

Nicasio School News

Winter 2015

School CLOSED for Mid-Winter Recess Feb. 16-20

From the Principal

The winter issue of the newsletter truly captures the nature and spirit of the Nicasio School community. I am appreciative to be surrounded this year by an outstanding group of educators who are highly skilled, passionate in their work, dedicated to our children, supportive of each other, and positive models for all. We have an exceptionally strong team!

Our team of educators is made stronger by the immense support and appreciation we receive on a daily basis from our parents and other members of the community. Grant writing, event planning, dump runs, deliveries, field trip driving, library support, gardening, weeding and whacking, donations, and more—you name it, someone's doing it. We appreciate YOU!

~Christy Stocker



Nicasio School
5555 Nicasio Valley Road
Nicasio, California 94946

☎ 662-2184 ☎ 662-2250

office@nicasioschool.org
www.nicasioschool.org

Save the Date!

May 2, 2015

Nicasio School Foundation

SPRING FLING!

dinner and music...!

(Event details coming soon)

Alexis Purcell Joins Staff as Chief Business Officer



*Alexis Purcell,
Chief Business Officer*

The dawn of 2015 brought a new staff member and a new way of conducting business to Nicasio School District. In early January, **Alexis Purcell** joined the staff as the new **chief business officer** (CBO) for the District. As retired **Associate Dean of Finance in the Schools for UCSF**, Alexis brings a wealth of finance experience to her new post.

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Campus Barn Owl Lays Her First Egg of 2015



Proud mama "**Pepper**", Nicasio School's resident barn owl, attends to her **first egg of the year**. Watch the live action inside the owl box! Go to: www.nicasioschool.org and click on the "*owl box*" link.

School Receives "Giant" Grant for Enrichment Classes

Thanks to a grant request by former **Foundation President Whit Jackson**, Nicasio School was honored to receive a **\$5000 "Step Up to the Plate for Education"** grant on Dec. 2nd from **Wells Fargo, KNBR Radio** and **S.F. Giants player Brandon Crawford**. The grant will support the school's enrichment programs.



SF Giants Player Brandon Crawford (l) and Wells Fargo Regional President Mike Billeci (r) present \$5000 grant award to Nicasio School representatives (center, l-r) Christy Stocker, Judith Kirkland and Whit Jackson.

Goodbye, Dear Friends!



Pictured above (clockwise from left): Phoenix W., Althea P., Fiona B. and Logan B.

At a surprise going away party in December, the school community bade a sad but fond farewell to four treasured students whose families were moving out of the area. *We will miss you!*

December Rains Set the Course for 6/7/8 Science Project



Grade 6/7/8 students coax their watercraft to the finish line of their science class regatta.

Mr. Williams' middle school students were able to launch a long-awaited science experiment in December when the rain-swollen campus creek provided the perfect conditions for pitting their handcrafted boats against time and one another. It was a spirited race to the finish!



The new "Cougar" baseball cap.

"Wear it Wednesdays" Promotes Cougar Spirit!

A more visible sense of school spirit has pervaded campus this year, and especially on "Wear it Wednesdays", when students, staff and parents sport the school colors of red and white, as well as new "spirit wear" apparel featuring the school's long-time cougar mascot.



Daniel S. sports vintage Cougar wear.



Monica Snell and Ellierose J. display new Cougar wear.



School spirit abounds in Ellian Klein's TK-2 classroom this year. Pictured above in school colors are (clockwise from top left): Ms. Damena, Ms. Ellian, Everett G., Akina R., Phoenix W. and Krystal A.

2014-15 Student Council Focuses on Fun *and* Fundraising for Special Causes



Under the guidance of Student Council Advisor Colin Williams, elections for the 2014-15 Student Council were held in October. Candidates for officer positions included (l-r): Phoebe B., Anthony M., Ellierose J., Jamie K., Olivia B., Ashley W., Camilla T. and Louisa W. Congratulations to ALL the candidates who participated in this year's election!

By Phoebe B., Student Council President

This year in **Student Council** so far has been a blast! The participants of Student Council are **Phoebe B.** (president), **Jamie K.** (vice president), **Louisa W.** (photographer), **Olivia B.** (secretary), **Xoxa B.** and **Elijah V.-L.** (3/4/5 reps.), and **Cassidy R.** (TK/K/1/2 rep.). We have done lots of fun spirit days, including crazy hair/hat, pajama day and clash day! We also held a raffle this year! The funds went towards the Student Council and the **Heifer**

Foundation, through which we helped fund an animal to send to a poor village. We also held a canned food drive for the **San Francisco/Marin Food Bank** and a coat drive for the **San Rafael Ritter Center's "One Warm Coat" Program**. We'd like to thank all the kids, parents and community members who helped with these drives. The Student Council is also in charge of electing the **Teacher of the Month**. In October, we elected **Ms. Ellian**; in November, **Ms. Jill**; in December, **Ms. Monica**; in January,



Ms. Ellian receives bouquet from Olivia B. (l) and Jamie K.

we elected **Mikki**; and in February, **Mr. Barni**! Congratulations, everyone! I can't wait to see what we think up next!



Student Council members honor "Teachers of the Month" (l-r) Ms. Jill, Mikki, Ms. Monica and Mr. Barni. (Staff photos by Louisa W.)

Holiday Craft Faire Generates Support for the Parent Club

Thanks to **Marnie Jackson, Daniella** and **Uli Weeren**, and all of the families who donated crafts and purchased treasures at the **Craft Faire** in early December, **\$1,134** was raised! The funds will be used to support **Parent Club** activities.



Luna S. (l) and Xoxa B. promote jewelry and ornaments for sale at the Craft Faire.



Michelle Rutledge pays Ashley W.



Monica S. delights in her handcrafted find.

Holiday Performance DVDs Now Available

If you would like to add the Winter Holiday Performance of **"Once Upon a Time"** to your home theater library, stop by the office to pick up a DVD. Special thanks to **Matt Gallagher** for filming the show. Each copy is \$10, and all proceeds go to the **Nicasio School Foundation**.

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She lives in Larkspur with her husband, **Robert**, and their dog, **Betsey**. Their adult children, **Julia** and **Alex**, currently attend college at UC Santa Cruz and San Diego State University respectively.

In her new CBO position, Alexis is responsible for keeping the superintendent, principal and school board trustees aware of all aspects of the District's financial status. She will oversee all activities involved in the preparation and administration of the District's budget as well as accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll.

Over the next several months, Alexis will train with and gradually assume duties from **MCOE Senior Director of Business Services Kate Lane**, who has been providing interim CBO services to the District for the past two years. Kate and her team at MCOE have provided outstanding business services support since 2013, when the District's previous business services contract with **Shoreline Unified School District** staff was terminated.

In a departure from the past several years when business services were provided to the District by off-site contractors, Alexis is working on campus in a newly repurposed office adjacent to **Mr. Williams' classroom** (the space previously utilized by the

Got Talent? Show it Off on March 26th!

For the second year in a row, the Nicasio community will be treated to entertainment by students, staff, parents and local neighbors who take the stage for the **March 26th Nicasio Talent Show!** The show will take place immediately after the **school's Open House (6-7pm)**. All ages are welcome to share their talent! Contact coordinators **Monica Snell** (monicasnell@me.com) or **Marnie Jackson** (marniejksn@gmail.com).

resource specialist and most recently, the director of special education.)

Since retiring from UCSF after 20-plus years there, Alexis has enjoyed a second career as an award winning author of children's books and interactive book apps. Her first book, **"The Turkey Who Forgot How to Gobble"**, was ranked #1 in iTunes last November! Alexis also started the **Pray for Peace Project**, which serves to support children living with violence in their lives. (More information about her books, apps, and the Pray for Peace project can be found on her website: <http://www.TwinkleTwinkleBooks.com>.)

Alexis said that while she loves and intends to continue her creative endeavors, she found that she missed interacting with others and being involved with business operations. She describes her new part-time CBO role with Nicasio School District as the perfect complement to her work as an author.

"I get to work with some really nice people, and very sweet and cute kids," she said. "Thank you, Nicasio, for welcoming me into your community; it's so wonderful to be here!"

Welcome to Nicasio School, Alexis! We are happy you have joined our team!!



Grades TK-5 Find Festive Fall Fun at Local Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch



A short trek across the road to the local pumpkin patch in October yielded big smiles and pumpkins for the TK-5 classes! (Pictured clockwise from top left: Dylan G.; Krystal A. and Phoenix W.; Lucas W.; Haley D. and Flora L.; Ms. Julianne; the 3/4/5 Class; and Eva T. and Valeria D.)



Rotary Club of West Marin Gives Third Grade Students the Gift of Words

The third grade students in Ms. Julianne's class received very special gifts on Feb. 4th, when Michele Clein, founding president of Rotary Club of West Marin, presented each one of them with a new and beautifully illustrated Macmillan dictionary. Our warmest thanks to Michele and to Rotary Club of West Marin for these gifts that will benefit our students forever!



Michele Clein of Rotary of West Marin is pictured above with 3rd grade recipients of new dictionaries (l-r) Daniel S., Esmeralda R., Flora L., Haley D., Lucas W., Cassidy R. and Chase B.

School Community Embraces Autumn with a Variety of Festive Halloween and Dia de los Muertos Activities



Logan B. appears as an eaglet.



Halloween "hot-dogger" Chase B.

Cassidy R. gets her face painted during Buddy Activity.



Buddies Ashley W. and Brandon A. collaborate on skeleton art project.



Dia de los Muertos altar was a joint Spanish/ Art class project which honored the deceased loved ones of students and staff.



Masked revelers Robyn and Mark Burton arrive for the fun and frolic of N.S. Foundation's Halloween Boo! fundraising event at Druid's Hall.



Jasmine G. and Flora L. flash purr-fect smiles after face painting.

Adrian M. strikes a pose as Super Mario.





Phantasy foursome Esmeralda R., Xosca B., Altbea P. and Luna S.



A cast of costumed characters takes the stage.

A wacky parade of costumed characters, fun buddy activities, artful tributes to departed loved ones, and a rollicking (adults only) Halloween Boo! fundraiser were among the fall events in which Nicasio School students, staff, parents and supporters took part.



Flora L. flutters by with spotted wings.



What a blast from the past! Nicasio School's groovy staff, attired in '70s garb, included (l-r): Christy Stocker, Julianne Bretan, Damena Ware, Priscilla Troy, Colin Williams, Ellian Klein, Judith Kirkland and Monica Snell.



TK-8 Students Shine Onstage During Winter Holiday Performances



When the stars come out in Nicasio, they light up the whole community, and the 54 stars on the stage of Nicasio School's MPR during the December 17th **Winter Holiday Celebration** dazzled all who were in attendance. Many thanks to **Director Extraordinaire Monica Snell, Nicasio School TK-8 students & staff, and all the parents** whose valuable contributions made this year's school-wide winter performance a very magical and memorable experience for the entire Nicasio community!



Gr. 7/8 cast of "Into the Woods, Jr."



Olivia B. as Little Red Riding Hood and Anthony M. as the Wolf.



Winter S. as Jack.



Jamie K. as Cinderella.



Above: Glowing Gr. 3/4 students perform to "Friend Like Me" from Aladdin.



Left: Grade 5/6 students perform to "Tanz" from "Herz und Verrat" by Hiss. Pictured (l-r): Joya C.-R., Luna S., Ashley W., Tess R., Myrtle V.-L., Jasmine G., Raul S., Dylan R., London M., Ridge B., William K., Trystan S. and Tino V.



Curtain call for Gr. 7/8 cast of "Into the Woods, Jr."



Camilla T. as the Witch and Louisa W. as Rapunzel.



Gr. TK-2 students sing and use sign language to perform "When You Wish Upon a Star" from Pinocchio. Pictured (l-r): Valeria D., Eva T., Logan B., Krystal A., Francesca M., Kate K., and Adrian M.



Ryan D. as Cinderella's Prince and Anthony M. as Rapunzel's Prince.



Phoebe B. as the Baker's Wife and Elly P. as the Baker.



Gr. 7/8 "Into the Woods, Jr." performers (l-r): Esmeralda F., Ellierose J., Elly P., Phoebe B., Fiona B. and Olivia B.

Nicasio School's Rich Learning Environment Springs From a Supportive and Generous Community



Mark Burton digs in during campus cleanup.

There is no shortage of individuals who step forward in a myriad of ways to support the students and staff of Nicasio School. The contributions by members of the school and local community take many forms, each one deepening the roots of Nicasio School's rich learning environment. Whether pulling weeds, planting seeds, driving on field trips, helping in the classroom, making trips to the dump, handcrafting gifts, cooking tamales, writing a

check or drafting a grant proposal, every kindness shown is valued and deeply appreciated. Whether we caught you in the act (of giving) or not, please know that your generous gift(s) of time, talent and resources have made a difference. Among those to whom we extend a *heartfelt thanks*:

- * **Jason Snell & Rob Winkelmann:** *Repair of MPR stage-light equipment*
- * **Lucienne Meckfessel:** *Yearbook coordination, Winter Program refreshment coordination and pickup of office supplies*
- * **Marnie Jackson:** *Craft Faire coordination and pickup of office supplies*
- * **Danielle & Ulrich Weeren:** *Craft Faire coordination and campus cleanup*
- * **Robyn Burton:** *Garden care, first aid assistance, new Cougar merchandise coordination, and classroom assistance*
- * **Kozubik and Grady families:** *Donations of baseball gear*



Robyn Burton assists Gr. 3/4/5 students with California model project.



Grant Beatty carries precious cargo during Fall Campus Cleanup!

- * **Mina family:** *Performing arts donation*
- * **Robert Meckfessel:**
- * *Adjustment and installation of door closures and lockdown levers*
- * **Andrew Loose:** *Delivery of textbooks and campus cleanup*
- * **Kozubik family:** *Campus cleanup*
- * **Taylor family:** *Grass seed donation*
- * **Chihiro Saito:** *Classroom assistance*
- * **Mark Burton:** *Campus cleanup coordination and roto-tilling of field*
- * **Grace Rogers:** *Library supervision during recess*
- * **Pete Casartelli:** *Recycling/dump run and campus cleanup*
- * **Amy Morse:** *Landscape revitalization*



John Taylor donates a bag of grass seed for field.

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- * **Zac Wilder & crew of Marin Arborists; Ross & Tom Perry of Sunny-side Nursery; and Kevin & Nancy Lunny of West Marin Compost:**

Donation of landscape materials and services

- * **Antonio Padilla:** *Campus cleanup*

- * **Tory Grady:** *Back-to-School Tea coordination and ongoing Parent Club support*

- * **Beatty family:** *Staff holiday gifts and campus cleanup*

- * **Michelle Rutledge:** *Classroom assistance*

- * **Monica Snell:** *Classroom assistance, Walkathon coordination, new Cougar merchandise coordination, and delivery of textbooks*

- * **Kathy Kirkland:** *Donation of art and "Day of the Dead" supplies*

- * **Ramon Ramirez:** *Pumpkin donations*

- * **Laura Ramirez-Flores:** *Assistance with "Dia de la Raza"*

- * **Lafranchi family:** *Free admission to Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch*

- * **ALL Field Trip Drivers & Chaperones!**

- * **Mariefrance Cote-Rabieh:** *Coordination of N.S. Foundation's Halloween Boo! Event*

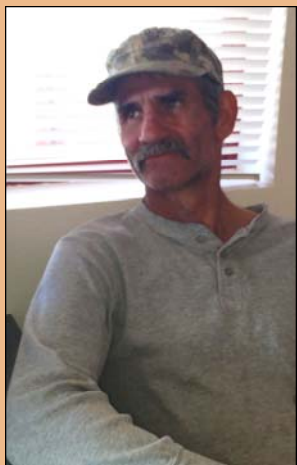
- * **Whit Jackson:** *Submitting successful request for \$5000 "Step Up to the Plate" grant*

- * **District Trustees, Foundation Officers, & Parent Club Coordinators:** *Donating countless hours to support Nicasio School students and staff!!*

- * **Any Volunteers Not Listed Above:**
THANK YOU for your invaluable contributions!!



John Kozubik hauls the weeds away.



Pete Casartelli offers his debris hauling services.



Daniella Weeren lends a helping hand to spruce up campus.



Ramon Ramirez welcomes daughter, Esmeralda, and other TK-5 students to Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch, and donates pumpkins for the classrooms.



Amy Morse and crew revitalize the landscape with new ground cover and plants.

Students Step-Up to Raise Funds and Show School Spirit at Walk-a-thon Event

By Monica Snell, Walk-a-thon Coordinator



Walk-a-thon award winners (l-r): Tess R., Valeria D., Daniel S., Ellierose J., Joya C.-R., William K., London M. and Trystan S.

The Nicasio School Foundation's 11th Annual Walk-a-thon on October 10th was a huge success! We raised just over \$5,000! All proceeds directly support our enrichment programs including Art, PE, Spanish and Performing Arts. Every student made a difference and we could not have been so successful without the participation of the entire school. There are a few students who went above and beyond their goals, which leads us to.... **Prizes!** Prizes consisting of gift certificates to **Powell's Sweet Shoppe** and **The Fairfax Scoop** were awarded to the following students for their outstanding Walkathon achievements:

- * **Most Funds Raised:** Valeria D. (TK-2 classroom), Joya C.-R. (3-5 classroom) and Ellierose J. (school-wide).
- * **Highest Number of Donors:** Valeria D. (TK-2), Daniel S. (3-5) and Tess R. (6-8)
- * **Walking the Most Laps:** William K., London M. & Trystan S. - A three-way tie at 34 laps!
- * **Classroom Raising the Most Funds Overall and WINNERS of the Super Sundae Ice Cream Party(!):** Miss Julianne's 3/4/5 Classroom

A big "Thank You" to my awesome helpers: Gisela Alvarado, Laura Flores, Mr. W., Lucienne Meckfessel, Barbara Bell, Melissa Silva, Terri Carlson, Cleary Vaughan-Lee, Alejandra Diaz, Laura Skapik, London M., Trystan S., Winter S., and Luna S. Plus a "shout-out" to Christy Stocker and Julianne Bretan for motivating the students by walking laps the entire time! *Congratulations, Cougars!*

Gr. 3/4/5 Students Get Hands on Lessons at Lawrence Hall of Science



Tory Grady and students observe a turtle.

During a Jan. 22nd field trip to the Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley, students in Ms. Julianne's 3/4/5 class

participated in a workshop about how animals adapt to their environment. The lesson included observation of live animals including turtles, crayfish, hermit crabs, chinchillas and more.



Gr. 3/4/5 students bond with a resident "whale" at the museum.



Cassidy R. bonds with a chinchilla.