

# UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2018

## Superintendent's Message

### Bonita's Future is Bright



As we cross into the second half of the school year in the Bonita Unified School District, I am reminded of the importance of taking time to reflect on our accomplishments and to embrace the exciting opportunities and successes that are in our future. Bonita has a long-standing reputation for being one of the finest Districts in the nation. This did not happen by chance; it is the result of the intentional commitment of always putting students first.

During the first half of this school year, we celebrated student achievements in academics, athletics, activities, and the arts. Our students scored big gains on California state assessments. Our staff and students were recognized locally, regionally, and statewide for successes on and off the athletic field. The district's financial health is solid. Our first-class facilities continue to improve with a new gym at Ramona Middle School and a gym nearly completed for the students and community of Lone Hill Middle School. It is through the hard work and dedication of all in Bonita and our community partners that we have so much of which to be proud.

As we look into the near future, the District continues to focus on equity and access for all students. The one everlasting truth in education is that we will never “arrive.” There is no destination. As the world evolves and the skills required for our students change, so do our practices. We will continue to hone our teaching skills, so all classrooms integrate technology, have collaborative environments, provide opportunities for creative expression, infuse problem-solving methodologies, and promote hands-on learning. Most importantly, the work will be fun and engaging.

The Bonita Unified School District has tremendously talented teaching staff on every campus in every classroom, and behind every great teacher is an unending amount of support from our classified, certificated, and management teams. It is because of this support, the most important work is done well every day — the interaction between teachers and students.

In a few months, graduation stages will be built, and hundreds of Bonita USD graduates will walk up ready to attend universities, local colleges, and technical schools and to enter into the competitive workforce and military. I am confident that Bonita is not only preparing our students with the necessary skills for the 21st century we live in today but giving them a solid foundation for the future.

The future for Bonita is not only bright; it's progressive. I look forward to what we will accomplish together as we finish the 2017-18 school year stronger than ever.

It is my humble privilege to be of service to the students, staff, and community members of Bonita Unified School District.

Sincerely,

Carl Coles  
Interim Superintendent

# Duarte Elks Lodge Donates Dictionaries to Third Graders

For the past eight years, the Duarte Elks Lodge #1427 Dictionary Project has gifted dictionaries to Bonita Unified School District's third-grade students. On December 11th and 14th, the Elks visited Bonita USD's eight elementary schools to make the special delivery. The team of Elks who delivered the dictionaries included Donna McEntire, John McEntire, Ann Garner, George Van Hove, Dian Stegall, Jackie Orovecz, Kathy and Jennifer Rentschler, and Rita Hirsch.

The third-grade students were thrilled to receive their very own dictionaries. Exclamations like, "This is the best day of my life," "This dictionary will make me happy every day," and "Is this true?" say it all.

We thank the Duarte Elks Lodge #1427 for their commitment to literacy and their commitment to BUSD.



Photos 1 & 2: La Verne Heights Elementary third grade students show their excitement (left) and Donna McEntire discusses the dictionary with students at Grace Miller Elementary (right).

# Bonita USD Director of Transportation Performs As Santa for Children in Hospital

Paul Thomas, Bonita Unified School District Director of Transportation, brought joy dressed as Santa for children at Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC) Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit on Christmas Eve. He has been performing as Santa for about 15 years beginning at Bryn Mawr Elementary in Redlands USD. This event came about when a friend sent him a Facebook post seeking a Santa for Christmas Eve to visit a child in the cardiac intensive care unit. The child's only wish was to have a picture taken with Santa. Without delay, Thomas called to volunteer his services. He visited 20 children that day allowing families to have their picture with Santa. The organization that sponsored the visit is called, "Little Hearts Warriors," created by a group of mothers with children with severe Congenital Heart Defects (CHD). Getting to visit the children that day was especially significant to Thomas as he dealt with the heartache that comes

from cardiac problems. He lost his 5-day old granddaughter to multiple heart defects, and his youngest son had open heart surgery when he was 16 years old at LLUMC Children's Hospital and stayed in the Pediatric Cardiac ICU.



**Photo 3: Paul Thomas performs as Santa to bring holiday cheer to families in the Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Unit at Loma Linda University Medical Center.**

## **Schools in the Spotlight**

### ***Roynon Elementary***

#### **Roynon's Invention Convention and Opportunities for Real Life Connections**

Roynon's fifth graders will be working on a project this month called Invention Convention. This project encourages students to think about an idea or concept that interests them or improves quality of life. On Friday, December 8, students had the opportunity to visit The Hettema Group, a world leader in experiential design located in Pasadena, which provided real-life connections prior to starting their inventions. Students were able to meet with employees and hear how they create themed attractions and inventions that are enjoyed by millions around the world. Students visited the model shop where they were able to see inventions that had been patented by some of the employees that work there. Students also heard how one project led to the creation of an elevator surrounded by LCD screens, the first of its kind that is in the One World Observatory in New York's One World Trade Center. The Hettema Group employees even created presentations for the students following the same criteria that students are expected to use in their presentations that gave students ideas for how to make their presentations more compelling. Amber in Mr. Baur's class shared that her favorite part of the trip was hearing about the materials that one of the employees used to create amazing Halloween decorations and a party atmosphere for the Obamas

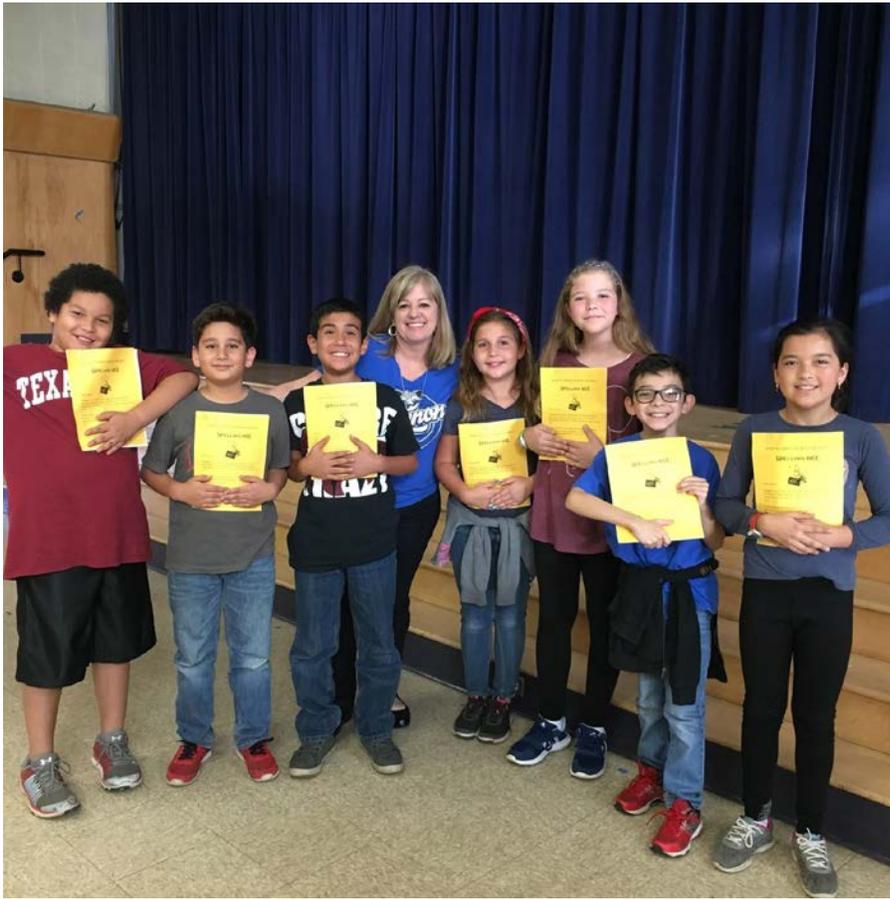
at the White House. In Mrs. Miranda's class, Nico shared that he was inspired by learning about the brainstorming process. Ms. Stirrett shared with the staff at The Hettema Group how as educators, we love to give our students experiences that inspire and excite them and the fifth grade students were definitely inspired and excited by their trip to The Hettema Group. A recap of the events from the day can be accessed online at <http://thehettemagroup.com/blog/1074-2-2-4-2-2/>.



Photos 4-7: Roynon Elementary students learn to create presentations from staff at the Hettema Group.

### **Roynon's Raccoons are Superstar Spellers**

The Bonita Unified School District's 14th Annual District-Wide Spelling Bee is scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2018. Roynon students began preparing in December for this exciting event. Interested fourth and fifth-grade students participated in a preliminary written Spelling Bee test during the month of December. Twenty-three students moved on to the fourth and fifth-grade Spelling Bee held at Roynon on Friday, January 12. Congratulations to fourth-grader, Rylee McCartney, for winning our school Spelling Bee that day. The seven students pictured below will move on to the District-Wide Spelling Bee this month. They have been practicing both at home and at school for this unique opportunity. We are so proud of their perseverance and wish them all the best!



**Photo 8: Mrs. DiGrazia poses with Roynon students advancing to the District Spelling Bee: (Left to Right) Jason Flegance, Emanuel Lopez, Issac Solis, Rylee McCartney, Sasha Freeborn, Jared Zavalza, and Mikaela Avila**

## **San Dimas High School**

### **San Dimas High School Junior Amita Stowitts earns Perfect ACT Score**

San Dimas High School Junior Amita Stowitts, daughter of Paul and Shweta Stowitts, earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36. On average, less than one-tenth of 1 percent of students who take the ACT earn a top score. In the U.S. high school graduating class of 2016, only 2,235 out of nearly 2.1 million graduates who took the ACT earned a composite score of 36.

The ACT consists of tests in English, Mathematics, Reading and Science, each scored on a scale of 1–36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. Some students also take the optional ACT writing test, but the score for that test is reported separately and is not included within the ACT composite score.

In a letter to the student recognizing this exceptional achievement, ACT Chief Executive Officer Marten Roorda stated, “Your achievement on the ACT is significant and rare. While test scores are just one of multiple criteria that most colleges consider when making admission decisions, your exceptional ACT composite score should prove helpful as you pursue your education and career goals.”

ACT test scores are accepted by all major U.S. colleges. Exceptional scores of 36 provide colleges with evidence of student readiness for the academic rigors that lie ahead.

Amita is a fantastic student. Her mother Shweta Stowitts is acting PTSA president at San Dimas High School. Amita has a 4.3 GPA and is a member of the Girls Varsity Soccer Team.



Photo 9: Amita Stowitts with Counselor Alicia Atkinson

## **San Dimas High School Student Earns Second Place in Siblings of Autism Scholarship competition**

Miranda (Mandy) Fetters, a junior at San Dimas High School, took second place in the Siblings of Autism Scholarship competition for 2017 and won \$5,000. Mandy wrote, produced, and starred in her own video submission for Siblings of Autism. Mandy's older brother Jaime, now twenty-one years old, was diagnosed at 27 months old with Autism. Mandy's heartfelt and realistic video depicts the ups and downs of living with a sibling who has Autism. Mandy maintains a 3.5 GPA at San Dimas, is enrolled in the Digital Photo class, and has played Softball for San Dimas High School.

**Sibling Scholarships** - Many people who are not impacted by autism fail to realize how expensive it is for a family to raise a child who is on the autism spectrum. Often as a family's limited income must be used to obtain the needed services and support for the family member with autism, the other children in the household are directly affected. The impacts may include lack of funds for summer camps, college tuition, or vocational training. Siblings of Autism distributes scholarships for education and other defined needs for those that have a sibling on the spectrum.

**History of Siblings of Autism** - Jason Cherry, founder of Siblings of Autism, recognizes the powerful impact of growing up with a sibling on the autism spectrum. Jason's brother, Matthew, was adopted from a Russian orphanage in 1993, just before Jason's birth. Diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and fetal alcohol syndrome, Matthew had a substantial impact on Jason's and his sister's childhood. The extensive involvement and funding required by the family for services and support for Matthew over two decades

directly influenced Jason and contributed to his compassion for kids on the autism spectrum and their siblings. As a direct result of the powerful and challenging experiences in his home, Jason has developed into a true leader and is working to become a voice for all siblings of individuals with autism. Mission Siblings of Autism is dedicated to supporting the siblings of individuals on the autism spectrum through educational scholarships, respite funds, and outreach programs. For more information on Siblings of Autism go to [www.siblingsofautism.org](http://www.siblingsofautism.org). Fiscal Agent Siblings of Autism is a 501(c) (3) registered charity. Donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

You can view Mandy's video at <https://youtu.be/vsvd6EwDBdE>



**Photo 10: Miranda Fetters with SDHS Interim Principal Jack Nance**

## **San Dimas Art Student Selected as Artsonia's "Artist of the Week"**

Congratulations to Brian Mares, a junior at San Dimas High School, who was selected as Artsonia's 10th-12th-grade "ARTIST OF THE WEEK" for November 26 - December 02, 2017. During the contest, Brian known as artist (Brian9629) received 668 votes from website visitors! Brian has taken Art at San Dimas for three years participating in Intro to Art, Advanced Art, and Advanced Placement Studio Art with Art Teacher Dominic Black.

Brian received a plaque from Artsonia and a \$50 gift certificate from Blick Art Materials. San Dimas Teacher Dominic Black received a \$100 gift certificate from Blick Art Materials.

Artsonia is the largest student art museum in the world! Every child can have an online art gallery and keep their masterpieces in a digital portfolio! The story of Artsonia begins with a dream that artwork created from kids around the world can be shared and enjoyed by everyone. Today, due to the passion of thousands of art teachers worldwide, that dream has come true. You can view Brian's artwork by visiting the Artsonia homepage at [www.artsonia.com](http://www.artsonia.com) and click on artist Brian9629.



**Photo 11: Brian Mares with Teacher Dominic Black and SDHS Interim Principal Jack Nance**

## **The San Dimas High School Cheer Squad on the Road to Earning Back-to-Back National Championship Title**

The San Dimas High School Cheer Squad knows what hard work is all about. They are the current 2017 United Spirit Association National Champions, an honor they also won in 2015. They were runners up in 2014 and 2016. Their team goal for 2018 is to win another National Championship. They are well on their way, taking 1st place honors in their first two regional competitions of this year, and are ready for the State competition scheduled for January 27, 2018.

Cheer coach Keyanna King has been coaching the Cheer Squad at San Dimas for five years, and is extremely proud of her athletes. She herself was nominated last year as a Cheer Pro Coach of the Year, and is nominated again this year.

The Cheer Squad at San Dimas practices daily each morning during zero period and frequently after school. They perform at school sporting events, rallies, and quite often at city events. Competitions are held on the weekends. These cheer athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA and exceptional Citizenship to participate. However, many of these athletes maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA and will be honored in the spring as Scholar Athletes.

On October 5, 2015, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 949, introduced by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), to classify competition cheer as a California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) sport beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Cheerleading is now a CIF sport where it will join basketball, badminton, cross country, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, skiing, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling.



**Photo 12: The 2017-2018 San Dimas High School CIF Saints Cheer Squad**