



Mt. Diablo CARES Afterschool Program at Riverview Middle School

Children Learning to Change the World!

A Healthy Behaviors Learning Center

Christine Huajardo

205 Pacifica Ave

Bay Point, CA 94565

School Phone: 925-458-3216

CARES Phone: 925-261-9712

Fax: 925-458-0875

E-mail: ambrose31@hotmail.com

About the Program

Mt. Diablo CARES (Collaborative for Academics, Recreation & Enrichment for Students) is committed to developing well rounded, self motivated children with strong connections to their schools, communities and families, and building their capacity to succeed. A collaborative of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Ambrose Recreation and Parks District, the City of Concord, and Bay Area Community Resources (BACR), and located in Central and East Contra Costa County, Mt. Diablo CARES is widely recognized as a leading afterschool program in California. Riverview Middle School is one of Mt. Diablo CARES' 16 afterschool sites in the Bay Area. It also serves as one of the program's two Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers that works with other afterschool programs to help them improve students' eating habits and physical fitness by intentionally integrating physical activity and nutrition education with youth development principles and practices. Over the past ten years at Riverview Middle School, the program has demonstrated the effectiveness of its approaches and its impact on students' lives.

Funded by the Afterschool Education and Safety (ASES) program, Mt. Diablo CARES at Riverview Middle School serves 176 students—61.1 percent Latino, 21.3 percent African American, 13.1 percent Caucasian, 3.3 percent Filipino, 0.8 percent Vietnamese, and 0.4 percent Asian Pacific Islander. Over 85 percent of Riverview Middle School students are eligible for free and reduced lunches. The program runs Monday through Friday from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. and is staffed by two part-time site coordinators, 1 teacher leader and a minimum of five recreation specialists. The staff to student ratio is 1:20.

The program provides a wide range of opportunities to strengthen students' academic, social and emotional competencies while engaging in exciting, meaningful and rewarding activities.

Homework Assistance and Links to the School Day

- **Homework Zone:** Homework assistance and Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) or Recreation Specialist reading to the class.
- **Intervention Program:** 1 ½ hours of academic Intervention with a credentialed teacher in either Read 180 or My Skills Tutor Intervention Program. Student to teacher ratio is 20:1.
- **Academic Coaches** attend faculty, leadership and grade level meetings. Informal and formal communication between CARES staff and school day teachers.

Enrichment

- **Enrichment opportunities:** 1 ½ hours of structured enrichment. Enrichment programming includes arts and crafts, physical education, Life skills and Tribes. Students participate in a variety of programs which include KidTribe (a Hula Hoop exercise program) and Stix. The program also has field trips throughout the year. The Hall of Health, the Oakland Museum, Mt. Diablo State Park and graffiti clean-up in the community are a few of the most popular trips. The program encourages students to participate in planning their schedule for the week with activities, games, arts and crafts as well as events like the "After Goul Program," a Halloween celebration.

- **Nutrition Education:** 7 hours a week of nutrition education which includes the Eat Fit Program, Nutrition to Grow On, Harvest of the Month, and physical activity promotion, including the SPARK program. Students also participate in hands-on cooking instruction and field trips to the CARES Gardens.
- **CARES Gardens:** The Bay Point Garden Project sits adjacent to Riverview. It is a two- acre organic garden that is used to teach gardening and nutrition. In addition to Riverview Middle School, it is also visited by several other CARES programs daily.

Peer Resources and Youth Development

CARES Middle School Volunteers: Middle School students volunteer at the four local elementary schools. After homework and tutoring, volunteers assist recreation specialist with enrichment activities.

Cesar Chavez Club: The Cesar Chavez Club is a service learning club that is youth led. Riverview students have the opportunity to learn about his life and legacy, as well as the values he lived by. Students learn leadership skills and participate in various activities geared to improve the community they live in, including clothing and book drives. The club has begun painting over graffiti-covered fences and walls near the school. Students in the Cesar Chavez Club decide on projects that are most needed in the community and the club leader, facilitate the activities decided by students. The program is currently working on completing hygiene packs to send to an orphanage in Haiti.

Middle School Sports Program: The CARES After School Program's four middle schools have put together an organized sports program for middle school youth. The sports schedule consists of soccer, volleyball, basketball, flash football and softball. It is hoping to add track and wrestling teams as well. Each school sponsors an end of the season jamboree, with all four middle schools coming together to play against each other in a tournament style game. All participating students receive medals/trophies and or certificates. All students are required to have passing grades; no Ds or Fs, unruly behavior or suspensions are allowed; and students must follow the CARES Behavior Policy. The teachers and school staff enjoy having the sports program at Riverview because the students are held accountable for their behavior and grades.

Fine Arts: Over the years CARES has given the students multiple opportunities to experience cultural diversity through the fine arts. Students have acted in plays as well as sung at the Sun Valley Mall in Concord. They have also showcased Jazz and Hip Hop routines.

Teen Garden Corps: Riverview CARES Program has been fortunate to have students participate in the Teen Garden Corps Program and later become Recreational Specialists at its sites. The six-week summer program teaches organic gardening and job skills while promoting healthy eating through hands-on gardening, field trips, food preparation and team-building exercises.

Partnerships

Many partners have helped ensure the success of the program. They include:

- Center for Collaborative Solutions/Healthy Behaviors Initiative
- Contra Costa and Solano County Food Bank
- Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department
- *Network for a Healthy California*
- First Tee
- A4A Collaborative
- Kaiser Permanente
- U.C. Cooperative Extension
- Jr. Achievement