



Horace Mann Elementary School Rocks

By Theresa J. Marino

If you pass by the playground at Horace Mann Elementary School bordering 3rd Street on the north, you will see a mural of the school's mascot, an Orca whale, with the words "Mann School Rocks." Last week, I interviewed Mrs. Fiala, who is in her fifth year at Mann. Horace Mann is our hidden gem of a school in Bluff Heights. They really do take great care of our children, our families and our community. Every child and adult will agree that there is something special here.

"There is a great sense of family and community here, said Mrs. Fiala. "The staff and teachers work very intentionally to give each child their instructional best each day and they love making great memories for the children."

Mann has made huge achievement gains over the past couple of years. "We take pride in knowing that we are one of LBUSD's most improved academic schools," she said. "Our teachers are very dedicated to the success of all children in our community." Mann offers Super Saturday School, after school tutoring, before and after child care, preschool and even has a theatre group for some wonderful musical productions. Mann also has a GATE (gifted and Talented Education) program to engage learners and create student agency and voice to their learning. They want their students to have the best opportunities to succeed.

Horace Mann has completed Phase I of Measure E Construction with new air conditioning and heating systems, upgrades, painting, ADA modifications and other improvements. Teachers daily use their new Xtron projection and voice projection systems to ensure learning is optimal.

At Mann we say that, "Everyone who enters, has the right to feel safe, supported, accepted and cared for as a valued member of the Mann Family," said Mrs. Fiala. The staff prioritizes the social and emotional care and safety of their students and has ensured that students have tools for resolving conflict and communicating emotions. Mrs. Fiala loves creating great memories at school and enjoys seeing happy kids.

Community safety has also been a priority at Mann as well. Mrs. Fiala has work closely with community members, the police dept. and community safety committee to improve pedestrian safety for students and traffic concerns around the school. Adding safe areas to drop off and pick up students has been a challenge with the lack of parking in our neighborhood.

"We need to respect traffic safety for children in our community and around our schools." "We should not see double parking, cars parked over crosswalks, drivers speeding near schools or students running across streets without crosswalks and stop signs."

She is very appreciative of the safety responses by the city to stripe new crosswalks around the school and she is very eager for next phases of continued safety supports. Like all of us in Bluff Heights, we are so appreciative of Public Works and LB Council District staff for installing the crosswalk and signs on 3rd and Coronado to help protect students, families, and pedestrians. We look forward to more marked crosswalks and signage.



This year, Mann Elementary will open with full capacity of students and programs. Mrs. Fiala said she is looking forward to welcoming the community to public events again. Events like this year's musical The Wiz, the Science Fair, Winterfest and sledding in the snow, Trunk- O- Treat and partnerships and events with the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association, community volunteers, business supporters, and the Long Beach Police, Fire, and other city departments are some of the highlights. She is so appreciative of a very involved PTA and looks forward to volunteers from the neighborhood and beyond. Mrs. Fiala, emphasized that, "Together we are creating a great place to send kids to school!"

And don't forget..."Mann School Rocks!"

Theresa Marino, Retired Bureau Manager, City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, sits on the Marine Advisory Commission and is the Founding Executive Director of Conservation Corps of Long Beach, where she is President of the Board. She was a community organizer from CSULB during the 1970s War on Poverty era. She lives in Bluff Heights with her house and gardening mate Mingo and their two cats.