

SLOCOE e-News



Monthly News from the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education



"I am so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers." ~ L.M. Montgomery, author of *Anne of Green Gables*

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"The Beat Goes On"

by James Brescia, County Superintendent

As I reviewed the plethora of articles on distance learning, one story about how high school choirs are improvising in the age of COVID-19 caught my attention. The positive attitude and actions of these students, their teachers, their families and the community reminded me of the many blessings for which we should give thanks.

All of the noise bombarding our senses during the month of October from the political arena, our daily lives, and society can get in the way of recalling the many positive things we still enjoy. We have so many reasons to have hope for tomorrow and to remember how we can have a positive influence on the world. With this in mind, please join me in congratulating and thanking our "Employees of the Year" and all who were nominated for this honor.

We should give thanks to all who have continued to do their part during COVID-19 and those who have let us know ways in which we can improve our service. By coming together, we support the work of our local school districts, deliver specialized student services, provide countywide leadership, and advocate for education.

Just like the choir students in the article I re-



viewed, I see SLOCOE employees innovating in their service to the community. SLOCOE is committed to engaging everyone in meaningful conversations that are open and honest. To that end, we must continue supporting each other and joining together as one team. I am very proud of our employees and consider it an honor to serve as your county superintendent of schools.

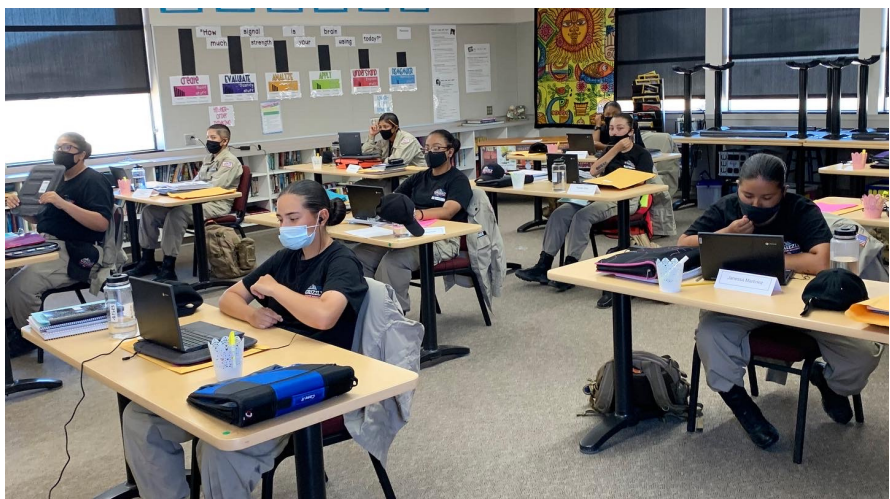
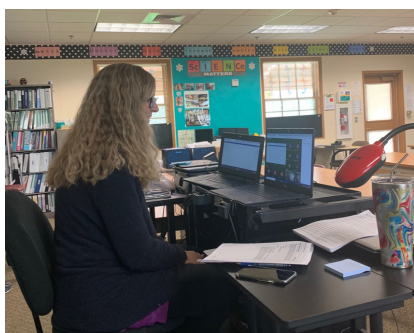
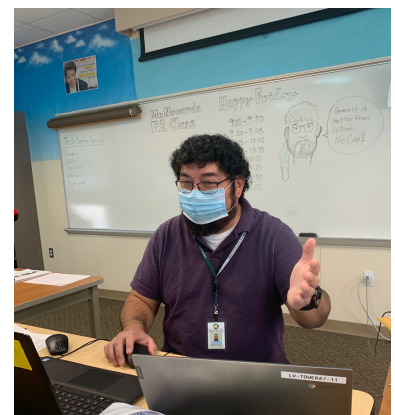
~Jim Brescia

Today you are you! That is truer than true! There is no one alive who is you-er than you!
~ Dr. Seuss

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own, and you know what you know. And you are the guy who'll decide where to go.
~ Dr. Seuss

A Peek at Distance Learning Two Different Ways

Distance learning, a signature challenge of the 2020-21 school year, calls for flexibility in our programs. While Loma Vista Community School teachers Art Navarro (**Right**) and Stacey Byrd (**Below Left**) provide instruction from inside classrooms to students who remain at home, Grizzly Youth Academy teachers connect with students sitting in their classrooms (**Below Right**) while they themselves remain at home. Grizzly students stay with their platoons for better safety.



Meet Sabrina Green

Behavioral Health Specialist, Student Programs & Services

Imagine beginning a new job in the middle of a pandemic. Now imagine getting to know your students through a screen. Sabrina Green, a recent graduate of Cal Poly with a degree in Child Development, knows first-hand about distance learning as a student, and now as a Behavioral Health Specialist. Nothing seems to dampen her excitement about her opportunity to engage with students, even from a distance.

What does a typical day at Chris Jespersen School hold for her? Students (at home) begin each day with DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) training, that helps all to develop mindfulness in their emotions and thoughts. Sabrina then spends 30 minutes with each of three 9-12th grade students assigned to her, assisting them with their school work, such as writing essays.

"I enjoy this population," she says. "I know these interactions can go far for these kids. I like being someone who cares, showing them they can get through their obstacles. Real change starts with youth." Sabrina doesn't yet know if she will pursue a teaching credential or a career in social welfare, but she loves specialized classrooms.



Sabrina grew up in South Lake Tahoe, and is among the first in her family (along with her mother, pictured with her above) to earn a college degree. When her graduation from Cal Poly turned virtual because of the pandemic, she and her roommates conducted their own ceremony at home, wearing their bathrobes. That, along with a family celebration, helped to make graduation special. Sabrina's college degree includes an emphasis in psychology and Spanish, supplemented by an internship with Family Care Network. She loves the outdoors - surfing, walking, time with friends, and calming activities such as painting. Welcome, Sabrina!

Diaper Donations - You Can Help Too!

Thank you to Heather Markham, from the nonprofit organization, Infant Essentials, for donating diapers and wipes for two families who receive services from the SLOCOE Infant Program. Infant Essentials was launched from Cambria in 2013 to provide necessary comforts for infants (0-3 yrs) in homeless and low-income families. Susanne Murphy, Teacher, Early Intervention Program, collaborated with the Homeless Services Coordinating Program to help these two families. (For more, see Page 4)



Diaper Donations (from Page 3)

SLOCOE staff can also participate in this effort! Send donations of diapers and wipes (all sizes and brands in unopened packages) via interoffice mail to the attention of Robin Kirby at Morro Road. Thanks to all for the support!

~ Robin Kirby

How Do You Plan to Celebrate Halloween?

SLOCOE staff share plans and ideas for fun and safety



Heidi Hopkins - "I made the pumpkin punch (left) so a trick-or-treater could "punch" a spot and pull out a candy bar. For this to be sturdy enough to survive some punches, I took the actual "punch" out by making easy access to each candy bar. I can accommodate 52 ghosts or ghouls on Halloween."

Sonia Stuart - "Our little town in Nipomo is having a Halloween festival, organized by our local South County Veterans of Foreign Wars. They are very involved and always think of the kids."

Jeanne Buchanan - "We plan to celebrate with a short walk to the grandparents' house and then

back home where the kids will go between the side door and front door while adults inside do quick costume changes for each time a door is opened. We will also make some Halloween goodies and celebrate with movies and popcorn in the evening."

STAFF TRANSITIONS & NEWS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

DJ Pittenger, Assistant Superintendent, Administration

WELCOME TO THREE NEW BABIES!

Conner Raye Thomas (Below Left), born September 2 to Brenda Thomas, Behavioral Health Specialist, Chris Jespersen School, Student Programs & Services

Luna Hope Vazquez (Below Center), born September 4 to Jose Vazquez Ocampo, Migrant Education Services Specialist, Student Programs & Services

Jaden R. Newman (far right)
Born in September to Jason Newman, Math Teacher, Grizzly Youth Academy

