promotes viable life skills among young people in our community through recreation activities, community service opportunities, counseling programs, and skill development at San Ramon middle schools and high schools. The middle school program is called "Quest." Each session meets once a week for a four week after school curriculum at designated school sites. The City of San Ramon partners with the San Ramon Valley Unified School District and the San Ramon Police Department to provide a positive, safe environment for students.

Making the Right Choice

Learn about personal finance, education, and career options based on your skills, interests, and values.

Tuesdays, February 16 - March 9, 2:45-4:15pm at Pine Valley. Ages 10-14, 1 session, \$29, Act #64470

Visit San Ramon's teen website, www.SRTeen.org, for information on teen events, classes, and other programs. At SRTeen.org you can sign up for email updates and participate in contests that can make teens eligible for free prizes and discounts on programs and events. Check out www.SRTeen.org to get the 411 on teen programs.

Students of the Month Program - by Wendy Pomeroy

Congratulations to the November/December Students of the Month. They have been chosen by their teachers or other staff members for exemplifying the life skill of **Organization**.

Student	(Nominated by)	Student	(Nominated by)
Kelsey Aguirre	(Ms Mottaz)	John Kriston	(Dr. Grame)
Emily Anderson	(Mrs. Loughery)	Sydney Larsen	(Miss deSilva)
David Arnold	(Miss Meredith)	Joshua Larson	(Mrs. White)
Smita Balaji	(Mrs. Rowland)	Jennifer Manriquez	(Ms Holstrom)
Hunter Brown	(Mrs. Nair)	Lauryn Mellberg	(Mrs. Shivitz)
Jessica Chen	(Miss Ciriaco)	Kylie Ortega	(Ms Barks)
Amanda Chun	(Mr. Bellomo)	Zach Page	(Miss Martin)
Conrad Cornwell	(Miss Krummes)	Andrew Patocchi	(Mrs. Irvin)
David Crinnion	(Mr. Vespi)	Lira Rathee	(Mrs. Knudson)
Julia Druker	(Mrs. Marchese)	Xinge Ren	(Mrs. Kontilis)
Vincent Egawa	(Mrs. Schluntz)	Madison Ricks	(Mr. Erbez)
Sarah Ensley	(Mrs. Moore)	Erin Saiki	(Mr. Wulff)
Chris Eseltine	(Mrs. Rosenberg)	Ameen Saleminik	(Ms. Charles)
Morgan Ham	(Ms. Phillips)	Allison Sellers	(Ms Bramble)
Elizabeth (Seung) Han	(Mr. Miller)	Lasya Shah	(Mrs. Hegarty)
Holly Hart	(Miss Pappas)	Randi (Siranden) Shoecraft	(Mrs. Hart)
Jeff Haslam	(Mr. Liebow)	Ashley Sullivan	(Miss Damgen)
Cindy Ho	(Mrs. James)	Kristina Sun	(Mrs. Johnston)
Christy Hong	(Mr. Boyd)	Taylor Tsuji	(Mr. Munson)
Ilan Izakov	(Mrs. Lemma)	Megan von Sosen	(Miss Gault)
Jamie Jensen	(Mrs. Fleshman)	Emma Young	(Ms Herrera)
Sam Klopstock	(Ms. Huff)		

The Pine Valley Students of the Month program honors students who exemplify the featured life skill of the month. The selected students are rewarded with a professional photograph and an ice cream sundae during their lunch break on a pre-determined day of the month and recognized in the next newsletter. This program is sponsored and supported by the PTA. The featured life skill for January is Effort.