

FREE

# School News

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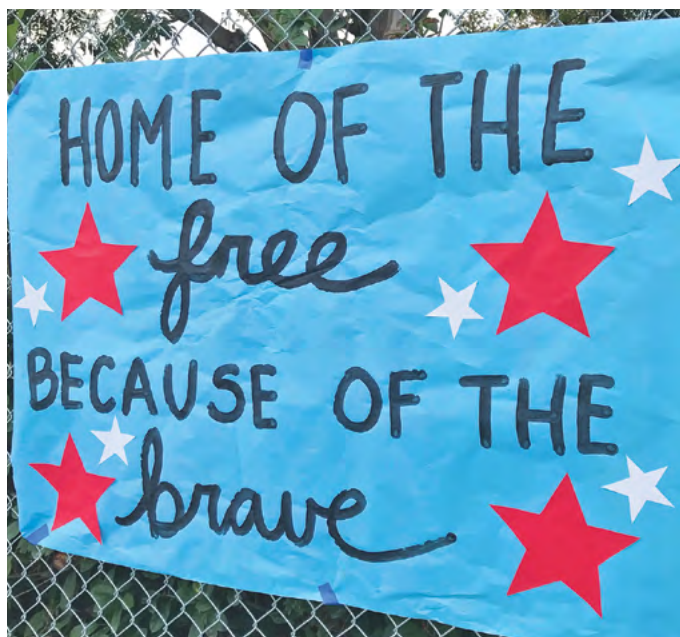
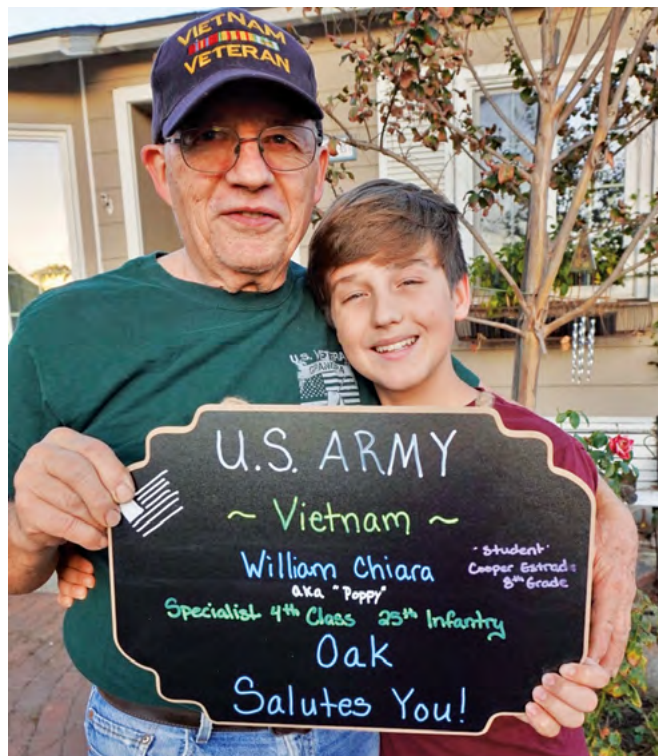
**Covering the Los Alamitos Unified School District**



Volume 17, Issue 88

December 2020 / January 2021

## Oak Middle School Honors Our Local Veterans



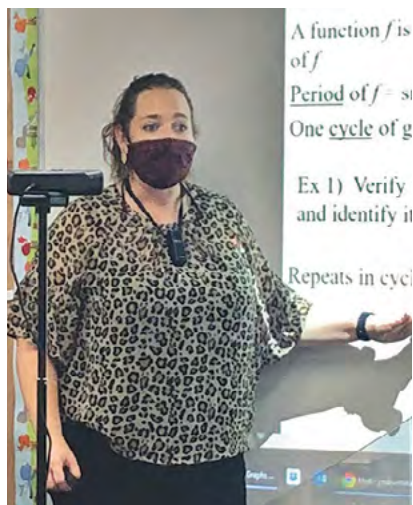
# Extraordinary Efforts of Teachers Bring Us Together



**Dr. Andrew Pulver**  
Superintendent

Holiday season has arrived, bringing the traditional time for celebration. While this year continues to bring us all many challenges and hardships, I wanted to take a moment to celebrate the extraordinary efforts of our teachers — those teaching in-person in our Hybrid classrooms and those teaching online through our LosAl@Home program. In circumstances that have demanded the utmost in creativity, patience and persistence, they have come through to make this a safe and successful school year for our kids.

To give a sense of what it means to teach in these times, I'd like to introduce two of our best: Janelle Fox, our 2020 Teacher of the Year who teaches mathematics at Los Alamitos High School in our in-person Hybrid program; and Nicole Walters, our 2019 Teacher of the Year who teaches second grade in our LosAl@Home pathway. Here are a few of their personal thoughts on how they view the challenges and rewards they find each day.



**Janelle Fox**

Being back in the classroom is first and foremost exhausting, Janelle says. "We've had to rethink and redo everything we do and then redo it again based on how it goes." Things that were a basic part of the pre-COVID classroom routine, such as group activities where students sit close together and collaborate in their

learning, are not possible now. "So, we have to find ways to do the same thing but do it with computers, like with chat rooms, but all that has to be set up and takes time and attention to make it work."

In addition, the delay in returning to the classroom this fall created a backlog of material that must be taught by the time the Advanced Placement test is given in the Spring. The need to teach every possible moment as well as attend closely to safety protocols and adjust classroom routines is intense.

On the other hand, Janelle says, "It feels great being back. I can have actual conversations with kids and build relationships with them. They wear masks, but I can tell from their eyes if they're smiling and whether they get it."

## Nicole Walters

Even though her second graders are learning online, "I think the kids are faring just fine!" Nicole says. "They're happy, engaged and learning, all while being safe."

Her major challenge is to create lessons that will keep students highly engaged online. It's also difficult when a student needs help with some computer issue and they do not have an adult or parent near them to help them. The nature of online learning also means "the children are missing the live interaction and socializing they get when at school. They are missing playing with their friends."

But as all teachers know, children are resilient and adaptable, and Nicole says she has seen her little ones become "tremendously tech savvy at a young age." And as her students have become more adept, "we are able to do more to make our learning environment fun and engaging, even from behind a computer screen." Nicole says one surprising benefit of virtual teaching "is a much stronger connection to our families. We are seeing and talking to them much more online than during a typical school year."

I am so proud of Janelle and Nicole and all of our educators across all grade levels, whether in classrooms or online. They are the ones who make it possible for us to celebrate being Better Together!



## Board of Education



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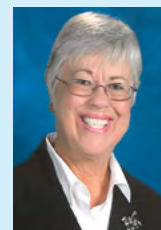
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We are pleased that converting *School News* to digital has been well-received and I appreciate your many nice comments when you email your contest entries.

Our next issue February 3, 2021.

If you would like to join our sales team working from your home, please email me for information ([kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com)). I also have a part-time position available as an assistant in my office.

**Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas**  
from the *School News* Staff!



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## Preparing Your Child for Modified Holiday Celebrations



**Ioana Pal, PsyD.,**  
clinical psychologist,  
Stramski Children's  
Developmental  
Center,  
MemorialCare  
Miller Children's &  
Women's Hospital  
Long Beach

This year, holiday celebrations for so many families will be different. It may be a difficult change, but it also means the opportunity to have smaller, more intimate gatherings. This will give your family a chance to connect more and increase quality conversations.

As you're planning your modified holiday celebrations, follow these tips:

- Keep your celebration outdoors if possible.
- Try limiting the number of attendees.
- Consider where family is traveling from and if it's a good idea to have them visit in person. You may want to try a hybrid model of a few in-person members and virtual for those from afar.
- Make sure you have enough personal protective equipment or ask those coming to a gathering to bring their own.
- Ask those invited to give you any health updates within two weeks of the planned event.

Your family's mental well-being is just as important as their physical health and safety. It's important to prepare your child for these changes using these tips:

- Acknowledge their feelings. Don't brush them aside.
- Explain the exception and why this year may be different.
- Have a family meeting to decide holiday plans as a team. Encourage communication, creative thinking and problem solving when planning.
- Keep your children connected with extended family by sending emails or hand written notes to those who can't or shouldn't travel.
- Help your children express their feelings through journaling activities, where they can write about how 2020 was different.

However you choose to celebrate, have a safe and happy holiday season!



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# Hopkinson *Elementary*

12582 Kensington Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4500 • <https://hopkinson.losal.org>



**Evelyn Garcia**  
Principal

## Husky Leadership Council

Hopkinson's 5th Grade Leadership offers students the opportunity to implement skills they have gained in the areas of communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creation, to support our school and community.

Leadership looks different for the 2020-21 school year. Although we are not meeting in person, we have biweekly meetings via zoom and monthly philanthropic projects. This year, we have 43 5th grade students who are partaking in this privilege.

Meetings are focused on collaboration, leadership, and philanthropy. We use breakout rooms in Zoom to plan and collaborate in smaller teams. Students serving positively impact the school culture and learn skills that will last them a lifetime.

This month, our focus is honoring our Veterans and military. We collected candy for Operations Gratitude, wrote letters, and created a video.



**FROM 5th GRADE HOPKINSON LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**



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## Lee *Elementary*

11481 Foster Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4540 • <https://lee.losal.org>



**Dr. Amy Vento**  
Principal

### Community Connection

It is more important than ever to remember that we are better together! Lee Elementary School works hard to offer opportunities to recognize hard work, show gratitude, and encourage family and school connectedness.

Lee teachers recognize students' great character in classroom assemblies while parents join via Zoom. Each day, a Lee student is honored as our A for the Day for their tremendous efforts and attitude. Pictures of our A for the Day superstar are emailed home to families.



Our school picture day was held outside to adhere to social-distancing guidelines. However, we took this opportunity to welcome our LosAl@Home students back to Lee with banners and warm smiles. Instead of our traditional Veteran's Day flag ceremony, we shared a video showcasing pictures of our Leos with family members who are current or retired members of our armed forces.

Regardless of the adjustments we make to operate our events, our FamiLEE unity is strong!

## Los Alamitos *Elementary*

10862 Bloomfield St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4700 • <https://lae.losal.org>



**Gary Willems**  
Principal

### Holidays are Special

LAE is the Place to Be! Each year we try to make the holidays special for our TIGERS and the pandemic hasn't changed that. This year for Halloween, students were able to wear their costumes all day and we had special backdrops made with Halloween themes so students could take pictures in their costumes. For Veterans Day we made a special 'Thank you Veterans' video that had students thanking our Active Duty and Military Veterans. We also included pictures of our Active Duty and Veterans, some pictures went back to WWI and WWII. For Thanksgiving we celebrated with our Gratitude Challenge. This is where students made videos using FlipGrid and we turned it into a movie of why we are so thankful for our friends, family, and amazing things in our life. We look forward to the holiday break in December and continuing to not let the pandemic take away from the holiday spirit!





# Los Alamitos *High School*

3591 W. Cerritos Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4780 • <https://lahs.losal.org>



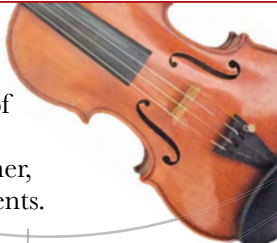
**Gregg Stone**  
*Interim Principal*

## Drive-in Choir Night

The Los Alamitos Show Choir Program celebrated young HEROES among us, our talented and thriving Griffins, with the first-ever, Drive-In Show Choir Concert Celebration! The Shops of Rossmoor doubled as a Drive-in Theatre for a night of pre-recorded and digitized performances. This event was possible through the generous and supportive partnership of the Rossmoor Homeowners Association (RHA) Event Team who worked tirelessly to support



the numerous details to host the event in the Shops of Rossmoor. Thank you to our Los Al families, LAHS filming, Shops of Rossmoor, RHA, and the OUTSTANDING AND DEDICATED STUDENTS in the LAHS and LosAl@Home choirs, who creatively recorded and submitted the necessary content to make this event a success! Each number was a product of a student submission of personal video, filming live performances, and the genius creative editing to piece the performance together.



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## McAuliffe *Middle School*

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**Dr. Ryan Weiss-Wright**  
Principal

### Keeping Arts Alive at McAuliffe!

At McAuliffe, we are constantly working to ensure students have access to the 4 A's (Academics, Athletics, Activities, and the Arts) during this unusual school year. Like everything, the Arts look very different this year. Our McAuliffe Choir recently debuted our virtual Lip Sync concert and competition



featuring performances from over 100 middle school students! In Drama, students are currently rehearsing for "Myth-O-Logues" which will stream online later this month. Our Instrumental Music program is constantly reinventing themselves, learning percussion, strings, and music theory while we await clearance to play wind instruments. And in Visual Art, students are busy creating meaningful art projects about their experiences in 2020. We are so proud of our McAuliffe artists!



## McGaugh *Elementary*

1698 Bolsa Ave., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/799-4560 • <https://mcgaugh.losal.org>



**Dr. Issaic Gates**  
Principal

### Holiday Spirit Remains!

The months of October and November are such a great time for culture, community and holiday festivities! In October, McGaugh students and staff had such an exciting Red Ribbon and Halloween Week. Thanks to McGaugh's PTA, the city of Seal Beach and the Seal Beach Police Department, McGaugh's campus was abuzz with messages about healthy choices and Halloween celebrations. With an active International Culture Club (ICC) dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion, McGaugh families also celebrated the beautiful Latin holiday Dia de los Muertos on Nov. 1 and 2. The festivities concluded with a Movie Watch Party—Disney's *Coco*. And on that final note, we ushered in November.

With the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach right next door to the McGaugh campus, the respect for the servicemen and servicewomen is woven into the fabric

of McGaugh Elementary. This Veterans Day, some of our McGaugh Elementary fifth-grade students had an opportunity to interview Capt. Jason "Sherm" Sherman, commanding officer of the Navy Munitions Command Pacific, CONUS West Division, regarding his military career, roles and responsibilities. Students learned what Veterans Day means to Capt. Sherman and how we can best stand united as a country to honor and show respect for all of our veterans.

Finally, later in November, McGaugh had its inaugural Pie with the Principal. Via Zoom, McGaugh students and I baked a traditional Thanksgiving pie together from our homes. Our time together helped solidify the culture and climate we are creating together. While baking together, we took a moment to pause and share some of the things we are thankful for in our lives.

With all of these bonding moments and the festivities December traditionally brings, we are ready and looking forward to a great 2021!



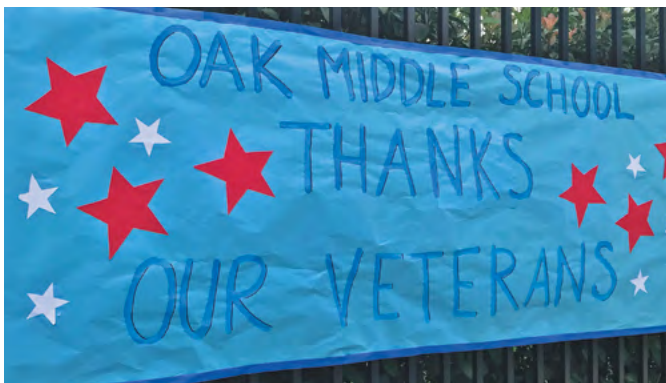


**Erin Kominsky**  
*Principal*

## Honoring Our Local Veterans

Veteran's Day holds a special place in the hearts of our Oak Middle School Community. Each year, the entire school gathers to celebrate our local Veterans in our amphitheater. Our stage is usually filled with Veterans that spans seventy-five years of military service. You could hear a pin drop as our guests shared their stories with our students. We want our Veterans to know that

we haven't forgotten them this year. The pandemic might have cancelled our beloved ceremony, but our students and staff are as dedicated as ever to show their gratitude to our Veterans. Students took photos and filled out special posters, and several Veterans recorded tributes that were all made into a video production for our entire community. In addition, our campus fences were decorated with signs of appreciation for our Veterans. Our Oak community thanks YOU for your service. Lions are grateful.



## Rossmoor *Elementary*

3272 Shakespeare Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4520 • <https://rossmoor.lsal.org>



**Dr. Amy Coltey**  
*Principal*

### Project Thank You

At Rossmoor Elementary showing Knight PRIDE is an important part of our school culture. Our Knights work daily to earn House Points for their assigned house (Percival, Galahad, Lancelot and Gawain) by showing positivity, kindness, integrity, respect and responsibility. This November our school is focusing on the P in PRIDE which stands for Positive Words and Actions.

Normally we have House Meetings in person each month but this year we are being creative!

We partnered with a non-profit organization called Project Thank You. Our Knights worked on creating thank you notes for health care workers. During this pandemic, many healthcare workers are working endlessly on the frontlines to help those in need. Our school community wanted to find a way to let healthcare workers know that they are appreciated this season. The greeting cards they created was sure to bring a smile to their faces. Our Knights experienced the magic of positive words and actions and how it can uplift those around them!

## Weaver *Elementary*

11872 Wembley Rd., Los Alamitos, CA 90720 • 562/799-4580 • <https://weaver.lsal.org>



**Dr. Todd Schmidt**  
*Principal*

### Honoring Our Veterans

Celebrating and honoring our Veterans is a tradition at Weaver Elementary. Despite being in a pandemic, where gathering in large groups is not possible, we still wanted to bring together our Weaver community to thank our Veterans for their service and for their sacrifices to protect the ideals for which this country was founded. Thus, we had our first-ever Virtual Veterans' Day

Assembly. Using Flipgrid, our Veterans submitted short videos sharing who they are, when they served, and what

advice they would give to our students. We were also fortunate enough to have General Michael J. Leeney, the Deputy Commanding General for the 40th Infantry Division give a brief keynote address to our families. In addition, our Weaver Ambassadors collaborated on sharing why they believe celebrating Veterans' Day is important. Other highlights included a special Pledge of Allegiance "on-location" from Mt. Rushmore and a singing of the National Anthem from the USO Show Troupe. It was our way of showing our Veterans that they are valued, appreciated, and respected, and we were honored to have so many take part in a very special assembly.

## Seal Beach Animal Care Center

1700 Aldofo Lopez Dr., Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/430-4993 • [www.sbacc.org](http://www.sbacc.org)

### Moving, with Pets

*By Murlyn E. Burkes, Cat Committee Liaison*

Moving can be stressful for people, so just imagine how anxious it can make your pets! They go through stress when there's unexpected activity in the home and when they are introduced to a new home.

There are some useful tips that should make for an easier transition for your beloved friend.

If you are moving out of the area, make sure to notify your vet and take your records and any medication with you. See if your vet knows another vet in your new area. During the move, keep your pets in the quietest spot possible. Placing them in their carrier or a bedroom that has been emptied is best. Check on them regularly to make sure all is OK.

Moving with your pets can be done!  
After all, it is a lifetime commitment—  
their lifetime!

Take your pet in the car with you to the new home. Give them a few days to acclimate to the new home. Set up as much as you can before you introduce the pet to the new environment. Make sure that they have familiar items around them. Once you are settled, make sure to update their tags or microchip information to your new address or cell number.

Recently, we had two of our shelter cats make a move to their previous owner in Alaska. He made all the arrangements for the cats, and we did the necessary medical updates for the airlines. He arranged a companion company for his pets, who traveled with them and made sure they reached the destination.

Moving with your pets can be done! After all, it is a lifetime commitment—their lifetime!



## 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 an athletic 7th grader who loves basketball and skateboarding. His favorite subjects are PE and math. He is a gentle pet owner and loves taking care of puppy, Chewie, and 3 guinea pigs. He enjoys going out to eat and trying different foods.

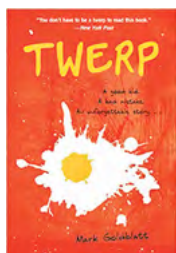
## Sean's Book Review



Sean

### A Bad Decision

*Twerp* is a humorous book by Mark Goldblatt about a 6th grader in 1969 named Julian Twerski. Julian is a good kid who makes bad decisions, which makes him seem like a "bad kid." When his



English teacher, Mr. Selkirk, tells him that if he does a journal on his crazy life and decisions, he can get out of writing a report on Shakespeare (which Julian hates). Throughout the book, interesting stories are always being told by Julian. Some of the incidents include hitting a bird with a rock, helping out his BFF by writing a love letter for his best friend's crush, and accidentally burning off his friend's eyebrows! A middle schooler could relate to Julian's point of view on life. In conclusion, *Twerp* is a very fun and suspenseful book that can be enjoyed by all types of readers.

Sean Cheng is a 6th grader and enjoys speed cubing, playing basketball, and performing tricks on his scooter. His favorite subjects at school are math and PE. He loves teaching tricks to his new puppy and taking care of his 3 guinea pigs. He looks forward to boogie boarding at the beach!



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Semra Bilsel  
Branch Manager

### OC Public Libraries is providing Grab & Go service at this time!

This means that patrons can come inside the library within limited capacity. Services available are designated browsing areas which include New and Lucky Day adult, teen, children's book or audio items, self check out stations, and distanced single use computer stations by reservation including printing availability.

### The hours for Grab & Go service is as follows;

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 11:00am-7:00pm.  
Friday and Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm.

If you prefer to pick up your item outside and not come inside the library, we do have Curbside Pick Up service, also.

You can place items on hold online at [catalog.ocpl.org](http://catalog.ocpl.org), drive to the library when you receive notice that your items are ready, call the number on the sign (on the canopy) when you arrive, wait for staff to place items on table and return inside before retrieving, enjoy your reading!, and lastly return items to bookdrop when done. Please be sure to not return the item to inside the library but to the bookdrop outside the building. Items will need to be quarantined before it is available for the next patron.

### Curbside service is available during the below hours.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 12:00pm-6:00pm  
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If you have any further questions, please feel free to call the Los Alamitos/Rossmoor Library at 562-430-1048.

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## Parent To Parent



Jodie Lynn

### Adjusting from Private to Public School

**Q.** I have a daughter, age five, who has attended a private school but recently started public school. She always becomes agitated when she gets frustrated, which seems to be frequently. What can I do to help her adjust better to her new situation?

**A.** The private school you mentioned is focused on child-centered learning at the pace of each individual, for some children, transitioning from it can be a big adjustment. Public school, on the other hand, is more teacher-centered where there are schedules and goals for each academic subject, homework, tests, etc. If she has always been a little high-strung and gets frustrated easily, the new change may be adding to a more emotional and stressful situation. It's like any one of us when we are taken out of our comfort zone; we're just uncomfortable. Consider inviting one of her new classmates over for a few play dates. Having the support of a friend in a new environment could be what she needs. Also, talk with her teacher about what might be recommended to help your daughter in school as well as things at home that you can do.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author.  
[www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)

## Gardening Terms –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 LAUSD in the subject line.

Entries must be received by January 30, 2021

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 Barnes & Noble gift card!

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SHOVEL	ROW
RAKE	FERTILIZER
HOE	SPADE
TRANSPLANT	SNAIL
POT	FOOD
NEMATODE	STAKE
WORM	HOSE
SOW BUG	SPRINKLER
FENCE	SEEDS
BED	PRUNERS

R	Q	Q	Z	D	G	F	J	O	H	S	X	S	F
L	E	V	O	H	S	W	I	I	C	M	M	V	E
F	V	Z	F	N	R	D	E	B	U	Z	L	K	K
U	S	B	I	F	H	O	E	S	Q	D	A	T	V
M	R	O	W	L	H	O	S	E	U	T	T	G	C
F	E	D	J	O	I	F	L	A	S	O	Y	U	T
C	N	U	X	L	X	T	F	C	T	P	D	N	H
G	U	B	W	O	S	N	R	E	D	G	A	I	V
X	R	E	D	O	T	A	M	E	N	E	D	D	Y
S	P	R	I	N	K	L	E	R	F	C	H	G	E
M	T	R	A	N	S	P	L	A	N	T	E	N	Z
B	I	F	I	K	Z	F	H	L	I	U	X	M	G
A	U	F	V	G	E	R	V	X	X	J	C	T	S

Congratulations to

**Trent Cairns and Camille Baliwag**

Winner of our October Word Search Contests!