

THE CHALKBOARD

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE Education Consortium of Central Los Angeles © 2009 ECCLA

Books and Blankies

Connecting Educators to Resources with ECCLA

Mark Gozonsky, fourth-grade teacher at Weemes Elementary, learned of ECCLA when a colleague was honored with an ECCLA teacher award nomination. When he needed books for the Don Quijote Book Club he had started with his class, he remembered that ECCLA's mission is "connecting educators with resources." ECCLA connected Mr. Gozonsky to USC's ongoing activities celebrating Don Quijote's 400th anniversary and with a video adaptation of part of the book. Most important, though, was introducing him to 22-year-old non-profit entrepreneur Robyn Strumpf, founder and director of Project Books and Blankies.

Like many children, young Robyn had had trouble learning to read at first. But, she says, "I stuck with it, and with the help of family members who encouraged me and patiently sat and read with me—snuggled up in a cozy quilt—I finally got it! [B]ecause I didn't give up, new worlds opened to me."

She felt so strongly about wanting to help other children "get it" too that she started her own organization, called Project Books and Blankies, when she was only 12 years old. She asked friends and family for help, and she contacted publishers to see about getting donations directly. Strumpf now has relationships with book publishers who offer her large discounts, and others who regularly donate surplus books to her organization. Since the organization started, Ms. Strumpf



ECCLA executive director Jacqueline Hamilton with Robyn Strumpf, founder and director of Project Books and Blankies.

has raised more than \$120,000, which has supported not only donations of over 18,000 books, but the creation of dozens of hand-made quilts, which she makes to accompany most donations to classrooms, libraries and community groups.

When Ms. Strumpf heard Mr. Gozonsky's passion for sharing the adventures of Miguel Cervantes' famous knight-errant with his students, she gladly donated a large assortment of books related to knights, medieval times, castles, Spain, and Don Quijote, as well as twelve editions of the book itself in both English and Spanish.

"Robyn gave us three baskets full of children's books about adventures, quests and magic." Afterwards, Mr. Gozonsky reports, "I saw a [student]

out on the yard wearing a tiara one day—you could just tell she liked the way she looked in a tiara—so I gave her a copy of *The Princess Academy* [from Robyn] to review. Sure enough, next week she showed up for the book club."

ECCLA's partnership with Books and Blankies works both ways. Ms. Strumpf sometimes receives so many book donations from publishers that she needs help finding good homes for them. Last spring she asked ECCLA to help place over 300 copies of *My First Dictionary* by DK Publishing. ECCLA director Jacqueline Hamilton found willing users at two of ECCLA's target schools, Ricardo Lizarraga Elementary School and the Dr. Theodore T. Alexander Science

Continued on Page 4

Eighth Graders Prepare for College

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS LEARN APPLICATION PROCESS

Applying for scholarships and college admission can feel confusing and complicated to those who have never done it before. ECCLA created its annual Eighth Grade Higher Education Scholarships in part to introduce students to the process. ECCLA also hopes that the scholarships will inspire students to begin thinking about college, and to reach high school graduation. Each autumn, eighth graders from all ECCLA target schools can apply. The current contest deadline is November 6th, 2009.

The 2008-09 scholarships went to two outstanding eighth graders selected from all of ECCLA's target schools, and to an eighth grader from Carver Middle School for the Ernestine Turner Memorial Prize.

The last issue of *The Chalkboard* featured the creation of the Turner Prize. Magdalena Barrientos won the very first scholarship awarded in honor of this long-time teacher.

"She has an extraordinary, positive attitude which is infectious. [I] know that she will go far in life," said

Thomas Turner, Magdalena's teacher and the son of Ernestine Turner. Should Magdalena not claim the prize for any reason, the alternate for this scholarship was Ariana Rodriguez.

Isabella Lloyd-Damnjanovic of 32nd Street School won the first of the other two prizes made possible by the USC Regina Hunter Bloom Fund. Ms. Rita Collins recommended Isabella for the scholarship noting her outstanding command of verbal communication and [peer] teaching

Continued on Page 3

ECCLA's Annual Essay Contests Celebrate Diversity Once More

EVERYDAY CARING INSPIRES LOCAL WINNERS

Since 1997, ECCLA has offered essay contests as a tool for teachers to encourage their students to practice and excel at writing personal narratives. Where else can a student have the chance of winning up to \$100 just for completing a homework assignment? All entrants receive a certificate of participation and winners receive cash prizes, usually awarded at a school assembly or in-class presentation to call attention to the achievement.

Honoring Latinos in the fall and African Americans in the spring, teachers and students at ECCLA-area schools have responded to the question "who do I admire the most?" Reflecting on their personal heroes, the winners of the 2008-09 contests wrote about the everyday and the extraordinary, about people young and old, about family and relative strangers.

LATINOS INFLUENCE ON LOS ANGELES YOUTH

For the fall essay contest, 20 middle and high school teachers from 14 different schools submitted 336 student essays on the prompt "The Latino/a I Know That I Most Admire." In the middle school category, students tied for both second and third place, making for five winners. Middle school winner Luis Vargas wrote about his neighbor: "He uses examples in life, and he clearly shows how behavior and consequences are connected to choices. In the future, I hope to

become an engineer, and Jesus has kept me on the right path."

Luis Romero, first place winner at the high school level, chose to write about a man he met at work who taught him some important lessons.

"Before I met David I wasn't really thinking about a UC [college] of any kind. I felt I wasn't good enough. [H]e motivated me to try my best

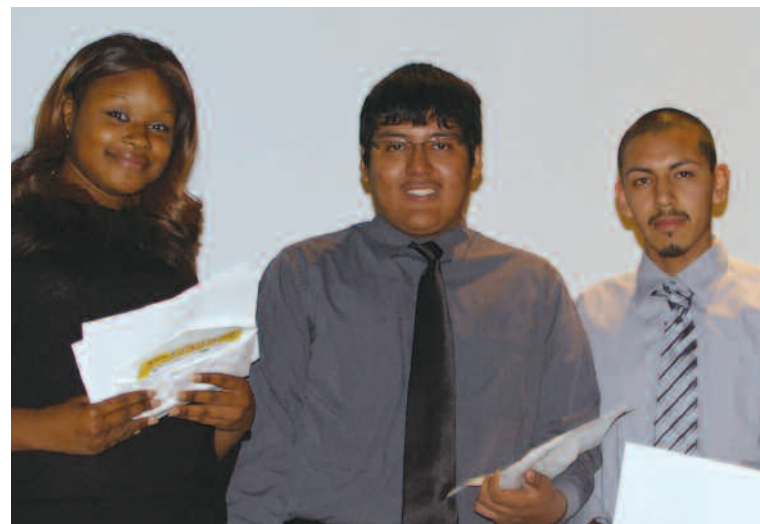
Since 1997, ECCLA has offered essay contests as a tool for teachers to encourage their students to practice and excel at writing personal narratives.

and get the best education I can, and taught me that there's no shame in transferring from a community college like he did," wrote Romero.

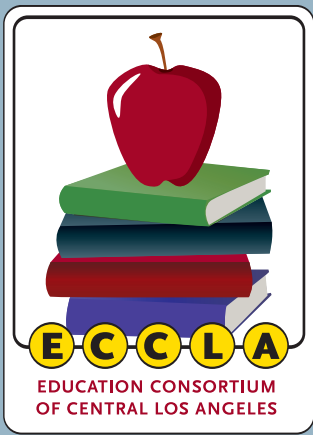
Other stories demonstrated the tough times facing many students in South Los Angeles.

"My older brother became the head of our household when he was 10 years old and had to give up the remainder of his childhood for us," wrote Jose Gaspar, who won second place in the high school category. Yet

Continued on Page 3



High school winners of ECCLA's African American Essay Contest. Left to Right: Bree'ana Monroe, James Nolasco, Cesar Sanchez.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008–2009

INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
California African American Museum
 Charmaine Jefferson, *Executive Director*
 Sonia Brown, *Gallery Educator*

California Science Center
 Ron Rohovit, *Deputy Director of Education*
 (Vice President for Programs)
 Katy Mendivil, *Community Programs Manager*

Hebrew Union College
 Adam Greenwald, *Assistant Director*
 of Development and Public Affairs
 Madelyn Mishkin Katz,
Director of Student Services

Los Angeles Trade Technical College
 Rhea Chung, *Associate Dean of Advancement*
 Ramón Castillo, *VP of Student Services*
 Theda Douglas, *VP of Student Services*

Mount St. Mary's College
 Carol Johnston, *Assistant Professor*
 Maria Lyons, *Director of Community Affairs*

**Natural History Museum
of Los Angeles County**
 Robin Savoian, *Manager, Family & Community
Programs (Vice President for Membership)*

University of Southern California
 Katharine Diaz, *Community Coordinator,
Civic & Community Relations*
 Tina Koneazny, *Director, USC Readers Plus Program*

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES
Los Angeles Unified School District
 Donna Jacobson, *Principal, Richard Merkin Middle
School, Alliance for College Ready Academics*
 Michael Dean, *Principal, Jefferson Early College
Program at LATTC*
 Thomas Turner, *Teacher, Carver Middle School*
 Renita Woods, *Teacher, Muir Middle School*

Archdiocese of Los Angeles
 Kathleen Doherty, *Development Director,
St. Agnes School*
 Vince O'Donoghue, *Development Director,
St. Thomas the Apostle School (Vice President
for Development & Finance, Treasurer)*

ECCLA STAFF
 Jacqueline Hamilton, *Executive Director*
 Brigette Kidd, *Operations & Outreach*
 Courtney Brown, *Intern*
 Molly-Marie Canales, *Intern*
 Radhiya Colson, *Intern*
 Devon Victoria, *Intern*

COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE
 Jacques Bordeaux, *Principal, ICEF Inglewood
Middle Academy, Inner City Education Foundation*
 Tony Giarla, *Development Director, Kids In Sports
(President)*
 Rita Flynn, *Esperanza Housing Corp.*
 Peggy Hentschke, *retired ECCLA Director
(Secretary)*
 Belinda Jackson, *Executive Director, L.A. Dept.
of Recreation & Parks EXPO Center*
 Julia Furer, *Community Partnerships Coordinator,
L.A. Dept. of Recreation & Parks EXPO Center*
 Annette Kessler, *Principal, New Open
World Academy*
 Kim Thomas-Barrios, *Program Director,
USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative*

PRESIDENTS EMERITI
 Elaine Avak, *Calif. Retired Teachers Association*
 Sister Daniel Thérèse Flynn, *Mt. St. Mary's College*
 Alice Green, *Director, Peace Games Program*
 Margo O'Connell, *Former Board President*
 Frances Goldman Strasberg, *Retired LAUSD
Principal, Former ECCLA Treasurer*
 Carmen Terrazas, *Retired LAUSD Administrator*

EDITORIAL STAFF
 Editor in Chief, Jacqueline Hamilton
 Writers, Molly-Marie Canales,
 Jacqueline Hamilton
 Design and Production, Steven Rachwal Design
 Contributing Photographer, Raul Guereque

**Education Consortium
of Central Los Angeles (ECCLA)**
 2801 S. Hoover Street, Los Angeles, CA 90007
 TEL: (213) 743-4516 FAX: (213) 743-4511
 www.eccla.org

Send comments, suggestions, ideas to:
chalkboard@eccla.org

EDITOR'S LETTER



The Gift of Making Math Fun

A gift dropped in my lap in August. I had been dreading the start of this school year. Budget cuts meant bumping and shuffling administrators and teachers between schools, bigger classes, and extra stress for educators everywhere, including central Los Angeles. How could "little" ECCLA do anything to improve education in the face of such enormous challenges?

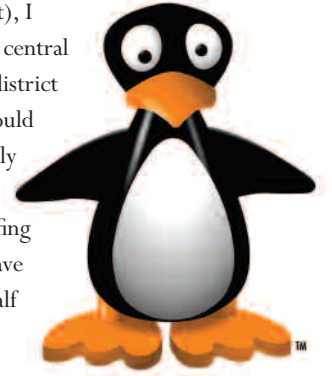
So when the MIND Research Institute came to us with an offer to start a new Los Angeles Math Initiative in ECCLA's schools this year, I was deeply skeptical. In a year of stress, why should schools scramble at the last minute to implement a new program? Besides, I have seen loads of people parachute into inner cities with some miracle solution, then helicopter out again shouting "good luck" as they disappear over the horizon.

MIND wanted to make math grants available to the 81 ECCLA schools with K-8 classes. They had reams of statistics about how well their program works; their data even include populations of English learners like ours. They also have over 10 years of experience in providing and improving their programs. As a nonprofit organization, they dedicate themselves to changing math education, rather than just increasing market share.

Two things, however, finally convinced me to form the partnership and to start this year. First, MIND's intelligent, thorough implementation and support program: it makes success for students, teachers and schools probable rather than just possible. Second (and more important), I believed that this program could actually make central Los Angeles a leader in math education in the district over the next five years. Making that happen could take hard work, but I found myself unexpectedly excited about the coming school year.

So we invited principals to a breakfast briefing about the program on September 3, and we gave them only 10 days notice. Amazingly, nearly half of the eligible schools attended, and fully one-quarter decided to turn around the grant application quickly and were accepted into the program. At the time of printing, teachers had begun training and a few schools have the program up and running. Our Spring issue of *The Chalkboard* will describe MIND and the math initiative in greater detail. Hopefully it will inspire more ECCLA schools to join next year!

Until soon,
 Jacqueline Hamilton, *ECCLA Executive Director*



Jiji, the MIND Research Institute's mascot for its math games.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ECCLA's President Works to Include "Kids in Sports"

Tony Giarla believes in the power of sports to transform young lives, especially in urban areas. That commitment to young people in urban settings brought him to ECCLA, where he currently serves as ECCLA's Board president. Originally from Massachusetts, Tony has enjoyed sports and coaching for most of his life. He coached baseball in Gloucester, Massachusetts, collegiate softball at Plymouth State in New Hampshire, and served as head coach of the men's volleyball team at Endicott College in Massachusetts.

Tony has lived in Los Angeles since 2000, and he now serves as the development director for Kids in

Sports (KIS). He still coaches on the side, but nowadays he ensures that the nonprofit KIS can keep serving over 9,000 youth (ages 5 to 17) with 15 sports clubs spread across Los Angeles County. KIS cultivates, nurtures, coordinates and supports community-led sports teams and leagues that provide sports opportunities in under-served areas. Tony first learned about ECCLA from a former Board president, Keith Cruickshank, who was the executive director of Kids in Sports at the time.

As soon as he joined the Board, Tony jumped right in to serving on committees and helping with the annual teacher reception and other

ECCLA activities. When asked to serve as Board president in 2008, Tony says, "I was very willing." Both ECCLA and KIS help Tony connect to people in the community. "Every neighborhood, no matter its economic state, its crime rate, its perception, has great people that want their lives and their kids' lives to be better. Being able to give them an opportunity to do that is really what drives me," he says, adding, "it's the lives you touch and the differences you make" that make the work worthwhile. Tony says his favorite part of working for ECCLA is "being around like-minded people who are passionate about the education



Tony Giarla, ECCLA president and development director of Kids in Sports.

process." ECCLA is thankful to have a motivating and passionate president like Tony. ○○○

CENTRAL L.A. SCHOOLS

Witness to a Dream: The Foshay Learning Center

Helen Carillo, a 7th grader at Foshay Learning Center, met Tom Sturges at a Christmas mentoring event in 1997. Mr. Sturges, an executive vice president at the Universal Music Publishing Group, not only spoke to Helen's class, but he also made an impromptu assignment for

the class to write a song about what they thought makes a difference in the world.

From that moment, the Foshay Learning Center Choir began to take shape. Inspired by the students' energy, Mr. Sturges continued to meet with the students periodically

and introduced them to the world of the music business. He partnered with long-time Foshay music teacher Vince Womack and eventually helped the new student choir write and record an entire CD of original songs. By 2003, when the last of the original choir members graduated, they had performed for a long list of luminaries, including Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Most of the original choir members would say that Mr. Sturges' commitment and continued presence in their lives played a significant part in their success (92% of them have graduated from college).

Now *Witness to a Dream*, a documentary film about the original choir's successes and challenges, has begun making the rounds at local film festivals and recently gained

acceptance to the International Bahamas Film Festival. The film's real prize, however, lies in its effect on current students at Foshay. Assistant Principal Regina Boutté says that current students get excited seeing kids from their school make it through challenges and graduate from high school, then college. "We have formed the *Witness to a Dream* Foundation to continue the work," says Ms. Boutté, who is also the documentary's co-executive producer. "We want to talk to adults and tell them that they can get involved. They can bring exactly who they are, whether auto mechanic or nurse or movie star, and make a big difference in our kids' lives." The film's producers hope to have other showings in the area soon, possibly in November. Screening details will be at www.witnessoadream.org.



The Foshay Choir performing under the direction of their mentor, Tom Sturges.

Central LA Destinations

- 1 **CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM**
600 State Drive, Exposition Park
[213] 744-7432 • www.caamuseum.org
- 2 **CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER**
700 State Drive, Exposition Park
[323] 724-3623
www.californiasciencecenter.org
- 3 **HEBREW UNION COLLEGE**
3077 University Avenue
213] 749-3424 • www.huc.edu
- 4 **LOS ANGELES TRADE TECHNICAL COLLEGE**
400 West Washington Blvd.
[213] 763-7000 • www.lattc.cc.ca.us
- 5 **MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE**
10 Chester Place
[213] 477-3500 • www.msmc.la.edu
- 6 **NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**
900 Exposition Blvd.
[213] 763-DINO • www.nhm.org
- 7 **UNIV. OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**
823 Exposition Blvd., University Park
[213] 740-2311 • www.usc.edu
- 8 **KIDS IN SPORTS HEADQUARTERS**
3980 Menlo Avenue, Suite 237
[213] 740-2311 • www.usc.edu

- 9 **ORTHOPEDIC HOSPITAL MEDICAL MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**
2400 South Flower Street
- 10 **FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER**
3751 South Harvard Blvd.
- 11 **MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL**
4131 South Vermont Avenue
- 12 **NEW TECH JEFFERSON STUDENT EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY**
1319 East 41st Street
- 13 **AUDOBON MIDDLE SCHOOL**
4120 11th Avenue
- 14 **32ND STREET SCHOOL**
822 West 32nd Street
- 15 **HOLY NAME OF JESUS SCHOOL**
1955 West Jefferson Blvd.
- 16 **JEFFERSON EARLY COLLEGE AT LATTC**
400 West Washington Blvd.
- 17 **CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL**
4410 Mckinley Avenue
- ★ **ECCLA**
2801 South Hoover Street
[213] 743-4516



ECCLA CORNER

We have changed our annual essay contest themes!

Traditionally, we have held a Latino heritage-themed essay contest in fall and an African American heritage-themed contest in the spring. (You can read about the winners from these contests in this issue and on the website.) We select winners for the cash prizes at both the middle school and high school levels. All 6–12th grade students at ECCLA's target schools (see map of coverage area above) are eligible to enter.

The new school year brings new topics.

- The Fall 2009 essay contest theme will be "What I Want Most that Money Can't Buy." Deadline for entries is Oct. 23, 2009.
- The Spring 2010 essay contest theme will be "If I Could Spend a Day with Anyone from the Past, Who Would it Be and Why?" Deadline for entries is Feb. 26, 2010.

Rules and entry forms for both contests are available at www.eccla.org under the Programs tab. This year is the first year that students will be able to submit their essays online.

To submit online, click the yellow post-it on our website that says "Register and Submit Essays, Scholarships, and Nominations." Simply fill out the form and submit! A confirmation email will be sent in response, and your user account will be created. Then, you can upload your essay any time before the contest deadline. **Good luck!**

ECCLA's Annual Essay Contests *continued*

that same brother "became the second person in my family to graduate from high school and the first to attend a four-year university."

While the essays received were often filled with rough times and tough decisions, all of them demonstrated how one person, whether parent, friend, or someone completely outside the family, can dramatically affect the course of a child's life.

RECOGNIZING AFRICAN AMERICAN MENTORS

Fifteen teachers entered a total of 185 student essays in the spring contest, "The African American Who I Know That I Most Admire." Winners again wrote movingly about those who had served as guides, mentors, or inspirations to them. Janet Lopez, first place winner in the middle school category, wrote of her deceased stepfather with grace. "Over the years that I was able to spend with him, he made me appreciate aspects of his culture, such as soul food. I will always remember the values he set for me, including teaching me how to be proud of myself and to believe that I am capable of accomplishing whatever I put my mind to."

For the high school category, first place winner James Nolasco told of a middle school friend that he "both literally and metaphorically looked

up to," a gifted athlete who "stayed focused and knew that he did not want to waste his time. . . . His knowledge of academics was great, and with his help I ended up surpassing him. . . and he was someone who could make me laugh."

...

ECCLA congratulates all of these winners, and extends its gratitude to the teachers who took the time to include this contest in their course work. "ECCLA Corner" describes the new prompts for our essay contests this year. Deadline for the current fall essay contest is October 23,



A middle school essay winner, Taylor Mercado from Holy Name of Jesus School.

2009, with winners to be announced in mid-November. Information about the spring contest will be mailed and posted on www.eccla.org in early December. ○○○

ECCLA'S ANNUAL HISPANIC HERITAGE ESSAY CONTEST 2008 WINNERS

Middle School:

- 1st Prize, LUIS VARGAS, St. Odilia Catholic School, Mr. Monteilh.
- 2nd Prize tie, TUNDE AKENDE, Adams Middle School, Mr. Ter Astvadsadrian.
- 2nd Prize tie, FRANCISCO MORENO, St. Odilia Catholic School, Mr. Monteilh.
- 3rd Prize tie, TENECIA ZUÑIGA, 32nd Street Magnet, Ms. Zaragoza.
- 3rd Prize tie, STEPHANIE ROMERO, Adams Middle School, Mr. Ter Astvadsadrian.

High School:

- 1st Prize, LUIS ROMERO, Jefferson High School, Mrs. Lutero-Farris.
- 2nd Prize, JOSE GASPAS, Jefferson High School, Mrs. Lutero-Farris.
- 3rd Prize, VICTOR ISLAS, Manual Arts High School, Ms. Conde.

ECCLA'S ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN ESSAY CONTEST 2009 WINNERS

Middle School:

- 1st Prize, JANET LOPEZ, Audubon Middle School, Ms. Blume
- 2nd Prize, KORTNEE OGBUEFI, 32nd Street Magnet School, Mrs. Smith
- 3rd Prize, TAYLOR MERCADO, Holy Name of Jesus School, Mrs. Smith;
- ASHLEY JONES, 8th Grade, 32nd Street Magnet School, Mrs. Smith

High School:

- 1st Prize, JAMES NOLASCO, Jefferson Early College at LATTTC, Mr. Dean
- 2nd Prize, BREE'ANA MONROE, Jefferson Early College at LATTTC, Mr. Dean
- 3rd Prize, CESAR SANCHEZ, Jefferson Early College at LATTTC, Mr. Dean

Eighth Graders Prepare for College *continued*

skills in the classroom. Ms. Collins also cited Isabella's ability to "create scaffolds for learning, bridging the gap between prior knowledge and new textbook material."

"Very little time passed before

Magdalena Barrientos, winner of the very first Ernestine Turner Memorial Prize.

I became impressed at how Isabella demonstrated insight and thorough use of subject matter content," said Ms. Collins.

The second ECCLA/USC Hunter winner was Mindajha Carter, also of 32nd Street School. In her recommendation letter, Ms. Kara Smith appreciated that she "could always count on [Mindajha] as a leader and role model, academically and person-

ally, for the other students in class." The alternates for these two scholarships were Istifaa Ahmed and Jessica Kwon, also from 32nd Street School.

ECCLA congratulates all of the winners and alternates, and hopes that many more teachers and counselors will encourage their students to apply this year. Forms and information are available at www.eccla.org/scholarships.asp. ○○○



Books and Blankies *continued*

Center School. “Descriptive writing is a second-grade standard, and we’ve used the dictionaries to add adjectives to our writing,” said Jairo De La Torre, one of the six second-grade teachers from the Science Center School whose students benefitted from the classroom sets of the books.

ECCLA also played matchmaker when a friend of Ms. Strumpf had a book donation drive among her elementary students in Northridge and needed to find an interested teacher at a cash-strapped school to accept the gift. Ms. Strumpf asked for help and ECCLA paired them up with

Trinity Street Elementary, where the children could hardly wait to discover the delights chosen for them by their counterparts in another school.

Like ECCLA, Books and Blankies works to connect teachers to the materials they need to create a successful learning experience. And when teachers find help once, they often return. Mr. Gozonsky’s success with the Don Quijote Book Club gave him another idea. Following the presidential inauguration, he wanted to hear what high schoolers would think of Barack Obama’s *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and*

Inheritance. With a set of the autobiographies in hand from Books and Blankies he found a colleague who connected him with some students at an Inglewood high school. “I don’t think we could have done the book club without [Robyn]. [H]aving a dozen copies of the books gave me credibility, too,” said Mr. Gozonsky. “It was such a show of faith.” As a result of the donation the book club did meet over several weeks, and Mr. Gozonsky reports: “We had a vibrant experience of connecting with the book using video, art and music—and most important, the students’ frank and intelligent assessment of the text.”

Ms. Strumpf, who is now an engineering graduate student at USC, plans to continue to operate Project Books and Blankies well into the future. “Every time that I make a delivery of ‘books and blankies,’ I see the excitement in the kids’ faces as they sort through the baskets. Their appreciation that someone is interested in their success—that’s all the reward that I need,” she says.

For more information about connecting to ECCLA or Project Books and Blankies, visit the ECCLA website at www.eccla.org. ○○○



MONEY MADNESS

Los Angeles Sparks Fundraiser Program

The Los Angeles Sparks WNBA basketball team makes it easy to **raise money, build community and encourage fitness** at the same time. The Sparks play at the Staples Center—just like the Lakers and the Clippers—but the most popular seats cost just \$15 to \$36. Schools can earn back up to half of ticket sales, and the Sparks offer prizes and incentives to encourage participation. Top sellers can earn autographed jerseys or even win a pair of season tickets. Schools can earn team autographs after the game or even get to play on the Staples Center court.

The Sparks play from May through September, so now is a great time to begin planning a spring fundraiser. For information or to sign up, contact Erica Pacheco at 213-929-1309, or epacheco@la-sparks.com. **Mention ECCLA to Erica and you could win additional Sparks tickets and souvenirs.**

Win Books and Blankies!

Two elementary classes will each win a large basket of assorted books and a hand-made quilt donated by Project Books and Blankies.

To enter the contest, visit www.eccla.org and click on the note at the upper left that says “Register and Submit Essays...” All elementary teachers within ECCLA’s boundaries who register at the ECCLA website before December 3, 2009 will be automatically entered to win a book basket and quilt. ECCLA will hold a drawing on Friday, December 4, 2009 to determine the winners. Winners will be posted on the ECCLA website by 2:00PM on that date.

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

1 University of Southern California, The Metropolitan Opera: *Aida in HD*. See the live performance of this powerful opera simulcast in HD at USC’s Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre. 1:00 pm. Admission is free, but reservations required. RSVP at www.cinema.usc.edu/aida.

2 24th Street Theatre, *Dia de los Muertos* celebration. Annual neighborhood celebration of ancestors, remembrance and culture. Participants decorate a tomba in honor of loved ones, while enjoying traditional Latino music, food, folklorico dancing, and theatrical vignettes. Sunset to 10 pm at 1117 W. 24th Street, 90007. Email info@24thstreet.org or call 213.745.6516.

4 St. Agnes School Farmers Market. Fresh produce direct from the farmer to you! Every Wednesday, 2 to 5 p.m. At 1428 W. Adams Blvd. 90007 in the school parking lot.

4 University of Southern California, Art, Culture, Politics: *A Conversation with Shepard Fairey*. A talk with the artist behind Obama’s HOPE poster about how his iconic art has become an important element in the creative and cultural economy. 7:00 pm in the Annenberg Auditorium. Email visionsandvoices@usc.edu for more information or visit the USC Arts and Events Calendar at www.usc.edu/calendar.

5 University of Southern California, The Antenna Repairman: *A Multimedia Percussion Performance*. The Antenna Repairman trio perform a Ghatam, a unique work inspired by Afro-Latin and Hindustani traditions. 7:30 pm. Free at the Gayle and Ed Roski Master of Fine Arts Gallery, 3001 South Flower Street. For more information email visionsandvoices@usc.edu.

6 DEADLINE: ECCLA’s Eighth Grade Higher Education Scholarship. Visit www.eccla.org/scholarships.asp for more information.

8 LAST DAY: Natural History Museum’s exhibit, *Spider Pavilion*. An open air exhibit where spiders spin their webs freely, and an educational center to learn about the arachnids before you enter the exhibit. \$3 for Adults, \$2 for Children. Call 213.763.3466 or visit www.nhm.org for more information.

Skirball Museum, Readings and Lectures: Jonathan Safran Foer. The author of “Everything is Illuminated” reads from his new book “Eating Animals” and explores why humans eat animals, and if they would if they knew how animals got on their plate. Free with advanced reservations. Call 310.440.4500 or visit www.tickets.skirball.org/public.

18 University of Southern California, Thornton CreSCendo. An evening with USC’s jazz vocal ensemble from the Thornton School of Music at the Alfred Newman Recital Hall. 7:30 pm. Free. For more information visit www.usc.edu/music.

21 California Science Center, *The Medicalization of Race*. Moderated by Travis Smiley, this roundtable discussion will explore scientific facts about race and its controversial place in human biology. 1:00 pm. Free. Register online at www.californiasciencecenter.org.

Natural History Museum, Junior Scientist: *Seeking Seashells*. Investigate the museum’s snails, slugs, octopi and more as a junior malacologist (a scientist who studies mollusks). Sessions at 10:30 am and 2:00 pm. Check in at the Dueling Dinosaurs. Free with museum admission. Visit www.nhm.org/site/activities-programs/junior-scientist or call 213.763.3466 for more information.

29 LAST DAY: California African American Museum’s exhibit, *Tuskegee Airmen: The Journey to Flight*. Photographs in this exhibit show the tribulations of the Tuskegee airmen, who were trained in a groundbreaking Negro civilian pilot training program in the 1940’s, who have gone largely unrecognized for their efforts. Free. Call 213.744.7432 or visit www.caamuseum.org.

DECEMBER

3 DEADLINE: Prize Drawing for “Basket of Books and a Quilt” for elementary classes. Register at www.eccla.org to enter the contest. Sponsored by Project Books and Blankies. Email jhamilton@eccla.org for more information.

Submit events for the calendar to: chalkboard@eccla.org.

ONGOING

CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM *Harlem of the West: Jazz, Bebop, and Beatnik*. A photo exhibit of famous black musicians from Billie Holiday to Louis Armstrong who thrived in the Fillmore District of San Francisco, where there were at least 19 black managed clubs prospered from the 1940’s to the 1960’s. Runs until January 10. Free. Call 213.744.7432 or visit www.caamuseum.org.

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER *RACE: Are We So Different?* Uses multimedia, interactive exhibits to explore the science, history and personal experiences of race, illustrating what race is and what it is not, and rethinking assumptions of race and human variation. Runs October 3 to December 31. Free. Call 323.724.3623 or visit www.understandingrace.org or www.californiasciencecenter.org.

America I Am: *The African American Imprint*. An exhibit exploring the long history of influence and innovation from African Americans to the United States and the world. Runs October 30 to April 15. Free. Call 323.724.3623 or visit www.californiasciencecenter.org.

IMAX Films: *Across the Sea of Time* and *PULSE: A STOMP Odyssey*. *Across the Sea of Time* features a young Russian boy traveling to America to find his family in the United States, mainly New York. *PULSE: A STOMP Odyssey* aims to crush diversity by showing percussion groups from everywhere in the world, without boundaries or prejudices, to create a positive global spirit. Discounted price for large groups. Call 213.744.2019 for more information.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM *Dinosaur Encounters*. A live dinosaur puppet presentation at 11:00 am and 3:00 pm every day in the Times Mirror room. Free with admission, admission waivers available to school groups. Call 213.763.3466 or visit www.nhm.org for more information.

SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER *Dig it!* Experience an outdoor simulated archaeological dig to find hidden artifacts or sculpt your own artifact to bring home. Everyday Saturday and Sunday when weather permits from 10:00am to 5:00 pm. Free with museum admission. Call 310.440.4500 or visit www.skirball.org/family for more information.