

November 9-20 Canned Food Drive	December 4 7th/8th Grade Dance 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
November 11 Veterans' Day (No School)	December 8 School Site Council Meeting 7:15 AM
November 12 PTA Meeting - 7:00 p.m.	December 17 Jazz Band Winter Concert
November 16 IHMS Ed. Fund Meeting	Dec. 21 to Jan. 1 Winter Recess No School
November 23-27 Thanksgiving Recess (No School)	

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# IRON HORSE JAGUARS

## I H M S P T A N E W S L E T T E R

### A Message from the PTA President

**Time** passes so quickly!! As I write this message, we are nearing the end of the first quarter and Halloween is just a day away. I'm sure we've all noticed the holiday advertising in the media and in the stores! I hope that you and your children are having a successful year so far.

Our next PTA meeting will be on Thursday, **Nov. 12, 2009**. We are pleased to announce that the Math Department will be our featured speaker. Math teachers, **Mona Keeler** and **Alison Beggs**, will be updating us on the math department and will be available for any questions you may

have. Our meeting starts at 7:00 PM in the Media Center.

November has been designated by the National PTA as **Healthy Lifestyles Month**. As such I would like highlight one program we have here at Iron Horse that the entire family can participate in and is supported by the PTA. It is the **Run/Walk Club**. I know the PE teachers spoke about this wonderfully simple program during Back to School Night. All you have to do is keep track of the miles walked or ran outside of school! A tally sheet is available from the school and a t-shirt will be awarded for certain milestones such as 50 miles, 100

miles, etc. This is about as simple a plan for physical activity as you can get! Why not take advantage of it and walk or run daily with your family? No need to check you heart rate, buy special equipment or spend money on a gym membership. All you need are your feet and a pair of comfortable shoes. What could be more simple? If you are interested the National PTA website has a **Healthy Lifestyles Parent Guide**. This guide has many ideas for increasing physical activity and ideas for healthy snacking. Go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) and click on *Health & Wellness*.

Speaking of walking and running, I would like

*(Continued on page 2)*



### Mrs. Cooper Writes

Dear Iron Horse Families,

The season of summer has ended, Halloween has come and gone, and first quarter report cards are being mailed home.....all signs that we are well into this school year. One of the most important responsibilities I feel I have as principal is to keep my parent community informed on how Iron Horse is serving their children in his/her educational experience. I can best accomplish this by taking every opportunity to communicate how we are progressing towards our five main Areas of Focus for this school year. Middle school is a busy time in a child's (and parents') life, filled with drama and distractions, so every so often it is necessary to stop and refocus on the purpose of us all being here at Iron Horse.....to learn and to grow.

#### Iron Horse's Five Areas of Focus to Achieve Our Mission:

##### 1. Understanding Early-Adolescence

Developmentally speaking, adolescents are a breed of their own. They are changing whether we like it or not. It is our responsibility as adults who work and live with these special youngsters to inform ourselves on what makes them "tick." As you may have noticed, I am including an article on early adolescence in every newsletter. This month's article is titled "Humor" ([see page 4](#)). The article describes how injecting some humor in how you react to your pre-adolescent's up's and down's can help diffuse tense situations. As a fellow parent of an adolescent, I practice "humor" quite often.

##### 2. Increasing Parent Involvement

Attending PTA meetings is a great first step

towards getting involved in your child's school. PTA meetings not only share important information but they give parents an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas as well. Our next PTA meeting is on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the IHMS Media Center. **The first agenda item for this month's PTA Meeting is a presentation by the IHMS Math Department.** The Mathematics flowchart outlining math coursework requirements from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to college level will be shared as well as specific information relating to the IHMS Math program.

##### 3. Communication and Collaboration

This newsletter is a huge part of our pursuit to effectively communicate with parents. We also have our weekly Lyres "What's Up?" communication that is e-

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Iron Horse Middle School  
PTA Newsletter**

Published Monthly by the  
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a unit of San Ramon Valley  
Council of PTA's

Iron Horse Middle School  
12601 Alcosta Boulevard  
San Ramon, California 94583  
(925) 824-2820

Principal - Michelle Cooper  
Assistant Principals  
Chris George  
Maureen Allison  
PTA President  
Judith Upchurch

Newsletter Editor  
Bridgette Percivalle  
bridgette.percivalle@safeway.com



Mrs. Cooper Writes  
(Continued from page 1)

mailed home every weekend and posted on the front page of the Iron Horse website. We also post the weekly student bulletin on our website. Both of these communications contain the most current and up-to-date information and activities for that week. In addition, schoolloop.com is a highly valuable form of communication for our parents, students and their teachers.

**4. Increasing Academic Achievement and Student Engagement**

The Iron Horse teachers continue to do what they do best in the classroom and are always looking for new ways to improve student learning. Currently, all departments have created plans on how to utilize instructional technology to engage students in their learning and to support all students in meeting and/or exceeding grade level standards. I continue to be impressed with our teachers' dedication to improving student learning.

**5. Building a Strong School Community**

Students are becoming increasingly familiar and comfortable with the policies and procedures expected of them at Iron Horse. However, knowing that they are early adolescents we are not surprised when they test the rules and/or forget that the rules even exist. If we work together in the spirit of helping our students appreciate the importance of following the school rules we will definitely be working together in the best interests of our students. We know that you work hard to raise your child to be a good, respectful citizen and we want you to know that we work hard to do the same here at Iron Horse. Our students learn and discuss positive character traits in our advisory program and we challenge them to be kind and to practice empathy with their peers. We have high expectations for our students both academically and behaviorally and we want to keep our expectations high because we know our students will rise to the occasion.

I wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday with your family and friends. Enjoy this extra time with your children and I hope you make some lovely memories that will last a lifetime.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Cooper ☺

A Message from the PTA President  
(Continued from page 1)

to thank **Mani Keeran** who headed up Primo's Run for our school. This was a very successful event put on by the San Ramon Valley Education Association. Over 10% of our student population signed up to run and we had numerous volunteers. As a result SRVEA will share some of the proceeds of the run with the IHMS PTA. Great job, Mani!

Thanks also to **Leslie Liscano** and **Rina Dodgion** who headed up the Reflections committee this year. We have several entries which will be on display during the district wide Reflections evening.

Since November is also the month in which we take a moment to give thanks, I would also like to say how grateful I am that my daughter has the opportunity to attend a wonderful middle school like Iron Horse. I am very proud to be serving as the PTA President for Iron Horse and thank all of you who have given your time, talent and money to support the school and the PTA. I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving!

*Thank You Parent Patrol!*

**T**hank you to all of the parents who have already served on Parent Patrol this year. Your presence is making a significant impact upon the climate of our students' lunchtime experience. You are making a difference!

**What is Parent Patrol?**

Parent Patrol is a fabulous way to get a glimpse of your child's middle school experience and to help his/her school be a safer place to learn. Parents simply monitor the campus during lunchtime (11:00 AM to 1:15 PM). **Mr. George, Ms. Allison** and I enjoy spending time getting to know our parents as we supervise lunch together. If you are interested in serving on Parent Patrol this year you can drop by the office or call the office at 824-2820.



## Greetings from Mr. George

**A**s you read this, we are well into our second quarter with our students, and proud to see that they, and our staff, have gotten off to such a great start.

In our ever present work towards a safer school, Iron Horse participated in the Great California Shakeout on October 18th. This was a statewide earthquake drill created to reinforce and assess our ability to react and respond appropriately to an earthquake. Our students performed admirably, as usual, during this drill, and we are very please with their response.

We have also worked throughout the fall with the PTA in order to stock our safety supplies with the very best equipment should there be a major disaster in the Bay Area.

Several teachers have also begun to meet weekly in order to discuss ways of furthering the reading and comprehension abilities of our students, especially in the curricular areas outside of the Language Arts. You will probably hear and see more of these efforts throughout the year, as well.

We have almost completed our volleyball season at this point. We are grateful to **Ms. Irwin, Ms. Adragna, and Ms. Small** for their coaching efforts, as well as **Ms. Taylor's** Ultimate Frisbee coaching. We do ask for a non-mandatory, one-time \$80 donation for sports participation. This covers coaches, referees, and equipment, and we are grateful for the donations we've received.

## *Notes from Maureen Allison*

**Here** we are in our Second Quarter already! Let's take a quick look at some of what's happened.

Our magazine sale is wrapped up for this year, though online orders still benefit Iron Horse. Our Student Council is up and running. We celebrated Hello Day and Red Ribbon Week, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders had a great time at their social. Stay tuned for more fun to come!

**Super Jaguars:** Returning Super Jaguars are eligible to turn in applications now that first quarter progress reports are published. Teachers sign for citizenship and I will check grades and attendance. Students need at least 5 hours **each** of school activities and community/school service, for a total of 15 hours. New Super Jaguars need a total of 30 hours (still at least 5 hours in each category) and may turn in applications after first quarter grades are complete. Our first Super Jaguar field trip is being planned, so be sure to turn in your application as soon as you can.

Many Iron Horse students have already put in many hours volunteering at school or in the community. Thanks to all who are making a difference and representing Iron Horse so well!

Enjoy November,

Maureen Allison

### *An Invitation*

You are invited to our next PTA meeting on  
November 12, 2009  
at 7:00 PM in the Media Center.

Our speakers will be Mona Keeler  
and Alison Beggs from the  
Math Department

Join us to hear the latest Math news!

*Understanding adolescence does make a difference!*

## "Enjoying Adolescence"

From a pamphlet published by the National Middle School Association

### Article #11: Humor

*Last month's article on "Denying" concluded with the following paragraph.....*

This period of denying everything doesn't usually last long, and it's an important protection for a fragile ego lying beneath the surface of a preadolescents sassy exterior. In a few short months, as their self esteem is boosted, they realize that compromise works better than conflict. They also begin to see that adulthood is ever more appealing, but not for the reasons they had originally thought.

In the meantime, try these tactics:

- ★ Be careful of your tone of voice. An irritated or accusative voice can be threatening in itself. Hearing this tone, preadolescents automatically go on the defensive, and worthwhile communication shuts down.
- ★ If the issue is minor, keep things light. The shoes on the floor, the wet towel on the bed, the carton left open – these are maddening, perhaps, but not earth shattering. Call attention to the issue in a humorous way, so your middle schooler knows you want action but you aren't being punitive. "Either the cat's smarter than I thought or you left the milk carton open on the counter. One of you please put it back before it spoils."
- ★ If the issue is major, start by listening. Starting off an important discussion with threats, put-downs, or lectures brings the hoped-for discussion to an immediate

close. Although you feel strongly about your side, let your child know you will listen to his or her side first, then DO listen without interrupting. "Tell me about this English grade." "I'm concerned about this fight at school." "I was worried when you didn't get home at the time we set; tell me what happened." If there are consequences, carry through with them, but avoid angry reactions.

- ★ Ignore trivial denials. For a time in a middle schooler's life, denying becomes almost a habit. Most of the time you can ignore it, just as you ignore preadolescent habits, like belching or rolling their eyes. A statement such as "I know you didn't leave them there, but would you pick them up anyway? Thanks," will get the task done.



*Presented by the San Ramon Libraries*

## Tea and More for Teens

**Saturday, November 7, 2009  
2:00 PM—4:00 PM**

Have you ever wondered what fork to use at a formal dinner or if it is okay to send a text message instead of a thank you note? Life can be complicated and the finer points of social graces can be confusing!



But help is here! Just in time for the holidays Rebecca Black, etiquette consultant, teacher and image coach will cover the basics including table manners and dating etiquette. And just to prove how much we've learned, we'll enjoy a formal tea and have fun too!

## More Jazz at the Library

### The Wayne Wallace Quintet

Friday, November 20, 2009  
8:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Coming to the Front Row Theater at the Dougherty Station Community Center, San Francisco-based trombonist and composer Wayne Wallace once again delivers the goods of burning Afro-Cuban Latin jazz. Featuring one of the most cohesive groups around, Wallace brings long time band mates, Murray Low on piano, bassist David Belove, Paul van Wageningen behind the drums and Michael Spiro on percussion. From fiery, red-hot grooves to impassioned ballads, the level of talent, experience and communication from this tight-knit working ensemble is readily apparent right from the opening.

Desserts will be provided by **Thyme to Eat Restaurant**, and coffee will be provided by **Starbucks**.

\$20 general admission; \$15 Senior/Student.

Buy tickets online at the San Ramon Performing Arts website.

The Front Row Theatre is located at the Dougherty Station Community Center, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon, 94582.



# Library Media Center News

**The** Book Fair has been packed up and shipped back to Scholastic for another year. Thank you for your generous support! Students are happily reading titles that were purchased by them, their teachers, and the library. Many thanks go to our volunteer parent community who so generously worked all week keeping the Fair running smoothly. The IH Jazz Band's performance on Tuesday evening kept everyone moving to a lively beat as the shopping and reading continued.

Please take some time to **investigate the resources** available through the Contra Costa County Office of Education's **Ed1Stop** portal. Find it listed under "Databases" on the IHMS Library Catalog home page <http://library.ihms.srvusd.net> This is a subscription service available through funding by our School and Library Improvement Program which is administered by the School Site Council. To access, please enter:

**Username** ihms\_stu

**Password** jaguars

The following resources are available under the "**School Help**" tab:

## ★ **Discovery Education**

**Streaming** offers educational videos for viewing and downloading.

★ **BrainPop** provides more than 300 animated movies explaining concepts in many curriculum topics.

★ **Digital Math** and **Math Quiz**

are designed to help and challenge math students.

Under the "**Project Help**" tab are these helpful resources:

**AP Images** provides images, sound bytes, graphics and text dating back to the early 1800s.

**Soundzabound** offers royalty-free music for use in student projects.

**Pics4Learning** offers copyright-friendly images for use in student projects.

Under the "**Reference**" tab, you will find:

**EBSCO's Points of View** is designed to offer multiple viewpoints on controversial subjects, supported by articles from a wide variety of sources.

**EBSCO's Student Research Center** is a database of articles from magazines, newspapers, reference books, radio and television transcripts, photographs, maps and flags. This is a good spot to find current event information as it is updated daily.

## **Battle of the Books**

The third annual SRVUSD Battle of the Books will be held in May at the California High School Library. All students are invited to begin reading the books and become experts on the details of plot, character, setting, and theme of each. A Jeopardy-style competition will determine the district winner.

There are multiple copies of the books available in the library. Titles include:

*The Thief* by Megan Turner

*Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel

*Alabama Moon* by Watt Key

*Vampire High* by Douglas Rees

*Notes from the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick

*Blood on the River: James Town 1607* by Elisa Lynn Carbone

*The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd

*Every Soul a Star* by Wendy Maas



## Counselor's Corner

Catherine Carle and Jennifer Benz, Counselors

**A**s we enter the busy, upcoming holiday months, the IHMS counseling staff would like to wish you all a happy holiday season. With all the excitement of the holidays, it can sometimes be difficult for students to stay focused on school. The second quarter, which began November 2, can fly by due to Thanksgiving and Winter breaks, so it is important to help your students stay organized and to help them manage their time well.

Quarter 1 report cards will be mailed on November 6. If your child earned any grades of D and/or F, please remember that Quarter 1 grades will be averaged with Quarter 2 grades to create a semester grade, and it is semester grades that show on the student transcript. We offer many academic interventions, including Study Club, Math Tutoring, Lunchtime Study Skills Workshops (next one is November 4 on "Taking Charge of Homework"), and Morning Study Hall (will start after Thanksgiving Break). Please contact the Counseling Office for additional information on these support programs.

### **Important Dates**

November 2 - January 22	Second Quarter
November 23-27	Thanksgiving Recess
December 9	Mid-Quarter Progress Reports e-mailed through Schoolloop
December 21 - January 1	Winter Recess
January 22	End of First Semester

### **Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Talent Search 2009-10**

Students interested in taking the SAT or ACT as part of the Johns Hopkins CTY Talent search may pick up an application packet in the counseling office or go to the website at [www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu) for application information. Complete instructions are included in the packet and on the website, including information about the 2010 CTY Awards Ceremony for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who meet the qualifying criteria (see packet for more information).

### **HEALTH CHALLENGE EXAM 2009**

For 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Only

8<sup>th</sup> grade students who are interested in taking the Health Challenge Exam can now pick up information from Iron Horse Middle School's counseling office. Exam day is December 9<sup>th</sup> @ 3:10 on the Dougherty Valley High Campus.

For more information on the exam, please see your science teacher.

## We need your input on "The Next Level" for our schools

**Our** community has grown accustomed to a high level of academic performance in our schools. The upcoming community forums provide an opportunity to think creatively about ways to make this outstanding school district **even better**, and to revisit the values, mission and priorities of our school district.

### We need your input at these forums around issues such as:

- How to best prepare students for success in a changing competitive, global environment, and what this means for teaching and learning.
- Technology and expansion of world language education.
- A possible restructuring of the senior year experience, allowing these students more time off campus in order to have a job, engage in community service or political advocacy, and/or take college classes.
- How to best meet all of our facilities needs in terms of growth, modernization of older facilities and energy conservation.

The forums will be scheduled at each high school. Parents, staff, students and other community members may attend any forum that works best with their schedule. The community forums will be at 6:30 p.m. (staff forums at 4:00 p.m.). The dates and locations of the forums are:

- Wednesday, November 4, San Ramon Valley High School
- Monday, November 9, Dougherty Valley High School
- Thursday, November 12, Monte Vista High School
- Monday November 16, California High School

*For more information, contact the Superintendent's office at  
925-552-2933 or [ghaddad@srvusd.net](mailto:ghaddad@srvusd.net).*

## H1N1 Information

### *A Statement from the San Ramon Valley Unified School District*

"It is safe to say that probably all of the schools in our district, as well as all schools in California are experiencing students with the H1N1 flu virus. In most cases doctors are not formally confirming the presence of H1N1. As a school and district, we continue to treat this as we would the seasonal flu, and as such we do not report out information regarding student illnesses. This is in alignment with the advice we have received from the CDC and the Contra Costa County Department of Health. Should we be directed otherwise we will certainly comply. In the meantime we are continuing to emphasize the importance of hand washing, covering the mouth when sneezing/coughing, and keeping students home if they begin to demonstrate a fever or other flu-like symptoms."



San Ramon Valley Unified School District

*SPECIAL NEEDS LIAISON*

*"Helping children with special needs succeed through collaboration"*

~presents~

## *IEP Goals & Paperwork Workshop*

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

#### **ANNUAL GOAL:**

When given 20 oral or pictorial math problems, Ima will determine which approach will be taken to solve the problem with 75 % accuracy in 4 consecutive trials. 1.1.1

Does the box above look familiar to you? Goals play a critical role in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Come to this in-depth workshop on IEP goals, and learn how to help your child's IEP team develop appropriate goals to support your child's progress in areas of educational need. Learn why we write goals, how they are developed, and the role they play in the IEP. Discover "SMART" goals, and the importance of measurable criteria. Find out how you can best contribute to this critical function of the IEP process. Preview the paperwork for SRVUSD's computer IEP system, GENESEA.

Workshops are FREE. All workshops include time for questions & answers.

*The workshop will be 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., at Dougherty Valley High School, Room 1114.*

## From the City of San Ramon

The City of San Ramon Parks & Community Services Department offers a variety of programs, classes and events. Visit our teen website, [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org), for a complete listing of what's going on for teens in San Ramon. To register for classes or other programs stop by the San Ramon or Dougherty Station Community Centers or you can register online at [www.SanRamonRecGuide.com](http://www.SanRamonRecGuide.com). If you have questions or need more information please call 973-3200.

### Upcoming Programs

#### *Babysitting for Beginners*

The class you have been looking for to develop all the skills needed to be a trusted and responsible babysitter. Learn about child development, bedtime strategies, discipline, how to get jobs, and ways to make babysitting fun for you and the kids. Basic first aid, general safety, and what to do in an emergency will also be covered.



Ages 10-18  
1 Classes \$60(R)/\$75(N)  
Community Center at Central Park  
Sun 11/8 9:00 – 2:30 pm Act# 63221

### Youth Resource Program – New Session

The Youth Resource Program promotes viable life skills among young people in our community through recreation activities, community service opportunities, counseling programs, and skill development at San Ramon middle schools and high schools. The high school program is referred to as “Connections”, and the middle school program is called “Quest.” Each session meets once a week for a four week after school curriculum at designated school sites. The City of San Ramon partners with the San Ramon Valley Unified School District and the San Ramon Police Department to provide a positive, safe environment for students.

#### Managing Stress and Pressure

Discover how to evaluate your different management skills can be utilized with the pressures of school, home, and everyday life.  
No class 11/26.

Ages 11 - 18  
4 classes \$35  
Iron Horse Middle School  
Thu 11/19 - 12/17 3:00 - 5:00pm Act# 63451

#### Iron Horse Teen Center

NEW: 5 Day Pass \$45  
November – December \$149

Parents.. know where your child is after school! The City of San Ramon has re-invented its teen centers with lower prices and new additions to the program! The teen centers are a place for homework and learning as well as fun, social activities your kids will love!





Call (925) 973-3200 or visit [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org) for more information!

### Visit SRTeen.org

Visit San Ramon's all new website, [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org), to get information on teen events, concert information, classes, and other programs. At SRTeen.org you can sign up for email updates and participate in contests that can make teens eligible for free prizes and discounts on programs and events. Check out [www.SRTeen.org](http://www.SRTeen.org) to get the 411 on teen programs.



NOVEMBER CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 <b>NOV</b>	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 CANNED FOOD DRIVE 	10	11 VETERAN'S DAY (NO SCHOOL) 	12 PTA MEETING 7:00 PM	13	14
15	16 ED FUND MEETING 7:00 PM	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 THANKSGIVING RECESS	24 	25	26	27	28
29	30	1 <b>DEC</b>	2	3	4 7TH/8TH GRADE DANCE 	5