



Cowan PTA Crier

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE COWAN AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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Tiger Tea and Kindergarten Tour Keeps Teachers at Forefront

For the first time since its inception, Cowan's annual Kindergarten Tea is taking on a new name and a new look as part of an initiative to broaden the focus of this premiere recruitment opportunity. Targeted to bring new families to Cowan every year, the **Tiger Tea and Kindergarten Tour will be Wednesday, March 4th at 12:30 p.m.** in the school auditorium.

"Tiger Tea and Kindergarten Tour is a great way for us to showcase our school and to encourage Westchester neighbors and Windsor Hills residents to come home to Cowan," said Terri Haywood, 2009 Tiger Tea Chairperson.

In addition to the new name, new banners were created to highlight the school's tiger mascot and the program was slightly revamped to broaden the focus beyond just Kindergarten. Aside from Haywood, other members of the planning committee include Kindergarten parents Monisha Brewer, Donelda Carter and Elizabeth Warner.

Like other Westchester schools, when Cowan first offered the program, there were only a few families who attended, all interested in one of the then 33 Kindergarten vacancies. Now the event has grown to attract 80 to 100 families, some of whom have children in first through fifth grades. Currently, we have about 65 Kindergarten seats, which equates to three full-day classrooms.

One aspect of the Tiger Tea that won't change is the active involvement of our Kindergarten teachers. Their presentation is usually the highlight of the program as they talk about the Kindergarten curriculum and describe a typical day in the life of a Cowan student.

Collectively, this year's Kindergarten trio represents 57 years of teaching experience and each one comes from a legacy of educators. Mrs. Remus' father was a flight instructor in World War II. Mrs. Alvarez' mother was a high school and college instructor, and her father was a college professor. Ms. Kollar's mom is a director of a child care program and two of her grandparents were teachers.

All three teachers have also received public recognition for their accomplishments in the field of education. Both Mrs. Remus and Mrs. Alvarez have been named the Teacher of the Year by the

LAX Coastal Area Chamber of Commerce and Ms. Kollar has received several awards in child development.

A spirit of entrepreneurship also runs through this team. Mrs. Remus owned a preschool and Kindergarten for 11 years, while teaching at Cowan. As an undergraduate student, Ms. Kollar started a successful child care center on the campus of California State University, Monterey Bay.

According to Mrs. Alvarez, what makes the team so successful is "the way we work collaboratively together, particularly in grade level planning."

"We often team teach on different subjects like science, social studies and art," added Mrs. Remus. "Our teaching styles complement each other and allow us to use each other's expertise."

Aside from the contributions they are making in their grade level and individual classrooms, each of these teachers plays diverse roles within the school. Mrs. Remus is a 34-year seasoned veteran who has worked 19 of those years at Cowan. She has been Faculty Chair for 12 years, is a member of the Technology Committee and has served on the iDesign Transition Team, the Autonomy Exploratory Committee and School Site Council (SSC). She is also the Lead Support Provider for Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) covering all of District 3 within LAUSD. In this capacity, she helps to ensure that first year teachers are mentored and guided with appropriate training and support. Additionally, Mrs. Remus serves as the Administrative designee in the absence of the Principal and Assistant Principal.

Mrs. Alvarez has been teaching 20 years, 16 of which have been at Cowan. This bilingual educator serves as Secretary of the Technology Committee and SSC. She was also serving on the iDesign Transition Team and Autonomy Exploratory Committee before being elected to serve next year on the new Governance Council.

Ms. Kollar is the newest member of the Kindergarten team having joined Cowan three years ago after completing her graduate program at University of San Diego, where she was

valedictorian of her culminating class. She heads the Student Success Team (SST) Committee, which helps create intervention plans with parents and teachers for students with behavior and/or academic challenges. She also serves as Cowan's CST/CAT 6 Testing Coordinator.

"Our Kindergarten team represents the successful fusion of long-time experience with new ideas and energy," said Principal Richard Da Sylveira.

Cowan Avenue Elementary is an iDesign school within LAUSD that serves as the home school for designated areas in Westchester and Windsor Hills and is part of the LMU Family of Schools partnership.

The Best Part About Their Job?



Mrs. Alvarez— "My students are young at heart, and they help me to stay that way."



Mrs. Remus— "The children at this age are very honest and very loving."



Ms. Kollar— "My kids make it fun to come to work every day."

NEWS AND UPDATES

PTA Executive Board Elections are fast approaching!

Please watch your child's backpack for the nomination form and details! The following is a list of PTA Offices for which the Nominating Committee will be accepting nominations:

- President
- Executive Vice President
- 1st Vice President, Membership
- 2nd Vice President, Volunteer Coord.
- 3rd Vice President, Communications
- 4th Vice President, Room Parents
- 5th Vice President, Community Outreach
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Auditor
- Historian

Contact Amy Malysz with any questions at amy.malysz@sbcglobal.net or (310) 670-8761.

LAX Coastal Area Chamber of Commerce "Friends of Education"

The LAX Coastal Area Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for its "Friends of Education" award. This award honors a person, business or organization in the community that has had a great impact on our schools and education. Awardees will be honored at the 26th Annual Teacher Eddy Awards which will be held in May (location and date TBA). Nomination forms have been inserted into this month's newsletter and are also available in the main office. The nominations are not limited, so you may submit as many as you wish. Nomination forms are due April 3, 2009.

Meet With Friends & Family at Islands for Dinner!

Our March Family Dinner Nights will be at Islands in Howard Hughes Center on Tuesday, March 24 and Wednesday, March 25. Come meet your friends, have a delicious dinner and earn money for Cowan's Booster Club. Don't forget to order Scrip and earn even more money for Cowan. Look for more details in your child's backpack.



Cowan's Art Reflections Award Winners

Congratulations to the fourteen Cowan Avenue students who earned recognition from the L.A. Tenth District PTSA for their entries in the Art Reflections contest! Fourth grader Mackenzie Starr earned an Award of Excellence in the musical category, four other Cowan students earned Awards of Merit, and eleven Cowan entries earned Honorable Mention. All will be honored at the Reflections exhibit and reception on Sunday, March 1, 2009 at the Tenth District PTSA Auditorium at 1000 Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles 90015. All are invited to attend any time between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.

We are so proud of our Cowan winners!

Intermediate – Grades 3-5

Musical

Mackenzie Starr - Award of Excellence

Visual Arts

Ethan Rittner - Award of Merit
Nina Acero Liebman - Honorable Mention
Sophia Clendenen - Honorable Mention
Isis Golden - Honorable Mention
Mackenzie Starr - Honorable Mention

Photography

Chelsey Evans - Award of Merit
Kennedy Haywood - Honorable Mention
Lilyann Mito - Honorable Mention

Literature

Kennedy Haywood - Honorable Mention

Pre-K – 2nd Grade

Literature

Olivia Obeda - Award of Merit

Visual Arts

Samantha Wang - Award of Merit
Joie Littleton - Honorable Mention
Ainsley Starr - Honorable Mention
Samuel Dale - Honorable Mention
Simona Dale - Honorable Mention

PTA Announces Academic Improvement Awards

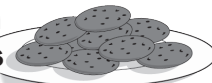
The month of February kicks off the new school wide student Academic Improvement Awards created and awarded by the Cowan Avenue PTA to encourage more students to achieve in academic excellence. One or two students per classroom every month will be awarded a certificate of Academic Improvement by the PTA. The recipient(s) will be determined by the teacher and awarded the last Monday of each month starting on February 23rd. February's award will be dedicated to those students who have improved in MATH. March's award will be for those students who show improvement in READING.

The awards will be presented similarly to the Star Student of the Month immediately after drop-off at 8:05 a.m. The selected children will be called to the front to display their PTA certificate and stand to be recognized by the student body, parents and teachers.

Parents will be contacted the preceding Friday to be informed of their child's upcoming Monday morning recognition. We encourage all parents to come and cheer on academic excellence.

—Leslie Dennis-Rigney

Calling All Cinnamon Bun & Cookie Lovers



The wait is over! Our annual Cookie Dough Fundraiser is kicking off on March 6. Orders are due March 23. Delivery is scheduled for April 1 at 2 pm. Orders must be picked up that afternoon in the auditorium since storage is not available at school. If you cannot be there please arrange for someone else to pick up your order. Please contact chair Kita Golden, avdeity@aol.com if you are able to help with sorting and distribution on April 1.

Prospective Parents, Cowan Needs You!

There are several things you can do now to become an informed and involved parent and help Cowan in the process:

Visit Cowan's Website - www.cowantigers.org

Join Yahoo! Groups - you will receive emails about what's going on at Cowan. Go to: groups.yahoo.com/group/cowan and click Join this Group.

Register your Vons and Ralph's club cards - A percentage of your Vons and Ralph's purchases will be donated to Cowan Avenue Booster Club. For Vons, visit www.escrip.com. Click on Members/Supporters, sign up and register your card. Please choose Cowan Avenue Booster Club as the organization you wish to support. For Ralphs, visit www.ralphs.com. Click on Community Contribution, click on Participant Sign-Up. Enter NPO number 80204 and then enter your club card number. Questions? lyleweldon@gmail.com.

Cowan's Governance Council is announced

The results are in! The members of the first Cowan Avenue Elementary School Governance Council are:

Richard Da Sylveira, Principal
Sheila Alvarez, General Education Teacher
Ann Bryce, General Education Teacher
Michele Johnson, Special Education Teacher
Donia Horton, Magnet/GATE Teacher
Kathleen Fitzpatrick, UTLA
(Teachers' Union) Representative
Kelly Coady, Classified Staff
David Binder, Westchester Parent
Gaila Williams, Windsor Hills Parent
Marc Simmons, Magnet/GATE Parent
David Gray, Special Education Parent
Mark Marino, Permit Parent
Donna Lasman, Westchester Community Mbr
Didra Brown Taylor, Windsor Hills Comm. Mbr.

Alternate members are:
Lucia Thompson, Classified Staff Alternate
Narbik Manukian, Westchester Parent Alternate and Acting Parent Alternate
Stephan Brooks, Permit Parent Alternate
Dena Vatcher, Westchester Community Member Alternate and Acting Community Member Alternate.

As Cowan moves forward as an iDesign school, administrators, parents, teachers, classified staff, and community members will all have more of a voice in decisions that are made here at the local school level. Our Cowan Governance Council will have oversight to include, but not limited to, school budget, the Single Plan for Student Achievement, Gifted and Special Education programs, hiring and staffing, accountability and assessment, and additional areas as granted in iDesign autonomy.

Leadership Training for Governance Council members through the Institute of School Leadership and Administration at LMU will begin shortly, as will planning and preparation for next school year. The Governance Council will become the governing body of the school beginning in September, 2009.

The Cowan Transition Team would like to express its sincere appreciation to all who assisted in the election process: candidates who ran for Governance Council positions; stakeholders who cast their votes; our leaders and support personnel from iDesign and LMU - Mr. Da Sylveira, Mr. Rochelle, Dr. Patterson, Amy Orringer, and Drew Furedi; parents, teachers, LMU and iDesign representatives who prepared election materials including candidate information sheets, staffed the voting tables, picked up absentee ballots from classrooms, and conducted the ballot count; and all other members of the Cowan family who helped out in so many ways.

Have you ever wanted to help a child, but didn't know how? Are you aware of the literacy problems in our public schools? Do you have just one spare hour a week?

If you answered yes to these questions, you can make a difference right now by joining forces with **The Wonder of Reading** and **Cowan Avenue Elementary School**. Become a volunteer reading partner to a public elementary school child who needs a mentor like you.

Our purpose is to inspire in children the love of reading by implementing the **3R Program** of Renovating the school's library, Restocking with new books, and training volunteers to Read one-on-one with students in public elementary schools.

One hour a week can enhance the life of a child and provide him or her with much needed guidance and friendship. An extensive, fun, and interactive 3-hour training is provided at the school site to equip you with special one-on-one reading techniques. Afterwards, we match you with one student who is a struggling reader. You will work with that student for one hour every week or a minimum of one hour every other week.

To become a reading partner, please attend the New Volunteer Training, at **Cowan Avenue Elementary School, Wednesday, March 18, 2009, 8:45 am-Noon**, at 7615 Cowan Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Ph: (310) 645-1973, F: (310) 645-6273.

To confirm your spot in the training, simply mail or fax the registration form below to the above address, ATTN: Amy Malysz, Volunteer Coordinator.

You must be at least 16 years old to be a Wonder of Reading volunteer. Background checks will be conducted. Please bring photo I.D. and the name and phone number of two references (people who have known you for at least 2 years and are not related to you). We will see you at the training! www.wonderofreading.org



**THE WONDER
OF READING**

YES! Sign me up for the WOR TRAINING! *Date: March 18, 2009*

Name: _____ Phone Number: (_____) _____

Mailing Address: _____
Street City Zip

Email: _____ I speak English fluently: Yes No - If no, I am fluent in _____

Affiliation (how did you hear about the training?): _____

You will be asked for a photo I.D. and the names and phone numbers of two references - people who have known you for at least 2 years, and are not related to you). Please contact Amy Malysz at (310) 670-8761 if you have any questions.

And look forward to sharing the Wonder of Reading with a child at Cowan!

390 Minutes A Day...All to Myself! - Lyle Weldon, parent of K & 3rd graders

Being a parent is hard. It's emotionally exhausting, physically draining and leaves little to no time in the day that's not spent entertaining, caring, feeding, reprimanding or cleaning our children. Which explains the summersaults new kindergarten parents perform as they leave their progeny at Cowan Avenue Elementary during the first week of September. You've finally made it! Just imagine, after five years of non-stop mommy or daddy care – which is one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-five days if you're living it one never-ending day at a time – you finally find yourself with six and a half hours all to yourself. It's like New Year's Eve, Christmas morning and the 4th of July all wrapped up and presented to you five times a week. It's your birthday every day! You can finally live the life you've dreamt about. Whoo-hoo!

When my youngest daughter reached kindergarten age this past fall (and she was nearly six years old, I'd like to point out!), I couldn't believe the windfall of time on my hands. What would I do with six and a half hours a day? The options were limitless! I'd work out regularly, donate time at a homeless shelter, help a

political candidate through a difficult election and finally get that screenplay out to my agent so she could sign Amy Adams on the dotted line.

Then there were the lunches! McDonald's was banished from my menu. Now I could eat at Indian restaurants and Thai places and travel to Santa Monica to meet friends who work there. We could walk on the beach, nibbling our gyros while discussing politics – and there wouldn't be a diaper bag, stroller or a McNugget anywhere in sight!

Now, six months into my partially empty nest years, I've revised my schedule a bit. Here's what I have time for these days: I run three days a week and am still working on Amy Adam's screenplay. Barack, unfortunately, had to go the distance without me at his side. To be honest, six and a half hours just isn't all that much time. But whenever I see friends who still have preschool aged children, I realize I really can't complain. The quickly approaching summer, however, has already got me worried. Mickey D's, here we come.

Cowan Crier

A PTA PUBLICATION

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www.cowntigers.org

COWAN AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

7615 Cowan Avenue
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Located at the corner of 77th Street
and Cowan Avenue in Westchester

VISITING POLICY

All visitors to the Cowan Avenue campus must report to the office to sign the visitors book on the counter, and receive a guest badge. The badge must be worn at all times while on the campus. When your visit is complete, please sign out in the front office, and return your badge.

NEXT CRIER (April 2009)

Crier submissions are due on the 20th of the preceding month. Please submit your articles by email to Katherine Clendenen at kclendenen@sbcglobal.net. Your photo submissions with articles are welcome as long as they are high-resolution .tiff or .jpeg files.

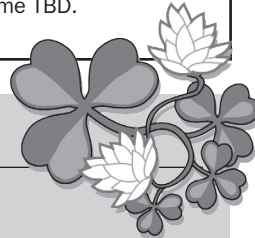
**Concert by the Canyon
& Silent Auction - Sunday, May 3, 2009**

Our 6th annual Concert and Silent Auction are only two months away! Please help us plan the best event ever!

The Silent Auction Committee will be meeting every Friday morning from March 6 until the auction, after drop-off, in the teachers' lounge. Please join us if you can. We need your

talents and help with all aspects of the Silent Auction. If you would like to help, but are not available on Friday mornings, please email Katherine Clendenen, co-chair at kclendenen@sbcglobal.net.

A Concert planning meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, time TBD.



MARCH CALENDAR

March 4	Kindergarten Tea, 12:30
March 6	Cookie Dough Fundraiser Kick-Off Silent Auction meeting 8:15 am, Teachers' Lounge
March 10	Concert by the Canyon planning meeting, time TBD
March 12	PTA Meeting
March 13	Silent Auction meeting 8:15 am, Teachers' Lounge
March 18	Wonder of Reading Training, 8:45 - Noon
March 20	Silent Auction meeting 8:15 am, Teachers' Lounge
March 23	Cookie Dough Fundraiser Orders Due
March 24, 25	Family Dinner Nights at Islands
March 27	Silent Auction meeting 8:15 am, Teachers' Lounge
March 30 - April 3	Parent-Teacher Conferences
April 1	Cookie Dough Pick-Up, 2 pm, auditorium
April 3	Deadline for nominations for "Friends of Education" award
April 6-10	Spring Break
May 3	Concert by the Canyon & Silent Auction