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CUSD Today

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



February 2021

Clovis Unified School District — WHERE CHARACTER COUNTS!

Volume 23, No. 7

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UPDATE

Returning to school

CUSD Today

Clovis Unified elementary students who are part of the final phase of in-person instruction began returning to campuses Feb. 9 after the district received permission from the Fresno County Department of Public Health. The students, along with intermediate and high school students whose family opted for in-person instruction, were set to return in January but that was halted by the county

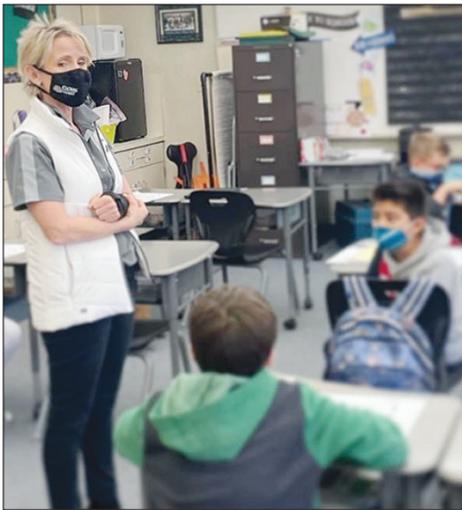


Photo special to CUSD Today. Superintendent Eimear O'Farrell visits with elementary students who are attending in-person instruction at Gettysburg Elementary.

at that time.

As of CUSD Today's print deadline, the district is waiting for the state's response to a clarification appeal by Clovis Unified about the status of the district's secondary schools. Most recently, in late January, county medical officials determined additional secondary students would not be allowed on the district's campuses until COVID daily rates are 25 new cases per 100,000 county population or below. State guidelines and requirements are also evolving, and may impact plans for secondary student returns toward which the district is working to implement as soon as possible.

On Jan. 27, the CUSD Governing Board adopted the newly required COVID Safety Plan that includes the updated School Reopening Plan and the COVID Prevention Plan (including the School Guidance Checklist). Copies of these documents can be found online at <https://www.cusd.com/BacktoSchool2020-21.aspx>.

There were about 11,000 Clovis Unified students attending in-person instruction who returned to campuses October through December, including elementary, some special education and some secondary students in support programs. The return of the final phase of elementary students will bring about 2,300 more students to campuses. There are about 10,000 secondary students whose families have opted for them to return, and are waiting for that to occur.

For ongoing updates, visit Clovis Unified's website: cusd.com. Families are also encouraged to watch for messages from Clovis Unified's app, and to sign up for it if they have not already done so, and to look at their student's school website.

A-MAIZE-ING



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Sierra Vista Elementary teacher Michael Williamson dressed in his finest corn suit while teaching students online about plants, in particular, corn. His enthusiasm captures the spirit of what we call "Diamonds." In honor of Clovis Unified's 60th Anniversary – its Diamond Year – see other gems shining across the district as students and staff make the best of a challenging time.

➤ See Page 9

Buchanan among Top 5 state 'Schools of the Century'

Cal-Hi Sports recently released its current "State Schools of the Century" rankings with Buchanan High and Long Beach Poly tied for fifth place.

The four schools ranked higher (Archbishop Mitty High School, Mater Dei High School, De La Salle High School and Torrey Pines High School) are powerhouse schools – three of which are private schools – with deep legacies of sports dominance.



"For Buchanan High to be recognized as a Top 5 State School of the Century is absolutely incredible. This is the biggest recognition that any school

can receive for athletics," said Steve France, Clovis Unified's Assistant Superintendent who oversees district athletics. "This is not only great news for our district, but great news for our entire community. We should be very proud of Bear Nation, including the dedicated young men and women athletes as well as the leadership, coaches and mentors."

Buchanan High was named the California



State Athletic School of the Year by Cal-Hi Sports the last two years and also in 2005-06. Most recently, the Bears wrestling team won the CIF State Championships for the past five years, both girls cross country and girls track and field won their first CIF State Championship and boys water polo won the CIF Regional Championship. Other successes have been achieved since 2000 in baseball, softball, soccer and football.

The Buchanan baseball team was No. 1 in California in 2011 and 2016.

"We are very proud to have our Athletic Department mentioned with the likes of Archbishop Mitty, Mater Dei, De La Salle and Torrey Pines. These school historically are the top athletic departments not only in California, but in the U.S.," said Buchanan Principal Joe Aiello. "This recognition validates the dedication our coaches have made to build true articulated programs and the commitment from our community to give our students the best possible athletic experience."

Only one other school in the Valley made the current Cal-Hi Sports rankings for the century and it is also a Clovis Unified school. Clovis West High, which was Cal-Hi's state school of the year in 2004-05, is No. 11 in the listing. Congratulations to the Bears and Golden Eagles!!!

Clovis Unified district, schools named to honor roll

Clovis Unified learned in January that it has been named an Educational Results Partnership Honor Roll District – the only school district in the Valley to receive the title. Additionally, 31 Clovis Unified schools were recognized as Honor Roll schools.

The schools are: Alta Sierra Intermediate, Boris Elementary, Century Elementary, Clark Intermediate, Clovis East High,

Clovis Elementary, Clovis High, Clovis North High, Clovis West High, Cole Elementary, Fancher Creek Elementary, Fort Washington Elementary, Freedom Elementary, Fugman Elementary, Gettysburg Elementary, Granite Ridge Intermediate, Jefferson Elementary, Kastner Intermediate, Liberty Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Maple Creek Elementary, Mickey Cox Elementary, Miramonte Elementary, Mountain View Elementary, Nelson Elementary, Orazo Elementary, Reyburn Intermediate, Sierra Vista Elementary, Tarpey Elementary, Temperance-Kutner Elementary and Weldon Elementary.

The award is given to schools that demonstrate high levels of student academic achievement, improvement in achievement over time, and reduction in achievement gaps.

Each year ERP compiles the California Honor Roll under the partnership of the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence, or CBEE, as part of an effort to shine light on successful educational systems and promote solutions that have demonstrated improved student outcomes.

"These honor roll schools and districts are living proof that our students can succeed when schools are committed to removing educational obstacles and accelerating student success," said ERP President James Lanich.

In total, 26 California districts and 1,834 schools were named to the honor roll based on achievement data.

31

CLOVIS UNIFIED HONOR ROLL SCHOOLS



Vaccinations begin ...

➤ See Page 3

INSIDE:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

District air filters get boost

Clovis Unified began upgrading air filtration systems in every classroom, school building and district facility. *Page 3*

COMMUNITY

#ClovisUnifiedCares

Recently students throughout the district gave their efforts to supporting their community through acts of kindness and collection drives. *Page 6*

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Efforts driven by needs of students, staff

Over the past 11 months I have regularly related our COVID response experience to that of a journey through the unknown. *Page 5*



Virtual Advising Session Dates

| High School | Date(s) |
|---|------------------------|
| Buchanan | January 26th and 27th |
| Clovis High | February 9th and 16th |
| Clovis West | February 10th and 11th |
| Clovis North | February 19th and 26th |
| Clovis East | March 11th and 12th |
| Gateway/Clovis Online/Enterprise & Community Day School | March 9th |
| Alternative Education | April 6th |

If you missed a session above, contact your high school counselor



High School Students:

- You received a flyer from Clovis Community College and State Center Community College District
- The flyer has instructions on how to sign-up for the virtual community college advising sessions
- All college advising will be done via Zoom online sessions

Please contact your high school counseling department or community college Outreach Specialist assigned to your high school for exact times and online event log in information.

Clovis Community College Outreach Specialists



David-Anthony Navarro
 Schools: Clovis East, Clovis West, Clovis Online, Enterprise, Community Day School & Gateway
 Phone: 559-325-5267
 Email: david.navarro@cloviscollege.edu
 Appointments are available per request.



Isaac Reyna
 Schools: Clovis High, Clovis North, Buchanan
 Phone: 559.325.5357
 Email: isaac.reyna@cloviscollege.edu
 Appointments are available per request.

1 in California...

Number of Associate Degree for Transfers (ADTs) awarded, based on enrollment
Campaign for College Opportunity per 50 FTES for 2018-19 academic year

Number of transfer students to UCs/CSUs, based on enrollment
CCCCO Student Success Metrics per 100 students, 2017-18 academic year

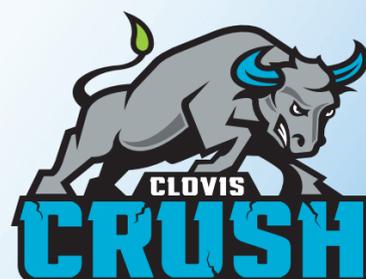
2 in California...

Associate Degrees earned with fewest units accumulated
CCCCO Student Success Metrics 2018-19 academic year

Clovis Community College is the college of choice for academic excellence, innovation, and student achievement.

Clovis Community College is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Creating Opportunities...
 One Student at a Time



➤ Announcements



VACCINATIONS BEGIN: Some Clovis Unified employees were among the initial eligible recipients of COVID vaccinations in January, including school nurses Sarah Wilson, left, and Stacey Kiehlmeier, seen here showing off their Band-Aid and giving a thumb's up. In its initial phase, Fresno County's vaccination schedule made the vaccine available for district nurses and health aides, some staff in special education and employees 65 and older who chose to receive it. As supplies continue to become available and Fresno County moves through the distribution schedule, the vaccine is expected to be offered to other staff and teachers in the district in the coming months. Learn more: <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>.



CART: CART is a joint learning center between Clovis Unified and Fresno Unified. Students spend half day at their home campus and half at CART, learning in one of its hands-on learning labs. Areas of study include biomedicine, biotechnology, business and finance, cybersecurity, digital marketing, engineering, manufacturing and robotics, environmental science and field research; forensic research and biotechnology; interactive game design; law and order; multimedia; psychology; and web development. CART is open to students who will be juniors and seniors next year. To attend CART's Information Webinar, go to: <https://cusd.zoom.us/j/91719788007>. For more information about CART, see www.cart.org.

More information about these programs is also available through school counseling centers.

Student conferences to be online, allow greater access

Clovis Unified has moved its annual student leadership conferences usually attended by hundreds into online formats this year because of COVID. The new virtual format is expected to provide a chance for even more students to attend.

"Launching the events online will increase conference availability," said Saul Salinas, Clovis Unified's Community Relations Coordinator. "In the past, every conference reached capacity and unfortunately students had to be turned away."

In February and March, Clovis Unified will hold the African American Middle School Conference, the Latino High School and Middle School Conference, and the Asian Student Success Conference. The district is also a sponsor of Fresno County Office of Education's African American High School Conference.

Salinas said the conferences' goals are to promote culture and diversity; to expose students of diverse backgrounds to role models of their same background and heritage; to teach cultural history beyond the curriculum; and to provide inspiration in pursuing post-secondary goals.

"Historically certain ethnic groups have been left out and marginalized, and unfortunately, the data reflects a need to do something special. One event will not solve all the historical and current challenges, but it's a good start," Salinas said. While the conferences are specific in ethnicity in regard to conference topic, the conferences are open to any student of any ethnic background.

Each conference will feature speakers, local mentors and information about college and career opportunities. Students interested in attending can get details from their school counselor or visit www.cusd.com/IDAC.aspx.

Student Conference Opportunities:

- FCOE African American High School Student Leadership Conference, Feb 2.
- CUSD African American Middle School Conference, 1:30-3 p.m., Feb. 22, featuring Civil rights activists Joan Mulholland and Joanne Bland. Open to any middle school in the Valley. Details coming: www.cusd.com/IDAC.aspx Free of charge this year.
- CUSD Asian Student Success Conference, 2-3 p.m., March 8, for grades 7-12. Details coming: www.cusd.com/IDAC.aspx.
- CUSD Latino High School & Middle School Conference, March 22, time TBD. (Combined student groups for this year only.) Details coming: www.cusd.com/IDAC.aspx.

CUSD Campus Catering honored

Clovis Unified's Campus Catering team – or "nutritional masterminds" as The Restaurant & Food Group editor called them – recently learned it won two spots on the organization's "Food Management Top 10 Best Sandwiches" list in the Steak category.



Korean Steak Sandwich



Steak Sandwich

The district's winning sandwiches are the Korean Steak Sandwich (steak with gochujang flavor and citrus slaw) and Steak Al Pastor with Citrus Slaw (a combination of Mexican el pastor and Middle Eastern spice market).

Both sandwiches were served at Clovis High prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Campus Catering hopes to add them to the district menu when hot meals can be served again.

The Food Management brand of the Restaurant & Food Group is a leading resource for the onsite/noncommercial foodservice community, featuring trends and best practices, products and solutions in the segments of College & University, K-12, Healthcare, and Business & Industry dining.

District air filters get boost

Clovis Unified began taking additional aim against COVID and airborne particulates like dust and smoke by upgrading air filtration systems in every classroom, school building and district facility. In January, Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization units were installed to air ducts at all district high schools.

The system filters out 99% of COVID, SARS, influenza and contagions. It also minimizes particulates like ash, dust and other allergens.

All of the district's total 2,600 ducts are expected to be fitted with the units by mid-spring.

Learn more about CART, CTE classes

With high school students soon registering for classes for the fall, virtual tours and explanations of two of Clovis Unified's innovative learning approaches are available for students and families to review.

The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) will host an informational webinar from 6 to 7 p.m. Feb. 10 online, and Clovis Unified's Career Technical Education (CTE) held an online night in January that remains available to view on its website.

CTE Classes: Currently 3,800 Clovis Unified students are taking CTE classes like agriculture, construction, architecture, video production and medical patient care. CTE classes go beyond textbooks as students participate in ex-

CLOVIS FFA

Booster BBQ

Saturday,
February 27, 2021

DINNER for 4 \$50

Pick up @ Clovis Rodeo Grounds
4pm - 7 pm

DRIVE-THRU FUNDRAISER ONLINE RAFFLE & AUCTION

Special online raffle provided by
Sportsman's Warehouse



Buy tickets on our website with QR code or link below:
<https://sites.google.com/clovisusd.k12.ca.us/clovisffa/ag-boosters>
Auction Site: <https://www.32auctions.com/clovisffaboosters>
For more information email: clovisffaca2015@gmail.com

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Direct: 559-256-3629

VALLEY HEALTH TEAM

IS HERE FOR YOU DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME

In response to coronavirus (COVID-19), Valley Health Team is conducting telehealth appointments for medical, dental and behavioral health services, along with in-vehicle appointments. In addition, our health centers continue to be open for traditional in-office visits. For information or to schedule an appointment, please contact a Valley Health Team location near you.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| San Joaquin Health Center (559) 693-2462 | Kerman Health Center (559) 364-2970 | Kerman Dental Center/ Valley Optometric Center (559) 364-2980 |
| Kerman Unified School District Community Health Center (559) 364-2975 | Sablan Health Center (559) 659-3037 | Central Fresno Community Health Center (559) 203-6660 |
| Kingsburg Community Health Center (559) 326-5320 <i>Urgent Care Now Open</i> | Bishop Health Center (760) 2784-7020 | Dinuba Community Health Center (559) 595-1000 <i>Urgent Care Now Open</i> |

No Cost COVID-19 Testing

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms or had contact with a positive COVID-19 patient, please contact your nearest Valley Health Team location to determine if a COVID-19 test is needed. If you have additional questions, contact the COVID-19 Hotline listed below:

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

VHT.ORG | VALLEY HEALTH TEAM | COVID-19 HOTLINE (559) 705-6050

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY!



2020-2021 REGISTRATION

- HIGH QUALITY PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS
- NO COST TO QUALIFIED FAMILIES
- AM & PM CLASSES AVAILABLE



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CALL 327-9180 FOR MORE INFORMATION

Accolades for our Clovis Unified employees

Congratulations to several Clovis Unified team members who were recently recognized for their passion, dedication, and achievement in their work.

■ **Jeanne Prandini**, CUSD Director of Nursing Services, received the Fresno State Health and Human Services Hero Award for her work coordinating more than 100 staff while also advocating for the health and wellness of students and staff.



Jeanne Prandini



Ken Shipley



Demetra Walker-Vincent



Sherri Johnson



Richard Delgado

■ **Ken Shipley**, Clovis West girls golf coach, was named the NFHS Girls' Golf

Coach of the Year for the Western Section (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah) and the state! He is in his 14th year coaching the Golden Eagles, during which his team has been the TRAC champions every year.

■ **Demetra Walker-Vincent**, Clovis High Learning Director, has been selected as the district's nominee for Administrator of the Year in the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools annual contest. Walker-Vincent is also one of the founders of CUSD's Browder Scholars Program.

ways to have mainstream and children with special needs come together in supportive ways. She is currently teaching both online and in-person instruction.

■ **Richard Delgado**, Clovis West Area Transition Student Relations Liaison, has been selected as the district's nominee for Employee of the Year in the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools annual contest. He is the advisor for Link Crew, Latino Club, Native Nations Club and coordinator of the district's Latino Student Success Conference.

■ **Sherri Johnson**, Cole Elementary First Grade Teacher, has been selected as the district's nominee for Teacher of the Year in the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools annual contest. Johnson is a CSI coordinator, founded the Building Bridges Club to break down barriers, and creates

Science lessons from Sonora continue!

CUSD Today

Sierra Outdoor School (SOS) in Sonora, one of Clovis Unified's specialty schools, has gone virtual in order to provide an opportunity for sixth-graders to still experience the majestic science lessons traditionally experienced during three days at the camp.

Several sixth-grade classes have attended the remote learning sessions. Classrooms can join up to four different 50-minute lessons that engage students in topics ranging from ecology to conservation to wildlife. Students virtually experience the forest live with SOS naturalists, ask real-time questions, see wildlife specimens, and might even see a live animal if attending the raptor class.

Garfield Elementary is among several district schools that has taken their sixth-graders to camp remotely. Students Zoomed with SOS staff for their Raptors and Conservation classes and were given lessons and materials for the Talk to Trees class and Night Hike. Garfield teachers even provided students supply bags that included small disks of cut wood for a necklace making project and s'more fixings for a special camp treat to make the experience more real.

"It has been so good! I've enjoyed every minute of it," said student Hope Persons. "I didn't get to go in person,



Garfield Elementary sixth-grader Hope Persons works on her wooden medallion as part of her Sonora camp experience.

Photo special to CUSD Today.



but I did get the information. It was fun. I'm glad my class got to do the lessons together."

Learn more on Sierra Outdoor School: <https://sos.cusd.com>.

Save for College **AND** Support Your Parent-Teacher Club or High School Foundation

Is Your Student College Bound?



Join **College Planning Fresno** and support a Parent-Teacher Club or High School Foundation of your choice.



Step 1: Attend a free no-obligation 60-to-90 minute remote or in-person College Planning Consultation (\$150 value) at www.collegeplanningfresno.com to discuss admissions and college funding strategies that relate to your family and student's unique circumstances.

Step 2: Enroll your student in our college finance preparation program and we will contribute **\$200** to your student's Parent Teacher Club or high school foundation.* If you enroll a sibling, we will contribute an additional **\$100!**

Learn more by attending a free upcoming Webinar:

- Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. "Understanding the College Admissions Process."
- Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 at 6:30-7:30 p.m. "Are 529 Plans the Right Choice?"

Register online at: collegeplanningfresno.com

*Must show flyer or mention this ad. Offer expires April 15th, 2021. Offer subject to change.



SCOTT-KARL
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Efforts driven by needs of our students, staff

By Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

OVER the past 11 months I have regularly related our COVID response experience to that of a journey through the unknown. Along the way, we have climbed mountains, forged through uncharted territory, navigated dark valleys and high peaks in our efforts to meet the educational needs of our students and ultimately return to in-person instruction on all of our campuses.



Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D.

This journey has caused us to lean heavily into core values to inform difficult decisions, like our decision to act quickly to implement the health and safety measures recommended by medical experts so we could offer in-person instruction even while our county is in the Purple Tier. These efforts have required us to create new schedules, reconfigure classrooms,

invest in PPE and sanitizing equipment, create and staff new cleaning protocols, and recreate transportation systems – and then do it all over again, and again, as recommendations and requirements have evolved.

It has required us to tap into relationships with our employees to reinforce confidence that these measures designed for their safety, that in fact work, can be followed with fidelity.

Our employees must know that we are safely balancing their health and the health of their families with the needs of our students as we safely return to in-person instruction. We have delved deeply into conversations with state and local decision-makers involved in California's pandemic response so that we have a clear understanding of the steps to take to layer protection into our classrooms and

“In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to forge a path over, under and through the obstacles we will face.”

Eimear O'Farrell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

facilities.

Today we have close to 10,000 students learning in-person on our campuses, and we are actively working with the Fresno County Department of Public Health toward receiving authorization to complete the return of the remaining 10,000+ students whose families have opted for in-person instruction. New guidance and policies issued during the month of January at the state and local

vaccination of about 650 employees working in close contact with our students with special needs who cannot maintain physical distancing and 100% masking. Simultaneously, we are developing partnerships with healthcare providers and our own MiCare health center to become a vaccination site. Ensuring our educational team is quickly vaccinated at the time educators are eligible is a critical leg

of our journey back to the classroom.

Along the way, we have also been fortunate to summit some peaks. Implementing the start of our in-person instructional plans last fall and being one of the first in the state to provide students some access to co-curricular programs through our Return to Play protocols last June were such summits.

Our offerings of a virtual Career Technical Education Night to families on Jan. 27 and CART's annual student showcase were other summits reached by teams focused on creatively providing our students with valuable school experiences.

This journey is long, and while our destination is within sight, we still have miles to go until all of our students are back in their classrooms. In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to forge a path over, under and through the obstacles we will face. It may not be easy and at times it may appear messy, but our commitment to you is that, rather than set up camp and wait for someone else to draw a map, we will continue to move carefully forward on this journey.

Students share vision, hope in MLK contest

CUSD Today

Winners and honorees of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Contests will be celebrated Feb. 11 for their insights about ways to advance freedom and justice. Among them are several Clovis Unified students who – through expressions of art, essay or speech – responded to the question: “Where Do We Go from Here? Growing the Plant of Freedom with Love and Justice.”

The question comes from a speech delivered by King in 1967 titled “Where Do We Go From Here?” in which he said, “The deep rumbling of discontent in our cities is indicative of the fact that the plant of freedom has grown only a bud and not yet a flower.” The Fresno County contest challenged stu-

FCSS Martin Luther King Jr. Contest:

- Feb 11
- Virtual Exhibition & Awards Program
- 5:45 p.m. Art Loop
- 6 p.m. Program
- Zoom: <https://fcoe-org.zoom.us/j/95803910426>

dents to consider how to further grow the bud of freedom.

Artwork and performed speeches can be seen at the virtual event and on the FCSS website, mlk.fcoe.org.

Featured here are excerpts of CUSD student winning essays:

As a Latina girl I imagine when I grow up, I will earn as much as any man. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s “Where do we go from here” speech says, “We should be dissatisfied until everyone has justice.” He talked about “The deep rumbling of discontent in our cities is indicative of the fact that the plant of freedom has grown only a bud and not yet a flower.” I believe the women's pay inequality to men is similar to this idea because there is progress, but it is not finished. What needs to be done to make sure that women earn as much money as men is to have more people involved fighting for women's equality. We need to change the way people think of women's value.

Women do not earn as much as men, but African American women get even less, and Latinas get even less earnings than all groups of women. The 2014 Shriver Report noted “women's average annual paychecks reflected only 77 cents for every \$1.00 earned by men.” The gap is even wider for women of color: African American women earn only 64 cents and Latinas 55.

... When I grow up and get a job, I want justice to look more like a flower like what Dr. King talked about in his speech. To continue to use your voice and to continue to fight for equal rights – then we will start to see the flower

LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



Special to CUSD Today

Valley Oak Elementary sixth-grader Karli Kennedy's colored pencil drawing placed in Fresno County's Martin Luther King Jr. Art Contest. She explains the drawing depicts Dr. King delivering his famous speech, “I Have a Dream,” and his words plant seeds in those who are listening and grow buds of dreams for freedom, hope, peace and justice.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

grow.

Isla Cohea
Red Bank Elementary

The discontent Dr. King talks about in “Where Do We Go from Here” resonates with us, especially because of the events in this year. It reminded me of Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher, who once said, “Collective fear stimulates herd instinct, and tends to produce ferocity toward those who are not regarded as members of the herd.” Since the foundations of America, and long before that, fear has led to hatred, and we see this in acts of

racial injustice. In order to move forward, we must let go of fear and embrace change.

America was built by challenging ideas and finding compromise between our differences. Our nation's history is full of innovation. At the same time, it is also full of injustice in the form of slavery and segregation. Although we no longer see this disgusting part of American history, we have not yet dealt with the core problems. Studies show that more people in America are imprisoned than in any other country in the world, many of them African-Americans. Other studies

show that a black man is way more likely to be shot or arrested than a white man doing the same crime. The issues of racial injustice did not magically go away when slavery and segregation ended. They just changed with time. If we continue to deny that these issues still exist, we will never be able to make change.

... Differences in how we look, how we think, and what we do should be acknowledged and celebrated, but there is more that connects us than what separates us. Hope can overcome the fear that tries to destroy us.

Megan Sinaga
Granite Ridge Intermediate

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo once said, “When solving problems, dig at the roots instead of just hacking at the leaves.” Too often, it appears that we attempt to solve problems without considering the root causes. This creates even more strife and conflict when a similar issue arises. Several issues still plaguing America today include racism, lifestyle diseases, food inequality, and environmental justice. Such issues interconnect in various ways. ...

It is important to remember that the best and most efficient solutions begin with the roots. One of the first steps taken should be to listen to those impacted the most about the issues they want to address instead of choosing issues based on an agenda. We should also be willing to learn. We may not understand, but we ought to remain open-minded and empathetic so that we can expand our understanding of these issues. Then and only then will we be able to solve these issues.

The “plant of freedom” is waiting for us, ensnared in the weeds of problems that have gone on for too long. But, like weeds, we cannot solve the issues on the surface, for they will worsen in time. We must dig deep, face the problems at the roots, and then begin to nurture and grow the “plant of freedom.”

Alyssa Kelzer
Clovis West High

Clovis Unified student winners

Essay Contest:

Elementary: Isla Cohea, Red Bank, 1st place; Rahmatullah Fathalli, Lincoln, 3rd; Junior High: Megan Sinaga, Granite Ridge, 1st; Aminah Carter, Granite Ridge, 2nd; Maiya Levine, Granite Ridge, 3rd(T); High School: Alyssa Kelzer, Clovis West High, 1st; Mia Scott, Clovis North, 2nd; Trisha Prajapati, Clovis North, 3rd

Art Contest:

Elementary: Karli Kennedy, Valley Oak, Runner-Up; Angelina Olivar, Red Bank, Honorable Mention; Secondary: Abigail McGill, Clovis High, Runner-Up; Keira Ngo, Kastner Intermediate, Honorable Mention (T)

Speech Contest:

Elementary: Jocelyn Hanson, Valley Oak, 2nd; Sania Jhangiani, Fugman, 3rd; Junior High: Priya Prajapati, Granite Ridge, 1st (T); Sarah Qamar, Granite Ridge, 2nd; Sharndeeep Kaur, Reyburn, 3rd; High School: Trisha Prajapati, Clovis North High, 1st; Vaughn Ladd, Clovis North, 2nd; Eunice Choi, 3rd

— 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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District students show compassion, good citizenship

CUSD Today

During the recent holiday season and winter months, students throughout the district gave their efforts to supporting their community through various acts of kindness and collection drives. Events looked different because of COVID restrictions, but the enthusiasm and lesson learned about compassion, caring and good citizenship remained strong.

"We are on a mission to build champions for life and part of the way we grow champions is by teaching students to be a champion for others," said Orazo Principal Robyn Snyder of her school's canned food drive. "Giving back to our community is just one way, our Bearcats are making an impact on those around us."

Here's a sampling of #ClovisUnified-Cares:

■ **Alta Sierra Intermediate** collected and gave more than 3,000 food items to Clovis Rotary, which made food baskets for local families in need. ASI leadership students helped receive the donations during drive-thru drop offs.

■ **Clovis Elementary** learned about gratitude through a Positivity Project, and students were then encouraged to donate non-perishable food to show #positivityinaction. Hundreds of items were collected and also given to Clovis Rotary for their program.

■ **Clovis East High Air Force Junior ROTC** cadets volunteered for Operation Christmas Child, helping sort shoe boxes filled with toys and preparing them for shipping. There were 47 cadets who gave 163 hours of service for the project that sends gifts to children in countries from



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Clovis West High's Juliana Solorio and students in the Functional Life Skills program made holiday cards for the elderly.

Rwanda to Ukraine.

■ **Clovis East FFA** students also prepared 86 filled shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. In addition, the group held a canned food drive and students collected more than 1,000 nonperishable items that were donated to the Poverello House.

■ **Clovis North High** held its annual food drive, donating the collection to Rotary for distribution. Clovis North's Interact Club made ornaments for senior citizens at Cedarbrook Memory Care Facility.

■ **Clovis West High** held many projects. The Functional Life Skills Program made holiday cards for the elderly and collected blankets and jackets for the homeless. The school held a food drive that helped feed 200 families during Thanksgiving. The SOAR office and Fresno Food Bank distributed 50 food baskets to CW area families. The leadership team and a local tree lot gave 26 Trees for the Troops and 21 wreaths that were delivered to military sites.

■ **Clovis West High and Kastner Intermediate's** pep and cheer programs made blankets, sharing their work together while on Zoom. The cheerleaders made more than 80 blankets that were given to a women's shelter, Poverello House and a school.

■ **Cole Elementary** held its annual food drive in November run by the PTC Cole Cares Committee and in partnership with Faith Community Church. Food donations were used to supply the fixings for full Thanksgiving dinners for 20 Cole families.

■ **Freedom Elementary** joined in the Toys for Tots drive and collected more than 100 toys. Members of the Student Council encouraged their peers during Zoom meet-



Photo special to CUSD Today.

At Garfield Elementary, Michelle Weber and Jonathan Davies stand among donations for the Giving Tree drive.

ings and also made videos for all classes promoting the efforts.

■ **Garfield Elementary** held a Giving Tree, where families sponsored a child from sister school Sierra Vista Elementary. A total of 129 children were gifted a toy and clothing.

■ **Gateway High** continued its tradition of participating in the annual Toys for Tots drive, although it looked a little different. Led by the school's Access Team, which is part of the CUSD Transition Program, the drop-off collection drive filled three boxes full of books and toys. In non-COVID times, students and staff partner with Odd Fellow members at a dinner where toys are donated, and the students serve meals and sing songs.



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Clovis North High's Alzheimer Club members made cookies for residents of a retirement home to enjoy.

■ **Kastner Intermediate Random Acts of Kindness Club** spread holiday cheer. Student members collected and filled 20 boxes with hygiene products, toys and school supplies to be sent to children around the world.

■ **Orazo Elementary's** Student Council organized a canned food drive. Two large bins were filled with non-perishables like rice, canned corn and beans. The food was given to Clovis Rotary for distribution.

■ **Valley Oak Elementary** teacher Kristi Vincent and the Student Council organized Blessing Bag. The school made bags for those in need containing items like body wash, combs, sunblock, socks, toothbrush and bottled water.



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Clovis West and Kastner's pep and cheer's Jordyn Sanders and team members made blankets for the Poverello House.



Photo special to CUSD Today.

Alta Sierra Intermediate leadership students Adi Engelbert, Sadie Munro and Cole Fennacy received non-perishable items during a drive-thru drop off for the school's Canned Food Drive.



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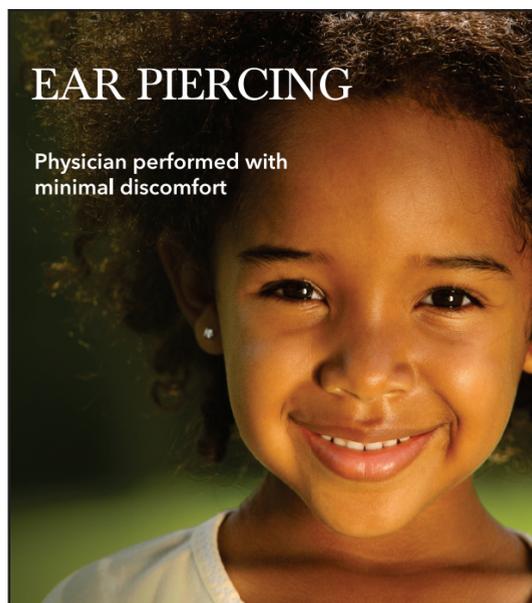
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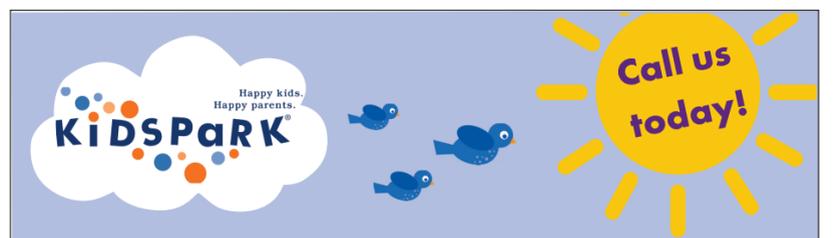


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Photo special to CUSD Today.

Evalin Mota shows her graduation certificate from Clovis Adult's Nurse Assistant Program.

Nursing careers begin

Thirty-six graduates of Clovis Adult Education's Nurse Assistant Program were celebrated recently during a drive-thru graduation event. The men and women who completed the 14-week program will next take the State Board exam to be certified, which previous CAE students had a 99 percent passage rate! According to CAE Principal Ed Schmalzel, many of the students plan to next enter the Vocational Nurse Program at Clovis Adult, which is overseen by Clovis Unified.

More than a game at Cedarwood

Cedarwood kindergartners in Elizabeth Aniotzbehere's class put their imaginations to work and built their own arcade games out of cardboard after watching a documentary video on Zoom called, "Caine's Arcade." The video discussed what it's like to create something with your hands compared to on a computer.

"The students were so excited," said Aniotzbehere of the one-week project to use cardboard and creativity to make their game. "The presenter was required to tell us how the game worked, how much it cost to play, and what the prize would be if there was a winner. The students listening offered compliments about what they liked about the presenter's arcade game."

The games included "Colton's Ring Toss," "Spencer's Skee Ball" and "Thomas' Ball Toss."

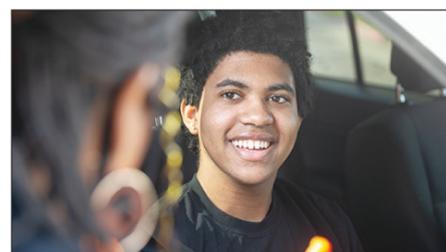
Aniotzbehere said the lesson provided different learning skills including fine and large motor skills, thought process, cause and effect, critical thinking, listening skills and speaking skills.

Emmys for Buchanan?

Buchanan High student productions were among the nominees announced recently by The Foundation of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for the



A drive-thru graduation was held for students who completed the Browder Scholars Program. Pictured, clockwise from left, are Nia Jackson (Clovis High); Nathan Lambert (Clovis West); and Imani Nur (Buchanan High), second from left with instructors Darryl Miller, Sean Ford and Tara Wills.



Photos special to CUSD Today.

Browder Scholars graduation

Students who completed the Browder Scholars cultural immersion program had a special drive-thru graduation following the conclusion of the five-week voluntary academic course. The Browder Scholars was developed by Dr. Anthony Browder for students to explore the history of the African experience in the United States and abroad.

Its curriculum provides an awareness of African heritage, history and culture. In its second year in CUSD, the course was open to all high school students, and participants met five Saturdays in a rigorous learning environment. Congratulations to all of these hard-working students! Great job!!!

2020 National Student Production Awards. Winners will be revealed during a web stream in February and presented with Emmys.

- Buchanan nominees and their award categories are:
- Audio/Sound: "The Wrong Way," Noah Roberto, (Daniel Pearce, advisor)
 - Director: "We Belong Together," Madi Barrett, (Pearce, advisor)
 - Editor: "We Belong Together," Barrett and Nate Long, (Pearce, advisor)

The nominees were selected from more than 2,000 entries from regional chapters of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and judged by industry professionals.

Global view at Maple Creek

When Maple Creek Elementary School could not hold its annual Multi-cultural Fashion Show in person, not only did the school move the program to online, but it also recreated the show into an innovative, engaging new format.

Using a world map and pins for viewers to click on, students shared a cultural selfie and information about their backgrounds. Student profile pins are literally spread all

around the globe! Check it out! <https://padlet.com/jordan-sharp1/zj5l6rc0k78u007y>

Art contest winners

Clovis Veterans Memorial District announced winners of its annual Veterans Day Contest held for Clovis Unified students.

- Grand Prize winners are:
- 2020 Veterans Art Contest Grand Prize – Mikhayla De Asis, fifth grade, Young Elementary
 - 2020 Veterans Essay Contest Grand Prize – Hope Pehrson, eighth grade, Alta Sierra Intermediate
 - 2020 Veterans Day Digital Media Contest Grand Prize – Layla Samouie, ninth grade, Clovis West High

Other first-place winners for grade levels are: Lorenzo Gastelum, kindergarten, Garfield Elementary; Chloe Harris, first grade, Liberty Elementary; Evelyn Hanson, second grade, Valley Oak Elementary; Danica Martinez, third grade, Mickey Cox Elementary; Mikeely Woods, fourth grade, Dry Creek Elementary; Abigail Nevin, fifth grade, Young Elementary; Francheska Requina, sixth grade, Reagan Elementary; Isabelle Balubar, seventh grade, Alta Sierra Intermediate; and Ava Helsley, eighth grade, Kastner Intermediate.

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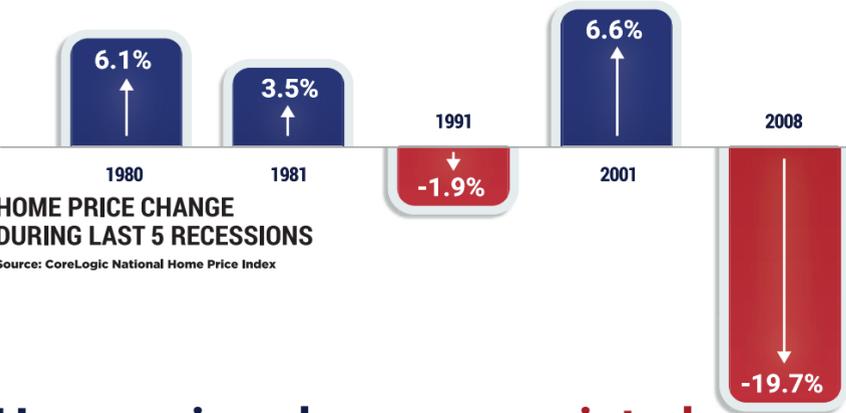


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Source: CoreLogic National Home Price Index

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Even though the economy has been placed on pause, it appears home prices will remain steady through the pandemic.

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▶ BOARD BRIEFS

Board discusses on-going efforts to navigate the COVID pandemic

By Kelly Avants, A.P.R.
Chief Communications Officer

Jan. 27

The Clovis Unified Governing Board heard a report on the district's on-going pandemic response and new state and local guidance and policy documents released during January. The district is poised to bring back its final phase of students awaiting in-person instruction when the Fresno County Department of Public Health's established criteria of case counts at 25 cases or less per 100,000 population is reached.

The board adopted the COVID-19 Safety Plan that includes the School Guidance Checklist, COVID-19 Prevention Plan and the current School Reopening Plan, which fulfill new reporting requirements. These are online at <https://www.cusd.com/Back-toSchool2020-21.aspx>.

Jan. 13

The board discussed the legal obligation of the district as a public agency to comply with guidance and direction given by the Fresno County Department of Public Health under the Governor's March 2020 Executive Order; efforts to accelerate the pace of vaccinations in the community; and on-going work to implement multiple health and safety measures in the workplace.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved new courses of study to be offered during the 2021-22 school year. These include Accounting (at all five comprehensive high schools), Digital Information Technology (Clovis Online), Honors Math IAB (Clovis Online), Innovation and Product Design (Clovis North), and Introduction to Computers & Technology (Clovis Online).

Dec. 11

Newly elected board members were seated and the annual organization of officers occurred. Yolanda Moore, David DeFrank and incumbents Hugh Awtrey and Dr. Steven Fogg took the Oath of Office beginning their four-year terms. During the reorganization, Dr. Fogg was elected to serve as president, Susan Hatmaker as vice president, and Tiffany Stoker Madsen as clerk, serving in these roles until December.

In other action, the board:

■ Approved the First Interim Report and adopted a positive certification indicating that the district will be able to meet its financial obligations for the remainder of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Governing Board will be held Feb 17, with the public portion at 6:30 p.m. Complete agendas and minutes are available online, along with videos of meetings of the Board, at cusd.com.



SPARKLING GEMS IN THE DISTRICT

Clovis Unified's 60th anniversary year is unlike any other with the challenges resulting from the COVID pandemic. But in this, our Diamond Anniversary year, there are many ways students, staff and families are shining brighter than ever as they make the best out of difficult situations. We salute these diamonds that illustrate the strength and character of Clovis Unified.

GOOD TO KNOW YOU: Gettysburg Elementary created its official Instagram account in January and began weekly posts shining a spotlight on a staff member who shared fun facts about themselves. Plant Supervisor Cruz Rodriguez said he loves his family, camping and watching the Raiders. Functional Life Skills kindergarten teacher Jordyn Mora let the Gettysburg Generals know she loves M&Ms, is a proud dog mom and has been to three countries that all begin with the letter "I." And Transitions Liaison Taylor Reeves shared she played soccer in college, is engaged and is the oldest of six girls. Those really are some fun facts!

BARISTAS AT FUGMAN:

Celebrating the end of a great Second Quarter, administrators at Fugman Elementary set up the Fugman Coffee Shop in the hallway for staff members to enjoy coffee and at baked treat. So proud of the students and staff for their commitment and hard work, exclaimed Principal Michael Olson. Now that's a whole "latte" love!

#WOLFPACKMEANSFAMILY: And family takes care of one another. That's exactly what Clovis East High learning directors did when they surprised Clovis East teachers with "Something Out of the Blue Because We Appreciate You!" treats. Blue drinks and blue bags of cookies, peanuts and candy were wrapped and given out as a way of thanking teachers for the dedication they have to their work and students.

AND YOU CAN QUOTE THAT!: The wise words of Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., Booker T. Washington and Deepak Chopra are among the quotations Boris El-

ementary is sharing on social media to their school community that encourage positivity and doing one's best. "It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer," says Einstein. "If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else," says Washington. What great inspiration for us all!

SHARING STORIES:

An old newspaper dispenser stand has been transformed into a Little Library at Garfield Elementary where books can be taken home and kept to enjoy. Jonathan Davies, who hand painted the stand with Cubs designs, and school parents worked on making this happen. Already, several books have been donated to the school to be added to the stand.

NEW SCHOOL MASCOTS?

Students at Jefferson Elementary recently were invited to share photos of some of their best friends – their pets! For those students in online instruction, these furry friends can offer a lot of fun during break times. The school put all the submitted photos and videos together in a fun slideshow. A few standouts included a cool, spotted lizard named Lizzy, and a silly pup named Ophelia who, from inside the car, tried her hardest to put a stop to the wiper blades that were sliding across the car windshield. (The car was parked so everyone was safe!)



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