

Pine Valley Middle School - A California Distinguished School



PUMA NEWS

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A publication of Pine Valley PTA

Jason Law, Principal

Kristen Holbrook, PTA President

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Inside this Issue:

- [President's Message](#)
- [Principal's Message](#)
- [Your Input Requested at Forums](#)
- [PVEF Update](#)
- [Counselor's Corner](#)
- [Library News](#)
- [Red Ribbon Week a Success](#)
- [Thanks Magazine Volunteers](#)
- [Traffix](#)
- [News from eScrip](#)
- [Box Tops for Education](#)
- [Frantic Families](#)
- [Nov. Special Needs Programs](#)
- [San Ramon Library Programs](#)
- [City of SR Programs for Teens](#)
- [Students of the Month](#)

Dates to Note:

Date	Event
Nov. 2	PTA Meeting, 6:30pm in Room A133 (Career Tech Rm)
Nov. 3	Election Day - Exercise Your Right to Vote!
Nov. 4	Community Forum SRVHS, 6:30pm
Nov. 9	Community Forum at Dougherty Valley HS, 6:30pm
Nov. 10	IEP Goals & Paperwork Training, 9-11am at DVHS
Nov. 11	Veterans Day Holiday - no school
Nov. 12	Community Forum at Monte Vista HS, 6:30pm
Nov. 16	Community Forum at Cal High, in the library, 6:30pm
Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Recess
Nov. 18	PTA Special Needs Program, Managing Your Stress, 7-9pm at Iron Horse MS MPR
Nov. 19	Brown Bag Series on Accommodations in the General Ed. Classroom, 12-1 pm, Bishop Ranch 6
Dec. 4	"Winter Wonderland" 7 th & 8 th Grade Dance

President's Message - by Kristen Holbrook & Lani Bari

It's hard to believe that November is already here! Winter holidays are just around the corner. The school year is in full swing. We had a busy October! We would like to thank Sheila Madrieres for all of her hard work coordinating Pine Valley's participation in the SRVUSD's fundraiser, Primo's Run for Education. Participation was up this year because of her efforts! Thank you also to Jeanne Lowe putting together the Pine Valley Directory! Lastly, we would like to thank Lisa Webster for organizing an amazing Red Ribbon Week. There are so many people that help make these activities successful - thank you to all who had been involved!

We invite you to join us at our next monthly PTA meeting on Monday, November 2nd at 6:30pm in the library. Remember, there is no school on Wednesday, November 11th due to the Veteran's Day holiday. Also, school will be closed during the week of Thanksgiving. Please contact us with questions, or to be involved in PTA!

Thank you,
Kristen Holbrook
K10holbrook@hotmail.com

Lani Bari
lanibari@comcast.net

Principal's Message - by Jason Law

Welcome to November... I mean flu season. By now, most of you have read the email that I sent out last month (October 14) in regards to students being ill and missing school. Much of what I write in this monthly message will be in the same vein. Absences at this time are up from previous years but they have stopped climbing. I have never been overly alarmed, but the numbers I was seeing necessitated me to keep an eye on things, while communicating my concerns with parents. I don't pretend to be a doctor, and I can't even say I play one on TV.

After receiving that message last month, many parents sent follow up emails to me asking for clarification on make-up homework procedures. After speaking with some staff members and reviewing district policy, here is some information that should clarify some concerns.

Last year, as part of the district's new homework policy, this very same subject was discussed. Board Policy 6154 states, "*Students who miss school work because of an excused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time.*"

Over the next few weeks, I am going to be discussing with staff their interpretation of "reasonable." At this time, as students miss school and attempt to catch-up, be sure to have students talk with teachers to discuss expectations, timelines and guidelines for turning in make-up work. As the parent, if you feel the need to get involved for clarification, please do. A general rule of thumb shared by most teachers is that you get as many days to make up work equal to as many days missed. However, for extended absences, this may not be enough time. Students need to be held accountable for curriculum missed, but it does not need to be made up exactly the same way it was completed by the rest of the students. As students get physically healthy and return to school, parents and teachers both need to realize that it takes some transition time for the student to get back into their normal routine. I don't want students coming back to school and immediately feeling overwhelmed and stressed out.

It is safe to say that probably all of the schools in our district, as well as all schools in California are experiencing students with the H1N1 flu virus. In most cases, doctors are not formally confirming the presence of H1N1. As a school and district, we continue to treat this as we would the seasonal flu, and as such we do not report out information regarding student illnesses. This is in alignment with the advice we have received from the CDC and the Contra Costa County Department of Health. Should we be directed otherwise, we will certainly comply. In the meantime we are continuing to emphasize the importance of hand washing, covering the mouth when sneezing/coughing, and keeping students home if they begin to demonstrate a fever or other flu-like symptoms. When you call students in ill, please follow the prompt and provide the information being asked for - including your child's temperature. We have been asked to collect and document information by Contra Costa County. If your child has a confirmed case of the H1N1 virus, please share that with us. We are not closing schools when students have been diagnosed. We are simply tracking and documenting our cases and sharing that information with the necessary individuals.

Again, if your child is displaying flu-like symptoms (including a fever greater than 100°F), keep him/her home while they FULLY recover. If students have a fever greater than 100°F on campus, that student will be sent home. Please keep students home for an additional 24 hours after the fever has broken. Again, students SHOULD NOT return to school unless they are fever-free for 24 hours without taking any fever-reducing medication (Tylenol, Advil, etc.).

I don't want to cause alarm by sharing this information. I just want you to know that I take the health of all the students on this campus seriously. This will be a flu season like no other, and we will communicate with our community as necessary. With the first quarter already behind us, I look forward to a healthy rest of the school year.

Enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday,
Jason Law

Your Input Requested on "The Next Level" for Our Schools

Our community has grown accustomed to a high level of academic performance in our schools. The upcoming community forums provide an opportunity to think creatively about ways to make this outstanding school district **even better**, and to revisit the values, mission and priorities of our school district.

We need your input at these forums around issues such as:

- How to best prepare students for success in a changing competitive, global environment, and what this means for teaching and learning.
- Technology and expansion of world language education.
- A possible restructuring of the senior year experience, allowing these students more time off campus in order to have a job, engage in community service or political advocacy, and/or take college classes.
- How to best meet all of our facilities needs in terms of growth, modernization of older facilities and energy conservation.

Forums will be held at each high school. Parents, staff, students and other community members may attend any forum that works best with their schedule. The community forums will be at 6:30pm (staff forums at 4:00pm). The dates and locations of the forums are:

- Wednesday, November 4, San Ramon Valley High School
- Monday, November 9, Dougherty Valley High School
- Thursday, November 12, Monte Vista High School
- Monday, November 16, California High School in the Library

For more information, contact the Superintendent's office at 925-552-2933 or ghaddad@srvusd.net. We hope to see you there!

Pine Valley Ed Fund Update - by PVEF Board

Thank you to all the families for your continued support. However, we still need more families to participate. 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 out for Pine Valley" event. As a fun way to raise funds for Pine Valley, we will be joining forces with Chili's in the month of December. More details and flyers will come in November.

Together, as a Pine Valley community, we can make the difference in our children's education.

Counselor's Corner – by Julie Damgen

This month I would like to share the following article about Homework Help for Middle School students. It is reprinted with permission in the emailed newsletter, but the copyright on the article does not allow it to be included in the newsletter posted on the school website.

In addition, there are two program/classes I'd like to make you aware of:

- San Ramon Youth Resource Program for middle school students, Quest, is offering a 4 part weekly class titled *Managing Stress & Pressure* that meets after school at Pine Valley, Nov. 17 thru Dec. 15, 2:45-4:45pm. For more information, please view this flyer at <http://apps.srvusd.net/upload/uploaded/Pine%20Valley%20Quest%20Program%2009-10.pdf>
- The Discovery Center is offering *Creating Lasting Connections*, which includes an after-school group for students and an evening parent group. For more information, please view this flyer at http://apps.srvusd.net/upload/uploaded/CLFC%20Fall_2009-PV%20flyer2.pdf.

Homework Help for Middle School Students

Parent Tips for Academic Support

© Susan Carney <<http://www.suite101.com/profile.cfm/sugarsnapmj>>

Sep 11, 2009 <<http://www.suite101.com/daily.cfm/2009-09-11>>

How much homework help is the right amount for students whose goal is to become academically independent?

When students enter middle school, parents may think that they no longer need their help with their nightly homework. After all, middle school is when kids are supposed to learn how to be independent and responsible, right? Well, yes and no. Kids develop at different rates, and nothing magical happens during the summer between 5th and 6th grade that suddenly makes kids ready to be totally on their own as far as their homework goes. Ideally, this transition happens during the 6th grade year; for some it may happen relatively quickly, for others, they may need parental support throughout the year.

"Helping" with homework at this level may look different from what many parents are used to. Certainly, sitting with kids while they slog through each and every math problem is not ideal, either for the parent or the student. At this level, good parental homework support is less about assisting with learning content than it is about helping kids master the process of homework.

There are five key ways parents can assist with homework at the middle school level:

1. Study Space and Materials

Parents should provide their child with the space and materials he needs to do a good job. A quiet space that is free from distractions is best. He will also need a comfortable chair, proper lighting, and plenty of room to spread materials out. Checking with teachers about what supplies are needed, and making sure they are obtained, can reduce stress and last minute trips to the store.

2. Time and Task Management

The student may need help structuring her time and other activities so she has plenty of time for her assignments. The assignment book she received from school can be used for this time and task management purposes. She may need some practice breaking assignments down into chunks and scheduling time for her homework and other responsibilities.

3. Assignment Book Review

Kids may also need help reviewing their work when it's completed to make sure nothing has been forgotten. Kids often attempt to do their homework from memory and then wind up missing something. It's good to give reminders to use an assignment book as a guide to confirm that everything is done and ready to be handed in.

4. Developing Organizational Skills

Middle schoolers should be encouraged to organize his binders, notebooks, and locker once every week or

two to keep things orderly. If his belongings are neat, the student will have an easier time keeping track of what needs to be done, won't lose things, and will feel more in control of his success.

5. **Monitoring Grades**

Parents should remind their child to check her grades frequently, so there aren't any surprises at report card time. Knowing her grades also helps her take ownership of them; if she's doing well, her confidence will be enhanced, and if she's not, she can seek help before she gets too far behind.

As the year progresses, parents should find that their kids become more independent with these tasks. When that happens, parents can gradually reduce the amount of support they give. Parents should monitor grades as well, so they can jump back in if more help is needed.

With proper parent support, all students can make a smooth transition into middle school and shine academically.

*The copyright of the article **Homework Help for Middle School Students in Middle School** is owned by Susan Carne <<http://www.suite101.com/profile.cfm/sugarsnapmj>>.*

Library News – by Gerri Peterson, Librarian

October has been a very busy month in our library. As I'm writing this, our students are looking forward to a week of book fair fun. This fall's theme is "Let the Adventure Begin," and it is my hope that each student will find just the right book to spark their imagination. This year we were able to remain open during the evening to allow more families to attend. I hope you had the opportunity to visit our fair and then attend the play put on by our performing arts students. Your generous support of this event helps to continue enriching our library collection with current middle school favorites and additional curricular research materials.

One of the research materials our library provides to students is the Contra Costa County Office of Education ED1Stop customized educational web portal. You will find a link to this on the homepage of the Pine Valley website. With one login, your child can gain access to an abundance of academic support materials. (Students can receive the user name and password from any of their teachers or here in the library). Once students have logged in, they will find under the Research Tab, Grolier Encyclopedia that includes not only the Grolier Multi-Media Encyclopedia but also The New Book of Popular Science, a multifaceted web site that students will find extremely helpful when working on classroom science projects. Also under this research tab you will find the World Book On-Line, Maps 101 and Calisphere. Under the School Help tab students can gain additional educational support by linking into Digital Math, Math Quiz and Brain Pop. Under the Project Help tab students can get royalty free pictures, music and software tutorials and reference guides. Many classes have been visiting the library and learning to navigate this extremely supportive portal. I hope you will remind your child to access this portal as they work on their projects at home.

We also had a blast at our first library Game Day this month. Our library was filled to capacity all three lunch periods as we learned to play new games and make new friends. Thank you to those families who donated board game and puzzles for this event. We are planning to continue these fun Fridays throughout the next few months so there is still time to donate some of your favorite used board games and puzzles.

Finally, one of the great joys of our new library is the opportunity to display student art. If you haven't had an opportunity to see the great art displayed by students in Mrs. Grames classes, please come visit when dropping off or picking up your child from school. This month we are presenting a display called Primo Puma Style. Our library is full of Puma Pride! Come check us out!

Red Ribbon Week A Success! – by Lisa Webster, Health & Safety

Red Ribbon Week was celebrated October 19-23 at Pine Valley to raise drug prevention awareness. Thank you to Sue Barks, Gerri Peterson and the Leadership class for facilitating the activities. Long before your kids are presented with a chance to drink alcohol or take drugs, you can increase the chances that they'll just say "no." By the teen years, your kids should know the facts about alcohol and drugs and your attitudes and beliefs about substance abuse. So use this time to reinforce what you've already taught them and focus on keeping the lines of communication open.

Thank You Magazine Sales Helpers! - Dawn McQuiston and Nancy Steiger

We want to thank all of the wonderful volunteers that came together and helped us hand out prizes and tally the magazine orders. We couldn't have done it without your help - Jeanette Dreifuerst, Nancy Agawa, Kelli Pagno, Alia Gettler, Laura Haworth, Tracy Weller, Kathy Ramsey, Pat Wing, Cheryl Gasparini, Carol Bernardo, Lani Bari, Jenny Jensen, Ingunn Akins, Joe Akins, Nivin Velasquez, Glenna Wakashige, Kim Piechalski, Phyllis Looney, Michele Arnold, Grace Moy-Gyotoku, Julie Brink, Dolores Hobaugh, and Marty Walker!

TRAFFIX - by Lisa Webster, Health & Safety

TRAFFIX is a student bus program available at Pine Valley Middle School. Did you know:

- Some TRAFFIX bus routes in Danville are completely full and have a waiting list.
- Your student can start riding the bus anytime during the school year.
- The TRAFFIX bus program is simple, safe and smart.

For more information visit www.ridetraffic.com or call program director Aram Boyd at 866-8739.

News from eScrip - by Luz Teresa McKinney & Montse Barr

Good news everyone! eScrip enrollment for Pine Valley Middle School has more than doubled! Help us keep the numbers growing. If you have not done so yet, please, log on to eScrip at www.escrip.com and update your status. Verify your cards are linked to Pine Valley Middle School. You can also register your other credit cards such as Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Target, etc. It's free, and it brings in funds.

Box Tops for Education- by Melinna Gershik

Thank you to all who submitted Box Tops so far this year. We've just mailed in our Fall collection, and we will let you know next month how much money we have raised with your help!

In addition, every person who registers on the Box Tops website will receive five bonus Box Tops for our school. If each family at our school did this, even with one email address per family, we'd raise about \$400! To participate, please go to the following website:

<http://www.boxtops4education.com/one/default.aspx?ESRC=14471>

Another program that can help our school is to use the Box Tops Marketplace shopping portal by going to <http://www.boxtops4education.com/earn/marketplace/Default.aspx>. Many online stores that you probably shop at already participate in this program and they contribute a percentage of your online purchases to our school.

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

November Special Needs Programs - by Kristen DeLaGardie

IEP Goals & Paperwork

Tuesday, November 10, 9-11am at Dougherty Valley High School, Room 1114

Presented by the district's Special Needs Liaison, Todd Gary. [View the flyer.](#)

Managing Your Stress

Wednesday, November 18, 7-9 pm at Iron Horse Middle School MPR

Presented by the San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs Special Needs Committee

Parenting is stressful enough, parenting a child with special needs adds a whole new dimension. In order to be successful in either, you must employ many coping strategies. Come to an educational evening designed to uncover your coping strategies. Come away with an understanding of when coping mechanisms emerge, how to utilize them to your best advantage, and when to let them go. Registration will begin in early November. Please check for more information on the San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs website, www.srvcouncilpta.org.

New Brown Bag Lunch Series on Special Needs Topics on the 3rd Thursday of every month

Presented by the district's Special Needs Liaison, Todd Gary. Please bring your own lunch and drink.

12 to 1 pm at Bishop Ranch 6, 2430 Camino Ramon, Suite 240 in San Ramon.

November 19th topic: **Accommodations in the General Education Classroom.** [View the flyer.](#)

San Ramon Library Programs – by Nancy Kreiser

Tea and more for Teens

Saturday, November 7, 2:00pm at the San Ramon Library

Have you ever wondered what fork to use at a formal dinner or if it is okay to send a text message instead of a thank you note? Life can be complicated and the finer points of social graces can be confusing! But help is here! Just in time for the holidays Rebecca Black, etiquette consultant, teacher and image coach will cover the basics including table manners and the etiquette of living in an online and connected world. And just to prove how much we've learned, we'll enjoy a "formal" tea and have fun too.

Programs for 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.

Upcoming Programs

Babysitting for Beginners

The class you have been looking for to develop all the skills needed to be a trusted and responsible babysitter. Learn about child development, bedtime strategies, discipline, how to get jobs, and ways to make babysitting fun for you and the kids. Basic first aid, general safety, and what to do in an emergency will also be covered.

Sunday, November 8, 9:00am-2:30pm, at the Community Center at Central Park

Ages 10-18, 1 Class \$60(R)/\$75(N), Act# 63221

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 high school program is referred to as "Connections", and 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.

Managing Stress and Pressure

Discover how to evaluate your different levels of stress, and how positive stress management skills can be utilized with the pressures of school, home, and everyday life.

Tue 11/17 - 12/15 3:00 - 5:00pm at Pine Valley Middle School, Ages 11-18, 4 classes \$35, Act#63450

Visit SRTeen.org

Visit San Ramon's all new website, www.SRTeen.org, to get information on teen events, concert information, 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 October Students of the Month. They have been chosen by their teachers or other staff members for exemplifying the life skill of **Sense of Humor**.

Student	(Nominated by)	Student	(Nominated by)
Kyllian Adams Hart	(Mrs. Fleshman)	Cindy Kanga	(Ms Barks)
Leah Armstrong	(Miss Meredith)	Nazim Kazi	(Mrs. Loughery)
Tiegen Bagnall	(Mrs. White)	Re em Landsman	(Mrs. Lemma)
Melanie Balaban	(Miss Pappas)	Elijah Langdon	(Ms. Huff)
Sam Barish	(Mr. Miller)	Alisa Lego	(Ms. Phillips)
Joshua Burris	(Ms Bramble)	Kyle Martin	(Miss Damgen)
Josh Candeub	(Mrs. Kontilis)	Kaidyn McClure	(Mr. Munson)
Zachary Dighans	(Mrs. Hegarty)	Trevor McGreary	(Mr. Wulff)
George Duan	(Mrs. Rosenberg)	Tyler Oranje	(Ms. Charles)
Robert Ellery	(Mrs. Johnston)	Noah Phillips	(Miss Krummes)
Anthony Epshteyn	(Mrs. Rowland)	Dean Piechalski	(Miss Martin)
Tony Ernst	(Miss Gault)	Fred Qu	(Miss Ciriaco)
Tristan Ferreyra	(Miss deSilva)	Matthew Ridgers	(Mr. Vespi)
Joshua Fong	(Mrs. James)	Alyson Rolita	(Mrs. Schluntz)
Jacob Furrer	(Mrs. Moore)	Kailey Runestrand	(Ms Mottaz)
Jacob Gencarelle	(Mrs. Knudson)	Michael Scanlon	(Mr. Bellomo)
Austin Guo	(Mrs. Irvin)	Michael Trantchev	(Mrs. Hart)
Stuart Hanna	(Ms Holstrom)	Steve Waltrip	(Mrs. Shivitz)
Drake Hendrickson	(Ms Herrera)	Christian Williams	(Dr. Grame)
Alec Hillman	(Mrs. Marchese)		

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 November/December is Organization.