Telemundo: Partners for Parents

Los Angeles Unified School District and Telemundo Los Angeles have begun a partnership designed to bring useful news and information about public schools and education to Spanish-speaking parents. The yearlong program offers regular news features, on-air events, and phone-in opportunities that will help families understand and participate in their children’s education.

“This is information that parents need and want: how to help with homework, how to talk to teachers and principals, facts of college preparation, those things that lead to student success in school,” explains Stephanie Brady, LAUSD’s Communications Director.

Hispanic students make up 72% of the District’s student population. Nearly half speak Spanish at home. The partnership between Telemundo (KVEA, Channel 52 and KWHY, Channel 22) and LAUSD is part of Telemundo’s campaign called Mejorando Su Vida, television that focuses on issues that can improve the quality of the lives of the viewers – important issues such as health, immigration, and education. “We are really excited about this partnership. Among Latinos, family

Counting on Math

It looks like simple addition: a new district-wide plan to strengthen math instruction + a major campaign to train thousands of teachers in the latest math instruction strategies + a guide to math standards for parents and teachers — improved student mastery of math skills. That’s a top priority for the 2003-2004 school year across the Los Angeles Unified School District.

The plan is in effect, according to Matthias Vheru, Secondary Specialist for LAUSD’s Mathematics.
Parents Making An Impact
Message from Superintendent Roy Romer

Because we know how closely related parent involvement and student success are, we continue to work to help parents participate with their children and their schools in informed and meaningful ways.

On page 1, you can read about our new partnership with Telemundo, Channel 52, the second largest Spanish language network in the country. Telemundo now broadcasts many stories about what is happening in our schools for its Spanish-speaking viewers. The station also has produced a pamphlet in both English and Spanish that describes ways parents can become involved in their child’s education. It is available by calling (866) 669-7272.

This school year a few shootings have occurred near our schools that are creating concern for safety when students are en route to or from school. One of the best solutions to this problem is a new willingness on the part of parents and the community to work with the police to provide information that can identify suspects. This is leading to swift arrests.

We will continue to make safety one of our highest priorities for your children while moving forward with our instructional progress of the past few years.

Free Reading & Math Tutoring

Offered to LAUSD Students

Students in more than one hundred schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District are eligible for free tutoring in math and reading. The opportunity is offered to more than 186,000 students attending designated Title One Program Improvement schools.

LAUSD students received a brochure and request form for this extra academic assistance known as Supplemental Educational Services. These special services are a part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Parent Education Opportunities

Build your skills as a successful parent by attending the new monthly Parent Workshops presented by PCSB and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). Trained parent mentors provide instruction on a different topic each month. Handouts and activities will be presented, so that parents “will be able to take what they’ve learned and use it with their children at home,” says Roberta Ray of LACOE’s Parent Mentor Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>Successful Parenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Developmental Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 13</td>
<td>Parent’s Rights &amp; Responsibilities</td>
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<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>Retention &amp; Promotion</td>
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Where: PCSB Auditorium 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
701 W. Cesar Chavez Avenue
Los Angeles, 90012

Additional copies of the Parent Press may be obtained by calling (213) 217-5272 or TOLL FREE 1-866-669-7272 or DES (818) 766-4901

Parents of students eligible for free Supplemental Educational Services received brochures in the mail that explain how to request the free tutoring.

“This goes straight to the goal of improving student achievement for Title One students,” explains John Leichty, LAUSD’s Associate Superintendent for Beyond the Bell. “Small group tutoring sessions are held after school, on Saturdays, or during off-track time to provide struggling students with the math and reading attention they need – and there’s no charge!” Parents choose a provider from the twenty-six state-approved providers, including LAUSD’s Beyond the Bell Learning Centers, that are listed in the
Update on the Clean Restroom Initiative

“In 2000, when the hotline was announced, we had 969 calls,” says Robert Hamm, Deputy Director of Maintenance and Operations. “Now we’re down to between 50-100 calls a year. That shows a marked improvement.” The decrease in phone calls is likely a direct result of Superintendent Roy Romer’s Clean Restroom Initiative. His efforts last winter added urgency and resources to the campaign for clean, safe restrooms in all schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Every school restroom is now to be cleaned and stocked twice a day, and additional resources are being allocated to keep secondary school restrooms clean. Most high schools now have School Facilities Attendants who rove between restrooms spot cleaning, picking-up and stocking throughout the school day. They also serve as a deterrent to vandalism.

The District initiated the Smart Restroom program soon after the hotline was established, installing automatic flush toilets and urinals, automatic sink shut-offs, and hand dryers, in addition to painting and refurbishing existing facilities. An average of 100 restrooms have been converted to smart restrooms over the past several years, usually two restrooms per school. The goal for 2004 is to convert 200 more into smart restrooms, as well as to paint an additional 2,000 restrooms and renovate 1,000 restrooms as a result of the Superintendent’s initiative.

Feedback on the efforts has been largely positive. Site inspectors sent by Maintenance and Operations have reported improvement, and numerous teachers, principals and students have supported their findings. “Several student body presidents have also reported improved restroom conditions at recent school board meetings,” says Mr. Hamm, “offering their thanks to everyone for making things better.”

Clean Restroom Hotline number
1-800-495-1191

Los Angeles Unified School District now has one of the most child-safe pest management programs in the U.S., and because of the effective way it has reduced the risk for students and teachers, its program has become a national model. That accomplishment brings a smile to LAUSD parent Robina Suwol.

“My son was accidentally sprayed with a pesticide as he arrived at school one morning,” she recalls. “He has asthma and had a severe reaction. I knew what had happened was an accident, but I wanted to fix it.” She and a group of dedicated parent and community volunteers have done just that. Over the past three years, their group, California Safe Schools Coalition, and the school district have changed the way schools deal with the problems of pest management. Toxic chemicals are out. Trapping, removing habitats like holes or crevices, and excellent sanitation are in.

Pests, such as ants, rodents and even weeds, can be problems everywhere, home, office, and school. “We now know that some pesticides can be as hazardous (or more hazardous) to health than the pests!” LAUSD has replaced old pest management habits with effective alternative strategies,” explains Jenny Brady, another parent in the group that meets monthly to ensure the safety and health of all school children. “Despite the changes, pesticides must be used occasionally,” she adds. “But we’ve eliminated over 100 from district use.”

All parents can participate in protecting the health of their children. The LAUSD Parent/Student handbook contains the Annual Pesticide Use Notification Form. When the form is filled out and returned to your child’s school, you will be notified before pesticides are used on campus. Parents can also help by talking to their children about the need to properly dispose of food, trash, and gum on their school campus. For more information contact: Jenny Brady at 310-454-0290 or go to www.calisafe.org.

Your Child’s Safety Comes First

Programs Open

The nation’s largest magnet program became even larger this school year when five new magnet programs opened in the Los Angeles Unified School District. “The District was awarded a $5 million grant to start five new magnets, expand three existing magnets, and upgrade technology,” says Laverne Patterson, Advisor. The new additions will offer 1100 new seats when totally enrolled. They are located at:

Verdugo Hills Multimedia/Technology
Gage MS Math/Science/Technology
Purche ES Science/Technology
Taper ES Technology
Sunland ES Gifted/High Ability

Parents interested in applying to any of the 161 magnet programs for the 2004-2005 should watch for the Choices brochure that will be mailed to all LAUSD homes in December. The application deadline will be January 23, 2004. More than 53,000 LAUSD students currently attend magnet programs.
LAUSD Schools Surpass State and County SB IX Schools

The pace of improvement in schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District participating in reform programs exceeds that of state and county schools in the same programs.

“The numbers tell an impressive story,” says Harry Gerst, Director of the SB IX Unit. “The gains continue the momentum of Superintendent Romer’s Initiative with the strong academic improvement made in our elementary schools for the past three years. The efforts by teachers, administrators, the new math and literacy coaches and programs such as Open Court are paying off for students. More of our schools met or exceeded their API growth targets. The data from the California Department of Education shows how well our schools are using the supplemental funds to improve student achievement.” The charts to the right illustrate that.

More than 330 LAUSD schools are in various stages of these SB IX programs. Brooklyn Avenue Elementary School is one of the new ones, receiving its first grant in May. The staff and teachers lost no time putting it to good use, according to Principal Raymond Gonzales. “We got $221,000 to bring student success to the campus. We knew where we had to start - with the basics.”

Young readers at Brooklyn Avenue run to the brand new computers and settle down quickly for their Waterford literacy lessons. The first graders are drawn by the state-of-the-art technology that has only been in place a few months. “It’s the first thing we did with our SB IX grant. We bought materials, materials, materials,” explains Mr. Gonzales. “Our computers were ten years old, the student furniture was also old and broken, and our library was down by 40% after we removed books too out-of-date to be useful. The basics of good instruction, that’s how we’ve begun.”

The support from the state and federal governments to increase student achievement goes to the schools that need it most. “Eligible District schools have received more than $300 million dollars over the past four years,” adds Mr. Gerst. “Each school designed its own action plan, and, by last measure, 293 are making dramatic progress.”

DELAC: An Opportunity for Parent Participation

District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) is a state-mandated group of parents whose first priority is quality education for students who are English Learners.

DELAC parents assist and advise in the development and implementation of the District Master Plan for the Education of English Learners (EL). They also work to bring community resources into the effort to provide an effective education for the thousands of LAUSD students who are ELs. DELAC members provide support to local districts by providing information about District programs and initiatives.

DELAC meetings are open to all and are held on the 4th Thursday of the month at Parent Community Services Branch, 701 W. Cesar Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles. Each meeting is conducted in the language spoken by the majority of members, and translation services are provided as needed.

DELAC Officers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>Hortencia Perez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Vice Chair</td>
<td>Rita Suarez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Vice Chair</td>
<td>Carmen Flores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Vice Chair</td>
<td>Rosa Mendoza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ricardo Gastelum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Secretary</td>
<td>Maria Palafox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliamentarian</td>
<td>Encarnacion Campos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asst. Parliamentarian</td>
<td>Raquel Alamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Carla Vega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Public Relations</td>
<td>Maria Avila</td>
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Spotlight on Parent Involvement

Each and every school in the Los Angeles Unified School District elects School Site Councils. The Council provides a forum for parents to participate cooperatively with teachers and administrators. Beginning this year, each Council has a new and stronger authority. The School Site Council now is responsible for developing the Single Plan for Student Achievement that is the instructional roadmap for each school, required by the state of California. Other parent councils may advise; the SSC is the decision-maker. I applaud the dedication and work of the parents elected to their Councils and urge all community members to support them. The School Site Council is the voice of the parents on campus. Make that voice meaningful for the success of all students.

In past issues of the Parent Press, you’ve been introduced to the current parent leadership on the district level. The District Advisory Committee, the Parent Collaborative, and the District English Learners Advisory Committee are led by parent volunteers who commit long hours to increasing the quality and equality of education in our schools. I commend those leaders who represent all parents.

Loma Vista Elementary School opened its new Parent Center in September. Parent volunteer Amparo Morales says, “We are so happy to have a place on campus where we can meet, learn, and do volunteer work for our school.” Since the bright, newly painted room was officially opened, it has been busy with parent education classes including ESL and a Spanish literature classes for adults. Parents volunteer daily to ensure safe student arrivals at Sherman Oaks School.

Dorsey parent Stephanie Johnson wants all parents to know that Dorsey High School “encourages students to aim high and reach for better things, particularly in the area of athlete scholars.” Her son Jonathan Heard, who is a senior, has won a $4000 college scholarship from the Legal Heritage Institute. He is a varsity basketball player and a Law Magnet student who, according to his mother, “has been directed by teachers and coaches that academics are the top priority. If students don’t do well in class, they won’t play on Dorsey sports teams.” Jonathan is one of only 24 California students to win this competitive scholarship.

The value of fire safety rules, exercise, and flag etiquette are just some of the lessons learned by students at Tom Bradley Elementary School in their Junior Fire Cadet Program brought to campus by LA City Fire Department Captain Brent Burton. Capt. Burton meets for six weeks with 40 students. One lesson focuses on how fire-fighting equipment works complete with a fire truck for hands-on instruction. Capt. Burton was a student at Bradley and brought the Cadet Program as a way to give back to his school.

Math, from page 1

Program, and he wants parents to know that. “We created and are using an instructional guide that covers mathematics instruction from Kindergarten through Algebra, and in October, we’ll begin working on a guide for Geometry.” The instructional guides are a compilation of the state standards that students are expected to learn, along with a chart that connects each textbook to the standards it will cover. It makes the standards more accessible to students, parents and teachers.

The math guides are available to parents at their local schools. “It’s so helpful when parents have informed discussions with teachers, when they are aware of the standards and the expectations for their students,” he emphasizes.

“The new math initiative also includes Quarterly Assessments that will help both teachers and students,” adds Mr. Vheru. These assessments, which were developed for grades 2-Algebra, will be given at the end of each quarter to determine student mastery of the standards. Developed with Educational Testing Services (ETS), the test can be given in one day, with the results available 24 hours later. This means that teachers, if necessary, can focus on any aspect of the standards that proved difficult for students, helping them to fully understand the concept before beginning new material in the next quarter. “We’ve built in a window of time at the end of the quarter to administer the assessments and then to allow teachers to meet together to compare their progress and strategies for student success,” Mr. Vheru says.
Family Fun for Free

Paramount Ranch – This former studio lot is now open to the public, complete with a working set of a California village. There are trails and rangers lead hour long tours every other Saturday morning.

Where: Paramount Ranch Road and Cornell Road, Agoura Hills
For more info: 818-597-9192

Lauren Greenfield’s Girl Culture at the Skirball Cultural Center – This free exhibit in the Ruby Gallery features photographs that offer a glimpse into the social and emotional lives of modern girls and women. There will be a lecture by photographer Lauren Greenfield on Wednesday, November 19th as well, discussing the meaning of the work. The Skirball has a variety of programs and exhibits that are family friendly and are usually inexpensive.

Where: Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 North Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90043
The museum is open from Noon – 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Sunday.
The Special lecture is on Wednesday, November 19 at 7:30 p.m. and is free.
For more info and exhibit hours: 310-440-4647.

FREE TUTORING, from page 2

Supplemental Services brochure mailed to every eligible LAUSD home.

The free tutoring is less than a year old, but already results look promising. “From the data we’ve received, almost all students who attended a full session showed growth in achievement levels,” reports Mr. Leichty. “The improvement was measured from the assessments done before and then at the end of the program.” The free tutoring programs are available only to students who attend one of the 104 identified Program Improvement Schools listed on the Beyond the Bell Web site http://www.btb.lausd.net/ses.

“It’s a great deal for students. If parents had to pay for the tutoring, it would cost nearly $1000 for the session,” says parent Michael Caldwell, Chair of the District Advisory Council. These sessions are scheduled from November 2003 through August 2004. Parents must file a request form. The last deadline for returning those forms is December 5, 2003. More information can be found at http://www.btb.lausd.net/ses or by calling your local school.

FREE COMPUTER CLASSES

Learn computer skills from the most basic level to advanced uses taught by experienced instructor.

Classes held in the Computer Lab at PCSB, M–F 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
For Information please call: 213–217–5272

FALLING BEHIND, from p. 1

Parents who want to help their teenagers earn a high school diploma or GED by buying classes from a private company: Beware!

Purchasing GED preparation classes or courses for “high school credit” from an outside vendor could be a waste of money. The Legal Counsel for the Los Angeles Unified School District warns that at least two vendors have been selling such programs – even though the classes don’t meet California requirements, and the students will not receive credits from the District.

California Technical High School, which sells independent study programs, and Continental Academy, a Florida-based company offering correspondence courses for high school diplomas and GEDs, have come to the attention of LAUSD lawyers. Parents should be on alert. Neither company meets state qualifications or provides classes that meet California graduation requirements. There are probably other unaccredited companies out there, too.

Parents should ask these questions and see documentation as proof:

1. Is the provider accredited and registered in California and meet all state requirements?
2. Is the provider familiar with LAUSD high school requirements and how the classes fit into those requirements?
3. Does the course provide the required instructional minutes needed for credit?

Parents and students should talk to the high school counselor, career advisor, or school administrator before enrolling with or paying money to any outside provider. If students want or need additional credits, or information about graduation requirements, their high school should be the first stop. For more information, call the High School Programs Office at 213-241-6895.