



## What's Good in Education - Briefs September 3, 2008

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### Chinese Exchange Program Thrives

The day after school got out in June, seven Saugus High School students and World Languages Department Chair and China Exchange Coordinator Patty Stephenson set out to spend the summer at Gao Xin No. 1 High School in Xi'an, China, as part of Saugus' school-to-school exchange program. The group lived with Chinese host families and attended school daily, improving their abilities to speak, read, write and understand Chinese. The students also learned about Chinese history, calligraphy, art and music. Members of the American exchange team included Melissa Keller, Keith Jordon, Kimi Gibson, Aurelien Abou-Nassar, Careese Quon, Kimberly Gordon and Amanda Keller. The group also toured such areas as the Great Wall and the pre-games Olympic Village.



A week after the Saugus students returned from China, this year's Chinese students arrived to spend the fall semester at Saugus High School. Linxiao Wang, Shuangshuang Ren (Holly), Gaozheng Jin (Allen), Yuqi Hu (William), and Junlin Liang (Max) have adopted American names, are all living with host families and attending regular and honors classes at Saugus. Their teacher, Hongmei Guo, is also attending classes in order to learn more about the American educational system. The Chinese students will spend five months studying at Saugus before returning home next winter.

### Rider Earns Grant for Rancho Pico Library

The library at Rancho Pico Junior High will soon be \$1,000 to \$1,500 richer, thanks to eighth grader Ashlyn Matheus, who won first place in the Riding for Reading class at a benefit horse show recently at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center. The non-profit Riding for Reading offered library grants to all 55 riders in the class, with the highest grants going to the top competitors. Ashlyn rides with the Interscholastic Equestrian League and won not only the Riding for Reading class last weekend, but also the hunter/jumper class. A budding journalist as well as a top-ranked equestrian, Ashlyn is hoping the Rancho Pico Library will use part of her grant to fund computers for the Rancho Pico journalism class. Riding for Reading combines students' love of horses with a campaign to support literacy and scholastic achievement through library grants, scholarships and book drives.



### Creative Minds Launch Virtual Enterprise Company

Students in the first Virtual Enterprise class offered by the Hart District's Regional Occupational Center have selected a product and theme for their new company: Acoustic Cakes and Apparel. The new company will be a cupcake bakery (cupcakery) with a theme of famous guitar players. Flavors will include Elvis Peanut Butter Banana, Chuck Berry Cherry, Beatles Blueberry, Chocolate Clapton, Page Pistachio, Vaughn Vanilla, Cash Coconut, Marley Mocha, Swift Strawberry, Lenon Lemon, B B King Key Lime Pie, Crow Carrot etc. The company will also sell T-



shirts and other gift items with cupcake designs and guitars, based on a "Taste the Music" slogan. Once a month the company will feature an acoustical concert with a famous guitarist. Next on the agenda will be selection of company uniforms, design of a company logo, Web site and catalogue, and planning for a Grand Opening. The class meets at Golden Valley High School and will "trade" its products with other Virtual Enterprise companies around the world.



## [‘Seeing Saugus Through a New Lens’](#)

Saugus High faculty toured The Getty, one of the world’s most famous art museums, as the kick-off for this year’s staff development theme, “Seeing Saugus through a New Lens.” In a study session prior to the trip, teachers received instructions to take photographs following detailed guidelines. The purpose of The Getty trip was to see first hand how great artists and photographers frame their subjects, pay attention to meticulous details in their work and exhibit great patience. According to Principal Bill Bolde, “When you think about it, good teachers do the same. They try to see everything that makes their students unique and impressionable, using different resources to affect their learning and exercising great patience along the way.”



## [Rio Norte to Honor National Anthem](#)

Jeffrey Gilbert, the music teacher at Rio Norte Junior High School, is concerned that students no longer know the familiar patriotic songs that once were learned in elementary school music classes. He is filling that gap by involving the Rio Norte student body in the National Anthem Project: Restoring America’s Voice. The Rio Norte concert band and choir will lead the students—more than 1400 strong—in “The Star-Spangled Banner” on Sept. 12, the second year Rio Norte students have taken part in the project. The program will be opened by Santa Clarita Mayor Bob Kellar, and local veterans are invited to share the occasion. Classes will gather in the quad at 9 a.m.

## [Students Explore Cultural Roots](#)

Saugus High English teachers Kelli Williams-Korbel and Frank Koroshec collaborated on a unique get-acquainted project focusing on the diverse backgrounds of their classes. They instructed their students to give a presentation on an artifact from their own cultural heritage with significance to them, along with an explanation of their own names and a brief history of their family. Artifacts included clothing, costumes, jewelry, pictures, photographs and sentimental objects as well as specially prepared food for the class to sample. “It was awesome to explore my own culture and past,” said sophomore Cameron Neal. “It was also an interesting way to learn about the cultural difference of other students.”

