

**Such A Busy Month!**

Everyone at S.O.D.A wishes to give thanks to all who have reached out to help our school these first few months. At no other time was the support of families more apparent than this past week. The Fall Festival was a **huge** success, thanks to the many families who donated time and supplies to this event. Friday's Service Learning sessions involved 7 loyal parent/grandparents who continue to come back when needed to work with students in small groups. You are all so special to us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

**No School For 5****Days!**

Our Thanksgiving break begins tomorrow. We hope that all of our S.O.D.A families enjoy some quality time together. As we know that many students will use some time these 5 days to do some catching up on E2020, know that Mrs. Greenley (and likely other teachers) will check email to see if requests arise for assistance. For students to be reset in their course quizzes, normally in class they must produce the correct answers, in writing, to their last failed quiz. A teacher goes over these notes before resetting the assessment. Teachers ask that for students to make requests for quizzes to be reset from home, that a parent has supervised this request and has ascertained whether the student has made attempts to learn the material not previously learned. A parent's tel. # at the bottom of the

request works nicely, should a teacher wish to verify parental involvement in what is being studied at home. Again, we ask that Topic Tests are taken at school. Quizzes may be completed at home.

Mr. Yates Addresses Helpful Issues in Letter

Last week your child should have taken home a letter that you were asked to read, sign, and return to your child's advisory teacher, thus ensuring that all of our families were updated on two important topics. If you did not read this, please ask your child to get another copy to bring home. In brief, the two topics were: (1) the new afternoon courses we are offering and (2), some helpful information on how to evaluate your child's progress on the E2020 courses.

To recap, all of our students are in two new courses that each run 40 min. at the end of their day. For the most part they chose their courses, but for many, one of their two courses was chosen for them, as these courses provide academic support to students in need. Ms. Hernandez runs a course using "My Skills Tutor" (a computer based skill-building program) and Mr. Romero teaches math tutoring.

As for E2020, we wish to encourage families to think about these computer-based courses a little differently than you would at a typical school. At the end of the semester, courses that are completed receive credit; in those that are not finished, students continue working on. Should each student work to catch up over their two week Christmas vacation? You bet! However, the good news is that on your child's semester report card, you will see their grade based on what they have done, and if they are not finished with the course, it will show you what remains before credit is received. Enrichment courses operate like they would elsewhere. The courses are completed before the

winter holiday. New Enrichment courses will be assigned in January.

Winter Holidays Are Coming!

Mark your calendars. December 18th is our last day of school before we all settle in for Winter Break. School resumes on Tuesday, January 5th.

Service Learning/Experiential Education

This month has been a busy one. We have had guest speakers galore as well as lots of hands on. Our guest speakers have been from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, the Valencia County Sheriff's Dept., the Los Lunas Police Department, and members of Blue Star Mothers – an organization we will partner with shortly to support our troops serving overseas. Ask your child about these guests and their messages. We are always grateful to individuals who join our community for a morning of learning, discussion and fun. Early in December we will have the Valencia County Coalition Against Domestic Violence come in to discuss teen-dating, setting boundaries, cyberbullying, etc. We hope to find a way to reach out and help their organization as well. Here are some student reflections on our work in recent weeks. Enjoy!

Today was great. I thought that learning about those laws was a great way to learn more about our community. Before today I didn't know anything about any of those things. I also think that supporting our troops could be a great service learning project. We could do things like send them letters and have food drives. I learned a lot today.

-Zack

I loved the guest speakers, they really touched me. I never thought that there are so many people fighting for us. Wow, if I could listen to them one more time that would be cool because no matter how much they said, I thought "Wow, these people have family members that are fighting, and it's hard for the family members because they want them to come home and be okay." The police officers were a great experience for us. When they started saying things like, "Don't get in trouble and live a good life", it touched me because I know they're here for us when we need them.

Both of the police officers had good points the entire time. It slapped me in the face when she said be careful, don't do stupid things and use your brain. If you see something, don't take it, and tell the truth. They were very good guest speakers. I want to give them a great big thanks.

-Demi

I thought it was really cool to have the police department and sheriff's department come. I learned a lot of things that I never knew. I liked that the moms of the Navy came in and talked to us about what their sons do. It was kind of like getting an inside look on their lives. Sometimes I wonder what would happen without our troops. I guess the saying "Freedom isn't free" is true. Our troops fight for our freedom, so it really isn't free. I liked today a lot- it was very touching. Thanks for making service learning great!

-Jessie

Want to Learn More About S.O.D.A?

The governing council meets every month and welcomes parents who wish to share concerns or ask questions. Their next meeting is on Dec 1, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the school. Our Parent Teacher Association meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00. All are welcome!

Your Help Is Needed!

Parents, please help us. We must enforce the rules that our founders laid out in the charter. No gum, no candy, or no soft drinks are allowed at our school. Meanwhile we have found gum imbedded in the carpet already and no less than 20 pieces of gum stuck up under the tables! Daily kids are opening cans of soft drinks they bring from **home**. They often are spotted and required to discard of them. The sooner we get your help in this, the better. We prefer to focus on teaching and learning. However, as was previously stated, we are trying to adhere to the rules laid out by those who created our school.

The Green Team Asks For Aluminum Cans!

Our newly formed "Green Team" would like to ask families to begin sending in their aluminum cans for recycling. We are working to make a little profit off of our recycling efforts to support initiatives at our school. If you send them already crushed, this is best, but not required. We have recycling receptacles ready on campus for your cans. Thanks so much!

Happy Holidays S.O.D.A Families!