



What's Good in Education - Briefs

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Hart Among Top 1500 American High Schools

Newsweek magazine has named Hart High School one of America's top 1500 high schools, based on the school's Advanced Placement program. Hart was ranked No. 948 out of approximately 40,000 high schools nationwide. Hart High had just under 2200 students enrolled last year and administered 1009 AP exams. All of the schools on the magazine's list are in the top six percent of public schools, according to the formulas used to come up with the list. Hart has made the list several times in the past. Although it's not part of the Newsweek rating, Hart boasts a 75 percent pass rate for those students who do take their AP classes.



Summit to Stress Mutual Respect



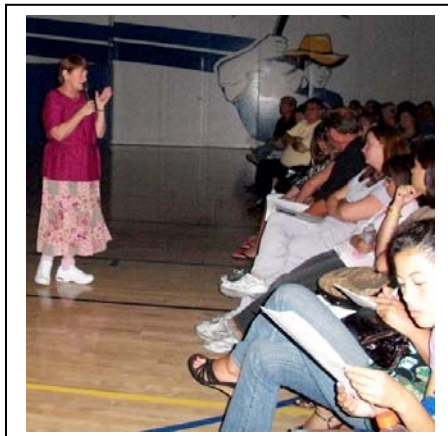
On Oct. 21, 350 students from Hart District junior high schools and Castaic Middle School will come together at the City's Activities Center for a day of "bridge-building" activities intended to promote positive relations between students within and between campuses. This year's Youth Summit, a collaboration between the City of Santa Clarita and the Hart School District, will feature a keynote address by Verne Johnson, an educator from Northern California. Johnson has developed the "iWill" program, which challenges youth to take responsibility for creating a safe and caring environment for each other in their schools and within the larger community. The annual theme for Youth Summit is "Respecting Ourselves...Respecting Each Other," and participants will be empowered to take a leading role in shaping positive school and community culture.



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GATE Families Explore Talent Search

Some 300 Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students and parents from junior high schools across the Hart District gathered recently at Placerita Junior High to hear Placerita counselor Jody Liss-Monteleone discuss the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (JHUCTY) Talent Search for seventh and eighth graders. She also discussed the SAT college readiness test and enrichment programs for GATE students, as well as high school and college requirements. A number of local junior high school students have participated in the Talent Search program and recorded impressive scores on the college-entrance SAT tests while still in junior high school.



ASL Students Address Missing Verbs

Students in the American Sign Language class at Hart High School celebrated Deaf Appreciation Month by launching shirts they designed themselves sporting the words "FOBAMIZAR Implied." The acronym,



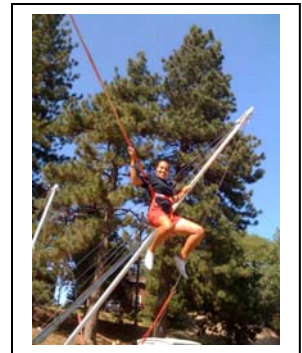
created by ASL teacher Ray Archer, stands for "Form Of Be - AM, IS, ARE," verbs that are implied and not

signed. The slogan gives ASL students a chance to explain about signing when asked by their peers. The ASL students used a wide variety of media to express their own creativity in creating their FOBAMIZAR shirts.



Mountain Outing Builds Leadership

The student government and Peer Mediation classes from Rancho Pico Junior High School got some intensive leadership training during a recent visit to Pali Mountain retreat near Lake Arrowhead. The students had to learn to work together as they navigated a ropes course which included a zip line, a "crow" obstacle course, leap of faith and more. Some of the team-building activities included building a raft, unraveling a human knot, guidance and more. The activities are geared toward building leadership skills that the students can use throughout life.



Safe School Ambassadors Train for Interventions

The Safe School Ambassadors program, now in its fifth year of operation across the Hart District, kicks off a month of scheduled trainings, with two-day workshops on 10 campuses through October. In Hart's award winning program, trained staff members teach selected students techniques for intervening safely to reduce social tensions on campus and to increase positive social interactions. Students identified as natural leaders work within their own social groups to have a positive influence on their own friends. Ambassadors learn how to defuse situations with little or no adult intervention. With active programs at both the junior high and high school level, the district has noted a dramatic reduction in the number of interpersonal conflicts. Participating schools typically train between 35 and 50 students each year, combining their efforts with those who have been trained the previous year.

Sierra Vista Students Help Clean River

More than 60 Sierra Vista Junior High School students, staff and parents participated in the recent River Rally and helped to clean the Newhall Creek portion of the Santa Clara River.



Although the clean-up took place across town from Sierra Vista's Canyon Country campus, many parents brought their children to Newhall at 7:30 on a Saturday morning, and the teams put in a full morning's work. It was hot and dusty and a lot of work, but the students had a great time knowing that they were doing something positive for their city. A big thank-you to everyone who helped out!



Trail Blazers Aid Food Pantry



The Trail Blazer team at Rancho Pico Junior High literally jumped in to help the Santa Clarita Food Pantry with a trip to Scooter's Jungle. One hundred twenty students, siblings and parents brought canned food and their socks (required to play) and spent several hours jumping, sliding, swinging on ropes, eating pizza and just having fun. The Food Pantry was pleased to receive the \$575 donation and two shopping carts full of canned food. This is the fourth time the team has earned money for those in the community who need help putting food on their table.

Saugus Students to View Uganda Documentary

Students at Saugus High School will have the opportunity to learn more about the unseen war in northern Uganda and the plight of children there when the school screens the documentary, "Invisible Children: Rough Cut." The film exposes the tragic realities of northern Uganda's night commuters and child soldiers. Saugus resource teacher Marcus Garrett, who is coordinating the program, hopes to spark students' interest in the situation in Africa. He considers the presentation an ideal opportunity for students to begin asking questions and analyze what's happening in the world.

Cheerleaders Collect Cards for Troops

Hart High School cheerleaders staffed a booth at the recent Day for Kids, providing paper, pens, crayons, stickers, cutouts and markers that children could use to make cards for the nation's troops serving overseas. Hundreds of cards made during the activities are being given to the local chapter of Blue Star Moms for forwarding to service members. This is the second year Hart cheerleaders have participated in the event, which drew an estimated 5,000 participants.



Mayor's Committee to Salute Employers

The SCV Mayor's Committee for the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities will hold its annual Employer Appreciation Luncheon Oct. 14 at the City Activities Center. The event will honor a number of employers who offer jobs to students in the Hart District's programs for students with disabilities. Actor Jack Patterson will deliver the keynote address, "I wasn't disabled until I came to Hollywood."



Students Enjoy Edible Science Experiment

Students in Becky Arnold's physical science class at Rancho Pico Junior High School created their own experiment to show a chemical change by making an edible result. Students mixed together milk, sugar and vanilla and then shook the ingredients together in ziplock bags with rock salt and ice to create a frozen treat. Voila, ice cream! Students enjoyed the experience and can't wait for the next opportunity to eat another project!



'Smoke Signal' Wins Gold Medal

"The Smoke Signal," Hart High School's student-produced newspaper, has been awarded a Gold Medalist Certificate by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for the 2008-09 school year. There are three levels based on a 1,000 point scale, with Gold Medal winners scoring 925 points or higher. "The Smoke Signal" scored 941 points. The judge praised the paper's wide variety of articles and its efforts to keep students aware of issues both in school and out. Specific articles mentioned had to do with budget cuts, students attending the Presidential inauguration, an editorial on the state budget and one dealing with the pain of losing a friend. Leslie Woods is the paper's advisor.



Grizzlies Help Clean River

Some 50 students from Golden Valley High School joined hundreds of volunteers at the annual River Rally recently, removing tons of trash from Newhall Creek. The Golden Valley team was organized by the National Honor Society and the Key Club, which has participated in the project in the past. The students were amazed by the amount of trash in the river: a car, a



huge truck tire, a shopping cart from Lucky's market (which hasn't been in the area for several years), numerous car tires, three bicycles and plastic bottles. Local radio personality Carol Rock came over to talk with the students before they launched their clean-up effort. The honor society is getting far more involved in the community, adding the River Rally to last year's Relay For Life effort.



AOC Welcomes Parents, Underclassmen

Academy of the Canyons middle college high school welcomed parents to the school's new University Center campus during Back to School Night. Parents from all four grades gained insight into the new school and campus and gave teachers a chance to introduce themselves and the unique academic journey ahead for their students. The school's ASB and student body has an active calendar, including a "Snow Nice to Meet You" ice breaker with free snow cones to unite all four classes into one student body. Students also enjoyed Sports Day by wearing clothing in their favorite team's colors, and Decades Day by dressing in fashions from a past decade. A two-day art expo is planned this month, designed to showcase the diverse talents of AOC students with performances and galleries.

Golden Valley Freshmen View Share Trailer

Ninth graders from Golden Valley High School rotated through the Sheriff's Share Trailer recently, learning tolerance, respect and acceptances. The program includes a video dramatizing actual incidents of discrimination and intimidation, one of which actually happened in Santa Clarita. Students then returned to the classroom where they discussed their own experiences and the way they felt after seeing the depicted incidents. The trailer rotates among schools all over Los Angeles County, and the Hart District is fortunate to obtain the program for a number of local high schools.

