

MUSD Radiant



Stallions Beautify with Stallion Pride

ANGELICA COSTILLA

AS A SCHOOL that first began in the year of 2006, Madera South High School has flourished into becoming a school based on pride, spirit, and the creation of the best learning environment as possible. This means enabling change where it is due, and that is exactly what Principal Todd Lile and the staff at Madera South High School have done. Stepping onto campus this spring season, you will find that things look a whole lot different than when students first stepped onto campus at the beginning of the year in August, and it is only for the better.

"Our mission is to change everything that was once grey and blue to purple and black," says Principal Todd Lile. This duty sounds so simple, yet makes all the difference. On campus, the Madera South Library has been repainted, and on the walls you will find a blanket of student art pieces. Student art plays a major role in the school's beautification process, as you will also find their entire Academic A building displaying the students' hearts. Styled as a real art gallery, the building displays students' paintings and pictures next to inspiring, motivating summaries of why they created what they did.

But the school's improvements do not stop there. The entire cafeteria has been redone,

outlined in the glorious purple and black, and also flaunting student artwork. Furthermore, with the help of students and mural painter Mauro Carrera, a gigantic mural serves as the centerpiece of the Stallion home. Students who volunteered spent countless hours after school, pouring their hearts and souls into the creation of that project, with the help of Mr. Carrera, making their school a better place to live and an easier place to learn. "Wherever we get to add purple, we do," say Mr. Lile, "It is important for stu-

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Mayor Rob Poythress

The Importance of Reading to Your Children

ROB POYTHRESS

Madera Unified School District has always considered the ability to read competently as a foundational goal of the educational experience. Furthermore, evidence is available that demonstrates the importance of parents taking a leading role in developing their children's reading skills rather than just relying on schools to develop this skill. An article from the 9-30-13 edition of Huffpost Living lists five benefits as follows:

Building Bonds: Researchers consider reading with your children one of the best ways to develop bonds with your children. Parents will forever cling to such innocent moments, and kids are learning about complex aspects of life and relationships when they are engaged in stories with themes that can be more mature than anything they've encountered in life.

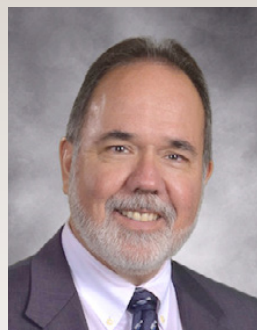
Secret to Success: In March 2013, the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research introduced research that showed that children 4 to 5 years of age who are read to 3 to 5 times a week are 6 months ahead of their peers in terms of reading acumen, and those who are read to daily are a year ahead of those who are read to less frequently!

Rich Vocabulary equals Advantage: Literature is much more intricate and vastly more educational than common speech. Educator Jim Trelease states that "In books, newspapers, and magazines, the language is more complicated, more sophisticated. A child who hears more sophisticated words has a giant advantage over a child who hasn't heard those words."

Teaching by Example: Trelease points out that "a child who has been read to will want to learn to read herself. She will want to do what she sees her parents doing. But if a child never sees anyone pick up a book, she isn't going to have that desire."

Boosting Communications Skills: Early readers will be armed with the vocabulary necessary to communicate to their peers, teachers, and parents. Education provider Gemm Learning says children who have the ability to find the words they want to use are more likely to have a strong sense of confidence and higher academic standing.

I encourage you to spend time reading to your children, grandchildren, or other children who you may have contact with, to help them develop the ability to be great readers and establish a strong foundation for success!



Superintendent
Ed González

Superintendent's Message

ED GONZÁLEZ

AS WE WIND down another school year, it is important to take time to acknowledge the phenomenal accomplishments of our students and staff. Madera Unified is moving in a positive direction that will affect the entire community of Madera for years to come.

In April, the California Department of Education released its Graduation and Dropout Rates for all school districts. MUSD's graduation rate shot up 3.5% to 87.9%, the highest in district history, and the largest increase of all districts over 10,000 students in the Fresno-Madera area. The dropout rate was correspondingly the lowest ever. When we combine that data with an increase in the number of AP (Advanced Placement) tests taken in both high schools, and an overall increase in the average score of those AP tests, we have direct evidence that our students are achieving at unprecedented levels. Student success is tied with teacher empowerment, and we have placed an emphasis on teacher-led professional development. We have returned the arts and P.E. to their rightful place in the curriculum, and have added additional staff (counselors, nurses, psychologists, reading specialists, etc.) to ensure the proper support for all of our students. Discipline infractions are at an all-time low, and we have labor peace for the first time in many years.

All of these statistics are a good sign of the district's direction, but we are far more than statistics. More graduates translates into more young people entering the work force prepared for civic involvement. Fewer dropouts means fewer young people on the streets without direction and hope. More students achieving fluency in English allows for more young people who can access higher education and a career that affords opportunities for advancement. An emphasis on a well-rounded curriculum results in healthier, happier students and teachers, and this will be felt in strong relationships that create a vibrant and robust school system, which in turn becomes the very economic engine of the community.

We have much to celebrate in Madera Unified, and much still to do. I would like to thank the community of Madera for their unwavering support of our efforts, and I commit to them a school district that will soon be the jewel of the valley.

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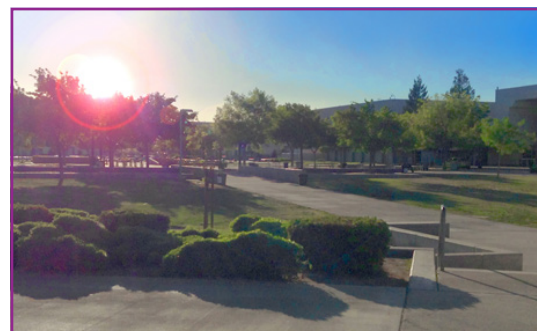
dents to see these colors alive, and without them even realizing it, let them brighten their day."

Creating this new environment of comfort and pride took many hours and many days of collaboration among staff. Art teacher Ms. Kincade and student teacher Adam Mena played crucial roles in guiding these improvements through the magic of art. Custodians Ace Perez and Alberto Gonzalez are also working behind the scenes, as they are the painters behind every change in color.

Landscape will also be-

come a key focus in the school site's

beautification, as picnic tables and permanent benches will be added. Soon students will also be able to enjoy a purple concrete ping-pong table, not one but two giant life-size chess boards, and open space used as soccer and football fields for their enjoyment during what many students look forward to throughout the day: lunch. Lighting for all athletic fields is also being installed, as Stallion pride and honor will continue to flood every hallway and every



walkway. The campus is a work in progress.

"Our students have the ability to beat the odds and live out their dreams," states Mr. Lile. "That is why it is important to do everything we can to provide them with the best learning environment possible."

LCAP: Gateway Towards Success

ANGELICA COSTILLA

MADERA UNIFIED SCHOOL District is currently taking huge leaps toward success and betterment for every student's needs through what is known as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP plays a key role in the new way the state of California funds school districts through the Local Control Funding Formula process (LCFF). With this plan, school districts will receive a wide range of additional funds based on the number of low income, English learner, and foster youth students enrolled within the district. Turning to those directly involved with Madera Unified's system of education, the state has allowed parents, educators, employees, students, and the community to come together in deciding exactly how to spend the newly given budget and on what resources are needed, in order to meet the district's vision and goals.

From February 3rd until March 5th, ten different community meetings were held by school type to review and discuss the three categories for planning purposes under which the LCAP's eight state priorities fall. These categories consisted of "Conditions of Learning": basic services, implementation of state standards, and course access; "Student Outcomes": student achievement and other student outcomes; and "Engagement": student engagement, school climate, and parental involvement. Out of these meetings came a remarkable 558 attendees. However, engagement efforts did not stop there. Administrative meetings, teacher meetings, student meetings, and the formations of Community Based Organizations and Parent Committees (District English Language Advisory Committee and School Site Council) were put into play to keep the conversation going on what is best for Madera Unified's school needs. A total of 1,639 meeting attendees, including eager students, all came together for the sole purpose of ensuring what is greatly deserved within their district. As surveys would show, 99% of meeting attendees felt their input was heard and valued by leadership, allowing LCAP to prove to be a driving force that brought the community together for the sake of education.

How do these meetings work? What do these meetings do? In the words of Babatunde Ilori, Director of Performance Management, "These meetings allow us to directly address what is needed while being transparent with our data." After each meeting, community feedback is put into summarization

by the Performance Management Staff Directory, then put into the hands of the Parent Advisory Committee and the District English Language Advisory Committee, which consists of one parent representative from each school. The parents work together to form a formal written feedback list that is then given to the Board of Education, who in the end makes the final decision.

The 2015–2016 LCAP will be approved on June 9th of 2015. In this plan lies the implementation of more counselors, more literacy support specialists (targeted to support early learners), more interpreters, additional art and music courses, a greater selection for career education, a Spanish elective offered at K–8 schools, and more paraprofessionals (teacher aids).

The whole motive behind LCAP's work through Madera Unified's community is to assure the people that the Board of Education is listening. "What you say is important. With it, we can only move forward," says Ilori. In fact, on April 20th of 2015, an LCAP Dashboard website was unveiled for the public to see what is being done at all times in regards to the Local Control Accountability Plan,

something not every district has. Babatunde Ilori notes that the main goal is to have an ongoing discussion with all community stakeholders on the resources needed to meet our district goals



and the state's eight priorities.

LCAP meetings will be held year-round beginning with the opening of school as each year a new plan must be created to become approved. Join the conversation today and be part of the reason your community's voice gets heard! For more information and details on meeting dates, visit the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) site shortcut tab at maderausd.org.



The four pillars of
the MUSD Strategic Plan

IV
Strong
Relationships
with Families
& Community



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Maria Velarde-Garcia,
PRESIDENT

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Ricardo Arredondo

Brent Fernandes

Al Galvez

Ed McIntyre

Ray G. Seibert

Contributors

Rob Poythress, MAYOR,
CITY OF MADERA

Angelica Costilla,
MUSD STUDENT

George Martin,
MUSD STUDENT

Jonnie Montano,
MUSD STUDENT

Haley Wilcox,
MUSD STUDENT

Rosa Baca, TRANSLATOR

Jander Duque,
TRANSLATOR

Angel Vargas,
TRANSLATOR

Bill Coate, MENTOR

Tim Riché, CAREER
EXPERIENCE TEACHER

Babatunde Ilori,
DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS



Eagles Driven Toward Success

ANGELICA COSTILLA

STRIVING FOR THE purpose of quality education, Millview Elementary, “Home of the Eagles,” has proven to be deeply rooted within Madera Unified’s history over the years, and as time progresses, so do the ways in which the school is run. As the school is committed to creating a learning environment that encourages success, Principal Ms. Rosalinda Galvez explains that it is the tremendous efforts given by the staff at Millview Elementary that enable them to work together collectively to offer students the learning opportunities they need to achieve beyond what is imaginable in life. Here we witness that behind every successful program lies a meaningful collaboration that made it that way. But how exactly is this done?

For schools like Millview Elementary in the Madera Unified School District, it is done through continuous analysis of what can be done and the motive for positive change. At Millview, a great amount of hard work has been done through their school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), which has led to the Fresno County of Education’s awarding of the Bronze Level Award for the school year of 2012–13. Through their Positive Behavior Intervention System, the staff at Millview Elementary is able to analyze discipline data, make recommendations, distinguish between the “minor” and “major” referrals, plan activities, and solicit feedback during monthly meetings. Communication with parents also serves as a priority within this system, which is why their Parent Booster Club supports their efforts in providing incentives for promoting positive behaviors. Recognitions for students and classrooms vary from every two weeks for individual stu-

dents caught practicing “Schoolwide Rules” to classrooms being caught practicing the same. “I believe that if students know and follow the behavior expectations, then teachers can teach and students can learn,” says Ms. Galvez herself.

Yet the hard work does not stop there. Through Millview’s Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), grade levels are able to plan quarterly with grade level peers once a month for a full day while substitutes cover their classrooms. Early outs are also used for collaboration. Furthermore, as principal, Ms. Galvez meets individually with teachers three times a year to go over their data and student needs. She notes the importance of monitoring progress amongst students and recognizing support where it is needed. “We must work together toward our goal of providing students with the best learning opportunities as possible.” Millview also maintains a Response to Intervention process (RTI) that allows further assistance in addressing student needs academically and behaviorally. Additionally, the Student Success Team and Coordination of Services Team meets twice a month to review and adjust each student’s individualized plan for success.

Along with a strong sense of unity among the staff is an openness to technology that allows them to reach students in the ways most needed. With two computer labs, two laptop carts with laptops for all students in classrooms checking out the carts, and general computers in every classroom, students are able to demonstrate knowledge in areas tested without being hindered by lack of computer skills.

A feeling of pride and belonging by the students, parents, and school staff has resulted from this meaningful collaboration and professional learning done to improve and shift practices at Millview Elementary.

The four pillars of
the MUSD Strategic Plan



Madera Arts Community Partnering with Creative Students

HALEY WILCOX

THE MADERA COUNTY Arts Council (MCAC) has promoted and organized numerous events to encourage student artists by forming connections with other artists and providing a place where student art can be exposed to and applauded by the public. MCAC's events, such as the Madera Chalk Art Competition and Youth Art Month Gallery, actively foster strong relationships with families and community.

Shelby Boyd, a senior at Madera High, is just one student who has been able to utilize the MCAC's events to strengthen and express herself as an artist. Shelby has entered the Chalk Art Competition three years in a row and has won each time. Shelby first heard of the competition over Madera High's intercom, and immediately she knew this was an opportunity she would make the most of. Shelby explains, "As I grew up, I was surrounded by art, and it seemed natural to go into the art field." Shelby goes on to say, "The best part about being in the chalk art competition is the end when you get to see everyone's work and hang out and talk to other artists about what techniques and colors they used."

The Madera Chalk Art competition theme this year was "Springtime," hosted on Saturday, March 21st in the Circle Gallery parking lot. Each student skillfully sketched their interpretations of what springtime meant to them. This year, Rhea, a senior at Madera High, and her team won the competition.

The Chalk Art Competition is a conjoined event with the Circle Gallery Art Exhibit in recognition of Youth Art Month. Madera High, Chowchilla High, Yosemite High, Madera South High, Liberty High, Pioneer Technical Center, and Rancho Middle School each submitted 10 exquisite artworks from among their art classes. Each masterpiece was framed and displayed for the community to see from March 21st to April



1st. Kathy Fuller, Sheila Kincade, Tina Holmquist, Luke Reyna, Christine Hallett, Cheryl Rout, and Carol Hendrickson were the art teachers who submitted student art work into the exhibit.

Madera High's two art teachers, Mrs. Holmquist and Mr. Reyna, chose five students each. Mrs. Holmquist in a personal interview describes her enthusiasm: "I chose these students based upon the quality of the work they created. I was looking for works of art from the different areas we studied in Art I, Art II, and Art III. All four of these students went beyond my expectations on the requirements of these assignments." Pepper

Falcon did an exceptional scratchboard drawing of a rabbit enjoying spring after studying the works of Albrecht Dürer. Oscar Torres created a wonderful crayon-resist landscape based upon the works of Vincent van Gogh. Riley Dyer and Miguel Luna studied the works of Pablo Picasso and Franz Marc to create their superb colored-pencil cubist drawings.

Mr. Reyna, an art teacher at Madera High School, also states, "It is great to see students grow in their artistic abilities. I am glad to recognize some of the many students who demonstrate creativity."

The Youth Art Month has been a national event celebrated as early as the 1990s. Promoting the arts in education with K-12 students has remained an important event in the community of Madera. This year's Youth Art Month Show was directed by Diane Mello, the executive director of the MCAC and the Circle Gallery; art teacher Kathy Fuller; and MCAC Board members Sheila Kincade and Adam Mena. Mello encourages student artists to confidently pursue careers in art as well as appreciate and study art because it opens up doors to academic benefits, expands one's creativity, and allows students to better understand themselves and their capabilities. Mello also motivates artists to become a part of a community of artists as well as encourages them in their artistic endeavors.

Girls Set Out for a Championship

ON THE NIGHT of February 27, 2015, the Madera South girls' soccer team stepped onto the field without knowing that they would be making history for Madera South. An intense game had been played for more than an hour as the teams went back and forth creating a scoreless tie. It wasn't until junior Kimberly Montoya broke this tie in the 66th minute that the Central Valley Christian team knew they were in for a battle. The game only intensified from this point on, and the girls knew that they had to continue to fight for the win. Another junior on the team, Sophie Zertuche, secured the win when she scored in the 77th minute, creating a 2-0 advantage for the Stallions.

As the game came to a conclusion, friends and family in the bleachers of the memorial stadium roared with excitement. Madera South girls had just won their first Division 2 Valley Championship. As all the players ran onto the field in tears of joy and excitement, they knew that they had just reached a huge milestone for the Madera South program. First-year Madera South coach Ramon Delgadillo said, "The girls worked hard for it, but they are champions not only on the field but off the field too. They all have great



team attitudes; they are disciplined and have great character."

Madera South advanced to state level competition and got to experience what it was like to attend the SoCal regional playoffs for the first time. The stallions played a tough game against Trinity league contenders, Mater-Dei and came out with a 4-0 loss. This was a tough loss on the Madera South's girls team, but for being first year contenders they knew an open road lies ahead for their program. Like coach Delgadillo mentioned, "This year we dreamed about being Valley Champions and that is now a reality. There is no reason why we can't dream to go to the next level in years to come."

MUSD Alumni Then and Now

INTERVIEWS BY GEORGE MARTIN

JOHN ESCALERA graduated from Madera High School in 2004. He attended James Monroe and Eastin Arcola prior to going to Madera High. He is currently the Director of Information Technology for ERC.

Who was your favorite elementary school teacher?

While I can honestly say I had great teachers every year I attended, I'd have to say I had a favorite elementary teaching husband/wife combo. Mr. and Mrs. Horseman were awesome.

Who was your favorite 7-12th grade teacher?

I'm not sure, I can't pick a favorite, so let's go with the most impactful. Señora Harada was (or is still) a Spanish teacher for Madera High. Her classes were very tough, she was extremely strict, and she didn't accept excuses under any circumstance.

Were you involved in activities in high school?

I was in a "video production" class (at Madera South), which broadcast the morning news several times per week. Whenever I was chosen to be the morning anchor, I did a terrible job. I knew early on that the performing arts were not for me.

What are some of your favorite memories?

Two memories immediately come to mind, though one isn't school or community related. As I was preparing to finish up high school, I was all set to join the Marine Corps, not because I was in any way motivated to join, but because "college costs money," or so I had been told so many times before. I figured it was a better alternative than getting any job I could find and hoping it somehow became a career. Then came a seemingly random request to meet with a counselor, who informed me that there were several ways in which I could pay for college or have it paid for me. This 10-minute meeting altered the course of my life forever.

Where and what colleges have you attended?

I attended CSU Fresno (B.S. Computer Science) and Western Governors University (M.S. Information Security and Assurance).

Why did you choose your major and career?

I was always fascinated by technology. However, as every low-income student can attest, fascination does not equate to access. I was fortunate enough to be provided with access to technology via the public school system along with an awesome G.A.T.E. program. The G.A.T.E. program allowed students like me to finish mass amounts of schoolwork up front, which in turn provided time to explore other areas of interest, such as computer programming.

What position do you hold now?

I was recently promoted from Senior Software Engineer and Analyst to Director of Information Technology. I also teach Software Development and Information Security at a local college.

What are your future plans?

At any given moment, my future plans are laid out 5-10 years in advance. A couple of items on that list include an attempt at obtaining either an M.B.A. in

IT Management or a Doctorate (in a field related to my current career). My second child is due in about 7 weeks so perhaps I'll delete my current 5-year plan and just stay home playing in the backyard with my babies.

What kinds of opportunities did the community afford you?

I suppose it depends on how we define community. The public school system provided me with an outstanding education and access to a number of resources: a library, a public pool, technology, etc. The City of Madera, in a partnership with the Private Industry Council, provided me with summer work and experience in a setting outside of farm labor.

On a more personal level, several families in the community rounded out my education and enrichment. John and Carol Galvan treated me like a member of their family and allowed me to hang around their home day and night, meals included. The amount of trouble this kept me out of cannot be measured. David and Jessie Ruiz did the same, treated me like one of their sons—if they bought their son a pair of shoes, they bought me a pair as well—and provided some of the most fulfilling enrichment activities of my life (camping, fishing, formal events, travel), experiences I would not otherwise have had.

Do you have any advice for current students?

"The harder you work the easier life gets." You can either trade 5-7 years of hard work now for 50 years of happiness later, or hang around for the next few years accomplishing little and hope that the next 50 work out. It's a gamble either way, so make the decision today and don't complain about it later.

NATHAN NUNGARAY graduated from Madera South High in 2014. He attended Lincoln, Nishimoto, and Desmond Middle School. He is attending Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo.

Who was your favorite elementary teacher?

My favorite elementary teacher would have to have been Mr. Gregor. I had him for two years straight since I was chosen to be in a 5th/6th split my 5th grade year, and then continued to have him the following year in 6th.

Who was your favorite 7th-12th grade teacher?

My favorite teacher from 7th-12th has to be Mr. Horn, my Pre-Calculus and AP Calculus teacher. He always made math a fun class to be in, also not to mention he was the advisor who led the table tennis club, which I became a big part of.

Were you involved in activities in high school?

I was a part of the table tennis club in high school. I also did varsity wrestling my freshman and sophomore years, and was a varsity tennis player all 4 years of high school.

What are some of your favorite memories?

Some of my favorite memories of high school definitely had to be on the tennis courts, where I got to play and grow with my teammates, who are like brothers to me. We made each other stronger and always pushed each other to the next level, and most importantly stuck together no matter what.

Why did you choose your career?

Though I'm still in college and do not



John Escalera



Nathan Nungaray

currently hold a position in a career, I chose to go into the field of Graphic Communications mostly because I always loved design. I constantly came up with a lot of logos and designs in high school, many of them based on my faith, and I even created some of them into t-shirts. Being here at Cal Poly in this major is giving me the experience and knowledge to take my ideas and successfully print them for others.

Plans for the future?

My plans for the future are still coming to me slowly but surely. Right now, one goal I would love to have is to create a type of brand for apparel and use my designs to give people hope and some faith and to spread that across to all people.

What kinds of opportunities did the community afford you?

The Madera community was able to afford me opportunities to be a part of and help the community. I was a part of the Madera Leo Club, where I was able to help raise money and deliver supplies to young students who came from families where they could not afford to get school supplies for their children or a new pair of shoes, or a coat in the winter. This really opened my eyes to just trying to help others and be a part of something to make a difference.

Do you have any advice for current students?

If I have any advice to give students, it would be stay focused and try your hardest. If you keep pushing and striving to reach a goal, you expand the horizon of opportunity. The worst thing you can do is just barely scrape and do the minimal. Applying yourself fully is what ultimately makes you better and grow stronger, not just as a student but as a person in general.

How did high school prepare you for college?

High school prepared me for college by giving me multiple opportunities and responsibilities that I had to take time to balance in my schedule. This definitely prepared me more for college than I ever thought it would. It showed me that in the real world you will have to take things upon yourself to get them done and can't always rely on others to tell you to get stuff done. If you want success and results, it depends on how much effort you put into everything you do.

Would you recommend your career path to current students?

Graphic Communications is very hands-on and on the creative side, involving design, advertising, packaging, and basically anything else that goes into the printing process, as well as web design. I do recommend the major to students just because of how interesting I find it to be and the amount of appreciation that anyone can have for how something that is printed looks. We work a lot on computers with Adobe Creative Cloud, and it allows for a lot of ideas, creativity, and inspiration to go into it, and that is the part I like the most about it. Not to mention, it is actually a huge industry with many job opportunities.

DR. ANDREA CORONADO GRAY graduated from Madera High School in 1995. She attended John Adams and Thomas Jefferson before going to Madera High.

Who was your favorite elementary teacher?

Mrs. Young was my 5th grade teacher and one of my favorites.

Who was your favorite 7th–12th grade teacher?

My favorites in middle school would have to be Mrs. Defina

(History) and Mr. Aldrich (Pre-Algebra). My favorites in high school would have to be Mr. Pash (History) and Mr. Shine (Human Anatomy).

Were you involved in activities in high school, and what are some of your favorite memories?

I loved running and the friends I had through running. We were Valley Champions in Cross Country and came in third at state my junior year.

Where and what colleges have you attended?

I earned my bachelor's degree in chemistry from California State University, Fresno. I earned my doctorate in Biochemistry at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond Virginia.

Why did you choose your career?

I started college as a pre-med major. But three years in, I decided I did not want to be a medical doctor. I was a chemistry tutor and an athletic tutor while I was a student at Fresno State. Through those jobs, I realized that I love teaching. I knew I wanted to teach at the college level, so I decided to go to graduate school to get my Ph.D.

What position do you hold now?

I am currently a professor at California State University, Fresno in the chemistry department. I teach chemistry and biochemistry courses.

Plans for the future?

I enjoy teaching and plan to continue teaching at Fresno State. My husband, a fellow Coyote, is a pediatrician. We have three kids so our days are pretty busy.

What kinds of opportunities did the community afford you?

I feel there were a lot of opportunities I received growing up in Madera. When I was in high school, there was a program that paid high school students to go to the elementary schools and help elementary school children with homework and areas they struggled with. This was actually one of my first jobs, and it was my first experience teaching. I really enjoyed it.

Additionally, when I graduated from high school, I received a lot of scholarships from the community, which helped me pay for college.

Do you have any advice for current students?

My advice for current students is to work hard in high school so that you can attend and graduate from college. A college degree opens many doors when looking for a job. A college degree will also help you find a career that you actually enjoy.

How did your high school prepare you for college?

I took a lot of college prep courses while in high school. Some of those classes were Calculus, Anatomy, and AP History. These classes helped me figure out what I was interested in, which helped me choose my major in college. I liked history so much that I ended up getting a minor in history in college.

Would you recommend your career path to current students?

I would recommend my career path. It was a long road—4 years of undergrad and 4 years of graduate school—but I really love what I do. I love teaching, especially when you see a student really start to understand and grasp a tough concept. My job as a college professor is also flexible. I am off during the summer and at Christmas when school is out. It was worth the time and hard work.



Dr. Andrea Coronado Gray & family



Madera's Evening Lions Club supports the Aspirations of Berenda Lego Robotics Team

HALEY WILCOX

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS of promoting strong relationships with family and community, the Evening Lions Club has continued to seek out every possible act of service to improve Madera's community. Madera's Evening Lions Club is one of the community service

clubs that has volunteered their time, energy, and efforts in donating scholarships, fundraising, awarding grants, and supporting local children, schools, and citizens.

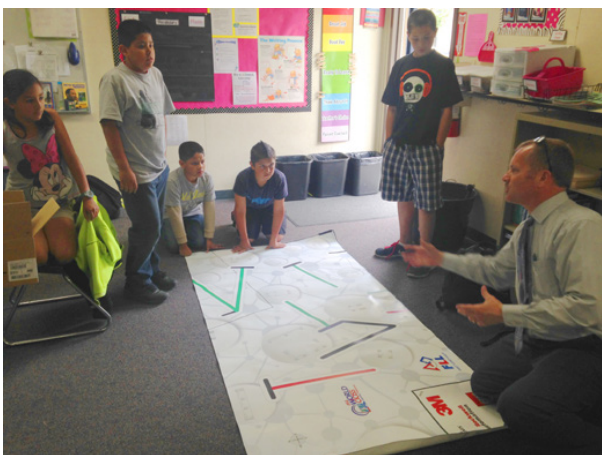
Bill Dawson, one of the many charter members and the incoming president of the Evening Lions Club, explains, "The Evening Lions, as other service clubs in Madera, want to help those worthy programs that make Madera the town we are proud to call home. If we cannot provide all the funds a program needs, we are willing to make available our combined resources of our membership to see that the projects come to fruition."

Berenda Elementary's upcoming Lego robotics team is one of those worthy programs that the Evening Lions believe in. As a result of their generosity and desire to mentor and encourage children to reach their dreams, the Evening Lions have generously donated \$500 to support Berenda's efforts in raising a Lego robotics team.

Due to the provided funds, Principal Carsten Christiansen is able to purchase Lego kits to allow students to learn how to build and apply basic engineering skills to construct a Lego robot. Shannon Vega, a third-grade teacher at Berenda, has been appointed to guide and lead a team of students interested in Legos and technology. Mrs. Vega explains that the students will begin to "build many skills, such as computer programming, problem solving, teamwork, and core values. In addition, all aspects of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) will be developed." Mr. Christiansen and Mrs. Vega both aspire for the students to learn basic programming in conjunction with building a working Lego robot and ultimately competing with other Lego robotics teams in the Central Valley.

Bill Dawson goes on to explain, "The Evening Lions are proud to have financially contributed to the successful Madera High Robotics program, and we felt that Lego robotics will become the feeder program to continue the success of this endeavor."

Diego Saldana, a fourth-grader, is one of the students who are enthusiastic about the formation of the Lego robotics team. Diego explains, "I feel very excited for being the chosen one for our class to be in Lego robotics. I am just so happy that this happened!"



Madera Robotics



GEORGE MARTIN

THE MADERA HIGH Robotics team qualified for the World Championships in St. Louis by placing at their own regional tournament. For the last four years, Madtown Robotics has competed on the world stage of the F.I.R.S.T Robotics Competition.

Madera High's success is a result of excellence in each portion of the season. For the first six weeks of each year, the team designs and builds a new robot for the annual challenge. Students take one part in the design and manufacturing process and learn fundamentals of engineering.

At competitions, they are exposed to different designs and ideas, as well as mentors who work in the engineering field. Robotics mentors work in places from NASA to Tesla Motors and show students how to be creative and use sound principles.

Madera High's own team is run by alumni who teach students about using software, modeling a design, and operating high tech machinery that produces metal parts.

Furthermore, being on the team teaches students how to cooperate to create the best robot possible, a vital skill for the work force.

The unique experience of Madtown Robotics provides its members a head start in any engineering career.

The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan



IV Strong Relationships with Families & Community

The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan



I Equitable Access to Rigorous High-Level Programs

Stallion On the Steps of History

ANGELICA COSTILLA

OVER THE YEARS, Madera has proven to be a town deeply rooted within the wrestling community from one generation to another, and these roots did not stop sprouting with Madera South's Wrestling Team during their 2014–2015 season. Winning the CMAC tournament and becoming Co-League Champions for the first time ever in the wrestling program history with their crosstown school Madera High School, Madera South's wrestling team set up a remarkable path to a journey headed toward much more future success. Yet amongst this great team shone a special spark this year, one who goes by the name of Cara Escobedo.

Eighteen-year-old Senior Cara Escobedo has been wrestling for the Madera South wrestling program for all four years of her high school career. Involved in numerous other activities and sports such as football, choir, swimming, and diving, Cara hit home with the sport she loves most, making a name for herself that many others will never



forget. On February 19, 2015, at Lemoore High School in Lemoore, California, Cara won the 2015 Central Section Girl Masters Championships, finishing the tournament with a 3-0 record. Seeded #2 going into the central section tournament, Cara defeated Brianna Holt of Woodlake by a fall, defeated #3 seed Macy Cardoza of Orange Cove by fall in the semi-finals, and defeated #1 seed Katelyn Blanchard of Sierra Pacific by fall in the finals. Doing so, Cara became the first-ever Central Section Girl Master Champion for Madera Unified School District. Of course, Cara's success was not won overnight. "Wrestling is a very hard-working sport, filled with many challenges, but that's what makes it worth it," says Cara in reflection of her season.

Head Coach Sal Gonzalez states that although she was very timid at first, "Cara believed in herself and knew she could compete amongst girls at C.I.F. sanction girl events. Her confidence and self-esteem grew through these last three months in the sport of wrestling," which is what the sport is all about. After mastering what she accomplished at the C.I.F. Valley Championships, Cara moved on to finish in the top 12 in the State of California for girls high school wrestling at the California State Girls Wrestling Championships held February 27–28 of 2015. She was one match away from becoming a girl state placer.

Cara left the mat this season with a 10-3 record.

When asked how she felt about her season, Cara humbly notes, "I love wrestling, and for me, participating in the sport has given me strength to endure and the confidence to succeed no matter how many losses along the way." Cara adds that she could not have done it if not for the guidance from her coaches and support from her family,



friends, and teammates. But Cara does not wish to stop there. Planning on going to college after graduation, Cara looks forward to coming back and helping the same team that helped her get as far as she has, while breaking another barrier: becoming one of Madera South's very first female wrestling coaches. She wishes for all to "follow your dreams and never give up!" Words we can take with a smile.

Statement From Athletic Director Ms. Andrea Divine: "Madera South girls' athletics is flourishing and also promising for the future. This year alone, we have a girls' section championship and the first girl winning a section title for wrestling. Our commitment and effort with our girls is increasingly improving every day. They work hard, and they know what it takes to succeed. We are on the edge of breaking through with more titles. We have the talent to do it. It's just about changing the mindset that we're good enough."

Teachers Teaching Teachers

JONNIE MONTANO

MARCH 14TH WAS a big day for Madera Unified as over 225 teachers jumped at the opportunity to be a part of the first annual Professional Development Academy event. The day consisted of 4 sessions with 9 to 10 workshops to choose from. Each workshop was geared to cover as many teachers as possible, meaning all different departments and all grade levels (K–12). The online registration system allowed staff to choose which specific workshops they felt would benefit them the most. This was something very new for the teachers who attended, since in the past seven years teachers were unable to choose which workshops or conferences they could attend.

The workshops took place on Madera South's high school campus in classrooms

that were chosen based on the technology needed by the presenter. This event was taught by classroom teachers, making the workshops more interesting and relatable to all the teachers who attended. Teachers were able to gain knowledge and reflect on what they felt was needed as an educator. As one teacher mentioned, "Teachers were excited to learn from one another." Many felt that these academies were giving them (the teachers) a voice in the education they were teaching.

This academy, along with the Common Core steering committee created by Madera Unified

Teachers Association, served as a pivotal turning point for the teachers in the district. With such positive feedback from the event, Mrs. Amanda Wade, the main organizer, reported that the process of putting together such a big event was "all worth it in the

end." Along with Mrs. Wade, everyone was very pleased at how the event played out, and they anticipate events like this to be held twice a year every year. These academies plan to continue to allow education to be more teacher-driven, while giving teachers the opportunity to learn from one another, which ultimately helps the students.



Baseball Scholarships

GEORGE MARTIN

LAST FALL, TWO of Madera High's star athletes signed on for athletic scholarships at well-known valley colleges. Alec Gamboa will be attending Fresno State on a partial scholarship, majoring in business, and Tristan Alvarez signed for a full ride to Fresno Pacific University to major in kinesiology. Gamboa and Alvarez have both played baseball from a very young age and worked extremely hard to achieve their dream of playing college-level baseball. Both students attended countless practices and put in an enormous amount of time to become the best players that they could be. Each player felt that his scholarship adds meaning to his commitment. Both athletes expressed gratitude for their opportunities. Alvarez was grateful because, for him, the scholarship "makes all the work worth it," and Gamboa was gratified that all his years of baseball paid off. Both players thanked their coaches throughout their careers for helping them achieve their goals, especially Coach Underwood from Madera High.



Full Ride Scholarship to Fresno State

HALEY WILCOX

AS AN ALL-STAR volleyball player and a champion in character, Brielle Hefner, a senior at Madera High, was awarded a scholarship to be a Fresno State Bulldog. Brielle's passion for volleyball ignited when she was in elementary school at Sherman Thomas Charter School. Her principal, Tera Napier, a former All Wac Player at Fresno State, inspired her to try out for the team, and ever since then Brielle has been determined to transform into the best volleyball player she can become.

Enduring discipline and hard work, Brielle became a varsity player on the Madera High team her freshman year, and with continuous improvement she has maintained her drive as a varsity athlete throughout her senior year. Brielle was chosen for the scholarship during travel season, also known as off season. During an unofficial visit with her mom and two other teammates, Coach Netherby-Sewell asked Brielle to stay behind in her office. She then found out that she would be honored for all the years of her dedication. Brielle describes her experience as "shocking, an amazing opportunity," and says she is "extremely happy." She goes on to describe her experience by stating, "I would have never guessed she was going to offer me a full ride scholarship to Fresno State!"

All throughout Brielle's volleyball career, she has played middle blocker. The last couple of years, she played setter, and currently on her travel team she played outside hitter. Brielle states, "I play whatever the coaches need me to, but I will most likely play outside hitter at Fresno State." Brielle is thankful for her motivating teams, friends, family, teachers, and coaches.



Madera FFA Opens Doors of Opportunities

JONNIE MONTANO

MADERA'S FUTURE FARMERS of America (FFA) program, currently the 8th largest chapter in the nation, has definitely had its share of success as they hold various state titles. Just this year, they were titled as the state-winning vine pruning team. Madera FFA Ag advisors have reported that the program doesn't stop there: students get offered

several more opportunities out on the farm as well as in the classroom.

This year, the Madera FFA program had the opportunity to take several of their students to the prestigious Sacramento Leadership Experience, where students were assigned to become assembly or senate members and experience the passage of bills. A Madera FFA advisor stated, "We are preparing the students with career skills that allow them to be involved in an occupation in agriculture in the future. We also make it our goal to allow personal and leadership development."

Agriculture being the number one industry in California adds one more reason to join the Madera FFA program. When Mrs. Sheehan, Madera's assistant FFA advisor, was asked what makes the Madera FFA program so successful, she replied, "We have students and



Madera FFA 2014-2015 chapter officers



2015 California state FFA tree pruning team L-R: Mark Cavallero, Vanessa Maravilla, Virat Kang, Jenae Hansen

teachers who put forth their best effort in everything they do. We focus on hands-on learning and always having opportunities for students to specialize in different aspects of agriculture."

Madera FFA, chartered in 1929, has built itself on these expectations, and we can only expect the best from this program as it continues to grow. Madera Unified is definitely very fortunate to have such a respected FFA program that allows students to prosper in any future occupation, Ag related or not.

