

PAL® Quarterly



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County Superintendent of Schools

PAL® PEER ASSISTANCE LEADERSHIP
ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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For the past couple of years, OCDE PAL staff has been able to visit PAL Programs across Orange County. We enjoy these visits very much, as we are always encouraged by the enthusiasm of students, and the pride they have for PAL and their school. One recent visit was to La Vista Continuation School, Fullerton Joint Union High School District. The OCDE PAL team decided to highlight the La Vista PAL program for this newsletter as their program is unique. In addition, with upcoming testing just around the corner, we asked advisors to share how their PAL Program supports academic achievement at their school. Thank you to all the advisors and students that contributed to this newsletter, and we look forward to visiting more schools soon.

PAL in an Alternative Setting

La Vista Continuation School, Fullerton Joint Union High School District is the only PAL Program in Orange County being offered in a continuation school setting. Recently OCDE staff visited with Gayle Smith, the PAL advisor for the past sixteen years, and her PAL students to learn more about La Vista's program.



Recruiting & Selection

In order to become a PAL at La Vista, students need to be recommended by teachers. Interested students are interviewed by current PALs; they look for students who are compassionate, respectful, and who love working with kids. Once chosen, the peer leaders are required to maintain good attendance in order to remain in the program.

Activities

The main focus of the La Vista PAL Program is to assist students on campus and to reach out to children in the community who have special academic and/or physical needs. La Vista PAL students are required to have perfect attendance during the week if they want to visit elementary and preschools on Friday. PAL students love working with children, therefore this rule helps keep them motivated to stay in school. In addition to their weekly visits, the La Vista PAL group provides holiday gifts (Halloween, Christmas, Easter) and activities for all the younger students they work with.

Sustainability

When asked why PAL has lasted at La Vista for so many years, Ms. Smith stated, "I think the main reason is because we offer PAL as a class. We meet daily, which provides the opportunity to work together in growth-promoting sessions, and circle groups where we discuss issues of concern to the students and plan our activities."

It is evident that the success of this program is also due to the commitment of their advisor and the connection she makes with each student. After spending time with this group, it was obvious that students consider the PAL class a safe environment where they can openly discuss personal issues, in addition to a place that they can develop and utilize their leadership skills.

PAL Advisor Resources

OCDE PAL

<http://pal.ocde.us>

National Peer Helpers Association

www.peerprograms.org

California Healthy Kids Resource Center

www.californiahealthykids.org

California Health Kids Survey

www.wested.org/pub/docs/chks_home.html

Search Institute

40 Developmental Assets

www.search-institute.org



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Peer Leaders Supporting Academic Achievement



PAL Peer Leaders, Running Springs Elementary School, OUSD

Running Springs Elementary School Orange Unified School District

Advisors: William Tarango, Shelli Hemerson, Teresa Donovic

The Running Springs PAL group runs an afternoon study hall/tutoring program. Every Tuesday and Thursday PALs are assigned to help first through third graders with their school work. Some of the lower elementary students are assigned to the study hall by their teachers to help them academically. Other students choose to stay after school to get help with their homework. PAL students are available to answer questions and provide tutoring.

Pioneer Middle School Tustin Unified School District

Advisor: Mark Payne

Once a week Pioneer Middle School PAL students walk to a local elementary school to peer tutor students from kindergarten through fifth grade. PAL students give up their lunch to go there. Elementary students are tutored on a one-on-one basis, mostly in reading. PAL students are supervised by the PAL advisor and the elementary teacher in each classroom. The teachers also provide training for the PAL students to help them understand the needs of the students they will be working with.

- Do you want to start a PAL Program at your school?
- Would you like OCDE staff to present PAL to your school or district?
- Are you a PAL Advisor who is retiring this year?
- Need help to improve your program?
- Do you know of a former PAL student that we could feature in future issues of the newsletter?

Call OCDE PAL today! (714) 966-4358

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Palm Lane Elementary School Anaheim City School District

Advisor: Sandra Cuzquen, Monica Garcia, Johanna Puccio

Palm Lane Elementary School's tutoring program is called *Tutoring Corner*. Fourth and fifth grade PAL students are available to tutor their peers in all grade levels. They utilize their library as a drop-in center every Tuesday and Wednesday before school, and average 15-20 students each day. All tutors received a training that covers basic tutoring skills and positive reinforcement. They provide individual tutoring as well as work in small groups, and utilize flashcards and textbooks donated by teachers. The advisor supervises the tutors and provides them with materials they need.

Baden-Powell Elementary School Magnolia School District

Advisors: Debbie Varon, Stacy Bugaren, Kristin Sauter

Baden-Powell Elementary School PALs go into first grade classrooms and work with students on flashcard math facts. Each first grade class has a least one PAL student a day for 15-20 minutes.



PAL Tutoring, Baden-Powell Elementary School, MSD

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