

SOUTH PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

TIGER PAUSE

March/April, 2006

On my way to school a few days ago, an impatient driver honked when I paused to look for oncoming cars before making a turn and then cut me off in order to get to the left turn lane sooner. Frankly, it bugged me. It also made me think about how someone else's behavior could influence my thinking. On the flip side, positive interactions, even brief ones, can leave their own lasting impact.

At our January 17th Professional Development Day, all of the faculty and staff of South Pasadena Unified School District came together to hear about the positive impact of personal asset building. Led by presenter Clay Roberts, we learned about the work of Search Institute in which they identified "forty positive experiences and qualities that all of us have the power to bring into the lives of children and youth." These are called Developmental Assets. The eight general asset categories – support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity – give insight into what young people need in order to grow up healthy and responsible.

As individuals, site-specific staffs, and as the District's family of five schools, we made commitments about how we will build assets in the young people with whom we work. To a person, our SPSHS staff demonstrated energy, empowerment, and excitement about renewing their focus on supporting our students in personal ways. Building assets is important in the schools, and it requires consistency throughout a community ("It takes a village..."). Based on strong relationships, collectively we have the potential to create solid personal foundations for each of our students. If you would like more information about committing to positive youth development, it can be found at www.search-institute.org.

Parent involvement in schooling and planning and decision making are two of the forty identified Developmental Assets. Parents can immediately practice those two assets by working with your students to assist in making decisions for next year's programming. It is amazing that it is already the time of year when we begin planning for the next! Sophomores and their parents will meet in small counseling groups as part of this process, and all students will have choices and back-up plans to design as part of their four-year plans. It is also an opportunity to reaffirm parental expectations about achievement.

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A goodbye to a good friend:

For twenty-five years, Cecilia Torres has been the Health Clerk at South Pasadena High School. She is the gracious, patient, caring woman who is always at the ready with a comforting word, an ice pack, a wheelchair, or a bandage. She is also the person who has tirelessly maintained our students' health records, kept parents aware of health concerns, and tested eyes and ears for optimum performance. This month, Mrs. Torres and her husband are packing up and moving to Nevada where they will begin a new phase in life – retirement. To Cecilia, we extend our heartfelt gratitude and best wishes. We will miss her very much!

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Notes about upcoming events:

- March 7th and 8th are the dates for the CAHSEE testing for juniors. Students involved in the testing need to be ready to go by 8:00 a.m.
- On March 1st, our Department Chairs, Jack Smith, and I will attend a “cyber workshop” intended to help us in continuing our development as a professional community.
- March 2nd is the Instrumental Music Spaghetti Dinner. See a musician to purchase tickets.
- Eighth Grade Preview Night, Part II, is at 7:00 on Wednesday, March 15.
- Friday, March 17th, brings the Mr. GQ Assembly, the Powder Puff football game, and the Backwards Dance.
- Also on March 17th and 18th, our Drama Company will compete in the Fullerton (College) Festival in student-directed plays, one-acts, and musicals.
- Our Spring Vocal Music Concert is on Tuesday, March 21st, at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium.
- If you know a fifth grader, our Fifth Grade Preview Night is on March 25th at 7:00. It is never too early to get excited about SPHS and all we have to offer!
- Our student recognition extravaganza, SPEX (for South Pasadena Excellence), is scheduled for Thursday, March 30.
- You will be receiving special notifications about our STAR State testing.

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Our final Community Coffees for the school year will be held on March 2, April 13, and May 4. Each Coffee begins at 8:30 in the main office, and we welcome guests. Let us know to expect you and to reserve a muffin for you. You are also welcome to email me at janderson@fc.spusd.net.