

ASPEN | COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 15, 2023 | VOLUME IV



The Community Engagement Initiative

On December 8, 2023, Aspen's CEI team of staff and students attended their first in-person meeting of the Community Engagement Initiative (CEI), Peer Leading and Learning Network (PLLN), which was themed "Dream a Vision for the Future". Schools across California came together to learn how to help change relationships between students, families, school districts, county offices of education, and communities in the coming years. The meeting was held in beautiful Birmingham and all expenses were paid by the State of California CEI.

Members of the CEI team are Executive Director Shelly Lether, Community Schools Coordinator Jessica Pittman, Extended Learning Coordinator Robert Theus, Aspen Ridge Assistant Site Director Abel Ruiz, Aspen Board Member Alicia Varela, Parent members Pete Lugo, Lori Loera, Rhonea Lewis, and students Lila Moris and Deon Lewis-Huff.

The CEI meetings offer an exciting opportunity for school districts to revolutionize their community engagement practices by participating in the PLLN. The objective is to create an environment where individuals can learn from, and support each other within a group of peers; recognizing that as individuals we often learn effectively from peers who share similar experiences, challenges, and perspectives.

Newsletter Highlights

THANK YOU, SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

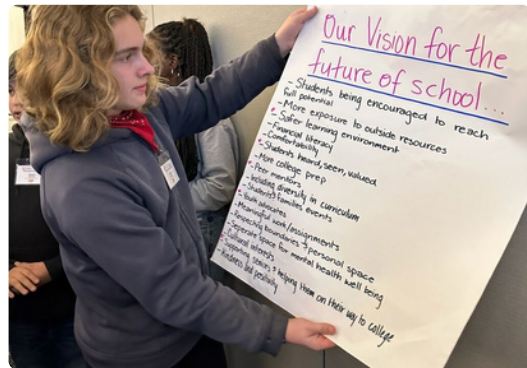
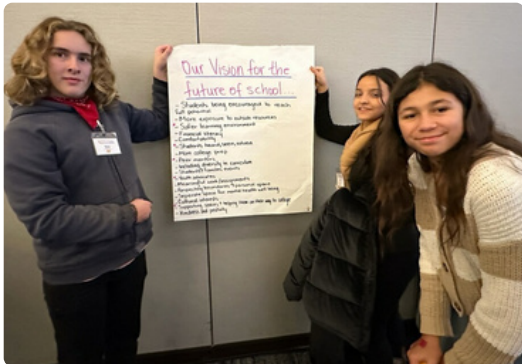
ASPEN ART

RAVENS FIELD TRIPS

ASPEN'S COMMUNITY GARDEN



During the meeting, the Aspen team was actively engaged in various discussions, workshops, and interactive sessions that encouraged the exchange of experiences and insights. They delved into conversations about the challenges they encountered, the innovative strategies they implemented, and the successes they celebrated in fostering stronger connections within the Aspen school community. The next statewide CEI meeting will be held on February 2, 2024, in Santa Rosa, California.



Thank you, Aspen School Resource Officers!



In December, the Fresno Fire Dept visited the Meadow and Valley campuses to hold a Fire Safety Presentation for our 1st through 3rd graders.

All Aspen SROs will attend the annual Active Shooter Training during the winter break.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION



JESSICA PITTMAN,
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
COORDINATOR

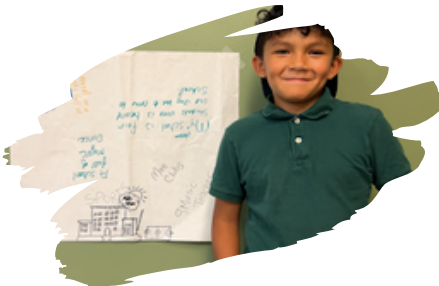
What are your dreams for Aspen Public Schools?!

This is the question I've been asking myself and so many others this past year. What strengths and connections does our community already have that can be used to improve the lives of families? What do we need to shift or change to improve the education that students experience at Aspen? How can we make sure to truly share the decision making power and also the responsibility for outcomes of how we use the resources we do have?

This is a new journey for many of us. It means listening deeply to people different from us. It means hearing from students, and actually changing what we do based on their feedback. It means looking at the neighborhood our schools are in and understanding how we are all connected.

Our Process this Year!

Our Community Schools Advisory Council has met 6 times this year, along with our leadership team and student teams who have helped guide our process. Our Advisory Council gatherings are open to anyone who wants to attend, but there is now a set team at each school, made of students, family members, staff and community partners. We have, with input from many of you, put together a priority list (or 'wish list') for each school. and are using it to finalize our Community Schools budget. We'll submit our budget by early February and find out in April or May if we are awarded up to \$750,000 per year for up to five years. (This is for all three of our schools.)



COMMUNITY EDUCATION: OUR FIRST PROJECT



We have created a plan to use the empty lot across from Meadow campus to build our Aspen Community Garden! This space has been a community garden in the past when Fresno First Baptist owned the campus. Our vision is to create a beautiful, calming space where students, families, and neighbors can grow food together. Classrooms and families will soon be able to sign up for a garden plot they can manage. We envision classes for families on growing organic produce, students learning how to plant and harvest, and potentially selling food at farmers markets! This will involve our neighbors and be open to the community, and we are looking to hire a part-time Coordinator right now!

If you are interested in being involved in the Community Garden, fill out our [interest form](#)!



Aspen Meadow Art



Aspen Meadow 5th and 6th graders helped paint a plywood mural to be on display for Fresno's Christmas Tree Lane! The artwork can be found right at the beginning on the corner of Van Ness & Dayton!

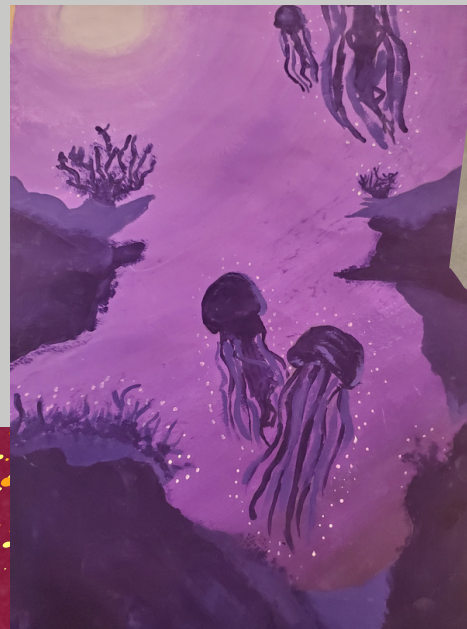


When we return into the new year, our students will get opportunities to use our new ceramic kiln and 3-d printer! We are so excited to continue elevating our art education experience, and continue to grow in the Fresno art community!

Aspen Ridge Art



Food art made with tissues



Ceramic pinch pot

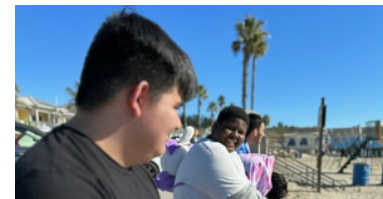


The Tower String Quartet visits Aspen Ridge on December 6th, 2023



December 15, 2023 | Volume IV

RAVENS FIELD TRIPS



During the trip to Cal Poly University's campus in San Luis Obispo, Aspen Ridge High School Students toured the campus with a student-lead presenter and explored the facilities during a scavenger hunt. They also enjoyed a fun-filled visit to Avilia beach.



Aspen Ridge Middle School Students enjoyed a field trip to the Fresno Chaffee Zoo on December 12, 2023. Students especially enjoyed feeding and petting the stingrays, and had fun competing in a scavenger hunt.



ASPEN | BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ASPEN'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BOARD MEETINGS, PLEASE VISIT "GOVERNING BOARD" ON ASPENPS.ORG



Carlos Huerta
Vice Chair



Alicia Varela
Board Secretary



John Grice
Board Chair



Renee Dayton
Treasurer



Mark Snee
Member