Founder’s Message
By Dr. Jacqueline Elliot, President & CEO, PUC National

During the month of November, we celebrated the renewal of the PUC CALS Charter Middle and Early College High School and PUC Lakeview Charter High School petitions. As has usually been the case, both schools received unanimous votes for approval from the LAUSD school board. Congratulations to the staff, parents and students at these schools! This is truly something to celebrate as they prepare to embark on their next five-year cycle, beginning on July 1, 2020. Since the founding of Community Charter Middle School in 1999 and the founding of all of the PUC schools that followed, we have gone through approximately 30 renewals and have never been denied.

One of the key reasons for our success in this process has been the engagement of staff, students, and parents at each of the renewing schools, all of whom are present on the day the board takes the vote. When a school is on the consent agenda and no board discussion takes place, speakers on behalf of the school are encouraged to pass on addressing the board since they are guaranteed renewal. Nevertheless, it is powerful for the board members to see strong representation from a renewing school present in the board room. On the occasions when school personnel, parents, and students have spoken, their commitment to and belief in the value of their schools is truly inspiring.

This spirit of dedication, tenacity, and standing up for one’s school began with the first 100 parents in 1999 who refused to take no for an answer when requesting their first approval. These characteristics of resilience and determination have continued to thrive within all of the PUC schools ever since and their continued existence will ensure future success and renewals. It is no secret that charter public schools have been criticized by a number of sources ever since the legislation passed in 1992 and because of this charter school staff, parents and students can never take for granted their right to exist. The fact that a charter school needs to be renewed every five years may be disconcerting to some and considered overly burdensome, but this requirement actually helps keep charter schools on their toes and accountable. So, once again congratulations to the staff, parents, and students at PUC CALS and PUC Lakeview Charter High School and may their spirit of pride, determination, and willingness to stand up in support of their schools continue for them and at all PUC schools forever more.
2019 Charter Renewals - PUC CALS & PUC LCHS

Submitted by Pete Frias, Director of Media Communications, PUC National

On November 19, 2019, the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Board voted unanimously to approve the charter petitions for PUC CALS Charter Middle & Early College High School and PUC Lakeview Charter High School. The petitions were renewed for a five year term and go into effect beginning on July 1, 2020. Parents, students, leaders, teachers and staff members from PUC CALS & PUC Lakeview Charter High School as well as home office team members were in attendance at the board meeting to support the schools. Congratulations to the schools!
PUC eCALS Hosts
8th Annual Dia de los Muertos Festival

Submitted by Pete Frias

PUC eCALS celebrated Dia de los Muertos by hosting a festival for the 8th year in a row. The festival featured student artwork, student performances, food, music, culture, and much more. Artwork, as well as altars and other installations, were on display in classrooms, in corridors, and in other open spaces. The free community event attracted hundreds of visitors, as has been the case for the past several years. The event would not have been possible without the collective efforts of the school’s students, parents, and staff members - most notably Ms. Cecilia Cueva, Art Teacher at PUC eCALS. Ms. Cueva is a long-time PUC eCALS teacher who has been instrumental in making the event a success as best demonstrated in the amazing pieces that students created for the festival.
Season of Giving at PUC Schools

Submitted by Pete Frias
Contributions by: Lucina Coronel Garcia, Inclusion Assistant, PUC Inspire Charter Academy, Anthony Ventura, School and College Counselor, PUC CALS Early College High School, & Jennifer Torres, Office Manager, PUC Nueva Esperanza Charter Academy

It’s the season of giving! In the spirit of the season, several PUC schools have organized various drives.

Canned Food Drives

3 PUC Schools - PUC Community Charter Early College High School (PUC CCECHS), PUC Inspire Charter Academy (PUC Inspire), and PUC Triumph Charter High School - held canned food drives during the month of November.

PUC Inspire alone was able to collect over 500 canned goods, which were donated to a local organization called MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity). MEND will be picking up all of the items and giving them out with the holiday baskets that they deliver every year. The purpose of the drive for PUC Inspire is to help their own students to gain community service hours as well as be part of their community during the holidays.

In addition to the holding a canned food drive, PUC CCECHS also collected feminine products.

Toy Drives

3 PUC Schools - PUC Excel Charter Academy, PUC Milagro Charter School, & PUC Nueva Esperanza Charter Academy (PUC NECA) - held toy drives during the month of November. PUC NECA drops off the toys they collect to the San Fernando Police department, which will use the toys to create holiday baskets for local families.

Sock Drives

In addition to the toy drive that the PUC Excel held in the month of November, the school held a sock drive. PUC Lakeview Charter High School also held a sock drive during November.
Food Drive

PUC CALS Charter Middle School & PUC CALS Early College High School (PUC CALS ECHS) organized a food drive. The schools collected over 100 items for the food drive. They collaborated with the Salvation Army in Glendale and the items were given to them. On November 26th, a group of our students went to the Salvation Army to volunteer for 4 hours and helped stock, organize, and hand out the food that they had collected. Below are quotes from students and staff who attended the event.

“I enjoyed it because the rest of the volunteers were very nice and I enjoy helping others.”
– Oscar Brenes, 11th Grade Student, PUC CALS ECHS

“I chose to volunteer because I wanted to give back and do what I could to help others. I had a great time and would definitely do it again.”
– Veronica Torres Marquez, 12th Grade Student, PUC CALS ECHS

“I have never volunteered with the Salvation Army before, so I decided to give it a try, and I really enjoyed it! I like helping other people out.”
– Arpad Feher, 10th Grade Student, PUC CALS ECHS

“I had fun volunteering and stocking food.”
– Axayacatl Cortez, 9th Grade Student, PUC CALS ECHS

“Volunteering at the Salvation Army with the students was such an amazing experience. It was a great opportunity to get to know the students while giving back to the community. The students enjoyed the various tasks such as stocking food, gardening, and organizing. I look forward to future volunteer experiences with the students at PUC CALS ECHS”.
– Gorety Parra, College Counseling Intern, PUC CALS ECHS
In the month of October, the 2nd grade team began their Families Today and Long Ago Social Studies unit. Each unit is guided by an essential question. In this unit, the question guiding our learning was Why is it important to study the history of families and learn about the past?

One of our lessons in the unit was to learn about families and their traditions. Ms. Sanchez and Mrs. Anacleto shared one of their family traditions with their students, the Day of the Dead.

Each 2nd grade classrooms created an altar (ofrenda) to remember family members that have passed away.

They invited all of their students to bring a picture and/or small item to remember and honor the memory of their ancestors.

On Friday November 1st, 2019 students shared their pictures and the memories of their ancestors as they enjoyed eating Pan de Muerto (bread of the dead). Students also shared their own family traditions, including delicious recipes that their own families have!

Ms. Sanchez and Mrs. Anacleto’s personal experiences and family traditions helped students start their conversations in the classroom and continue at home with their own families. Ms. Sanchez and Mrs. Anacleto hope to continue this tradition with their 2nd graders every year!
On Friday, November 1st, 2019, PUC Community Charter Elementary School held its Third annual Trunk-or-Treat Fall Event!

Trunk-or-Treat is an event that involves using cars as stopping places for kids to pick up a treat. Cars or trucks are parked in the yard, their trunks (and the rest of the car!) are decorated in a specific theme, and kids go car-to-car trick-or-treating! Each car also has an interactive or game component, adding to the fun and carnival-like feel. Trunk-or-Treat is a fun, safe way to trick-or-treat, creates community for our school, and involves all stakeholders in the creating of this event, as a large part of this event is based on parent involvement and participation.

We had a car represent each of our classrooms, each decorated in a different theme, with several classrooms really going all out this year! Parents from each class work together and take the lead in decorating the classroom’s car, and they do a wonderful job. Displays were impressive, and included Day of the Dead, Alice in Wonderland, Stranger Things, Minecraft, Carnival, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and many more! To say the least, there was something for everyone.

In addition to the fabulously decorated cars and games, there were several other features and vendors on site to add to the fun ambiance of the event. This included a haunted house, face painting, an interactive bubble area, a DJ, car contest, and tacos for sale! It was a successful event that was loved by students, families, and staff alike, with a wonderful turn out of guests - we are looking forward to planning for next year!
I want to start off by saying thanks Mom!

When I grew up I would get a gift from a relative, and my mom would say, “Yes, you got the gift, but no it is not yours until you write a thank you note and address the envelope.” As a kid this was an annoying ask! This expectation took time, thought, and yes, Mom vetted each note to make sure my penmanship was clear, and that I specifically mentioned the gift and noted thanks. What took the task from annoying to a task that had meaning, was that my mom made me think about what the person had to do to in order for me to receive the gift (i.e. earn the money; went to the store to buy the gift, wrap the gift, go to the post office and wait on line to ship the gift it arrived by my birthday). I look back at these processes she repeatedly walked me through, and say thanks Mom for teaching me these very important interpersonal skills!

It is one thing to teach students how to write a thank you, and another to help them understand what it means to be grateful so that they can appreciate the act, as well as sincerely express it. In an effort to build these, as part of our Majors & Careers Event*, all PUC sophomores and juniors will be asked to write 3 thank you notes (One to each expert volunteer presenter.) These presenters will be taking off from work, have prepared presentations, and some driving from as far as Long Beach and Bakersfield. A "Deepening Your Gratitude & How To Write A Thank You Note" lesson will be sent to PUC high schools in early January. Schools are asked to present the lesson to 10th & 11th grade students, and support students with composing 3-presenter thank you notes. The home office will collect the students’ work, and send the thank you notes to each presenter.

In this season of gratitude and family, I wish you my PUC family a wonderful winter break! Thank you for your heart, time, dedication and professionalism! I am so thankful to serve the students, families and schools, as well as continuously learn with you every day! See you next year.

*PUC Majors & Careers Event was developed to empower PUC sophomores and juniors by exposing them to a variety of careers and majors, allowing students to make more informed career and higher education decisions. This year’s event is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 (the Tuesday after MLK Holiday). The event will take place at PUC Sylmar Education Complex. Approximately 60 expert volunteer presenters have committed to sharing their personal career journey and expertise with our students. These presenters represent a wide-variety of majors & fields (i.e. Nursing, Animal Trainer, Cyber Security, Culinary Arts, Military, Manufacturing, Biotech, Electrician & Plumbing, EMT, Composure, etc.) Presenter recruitment was based off of PUC students’ Naviance career interest data.

If you have questions regarding this event and/or this lesson please feel free to contact me: Nicole Murphy, Director of School & College Counseling: n.murphy@pucnational.org, x1422, (818) 478-2096.
https://pucschools.org/alumni

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Please be sure to indicate your shirt size. Polos are available in both men's and women's sizes.