

# Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



## PUMA NEWS

# February

2009

*A publication of Pine Valley PTA*

Jason Law, Principal

Collette Ricks, PTA President

Rachel Hurd, Editor

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### Dates to Note:

| Date                | Event   |
|---------------------|---|
| 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. 10             | AP Information Night at Cal High  |
| Feb. 11, 18, and 25 | Parent Workshop Series on Special Education, 7-9 pm at Dougherty Valley High School, Rm. 1219 |
| Feb. 18             | Advocacy Day  |
| Feb. 20             | Box Tops Contest ends   |
| Feb. 28             | Parenting 2009 & Beyond, annual parenting conference  |
| March 2             | PTA Meeting, 7 pm in the library  |
| March 4             | College Night for Middle School Students, 6:30-8:30pm at Alhambra High School in Martinez     |
| Mar. 9-12           | Incoming Freshman Nights at Cal High, 7 pm  |
| March 11            | Pine Valley Education Fund Meeting, 7pm in the Conference Room                                |
| March 14            | Youth-to-Youth Conference   |

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

We all know that we are facing an unprecedented economic downturn, in addition to a troubling California state budget situation. If you would like to show our legislators that we care about education, consider participating in Advocacy Day on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. Registration closes on February 6<sup>th</sup>. [View the flyer and agenda](#) at the following website link:

<http://www.srvCouncilpta.org/Public/uploads/2009%20AdvocacyDayFlyerwithAgendaSRV.pdf>

Our next PTA meeting is on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm in the library. We will be electing a nominating committee at the 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 just Pine Valley PTA in general, please come!

Thank you to Sue Barks, PV leadership classes, Chris Brady, Amy White, and a host of other parent volunteers (chaperones & refreshment donors) for the time and energy spent putting on our 2<sup>nd</sup> dance of the school year. Another thank you goes out to Teresa DeHope and her parent volunteers for the recent Staff luncheon they put on to wrap-up the 1<sup>st</sup> semester.

Registration is now open for the "Parenting 2009 & Beyond" conference. The annual conference is on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> this year at Dougherty Valley High School from 8:45am-2:30pm. See [www.srvCouncilpta.org](http://www.srvCouncilpta.org) for more information and/or to register to attend the informative day.

As always, feel free to contact us with your questions & concerns.

Collette Ricks  
[collettericks@comcast.net](mailto:collettericks@comcast.net)

Lani Bari  
[lanibari@comcast.net](mailto:lanibari@comcast.net)

## Principal's Message – by Jason Law

Happy second semester! February marks the mid-way point of the school year. A time to reflect on what has been accomplished and a time to look forward to what still needs to be done. What a second semester it will be!

First, I would like to congratulate the 496 students who made the Fall Honor Roll. Even after the change in requirements, approximately 53% of the students earned a 3.5 GPA or higher. Regardless of level (Bronze, Silver, Gold), each honor roll student will be recognized in their Core class receiving a certificate from the school and a reward from PTA. Thank you students for working so hard and thank you PTA for recognizing their hard work.

Another issue that I want to discuss is one that has to do with student safety. Please remind your student about the importance of bike/scooter/pedestrian safety as they are coming and going to and from school. Many parents have shared with us examples of "near misses" as they have been delivering their own kids to school. We now have a consistent crossing guard at the intersection of Broadmoor and Pine Valley that will help maintain student safety, but another area of concern is the back parking lot where students jaywalk across Broadmoor. Crosswalks should be used and students riding bikes and scooters are mandated by law to wear a helmet. We have been in touch with the San Ramon Police Department and they will be monitoring Pine Valley at its peak traffic times. Students will be reminded of school expectations at the second semester Class Meeting Assembly scheduled for February 6. We need your help if we are going to avoid any tragedies in the future. Please talk with your child.

We received word last week that a Validation Visit is scheduled for Pine Valley on February 27. The Validation Visit is the next step in the California Distinguished School application process. The visiting committee will be meeting with staff, students, and parents discussing the programs and curriculum offered here at Pine Valley. The application is now available to download on the school website. This visit is an opportunity for us to show off all the wonderful ways we support your kids.

Finally, I want to mention two new things that will be happening at Pine Valley. As we begin discussions of classes to offer next fall, one new elective avenue that we are going to pursue is a chorus class. We have spoken with Ms. Lucerne Mottaz, the music teacher at Cal High about beginning a program here at Pine Valley. We are working together with Cal High to make that possible. Though no definite plans have been made, the class will be offered in the course catalog this spring. If enough students sign up, we will do everything possible to make it a reality.

The other news I want to share with you has to do with our upcoming school dance. After speaking with the various parent groups on campus and some key staff members, I have decided to invite sixth graders to the next school dance, scheduled for March 6. I have been very impressed with this group of Pumas and feel that they can handle this next step in their social careers. For those parents who still have reservations about letting their child attend, I invite you to chaperone so you can see what a safe and secure atmosphere the dance really is. Sixth graders mature quite a bit from August through the spring. I want to include all Pumas in school events. Though sixth graders may not be socially ready in the fall, I am anxious to see how prepared they are in March. I am very optimistic and think they deserve the opportunity.

## Local School Funding Measure Goes to Ballot

The Board of Education unanimously voted on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 to renew the education funding measure for our school district. The measure will appear on a mail-only ballot that will be mailed to all registered voters in April.

The "Excellence in Education Act" would protect teachers and academic programs in our classrooms if it garners the 67% vote needed for passage. The measure renews existing local funding for our schools that voters approved in 2004. With ongoing budget cuts from the state, we need this measure to protect critical academic programs, such as math, science and literacy, as well as to help retain qualified and experienced teachers in our classrooms. These funds go directly to our San Ramon Valley Unified schools—the state can't take a single dime.

A citizen oversight committee and annual audits will ensure that funds from the measure are spent on voter-approved programs. No funds can be spent on administrators' salaries and an exemption is available for persons 65 and older, as well as people with disabilities.

Voters will receive a mail-only ballot in April. Ballots must be returned by the end of April in order to be counted by the Contra Costa Registrar of Voters. You'll be hearing more about the measure in the coming weeks. Please stay tuned...

## Counselors' Corner – by Julie Damgen

US Representative Linda Sánchez (D-CA) introduced a congressional resolution today that will declare Feb. 2-6, 2009 "National School Counseling Week" to honor the important role school counselors play in the lives of students across the country. "School counselors provide a unique contribution by helping students not only reach their academic potential, but also realize personal, social and career growth," said Rep. Linda Sánchez. "I hope to see National School Counseling Week recognized in my home state of California and across the country as we take the time to thank and honor the valuable work of school counselors." The bipartisan resolution, introduced along with Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), recognizes that school counselors have been integral in efforts to reduce student drop-out rates by helping identify and address problems early in a student's career. The American School Counselor Association also endorsed this important resolution. This effort comes as a part of Rep. Sánchez' drive to make schools safer, provide additional counseling and student support in low-income schools, and to improve school environments for personal growth and academic achievement.

### Upcoming Dates:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| February 10 | AP info night at Cal High, 7:00 pm   |
| March 9-12  | Incoming Freshman Info Nights at Cal High, 7:00 pm   |
| March 16    | CH Counselors come to PV to collect Course Selection Sheets  |
| March 17    | PV Course Selection Assembly for current 6th and 7th grade students during 1st and 2nd periods.    |
| March 20    | PV Course Selection Sheets are due   |
| April 1     | Cal High's test for 9th grade Advanced English and History at PV, 2:00 pm                          |
| April 29    | 8th grade 'Planning for your Future: High School, College, and Beyond' Parent Night at PV, 7:00 pm |

## PV Puma Choir is Looking for You!

If you like to sing or want to learn to sing, this new for next school year Pine Valley elective class is for you! We will perform all types of music, classical, jazz, pop and show tunes. The class will include music theory, correct vocal technique, opportunities for solo work and choreography, and it will be taught by Lucerne Mottaz who is the choral music teacher at Cal High. The Pine Valley Puma Choir will perform twice a year and at the California Music Educators Association Music Festival. Remember to sign up for the class during registration.

## Even if your kids don't think they need you... We do!

By now you've probably noticed that your middle school-aged kids are not as thrilled to see you at their school as they used to be! If, however, you'd still like to be involved with their education, please consider joining the Board of the Pine Valley Education Fund. Each year the PVEF works with all the parents in the school to raise money to fund extra Core sections (thus reducing class sizes in all Core classes) and to pay for a Technology Aide for the school. This important effort cannot happen without the involvement of a group of concerned parents and it will be even more crucial in the reduced funding environment we are likely to face next year.

Your time commitment as a PVEF Board member is relatively limited, with only about five meetings a year and some work around Registration. That limited commitment yields great benefits for Pine Valley Middle School. We welcome any parents to the Board and could especially use those with budgeting, accounting, marketing or organizational skills. Please email the PVEF President, Terry Monday (terrymonday@comcast.net) if you are interested or have any questions.

If you have even a slight interest, please attend our next Board meeting on Wednesday, March 11 at 7 p.m. in the conference room at Pine Valley.

## Teacher/Staff Appreciation – by Teresa DeHope

On behalf of the PTA's Staff Appreciation Committee, I would like to thank the following people for making the recent "Warm You Up" luncheon a huge success. The following people helped by supplying food dishes, ingredients, decorating and setting up, taking down, and cleaning up:

|                  |                  |               |             |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Kim Carlson      | Barbara Goodson  | Leonora Noble | Leslie Will |
| Jennifer Chan    | Sheila Madrieres | Kathy Ramsey  |             |
| Michelle Chilson | Shannon Maser    | Susan Robery  |             |
| Annamarie Day    | Sherry Massimino | Vicki Sigl    |             |

Without these women, the luncheon would not have been possible. The teachers and staff really enjoyed the yummy soups, salads, breads, and desserts. Even the rainy weather could not have been more perfect, as it added to the winter snowman theme! We plan to do another luncheon in March, so if anyone is interested in helping with that one, please let me know.

## Box Tops for Education – by Melinna Gershik

Once again, I wanted to take the time to remind each of our Pine Valley families to keep their eyes open for Box Tops on the products that we all use at home. Hopefully you have been collecting Box Tops and sending them in with your students. We are currently having a Core class contest to see which Core class can bring in the most Box Tops. The contest runs through February 20. The winning class will be rewarded! To see a current list of products that have Box Tops go to <http://www.boxtops4education.com/AboutBoxTops/Products.aspx>.



In addition to clipping Box Tops, our school can also earn money through the Box Tops for Education Marketplace website portal, <http://www.boxtops4education.com/Marketplace/Default.aspx>. There are many websites -- perhaps ones that you already shop at -- that will make contributions to our school if you use the Marketplace portal.

If you have any questions about the Box Tops for Education program at Pine Valley, please email Melinna Gershek at [pinevalleyboxtops@yahoo.com](mailto:pinevalleyboxtops@yahoo.com) or call 828-9290. Thank you for your support!

## Advocacy Day – Be Part of the Solution

Come along on the San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs annual trip to Sacramento on Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 7:00am-4:30pm. Buses leave the Sycamore Valley Park & Ride at 7:15 am and return by 4:30 pm.

In the 29 years of this event, we have never seen proposed budget cuts even close to this year's. The Governor's proposal contains over twice as many cuts to education this year as seen over the past 8 years combined, and cuts to children's health and human services are even more severe. On this trip, you will learn about the issues and advocate our legislators. [View the flyer/agenda](#). Your presence makes a difference. [Register Online by February 6](#).

## Registration now open for Parenting 2009 & Beyond...

The San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs presents its annual parenting conference on Saturday, February 28 at Dougherty Valley High School from 8:45am to 2:30pm (check-in begins at 7:45am). This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Howard Glasser, creator of The Nurtured Heart Approach to Parenting. Following the keynote, you'll attend a morning and an afternoon small group seminar of your choice, focusing on current parenting topics. For more information, [view the conference flyer](#). [Register for the conference online](#). Alternatively go to the San Ramon Valley Council PTA website, [www.srvcouncilpta.org](http://www.srvcouncilpta.org), for the flyer and registration links.

## Parent Ed. Programs hosted by other PTAs – by Donna Dao-Willins

| Date                | Topic - click to view the online flyer   | Location                      |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| February 3          | <a href="#">Family Night Documentary, "Slipping Behind"</a> , a short documentary file that examines the price being paid by today's students and families for the achievement-obsessed way of life that permeates American education and culture. | San Ramon Valley HS           |
| February 4          | <a href="#">Internet Safety</a>  | Charlotte Wood MS             |
| February 18         | <a href="#">Underage Drinking &amp; Youth Access to Alcohol</a>  | Stone Valley MS               |
| February 11, 18, 25 | <a href="#">Parent Workshop Series on Special Education: Overview; The IEP Process; Achieving Success</a> , presented by Todd Gary, Special Needs Liaison  | Dougherty Valley H.S. Rm 1219 |

## Are you an RN ... or a LVN?

The San Ramon Valley Unified School district is currently seeking licensed nurses to fill some on-call, part-time positions. This work involves one-on-one medical care for students. Our nurses need to be independent thinkers with strong assessment skills. Good interpersonal communication skills are a must. To qualify, you must possess a

current CA license as an RN or LVN and have a current CPR certificate. To explore this opportunity, contact Kirby Hoy, Student Services at (925) 552-5052.

## 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

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth to Youth Middle School Conference

March 14, 2009, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.

At Gale Ranch Middle School

100% NATURAL.....100% YOU....ADD NOTHING!!!

Surely you've heard of YOUTH TO YOUTH....after all, this is the 15th year that high school leaders have been stepping up & out with your 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to help them believe in themselves to do what they love without drugs or alcohol being part of the plan. This is an amazing day and an opportunity for young teens to spend with high school leaders who believe in the strength of being drug, alcohol and tobacco free. But this conference is about so much more than drug and alcohol prevention. It's about leadership, self-confidence and empowering young people to make positive choices that impact their future.

San Ramon Valley Community Against Substance Abuse (CASA) has proudly been celebrating drug free youth in our valley since 1995. The nationwide Youth to Youth (Y2Y) program was established in 1982 as a community-based drug prevention & youth leadership program focusing on middle and high school students. The conference is an entire day where the kids get together, have fun, and talk about some really important issues. Teens with Y2Y training have been working enthusiastically for several months to prepare for the big day. More than 80 of our local high school students will work at the conference, guiding their younger peers through skits, games, panel discussions and small group activities.

More than 20 workshops will be offered throughout the day, such as building self esteem, dance, what to expect in high school, drug & alcohol information and communication skills. The conference will end with a dance. Youth to Youth creates opportunities for teens to support each other in decisions to be drug free and focuses on topics that youth face today. The learning and fun continues from morning till night during a Y2Y conference. If your kids like hanging out with their friends, meeting new friends, having fun, dancing and good food - then this is the conference for them.

Registration forms can be found in the school office or can be downloaded at [www.srvcasa.org](http://www.srvcasa.org) or [www.srvcouncilpta.org](http://www.srvcouncilpta.org).

# 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@cccocoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:erusk@cccocoe.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 x329 or [jdavis@discoveryctr.net](mailto:jdavis@discoveryctr.net).

## 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 January Students of the Month who are recognized for exhibiting the life skill of **Responsibility**. The featured life skill for February is Friendship.

| <b><u>Student</u></b> | <b><u>(Selected by)</u></b> | <b><u>Student</u></b> | <b><u>(Selected by)</u></b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Daniel Barker         | (Mrs. Johnston)             | Christian Langdon     | (Ms. Huff)                  |
| Austin Block          | (Mrs. Irvin)                | Jurnee Mabrey         | (Miss Myers)                |
| Kierra Charzuk        | (Mrs. Moore)                | Emily Mazza           | (Mr. Cepeda)                |
| Bronte Cintrone       | (Mrs. Schluntz)             | Melissa McGrath       | (Ms. Charles)               |
| Sierra Dewey          | (Mr. Wulff)                 | Justin Napper         | (Miss Gault)                |
| Annalycia Escobar     | (Miss Damgen)               | Mina Nayeri           | (Mr. Miller)                |
| Lauren Fabre Legaspi  | (Dr. Grame)                 | Laura Nichols         | (Mrs. Hegarty)              |
| Christian Fahrney     | (Mr. Munson)                | Daniel Osborne        | (Mrs. Svoboda/Gross)        |
| Reilly Fankhauser     | (Mrs. Rowland)              | Mariajose Ospina      | (Miss Pappas)               |
| Brian Fernandois      | (Mr. Vespi)                 | Nate Patocchi         | (Mrs. James)                |
| Natali Feyzbakhsh     | (Mrs. Loughery)             | Charlie Perschau      | (Miss Meredith)             |
| Kyle Franklin         | (Mr. Law)                   | Jessica Pettinicchi   | (Miss Martin)               |
| Kristyn Fudge         | (Miss deSilva)              | Olivia Pomeroy        | (Mrs. Fleshman)             |
| Andrew Gasparini      | (Ms. Phillips)              | Jessica Poon          | (Mrs. Rosenberg)            |
| Lucas Hansson         | (Mrs. Nair)                 | Cory Schumacher       | (Mrs. Marohn)               |
| Alexander Hillman     | (Mrs. Kontilis)             | Stephanie Smith       | (Mrs Barks)                 |
| Hannah Hitchcock      | (Miss Krummes)              | Matthew Soeherman     | (Mrs. Shivitz)              |
| Cindy Ho              | (Mr. Boyd)                  | Michael Swisher       | (Miss Ciriaco)              |
| Hannah Johnson        | (Mrs. White)                | Natalie Willins       | (Mr. Liebow)                |
| Re em Landsman        | (Mrs. Knudson)              |                       |                             |