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PTA

from front page

for the schools. Also, a representative from the PTA Council was sent on a Sacramento Safari by the 33rd District PTA, where PTA members traveled to the state capital and talked with elected representatives. And last fall, 144 families got their portraits taken as part of an annual fund-raiser held by the Council. For every portrait taken, part of the proceeds went to the school of the pictured family.

Looking specifically at the schools in the District, each site had its own accomplishments this school year.

Center Street Elementary PTA President Laura Gabel pointed out that its school had a green theme this year. For one, the Cougar Patch garden was opened. "It's an educational garden," Gabel said, "So the kids use it to enrich classroom activities."

The school's PTA contributed money to the garden and provided weekly volunteers. The Planet Pals committee was started through the PTA this school year. The committee teaches about saving the environment and started Trash Free Tuesday and Walk to School Wednesday. "Educating the children, who, in turn, educate their parents," Gabel said.

The PTA also sponsored the Cougar Choir when it went to the Music in the Park competition at Universal Studios. It was a good investment, since the little singers got first place.

Gabel feels it was a great year at the school. She said with the current economy, it has been challenging, but she thinks that has brought more parents out to support the PTA. As a result, the money the Center Street PTA earned through fundraising went up this year.

Richmond Street School got arty by opening Studio 109. The room serves as an art studio for the students and was created by the school's PTA. A parent/photographer came to the PTA and said he wanted to make sure the school didn't lose its art program, Richmond Street School PTA President Sheila Miller noted. So parents got together and created the art studio out of a room that wasn't in use all the time. The room is fully run by volunteers. "We have a full-fledge art program now," Miller said.

The school's PTA is also lending a helping hand by sponsoring a workbook. "We have a room at Richmond Street where our teachers can submit work that they need done," Miller said. The work is any task that someone else could do for a teacher, such as making copies of papers. Parents volunteer to do these tasks.

The PTA also financially sponsors the music and PE programs. And, similar to Center Street, the school works with Planet Pals.

The El Segundo Middle School is unique because it is the only District school that adds a letter to its PTA, calling itself the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA; the addition of "Student" comes from the student club it sponsors). In March, the PTSA contributed volunteers and money to the health fair, a new event for the middle school. Vendors such as Fresh & Easy and Salad Creations populated the fair. Outgoing ESMS PTSA President Brenda Colbert said the kids really enjoyed the fair, and it was more of a success than she predicted. "I never thought I'd see middle school students eating raw carrots," she said.

The PTSA also paid for an anti-bullying assembly by pantomime performer Cary Trivanovich. In addition, the PTSA helps organize and run the Orientation BBQ every August. The event is a way to welcome the incoming sixth graders. For the outgoing eighth graders, the PTSA provides decorations for their graduation, completely organizes the after party, and puts together the Eighth Grade Memory Book, which features past pictures of the students.

El Segundo High School PTA President Beth Muraida said its PTA is a little different from the other schools. "The fundraising efforts are a little more fragmented," she said. There are many clubs and class groups that are involved with fundraising. But Muraida reminds us the parents are still out there helping the school by volunteering, such as working at the high school snack bar.

The PTA sponsored an event in March that presented the data and reports of a school evaluation study. The PTA also helped with this study. A leadership representative from every department, the administration, classified staff, parents, and community members got together for this study and they brainstormed the strengths and the possible weaknesses in the school, Muraida said. They also produced a written document that details all the school activities and all the effort made by the different departments to educate the high school students and prepare them for the future.

A Tupperware fundraiser was held for the first time, with 40 percent of the sales of the product coming back to the PTA. The PTA also provided a SAT class for students; and from publicizing and supporting the class, the PTA got rebate money from the group brought in to teach the program, Muraida explained. And about once a month, the PTA has Teacher Treat Day, where volunteers decorate the teachers' lounge with a theme and provide breakfast and snacks for them.

Miller has an extremely positive opinion about her organization. "I love being a part of PTA,"