

PAL® Quarterly



PAL® PEER ASSISTANCE LEADERSHIP
ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Why did you join PAL?

"I had a desire to serve my school and community and make an impact. A lot of the other activities I am/were in focused on personal success.

I like being a part of something that helps others."

- 11th grade student, Esperanza H.S., PYLUSD

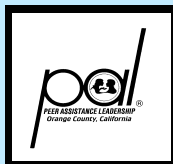
"To help the school and community and have fun in the process." - 8th grade student, Pioneer M.S., TUSD

"I just wanted to find a way to help others." - 5th grade student, Jefferson E.S., SAUSD

"I like the fact that we promote abstaining from drugs." - 10th grade student, Trabuco Hills H.S., SVUSD

"The main thing was how much the PALs helped me in 6th grade." - 8th grade student, Thurston M.S., LBUSD

"My teacher nominated me because she trusts me and she thinks I am a responsible person." - 4th grade student, Kinoshita E.S., CUSD



Welcome Back!

Welcome to the 28th year of PAL in Orange County! One sign that the program has been around a long time is that former PAL students are starting PAL programs at the schools they teach at (see story on back). For this first issue of the 2008-2009 school year, the OCDE PAL team decided to highlight the PAL Advisor Survey results. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of what PAL looks like on school campuses. In addition, advisors provided feedback on how OCDE can better support their efforts. The survey was conducted in June, 2008; OCDE received completed surveys from sixty school-site PAL programs. With an estimated 172 programs in Orange County, that is a 35% response rate. Thank you to all the advisors that completed the survey and we look forward to another great year of students helping students.

Profile of PAL in Orange County

Number of PAL Programs: According to the PAL Advisor List maintained by OCDE, 97 elementary schools, 44 middle schools, and 31 high schools in Orange County have a PAL Program. 25 out of 28 districts participate.

Length of PAL Programs: According to the PAL Advisor Survey, 46% of PAL programs have been around for 1-5 years, 30% for 6-10 years, 11% for 11-15 years, and 13% have been around for 16+ years.

Type of PAL Program: While most PAL programs meet as a club (56%), or class (25%), there are some PAL programs (14%) that are combined with other student leadership programs such as Associated Student Body (ASB).

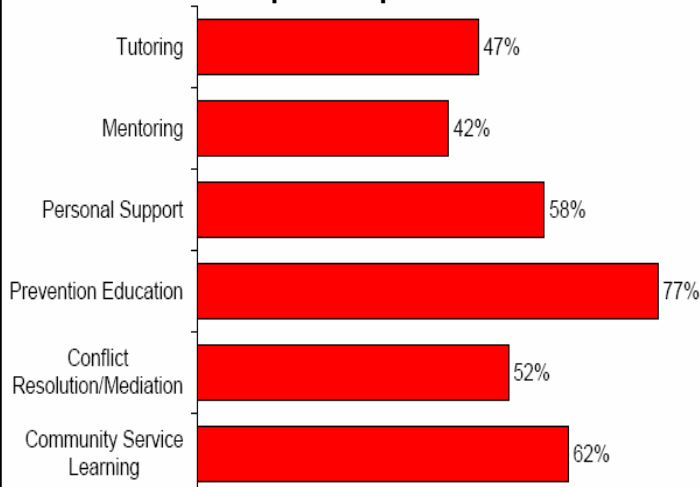
Number of Students Involved: The average number of students involved in a PAL program is 35, therefore, over 6,000 young people are involved in peer-to-peer outreach in Orange County! The number of students in each PAL Program varies greatly. Schools reported the following: 2% have 10 students or less, 23% have 11-20 students, 28% have 21-30 students, 20% have 31-40 students, and 27% have 41 or more students involved.

PAL Peer Leader

Demographics: The majority of students involved are girls (64%). The racial/ethnicity of PAL students was reported as follows: 53% Hispanic, 24% White, 14% Asian, 4% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 3% African American, and 2% Other.

Type of PAL Activities: The chart to the right illustrates the types of activities PAL programs are participating in. Most PAL programs conduct several types of activities throughout the year.

Percent of Orange County PAL Programs that Participate in Specific Activities



PAL Activities

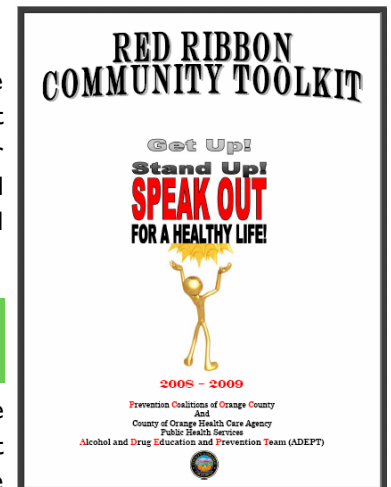
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One of the most common requests on the PAL Advisor Survey was the need for activity ideas. The OCDE PAL staff reviewed outstanding PAL applications from the last couple of years in search of creative activities that focus on building school connectedness, increasing meaningful participation in the school environment, and academic achievement. Activities include:

- Host a luncheon for new students at the beginning of the year and invite them back mid-year.
- Develop a new student handbook – for students, by students.
- Develop a guide to kindergarten for new parents.
- Compile a welcome back to school survival pack.
- Host a feeder school visiting day for students coming to the school next year.
- PALs contact freshmen before school starts with a phone call or postcard and continue monthly contact the first year of school.
- Middle school PALs visit upper elementary classrooms monthly to provide tips on being organized, keeping up their grades, and what to expect in middle school.
- Elementary PALs help with kindergarten registration.
- Send a monthly note or care package (pencil, candy, card) to transition students (freshmen, etc.) encouraging them to participate in upcoming school activities, provide study tips, etc.
- Organize monthly or weekly lunch time activities like a jump rope contest, relay races, basketball shooting contest, musical chairs, chalk art...
- Host a family movie night.
- Send birthday cards to students the week of their birthday.
- Elementary PALs buddy up with lower elementary students weekly or monthly.
- Cross-age mentoring within an elementary school, or secondary schools reach out to their feeder schools.
- Host a student of the quarter luncheon for students that have improved academically and invite the teacher that nominated them.
- Students set goals to improve grades and PALs provide support through letters, tutoring, and/or mentoring.
- Cross-age tutoring.
- PALs sponsor a motivational event before testing, or host an event for students who were there for every day of testing.

Red Ribbon Week 2008

This year the Prevention Coalition of Orange County has chosen the Red Ribbon Week theme **Get Up! Stand Up! SPEAK OUT for a Healthy Life!** The coalition has developed a toolkit to guide school campaign organizers with the development of meaningful prevention activities for Red Ribbon Week and throughout the year. The guide includes **activity ideas** for elementary and secondary grade levels, local and online resources, planning tips, plus much more. To order a tool kit, contact Mary Fabela at (714) 834-4194.



Former PAL Students Becoming PAL Advisors

We are hearing this more and more at our PAL Advisor Trainings. Former PAL students who are now teachers or school counselors coming to the PAL Advisor trainings so they can start PAL at their school. Following a recent Elementary Advisor training, Alicia Jannarone Price, from Stone Creek Elementary, Irvine Unified School District shared "We are excited about implementing PAL at our school. The three advisors at our school have been positively impacted by PAL. Two of the young teachers were PAL participants in middle school and high school and my 24 year old daughter who is preparing to be a teacher was a PAL member from elementary school through high school where she became a conflict manager. As a mother I have appreciated the tremendous life skills the program helped my daughter develop. PAL is such a valuable program that we have a second generation of committed people involved."

- 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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