



A Supplement from the...

Palm Springs Unified School District

Serving Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage & Thousand Palms

April/May 2017

Three Palm Springs Unified Teachers Vying for County Honors

Three Palm Springs Unified teachers selected as District Teachers of the Year are now vying for honors as Riverside County Teachers of the Year.



Rhonda Fort Rancho Mirage Elementary's Rhonda Fort, Painted Hills Middle's Dr. Brian McDaniel and Desert Hot Springs High's Michelle Beyronneau, were selected by a committee including the 2016-17 District Teachers of the Year and Palm Springs Teachers Association President Mark Acker for the District honor. The committee chose the winners from site Teachers of the Year selected by their respective staff members.

Fort began her teaching career at Agua Caliente Elementary in 1982 before moving to Desert Springs Elementary School in 1985. She joined the staff of Rancho Mirage Elementary in 1995 and currently teaches fifth grade. With a bachelors in liberal arts from the University of San Diego and a masters in counseling from Cal State San Bernardino, Fort was inspired to teach due to her passion for learning, helping others and working with children along with the passion for teaching she saw in both of her parents.



Brian McDaniel

McDaniel, who has been the band director at Painted Hills since 2015, began his teaching career as the director of bands at Desert Hot Springs High School in 2006. With a bachelors in music from Cal State Long Beach, masters in curriculum and instruction

from Cal State San Bernardino and doctorate in leadership for educational justice from the University of Redlands, McDaniel said he feels that his greatest contribution is providing his students with hope.



Michelle Beyronneau

Beyronneau, who holds a bachelors in mathematics from Creighton University, and a masters in educational administration from the University of Redlands, began her teaching career at Arroyo High School in San Bernardino in 2004. She has been teaching mathematics at Desert Hot Springs High since 2011. The daughter of a teacher, Beyronneau at first thought she would become a doctor despite all the volunteer work she did grading papers and working with struggling math students in middle and high school. She was quite surprised when her mom's response to wanting to change her career choice to math teacher was "it's about time!"

"Mrs. B inspires me," wrote one of her students in a letter of recommendation. "Not because I wish to become a teacher or pursue a career in math, but because she lights up a room with her presence and makes everyone around her feel like they belong. Mrs. B is an inspiration because she has endless compassion for every individual who crosses her path. She acknowledges her students as intelligent, rational human beings that need support and guidance, instead of condescending dictatorship."

Site-level Teachers of the Year include:

Agua Caliente Elementary School	Cristy Kokoszka
Bella Vista Elementary School	Joi Cox
Bubbling Wells Elementary School	Nila Arensberg
Cabot Yerxa Elementary School	Jennifer Shopshear
Cahuilla Elementary School	Joshua Otteson
Cathedral City Elementary School	Brandy Crousillac
Cielo Vista Charter (Elementary)	Amber Moser
Della S. Lindley Elementary School	Megen Dowlen
Julius Corsini Elementary School	Julie Marko
Katherine Finchy Elementary School	Jody Diaz
Landau Elementary School	Laura Lima
Rio Vista Elementary	Sandy Mason
Sunny Sands Elementary School	Deann Cochran
Two Bunch Palms Elementary School	Martha Rosales
Vista del Monte Elementary School	Dena Cockrell
Cielo Vista Charter (Middle)	Sonya Burkett
Desert Springs Middle School	Olivia Mejorado
James Workman Middle School	Sherry DiBari Irene Griffis
Nellie N. Coffman Middle School	Cynthia Blumberg
Raymond Cree Middle School	Carol Gafney
Cathedral City High School	Matthew Cauthron
Palm Springs High School	Gloria Chao
Rancho Mirage High School	Eddie Martinez
Alternative Education	Ron Bottorff
Desert Learning Academy	Theresa Smith
Early Childhood Education	Marie Hamrick

DIGICOM Film Festivals Slated for Next Month

May is a very busy month for DIGICOM with three film festivals that will all bring the stories of Palm Springs Unified School District students and staff members to life Each unique event promises to inspire, delight and charm you.

The first event is Della S. Lindley's Elementary DIGICOM Film Festival on Wednesday, May 10, at the Helene Galen Theatre at Rancho Mirage High at 6 p.m. This will be the school's second annual event that showcases the digital stories that range in topics from personal stories to the history of the school created by DSL's kindergarten through fifth grade. Last year's event was a huge success.

DIGICOM's largest annual event – the Student and Teacher Film Festival – will be held on Friday, May 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Richards Center for the Arts (formerly the Palm Springs High Auditorium). Themed "One for All," the 9th annual red-carpet event will feature videos from all grade levels including classroom projects, documentaries, arts and animation, personal stories and even a few narrative shorts.

"Each year the festival has grown to become of the biggest events in our community revealing the hearts and minds of our youth as they share their homework, their personal journeys and their stories about life, our community and world," said

Dr. Lee Grafton, DIGICOM producer and PSUSD Ed Tech Specialist.

On Wednesday, May 24, DIGICOM will screen narrative short films created by high school students across the Coachella Valley as a capstone to DIGICOM's newest initiative to bring together students from across the desert community to learn and share their passion for digital storytelling.

As part of the event, DIGICOM will screen its newest documentary – Lights, Camera, Music – a behind-the-scenes featurette about a Coachella Valley student rock and roll camp. It is a film by students about students making music.

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District Digest



Young Child Festival: Palm Springs Unified was well represented at the recent Week of the Young Child Festival in Cathedral City, a community outreach event that connects families with Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals as well as family and child community service agencies. PSUSD representatives included ECE teachers, administrators, school nurses, staff members and District preschool programs including four classes from Cielo Vista Charter who performed a song and dance. ECE also set up tables for young students to work on art projects, and PSUSD's Health Services Department hosted a table staffed by Cielo Vista ASB Leadership students, above, who provided educational handouts about the importance of sun protection and skin cancer awareness and nutrition.



Healthy & Fit: Students from Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Mount San Jacinto, Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage High Schools recently completed the spring "Healthy & Fit" education/competition programs at their respective schools after spending weekly sessions learning about good nutrition and turning their knowledge into creative, healthy recipes and earning points toward prizes based on appearance, use of recipe items and taste. The program is administered by PSUSD's Wellness Coordinator Jennifer Mattocks. Pictured above is one of the Palm Springs High teams getting creative with grains.

Schools Host Guest Principals: Palm Springs Unified school sites recently welcomed a guest principal for the District's annual "Principal for a Day" event. Following a morning where a community representative shadowed each site principal, met with students and learned what being a principal is like in our schools, all guests came together for a luncheon at the District Service Center to share their impressions and experiences. Pictured above KMIR Vice President and General Manager Gene Steinberg, seated, learns what it's like to be a principal from James Workman Middle School Principal Brad Sauer.



Symposium Welcomes Aspiring Filmmakers: About 200 film students from high schools throughout the Coachella Valley attended DIGICOM's first Narrative Filmmaking Symposium at the Camelot Theatre. Led by DIGICOM's adjunct screenwriting instructor, Ruth Atkinson, second from right, a Los Angeles-based script consultant and story editor; and DIGICOM's Director of Programming Max Finneran, the symposium introduced students and teachers to a diverse group of young professional filmmakers from Southern California. Four short fiction films from Los Angeles-based Film Independent's Project Involve Program, were presented, and six of the filmmakers were in attendance to share and answer questions about their films and the filmmaking process. The Symposium was made possible primarily through the support of a grant from the Anderson Children's Foundation along with additional community grants as the support of the Palm Springs Cultural Center. Pictured above with Atkinson are Cathedral City High Digital Arts Technology Academy (DATA) student Jennifer Reynoso, right, leading a Q&A session with the director and executive producer of the short film *Vamonos*.



DSMS Celebrates 'Schools To Watch' Honor: Representatives from the California League of Schools (CLS) recently presented Desert Springs Middle School with a special banner in honor of its designation as a 2016-17 "Schools to Watch" at a celebration ceremony attended by school, district, city and state officials. Desert Springs was also recognized at the recent CLS state conference and will be honored in Washington D.C. in June. DSMS was the only school in Riverside County named this year and is one of only 11 schools in the state to receive the designation this year.



DIGICOM Founder Honored: Palm Springs Mayor Robert Moon, left, declares April 8 "David Vogel Day" in honor of DIGICOM Founder and President David Vogel, right, who was honored at the recent "It's All About the Kids" DIGICOM fund-

raising luncheon at the Agua Caliente Resort. Proceeds benefit DIGICOM's classroom grants and scholarship funds. The DIGICOM 2017 Film Festival is on Friday, May 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Richards Center for the Arts (former Palm Springs High Auditorium).



PSUSD Has A New Pool: Palm Springs Unified's first school pool, located at Cathedral City High School, was recently dedicated. At a ceremony held in March, school, district, city and state officials expressed pride and excitement about the new addition (which will be used by both Cathedral City and Rancho Mirage High teams) before the ribbon was cut, and the CCHS Swim Team jumped in the pool fully clothed!



'Big Heart' Honorees: The Desert Hot Springs Rotary Club recently presented its first "Big Heart Awards" to a sold-out crowd at the Miracle Springs Resort.

Honorees included: elementary teachers Joi Cox (Bella Vista) and Julie Marko (Julius Corsini), middle school teacher Dr. Brian McDaniel (Painted Hills), high school teacher Jim Lister-Looker (Desert Hot Springs High) and principal Dr. Kiela Snider (Desert Springs Middle). The event was opened by the DHSMS Marine Corps JROTC, above, and singing of the National Anthem by Musical Theatre University student Bryton Carpio, who also sang an additional song. Entertainment was provided by MTU student Shelby Winstead and the Desert Hot Springs High Jazz Band. Desert Hot Springs High seniors Jacky Reyes and Nelson Zuniga also talked to the 185 attendees about their experience at the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA) camp and thanked the DHS Rotary for sponsoring their participation in the weekend experience.



CCHS Ballet Folklorico Showcased by County: Cathedral City High School's Ballet Folklorico, in its first year, was selected to entertain at Riverside County Superintendent of Schools' Dr. Judy White's first County State of Education presentation in March in Indian Wells. The performance was so well received that the group was invited back the following week for an encore performance at the western county State of Education presentation in Riverside. Pictured above are the dancers and their instructor Gabriel Ruiz, at the Esmeralda Resort, prior to their Indian Wells performance.



New Mosaics at Painted Hills Middle: Five mosaic pieces created by Painted Hills Middle School students and Artist-in-Residence Nedra Young, back row third from left, were recently unveiled at a ceremony at the school. PSUSD Arts Coordinator Louisa Castrodale, rear, right, organized the mosaic project as part of this year's new "Lady Lead" program for District middle school girls. The mosaics were created to represent each of the academic houses at the school (names chosen by students) including: Cal State Fullerton, UCLA, UCR and University of Redlands.

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DIGICOM *(continued from cover page)*

Over last summer, a group of DIGICOM interns and staff took their cameras to Shadow Hills High School in Indio to film the Academy of Musical Performance (AMP) camp. When DIGICOM was asked to come and create a documentary about the experience, they jumped at the chance.

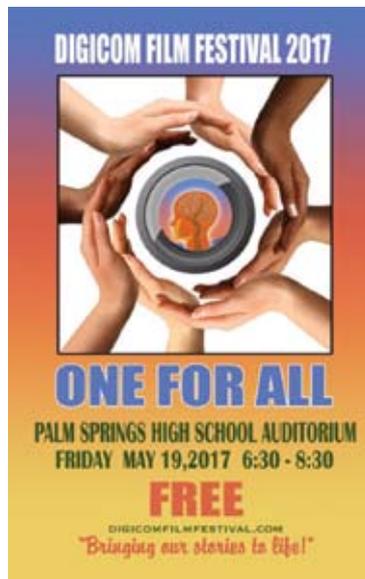
The May 24 event will be held at 6 p.m. at the Richards Center for the Arts.

All DIGICOM film festivals are free and open to the public, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, visit <https://www.digicomfilmfestival.com/> or call (760) 625-8782.

The May festivals come on the heels of DIGICOM's second annual "It's All About the Kids"

fund-raising luncheon to support scholarships and classroom grants for equipment and extracurricular activities as well as DIGICOM after school programs at the middle schools to be awarded at the film festival. This year's event honored DIGICOM Founder and President David Vogel, retired President of Walt Disney Motion Pictures.

While the luncheon is DIGICOM's only official fund raiser, financial support for the programs is solicited throughout the year from the community, foundations, corporations and local organizations to enhance District funding for some of the training, programs and awards provided by DIGICOM during the school year and summer.



Saturday Show Focuses on PSUSD's Career Academies

"PSUSD: Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce Today" is a 30-minute news magazine show spotlighting Palm Springs Unified's high school career academies. It will air on Saturday, April 29 at 4 p.m. on KMIR TV Channel 13.

Student anchors include: Luis Moytl and Valeria Vazquez from Digital Arts Technology Academy (DATA) at Cathedral City High; Elizabeth Lopez from Public Safety Academy (PSA) and Juan Guizar from Renewable Academy of Learning (REAL) at Desert Hot Springs High; Abby Angle from Culinary Arts Food Education Academy (CAFE) and Nathaniel Ramirez from Rattlers Automotive Careers in Education (RACE) at Rancho Mirage High; and Rhay Flores and Dallan Jimenez from Palm Springs Academy of Learning Medicine (PALM) at Palm Springs High.

"At KMIR, we are all about giving back to the community," said KMIR Vice President and General Manager Gene Steinberg. "Giving PSUSD students a chance to produce a news show and show off their incredible work was an opportunity we could not pass up. We thank (PSUSD Coordinator of Communications and Community Outreach) Joan Boiko for bringing this great idea to us."

The show will be posted on the District's Facebook page after the airing for those who miss the broadcast.

Message from the Superintendent



As we round the homestretch of our 2016-17 school year, our Board of Education, administrators and many staff members are finalizing our 2017-18 Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). After several months of gathering input from stakeholders including students, parents, staff and community members on their top priorities for our next plan, staff brought initial feedback to the Board of Education at the end of March.

Following a series of input meetings and review and analysis of more than 6,000 online surveys completed by community members and parents, staff members and students, Educational Services Department staff members presented Board of Education members with a list of top themes related to the LCAP goals of: Academic Achievement, Parent and Community Partnerships, Safe and Secure Learning Environment and Human Resource Development. Based on the feedback and input received, the team is proposing many LCAP adjustments for 2017-18. Here is just a sampling:

- Increased professional development in effective math instruction and related strategies

District Preparing 2017-18 LCAP

- Increased tutoring and enrichment opportunities across all grade levels
- Increased focus on A-G requirement awareness and preparation
- Establish and publicize summer school opportunities
- Increased awareness of Parent Centers and establishment of regular rotation of school site events.
- Development of a clearly articulated Anti-Bullying program consistently implemented districtwide.
- Increased visibility of campus security
- Refining drop-off and pick-up procedures at school sites.

The Board of Education will have one more Study Session to receive and provide additional input and feedback on the proposed 2017-18 LCAP on May 9 at its meeting beginning at 4 p.m. at Painted Hills Middle School in Desert Hot Springs. The Board will then hold a public hearing on the LCAP on June 13 at 6 p.m. before voting on the 2017-18 plan on June 27 at 6 p.m. Both June meetings are in the Board Room at 980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs.

Since the inception of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the preparation of an annual LCAP about five years ago, local districts are now given more

control over and flexibility on how funds can be allocated.

This change in funding structure has allowed us to add many new programs and services over the past few years including:

- Two Parent Resource Centers, a Parent Coordinator and parent engagement and outreach staff members
- District Centralized Enrollment Center
- Home Wireless Access (Pilot)
- Behavior Intervention Coordinator
- Elementary Counseling Expansion
- Increased Early Literacy Support
- Increased Elementary and Secondary Math Support
- Education Career Academy at Desert Hot Springs High

There are more new and improved programs and projects on the horizon as we move forward in our mission of academic achievement for each of our more than 23,000 students. Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we forge ahead. It only works when we all work together to help our students prepare for college and career.

Sandra Lyon
Superintendent of Schools