yond academics and enrichment – education that fosters students’ social and emotional development and well-being. Drawing from Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, children require their physiological and safety-related needs to be satisfied in order to enable needs related to belongingness, esteem, and ultimately self-actualization to be met. As educators, we know that it is our duty to support students’ journey to self-actualization, and as such, we are committed to fostering students’ social and emotional well-being.

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), “Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” CASEL’s widely used framework has identified five core competencies that help children to navigate the world more effectively:

- **Self-awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”
- **Self-management:** Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
- **Social awareness:** Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- **Relationship skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- **Responsible decision-making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

The La Jolla Cluster has also expressed a renewed commitment to fostering our students’ social and emotional development. The Cluster is currently exploring programs that we can implement TK-12th grade in order to create an articulation of skills, knowledge, and language around social and emotional learning. I’ll continue to update you on this endeavor.

Social and emotional learning is not new to La Jolla Elementary. Several years ago, we began a partnership with Dr. Susan Wais to deepen our understanding about approaches, strategies, and materials we could use to support this endeavor. Over the years, we’ve introduced students to character strengths, taught students how to tap into...
their strengths, and supported them with developing their lesser strengths. For the past couple of years, we have identified a character strength to target, develop, and support each month. Thus far this school year, teachers have supported students with self-regulation/self-control, grit, perseverance, gratitude, and curiosity. We’ll continue to focus on a character strength each month for the remainder of the year.

We are currently working on supporting students with the character strength of kindness, which is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. According to Susan Wais, encouraging kind behavior in schools can make a big difference. Evidence suggests that promoting kindness in children reduces disruptive behavior and helps to increase social and emotional well-being. The following activities can help you promote kindness at home:

- Write down each family member’s name on a scrap of paper, and fold it up. Have each person select a name. The mission is to do one act of kindness for that person during the week. At the end of the week, discuss the acts of kindness and how it made everyone feel.
- Start a kindness wall. Encourage family members to notice the kindness around them. On the wall, post messages, stories, photos, drawings, or thank you notes for the kind things that were done for them or that they’ve seen others do.
- Practice random acts of kindness. Kindness can be something as simple as smiling at someone, opening a door, offering help, or giving someone a compliment. Carrying out kind acts creates a virtuous circle.

In March, we’ll focus on developing our students’ social intelligence, which is defined as the awareness of others’ motives and feelings. Those with social intelligence understand how to fit into different social situations and how to put people at ease. According to Dr. Wais, developing social intelligence includes recognizing our feelings, harnessing our feelings, and recognizing the feeling of others. The following activities can help you promote social intelligence at home:

- Practice breathing by breathing in, holding it, and breathing out slowly.
- Develop listening skills by repeating what you’ve heard and asking the other person if your perspective is accurate.
- Engage in active constructing responding – empathizing with others when times are good.
- Apologize to and forgive others.

We are so fortunate that Dr. Susan Wais will be conducting free workshops for our LJES parents and caregivers on the topic of Happiness Habits on February 20 & 27, and March 13 & 20 at 8:30am in our library.

We look forward to partnering with you to continue to support our students’ social and emotional development. I am working currently on creating a page on the LJES website where I can continue to update you on important information and what we’re working on at school.

Warmly,

Stephanie Hasselbrink, Ed.D
Stephanie Hasselbrink, Interim Principal

Attention Run Club fans! You no longer need to navigate a minefield of backpacks haphazardly strewn on the sidewalk next to the upper field. Thanks to Girl Scout Troop #4978 members Sadie, Brenna, Sabrina, Mabel, Genevieve, Amelia, Lily, Lola, Brylie, Elsa, Adalee, Isabella, Tatum and Ella, we now have a permanent backpack rack that can hold up to 30 backpacks. The industrious Girl Scouts spent two Wednesdays in January measuring, marking, drilling and installing the hooks onto Trex boarding. Thank you to Mike and Brenna Olmert, Jenny and Sabrina Hochberg, and Tim, Ian and Annie Peppers for installing the boarding onto the chain-link fence. And, thank you to Coach Wiskus for sharing your vision, recommendations, and approval for the project.

Girl Scouts learn from an early age to identify areas where they can be helpful and take action. We hope the legacy these 3rd grade girls leave will help make the approach to Run Club safer for everyone.
I hope everyone is having a wonderful school year! In Physical Education class, students have been hard at work developing a variety of physical skills, demonstrating knowledge of concepts, and building sportsmanship and teamwork with their peers. We will continue to build on our important work of creating healthy active learners throughout the year!

In November, we had a PE staffing change due to the reconfiguration of allocated Prep time. Mrs. Black was needed for an additional day at her other school and we qualified for an additional day as well. We are pleased to welcome Joe Liscio “Coach L.” to the LJES Team, who will be here on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

In addition to Physical Education class, we are excited to continue to implement the IMPACT (Increased Movement Physical Activity Class Time) program to help our students achieve more physical activity during the school day! Special thank you to the classroom teachers for bringing their classes out to achieve more minutes of physical activity each week!

Run Club has been off to an amazing start this year as well! Our school-wide total is now over 7000 miles, our top runners have passed the 100 mile mark, and we have over 60 students (and 5 parents) that have made the Marathon Club and have earned their shirts! Special thank you to our generous, supportive PTO and parent volunteers for their continued support of the LJES Run Club!

Meet Our New PE Coach!

Hello, my name is Joseph Liscio and I am the new physical education teacher. I am originally from New Jersey and graduated from Montclair State University, where I received my teacher’s certificate and also played college football. I have been living in San Diego for 5 years and was recently married to my wife, Marianela, in February. I am very excited to join this great school and community and look forward to teaching physical education!

Funny as it may sound, a good education includes learning how to learn. In part, that means figuring out what to do when you have a topic you want to research. It also means becoming a good judge of content you find online. Having these skills in your toolkit helps you navigate not just the world wide web, but the real world beyond it.

In classrooms, our teachers strive to turn students into strong researchers and critical thinkers. Remember learning about non-fiction, indexes, and the difference between a report and a review? To expand that knowledge in the upper grades, La Jolla Elementary has teamed with the La Jolla/Riford Branch of the San Diego Public Library.

During rotations with Technology enrichment teacher Sigurd Kallhovde (also known as “Mr. K”), LJES third through fifth graders meet once in the fall/winter and once in the spring with the La Jolla/Riford children’s librarian. These sessions introduce students to basic research skills and resources the school and public library have to offer.

When the program started last year, it explored how to decide what to trust online. Ms. Angie Stava encouraged students to think about whether what they see and read on the internet is accurate (real or not), authoritative (from a reliable source), objective (not guided by a particular point of view), and up to date.

This year’s program has a different focus for each grade. In the first session,

- third graders learned how to use the school and public library catalogs to find information efficiently. Ms. Angie showed students how to run basic searches and filter results by criteria such as audience, location, and content (e.g., fiction or non-fiction).
- fourth graders learned how to find information, videos, and images on specific subjects through Research in Context, a database in the public library eCollection. Students researched pollution, Halloween, or another age-appropriate topic and wrote down four facts to share with their classmates. Several students chose their own topics, which included Alexander Hamilton, emus, Finland, and the Korean War.
- fifth graders learned about telling the difference between facts and opinions. Ms. Angie asked for examples of language and other signals that help separate fact from opinion. Students practiced using these clues with Opposing Viewpoints in Context, another resource in the public library eCollection. They chose one of two topics (pollution or plastic waste), browsed content in the database, and wrote down two facts and two opinions they found.

Ms. Angie brought her signature enthusiasm to the sessions, noting how hard it can be for students to recognize fact versus opinion and when online content is designed to influence them. Her guidance complemented Mr. K’s efforts to teach students about making the right choices on the internet. As he remarked, when coming across content online, “you’re going to have to make a decision about whether that was a good find.” Former principal Donna Tripi observed that the program is “going to help the kids with their research for all their school years” and provide “skills for their lifetimes.” Ms. Angie transferred to a position at the Central Library recently but we look forward to her successor, Ms. Dana Sanchez, coming to campus to continue the partnership this spring.

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Family Literacy Days welcomed parents to the classrooms to participate in reading and writing games. Older students shared their latest poems, essays and literary projects while our early readers showed off their reading skills.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

The PTO hosted a fun Family Movie Night on Friday, January 25. Thanks to our Buildings Supervisor, Jonathan Zavala, the auditorium was cleared, cleaned, and ready for the show before the last bell. At 5:30pm sharp, students and their parents began setting up viewing areas with blankets, sleeping bags, pillows, and stuffed animals. Some kids arrived in sleepwear, making the occasion extra festive by turning it into a pajama party.

Technology teacher Mr. K helped set up the audio and video. Dr. Hasselbrink was on hand to explain how to keep the event fun and safe (e.g., stay in the auditorium unless you need to use the restrooms or purchase a snack). The Fifth Grade Promotion Committee transformed the lunch arbor into a terrific concession stand with hot dogs, Caesar salad, pizza, and treats, including, of course, popcorn.

This year’s feature was Incredibles 2, which offered thrills, laughs, and plenty of action. The crowd seemed to get a special kick out of the youngest member of the Incredible family, Jack Jack, and his newly discovered powers. When the movie was over, kids and parents did a great job helping to tidy up the auditorium so it would be ready for the next school week.

If you have any suggestions for a film to screen at next year’s Movie Night or would like to help out with the event, please email ljes@jeankim.net.
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**FAMILY SCIENCE NIGHT**

Family Science Night is a special evening event that features over a dozen hands-on activities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM). All of the interactive stations are designed and staffed by LJES parents and students, who, along with a few special guests from the community, come together to share their love of science. Family Science Night is THE night Science is super cool.

The event will have something for all ages. There will be many chances for you and your kids to stimulate your minds, get your hands dirty, slimy, or mushy, and maybe even experience the spark of scientific excitement that comes with seeing some small piece of our great big world in a whole new way. The theme, Passport to Science, is meant to feature the diverse body of scientists represented at our school, and to call attention to the notion that science is a collaborative, global effort. Over a dozen stations are planned, including the La Jolla Elementary Passport Office; the World of Science Squishy Station; and, joining us all the way from London, the Royal Institute of Sugar.

Family Science Night is just around the corner... Friday, March 15th, 6-8pm at LJES. The roster of stations is taking shape, but we still have room for one or two more last-minute additions, and we still need LOTS of volunteers. Please email Co-Chairs Michael Campos (senorcampos@gmail.com) or Vanessa Emmery (vanessa.emmery@gmail.com) if you would like to get involved.

**LJES GARDENS FLORISH**

Thanks to the very wet January and February months, LJES gardens are flourishing. Pictured are students from Ms. Polen’s third grade class enjoying the fruits (actually vegetables) of their labor.

**LJES ROBOTICS TEAM WINS ANOTHER CHAMPIONSHIP!**

Sixty-one teams travelled from all over the state to compete in the First Lego League Robotics Tournament on February 10th at Legoland California. Team Asteroid Mekaniks took 2nd place in the robot competition while Team SpacebotZ took home the championship in the overall category! All six LJES teams placed in the top 15. Congratulations to our budding robotic engineers who represented our school so spectacularly!!

Team Asteroid Mekaniks: Zoran Shepanski, Columbia Joulin-Batejat, Kanoa Hsieh, Danielle Breise, Leyla Yazici (not pictured)  
Team SpacebotZ: Emily Upatham, Kai Moore, Anya Rastogi, Andrew Lee, Carter Brown
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Questions? Contact us at LJESauction@gmail.com or call 858-412-3772.
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