

SRVEA SIGNAL

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Silent No More

By Laura Finco
Signal Editor

April 17th marked the 13th National Day of Silence. Founded in 1996, the Day of Silence has become the largest single student-led action towards creating safer schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation. From the first ever Day of Silence at the University of Virginia to the organizing efforts in over 8,000 middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities across the country in 2008, its textured history reflects its diversity in both numbers and reach.

With the passage of Proposition 8, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered) students have experienced an ever increasing amount of pressure to become silent or risk the consequences of being who they are through bullying, threats, and sometimes actual physical assaults. There has been a rise in public aggression against the LGBT community in general as well as on campuses across our nation. It is as though the passage of Proposition 8 gave permission for hate against the LGBT community to prevail. In one conversation with a Proposition 8 supporter, it was declared, "for so long we have walked quietly in our beliefs but now the message has been clearly and loudly sent. Homosexuality is a sickness and it has no place in society."

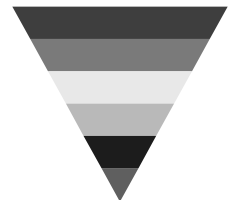
Regardless of our personal convictions or beliefs, we have an obligation to our students to remain in opposition to any "-isms" that appear on our campuses. We cannot ignore even the most casual comments involving racism, ageism, sexism, gender issues, or sexual orientation. It is not only the decent human thing but it is also the law. We need to be available to all of our students even if we do not agree with their lifestyle, religious views, or any factor that sets them as individuals apart from others.

Some would argue then that as educators we should not participate in political activities such as showing opposition to Proposition 8 or even participating in something like the Day of Silence. While I honor one's right to be in favor of legislation that writes discrimination into a state's constitution, as an educator my first priority is to my students, especially those who are endangered because of their differences. My personal beliefs aside, my students must have me as their advocate - their supporter - and that means that my actions must show protection for all.

Last year a California student was killed by another student during their first period class because of his sexual identity. Shortly before the 2009 National Day of Silence an 11-year old Massachusetts boy committed suicide because of anti-gay bullying on campus. Although he did not identify as gay, this young man was teased and harassed by others because of his small stature and what others perceived as being "girly." A couple of weeks later, another 11-year old boy also committed suicide for the same reason. In her introduction for the SRVHS-GSA Art Exhibition, SRVUSD student Jennie Drummond disclosed how her own silence and fear of anti-gay bullying almost lead to suicide. She is not alone.

We are losing children; children who are feeling the pressure of bullying and not the protection of the adults in their lives. We must allow their silence to have a voice and we must support their diversity. We, as the adults in their lives, cannot remain silent, nor can we allow their voices to be drowned out by misunderstanding and fear.

The triangle was used during WW II Germany to symbolize someone's difference as a mark. Today this once symbol of hate provides strength in the community and a call to "never forget" and never again. We are on the advent of a new holocaust through the loss of our children to bullying. We cannot allow this to happen, not here and not now.



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President's Message... Darren Day

What a Year!

What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny compared to what lies within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Rarely do I like to follow the lead of others, but this month I am following others by including the quote above as the beginning of my last President's message of the 2008-2009 school year, and what a year it has been.

I wanted to include this quote because when your mettle is tested, as ours has been this year, you realize that it is truly what lies within that makes us strong and able to handle what the world throws at us. Then, when individuals who have great values and strength within band together, the group becomes invincible. We need to remember this as we proceed through the summer and prepare for the next school year.

Even with the dire collapse of the state budget it looks like we have been able to bring back most of our teachers for the 09-10 school year. Unfortunately, with the continued reduction in money provided to education by the state, it appears we won't be so lucky the following year.

Over the summer, the SRVEA Bargaining Team will be working hard to negotiate the impact of changes the district is making to Grades 1-3 Elementary Prep, High School staffing ratios with the inclusion of the ROP classes in the overall school class-size ratio, counseling work load, as well as other items included on the district cuts list.

I have asked your site reps to put together a phone tree at your school site which can be used for disseminating important information over the summer. It will be critical for all of you to remain aware and vigilant throughout the summer as we negotiate. I will continue to use district email to send out district-wide notices and information, so it is important for you to frequently check your district email during the time you are away from your classroom.

We will also be posting weekly updates of information and Bargaining Updates on the SRVEA website.

With all of this uncertainty and anxiety we have endured this year, I want to thank all of you, with all that has been on your plate with budget cuts and the threat of programs collapsing, for continuing to provide your students with a top-notch education. At times many of you have come to the school board meetings to fiercely protect your programs and livelihood from degradation and dismemberment, and you have done so with respect and professionalism.



Because of your commitment to education, you give me the energy and passion to get up every day and fight on to protect our profession.

Get some rest this summer and keep yourself informed and up to date on new information.

Thank you for all that you do.

Congratulations 2009 SRVEA Retirees!

Carolyn Brien
Ramiro Cepeda
Sandra Cline
Mary Anne Devany
Georgia Dickey
Denise Guidici
Nancy Hoover

Ron Houston
Lynette Irwin
Bill Pence
Sally Powers
Jon Rego
Stephanie Rudy

Sally Shetterly
Patricia Sigworth
Patricia Simons
Richard Sims
Wayne Sutton
Kathleen Wills

What Happens Now? Propositions 1A-1E Fail

State Budget Initiatives on the May 19, 2009 Special Election Ballot Fail

Propositions 1A-1E were designed to provide otherwise lost revenue for the coming fiscal year. With the failure of these initiatives, California faces additional cuts which will deeply impact students, schools, and California’s future. The defeat of Proposition 1B was particularly disappointing. The \$9.3 billion that was scheduled to be repaid to schools in Proposition 1B is still owed to education. The California Teachers Association will be taking all legal action required to ensure schools get the funding required by law; but even with this action, funding will be incredibly deficient.

CTA President, David Sanchez, released a statement saying “Our public schools have already taken more than \$11.6 billion in cuts— more than 50% of the total state budget cuts and the single largest cut to public education since the Great Depression.” In the upcoming May Revise, the Governor proposed to cut an additional \$5.4 billion from schools. It has become painfully clear that our students are paying an unfair price for the state’s budget crisis.

The students of California did not create this budget mess, and their education should not be shortchanged because of it. School districts have already cut critical programs and services. Class sizes are already being increased at all grade levels and thousands of teachers have received lay-off notices. Some school districts are considering an additional round of lay-offs as provided by the unique situation that will allow them to issue more pink slips. In times of economic crisis, when there is less than a statewide 2% COLA districts may proceed with a second round of lay-offs. According to SRVUSD Superintendent Steve Enoch, the San Ramon Valley Unified School District appears to be stable and does not foresee taking advantage of another round of notices; however, this does not mean that the option is not present.

It is vital for teachers to remain in contact with SRVEA leadership in case anything changes throughout the summer.

Congratulations to the SRVEA Scholarship Honorees

Steve Dick	California HS
Crista Haar	California HS
Doris Kwok	Diablo Vista
Joe Lim	Tassajara Hills
Mimi Quan	Windemere Ranch

SRVEA W.H.O. AWARD RECIPIENT

MARGO JAMES



Congratulations to Margo James, this year’s W.H.O. Award Recipient. Margo is honored for her service as SRVEA Grievance Chairperson and for her ability to handle critical and sensitive situations with professionalism and fairness. We Honor Our own Margo James!

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THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

Did you know there are over 340,000 members of CTA? Because of our purchasing power, we are able to negotiate valuable benefits, programs and services for our members. Of all the benefits and programs available, the long list of discounts on retail shopping, entertainment, and vacation destinations are probably the most popular. CTA members have an array of discounts and travel services right at their fingertips. To take advantage of these special programs, log onto MyCTA (www.cta.org).

CTA Members Enjoy the Following Exclusive Benefits

- Exclusive discounts at Barnes and Noble bookstore
- CTA Rental Car program through Enterprise
- Full travel services and preferred pricing on airfare, hotels, rental cars, and more
- Reduced admission tickets to theme parks, movies, and other popular destinations
- New and Used Auto Purchasing Program

If you have not yet registered for MyCTA, go to www.cta.org and follow the instructions on how to register and then log on to take advantage of these and many other benefits available to CTA members.

Spotlight on Health

As time goes on, more and more doctors, health care professionals and organizations are realizing that prevention and self-care play key roles in controlling the skyrocketing costs of health care in the United States. CTA offers health information through the Mayo Clinic in an effort to help people access information and tools they need to make informed decisions related to their health and well-being. CTA members can go online at MyCTA or at www.mayoclinic.com.

This month's Spotlight on Health is about allergies and asthma. Allergies occur when your immune system reacts to a foreign substance such as pollen, bee venom, or pet dander. The immune system produces antibodies to protect you from unwanted invaders. When you have allergies, your immune system makes antibodies that identify your particular allergen as something harmful even though it isn't. This triggers the release of histamines and other substances that cause allergy symptoms. While allergies cannot be cured, there are a number of treatments that can help provide relief.



Treatments include avoiding the allergen. Medications, immunotherapy, and in emergency situations the use of epinephrine. There are also lifestyle and home remedies such as over-the-counter medications, reducing airborne allergens by frequently washing bedding and regularly vacuuming or the use of a HEPA filter and avoiding work outdoors in damp or humid weather. Herbal remedies, probiotics, acupuncture, and hypnosis have provided some with relief, although there is little scientific research that shows these methods actually work.

Do something interesting or exciting? Planning an incredible lesson or activity in your classroom?
Share your experiences! Newsworthy items and articles are being accepted for future issues of the Signal.
Simply send hard copy to Laura Finco at Stone Valley Middle School or email at lfinco@srvusd.net as an attachment.

For additional information regarding the Benefits of CTA Membership, go to <http://www.cta.org>