

PACIFIC VALLEY SCHOOL NEWS
BIG SUR ROUNDUP
OCT 2018

The summer of 2018 reached its end, and the new school year for 2018-19 began at Pacific Valley School on Tuesday, Sept 4th. We are so glad that just in time for this new school year, the long-awaited restoration of Highway 1 at the massive Mud Creek Slide zone has been completed, now providing access to the school for students, staff, families, and community members who, for nearly a year and a half, had been cut off from direct access via this essential route. With the full reopening of the highway, our school can once again enjoy the normal conveniences, activities, and events for which we have waited so long, particularly for two of our students who live on the opposite side of the slide from our school. We sincerely thank the CALTRANS and the reconstruction workers who have tirelessly labored in the grand feat of reconnecting our "broken road". They have had to literally "move mountains" in reshaping the landscape to achieve their task. Bravo!

With the start of school, we are looking forward to enhancing the learning experiences for our students with some fun and valuable field trip adventures. Included in the menu have been excursions to explore the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and to perform as "citizen scientists" in service to our priceless natural environment and its ecosystems with our annual Coastal Cleanup project at the local beach locations surrounding our school site.

Our first trip, on September 7th, took us to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. We traveled up the highway to Monterey and spent the day exploring through the rich array of exhibits offered at the Aquarium. We certainly enjoyed everything from viewing rich and mysterious fauna and flora of the Kelp Forest Tank, to the awe-inspiring life forms from huge sharks, tuna, and sea turtles that swim in the azure depths of the Open Ocean Tank, to the agile and playful sea otters in action. And we got to check out, one after another, the seemingly endless displays of the strange and beautiful life forms from colorful rockfish and lingcod, to gigantic and highly intelligent octopus, to the interactive pools, where we actually get to touch and feel the creatures that spend their lives in the intertidal zones. There was even the tunnel that as we walked through, a great churning wave crashed over our heads, showing how the liquid action of the sea provides the energy for life.

Then, on September 13th we carried out our renowned South Coast contingent of the International Coastal Cleanup Day. Teams of our students and staff took action to carry out the combined community service of cleaning up our local beaches of accumulated litter, trash, debris, and as citizen scientists, gathering valuable data for use by environmental agencies and organizations towards the objective of effective stewardship of our precious Big Sur ecological communities. We drove and hiked to locations including Willow Creek, Jade Cove, and Sand Dollar Beach Park, armed with recycle and trash bags and clipboards holding Data Collection Tally Cards. We removed the refuse items and marked each item by category on the data cards, accumulating statistical "images" of the ecological state and "health" of the regions surrounding our school. At the culmination of our project, the valuable collection of data we had gathered was submitted to the Ocean Conservancy and Save Our Shores, to be passed on for strategic use by environmental organizations and agencies, as part of the International Coastal Cleanup effort. The students and staff of Pacific Valley School deserve our deepest appreciation for the positive action they have carried out. They have certainly proven their worth as citizen scientists and stewards of the environment. The excellent work done on our local level was not just a learning project, but also a REAL LIFE contribution that will have a REAL effect on making our world a better place!

It is historically notable that Pacific Valley School has performed the environmental stewardship service of cleaning our local beaches for over a quarter of a century! Back in 1992, we had joined the Adopt-a-Beach Program and commenced regular cleanup projects at Sand Dollar Beach and also signed up for what may have been the first year of the International Coastal Cleanup when it came to Monterey County. We

established our own segment of the program and for over the last decade have provided both the community service of cleaning the beaches of the South Coast of Big Sur, and the scientific collection of litter and debris data for submission to the network of agencies and organizations from local, to state, to national, and international levels, via the Coastal Cleanup Program. Our commitment to the environment of Big Sur is definitely as REAL as it gets!!

A third field trip will take us to Pebble Beach, into the midst of the First Tee Open Golf Tournament, where awaits the "STEM Zone", an interactive playground of discovery in the realms of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). At the "STEM ZONE" children have opportunities to become directly involved in the ways that the principles of energy, mass, motion, and forces make things happen. They can experience bending and reflecting of light, to launching the mass of a moving object (such as a golf ball) on a directed path, an arc, affected by impact force, gravity, and air-drag friction. The students get to make their own hypotheses on how an action they initiate produces a resulting reaction. And, yes, the results can be surprising, fascinating, and thought-provoking! At the "STEM ZONE", the Sciences behind what they can do at the activities offered become REAL...and a lot of fun!!

Finally, forget not the fabulous Jade Festival! Yes, at last, after being put on hold for the last two years, because of the Soberanes Fire, followed by the disastrous landslides and road closures, the Big Sur Jade Festival will be back!...Hooray!! Hosted at our school, this wonderful event, celebrating the legendary "Stone of the Heavens" ...Jade... with music, gems and jewelry, art, food treats, dancing and drumming, and a lot of fun for all the family will be in full swing during the weekend of October 5-7. Of course, you will get to see the amazingly beautiful examples of jade in all its colors, from translucent green to the rare golden-sienna "Vulcan" jade, and in all sizes from great boulders to fine pieces of miniature jewelry. This event is sponsored by the South Coast Community Land Trust and proceeds from the Jade Festival go to benefit the community, including grants and scholarships for the children of the Big Sur South Coast. The festival hours will be: Friday, 12:00 - 6:00 pm, Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, Sunday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. The location of the Jade Festival will be at Pacific Valley School, about 35 miles south of the Big Sur village. Please be advised: Campfires, BBQ's, or Open Flames (including smoking) are NOT ALLOWED and vehicles parked outside of designated areas or over the white line on Hwy 1 will be towed at the owner's expense. Alcoholic beverages are also not allowed, but there will be plenty of delicious food and drinks offered for sale.

Well, Pacific Valley School is "off and running" for the 2018-19 School Year. And once again we will be featuring all the wonderful and award-winning educational programs and activities of which we are so proud!

David Allan