

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2011

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

1/21 - Emergency Operations Center Meeting

1/24 - School Site Coordinator Meeting

EL RANCHO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS GRANT INITIATIVE



The G.R.E.A.T. Program at Work

What does G.R.E.A.T stand for?: Gang Resistance Education and Training

What is the Program Vision?: Building Safer Communities One Child at a Time

What is the Program Mission?: Prevent Youth Crime, Violence, and Gang Involvement

How will it work in ERUSD?: Officer Carlos Flores is leading the integration of the GREAT vision and mission in the District's middle schools, along with the positive aspects of the Character Counts! program.

What's involved?: The U.S. Department of Justice designed the program to help youth develop positive life skills that will enable them to avoid gang involvement and violent behavior.

It's a community-wide approach using a curriculum developed through the collaborative efforts of law enforcement officers, specialists in criminology, sociology, psychology, education, and health to:

- Provide children with the skills necessary to combat the stresses that set the stage of gang involvement.
- Provide children with accurate knowledge about gang involvement.
- Provide children with the skills necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Help children understand the need to set realistic goals.



The GREAT Program consists of four inter-related components designed to target different audiences. Each component has outlined lessons to fit the target group's needs and skills as well as being age-appropriate in its goals. Each component can stand alone in teaching and forging skills and attitudes that will ultimately help youngsters at risk to resist gang pressures and acts leading to violence.

The Middle School Component is the core and foundation of the program. The middle school component must be taught in each jurisdiction where the GREAT program is being implemented.

The Elementary, Summer, and Families Components are not mandatory, but they greatly enhance and reinforce the concepts taught in the Middle School curriculum.

GREAT Program Instructor, Officer Carlos Flores, has already taught over 400 students in Burke and Rivera Middle Schools. In addition, the Summer component consisted of four weeks instruction to 38 students from North Park Middle School. The summer topics included Anger Management, Decision Making Skills, Community, and Goal Setting. In addition to that curricula, field trips to the Museum of Tolerance, the California Science Center, and Chantry Flats in the Arcadia Mountains gave students more perspective into their community. Students were treated to a variety of speakers from all walks of life, including clergy, law enforcement, and school administrators.

Officer Flores says that combining the GREAT Program with Character Counts! was a two-prong effort to give special assistance to those students who most need decision making skills and communication. Flores says the combined programs have produced promising results.

ERUSD is fortunate to have the qualified services of Officer Flores and Character Counts! team member, Alma Garcia bringing this successful nationwide program into the District. We believe that these programs will allow our students to practice positive behaviors that will remain with them during the remainder of their developmental years.



Officer Carlos Flores



SPOTLIGHT ON...

JAZMIN CHAVEZ

School Site Coordinator



El Rancho High School 9th grade English teacher, Jazmin Chavez, will be responsible for leading the teaching curriculum for Too Good for Violence, Too Good for Drugs, Character Counts!, and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at ERHS. She will monitor the programs taught, track the number and hours of instruction for each area of curricula and ensure program fidelity as set out by the Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant initiative being implemented at 13 other District schools. Ms. Chavez has received training in each of the programs and serves on the grant's Element Working Groups.

Ms. Chavez came to the ERUSD eight years ago. In addition to being a good teacher, she's working hard to make the developing programs extremely successful, most notably the Character Counts! program. She currently is working with the science department administering the Too Good for Drugs and Violence programs. Ms. Chavez modestly credits the "wonderful group of teachers" in the Too Good for Drugs program and is proud of the way the ERHS staff has embraced the Character Counts! by incorporating the Six Pillars of Character into the curriculum. Perhaps it's fair to say that the success thus far is in large part due to the enthusiasm, attention and guidance of School Site Coordinator Chavez!

Jazmin Chavez has firm roots in the southern California soil; she grew up in South Central Los Angeles, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, making her family justifiably proud by being the first family member to graduate from high school and college. She attended Sarah Lawrence College in New York before transferring to Whittier College where she obtained a B.A. degree in Comparative Cultures. She achieved her Masters in Education from Claremont Graduate University, and just last year, received an Administrative Credential from Cal Poly Pomona. It's little wonder that Ms. Chavez won Teacher of the Year honors in 2006.

Jazmin admits to being "an Asian in a Mexican-American body"! She loves to cook her favorite Asian foods for herself and husband of 18 months, who is also a teacher at ERHS. They live in Whittier with a chocolate lab named Ele. She is a student of floral design at Rio Hondo College because arranging flowers is a relaxing (and fragrant!) pastime for this very busy teacher. Jazmin says traveling is another pleasurable activity and to that end, she, along with three other teachers, accompanied a group of students through Austria, France, and Italy over the recent Christmas break. Napa in the northern California wine country is a sentimental favorite.

The El Rancho Unified School District is proud to have a dedicated educator in Jazmin Chavez; a woman who exemplifies hard work to achieve her own personal goals and is a fine example of a teacher who cares about her students getting a safe and healthy environment in which to foster their own dreams.

WE-TIP LINE (ANONYMOUS REPORTING) 800-78-CRIME (27463)

For questions and additional information contact Dora Delgado, SS/HS Project Coordinator at ddelgado@erusd.k12.ca.us

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