

Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



PUMA NEWS

November

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A publication of Pine Valley PTA

Jason Law, Principal

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Dates to Note:

Date	Event
Nov. 1-2	Community Ski Swap at SRVHS
Nov. 3	PTA Meeting, 7pm in the Library
Nov. 4	Election Day - Exercise your right to vote
Nov. 10-11	Veteran's Day Holiday
Nov. 19	Receptive/Expressive Language, Special Needs Program, 7-9 pm at Iron Horse MS.
Nov. 24-28	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 1	PTA Meeting, 7 pm in the Library
Dec. 5	7 th & 8 th Grade Dance, 7-9 pm in the MPR/Courtyard

President's Message - by Collette Ricks & Lani Bari

As October is coming to a close, we look back on all of the month's successful activities. Thank you to the October 24th dance chaperones and refreshment donors. Thankfully, Amy White & Chris Brady have agreed to take on the chaperone and refreshment duties for Pine Valley dances this year. We have decided to make some organizational changes to our dances, and our first dance of the school year was last Friday, October 24th. The student leadership group is now playing a larger role, and PTA is furnishing the chaperones and refreshments. Refreshments are now free-of-charge at the dances, and instead of the gymnasium, the dance was held in the new school facility. The DJ was set up in the Auditorium (MPR), and the students are allowed to leave the MPR and have refreshments and/or visit with friends in the courtyard. The new school allows us a perfect set-up, and makes it easy for the chaperones to supervise and keep the students safe & contained, while allowing more freedom. If you are interested in checking it out for yourself by chaperoning the next dance on December 5th please email Amy White (semedo08@yahoo.com), or if you would be willing to provide refreshments for the December 5th dance, please contact Chris Brady (chrisymae@comcast.net).

We would also like to thank Sheila Madrieres for her enthusiasm and support coordinating Pine Valley's participation in the SRVUSD's fundraiser, Primo's Run for Education. Thank you to Teresa DeHope (PTA's staff appreciation chairperson) for arranging a wonderful staff luncheon for our Pine Valley staff last week. She had many helpers and contributors too. Jeanne Lowe did a great job getting the Pine Valley phone directory (and PTA membership cards) out to PTA members in a timely manner. And lastly, we would like to thank Lisa Webster & Susan Crawley for their amazing Red Ribbon Week program. Their creativity and comprehensive plan was the key to the successful week.

We invite you to join us at our next monthly PTA meeting on Monday, November 3rd at 7:00pm in the library. Remember, there is no school on Monday & Tuesday, November 10th & 11th, due to the Veteran's Day holiday. Also, school will be closed during the week of Thanksgiving (November 24th-28th). As always, if you are looking to get involved in Pine Valley PTA activities, please see our contact information below. Thank you!

Collette Ricks
collettericks@comcast.net

Lani Bari
lanibari@comcast.net

Principal's Message - by Jason Law

I am astonished to already be writing my contribution to the November newsletter. Where has the time gone? With autumn in full swing and a full quarter of the school year under our belts, teacher expectations have been set and students are being held accountable. The parent-teacher conferences during the week of October 6-10 were extremely productive. With nearly 300 group and individual conferences taking place... parents and teachers now have a better idea of student strengths and weaknesses. Parents can now support teachers and students in their achievement of academic goals. On behalf of the Pine Valley staff, thank you for supporting our efforts in supporting your child. Communication between parents and teachers is vital to the success of your child. Continue to use School Loop as a resource and don't forget the power of the human voice. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and call a teacher to seek clarification. Remember, your student's perspective on any given issue is only one perspective. Listening to another adult may provide some additional and vital information.

Another issue that I wanted to bring to your attention had to do with student health. In the wake of the *Healthy Kids Survey* that our seventh graders took in their Core classes in October, I wanted to share some information with you. First of all, the kitchen staff is still concerned that students have not taken advantage of the full salad bar offered during lunch. All combos are \$3.50 and include the salad/fruit bar. Please talk about this option with your child. We are not asking them to give up the burgers and pizza; we just want them to balance those items out with the options at the salad bar. Again, they are already included in the combo price.

On a more serious note, student consumption of "Energy Drinks" is also becoming a concern. There have been two cases recently reported at a district high school where the consumption of these drinks has resulted in students complaining of heart palpitations and intense shaking. Though we realize that these highly caffeinated drinks are not banned at SRVUSD school sites, we do feel it is important to share this information with you. Energy drinks like Red Bull, Venom, and Adrenaline Rush contain large amounts of caffeine and other legal stimulants like ephedrine, guarana, and ginseng. The claims of "improved performance and concentration" can be misleading. The stimulating properties of these energy drinks can raise heart rate, blood pressure, dehydrate the body, and like other stimulants, prevent sleep. Please be advised and talk about this important issue with your child. These drinks ARE NOT sold on campus.

On a much more positive note, the first school dance was a tremendously successful school event. Optimizing our new campus by holding the dance in the MPR and the courtyard was enjoyed by all. A huge thank you to the PTA Dance Coordinator, Amy White and all of the PTA volunteers who served food and monitored students. Thanks to Sue Barks and her Leadership students for taking the initiative and responsibility for organizing a wonderful

night. It is my hope that these dances turn into social events that will include an even more diverse group of students... maybe even the sixth graders at some point. The next dance is scheduled for December 5.

Always feel free to share your thoughts and concerns...

Counselors' Corner – by Julie Damgen & Jean Journey

U.S. Department of Education Unveils New "Preparing for College" Web Site.

The U.S. Department of Education recently unveiled a new website, <http://www.college.gov>, that aims to motivate students with inspirational stories and information about planning, preparing and paying for college.

Designed with students' input and participation, the website was created by the U.S. Department of Education to be a go-to online resource for credible information about college that also provides real life experiences of peers who are already attending college. U.S. Under Secretary of Education Sara Martinez Tucker unveiled the web site during a discussion with students at The Stein Riverdale/ Kingsbridge Academy MS/HS 141 in Bronx, N.Y.

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings' Action Plan for Higher Education calls for expanding the accessibility, affordability and accountability of higher education for more Americans. Students pursuing education beyond high school has a significant impact on their future-and America's future economic prosperity. With approximately 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs requiring some postsecondary education, students need proper information and support to realize the benefits of higher education.

"Secretary Spellings has made college accessibility, affordability and accountability a priority and a key part of the national dialogue on education and global competitiveness," said Under Secretary Tucker. "As we have traveled around the country and talked with students and their families, we heard over and over again how helpful it would be to have a one-stop shop for reliable information from the department about planning for college and advice from fellow students who overcame challenges to attend college."

College.gov delivers the following unique features:

- Inspiring videos of college students sharing their stories and experiences about how they overcame obstacles to achieve their college dreams;
- Fresh design picked by students that boasts a non-government look-and-feel;
- An interactive tool for students to create an "I'm going" personalized roadmap that details the steps to take to get to college;
- Content organized and presented in a way for students to easily find the answers to their higher education questions: Why Go? What to Do? and How to Pay?

To learn more about this new site, visit www.college.gov.

Girls Support Group

Who: Middle-school girls: 6th, 7th, 8th graders

What: Ongoing support group where girls can safely explore issues related to self-esteem peer pressure, identity, body image, and stresses both at home and school.

Where: Discovery Counseling Center, Danville

When: Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Fee: \$40 per session

The group will be facilitated by Hillary Friedberg, MFT Intern, and a co-leader. Hillary is experienced working with teens and young adults in clinical, school, and college environments. Contact Hillary for further information: (925) 837-0505 x406

Pine Valley Education Fund Message – by Terry Monday

Do you plan on doing any holiday shopping online this year? The [eScrip Online Mall](#) is the perfect way to earn up to 16% for Pine Valley Education Fund for doing what you do anyway - shopping at over 1,000 of your favorite online merchants - just [visit the Online Mall first](#), and the school automatically receives a percentage of your purchase! It doesn't cost you anything.

If you don't want to remember to visit the Online Mall first, simply download [AutoEARN](#) - a FREE software tool that will automatically earn contributions at participating merchants - and you don't have to remember to do anything! Every Pine Valley student benefits from these simple actions that could yield big rewards. What's stopping you? Do it now!

Legislative News! – by Laie Nelson

November 4th Election:

The November election offers opportunity to set direction for legislation over the coming years in a number of areas. PTA asks that you become informed about the issues and the candidates and that you exercise your right to vote.

If you have changed your name, residence address or mailing address, turned 18, or gained citizenship, you needed to (re)register to vote by October 20 to be able to vote in the November election. For your convenience, voter registration forms were available in the school office.

Also, we encourage registration as a permanent absentee voter. Voting by mail ensures that your vote is counted even if you are suddenly called out of town, or ill or otherwise unexpectedly engaged on Election Day.

For information about registration and the Election, consult the League of Women Voters Easy Voter Guide at http://lwvc.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=easyvoter_home.

Our Local PTA Legislative Representatives:

Our names are Laie Nelson and Kristen Holbrook and we serve as the Vice Presidents for legislative advocacy for Pine Valley Middle School PTA. One of PTA's key purposes is to advocate on behalf of all children, and we represent our PTA unit on the San Ramon Valley Council's Legislative Advocacy Committee. You will hear from us throughout the year on legislative issues.

Periodically, we will ask for your help in signing letters to legislators, as well as with other local, state and federal legislative activities. Please contact Laie via email at laienelson@sbcglobal.net or by phone at (925) 829-2442, or contact Kirsten at k10holbrook@hotmail.com or by phone at (925) 833-1744 if you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help.

For other information on PTA legislative advocacy, please visit the PTA Council website, www.srvcouncilpta.org or the California State PTA website, www.capta.org.

Attention: Please Turn in Unused Cell Phones!

Most households have 1 or more unused cell phones just sitting in a drawer somewhere. What can you do with them? You don't want to throw them in the garbage (that's so un-green), and you want to feel safe about disposing of them properly. We have a perfect solution for you!

Pine Valley PTA is running a cell phone drive for the month of November. How can you help? Simply turn in your unused cell phones (all of them) to the Pine Valley office during the month of November. The PTA is working with

the Pace Butler Corporation (www.pacebutler.com) on this project. We will send them the cell phones (working or not), and they will look them up on a list and compensate our PTA for the phones accordingly. What do you have to lose? You will feel good about disposing of your unused cell phones properly, you will be helping to keep toxic chemicals out of our landfills, and you can help raise some funds for the Pine Valley PTA. Questions? Please contact Collette Ricks at collettericks@comcast.net.

Target's Take Charge of Education Program – by Katie Martin, Assistant Principal

Pine Valley just became \$922 richer this morning thanks to the latest donation from the San Ramon Target store and their Take Charge of Education program! Tracy Schluntz, Jason Miller, Gerri Peterson and I represented the Pumas during a nice ceremony at the Starbucks inside the Target store. Since March of 2008, Target has made over \$15 million in donations to schools; \$246 million since the program began in 1997.

In addition to the coffee, pastries and a check for \$922, the San Ramon Store Team Leaders and Regional Manager shared with us several ways Target supports teachers and education.



Much like e-scrip, anyone who uses a Target Visa, REDcard or Target Check Card can designate Pine Valley as the recipient of 1% of all their purchases at Target (and .5% of Target Visa purchases made anywhere). To date, Pine Valley has 75 donators — let's try for 100 before the end of 2008! It's easy to enroll:

Online: www.target.com/tcoe or

Phone: call 1-800-316-6142

Pine Valley's ID# is 35625

One thing was emphasized at the presentation: there are SO many card members in our area who don't have ANY school affiliation, so spread the word! You don't need to live in the area — contact friends and family — anyone in the country can make Pine Valley their school of choice.

A huge thank you goes out to Target stores everywhere for all they do for our schools!

Personalize Your Student's Yearbook – by Bettie Waggener

Now you can get your students name stamped on their 2009 Pine Valley yearbook and add some personality by having icons added to the cover too! Go to www.jostensyearbooks.com to place your order. If you have not ordered a yearbook yet, you need to do that first – see Mrs. Waggener in the office.

Red Ribbon Week – by Lisa Webster & Susan Crawley

Congratulations to all the winners from the Red Ribbon Week drawings. We hope you enjoyed your prizes. The Grand Prize Winners of the 6 IPODs were: Jesse Gandt, Madison Carrier, Melissa McElroy, Clarie Koupal, Jessica Clouse, and Maureen O'Neil.

A big "Thank You" goes to everyone who helped at our "Slam Dunk/Drugs are Junk" lunch time event: Mary Ann Fernainy, Cynthia Kent, Teri Gross, Rosa Feyzbakhsh, Theodora Pappas and Jason Law. And another big "Thank You" goes to the Leadership Class, Sue Barks and Geri Peterson for helping with the week-long event.

Teens today are under pressure to fit in and to be successful. We hope you make an effort all year long to talk with your child about making healthy choices. Remember that you as the parent are the "Anti-Drug". See <http://www.theantidrug.com/> for more information.

Teacher Appreciation Lunch – Teresa DeHope

On behalf of the PTA's Staff Appreciation Committee, I would truly like to thank the following people for making the recent "Treats Not Tricks" luncheon a wonderful success. The following people helped by supplying food dishes, ingredients, decorating & setting-up, and taking down and cleaning up:

Cyndi Adoff	Kim Hillman
Barbara Austin	Joy Hughs
Sandy Block	Rachel Hurd
Gina Buck	Soraya Kriston
Kim & Mari Carlson	Sheila Madrieres
Jennifer & Gendon Chan	Laurie McGrath
Annamarie & Ryan Day	Collette Ricks
Diane Deshler	Susan Robery
Rebecca Esparza	Vicki Sigl
Kathy Gyulai	

Without them, it would not have been possible and the teachers and staff really appreciated the amazing treats and Halloween decorations. We plan to do another luncheon in January, so if anyone is interested in helping with that one, please let me know.

Risky Behavior Parent Ed. Program – by Donna Dao-Willins

Join the panel of speakers for a lively, up-to-date review of the current risky behaviors in our middle schools and how we, as parents, can identify and address them.

Thursday, November 6, 7:30 pm
in the Library of Stanley Middle School, 3455 School Street, Lafayette

No fee, Register class #05-6101 on-line at <http://adulthood.acalanes.k12.ca.us/onlinereg/>

[View the flyer.](#)

Questions & comments? Please contact Vera Babor at vbabor@acalanes.k12.ca.us.

Receptive/Expressive Language – PTA Special Needs Program

"I am listening. I just can't understand you!"

November 19, 7-9 PM at Iron Horse Middle School

KayLynn Neal, a Speech-Language Pathologist with the San Ramon Valley Unified School District will discuss:

- The differences between receptive and expressive language
- Basics of Language Processing Disabilities
- How language processing disabilities can affect classroom/academic performance
- What parents can do at home to encourage language growth and production
- Ways to expand and develop higher level and current language abilities

To view the flyer, [click here](#). To register, [click here](#).

Library Teen Programs – Nancy Kaiser, San Ramon Libraries

Classical Indian Dance: Bharata Natyam

Sunday, November 9, 2:00pm

Dougherty Station Community Center, Front Row Theater

Bindu Shankar and dancers of Vrindavan Indian Dance Academy present the Classical Indian dance, Bharata Natyam. This dance is a body language that recreates stories and concepts from the ancient mythology of India through stylized dance movement, vibrant hand gestures and facial expressions. We encourage families to experience this program together in the charming Front Row Theater at Dougherty Station Community Center.

Movie Luau

Friday, November 14, 6:00pm

Dougherty Station Library

Bring your beach towels and put on your hula skirts and Hawaiian shirts! We are going back to summer in the middle of November with a luau movie evening featuring the film Nim's Island. There will be island inspired treats and activities. This program is for families, but children attending should be old enough to watch the PG rated film.

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 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.

Teen Centers

The City of San Ramon is pleased at the success of our new Pine Valley Teen. The Teen Centers provide supervised and structured academic and recreational activities from after school until 6:00 p.m. every school day. The program includes dedicated homework time with staff available for assistance and recreation programs that promote health, fitness, teamwork and leadership. For more information on registration, fees and policies please visit www.SRTeen.org or call Adam Chow at 973-3362. Registration is now open!

Upcoming Events

Overnight Lock-In (December 5-6)

We will be having an Overnight Lock-in from December 5-6 from 8:00pm-8:00am at the San Ramon Community Center. This event will feature tons of activities, contests, movies, sports, crafts, and more. Food will be served throughout the night and includes breakfast in the morning. Tickets are \$35 and available at the San Ramon or Dougherty Station Community Centers. For more info, visit www.srteen.org.

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 September Students of the Month who are recognized for exhibiting the life skill of **Organization**. The featured life skill for November is **Respect**.

<u>Student</u>	<u>(Selected by)</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>(Selected by)</u>
Baylee Akins	(Mr. Reeves)	Brandon Lee	(Miss Martin)
Rafael Altamirano	(Mr. Vespi)	Caitlyn Lowe	(Mrs. Fleshman)
Dallas Alves	(Mrs. Svoboda/Gross)	Nick Ludlow	(Miss Pappas)
Chantal Baena	(Mrs. Moore)	Jessica Ma	(Mr. Munson)
Joshua Brown	(Dr. Grame)	Michael Maser	(Mr. Cepeda)
Rachel Carranza	(Mrs. White)	Natalie McElroy	(Ms. Charles)
Nicole DeCosta	(Miss Krummes)	Cameron Meier	(Mr. Erbez)
Jason Dickens	(Mrs. Schluntz)	Cole Melloch	(Miss Clarkson)
Heather Donner	(Mrs. Hegarty)	Alexis Oertel	(Mrs. James)
Drew Dudley	(Mrs. Kontilis)	Andi Quilalang	(Mrs Barks)
Marina Fittinghoff	(Miss Meredith)	Preethika Rajsekar	(Miss Myers)
Elizabeth Granger	(Ms. Miranda)	Hannah Robbins	(Mrs. Rowland)
Alyssa Gruezo	(Mrs. Johnston)	Alexander Ross	(Mrs. Loughery)
Matt Haworth	(Mrs. Knudson)	Kailey Runestrand	(Mrs. Locke)
Courtney Haynes	(Miss Gault)	Lasya Shah	(Mrs. Nair)
Dean Heinz	(Ms. Huff)	Hannah Skrentny	(Miss deSilva)
Jessica Heneweer	(Mr. Law)	Haley Smoot	(Mr. Miller)
Max Holownia	(Mrs. Shivitz)	Bradley Tsuji	(Mrs. Rosenberg)
Chase Honaker	(Miss Ciriaco)	Nick Vivar	(Mrs. Marchese)
Jeremy Inchauspe	(Mr. Wulff)	Doug Xiques	(Ms. Phillips)
Alexander Kashtanoff	(Mrs. Marohn)	Madison Zierott	(Mrs. Irvin)
Lena Koussa	(Ms. Damgen)		