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CUSD Today



March 2023

Clovis Unified School District — DEVELOPING STUDENTS IN MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

Volume 25, No. 8

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Clovis Unified School District
1450 Herndon Ave.
Clovis, CA 93611

MUSEUM ON WHEELS



Students benefit from mobile military exhibit at Buchanan

The national Mobile Education Exhibit of Wreaths Across America made one of its few California stops at Buchanan High Feb. 21 for students and the community to learn about the service and sacrifice of the U.S. military. More than 200 students in history classes toured the interactive exhibit, and a community ceremony was held later in the day.

Hosted by the Fresno-Yosemite Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, the Mobile Education Exhibit parked next to Buchanan's Memorial Garden that honors the eight fallen BHS alumni who lost their lives while on military duty in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The exhibit is housed in a large semi-trailer and is a museum on wheels that includes short films and shared stories, and it makes stops across the United States annually to educate visitors.

Wreaths Across America is a nonprofit group that honors veterans and each year places a wreath at the headstone of fallen veterans at Arlington National Cemetery as well as cemeteries across the nation. This past December, several Clovis Unified high school students assisted in local efforts on the National Wreaths Across America Day.



Photos special to CUSD Today by Kenny Gilman

CONSTRUCTION ZONE



Work underway on new schools

This month construction crews will begin moving dirt and preparing two future Clovis Unified school sites in the southeast area of the district.

To ease current overcrowding that is anticipated to become more impacted with developments underway in that area, a new elementary school is being built near Fowler and McKinley avenues and an educational center to include both an intermediate school and high school will emerge near Highland and Clinton avenues.

Learn More

View the new "2 Minutes Today" video recently emailed to parents about the educational center.

In the next month, Clovis Unified's Governing Board is expected to name what will be the district's 35th elementary school and, soon after, school colors and a mascot will be developed with new principal Laura Reynolds working with the community for ideas. Attendance boundaries have been approved (see cUSD.com for map) after months-long planning and community meetings, and the school will open for students in the fall of 2024.

The Terry Bradley Educational Center will be the anchor creating a new school area within the district. Clovis Unified follows a plan that divides the district into areas centered on a high school and its feeder schools and is overseen by an area superintendent. As the district has grown, this model has kept a scaled down approach that offers stakeholders and the surrounding community strong access and connectivity with each other. Current Clovis High Principal Stephanie Hanks was recently announced by the governing board as the new area's superintendent beginning this July.

The ed center for the yet-to-be-named schools is planned to open for seventh- through ninth-grade students in the fall of 2025, with a grade level being added each year until the school is complete. District staff will soon start preliminary research regarding attendance boundaries, and community meetings for input and feedback will begin this fall.

For ongoing updates about these projects, visit cUSD.com/facilities or the new elementary school website at es35.cUSD.com.

Creativity sparks with Oral Interpretation

The 53rd Annual Oral Interpretation Festival had everyone talking at the Paul Shaghian Concert Hall. The two-day event in February showcased groups from Clovis Unified elementary schools performing a spoken-word piece in unison. Students had been meeting and practicing for months on bringing a narrative to life, and the festival allowed them to be rated by a panel of experts.

"Students learn responsibility, practice stage presence and public speaking, and gain new friendships along the way," said Red Bank Elementary second grade teacher Megan King, whose students performed "The Good Egg," by Jory John and Pete Oswald. "They are not all from the same group of friends, so they are able to branch out and form a new community...it's beautiful!"

While each group was given a rating of superior,



Photo special to CUSD Today by Joey Elswick.
Temperance-Kutner Elementary students Caleb Correa, left, Abrielle Franco and Danna Juarez Cervantes perform "The Very Cranky Bear," by Nick Bland.

excellent or good, the experience was a big victory for all participants, said Clovis East High drama teacher and event emcee Heather Randall. "Watching the kids go from their nervous personas backstage

to their confident characters onstage is miraculous. For many of these students this is the first time they have done anything like this, and it takes a lot of bravery to complete this task."

Most of the oral interpretation pieces are performed in unison as a group, some require students to tap further into their bravery and perform solo lines.

King said of her Red Bank team: "To see these 13 kids ask and choose to put themselves out there really spoke a lot to me. They took a risk, courageously prepared, and they knocked it out of the park!"

STORY TIME!



CUSD Deputy Superintendent Norm Anderson was one of many guest readers during Read Across America Week. See "Around the District" on Page 7.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



A student conference, campus activities, guest speakers and more were part of Clovis Unified's celebration of Black History Month. See Page 2.



Young teens gain inspiration at African American Student Success Conference

■ Clovis Unified hosts event for area schools

Hundreds of seventh and eighth graders from 18 schools across Fresno County attended Clovis Unified's Middle School African American Student Success Conference in February at the Clovis North Educational Center.

Drumming from TOUNKARA Plus! kicked off the event that featured inspiring speakers and informative breakout sessions for students to meet with local mentors and discover career opportunities.

Lindsay Fox, President and CEO of United Way Fresno and Madera Counties, gave the keynote speech, sharing her passion for supporting youth and the resources that can help them thrive. Since joining the organization in 2016, Fox has focused on supporting working families through wealth creation and closing the racial divide.

Close to 40 local professionals served as mentors for students to ask questions of and learn about their careers that include police officer, news reporter, business owner, college professor, nurse and principal among others.

Clovis Unified hosts the annual event and invites other Fresno County schools to participate.



Students learn from each other at campus events

Clovis Unified schools around the district celebrated Black History Month throughout February with assemblies, lunchtime events and more to educate students on African American culture. Here's a sampling of the many activities, several planned by students, that were held to inspire and celebrate African Americans.

■ **Gettysburg Elementary** Principal Dave Castro shared facts and asked trivia questions about black history every morning during announcements.

■ **Clovis Adult Education** academic classes visited Fresno's African American History Museum.

■ **Kastner Intermediate** invited Clovis West High alum and current NFL Philadelphia Eagle football player Andre Chachere fresh from the Super Bowl and Fresno Deputy Mayor Matthew Grundy to an assembly. They spoke to students about the obstacles they've faced that shaped them into who they are today. They also encouraged students to work hard and dream big to achieve their goals. "I like that their stories serve as a great reminder for us to appreciate the people around us," said eighth-grade student Allison Moua.

■ **Lincoln Elementary** fifth- and sixth-grade students attended a showing of "OUR Story: The Black History Musical Experience," which took students on a journey through history, achievement and cultural positivity.

■ **Copper Hills Elementary** invited the Libota Drum Circle for an evening of dancing,



art, and food for students and families.

■ **Riverview Elementary's** Human Relations Council shared information about influential African Americans during their morning announcements all month long. Sixth grade students also attended a lesson about Dr. Charles Drew, an African American doctor and scientist who helped develop blood banks during World War II.

■ **Clovis North Educational Center** held a drumming performance at lunch for students to enjoy. The school was also decorated with posters and banners featuring quotes from influential African Americans in history.

■ **Clark Intermediate's** Black Student Union organized a campus-wide research project involving most of the student body: students selected an influential African American activist, athlete, artist, inventor and others to learn more about their impact on American society. Students also participated in trivia activities and fun events focused on friendship and education.

■ **Clovis West High's** African American Student Union hosted a month-long Black History Month Trivia contest. Classes competed to answer the most questions correctly each day of the month, for the opportunity to hang a Black History Month banner in their classroom for the rest of the school year. The AASU also hung posters around campus of influential African Americans. "A continued engagement with history is vital as it helps give context for the present," said AASU advisor Monique McCoy. "Black History Month is an opportunity to understand Black histories, going beyond stories of racism and slavery to spotlight Black achievement."

■ **Buchanan High** students Janaya, Joy and Kendall, as part of the Ujima Project put on by Fresno County Office of Education, made presentations to elementary students on African American leaders. They visited Woods Elementary, where they shared about Dr. May Jemison, who was known for her accomplishments as an engineer, physician, and the first African American woman to travel to space.

■ **Weldon Elementary** students enjoyed an engaging drumming performance by African Drum Interactive. The school also received a visit from the Clovis High School stompers, who performed for students and talked with them about historical role models who inspire them. The seniors in the group also talked about their plans after high school to encourage the young students to plan for a bright future.

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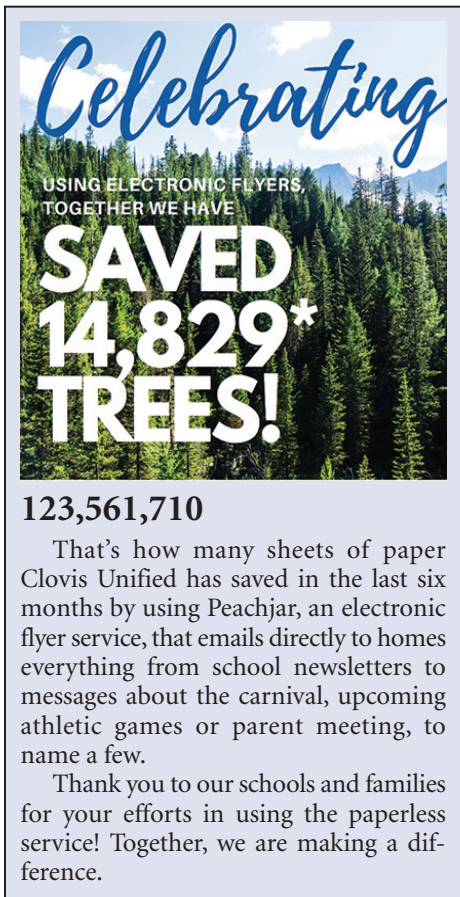
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That's how many sheets of paper Clovis Unified has saved in the last six months by using Peachjar, an electronic flyer service, that emails directly to homes everything from school newsletters to messages about the carnival, upcoming athletic games or parent meeting, to name a few.

Thank you to our schools and families for your efforts in using the paperless service! Together, we are making a difference.

Design a police car

Imagine your child's artwork featured on a Clovis Unified police car! The CUSD Police Department is running a contest for students of all grade levels to create a new design for the district's police cars! The winning design will be featured on new district police cars, and the top three entries will be awarded gift cards. The contest ends March 31. Entry forms and details are available at school offices. For more information, call the CUSD Police Department, 327-9221.

Meal planning help

Learn all about preparing healthy and cost-effective meals at "Plan, Shop, Save & Cook," a series of free classes open to all Clovis Unified families that will be held every Wednesday in March from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Hosted by the All 4 Youth Tarpey Wellness Center, the sessions will include meal planning, how to save money when shopping, reading nutrition facts and prepping healthy meals. The wellness center is located on the campus of Tarpey Elementary, 2700 Minnewawa Ave., Clovis.



**2023-24
NEW STUDENT
REGISTRATION**

2023-24 new student registration

Registration is underway for transitional kindergarten through 12th grade students who will be brand new to Clovis Unified in the 2023-24 school year. Online pre-registration is available at www.cusd.com/NewStudentRegistration.aspx.

Clovis Unified also provides high-quality preschool programs at 29 school sites. Enrollment for the 2023-24 year for preschool opens online at 10 a.m. April 5. To enroll or learn more, visit www.cusd.com/Preschool.aspx.



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or
seven increasingly eventful years
at a certain school of magic and magic
by MATT COX

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Get your tickets!

Who needs Broadway when the amazing talent of Clovis Unified's high school students and their school productions are available right here? For more information or tickets, visit CUSD.com/tickets.

■ **'Puffs' – Buchanan High's Bearstage Production** brings to life "Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain

School of Magic and Magic" in this parody of the Harry Potter book series. The show will be at 7:30 p.m. March 9-11 and 16-18 at the Dan Pessano Theater, 2770 E. International Ave., Fresno.

■ **'Sister Act' – Clovis West High's Theater West** will perform the musical comedy "Sister Act" in April. Based on the movie with the same name, the play follows the adventures of Deloris Van Cartier, an aspiring singer who witnesses a murder and has to go into protective custody as a nun. The musical will be at 7:30 p.m. April 20-22 and 27-29; and 2 p.m. April 22 at the Mercedes Edwards Theatre, 902 Fifth St., Clovis.

Working together for kids

Parents from every school joined Clovis Unified School District site and administration staff recently to discuss student programs and to help identify priorities on campuses. The 2022-23 Mid-Year Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Report included presentations on available funding, current supports and services, and recent California Dashboard assessment findings of the district. Those at the meeting took part in an interactive online Thought Exchange, providing feedback and rankings of input.

Information gathered will be used in planning for the next school year programs and priorities. Learn more: cusd.com/lcap

Leadership conferences for students planned

Clovis Unified has opportunities for students to participate in student leadership conferences that include keynote speakers and professionals in the community discussing their experiences, answering questions, and providing information about college and careers.

Remaining upcoming conferences are:
■ CUSD Latino High School Student Success Conference, March 13, Clovis North Educational Center

■ CUSD Officer Jesus Ceron Latino Student Success Middle School Conference, March 31, at Kastner Intermediate

More information is available through the CUSD intermediate and high schools' counseling offices.

Free online tutoring

Clovis Unified intermediate and high school students can access free, online tutoring for their classes through a partnership

the district has created with the Princeton Review's tutor.com. Subjects range from algebra and calculus to chemistry, English and physics. Students can access the service through their Clever account.

Spring Break

All Clovis Unified schools will be closed for Spring Break April 3 through 10. The CUSD district office will be open during this time with normal business hours.

Clovis Unified Child Development will hold a Spring Break full-day childcare program for elementary students from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. from April 3 to 7 at Orazo and Lincoln elementary schools. Transportation is available. Registration opens March 10 through Parent Connect, and space is limited. Details: 327-9160 or www.cusd.com/OptionalPrograms.aspx.

Special Education

Upcoming workshops

The Clovis Unified Family Resource Center has the following special education events planned to provide information and support. They are:

■ **"All About 504 Plans,"** online workshop, 6:30-8 p.m. March 21, presentation by Wendy Karsevar, CUSD 504 Plan learning director, Zoom. Register for link: tinyurl.com/FRC3-21-23.

■ **"Special Education Parent Café,"** in-person, 6:30-8 p.m., March 30, for families to connect with other parents who have a child with an IEP. CUSD Professional Development Building, 1680 David E. Cook Way, Clovis. Adults only; childcare is not provided. RSVP: tinyurl.com/frcparentcafe3.

Questions: 327-8455 or email familyresourcecenter@cusd.com.

Award nomination for Exceptional Person

CUSD Special Education Department's "Exceptional Persons Awards" is receiving nominations through March 15. The award celebrates district employees and volunteers who are exceptional at helping students with special needs. A judging team will determine the recipients and a ceremony will be held April 26. More information: CUSD Family Resource Center, 327-8455. To submit a nomination: tinyurl.com/ExPer2023.



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REGISTRATION IS ALMOST HERE!

There's still time to qualify for priority registration, which allows seniors from Clovis Unified School District to register for Summer/Fall 2023 classes before other students.

Steps to take to meet the April 17th priority deadline:

- 1.** Apply online at www.cloviscollege.edu/apply
- 2.** Complete your online orientation at www.scccd.edu/orientation
- 3.** Sign up to meet with a counselor on Zoom at www.scccd.edu/rtgmakeup

Need help? Visit www.cloviscollege.edu/outreach or call the Welcome Center at (559) 325-5421

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Clovis Unified is a purpose worth our best

By Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.
Superintendent

In the past few weeks I have had multiple reminders of what makes Clovis Unified a unique and special place whose cause is worthy of our best.



Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.

At our annual Crystal Awards I was reminded of this through the individual stories of our 24 employees of the year.

Each one of these individuals was cheered on by co-workers and family members as they were honored for being people who go the extra mile to make their small part of Clovis Unified the absolute best it can be for students and for our community.

Story after story was shared that night about this group of people who inspire the best in the rest of us because of the high standards they set for themselves, and the character and integrity with which they live out their service to our students and their co-workers.

Whether it was the student relations liaison at Pinedale who goes out of his way to help those in need in the community and who mentors many students on the campus; or the transportation leader who is regularly willing to hop behind the wheel and drive a route if there is a need (while layering in the rest of her responsibilities between stops and after hours); or the teacher who is so familiar with the unique needs of each of her individual students that she creates customized plans

for each of them so that they can excel, their stories are inspiring.

It's also championship season, and I've had the opportunity to cheer on teams competing for state and regional wrestling, soccer, basketball and mock trial titles (to

name just a few). Commitment to a high standard, to supporting each team member toward excellence, to putting in hours to hone talents, and to being willing to persevere were all qualities shared by these teams, regardless of

whether their field of competition was in a gymnasium or a court room.

January and February are also months in which we hold multiple student success conferences. These day-long goal setting workshops

are planned and facilitated by a wide ranging team of diverse educators and community mentors all of whom are focused on inspiring students of every culture and ethnicity to set goals and develop the tools to achieve them.

In between gala awards ceremonies; division, regional or state playoffs; and conferences, I've also spent hours each week on our school sites and in classrooms. There, I've witnessed our educational team leaving no stone unturned in a quest to inspire students to achieve at their very best.

Theodore Roosevelt made a compelling point when he said, "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

That is true in everyday life and it is especially true when talking about students and their learning.

Connecting with students in a way that makes them want to learn from someone who they know cares about them as an individual is the intersection where the magic of great teaching takes place. In our classrooms, I see that magic happening, and it's because of our people.

There are many things in the world right now that may cause one to question whether or not they are worthy of our time or our deep emotional investment. My experiences over the past month have been a reminder that Clovis Unified is truly something special, something worthy of believing in, something worthy of giving our best to as an educational team and as a community.

As you look into the future, I encourage you find a way to connect with our school community. You won't regret the investment of time and emotional resources because the purpose we are all working toward is so deeply worth all that we can give.

LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



Special to CUSD Today

Who believes in our students often before the students themselves do? School counselors! Clovis Unified campuses recently showered the counseling teams with appreciation during National School Counseling Week. From large thank you posters with custom messages, (pictured with Clovis East High Counselor Dr. Shur Lee), to special morning announcements and sweet treats, jesters of gratitude were presented by students and co-workers to these hard-working staff members who guide students in academics and high school course selections; college and career planning; and personal and social goal setting. Said district Guidance Learning Specialist Jeff Hodges, "School counselors create a school culture of success for all!"

"Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them."

LADY BIRD JOHNSON, FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES, 1962-1969

Crystal Award celebrates winners' innovation, care

Twenty-four Clovis Unified employees recently were the stars of the show at The Crystals where they received the district's highest employee award for their exceptional work in the preceding school year. These educators – ranging from teachers and principals to librarians and athletic directors – were nominated by their peers or supervisor in the fall and selected by employee judging panels to merit the top recognition.

The Crystal Award is given to those employees whose passion, innovation, dedication and dynamic work ethic far surpasses their job description. These are people who in tangible, measurable ways selflessly help students reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit. They go above and beyond what is expected, and they do so without prompting. They lead and inspire others by their humble nature and heart-felt examples.

In this issue of CUSD Today, we continue our ongoing series in alphabetical order meeting our honorees. For video biographies and presentation, see cUSD.com.

By Carol Lawson-Swezey
Special to CUSD Today

Cheryl Hedrick
Garfield Elementary



Team player, literacy champion, solution finder and gap filler extraordinaire! These are the accolades used in the nomination for Crystal Award winner Cheryl Hedrick. The library technician at Garfield Elementary goes above and beyond to support staff, engage students, ignite learning and promote diversity.

"Cheryl is not a librarian, but a teacher whose classroom is a library," a coworker said. "Whether it's going on Zoom to read a book to the medically fragile students at the Garfield Center, picking a multicultural book celebrating diversity, or intentionally learning sign language to include the Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, Cheryl is in a class all her own."

Hedrick has been instrumental in developing and imple-

► The Crystals

A full list of this year's winners and videos from the awards presentation can be found online at cUSD.com



menting the site technology plan, co-teaching and supporting classrooms in literacy, driving multicultural appreciation and disability awareness programs and supporting student achievement and behavior. She researched and selected 47 books specifically for Hard of Hearing students.

Hedrick begins each library reading session with a phrase of the month, relating to another culture. Additionally, she has led the robotics team, the Library Cubs club, Destination Imagination, and is a CSI Facilitator.

As one of her colleagues shared, "Cheryl has created an environment of curiosity in her library which has ultimately bled into the classroom."

Jennifer Hunt

Mickey Cox Elementary



Mickey Cox Elementary office manager Jennifer Hunt is all in! She exceeds expectations daily and holds herself and her staff to the highest standards to provide the best service to students, staff and community. She arrives at school early, stays late and has learned all the roles within the school office so she can fill in when circumstances warrant.

Beyond her typical job duties, Hunt's commitments include helping with intervention for at-risk students, assisting families and staff with technology, supporting learning stations during her lunch break, decorating for Mickey Cox events and greeting substitutes and ensuring they have sub plans and learn their

way around campus.

Most of the school's clear concise communication is either initiated or filtered by Hunt through the school's Weekly Roundup.

When parents come into the office in distress, Hunt provides families with her undivided attention and unwavering support. During the height of the pandemic, she even assisted with COVID testing when the volume of families needed testing was high.

Her colleagues said she puts the thoughts and needs of others before her own and makes Mickey Cox a priority. One coworker shared how Hunt drove her home when she wasn't feeling well and only left when she was sure she had everything she needed.

Other co-workers added, "Mrs. Hunt always does what's best, not what's easy!"

Charlotte Loeffler

Mountain View Elementary



To many of her peers, Mountain View Elementary fourth-sixth grade Functional Life Skills teacher Charlotte Loeffler is "Wonder Woman."

She has created a paradise for learning, safety and social-emotional development through a welcoming, inclusive classroom environment. Her constantly evolving lessons are based on input from students, parents and mainstream, like using yoga and other strategies to reduce student anxiety and stress.

To encourage learning, skills and responsibility, Loeffler initiated the Positive Behavior Support and Intervention (PBIS) Bear Cave store and Bear Buck coffee where students learn about advertising, stocking inventory, money management and customer service. She is the coordinator on campus of CSI and ASES.

On her own time, Loeffler coaches after-school sports and

► Please see *Innovators*, Page 6

— ABOUT US —

CUSD Today, Clovis Unified's good news publication, is sent directly to the homes of all CUSD parents and staff, as well as district supporters. In an effort to unify the CUSD community, the newspaper highlights the achievements of Clovis Unified students and staff; profiles new and updated Governing Board policies; and shares general news and information happening within the district.

Circulation: 34,000.

Funding: All costs associated with producing, printing and mailing CUSD Today are entirely funded by our advertisers. To show your appreciation of their support, we ask you to consider patronizing these businesses and services as the need arises.

Story submissions: Please submit all ideas to the Site Coordinator at your school. Please contact your school to find out who your Site Coordinator is. Editorial deadlines are two weeks before the publication date. We do our best to include as many submissions in each issue as our editorial space will allow.

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Barry Jager Associate Superintendent Human Resources and Employee Relations 327-9308	Michael Johnston Associate Superintendent Administrative Services 327-9110

Innovators: Highest employee honor presented

FROM PAGE 5

encourages SPED student participation so the kids experience inclusion and belonging. She successfully led Mountain View's Oral Interpretation Team to win eight superior ratings with her students in the Performance Group.

Exhibiting true superpowers, Loeffler mentored several substitutes last year when the K-3 Functional Life Skills teacher was out on maternity leave. She assumed her caseload, conducted triannual assessments, facilitated meetings, wrote IEP reports and supervised a challenging student. Her own class continued to excel with all students meeting or exceeding their IEP goals and three transitioning to middle school vocational education.

Bobby Mammen
Clark Intermediate



In the 31 years that Bobby Mammen has been at Clovis Unified, the Clark Intermediate teacher and athletic director has positively impacted generations of students, staff and community alike.

Since 2006, Mammen has led the Clark WEB – Where Everyone Belongs – program that focuses on ensuring all students have the ultimate experience in the new school year. He takes his students to all eight Clovis Area elementary feeder schools and makes sure Clark's teams are representative of all schools.

Clark had more than 700 students participate in athletics in the last school year, and Bobby added additional teams to make sure all interested students could compete. He also encouraged working hard in the classroom to remain eligible. The increased participation had a monumental impact in school pride and belonging.

Mammen builds trust by hiring highly invested role models who are reflective of the community. His diverse coaches mirror demographics of about 55% of the students representing an ethnicity other than white.

Several nominators, his former students at Clark, and now on staff, said that Mammen not only develops winners on the playing field but also winners in life!

He always told us, one said, "When you leave Clark and continue on your journey as a Cougar and in life, remember who you are and what you represent."

Elizabeth Marquez
Miramonte Elementary



Student academic, social and emotional needs are Elizabeth Marquez' highest priority. The Miramonte Elementary teacher saw a need for a supplemental writing program and a new STEM program that would encourage higher order thinking, and she took it upon herself to make it happen. She researched, trained and personally paid to bring that program to campus. Those efforts led to 73% of third graders who met or nearly met the claim area of writing last year.

Marquez is also involved in GATE and CSI, is the advisor for Peer Mediators, which provides a direct means for students to help other students and serves as the PLC lead. She shares her expertise to model and coach the ASES after school staff by introducing class management and appropriate use of resources. She has spent countless hours fine-tuning the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support program at Miramonte.

Marquez believes that students need to feel safe and valued to optimally learn. Last year the brother of a student passed away. On behalf of the Miramonte staff, she sent flowers and a card to the family. She personally attended the funeral and her support and kindness made a huge impact on the family and especially her student. It's just one of the many examples of how she cares.

Marquez believes that students need to feel safe and valued to optimally learn. Last year the brother of a student passed away. On behalf of the Miramonte staff, she sent flowers and a card to the family. She personally attended the funeral and her support and kindness made a huge impact on the family and especially her student. It's just one of the many examples of how she cares.

Michael Miller
Clovis West High



The secret sauce in the Clovis West High School automotive pathway program is CTE instructor Michael Miller.

An exemplary teacher, father figure, counselor, mentor, confidante and coach, Miller creates a family culture and opportunities for students to connect with one another and the community at large.

He designs his classes to be inclusive, offering four levels of automotive classes, encouraging freshman to enroll. Ford Motors has said on multiple occasions, "If a resume comes in and it has 'Clovis West' listed as education, it is a given that the candidate will be a good hire."

Miller thoroughly prepares students for post high school opportunities. He recognizes that not all students have the skills to be a diagnostic technician and is now developing curriculum for a Service and Parts Manager.

Since joining Clovis West in 2015, his program has added a heavy-duty shop and earned coveted accreditations, enabling donations from industry giants like Ford and Dodge. His students have also won Skills USA Career Challenges.

In 2020, Miller and Learning Director Karen Boone, applied and received a \$55,000 Clean Fuels Transportation Pilot Grant.



The money furnished an educational trailer used by Clovis West auto students to visit feeder school sites and introduce elementary students to new electric vehicle technology and available options for their futures.

Andrew Nabors
Facility Services



Two words that consistently describe newly promoted Coordinator of Administrative Services Andrew Nabors are efficiency and effectiveness! As the Senior Analyst for Development and Boundary Analysis in Facilities during the Crystal nomination period (he has since been promoted to coordinator!), Nabors tracks future student growth in the district. His work has a tremendous impact on every school and department in Clovis Unified. His keen ability to access unique information has helped him develop and write programs for customized data analysis that allow Clovis Unified teams to effectively gather information.

During the pandemic, Nabors developed the district's COVID Dashboard. He designed a public interface, wrote compatible code to work with eSchoolView and connect it to the forms back-end database. This tool went through many

revisions as the district brought students back on campus.

Nabors also collaborated with the Technology Department and rewrote standardized COVID forms, developed an internal dashboard to extract data when needed to present to the Governing Board and public, and created daily reports to send to lead administration.

But his day doesn't stop at the office. Nabors serves as the head coach of the Buchanan High School Bird Brains Robotics team for 80-100 students. He has successfully guided them from the local level to the national level on numerous occasions, and last year they qualified for the World Championships.

Coach Dan Pantoja
Clovis West Area



Dan Pantoja, affectionately known as Coach Dan, lives and breathes Pinedale Pride. The Clovis West Area student relations liaison was nominated for his work at Pinedale Elementary, where he is firmly committed to his community and he cultivates a culture of trust and respect.

For the past eight years, he has inspired athletes and developed young leaders through the Pinedale wrestling and football programs. Area schools now know that Pinedale will be a tough competitor.

Coach Dan hosts highly anticipated various camps throughout the year. He seeks out coaches who will be servant leaders for Pinedale youth and encourages them to develop that team mentality and foster good character, both on and off the field. He has provided transportation to wrestling matches and purchased athletic equipment for students from his own pocket.

He developed 'Mornings with Dan' at Clovis West to mentor and fellowship with former Pinedale students who may need extra support, and he also serves as the Latino Club advisor and helps mentor the African-American Student Union advisor.

His good deeds go beyond sports and into the area of Pinedale where Coach Dan has mowed lawns for elderly residents, paid to have a single mother's car repaired so she could get back to work, or made home visits to get a high school student back to school. He's a much-valued part of the community!

Abigail Paxton
Buchanan High School



Affectionally known by her students as "Pax," Buchanan High drama teacher Abigail Paxton maximizes her energy – and she is known for having a lot! Her passion and dedication shine, whether it's creating lesson plans, choreographing a dance, directing a play or creating a safe space for students to experience acceptance, love and purpose.

Paxton plans her curriculum specific to her students. She gleans ideas from the latest TikTok challenge, pop-culture craze, or a familiar TV show or song, thus motivating her students to be silly, serious, nostalgic, and reflective.

She ensures all her productions are family friendly, with clean humor and respectable content. Always seeking ways to clarify and reinforce the production process, she turns every glitch into a teaching moment, encouraging students to be reflective and move on.

Paxton took over the Buchanan Improv Team last year when their beloved coach unexpectedly passed away. In tribute to him, she mentors them and even brought back outdoor shows after the pandemic hiatus.

It's because of her initiative that there's been a supportive atmosphere created at Buchanan between arts and athletics – and Pax now has many athletes auditioning and performing in her plays!

Paxton intentionally builds community, unites students and makes decisions based on what's best for her thespians. This has promoted increased enrollment in her elective classes and the number of students auditioning for shows.

And the Crystals go to ...

- Toni Jo Beltran, Gettysburg Elementary Resource Specialist
- Sheryl Boe, Director of Transportation
- Annette Burger, Buchanan High School Secretary II
- Sarah Burress, Clovis East High Activities Director
- Trina Hairabedian, Cole Elementary Instructional Assistant I
- Stephanie Hanks, Clovis High Principal
- Ginger Hazel, Temperance-Kutner Elementary Teacher
- Cheryl Hedrick, Garfield Elementary Library Technician
- Jennifer Hunt, Mickey Cox Elementary Office Supervisor
- Charlotte Loeffler, Mountain View Elementary Teacher
- Bobby Mammen, Clark Intermediate Teacher, Athletic Director
- Elizabeth Marquez, Miramonte Elementary Teacher
- Michael Miller, Clovis West High Teacher
- Andrew Nabors, Facility Services Coordinator
- Dan Pantoja, Clovis West Area Student Relations Liaison
- Abigail Paxton, Buchanan High Teacher
- Aaron Penberthy, Kastner Intermediate Teacher
- Joaquin Rivera, Pinedale Elementary Teacher
- Lizette Ruiz, Clovis West High Bilingual Instructional Assistant II
- Susan Rutledge, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services
- Loree Sistrone, Reagan Educational Center School Office Supervisor, Sr.
- Lauri Vaughn, Cedarwood Elementary Teacher
- Carol West, Mountain View Elementary Teacher
- Maila Yang, Tarpey Elementary Teacher

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*scholarships available for male students



Celebrating reading, and Dr. Seuss!

During Read Across America Week, which includes the birthday of children's book author Dr. Seuss, Clovis Unified schools had an array of activities and guest readers. At Cole Elementary, Superintendent Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D., joined some of the district's youngest children – transitional kindergartners in Kathy Loeprich's class. It was "Green Eggs & Ham" Day in honor of Dr. Seuss' book with that name, and everyone was encouraged to wear green. Dr. O'Brien not only read to students but also used a globe to point out where she was born in Ireland. "From an airplane, the country of Ireland looks like an emerald jewel because it is so green," she said.



Books for Weldon

Bad habits may be hard to break but sometimes, good habits are just as difficult to stop. Recently more than 100 books were donated to Weldon Elementary School thanks to the San Joaquin College of Law's Elizabeth O'Neill Book Drive – but the twist is the annual drive has been on hiatus since 2020 due to the pandemic. Some faithful donors, however, in the habit this time of year of giving showed up at the college with children's books.

Said Weldon librarian Lisa Palomares, "Weldon is always excited to receive books! We are thankful San Joaquin College of Law gifted us

Stronger together at Clark

Clark Intermediate recently celebrated Multicultural Week with activities that included morning lessons, lunchtime events and a school assembly focused on "Stronger Together." Featured were student and staff speakers, along with performances by the Folklorico and Bhangra dancers from Clovis High.

"All cultures and backgrounds can come together to make this world a better place, and it starts with all of us," said Noel Felix and Jordan Cota, advisors to the Clark Multicultural Club that led the weeklong celebration.



with such a nice assortment of titles and beautiful hardbound copies. Our students were very eager to get their hands on them!"

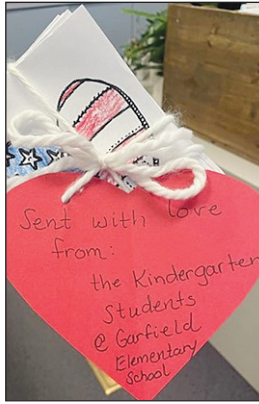
Thank you to the San Joaquin College of Law and good-habit givers for supporting Clovis Unified kids!

Valentines for Vets

California Assemblyman Jim Patterson visited Garfield Elementary last month, touring several classes and picking up around 800 Valentine's Day cards that were to be given to local veterans. The entire Cubs student body had been busy cutting pink hearts, drawing flags and writing words of appreciation as the school takes part in its annual Valentine's for Veterans project.

"We hope our students learn that even at a young age, they can make a difference and help those in our community," said Principal Jennifer Bump of Garfield's participation.

Assemblyman Patterson met with second and third graders to share the impact the cheerful cards have on veterans and to let the students ask questions.



Chieftains teaching Warriors

For two days, Clark Intermediate eighth-grade students in Lisa Brown's "Introduction to Education" led two first and fifth grader's P.E. classes at feeder school Weldon Elementary.

"It's so much fun to watch our eighth-graders put into practice tricks that they've been learning," said Brown. "They're teaching others the importance of play physical activity throughout school and life."

The course is designed to give students a taste of what it would be like to be a teacher one day, and it helps them learn about the CTE education programs that will be offered in high school if that's something they want to pursue.

Plus, Brown said, it's great to meet the elementary kids who in just a few years will be on the Chieftains' campus. "We love working with our feeder school students, and we really

enjoy making connections with them before they enter Clark."



Joining talents at CN

It wasn't just Clovis North High drama students, but also choir and art students who helped present the school musical, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." Drama instructor Matthew Bridges, who is brand new to the Broncos but has taught drama for several years, said he wanted to come in with a splash for his first show that would be grand in both scale and effect. That included joining forces with CN Choir Teacher Heather Bishop to have her students sing on stage and CN Art Teacher Lauren Myers to challenge her advanced students to create stained glass imagery.

"Because I now work in a district where the arts are supported by such a talented team, it was important for me to include as many other people and students as possible," said Bridges who is a former Clovis High drama student and 2006 graduate.

At times in the show, more than 60 students were on stage in the performance that Bridges described as a compilation of every adaptation of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" as well as several original moments.

Super kind Tigers

The tigers are terrific at spreading kindness! Century Elementary celebrated "Kindness Month" with acts of kindness all throughout February. The Kindness Committee, led by teacher Kim Fox-Kristensen, is made up of more than 20 students who volunteered their lunchtime to brainstorm ideas for their school to share kindness. Some members of the committee decorated the school walkway with welcoming messages for their athletic opponents on game day. Others wrote motivating messages on clothespins to clip onto students' backpacks all around campus.

Editor's note: "Around the District" is a regular feature of CUSD Today that highlights positive activities and accomplishments of students and schools throughout the district. Items for consideration may be sent to cusdtoday@cusd.com.

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Board names Hanks as new area superintendent

■ Attendance boundaries adopted for 35th elementary school

By Kelly Avants
CUSD Chief Communications Officer

March 1

Celebrating March as Music in Our Schools Month, the Clovis Unified Governing Board meeting March 1 was enlivened with a performance by the Buchanan High Jazz Band under the direction of Barb Shinaver.

Clovis High School has a new principal following the Governing Board's appointment of Matt Lucas, current principal at Cedarwood Elementary, to the position effective July 1. Lucas takes the reins of Cougar Country from current principal Stephanie Hanks, who will become the Assistant Superintendent over Clovis Unified's sixth comprehensive high school area this summer.

Also appointed during the meeting was Administrator of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability Darrin Holtermann. Holtermann, who currently serves as the Director of Induction and MTSS, will fill the position as of July 1 after current Administrator Janet Samuelian retires.

Members of the district's Career Technical Education team were present to answer questions about their annual report on the status of their work to connect and prepare students for career fields after high school. This year, enrollment in CTE classes has increased by 12.7%, with more than 3,600 students

taking a CTE course.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved construction costs for Phase 1B of the Terry Bradley Educational Center and related provisions of the lease-leaseback agreement and authorized the Superintendent or designee to execute the schedule of sublease payments for Phase 1B.

■ Accepted a \$3 million award from the California Department of Education for the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant.

■ Voted to elect four candidates from Sub-Region 10 (our local area) to serve on the California School Board's Delegate Assembly for a two-year term. The four currently serve on Governing Boards of other Fresno County school districts.

Feb. 16

The new elementary school opening at Fowler and McKinley avenues in August of 2024 now has a defined attendance area following the Governing Board's adoption of school boundaries.

The decision came after a months-long process involving multiple community meetings in the Clovis East Area where the school is under construction. Principal Laura Reynolds will now work with her community to develop possible options for school colors and mascots as the Board also considers possible names for the new school in the coming month.

For more information about the school boundary process or to see the approved map, visit <https://rec.cusd.com/2022schoolboundaries.aspx>.

The market study recommendation for operational employees represented

▶ BOARD BRIEFS

by CSEA Chapter 250 was approved at the meeting following approval of the ECC recommendations by CSEA members on Feb. 15.

The implementation of the study for operations unit employees will now follow the same timeline as other employee groups with new salary schedules implemented as of the February payroll. It's expected that work to complete calculations for retroactive compensation to the start of the current year will be completed, and separate paychecks/direct deposits issued, toward the end of April or earlier if possible.

CSEA employees eligible for the retroactive compensation are those employed as of Feb. 15, 2023. ACE Psychologists/Mental Health Professionals have not yet settled their first contract

with the district.

The board also took action to appoint a leader to the developing high school area served by the future Terry Bradley Educational Center announcing that Stephanie Hanks, current principal at Clovis High, will assume the role as of July 1.

The board adopted a resolution honoring employee Steve Ward on his 46+ year career with the Clovis Unified who is retiring. Ward has served as a teacher, school site and district level administrator and was instrumental in bringing the CIF State Cross Country Meet to the district as well as the opening of the MiCare Health Center that opened



Stephanie Hanks

in 2018. In 2011, Ward served as Interim Superintendent of Clovis Unified for a three-month period as the district transitioned to the superintendency of Dr. Janet Young.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved the placement of a student with special needs in a residential treatment facility as identified in the student's individualized educational plan.

Feb. 1

Dozens of student athletes and their coaches were present at the Governing Board meeting to be recognized for winning seasons.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Governing Board participated in a facilities planning workshop to review updated enrollment projections based on recent information received from the cities of Fresno and Clovis about residential development, construction work on the Terry Bradley

Educational Center, and the process to name the school site located at Fowler and McKinley avenues.

In other action, the board:

■ Heard a report from members of the Business Services team providing an overview of the Governor's 2023-24 proposed state budget and its impact on Clovis Unified.

■ Approved the one-time revenue expenditure plan for Arts, Music and Instructional Materials Grant using the allocation percentages developed by sites and departments. A copy of the percentage allocation is available with the online agenda materials of the February 1 meeting.

□ The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Governing Board is set for 6:30 p.m. March 15 in the Boardroom located at 1680 David E. Cook Way, Clovis. Complete minutes, agendas and meeting videos are available online at www.cusd.com.

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National organization's co-founder visits two CUSD schools

How do you teach integrity, perseverance or prudence to a first grader? Or for that matter, a third grader, or a sixth grader?

In Clovis Unified nearly all 34 elementary schools access daily lessons from The Positivity Project to do just that. Known as "P2," the program explores 24 character strengths, and recently P2's co-founder and CEO Jeff Bryan visited the district from the East Coast to see firsthand how it is working.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability Erin Waer – who was principal of Boris Elementary when it opened in 2016 and was the first to use P2 on the West Coast – led Bryan on the tour of Clovis and Century elementary schools' programs.

"The Positivity Project is one of the most incredible strategies I have witnessed and supported in my 22 years in education," Waer said, noting now hundreds of schools in the Central Valley alone use the project.

Built around the idea of developing an "Other People Matter" mindset, the program teaches character and relationship building skills to empower children to lead lives equipped with important strategies and understandings. Each week, one of 24 traits is highlighted in daily 15-minute prepared lessons that are grade-level appropriate, but the entire school is focused on the same trait.

Recently, P2's focus was on Perseverance, and for example, fourth-graders' lesson included a mindful moment,

THE POSITIVITY PROJECT

a quote – "You never give up. Even when things are hard," a short video about an Olympian who fell during her race and was helped by a fellow athlete in getting to the finish line, and questions like, "How do both women show perseverance," and "How are they thinking of others; do you have examples where you've thought of others?"

Sometimes a class will take more time because kids are that engaged, Waer said, and those conversations are important. She recalled at Boris walking down the second-grade wing and seeing walls covered with sticky-notes that had positive messages – "They had just done their P2 lesson

about encouraging others. It's a program that impacts the entire campus in a positive way."

Clovis Elementary Principal Donelle Kellom said she likes how P2 unites students and staff alike.

Bryan watched third graders acting out perseverance scenarios on his tour of the Jaguars' campus.

"P2 empowers everyone involved with a common language and an understanding of how to build positive relationships. Students are equipped to have conversations about topics that often go unmentioned like bravery, prudence, and open-mindedness ... the common pacing calendar allows everyone from the librarian to coaches to campus monitors the ability to reinforce and recognize what is being studied. Parents are included though P2 for Families and can follow along from home with weekly videos and conversation starters."

Bryan said of his visit to the two CUSD schools: "At both schools, it was clear that the students understand character strengths because they



Photo special to CUSD Today. Positivity Project CEO and President Jeff Bryan recently visited Clovis Unified schools using the program that equips children with character and emotional wellness skills.

were using the vocabulary to describe themselves and others."

He co-founded The Positivity Project with fellow West Point graduate Mike Erwin following their combined five tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the website, they wanted to continue to serve their country and felt the next step was to help empower youth by partnering with schools to provide training

and strategies to teach kids positive psychology.

"We believe that if each individual is strengthening their relationships and building their character, then our citizens, communities and country will be stronger and better prepared to meet the challenges of the future," Bryan said of the program that is now used by 135 schools in the Central Valley alone.

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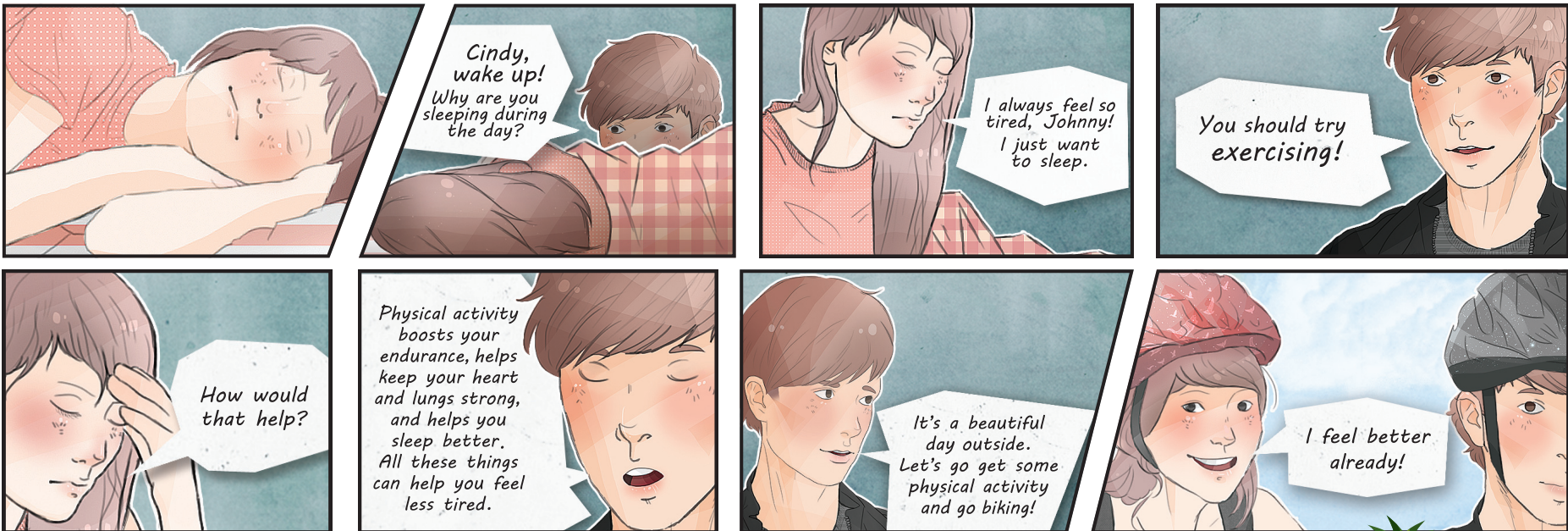
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"When I came here, I was scheduled for lower back surgery in August. Happy to say that I am no longer having surgery on my back. Thank you, Innovative Medical Center. My back is feeling great!" - Virgil A.

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