

**FREE**

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Monrovia Unified School District**



Volume 8, Issue 36

September / October 2021

## A Promising Start to the 2021-22 School Year



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# Monrovia Unified has Promising Start to the 2021-22 School Year



**Dr. Ryan D. Smith**  
Superintendent

At Monrovia Unified School District, the 2021-22 school year is off to a fantastic start! It has been a pleasure spending time at our schools and seeing our amazing students return to their classrooms.

I have been impressed with the work that our teachers are engaging in to build strong relationships and connections with their students, while building a sense of community and belonging in their classrooms and providing high-quality, rigorous instruction.

I would like to thank all of our teachers and staff for working together to get us to this moment. I also want to express my gratitude to our parents and families for their trust and confidence in our team to provide a safe return to in-person learning.

As always, we strictly adhere to requirements provided by county and state public health officials. Our independent study program at [Mountain Park School](#) continues to serve as a viable alternative for parents who would prefer their students continue learning from home.

As we welcomed students back, Monrovia Unified has focused on three key areas:

- Identifying gaps in learning for each individual student and acting to address them.
- Ensuring access to resources and support to address the social-emotional learning needs of all students.
- Utilizing technology to continue to personalize and accelerate student achievement

I am excited to share more with the Monrovia community about our work and progress in these areas, and engage in a broader conversation about topics such as college and career readiness, personalized learning and equity. The pandemic and recent events together have changed the world; it is important that we continue to adapt and adjust our work to ensure that our students are well prepared to be the next generation of leaders.

Thank you all for the warm welcome to Monrovia – it is a privilege and an honor to serve you as superintendent.

Below are some important updates related to the start of the school year.

## MUSD COVID-19 Dashboard

To ensure transparent and accurate information regarding COVID-19 cases within our district, we are providing a dashboard as of the start of the 2021-22 school year. A link to the dashboard is located on the district's COVID-19 webpage. All data in the dashboard indicate confirmed active cases among our students and staff. Dashboard data is updated within 24 hours of learning of any confirmed active cases, and is not updated on weekends or other non-school days. Cases are removed from the dashboard once the student or staff member is cleared to return to school or work.

## ParentSquare

ParentSquare is an important tool for our parents and families to stay connected with news and information that is happening in our schools and around the district. We have added a ParentSquare section to our district and school websites for parents who would like to learn more about Parent Square and how to sign up. Please help us spread the word to any parents or families who may not be aware of this tool.



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Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik

# School News

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Covering the  
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Welcome back to a new school year. This is our 8th year publishing the Monrovia Unified *School News*. We look forward to continuing to bring you the excellence from the classrooms under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Ryan D. Smith.

As you enjoy the articles in this issue you can feel the excitement of students returning to school.

On pages 10 & 11 we have included our popular student book reviews. And don't forget to enter the word search contest below (all ages may enter).



Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. Our next issue is November 3.

## Halloween Word Search Contest

**Rules!** One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: [Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) (Please put Monrovia in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **October 25, 2021**

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| BLACK CAT     | HALLOWEEN      |
| CANDY         | JACK O LANTERN |
| CARVE         | MUMMY          |
| CEMETERY      | SKELETON       |
| COSTUME       | SPIDER         |
| DECORATIONS   | SWAMP CREATURE |
| FRANKENSTEIN  | TRICK OR TREAT |
| FRIGHTFUL     | VAMPIRE        |
| GHOST         | WEB            |
| GHOUL         | WEREWOLF       |
| GRAVE         | WITCH          |
| HAUNTED HOUSE | ZOMBIE         |



# Bradoaks *Elementary Science Academy*

930 East Lemon Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2100 • [bradoaks.monroviaschools.net](http://bradoaks.monroviaschools.net)



**Dr. Jayne Nickles**  
*Principal*

## Flexibility is Key!

The 2021–22 school year is off to a great start! After 15 months of teaching and learning remotely, students are busy learning the routines and expectations of a new grade level as well as adjusting to being on campus full time.

Many activities of the new school year also focus on the social-emotional well-being of our students while building community and developing friendships. Flexibility is still key for this year. While we are able to have our treasured traditions return, they look a little different as we make allowance for safety and comfort. For instance, our Flag Ceremony will have half the school participating at a time so that classes and individual students can spread out in front of the school. We are also excited to announce that we now have enough devices so that each student will have one. To support this initiative, Chromebooks were distributed in the first part of



September for all students, and the students were eager to check out their devices.

It's great to have everyone back on campus! Go Bobcats!

## Canyon Early Learning Center

1000 South Canyon Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2001 • [celc.monroviaschools.net](http://celc.monroviaschools.net)



**Tom McFadden**  
*Director*

## Welcome Back to School

Canyon Early Learning Center welcomed back the part-day and SDC Classes on August 19. After a year and half of being away from campus, students returned to start their Preschool Experience at Canyon Early Learning Center. Families in the Canyon Early Learning Center's part-day classes began the first day with a Classroom Orientation. Staff prepared a welcoming classroom environment, introductory activities, and led students and families on a tour of the campus. The highlight of the tour was the new south playyard with new equipment and supplies from Lake Shore Learning Center.

Canyon Early Learning Center's guests for the opening day activities included Dr. Ryan Smith, Superintendent of Monrovia Unified School District, and Officer Thomas Montes, the school district's Community Resource Officer. Dr. Smith and Officer Montes were able to meet and greet several of the families and students. Officer Montes was lucky enough to have a student push him on the swings!



**Canyon Early Learning Center Welcomes students and Families Back to School**

# Canyon Oaks H.S./Mountain Park/Monrovia Community Adult

930 Royal Oaks Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3000 • [www.MonroviaSchools.net](http://www.MonroviaSchools.net)



**Flint Fertig**  
Principal

## Anticipation of New Year

*By Calvin J. McKendrick,  
Assistant Principal*

On August 18, 2021, Mountain Park School students, parents, and staff were back on campus for the kickoff to “Success Week.” The turnout was tremendous! There were many happy, healthy faces mingling with each other in a physically distant manner as the anticipation for the new year had finally arrived. Staff were introduced by the school’s Assistant Principal and the genesis of the school’s vision and mission was articulated by Mr. Flint Fertig, Director of Alternative Programs. After the orientation meeting with parents, students met with their teachers to sign master agreement contracts that outline the expectations of independent study and to learn more about the delivery of instruction.

Campus wide, there was an overwhelming feeling of gratitude and appreciation for the flexibility and empathy experienced by all in attendance. Mountain Park School continues to make all students feel validated for their unique emotional, mental, and academic circumstances.



## Clifton Middle School

226 South Ivy Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2600 • [clifton.monroviaschools.net](http://clifton.monroviaschools.net)



**Mari Bordona**  
Interim Principal

## New Paxton-Patterson Laboratory

On August 12, 2021, the installation of Clifton’s college and career lab was completed. In partnership with Paxton-Patterson Laboratories and Monrovia Unified School District Educational Services, Clifton has expanded opportunities for students to gain exposure to 16 different STEM related fields of study. Some examples include structural engineering, pneumatics, digital manufacturing, sports medicine, and digital audio production. Each unit of study takes two weeks to complete and students have the choice of what units they would like to learn more about. The laboratory provides college and/or career pathways to the high school level where students can continue their education and achieve industry certifications or further their education as they move into college.



## Mayflower *Elementary*

210 North Mayflower Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2200 • [mayflower.monroviaschools.net](http://mayflower.monroviaschools.net)



**Michele Costarella**  
*Principal*

### All Set and Ready!

Mayflower Elementary cheerfully welcomed students back to school on Wednesday, Aug. 18! Teachers, staff and families alike were excited to return to campus full time in anticipation of a wonderful new year!

With the new 2021–22 school year, we look forward to students on campus as well as programs and events returning for everyone to enjoy. Mayflower’s PTA has worked tirelessly to plan a multitude of family

activities, starting with the welcome-back event held in August. Some of the additional upcoming activities include a fun-filled family movie night and an all-new family bingo night. These events serve to bring our community together while supporting our incredible school.

Additionally, we are thrilled to restart programs on campus for students, such as Renaissance, Peace Patrol and Student Council. These leadership programs offer our Mariners the opportunity to grow in their capacity to serve others and lead as role models.

Mayflower Elementary is set for the new school year and fondly anticipates great things to come!



## Monroe *Elementary*

402 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2300 • [monroe.monroviaschools.net](http://monroe.monroviaschools.net)



**Amanda Noriega**  
*Principal*

### Excited About Possibilities

On August 18, 2021, Monroe Elementary School welcomed more than 500 students back to campus! We are excited about the possibilities that the 2021-22 academic year has in store for our Mighty Lions. As a campus, we are committed to fostering meaningful relationships, provide research-based high quality, rigorous instruction for all students, and to ensure our staff

and families are healthy and safe. Our program goals are for our students to achieve grade level academic achievement and to have sociocultural competence. We will kick off our celebration of cultural diversity with a month of Hispanic/Latinx Heritage recognition. Our students will honor culture with a Spirit Week, a class art competition, and a school-wide activity where students will showcase a Hispanic/Latinx country, region, or person of their choice through various mediums; writing, art, or video.

# Monrovia High School

845 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2800 • [mhs.monroviashools.net](https://mhs.monroviashools.net)



**Kirk McGinnis**  
*Principal*

## The Link Crew program

Monrovia High School strives to provide an engaging and supportive learning environment for all students, one where they can find their voice, be connected to something they are passionate about, and learn valuable life lessons.

An important part of shaping the school experience for all students is led by our school's Link Crew. The Link Crew is a nationally recognized program that empowers and trains student leaders in grades eleven and twelve to serve as mentors and partners with the incoming ninth-graders.

Link Crew leaders participate in summertime training provided by MHS Link Crew Leader Paul Dols, and they begin the school year with the ever-popular Freshmen Orientation. On this special day, ninth-grade students participate in school spirit activities, join breakout groups to meet their peers, go on a school tour, and spend time meeting with their Link Crew leader.

"Link Crew leaders provide upper-grade role models and mentors that help welcome our youngest Wildcats to what we believe is the best high school ever," says Mr. Dols. Link Crew has been well established on our Monrovia High campus, helping students make the transition into high school. Go, Wildcats!



**Link Crew Leaders working with incoming freshmen.**

# Plymouth Elementary

1300 Boley St., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2400 • [plymouth.monroviashools.net](https://plymouth.monroviashools.net)



**Dr. Greg Gero**  
*Principal*

## Rolling Out the Red Carpet

Plymouth rolled out the red carpet to welcome its students to the 2021-2022 school year! Students, staff, and families shared their excitement about a safe and successful return to what promises to be a fantastic year of learning.

But even before this red carpet event, our students and families began receiving personal welcome visits from their teachers. Beginning in the summer, teachers conducted virtual home visits with each child's family, which provided a golden opportunity to build trusting relationships.

When the children finally walked onto our campus, they were greeted with an array of innovative outdoor learning spaces. Our Plymouth team worked tirelessly to create opportunities for students to take advantage of our renovated natural outdoor school environment, including a redesign of our eating areas.

Now all students are able to enjoy breakfast and lunch in our open outdoor areas with picturesque views of the San Gabriel Mountains. What an auspicious beginning to the school year!



# Santa Fe *Computer Science Magnet School*

148 West Duarte Rd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2700 • [santafe.monroviaschools.net](http://santafe.monroviaschools.net)



**Dr. Geoff Zamarripa**  
*Principal*

## Codesters Blasts Off!

This year, all Santa Fe students will receive Python-based coding lessons in all four core content areas: math, science, social studies and English. Codesters is an engaging online coding platform for students and a powerful learning-

management system for teachers. It includes built-out coding lessons that allow all awesome Cougar Scholars to

begin coding with ease. The lessons provide substantial support and allow students to grow rapidly or take their time as they pace through each lesson.

Codesters lets students create interactive projects in Python, an industry-standard coding language. The unique drag-to-text toolkit guides students through text-based coding while engaging them with sprites and animations. Students build projects through structured lessons and then modify their code to create custom projects.

Santa Fe is the first school in the country to incorporate Codesters into all four core content areas. We are proud of our promising beginning with this exciting program to provide all students with meaningful skills that will continue to enable ample opportunities for application in the future.



# Wild Rose *School of Creative Arts*

232 Jasmine Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2500 • [wildrose.monroviaschools.net](http://wildrose.monroviaschools.net)



**Paige Ramos**  
*Principal*

## Off to an Awesome Start

Our Wild Rose families are delighted to be back on campus and ready to learn. After several weeks of school, we have made adjustments

and have quickly stepped back into the swing of things. We welcomed our bears with two new music walls and they are thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to make some noise! Mr. Bogdon, our Office Manager, demonstrated his knowledge of the drums, tempo, and eight counts during morning announcements. We are having a blast learning as we further develop our appreciation for music and self-expression. We are off to an awesome start!



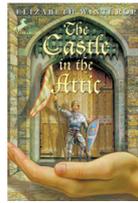
## David's Review



David H.

### Big Small Adventure

Title: *The Castle in the Attic*  
Author: Elizabeth Winthrop  
Do you like magic, knights, dragons, and adventure? Then this is the book for you.



William is a boy that loves his nanny and housekeeper, Mrs. Phillips, who has taken care of him since he was born. She is retiring and he doesn't want her to leave. She gives him a giant toy castle and a toy knight inside it as a goodbye present. William finds out that the toy knight, Sir Simon, is actually alive and the invisible kingdom inside the castle has been taken over by the evil wizard Alastor! William has Sir Simon shrink Mrs. Phillips with a magic coin so that she can't leave William and can stay with him forever. Then William shrinks himself so he can save the kingdom from the evil wizard.

Read this book to find out if William saves the day!

David is in fourth grade and he loves to read and play piano. He likes math and outdoor activities such as rock climbing, tennis, and basketball.

## Kailani's Review



Kailani T.

### Lovable Shih-Tzu, Yum-Yum

*Say Good-Bye* by Laurie Halse Anderson is book 5 of 17 in the Vet Volunteers series. It is about Yum-Yum, a small Shih-Tzu therapy dog. Yum-Yum visits children with cancer at the hospital to cheer them



up with his cuteness and tricks. Kids LOVE him. Unfortunately, Yum-Yum is also found to have cancer. Jane (Yum-Yum's owner) and Zoe (Jane's friend, a volunteer at the animal clinic) try their best to help him get better. Can Yum-Yum make it through?

This book is very heartwarming. It is full of suspense with excitement and sadness. Reading it makes me happy and sad at the same time. I have been asking my parents for a puppy for a few years. This story makes me understand that having a puppy won't just be cute and fun. If the puppy gets very sick, I may have to make hard decisions. I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves animals.

Kailani is a 4th grader who loves to read. When not playing with her brother, Kailani likes to listen to music, ride horses, and play board games. Hope everyone stays well and healthy.

## Daniel's Review



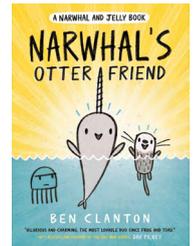
Daniel H.

### Best Friends

Title: *Narwhal's Otter Friend*  
(A *Narwhal and Jelly* Book #4)

Author: Ben Clanton

Narwhal the narwhal and Jelly the jellyfish are best friends. One day, they are swimming in the ocean when they meet Otty the



Otter. Otty is an adventurer that has done lots of cool stuff and met many animals. Otty wants to go on his next adventure and invites Narwhal to join him. They forget to invite Jelly. Jelly becomes jealous and wonders if he is still Narwhal's best friend. Is Otty now Narwhal's best friend? What will happen to Jelly? You will find out if you read this book.

This book is really cute and funny and made me laugh while I was reading it. I hope you read it and like it as much as I did!

Daniel is in second grade and he likes to spend time with his family playing board games, reading, and playing sports like tennis, soccer, and basketball.

## Tyson's Book Review



Tyson

### Poems, Poems, Poems!

"Everything On It" by Shel Silverstein isn't really a book, but is a collection of wacky poems. He is a creative writer with a very strange sense of humor. Some of his poems are funny, most are strange, and almost all are unrealistic! Look at this poem called "Housebroken."

The puppy's housebroken at last?  
Lord only knows when he was needin' it.  
You've trained him to go  
On the newspaper? Fine.  
But please-not while I'm readin' it.



See what I mean? The puppy is finally house trained, but Shel Silverstein twists the poem by questioning why the puppy is doing his business on the newspaper while the person was reading it! Shel Silverstein thinks out of the box and brings unexpected ideas to his poems. Not all books need to have a storyline. A book of poems can be just as enjoyable! Read this one and you'll like it too!

Tyson is a 7th grader who enjoys playing basketball, skateboarding, and video games. His favorite subjects at school are math and PE. The best thing about quarantine was having extra time to play with his dog and meeting new neighborhood friends!

## Katie's Review



Katie C.

### City Life vs The Wild

Title: *Brian's Return*

Author: Gary Paulsen

If you've ever read the book *Hatchet*, you know the story of Brian and how he was stranded after a dangerous and tragic plane crash. After he survives, the plot ends



and readers are left wanting more. *Brian's Return* is the sequel to this book, and portrays the difficulty Brian has in adjusting to his new life, free of wild animals and the dangers of living in solidarity in nature. As "safe" as his new life may seem, Brian is struggling immensely with living a so-called "normal" life. Therefore, he meets a psychologist named Caleb. Speaking with Caleb helps Brian work through the trauma he has faced and also to make a decision on what to do now. Will he finally be able to accept a calmer environment? Or will he still miss the woods, deep down in his heart? If you want to find out what Brian chooses to do, you should read *Brian's Return*.

Katie is a senior in high school. She likes reading and writing. She loves to read to younger kids. She provides book reviews to kids who want to find more good books.

## Sean's Book Review



Sean

### Middle School Can Change Your Life

*Finding the Worm* by Mark Goldblatt, is about a 7th grader, Julian Twerski, who attends McMasters Middle School. There, 9th graders are a real problem, as they are the bullies. Julian is seen



admiring a painting of a historical picture, and then is accused of messing it up! Julian's friend, Quentin, suffers from a tumor in his head, and due to this, is promised a visit from a famous baseball player. Another friend, Beverly, is constantly asking Julian to race her in running, but he always says no. This book has a lot of side stories that contribute to the main idea, making the book interesting, suspenseful, and funny. Mark Goldblatt did a great job connecting this book to his previous book, *Twerp*. In conclusion, *Finding the Worm* is really cool, but you should read *Twerp* before this, as you will have a much better time!

Sean is a 6th grader who enjoys playing basketball and volleyball. He loves to teach his dog, Chewie, tricks and taking him on walks. His favorite subjects at school are math and PE. The best thing about quarantine was spending time with his family in nature.

## Taegyong's Book Review



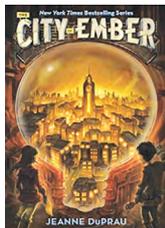
Taegyong K.

### Light in the Dark

Title: *The City of Ember*

Author: Jeanne DuPrau

Have you ever thought about living the place where you can't see the sun? This story is about the city of Ember where is underground. People in the city depend on the light bulbs to get light.



It starts with the conversation about the box that contains the secret between two builders who built the city of Ember. The mayors of the city pass it down to the next mayor secretly, but the seventh mayor couldn't pass it down and it remains unknown. Lina, A 12-year-old girl, and her friend, Doon, start to have doubts about the mayor and the city.

What is in the box? Where is it? Can Lina and Doon find the way for them and the city of Ember? Or will they be stuck in the city of darkness? If you like the adventures and secrets, I recommend this book to you.

Taegyong K. is a 6th grader. She loves reading books and writing her own stories. Also, she likes to draw and play video games.

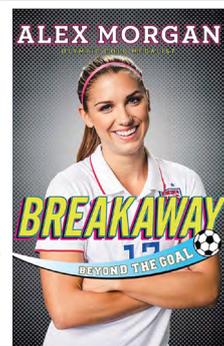
## Jenna's Review

### The Soccer Journey

Title: *Breakaway*

Author: Alex Morgan

Do you like playing soccer? Do you enjoy watching soccer games on your TV or in a stadium? If you do, you've probably heard of Alex Morgan. She is a professional soccer player. You might have seen her from the Olympics or the World Cup, well she wrote a book talking about her journey in soccer. She talks about tournaments she's been to, the World Cup, Olympics, and etc. My favorite story in this book is about her early stage on how she started soccer, who supported her, and how she got on such big teams. She also talks about how she handles losses, injuries, and negative thoughts. This book gives so much inspiration. She also tells you how to keep on practicing and how positive thinking can get you further. I definitely recommend this book to people who have a goal and want to reach it.



Jenna is a 6th grader. She enjoys playing soccer and drawing. She likes to read fiction novels. Someday she wants to publish a book.

# GRANDMA, WHY DO YOU HAVE CRACKS IN YOUR FACE?



KAY COOP  
ILLUSTRATED BY MELANIE FLORIO



Now Available on  
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*Grandma, Why Do You Have Cracks In Your Face?* Is a question many grandmothers have heard from their grandchildren. When a grandchild finds her beautiful lost doll, she understands beauty is more than skin deep.