Growing Our Students

From The Parent Institute (www.parent-institute.com)

The tools provided by this resource can be easily applied to students of all ages to promote well-being and school success.

Autonomy is the ability to think for oneself, make wise decisions and act independently. This doesn’t appear overnight in a child’s development. Building autonomy is a process that takes time.

Encouraging children’s autonomy leads to greater academic achievement, higher self-esteem and less depression. Here are some ways to boost your middle schooler’s autonomy:

• **Review** the school year with your child. What does she think went well? What does she want to do differently next year? Encourage her to ask her teachers for suggestions for the coming year.

• **Involve** your child in **making plans** for the summer. How does she want to spend her time? How will her ideas fit with family plans?

• **Suggest** she **volunteer** for a cause she cares about. Help her research opportunities, but let her interests drive the process.

• Set up reasonable guidelines for her **social life**. Give your child the freedom to develop and navigate relationships with her peers largely on her own terms. Wait until she asks before giving advice.

• Talk with your child about **current events**. Ask for her opinions. Show you appreciate her ideas, whether or not you agree.

• Make time for **board games** to promote learning and having fun as a family. In many games, your middle schooler will have to follow directions, reason logically and use strategy to make decisions. In others, she’ll have to create words or read to understand questions or clues. These are all skills that will help her in school.
**Special Talents on Display**

by Paige Johnson

California Kids, under the direction of Stacy Friedrich, hosted a talent show Tuesday, May 1st.

“The talent show is held every year in order to get the kids out of their comfort zone and to take ownership of the talents that they have. Also to be creative,” said Friedrich. “My ultimate goal for the kids is to have a love for music, learn different literature, and to just have a lot of fun.”

She wants to help kids find talents they don’t realize they have.

The theme for this year’s talent show was “top hits.” Twelve talents were chosen through an audition process. Also, the group prepared five songs to round out the evening.

California Kids is made up of fourth and fifth grade students who audition at the beginning of the school year.

“Being in California Kids gives them more background knowledge when they go to an audition,” said Friedrich. “It also helps the kids become more confident and teaches them the performance aspect of music.”

Fifth grade California Kids are automatically enrolled in the sixth grade Music Connections if they wish.

Other California Kids performances this year included the Moniteau County Farm Bureau dinner, nursing home caroling, and a small concert at Central Bank during the Christmas parade.

**Fifth Grade Opinion**

**Volunteering in our Community**

by Haylee Kiesling and Sonya Grotjan

Take a look around our community, what do you see? Trash? Abandoned animals? Run down buildings? Together, we can change that. Imagine our town as a better place. Together, we can make that dream a reality with a little volunteering.

Here at California Elementary, we have many opportunities. Sadly, volunteering isn’t one of them. If every student were required to do at least one project per month, our town would be sparkling in no time!

We know doing a project a month seems like a daunting task, especially for younger children, but, by definition to volunteer is to freely offer to do something. It doesn’t have to be big, even small acts can make a difference!

Volunteering can help students who are stuck on their rear ends glued to the TV all day have something to do. Instead of getting on your phone to save a world of pixels, you could help the real world!

Can’t you see how great our town can become with a little volunteering? Now, don’t get back to gaming, pick up the phone to present this idea to the superintendent!

**In my room . . . Flexibility defines secretary**

by Turner Myers

Sarah Wickham is the elementary school’s secretary. She started here in 2007 after living in Ratcliff, Arkansas. While in Ratcliff she owned her own business for eight years and was a receptionist at River Valley Primary Care.

Now as the Elementary’s secretary, a normal day for her is phone calls, attendance, greeting visitors, and more.

“It’s just as difficult as you make it,” Wickham said. “You have to be willing to change and learn new things.”

On occasion, Wickham has to stay after hours to assist a parent or teacher or to receive packages.

“You’re not only a secretary;” she said, “you’re a mom, nurse, custodian, cook, and whatever is needed.”

She said the biggest benefits of her job are “not having to worry about going to work when the weather is bad and having the month of July off.”

However, the downfall of her job is knowing that the great staff she works with can and will change each year.

Even when most of the kids are off over summer, Wickham still works through summer school and in preparation for the upcoming year.

**Youth track meet rooted in friendly competition**

by Jessa Kinchens

On Friday, May 4, approximately 700 kids and 50-75 adult volunteers will converge onto the track and field facilities at California High School. This will mark the 27th annual Lion’s Club Track Meet.

The track meet gives children experience in sportsmanship and friendly competition. Students in grades fourth through sixth at California schools, as well as surrounding schools, participate.

The idea of the track meet originated with Dr. Don Vander Felz of Vision-Health Eyecare when he first joined the Lion’s Club.

“I was not very athletic as a kid, so I wanted to create an event that offered something for everybody,” said Vander Felz. “Kids excel at different things so I wanted to give everybody a chance to do so.”

The track meet features 50m, 100m, 200m, 4x100m relay, softball throw, and standing long jump.

Only three boys and three girls from each school are in each event.

Being the largest school, students at California don’t get to just pick whatever event they want because they have so many students participating.

“We do tryouts for the events,” said elementary P.E. teacher Jill Hampton. “[Students] get to choose which events they would like to try out for. If they don’t make it in the event they try out for, they can always try out for another event.”

Students don’t do more than three events, but all do at least one each.

To run the meet, Lion’s Club members as well as some parents and community members volunteer their time. They do whatever jobs need to be done such as timing, organizing, starting races, and concessions.

To end the meet, there is a tug-of-war competition for everybody to participate in.

As an added bonus, the track meet gives California students a chance to meet potential high school classmates. Clarksburg, High Point, Latham, and St. Andrew are all invited to attend.

Hampton said, “This track meet is special to me because I was in the fourth grade at St. Andrew when this track meet started. Now I get to continue to participate but in a different way, as the coach instead of the participant.”
In my room . . . From criminal justice to school secretary
by Gracie George

A school secretary has many jobs to complete in one day’s work: some strenuous, some repetitive. Barbara Pickering has been working as a CMS secretary for three years.

Her daily tasks include taking attendance, answering phone calls, getting messages to students and teachers, and organizing substitute teachers for the day. Other miscellaneous things come up depending on the day.

Additionally, she keeps track of student and teacher locations at all times, prepares report cards for delivery, tracks of purchase orders, orders supplies, runs monthly reports, and greets people at the front door.

Pickering did not expect to become a school secretary with her Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and minor in psychology. Although it was not an anticipated career, she is happy.

Pickering started out staying at home with her children for about ten years. She then began working with children at a local preschool and shortly after moved to the elementary school as a paraprofessional and ESL teacher. After seven years, she decided she wanted something different but still wanted to be working for the school.

The secretary position opened up at the perfect time for her. She knew it would be a positive shift in her daily activities while still working in the kid environment.

Pickering has enjoyed getting to bond with her fellow faculty members and students. She has had the opportunity to grow close with the nurse, Tammy Kirchoff, and the counselor, Marcia Bibb.

“A benefit to this job is feeling like I make a difference in day to day activities of the school,” said Pickering. In contrast, stress can also come from “trying to stay organized when things get very busy.”

The students and teachers at school may not realize how much work a school secretary puts in, but Pickering plays a huge part in keeping the school organized.

Fifth graders consider band for middle school
by Jessa Kinchens

Tyler Edwards, band director at California Middle and High Schools hosted a Beginning Band Night on Tuesday, April 24th. This event was an opportunity for students entering the sixth grade in the fall to become familiar with different instruments. Students got to try out any instrument that is available to see which one they want to play in middle school.

Students and their parents went around to each instrument station where high school band members who play that instrument gave a short tutorial.

The fifth graders tried to make a sound using just the mouthpiece, and if they succeeded, they tried to get some notes out using the whole instrument. The high school helpers then marked a sheet that the students received, noting how well the student did on that particular instrument.

After the student tried every instrument, their sheet was given to Mr. Edwards for him to review and see which instrument would be the best option.

This event provided an opportunity for students who may not know what instrument they want, or are able, to play. It also allowed Edwards to see how much better a student could do on one instrument over another.

Junior band member Madison Thompson was glad to help out with the event.

“This is a great experience for the students to come and try out instruments and get excited for their instrumental journey ahead,” said Thompson.

Teachers take on Summertime Jobs
by Nyssa Gonzalez

When school gets out for the summer and vacation is on everyone’s mind, some teachers are not only getting ready for the next school year but also taking on a part-time job. These teachers adopt a summertime job for many reasons, whether it be to help others, occupy time, or for a little extra cash.

Lorrie Brauner, high school at-risk teacher, owns the Centertown BO-9 Junction Gas Station. Although this work is year-round, her focus intensifies during the summer. Brauner maintains product orders, payroll, paperwork, filling in when needed, and repairs.

Darrell Bolin, middle school science teacher, and Rick Edwards, CMS Assistant Principal and District Activities Director, cherish outdoor work over the summer. Bolin is fond of doing construction and maintenance while Edwards mows a large business’s yard.

Bolin does anything from roofing, laying new flooring, building decks or anything someone throws his way.

“My favorite thing about having a summer job is the personal satisfaction of seeing something that I did and the customer is happy with the job,” said Bolin.

While these teachers have to concentrate on their summer work, they also have to get ready for the next school year, which can be stressful.

Bolin said, “If there is a large job that runs late into summer then I feel a lot of pressure to finish what I started along with getting prepared for the start of a new school year.”

Jeanne Beck, middle school ESL and technology teacher, has decided to take on a unique educational position.

After college, Beck taught in Japan for three years on the Japanese government sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. This summer she was asked to teach and help prepare Japanese high school students for their academic year at a United States high school. She will help them on their reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Beck will teach EFL (English as a Foreign Language) to the Japanese students who will be placed in whichever high school their host family lives near. In the fall, they will attend a city or a rural school anywhere in the U.S., depending on if someone signs up to be a host family through Greenheart Exchange.

Beck said, “So much can be learned through exchange by visiting a country long term, living with a host family and experiencing daily life. You learn that there aren’t as many differences between people as you would think, and also what makes both your home country and host country special.”

There is no doubt our teachers work hard all year round. Teachers with summer jobs show an outstanding work ethic. Whether they take on an outside job or teaching job, they all enjoy what they do, especially when it comes to helping other people.
Commencement usher, honorable tradition
by Jackie Hibdon

California High School has a tradition of selecting juniors as ushers to help direct graduates from place to place during the commencement ceremony. Those selected should come across as students who act professional and as leaders.

Any junior is able to be selected as an usher. Faculty members vote for four girls and four boys whom they feel will best represent CHS.

The junior class president and vice president are automatically ushers due to their elected offices. Although ushers may decline the offer due to other obligations, it is an honor to be asked.

Juniors are chosen because they will be the new school leaders for the next school year. Also, they are saying a big “thank you” to the seniors for their example of leadership as they take the role themselves.

Being selected is an honor because they are recognized as leaders in front of not only their school but also their community. Any student is selected by school faculty, it shows that the school recognizes their leadership qualities.

Mrs. Henley, CHS librarian and senior class sponsor, said “I recommend that the students chosen to be ushers put this honor on their scholarship applications as ‘selected by school faculty members to represent the junior class at commencement as a commencement usher.’ This honor should be treated like any other award.”

Ushers have several commencement duties. As lead ushers, the junior class president and vice president escort the seniors into the ceremony. The other ushers hand out programs, direct the graduates onto the stage and back to their seats, and direct the graduates in their ceremonial procession around the gym.

This year’s commencement ushers are President Megan Witt, Vice President Molly Forsythe, Gracie George, Quinn Albertson, Lydia Kincaid, Breanna Roberts, Gabie Bailey, Austin Bolin, Shefki Dauti, and Trystan Hees.

Heightened awareness for mental illness
by Annastyn Trimble

One in every five high schoolers suffer from depression and anxiety disorders, also known as mental illnesses. Our high school student council took action on this epidemic and worked to spread awareness, kindness, and help for students.

They organized Life is Worth Living Week, and each day was dedicated to “bring awareness to the issue of mental health, try to reach out to students that may be in need of help, and stop the stigma that often comes with having a mental illness,” said Halle Oliver, senior STUCO representative.

Having a mental illness is often perceived by society as something to be ashamed of; however, having these issues is not something people should hide. These issues are completely real and need to be treated, not ignored. Mental illness carries such an ugly stigma in today’s world.

“[Mental illnesses] are often viewed as a weakness, and something that should be hidden,” said Oliver.

During this week STUCO sponsored several activities including a school assembly, donuts for breakfast, inspirational quotes posted around school, and compliments for every student. There was also a guest speaker, Angie Wallace. She lost her son to suicide and shared her experiences with the school.

STUCO is in hopes that Life is Worth Living Week has given students awareness, courage to ask for help, and the reassurance that their life is worth living. Everyone deserves happiness in their life, and when some people need help finding it, society should reach out with a comforting hand.

“I hope that this week gave kids who may be struggling the courage to get help,” said Oliver. “There is no reason that anyone should be living an unhappy life; everyone is valuable.”

In my room . . . Positive vibes at front door
by Peyton Peters

When students think about those in school that go above and beyond to help kids succeed, a lot of people come to mind, but one in particular is Kathy Blakely. She has been secretary at California High School for 19 years.

She always makes people feel at home when in the office. Brett Skinner, a senior and office aide for Kathy, said, “she has charisma and always has a good attitude. She is very kind hearted and doesn’t set anyone to a standard.”

Kathy gets to school every day at 6:45 a.m. Her daily tasks are answering the school phone, taking care of student attendance, preparing the bulletin and taking care of paperwork for employee absences. She also greets everyone who comes into the school and helps them in need.

Kathy loves her job. She loves interacting with kids and students. She said being a secretary was her calling.

“I have always been one of those people who likes to help others,” she said.

The most challenging part of her job is making sure the student attendance is correct every day because the school gets money from the federal government based on school attendance.

Kathy has aides that help her. They deliver notes and fill the copy machines with paper. She doesn’t have to work overtime often, but if she gets interrupted a lot during the day, she will have to take her work home.

CHS choir compete in Chicago, brings home gold
by Jocelyn Wells

A combination of 45 students from Sounds of Joy and concert choir made their way to Chicago, Illinois on Thursday, April 12. This was a once in a lifetime trip for many of them.

When they arrived in Chicago, students attended a Master Class with a voice professor from Loyola University. Then, California choirs, under the direction of Mrs. Michele Bilyeu, competed in a national competition.

All together California did an outstanding job. Both men’s and women’s choirs got a Gold First with the highest scores out of all the competitors. The men’s choir also received the “Adjudicator’s Award,” which means they got a 95 or better (out of 100) from all three judges. CHS chamber and mixed choirs both got Gold Second.

Besides competition, students got to experience Chicago visiting the Shedd Aquarium, DJ Dinner/Dance Cruise on Lake Michigan, Hamilton on Broadway, Medieval Times dinner show, Willis Tower Skydeck, Gino’s East Chicago Pizza, and sightseeing at Navy Pier.

“My favorite parts of the trip were when we went to Medieval Times and when we got all the awards,” said Emily Bilyeu, junior choir student.

This trip was one that the students will never forget. It was a great opportunity to show off their talent and hard work.