

# Learning Alternatives Community School News

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 20, 2010

## Important Dates

- 9/21-school pictures
- 9/29- volunteer fair
- 10/1 -midterm
- 10/14- 2 hr early release
- 10/15- no classes
- 10/19 - scheduled evening conferences
- 10/20- scheduled day conferences
- 10/21- no classes
- 10/22—no classes
- 11/5—term ends

## Inside this issue:

Welcome Week, Photo Fun **2**

Coming out of our Shell; >24.000 meals in 2 hours **3**

Media Memos, community notes, progress checks **4**

TIPs, Daily Schedule **5**

Notes from the Front **6**

Student Work, MAAP **7**

Get Involved **8**

## From the Director's Chair

*Bill Sommers,  
Director LACS*



Aloha Community. Aloha is used in the Hawaiian culture as a greeting. It means kindness, unity, civility, humility, and patience. Those are attributes that are a good foundation for school-community relationships. I am very happy to be back at Learning Alternatives Community School and honored to be part of a highly respected school system. I will also remain humbled by some of our challenges that face us. I think learning keeps us in a state of humility. After all, don't we first have to admit we don't know something before we can learn?

Some of my beliefs about learning are that it is based on prior experience, constructed through lessons and modeling

given by adults and peers, and is the school's number one focus. Roland Barth of Harvard says that students are 'at risk' if they leave school with no interest in continuing their learning. We are helping students to prepare for life. Unfortunately, none of us know what the future holds, what jobs are going to be available, or what knowledge and skills will be required to be successful.

The time spent in school hasn't changed but the training requirements for jobs and the job descriptions continue to change. In other words, we want students leaving high school with a habit of continual learning. This will remain a challenge for schools. There is an African Proverb that sums it up for me: Not Learning is Bad, Not Wanting to Learn is Worse. Our students will live in a very different world than most of us grew up in and will continue to

change.

Schools that perform at higher levels have a partnership with the parents and community. Parents can't teach our children alone, schools can't do it alone, extended families and community can't do it alone. This partnership between school, home, and community creates the best conditions for our students and your young adults. This is hard work and important work. Let's look for ways to strengthen this partnership.

Welcome to the 2010-11 school year. We have many resources available. Please let us know how we might work together. The community deserves competent, ethical young people. The students deserve our best. Let's do it together.

## CAFÉ LA Up and Running

By Haris H. & Kathy Sylvester

Café LA served their first meal on Friday, September 17. Third Hour LA Café class made homemade chicken noodle soup.

Café LA is in its first year here at LACS. It is an occupational food service class for

students that want to earn credits and learn lifelong work skills in the food service industry.

Next week, during the tailgate party at homecoming, LA Café will be cooking up puppy chow and be



Café LA students prepare Soup for Sale selling it in front of the rotunda — come by and buy some!

## Welcome Week—Let’s Get It Started!

By Brett Repasky



Welcome Week was a series of group activities & events designed to help bring our school and community closer together.

Throughout the week we focused primarily on team building strategies and identifying who we are as individuals. Highlights included

inter-advisory competitions to build some positive team camaraderie with other advisories

influential speakers who shared their experiences to help other students relate speaker’s stories with their own.

A service project to offer a hand in helping our community.

Personal reflection time and projects to help each student identify what's

important to him/her and what their personal goals for the school year are.

Overall, it was a very powerful week and had a lot of positive outcomes.

### Editor’s Note:

Welcome week was organized by Student Leadership and Advisor Brett Repasky. Students volunteered their time over the summer to organize the activities, line up speakers and put together all of the materials used to start off the school year. During Welcome Week, the Student Leadership team showed dedication, energy and flexibility as they guided students and staff through the activities and experiences.

THANK YOU Briana, Soraia, Marnie, Hilary and Brett for providing all of LACS with this awesome experience!

Pictures from top: Marni, Briana, Soraia led an all-school activity; Speaker Cesar C. with students ; A” toast to change” activity participants; A human “Q” and “T” from the Alphabet Challenge; Speaker Barbara M. performs in front of students

## Students Brought “Out of Our Shells” By Welcome Week

By Ryann P & Soraia K

The second day of Welcome Week was the start of bringing our school together as a family.

Through “get to know you” activities we got a better understanding of the comedic and serious sides of our classmates.

Our “character styles” explorations help us reflect on our leadership styles and showed us that everyone is unique in their own way, and everyone has something in common.

A “values cards” activity taught us that almost everyone has a similar base of emotional needs.

After participating in bonding activities in our advisories, the entire school gathered outside to compete in an inter-advisory kickball challenge. All students played two fierce and enjoyable

games; with Ryan’s team scoring the most points.

Following lunch, we continued to participate in advisory competitions that forced us out of our comfort zone and brought us together as a team. Sometimes we were exhausted and embarrassed during the relay races, but we had a great time.

Nick Foulks was our speaker for the day. He talked about discrimination he faced because of race, looks and even his voice. He encouraged people to be themselves and stop being too critical of themselves and others. His rapping and his dance competition brought us all out of our shells and into a more comfortable, open environment and mentality.

Reflecting on Wednesday,



Students gather in advisories to participate in the “Time Ball” challenge

Will T. said, “It helped bring us together, and helped introduce our new students to an alternative school.”

Rachel D., a new student, agreed, “I liked the day, because I made friends and the speaker was fun.”

**“[Welcome Week] helped bring us together and helped introduce new students to an alternative school.”**  
- Will T.

## Students Don Hairnets to Save Kids Lives

By Mariah FB

On Friday of Welcome Week everyone in Learning Alternatives volunteered at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC).

When we got there, they had us sit on benches and handed us all hair nets. Then they explained to us what FMSC is all about and how we would help them in meeting their mission of nourishing starving kids. They showed us a video put together by a teen who had volunteered at FMSC, it showed us how just volunteering for a little bit can do so much.

Then we washed our hands and went to the food stations to start packing rice, soy, veg-

gies and chicken flavoring into packages for shipping.

Everyone was really energetic and worked together. People were yelling out every time they packed a box full (36 bags = meals for 216 people). We packed nearly 24,000 meals!

Volunteering at FMSC was a lot of fun and it felt really good giving our time to help out starving children in our world!

For more information of FMSC check out: <http://www.fmsc.org>



Student volunteers pack nearly 24,000 meals



## Memos from the Media Center

By Tori Jensen, Media Specialist, MEMO Preseident

I am excited and honored to be a part of the reading program our Learning Alternatives High School is embarking on this year. There are different schools of thought on reading and learning to read. I believe very strongly in Free Voluntary Reading. No one gets better at reading without practice. I believe that all a person needs is the right material to read in the right space and the time to engage. I have read a lot

of research on this and it is proven to work.

This reading program is going to be so much fun. Those that already like to read will have more time and more material to read. That's like heaven to readers! Those that don't like to read, maybe they find it difficult or boring, will get the chance to explore all types of reading, not just the book some English or Language Arts teacher assigned. I used to dislike reading and I struggled with it. Books were so boring! I found comic books and fell in love with them. It

was my key to reading. My world grew and I found the gift of reading.

I became a librarian so that I could share this gift with kids. I have found a great reading match for many, many kids that told me they hated reading and wouldn't do it. I love getting those kids turned on to just the right reads. No, most of these matches are NOT great literature, but they sure are entertaining and no one can read just one. Come on into my library, let me turn you on.

**For your own health and the health of others, please sanitize your hands before entering the classroom.**

## Yearly Check-ups of Utmost Importance

By Sue Kvidera

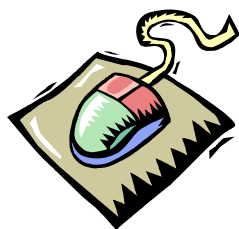
Kathy Sylvester, our Family and Consumer Science Teacher, would like to remind everyone about the importance of women getting their yearly mammogram.

After Kathy's yearly exam this summer, she was diag-

nosed with breast cancer. She had surgery over the summer to remove the cancerous mass, yet she will still need to undergo eight sessions of chemotherapy every other week followed by radiation.

During Chemo Kathy's immune system may be down,

so we are asking all students to sanitize their hands prior to entering Kathy's classroom.



## Monitoring School Progress at Home

By Sada Ganske

As the school year continues, you will receive progress reports and report cards in the mail updating you on the grades and credits your teen has earned. In between these updates there are many ways to check on your teen's school progress.

In addition to asking how your teen is doing in classes or calling or emailing a teacher, there are some fantastic online resources for LACS families.

You can use Campus Parent Portal to find information about your student's class schedule, attendance information, transcript information, and report cards. To access this FREE service, log on to:

**[www.springlakeparkschools.org](http://www.springlakeparkschools.org)** and click on the **Parent Portal** link located in the column on the left side of the screen. Follow the links to visit an active account or to set up a new account.

You can also have your teen log into their Project Foundry account at:

**[LA.ProjectFoundry.org/student](http://LA.ProjectFoundry.org/student)** to review their project proposals and progress.

Progress towards graduation is something you can check regularly by talking with your teen, contacting the school or looking on-line.

## TIP—Tips in Parenting

By Bill Sommers, LACS director

*“We don’t receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.”* Marcel Proust

Remember driving home from the hospital with our beautiful, flawless baby safely and securely wrapped in a soft blanket? We may have decided then and there that we would do everything in our power to protect this “valuable treasure.” Looking back, as inexperienced as we were, in many ways it was easier to protect, care for, and teach them at that point in their lives than it is now when they are in their teens.

It’s natural and normal to want the best for our child. We want him/her to be a straight “A” student, first chair in the orchestra, the number one debater, co-captain of their team, or have the lead role in the musical...

And, it’s natural

and normal to want to remove or prevent all roadblocks and barriers that get in their way. However, as painful as it is to watch our children struggle, a certain amount of struggle is good and it is part of life. Struggle helps them to become creative and flexible. It also helps them develop the skill of problem solving, as well as how to explore and seek options, possibilities, or solutions.

What is our role as parents when (not if) our children have a setback or a conflict?

- Simply being there and giving them your time
- Having conversation to help them process the situation and seek a solution
- Role playing how to talk with their coaches/teachers/friends
- Teaching them how to draw from their strengths in seeking resolution to adversity
- Guiding them through frustration by listening and giving support
- Teaching them how to

handle failures as well as successes, which are parts of life

• Modeling these strategies that we want our children to have

When our children learn to take ownership of their problems, ask for support and guidance, and develop the courage to face issues, it will be the lifelong learning that we say we want for our kids. They will act with pride knowing that they can take credit for the outcome.

As parents, if we remain anchored in our value system, remain strong and nurturing, and give them room and space to deal with life’s problems, we can empower them beyond high school.

One of the most important relationships of our lifetime is the relationship with our children. We can also model being healthy, having self-love and self-confidence, creating balance, showing gratitude, and working through our own frustrations.



**One of the most important relationships in our lifetime is the relationship with our children.**

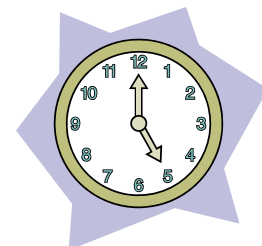
## LACS DAILY SCHEDULES

### Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri

PBL	7:35 - 8:45	70 mins
2	8:50 - 9:40	50 mins
3	9:45 - 10:35	50 mins
READ	10:35 - 10:55	20 mins
Lunch	10:55 - 11:20	25 mins
PROB.	11:25 - 12:00	35 mins
6	12:05 - 1:00	55 mins
7	1:05 - 2:00	55 mins
PBL	2:05 - 2:30	25 mins

### Wed. Late Start

PBL	8:11 - 8:55	44 mins
2	9:00 - 9:45	45 mins
3	9:50 - 10:35	45 mins
READ	10:35 - 10:55	20 mins
Lunch	10:55 - 11:20	25 mins
PROB.	11:25 - 11:55	30 mins
6	12:00 - 12:45	45 mins
7	12:50 - 1:35	45 mins
PBL	1:40 - 2:30	50 mins



**Notes from the Front**



**HOMECOMING Sept 20-24**  
 We're Goin' Bird Huntin'  
**Monday: Pajama Day**  
 Coronation: Monday Night 7:30pm Fine Arts Center Adults \$2, Students \$1  
**Tuesday: 80's Day**  
**Wednesday: Twins/Sports Day**  
 5:30-6:30 Powder Puff Game  
 7:00-9:00 Street Dance  
**Thursday: Camo Day**  
 Homecoming T-shirts on sale in the cafeteria \$6.00  
**Friday: Panther Spirit Day**  
 4:30-6:30 tailgate  
 5:30 Parade  
 7:00 Football game vs Saint Louis Park  
 Dance after the game (\$5 per person, ISD 16 Students ONLY)

Except for illness or an emergency, we expect all students to be at school. For your teen's safety, please call **our attendance line** to report an absence or tardy. The number is: **763-785-5531**

**Parking Permits** are required on all cars. Permits are available in the security shed. Daily permits for \$3.00 are also available if you have not purchased your permit. Students must only park in student lots.

GRAD TEST Retakes Dates

Math: October 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am  
 Reading: October 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am

Seniors who have not passed the GRAD Math Test or Juniors and Seniors who have not passed the GRAD Reading Test will be retesting on these dates. Please remember to eat a good breakfast and get plenty of sleep the night before the test.

**Class ring ordering dates**  
 October 11<sup>th</sup> - during the lunch hours we will be distributing information packets  
 October 18<sup>th</sup> - 5:30-7:30 p.m. - is the family night ordering  
 October 19<sup>th</sup> - class ring ordering during the lunch hours

**SENIOR CLASS PANORAMIC PHOTO**  
 10 am on Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> in the stadium home side. Seniors will meet outside the LA Office at 9:50 and will be escorted by Sue to the picture!!

**DRIVERS EDUCATION**  
 The 30 hours of driver's education will start on October 25<sup>th</sup>. This class is limited to 30 students only and a form must be completed before participation in the class. The fee is \$360, for more information stop by the LA office.

Find your self in the LACS office?? Please remember that the office is a professional space and it is usually the first location in LACS a person visits when coming to our school so..

- use appropriate language
- respect those who are working in the office
- be polite
- use your quiet inside voice
- schedule an appointment to see Sue or Bill so you don't have to waste time waiting

And be sure to thank Sherril and Carol for all their hard work!!

Want to volunteer your time or talent to help LACS? Please call: **763-785-5531**

**COLLEGE and MILITARY VISITS in the CAREER CENTER**  
 Monday, September 20 - **St. Johns/St. Benedict** @ 9:00 AM  
 Wednesday, September 22- **Gustavus** @ 10:30 AM  
 Monday, September 27: **Davenport College** 9:00  
 Wednesday September 29: **Mn School of Business** 9:00  
 Thursday, Sept 30 **University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** 8:15 am  
 Tuesday, October 19 - **California Institute of Arts** @ 11:30 AM

**\*\*All students need to get a pass from Sue**



**GET YOUR WORK IN THE NEWSLETTER:**

Email submissions (creative writing, artwork, news stories, photographs, etc.) for our next newsletter to: [sgansk@district16.org](mailto:sgansk@district16.org)

E-mails received by 3pm on October 14th will be reviewed by staff for newsletter approval. Items may be edited before being printed.

**This is the real me**

As my heart gets warmer  
My pain fades away beyond all circumstance

This has been a journey of unending future  
So therefore I am no longer living in my past

I'm a free spirit above all things

As my knowledge grew of skills  
And success I've grown from hatred  
Non the less

I stepped away from those brutal lies  
That doesn't consist of who I am  
Although it took me a million tries

Look at who I am now  
**SURPRISE SURPRISE!!!!**

This is the real me  
Strong and competent  
Always cares about what I'm going to be

This is the real me  
Beautiful and worthy

This is the real me

Created by RW



***“This is the real me..... strong confident... beautiful.... worthy”***

**MAAP News Briefs**

By Sada Ganske

The MAAP Conference Logo Contest is now open for students. The winning logo will be placed on conference shirts, publications and materials that will be seen all over Minnesota, and the designer will receive \$100. Second place and third place prizes will also be awarded (\$75, \$50 respectively).

To enter,

- ◇ Create a design that reflects this year's theme: **“The Real 3Rs: Reviv-**

**ing, Rejuvenating and Revolutionizing Innovation”** and includes the words Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs or MAAP.

- ◇ Submit your work on an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper
- ◇ Submit only original art work
- ◇ Turn in your submission to your advisor by Dec 1st (so it can arrive for judging by Dec 3rd).

**The STARS Fall Conference** will be held on October 28 and 29, 2010 at Camp Ripley.

**STARS Legislative Day**  
Date is still not determined. It will most likely be on a Wednesday in February or March.

**STARS SPRING CONFERENCE DATES**  
The STARS Spring Conference will be April 14 and 15, 2011 in Bloomington, MN.



## SPRING LAKE PARK SCHOOLS ISD 16

Learning Alternatives  
Community School  
7925 Able Street NE  
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

Phone: 763-785-5531  
Fax: 763-795-5105

**Empowering all learners  
to succeed**

Learning Alternatives Com-  
munity School Office:  
763-785-5531

District Services Center:  
763-786-5570

Community Education:  
763-786-1338

Athletics / Activities:  
763-785-5549

[springlakeparkschools.org](http://springlakeparkschools.org)

### Learning Alternatives Community School

Learning Alternatives Community School is dedicated to educating capable young learners who will become productive members of our society.

We focus on the development of personal responsibility, community and communication.

Student choice and student voice are integral in our courses.



## GET INVOLVED!

By Sada Ganske

Are you an LACS graduate or did you take classes in LACS? If so, you are invited to join our LACS graduate mentors program.

Graduate mentors are LACS alumni who want to give back to our community. They work with current students in a variety of ways, including: tutoring students in subject areas like math, language arts, social studies and science, modeling successful behaviors, chaperoning events and field trips, helping students to apply for jobs and colleges, and lending a listening ear. If you are interested in becoming a graduate mentor, please contact Robin or the LACS office.

We look forward to hearing from you:)

Are you a current LACS student looking to get involved in more at school? If so, there are a number of options available to you!

All of the extracurricular activities offered through ISD 16 are open to LACS students. This includes things like High School sports teams, drama, after school clubs and meetings. We also offer opportunities unique to LACS, such as Outdoor Adventure, the LACS Newsletter, Café LA, the School Store, writer workshops and MAAP STARS. Please talk to your advisor about how to get involved or about suggestions you have for extracurriculars in LACS.

## Volunteer Resource Fair

By Peter Yelle, Youth Service Manager

There will be a Volunteer Resource Fair for students on Wednesday, September 29, from Noon to 2:30 pm in the Kenneth Hall Gym and Multipurpose room. Organizations from throughout our community will be on hand to provide students with information on volunteer opportunities. During that time period students will be allowed to visit the fair and talk with representatives from the groups.

If you know of any organizations that would benefit from this volunteer fair, don't hesitate to let me know.