

# MUSD Radiant



## Dual Language Coming to MUSD

**NICOLE WHIPPLE**

TWO YEARS AGO, the parents of Madera Unified School District who were involved in District English Language Advisory Committee expressed interest in the Dual Language Instruction Program (DLI).

The program is for English, Spanish, and bilingual speakers at the kindergarten level who will progress in their studies by learning both languages throughout their education. The parents discussed their fascination for the DLI program with the former English Language Development Director, which resulted in taking a trip to a school with the program already being practiced to get a better understanding of how the program operated. Parents, district board members, and the ELD director visited the school and were amazed by what they saw.

“The parents got the initiative going. They thought that this would be something that would be very beneficial for the community of Madera,” said Nora Guillén, the English Learner Coordinator. “From there, the ball just started rolling. People saw what the program could offer. They saw the benefits for the kids just by sitting and talking to them,” stated Guillén.

According to Janet Sevor Grossnicklaus, the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the main language focus in the Dual Language Instruction Program is English and Spanish due to the majority of Spanish and English speakers in Madera. “I think one of the constructs of the program is that you’re looking for 50% native speakers of the target language and 50% of, for example, English,” Grossnicklaus said. However, they had to take into consideration the class composition and the balance of the children within the school site that was chosen for the program. To expand the DLI to other languages would require a significant number of people who spoke the targeted language.

DUAL LANGUAGE cont'd on page 2 ...

**DLI**  
Dual Language Instruction Program  
Madison Elementary



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Andy Medellin

## Our Future Is Looking Bright

### MAYOR ANDY MEDELLIN

IN A SHORT time, the city of Madera has changed in so many ways. We have survived the great recession without any layoffs and continued our service delivery to the city. We are building a 100-acre industrial park that will increase jobs. We have grown our Neighborhood Watch program to almost 80 neighborhoods, and we are in negotiations to expand our retail, transportation services, and entertainment opportunities that will be a game-changer in Madera. So many great things are happening in the

city, and I truly believe that our future is looking bright.

I believe this because of something else that has happened over the past few years: cooperation and collaboration. I have often said that nothing will be built or no project will happen without the cooperation and collaboration of people. Working together to achieve a common goal is a very simple concept as long as everyone understands what they are trying to achieve.

If we want to be a successful community, then we need to work together. We need to share all the fascinating and great ideas that so many Maderans have and collaborate to see just how we can move forward. We have a Vision 2025 committee that has done an outstanding job collaborating with stakeholders to share their vision of where Madera will be in 2025. Our Police Department has had a tremendous turnaround over the past four years under the direction of Chief Steve Frazier. A very successful program called the Police Citizens Academy allows people to participate in the day-to-day operations of the Police Department, and the City Leadership Academy helps us connect with the citizens of Madera.

As your Mayor and an elected official, I truly believe that if I am going to make decisions for the community, then I must include the community. I will continue to be accessible and transparent. City Hall will be open to any member of our diverse community, and everyone will always have a voice. I encourage everyone to get involved in your community, get involved with your school or neighborhood. I encourage you to reach out to your local and elected officials and share your thoughts and ideas. ☛



Todd Lile

## About Interim Superintendent Todd Lile

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT TODD Lile is a Madera native who attended both John Adams and Howard Elementary School and matriculated to Thomas Jefferson Middle School. At Madera High School, Mr. Lile was involved in athletics and student government for four years. Upon graduation in 1992, Mr. Lile was admitted to California State

University, Fresno, where he graduated in 1996 with a BA in History. While attending Fresno State, he served as a special education paraprofessional for more than four years in Madera Unified. Mr. Lile served as a teacher for 13 years before earning his MA in educational leadership from the College of New Jersey in 2010.

As an educator for 25 years, Mr. Lile has demonstrated a love of teaching and learning. His educational career began in Clovis Unified, where he served for a combined six years between Clovis High, Clovis West, and the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART), where he was an original staff member and psychology teacher. He and his wife Jessica Zapata-Lile, also of Madera, taught overseas in Escuela Americana Honduras for two years and then at Dubai American Academy for five years as an International Baccalaureate history teacher. Mr. and Mrs. Lile have traveled widely in the both Old and New Worlds together and often with students. After the birth of their first of three sons (Luke, Ian, and Benjamin respectively), Mr. and Mrs. Lile returned to California, where he eventually served as a vice principal and principal at Madera South High School. In 2015, Mr. Lile assumed the role of Chief Academic Officer for Secondary in Madera Unified. He is able to speak conversational Spanish and reads as much as possible about a wide variety of subjects, ranging from education and psychology to history and current events. ☛

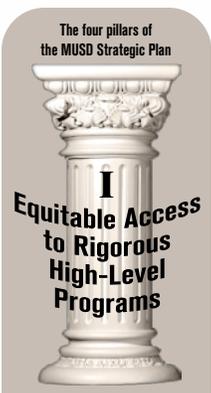
### DUAL LANGUAGE cont'd ...

The prerequisite in hiring qualified teachers for this program depends on how many current teachers in the district hold a bilingual certification to teach in two languages with a Spanish-language focus. The district has stated that the application process with the teachers began in January. "We held an informational meeting, and there were thirteen teachers in our district who were very interested in the program," said Guillén.

Many parents attended the 32 meetings and parent community workshops provided, showing extreme enthusiasm and interest in this opportune program. Parent participation is encouraged throughout the program but is not required for a child to be enrolled in it. "There are more opportunities for parent interaction in the school, and we hope that they take advantage of that and be as active as they can, but if a parent cannot be involved, that will not be a deal breaker," explained Guillén.

On November 15, 2016, Madison Elementary was chosen as the site for the first DLI program in Madera Unified School District. Applications for the Dual Language Instruction Program became available in December 2016 for all parents and families in the district.

Due to the promising future and benefits for the children, the Dual Language Instruction Program will be in effect in August 2017 for the incoming kindergarteners. According to current research, the children who start at a younger age and have a minimum commitment of five to seven years will see the true benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy in both English and Spanish. There will be five kindergarten classes with the maximum of 24 students in each class, totaling 120 students. These students will become the first cohort of the program. The students will move together each year even through middle school and high school. ☛



# New Elementary School on the Eastside

**HADIYA RICKS**

THERE ARE VARIOUS elementary schools in the Madera Unified School District. Soon, there will be a new addition to our growing home of Madera: Virginia Lee Rose Elementary. This new innovative K–6th school will open during the 2017–2018 school year. “The thing that makes this school so special is that it will have a dedicated music room, which other schools in this district do not have,” said Director of Facilities and Construction, Rosalind Cox.

In addition, the Virginia Lee Rose Elementary will have an After School Program (ASP), a concession stand, and an amphitheater for ebullient school activities. “At other elementary schools, they usually have the classrooms outside of the building, like Alpha. But the Virginia Lee Rose Elementary will have their classes held inside the building, so it’ll create a safer environment for the children,” said Cox.

The new, imaginative campus will be located on the southwest corner of Road 28 and Avenue 14½, also known as Tozer and Sunrise. Altogether, the school will be about 70,000 square feet on 16 acres. It will accommodate up to 850 students. Oral E. Micham is the general contractor, who also contributed to the construction of Cesar Chavez Elementary School. The architect, SIM Architects Inc., is responsible for designing the K–6th school, and it will have a modern, Tuscan look.

The principal will be Lisa Fernandez, who was previously the principal at Madison Elementary. Altogether, along with the experienced workers contributing to build such a magnificent, secure, and exhilarating campus for K–6 students, the diverse activities that they will engage in will make the many school years to come very valuable.

The name for the school was chosen in April 2016 as a dedication to a woman named Virginia Lee Rose, who was a phenomenal individual volunteering her time to the community. Virginia Lee Rose was an inspiring woman who could best be described as a loving and affectionate person.



“She was very loving, and was definitely a hugger!” said daughter Margaret Graham.

In addition to her devoted personality, Mrs. Rose volunteered at 17 communities that benefited many people in need of help and people who were struggling with domestic violence. “My mom was involved in communities like Mental Health, NAACP, Madera South Garden Club, domestic violence, and many more. She was given awards from the NAACP, and she really wanted black people to unite,” said Graham.

“My mother was a great supporter of Madera County and was a voice for everyone,” stated Graham. Along with her outstanding commitment to the communities that succeeded through the generosity of her spirit and her strong aspiration of giving back to her community, she did not discriminate against anyone who came her way. “She believed that everyone was the same, and not one person was different from another. She was very giving to everyone. She made sure that people ate and slept, she was very religious, and she was very hard-working,” shared Graham.

Virginia Lee Rose believed that education was the key to success. As her daughter explained, “My mom moved to Madera when she was nineteen years old, and she got her GED (General Education Development) and an associate’s degree. School was extremely important to her as well.”

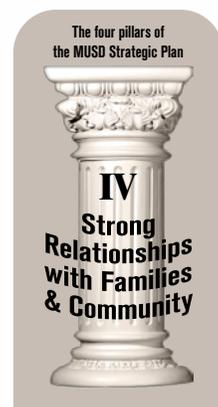
Virginia Lee Rose passed away in 2014, but her legacy continues to thrive today and will continue in the many years to come. She was the first female in Madera to have a school named after her. The great thing is that the school is being built right across the street from where she first started volunteering. Virginia Lee Rose was and still is an immensely meritorious and utterly inspiring woman who brings back hope to the entire community. Her dedicated devotion and enthusiasm has, without a doubt, created a legacy for her children and grandchildren. Mrs. Rose’s actions unceasingly have a positive impact on the young men and women in Madera County, and she serves as a model of inspiration and hope for everyone. ➡



*Virginia Lee Rose*



*Margaret Graham*





## MUSD Board of Education

- Al Galvez**, PRESIDENT
- Ed McIntyre**, CLERK
- Ricardo Arredondo**, TRUSTEE
- Brent Fernandes**, TRUSTEE
- Ruben Mendoza**, TRUSTEE
- Ray G. Siebert**, TRUSTEE
- Maria Velarde-Garcia**, TRUSTEE

## Contributors

- Todd Lile**, MUSD INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT
- Andy Medellin**, MAYOR, CITY OF MADERA
- Grace Da Rocha**, MUSD STUDENT
- Naomi Magana**, MUSD STUDENT
- Hadiya Ricks**, MUSD STUDENT
- Nicole Whipple**, MUSD STUDENT
- Angel Vargas**, TRANSLATOR
- Seleyna Mendoza**, COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT
- Tim Riché**, CAREER EXPERIENCE TEACHER
- Babatunde Ilori**, DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



## Elementary Counselor Shaping Lives

### GRACE DA ROCHA

Madera Unified, unlike most other districts, is fortunate enough to have a counselor working to counsel elementary students within the community. Veronica Garcia is an elementary school counselor who works regularly at the K–8 country schools such as LaVina and Eastin-Arcola. Garcia sees students from all grades. They come to her with conflicts that could distract them from focusing on school. Some examples of these conflicts are friendship problems, parent divorces, grief from losing a loved one, and other social or emotional issues that affect the student. She carries a wide knowledge of ways to assist these students in healing and prevailing through their situations.

“My job is not to fix anything. I am not a therapist, but I am here to help the students get through whatever they’re going through and give them some coping skills to make them more resilient, because life has its ups and downs, and we have to be able to cope with them,” Garcia commented.

She prefers not to talk with students, but instead to build crafts with them, utilizing objects like Play-Doh, balloons, and glitter. She creates items that help the students visualize and recognize their emotions. One example is her homemade “Cool-Down Bottle,” a bottle filled with water and glitter that students—if they are angry—shake until the glitter is stirred up. After they shake the bottle, she has them perform deep breathing exercises until the glitter has once again settled. Garcia stresses the importance of deep breathing because it allows oxygen into the brain, and this not only calms people but improves decision-making. This increases the likelihood that

the children will make good choices. “Good choices equal fun, bad choices equal no fun,” Garcia stated. She wants the students to realize that they are the ones who decide whether or not they make these good choices.

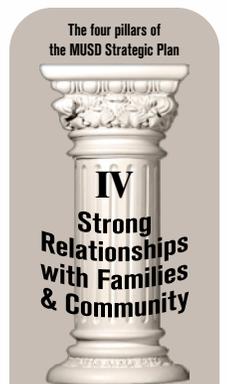
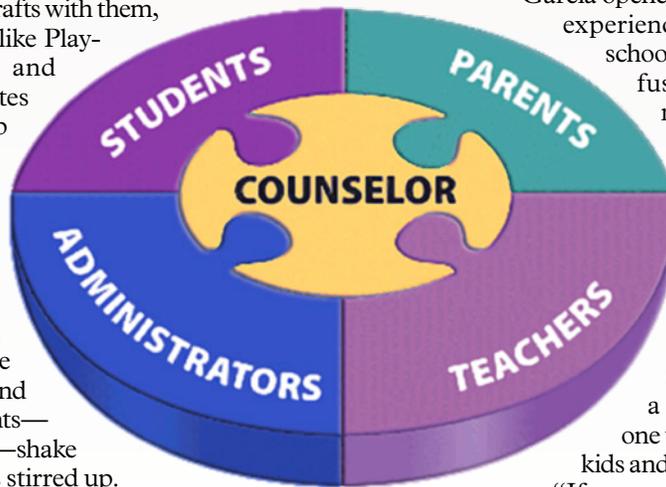
Garcia, a Fresno State graduate with a Master’s in Student Counseling along with a Minor in Communication Disorders and a Bachelor’s in Mass Communications and Journalism (with an emphasis in public relations), became interested in child counseling through her autistic son and his teachers. She started out being a counselor at Madera South High School but knew that her main interest lay in the way she can help children.

She explains that her degrees help her “relate to people and just have that open mind like a journalist, and doing the best ... my product is the student.”

Garcia opened up about negative experiences with her high school counselor and refuses to bring those negative comments to her students. Her own motivation is derived from those who tell her she can’t do something and her drive to prove them wrong. She wants to be like a cheerleader, someone who encourages the kids and makes them happy.

“If you can dream it, then you can achieve it. Let’s work for it. You know, the only person who’s going to stop you from reaching your goal is you, so if you really want something, let’s come up with a plan so we can get there,” Garcia said.

Regardless of the time or the student, Veronica Garcia refuses to leave a child behind and is determined to assist every child in gaining the traits to persevere through emotional and social problems. ☛





## MHS Alumnus: Kenny Paolinelli—Giving Back

NAOMI MAGANA

### **Which schools did you attend?**

Lincoln Elementary, Thomas Jefferson, and Madera High School.

### **Which teacher made the biggest impact and why?**

Football Coach Randy Blankenship. He really taught me the importance of hard work, dedication, return on investment, and really every skill that I use daily. We learned a lot more than football in his program. We learned about life.

### **When did you graduate?**



Kenny Paolinelli

I graduated in 2007 and played in four all-star games my senior year (two in football, one in basketball, and one in baseball.) I played different sports year round all through school. I attended Reedley College, playing football and baseball. After two years, I transferred and played at University Texas at El Paso. By doing that, I fulfilled a dream of playing Division One Football.

### **What did you do after football?**

I came back to Madera and took the Emergency Medical Technician exam and began working at Madera Community Hospital. Once I began working, I also began looking into a career in the nursing field, and I also worked as a walk-on baseball and football coach. For me, I really wanted to work in the medical field but loved working with young people as well.

### **What made you want to get into education?**

Coaching really changed my perspective on what I wanted to do. The opportunity to impact students' lives the way that my life was impacted is something I love doing. I cannot think of a better job than helping students reach their future. When I see success not only on the field but also in the classroom, it brings me so much joy.



### **What do you teach?**

I applied to be a Career Technical teacher at Madera High School 10 years after I graduated. I teach ROP Medical Careers and Medical Terminology, which is the study of the human body. College and Career Readiness

Director Sheryl Sisil and Madera High School Principal Alan Hollman recruited me and encouraged me to pursue the change into a career that I love. The Career Technical pathways have really made it possible for me to work at the high school.

### **What do you like about teaching those classes?**

I love being on the campus and getting to see my players and students. Although my class is less intense than football practice, I still hold high expectations. It is rewarding not just teaching but giving them skills that they need to achieve in the medical field. Most importantly, they will have skills that will make them immediately employable, which sets them up if they want to continue their education.

### **What are your future goals?**

I want to continue my education and earn my master's degree. I really have learned so much about teaching and know I have a lot more to learn about being an instructor. I hope eventually to be a head football coach and hope I can continue contributing to Coyote football as long as I can. I am honored to be able to work at Madera High School, and I hope I can improve the community with what I do. I am one grateful Coyote! 🐾



## MSHS Alumna: Bianca Rodriguez

HADIYA RICKS

### **What is your dream job?**

Helping students.

### **Where did you attend high school?**

I attended high school here at Madera South, for all four years. I was in the first graduating class as well.

### **Which middle school did you attend?**

I went to Howard Middle School. It's a K-8 school.

### **What were you involved in while you went to Madera South?**



I was in choir while in high school. I was also in leadership for my junior and senior years of high school. During my senior year, I was a part of the Commissioner of Academics program as well.

### **What are you interested in outside of work?**

I would say that I enjoy spending time with my family. I enjoy sports, and crafting is nice.

### **What made you want to become a counselor here?**

Well, growing up as a first-generation student going to college, I felt that I didn't really have any opportunities. I was passionate about personal growth as I was going to Madera South, and this school was my biggest support overall. Teachers and counselors like Ms. Vander Veld really supported me. I had a difficult time at home with personal experiences, and the educators here really kept me motivated in school.

### **What is the best part of being a counselor?**

I would say the best part about it is coming back and working for my community. I see myself in students, and it makes me feel like I can relate to them. I love being able to see them succeed and letting them know that no matter where you came from, you are still able to succeed in anything.

### **What subjects were you interested in at Madera South?**

I really enjoyed AP courses like AP Language and AP Literature. I just loved the idea of the challenge that it had and how it actually prepared me for college. I also enjoyed leadership because I loved being a part of school spirit and being a part of something that creates a new school environment for everyone.

### **What were the steps in becoming a counselor?**

As I was going to the end of my junior and senior years, I had my mind set on being a school counselor. After high school graduation, I went to Fresno State, where I got my bachelor's degree in psychology, and I graduated there in 2014. Then, I applied to the master's program and received my masters in school counseling and PPS credentials in May 2016. I did an internship at Madera South and MLK from September 2015 to June 2016.

### **Where have you traveled?**

I'm very passionate about sports, so I went to Atlanta to see my favorite team, the Atlanta Braves. I traveled all over California to visit baseball parks. I've been to Washington, Colorado, and Arizona. I like going outdoors to Yosemite and to the beach. I just like the idea of trying something new.

### **What are your future plans?**

I would say that my future plan is to travel abroad to different countries and keep helping the students I encounter. 🐾

# Meet the Board

## AREA 1

### Trustee Ray G. Siebert

#### **What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

What I enjoy the most about being a board member is being able to make a difference in the education of students within our school district. When I was in school, I had some personal experiences where I felt some teachers did not really care about you if you were not the 'A' student. That experience drove me to become a part of the educational system when the opportunity presented itself in 1989. My goal since the beginning has been to improve the educational opportunities of all students.

#### **What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

Throughout the past couple of years, we have made great improvements to the Career Technical Education program (CTE).



Ray G. Siebert

I hope once I finish serving Madera Unified, the CTE program will be centered on meeting the needs of all students so that once they leave our district, they have the most options available in their future.

#### **What would you like the community to know about you?**

It is important for the community to know that my morals have stayed the same since the beginning of my service to the district and the board. As an individual, I try to live my life the right way, and my Christian faith helps provide me

with guidance in life and with my duties to the district. I also want the community to know that it is important to me to make the education system better because I believe there is always more to accomplish.

#### **What was the last book you read?**

The last book I read was *The Big Agenda* by David Horowitz. The book is based on a detailed roadmap of how President Trump plans to fix our economy. It was interesting to read and provided a lot of insight into politics.

## AREA 2

### Board Clerk Ed McIntyre

#### **What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

What I honestly enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified is the complexity of the district. I enjoy working with the Board of Trustees and staff to find solutions to issues that arise in the district. My role as a board member is to set expectations that reflect the community's expectations and, well, Madera wants excellent schools. We are building a lot of momentum in that direction.

But we lack adequate funding for necessary and important programs. So, unfortunately, we must prioritize how we spend our money, and in the process, we sacrifice important programs and projects. That is something we want to move away from in the district. Everyone who wants great schools must convey the importance of providing schools with adequate funding.

#### **What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

There has been a philosophy in Madera Unified for many years that we can't do any better than what we've been doing. But we can do better. We have great students and teachers. We must organize for excellence, and we are moving in that direction now. One example is our new Dual Language Instruction Program (DLI). DLI starts at kindergarten by teaching subjects in two languages. MUSD can flourish with DLI, like other districts that have implemented DLI. DLI will transform how our students learn, creating high achievers.

I have great expectations for Madera. We can really turn this district around and make great things happen. I fully expect us to be on a trend where we can be on par with any other high-performing school in California.



Ed McIntyre

#### **What would you like the community to know about you?**

I want the community to know that when I set out to accomplish something, I am determined to see it through. I enjoy the challenge of the job of Trustee.

#### **What was the last book you read?**

I am currently reading four books that are quite interesting. Fiction: *The Border Trilogy* by Cormac McCarthy.

Non-Fiction: *The Undoing Project* by Michael Lewis, *The Intelligent Investor* by Benjamin Graham, and *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer.

## AREA 3

### Trustee Ruben Mendoza

#### **What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

I enjoy working with district staff who have a direct or indirect impact on students and seeing students grow academically. I've seen everything from "Wow, I didn't know that" to "Yeah, I learned all about that last year." But to see students grow intellectually is gratifying. It's like the light bulb is switched on and then dials up over time. It's the byproduct of a well-rounded education, for a student to leave high school and face his or her next chapter in life. I attribute this to district staff, collectively, and that's empowering.

#### **What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

I hope to make Madera Unified the place where families want to bring their children for an education. To improve the quality of life and to build on the opportunities for students, parents, and the overall community is vital. I would also like to create a safe and friendly learning environment for all stakeholders.



Ruben Mendoza

**What would you like the community to know about you?**

I was born in El Paso, Texas, and moved to the Los Angeles area at the age of eleven, where I completed my education. My father constructed desks and chalkboards out of raw materials for us as kids (six boys and four girls) because he valued education. I remember the days when, like a drill sergeant, he emphasized the importance of three particular subjects: Reading, Writing, and Math. The rest will come easy, he'd say. However, one of my older brothers took it a step further and insisted that I take a typing class in the ninth grade—no boys, just a room full of girls. Fortunately for me, I learned to type fifty-five words per minute with only two errors. I guess that little nugget of wisdom made my life easier in the long run.

**What was the last book you read?**

If not managerial books, I tend to read novels by James Grisham, Michael Connelly, Lisa Black, Veronica Thompson, and others that are suspenseful *whodunit* books. In the children's world, I have read the following books to 4th and 5th graders in the past two years: *The BFG* by Roald Dahl, *Frindle* by Andrew Clements, *Trouble* by Andrew Clements, *Tales of the 4th Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume, and others. This year during the Read Across America event, I also read *Skippyjon Jones*, by Judy Schachner to a six-grade class.

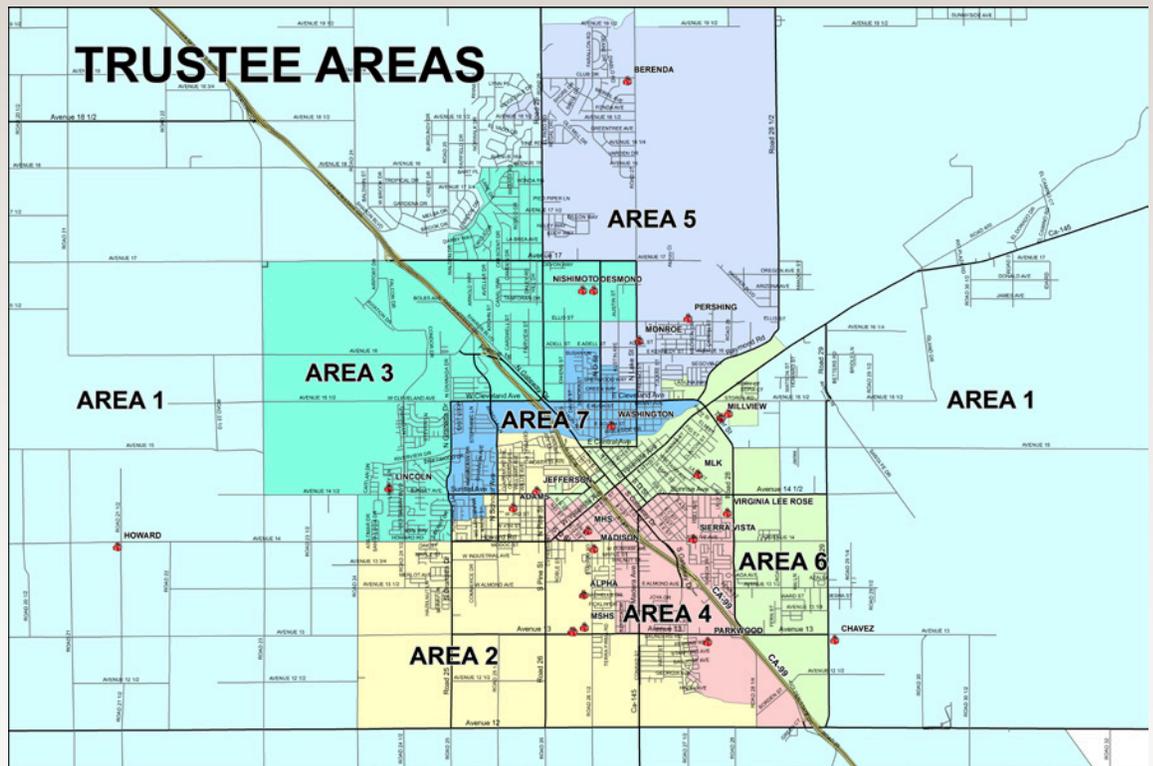


Maria Velarde-Garcia

I really appreciate the opportunity to be that voice for them. For me, it is important to make all decisions based on the expectation that it will improve student achievement.

**What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

While serving on the Board of Trustees for Madera Unified, I hope to have a positive impact on the lives of the students. I want to ensure that students receive the best education possible. To do that, it is important to provide the necessary tools and support to



**AREA 4  
Trustee  
Maria  
Velarde-  
Garcia**

**What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

I believe the most enjoyable aspect of being a Trustee is representing the students. The students need a voice, and

all employees so that they can better assist the students in their educational endeavors. In addition, the importance of creating a positive work environment for all employees, especially those in direct contact with students, is immeasurable. I firmly support a healthy work-life balance.

**What would you like the community to know about you?**

It is profoundly important to me that the community knows that my mission as a board member is to improve student achievement. I would like the community to know that I believe that every vote and decision I make is for the betterment of the students and for the people who work with students.

**What was the last book you read?**

I am still reading the *Code of the Holy Spirit* by Peter Stone. The book is very insightful and provides many philosophical ideas, which I enjoy because philosophy is a passion of mine.

**AREA 5  
Board  
President  
Al Galvez**

**What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

I think the one thing that stands out to me is working with all of the talent that exists within Madera Unified. The level of talent for all areas is amazing, and it is a pleasure to work with that talent! I truly believe that talent comes in many forms. Whether it be the janitor or the superintendent; they all have unique strengths that they bring to our District. It is clear



Al Galvez

BOARD cont'd on next page ...

that each individual puts their heart into their work, and I really enjoy meeting the people who have that dedication.

**What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

My primary focus is student achievement and how we get from where we are now and how we can then move forward. Our goal must be to have a positive effect on student achievement. I hope that the Dual Language Instruction program can show a positive effect on how our students learn and perform academically. We are also currently working on new facilities, which will help alleviate overcrowded schools. Technology is also becoming an important factor in the way we teach and how students learn, so it is important to understand and support its usage within the district.

However, it is highly important that the community understands that in order to accomplish these goals, we need parent engagement. We all need to come together as a district and community to help close our student achievement gap compared to other school districts. In the end, all of these things will come together to help with the advancement of our students.

**What would you like the community to know about you?**

I would like the community to know that I am actually an avid hunter. I love to hunt. Each year, my two brothers and I head out to Colorado on a hunting trip, and the great thing about the trip is the bond we share together. We just have a really great time. Another thing about me is that I am an avid gym buff. Being physically prepared assists me to be mentally prepared. Of course, the most important fact about me is that I am a husband, dad, and grandfather!

**What was the last book you read?**

The last book I read was a children's book to my grandchildren: it was *The Little Engine That Could*. I am also reading another book called *Executive Session*, written by our very own Trustee Ruben



Ricardo Arredondo

Mendoza. It is a mystery crime story based on a suicide-murder investigation. I am still in the middle of the plot, but I can tell you that it is a page-turner.

**AREA 6  
Trustee  
Ricardo  
Arredondo**

**What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

What I enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified is learning about a variety of issues concerning our community that can be

addressed through the school district. I believe that the school district encompasses the city and the community. I find great joy in working on the various issues that expand from facilities, student services, and academics because the development in these areas has been significant over the past few years. I also enjoy the opportunity to collaborate with the other Trustees, Madera Unified staff, and community members in the pursuit of academic excellence.

**What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

I am proud of the accomplishments we have made in the district already. For example, during my time as a board member, we have been able to implement the after school program. Over the past few years, we have been able to see the enrollment in this program

more than triple. I hope that the community has recognized the opportunity that students receive with additional time after school.

I am also proud of the revamping of our wellness policies because it has incorporated ideas and views from the community. I have had the opportunity to be a part of the process of reshaping the Career Technical Education (CTE) offerings at our high schools. This came to reality due to the insistence of Trustee Seibert, and I was fortunate to work alongside him in this process. We have been able to expand these programs, which better prepare our students for life, especially in career and college readiness. I believe that the work that we did with CTE really influences the transition for our students into high school, college, or career.

**What would you like the community to know about you?**

I want the community to know that I care. I care about making important decisions that are meant to benefit our students. I want people to know that I make decisions with compassion. It is important to know that before I make a decision I speak to people who will be directly affected positively or negatively by the outcome. In the end, I want everyone to know that I care about Madera Unified, and I am not afraid to correct a wrong decision that has been made in the past.

**What was the last book you read?**

The last book I read was the Bible. It provides me with guidance, and it centers my mind and focus. The Bible provides me with a different perspective: it reminds me to be kind, to be stern, and always to act in love. Overall, it reminds me to be human.

**AREA 7  
Trustee  
Brent  
Fernandes**



Brent Fernandes

**What do you enjoy the most about working with Madera Unified?**

I enjoy the opportunity to plan different projects for Madera Unified. From the planning stages, through the implementation process, and eventually being able to see the completed results, I enjoy it all. I have had the opportunity to work on many projects during my time as a Trustee; however, the projects I enjoy the most are those that directly affect student achievement.

**What do you hope to accomplish for Madera Unified?**

I hope to be a part of the change that helps increase student achievement and student test scores throughout the district. I especially want to help students excel in high school and be academically ready for college.

**What would you like the community to know about you?**

I want the community to know that I do everything I can to help this community grow and prosper. Our community is growing, and so is our district; therefore, I think it is important that we all work together as a community to make Madera a great place for our students.

**What was the last book you read?**

The last book I read was *Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy. The book describes how Kennedy dealt with his rise into power and how he was able to overcome being an outlier in his time. ☛

# The Madera Linkage Foundation

**SELEYNA MENDOZA**

THE MADERA LINKAGE Foundation, formerly known as The Linkage Foundation, was announced to return at Madera Unified's 50th-anniversary celebration dinner held on November 16, 2016, at the Peters Brothers Banquet Hall. In attendance were past and present superintendents, community members, and Madera Unified School District employees. The announcement of the revival of the Madera Linkage Foundation was met with great enthusiasm. The newly launched educational foundation was able to raise \$3500 from excited supporters of the foundation through a live and silent auction that night.

The Madera Linkage Foundation's mission, with support from Madera Unified and in collaboration with the community, is to support quality education for the District's students. Generating and distributing resources to enrich, maintain, and expand programs to meet the District's mission of offering exemplary programs affords many of our students the ability to learn for the rest of their lives and become productive citizens.

The foundation plans to implement programs for business and education to unite to further student growth and prepare them for the future as academically prepared and productive adults. This

will create a great opportunity for the community and Madera Unified to partner in support of students and teachers and show commitment to the education of the students of Madera. The foundation hopes that businesses and the community see that investment and participation in the education of Madera Unified students is invaluable. The foundation is committed to making a difference in the students' and families' lives throughout the district.

All donations made to the Madera Linkage Foundation will be used to support student achievement and provide scholarships to students pursuing post-secondary degrees and hopefully assist students in realizing their academic potential. The foundation board President, Ann Lozano, stated, "I strongly believe that education is the key to the success of students as they prepare for their futures as productive adults."

In order to guide the Madera Linkage Foundation, a board of directors was created, consisting of volunteers from local businesses, the community, and educational leaders. The following are the current board members: Anne Lozano (Board President), Debi Bray (Madera Chamber of Commerce), Jim Taubert (City of Madera), Joe Doyland (EECU), Mike Westley (JBT Industries), David Hernandez, and Adele Nikkel (Madera Unified). The board also welcomes financial support from employees of Madera Unified through a payroll deduction.

The community is welcomed and encouraged to attend board meetings to provide additional support to the foundation. Adele Nikkel, Chief Financial Officer for Madera Unified said, "Board meetings are open to the public and held bi-monthly on the second Tuesday at 11:30 a.m."



The wonderful opportunities that the Madera Linkage Foundation will create will provide an avenue for people in the community to support the school district, whether through volunteer work or monetary donations. It will also assist with bringing the community, staff, and parents together in support of education. To show appreciation to sponsors, donors, and volunteers of the Madera Linkage Foundation, the Board of Directors plans to host an annual fundraiser dinner, where supporters of the foundation will be recognized. All proceeds from that event will go back to the foundation to advance student progress. ☛

The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan



**IV**  
**Strong Relationships with Families & Community**

# Growing Schools for a Growing Community

**NICOLE WHIPPLE**

MADERA UNIFIED IS approaching a new era in its history since the unification of the school district in 1965. Madera Unified is making progress in evolving and adapting to the new innovative world we live in. In response to a growing community and aging facilities, the district has created the 12-Year Plan to help expand the district and to build innovative facilities within the next 12 years to help students in their educational endeavors. This was issued by former Superintendent Edward C. González last year and was approved by the ((? building plan of trustees ?)) in January 2017. The staff of Madera Unified School District has worked



alongside the district board throughout the process of developing the plan for the past year. To simplify the planning process, the 12-Year Plan was divided into three phases. Each phase of the plan needs the approval of the board to move forward.

The expansion of the district will include two new elementary schools, three new middle schools, and two new high schools. The district is also securing architects for the modernization of the Madera High School (MHS) industrial arts building, the concurrent middle school, and the athletic facilities at Madera South High School (MSHS). The first construction, currently in progress, is the Virginia Lee Rose Elementary School; the groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 18, 2016, and the school will open in August 2017. The new elementary is meant to have an innovative and welcoming architectural design. The design for the new high school is in the final stages and will open in August 2019.

Former Superintendent González stated that the biggest obstacle in the 12-Year Plan was "to articulate to the Board and the community rationale for minimizing our borrowing by establishing a Building Fund set aside that we adhere to annually." MUSD has found an efficient way to save money and supply for school demands instead of taking loans.

The main goal of this promising plan is to "provide the best education for our students, and thereby better prepare our students for the world that they inherit," stated González. With the guidance of former Superintendent González, the district has made all schools equally beneficial to each student as a part of their "integrated plan to address overcrowded conditions and bring our students into the world of 21st-century learning," said González.

As the expansion continues throughout the 12 years, the City of Madera should look forward to the new improvements and advancements of our growing school district and watch not only the students but the community grow as well. ☛

The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan



**III**  
**Safe & Healthy Environments for Learning & Work**

# Congratulation to our **TOP TEN STUDENTS!**

GREAT SCHOOLS GIVE great students the opportunity to rise! Some fun facts about this year's highest performers:



MADERA HIGH SCHOOL

- This year the Coyotes recognize *twelve* achievers due to a three-way tie!
- A dozen students cite Calculus as the toughest class ever. Three said it was their favorite subject—two of those said it was both toughest *and* favorite. At this level, challenge is good!
- Of those college-bound, 21 of 22 are pursuing higher education here in California, six of them in Fresno.
- At least 16 are in Advance Placement courses. The others probably just got tired of writing “AP” on all the questionnaires and university applications.

We wish the brightest of futures and the greatest success to these outstanding young people.



### **Juliana Leon**

PLANS Cal Poly SLO, UC Berkeley  
FAVE Howden, Honors Physics  
FSA Madera Interact  
TCE! AP Literature



### **Liliana Rosales**

PLANS UC Merced  
FAVE Mr. Col, Human Anatomy  
FSA Upward Bound  
TCE! AP European History



### **Amy Quinonez**

PLANS Fresno Community  
FAVE Mrs. Oxelson, History  
FSA Plays, Drama Productions  
TCE! AP Biology



### **Bijal Luhar**

PLANS UCLA  
FAVE Mr. Latimer, 4th Grade  
FSA Interact  
TCE! AP Chemistry



### **Erendira Olivares-Reyes**

PLANS Fresno State  
FAVE Mr. Howden, Hon. Physics  
FSA Marching Band  
TCE! AP Calculs BC



### **Simarjit Bagri**

PLANS UC Merced  
FAVE Markarian, Chemistry  
FSA Lunch  
TCE! AP Calculus



### **Samantha Valencia**

PLANS Fresno State  
FAVE Matthew Markarian,  
AP Chemistry  
FSA Swimming & Soccer  
TCE! AP Chemistry



### **Nicholas Guillermo-Martinez**

PLANS Cal Poly State  
FAVE Mr. Markarian, AP  
Chemistry  
FSA Football  
TCE! AP European History



### **Addyson Smith**

PLANS United States Air Force  
Academy  
FAVE Mrs. Tuck, AP Language  
FSA Sports  
TCE! AP Calculus BC



### **Martha Ochoa**

PLANS UC Irvine & UC Davis  
FAVE Mrs. Harper, AP Literature  
FSASoccer  
TCE! AP Literature



### **Taylor Davis**

PLANS UC Davis  
FAVE Ms. Harper, AP Literature  
FSA 4-H Community Service  
TCE! AP Statistics



### **Madilyn Baker**

PLANS Cal Poly  
FAVE Clemenson, Calc AB  
FSA Math  
TCE! Chemistry



MT. VISTA  
HIGH  
SCHOOL

**Priscilla Barajas** came to Mountain Vista during her junior year. At the time she was not doing well at school and was not doing great at life. After the birth of her baby, she realized that education was going to be the key to success. Ms. Malsom really connected her and became more than a math teacher, but also a mentor. Her grades are great, she is ready for graduation and Priscilla will begin State Center Community College in the fall and plans on being an accountant.



**Belen Wells** moved from Los Angeles as a sophomore to live with her aunt. After enrolling at Furman, she began taking control of her life and her education. Being incredibly behind she began to blossom from encouragement she found from the administrative assistant Ms. Bridges and her mentor teacher Ms. Howard. Belen is enrolled at State Center Community College and wants to not only work in education but work with at risk students. She would love to come back and teach at Furman.



FURMAN  
HIGH  
SCHOOL

MADERA  
SOUTH HIGH  
SCHOOL



PLANS Plans after high school  
FSA Favorite school activity

FAVE Favorite teacher & class  
TCE! Toughest class ever!



**Brenda Perez**  
PLANS Fresno State  
FAVE Moreno, English  
FSA Leadership  
TCE! Calculus BC



**Sabrina Ibrahim**  
PLANS UCLA  
FAVE Mrs. Gentry, Civics / Econ  
FSA Prom, Formal, Football Games  
TCE! AP Calc



**Maritza Cariño Ramirez**  
PLANS UC Santa Barbara,  
UC Santa Cruz  
FAVE Mr. Horn, Calculus  
FSA Key Club  
TCE! Calculus



**Ana P. Tirado Lomas**  
PLANS UC Davis  
FAVE Mrs. Lepe-Vera,  
Economics / Civics  
FSA Cross Country, Track  
TCE! AP Literature



**Alexis Garcia**  
PLANS UC San Diego, UCLA  
FAVE Mr. Witters, US History  
FSA CSF  
TCE! AP Calculus



**Angela Ortiz**  
PLANS UC Santa Barbara  
FAVE Mrs. Ibrahim, AP Psych  
FSA Winter Percussion  
TCE! Calculus



**Candida Lopez**  
PLANS UCLA  
FAVE Aranico, AP Lit  
FSA Key Club  
TCE! AP Calculus BC



**Nicholas Burns**  
PLANS Fresno State  
FAVE Mr. Horn, Calculus  
FSA Track & Field  
TCE! Calculus BC



**Nancy Sanjas Hernandez**  
PLANS UC Santa Cruz  
FAVE Mrs. Ibrahim, Guitar  
FSA Key Club  
TCE! Calculus



**Maria Molina**  
PLANS Fresno State  
FAVE Mr. Richardson, Anatomy  
& Physiology  
FSA Symphonic Band  
TCE! AP Calculus AB

# Tech Town

GRACE DA ROCHA

AT THE 2016 Madera Fair, located within the Sugar Pine Logging Company Building, lay the multiple displays run by the Madera High School Robotics team. The site was temporarily named “Tech Town” and allowed the public to interact with different types of technology.

The three main attractions of Tech Town were the “Freeze Tag Robots,” the team’s 2014 and 2016 competition robots, and the Virtual Reality booth. The first of the three garnered the majority of attention from eager children yearning to control the small Lego robots. The competition robots captured the interest of adults and enthralled younger audiences with their abilities. Lastly, the Virtual Reality booth drew people in with its enigmatic appeal as well as its simple-yet-pleasing game. People would wait for half an hour just to shoot arrows at stick people, to experience the newest advancement in gaming technology. To many adults, it was an amazing feat, but the young students who previewed the display early Friday morning acted as if they had entered an entirely new world.

Guided by both their teachers and student leaders from the robotics team, the students ranging from 1st to 3rd graders were shown how technology has revolutionized the many ways we can use it for both work and leisure. Howard Elementary, LaVina Elementary, Dixieland Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Washington Elementary, and Norman M. Gould Education Center are just a few of the schools that appeared on the fairgrounds that morning.



the MadTown Robotics team. The Madera Fair donated around \$2,000 to the team for their hard work and will grant more space for demonstrations in the future, as well as an increase in display and public interaction, and a better chance to introduce the public to the newest technology when they return in 2017. The MadTown Robotics team and Leach will partner to share the amazing things that technology has to offer the community of Madera.

Leach is also working to help the Robotics team grow. She explained that “the media and public exposure is most impactful [for the Robotics team]. The exposure of the Robotics program to the public by way of media and attendance should impact the expansion of the program in both participation and, hopefully, financial sponsors. Highlighting the Robotics program gives a new group of young innovators something to get involved in. It reaches all students from K to 8th.” She is a firm believer in the fact that having the Robotics team and promoting them throughout the community offers prospective elementary engineering majors the chance to aim for similar goals as the students who aspire to get involved with high school sports teams. For Leach, this is an exciting pathway, and it is expected to produce fruitful results in the upcoming years.

“The original intention of County Fairs was to share the greatest the county has to offer. Technology is finding a place once again in the original blueprint. At the Madera Fair, we couldn’t be prouder to celebrate it!” Leach offered as her final statement.

Due to the efforts of Barbara Leach and the MadTown Robotics team, Madera County will gain the opportunity to immerse itself in the fields of Engineering and Technology and introduce both children and adults to the beneficial factors of these two industries. ➡



*CVR Regional Champion Engineering Award Recipient, which comes with paid entries to the National Competition in Houston, TX. Great job, RC!*

Barbara Leach, who is in charge of Public Events and Marketing at the Madera Fairgrounds, stated, “We feel the Tech Town presentation was a huge success for Madera Fair and our MadTown Robotics. Our exit surveys show Tech Town as the highest-visited exhibit for 2016.” The exhibit was such a success that five other fairs from across California have talked to her about integrating a display such as Tech Town into their own fairs. Armando Correa, the CEO of the MadTown Robotics team, commented, “It was great working with Barbara Leach, and her husband as well, because they helped us create a presentation that highlighted the benefits and the fun aspects of Engineering and Technology.” The demonstration speaks for itself: the people of Madera want to see more of our modern technology.

The event drew major exposure for

