

COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMUNICATOR

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Countywide Community Schools Newsletter

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Dear Countywide Community Schools Team,

Due to everyone's hard work over the past year, we were able to launch the first community school in Las Cruces! Since January, Lynn Middle School (LMS) has incorporated quality after-school enrichment programs and has begun to impact the families and students at LMS.

A stakeholder group has been created. The group is comprised of Lynn educators, parents, administrators, community members, and our Community School Coordinator, Vanessa Mendez.

Currently, LMS is in the community school assessment phase of transformation. Countless partners have worked to engage and listen to the community so our first Community School can best serve Lynn students, staff, and families.

While community assessment is underway, we have also begun integrating services and activities that were deeply needed by the community. These services are profiled below, and we hope to continue updating everyone on the progress at Lynn and future community schools throughout our county.



Lynn Middle Schools students work on team building skills during Rise Up Friday

Students Rise Up on Fridays

An extraordinary, extended after-school program, "Rise up Friday" has been integrated at Lynn since mid-February. The program takes place every Friday for grades 6-8. During the program, the students are provided with a nutritious snack, the Boys & Girls Club facilitates activities, dinner is provided and the City of Las Cruces engages the students in activities.

There are seven staff members who are a part of the program and a total of 86 students. The students were registered for the program in January by parents who feel their child would benefit from the interactive skill-based activities. "Rise Up Friday" is unlike any typical after-school program. The hours extend from 4pm-7:45pm. The program takes place in the Lynn Middle School gym and cafeteria.

One community school partner, Crystal Archuleta, from the Team Mobile Unit (TMU) said, "The program shows the students that there are people out there who care about them and want to provide these opportunities." Staff members extend their workday for the students. The activities build teamwork skills, influence creativity and encourage critical thinking skills.

Lynn Mobile Fresh Market

Community Schools in partnership with the Lynn Middle School social workers saw the need to assist Lynn families by creating a food drive for pre-selected families. The food drive is held in the Lynn cafeteria and

has served families since January 2017. The food drive takes place the last Thursday of each month. Community Schools makes the drive possible with partners and volunteers to prepare for the families in need.

The food drive has been well received by parents. "Between food stamps and (this program) neither one of us goes hungry," said Trisha, one grateful parent. She was able to receive the food she needed for her family. The food products available at the food drive include staple items such as bread, milk, cereal and canned food items.

There are small red wagons to wheel around the cafeteria that help in gathering food. Volunteers assist with sign-in and inform the families on what is available for them. Lynn's National Junior Honor Society gives their time to support and volunteer at the food drive.

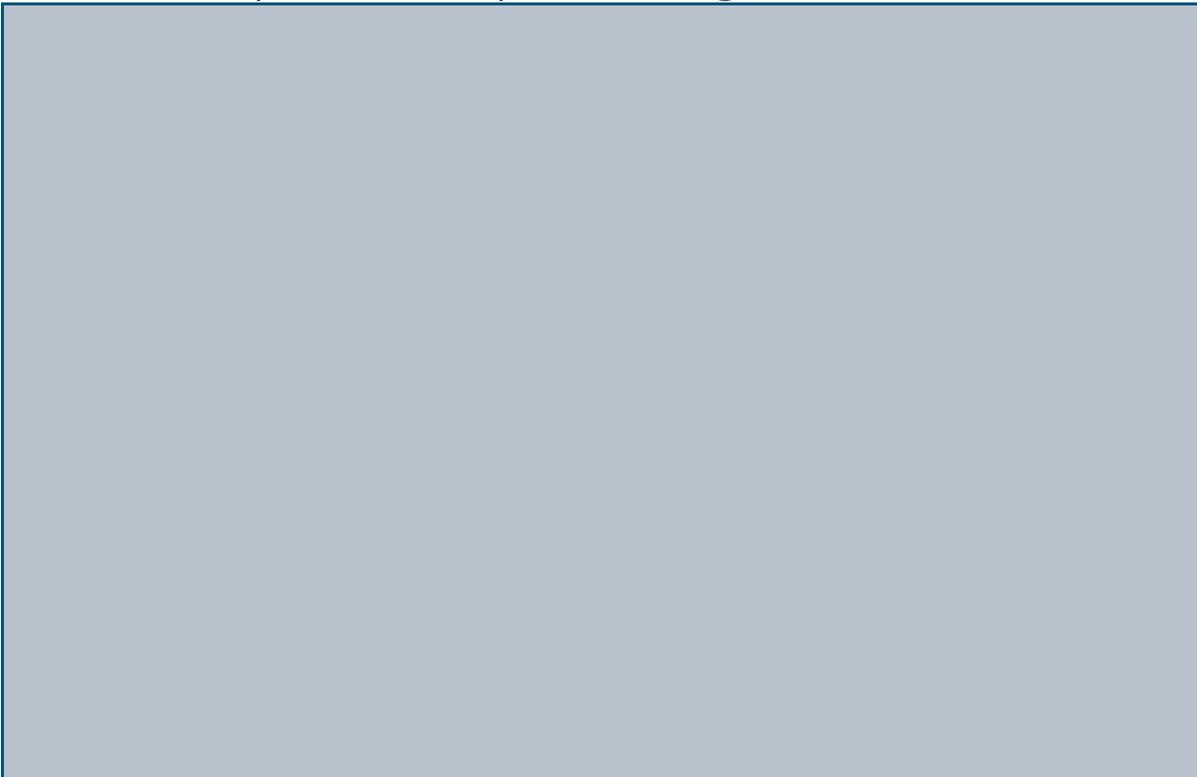
Community Schools has partnered with Roadrunner Food Bank in providing La Semilla, a mobile farm fresh market, non-profit organization. The bright, colorful truck has fresh vegetables available for sale. The mobile market educates families on local farms and food producers. The public has easy access to fresh food and utilize their "Food Bucks", SNAP and WIC cards. The La Semilla truck can be found outside the entrance of the Lynn cafeteria during the food drive.

To become a volunteer, you may contact Vanessa Mendez, Community School Coordinator at (575) 527-9445 Ext. 4209.



Lynn Middle School parents at the Community School program food drive on April 27, 2017

Lynn Community School Program Calendar



May 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Great Conversation on Education (Limited capacity)	2 Two for Tuesday 3:45-5pm	3	4	5 Last Rise Up Friday 3:45-7:45pm	6
7	8	9 Two for Tuesday 3:45-5pm	10 Stakeholder Group Meeting	11 Student Showcase/Parent survey 6-7:30pm	12	13
14	15 Student Engagement Team Meeting 4:15-5:30pm, Rm 301	16 Two for Tuesday 3:45-5pm	17	18 Food Bank Drive (TBD)	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Last Day of School	27
28	29	30	31 Stakeholder Group Meeting			

Volunteers needed for May 11th event, contact Vanessa Mendez, at (575) 527-9445 Ext. 4209.

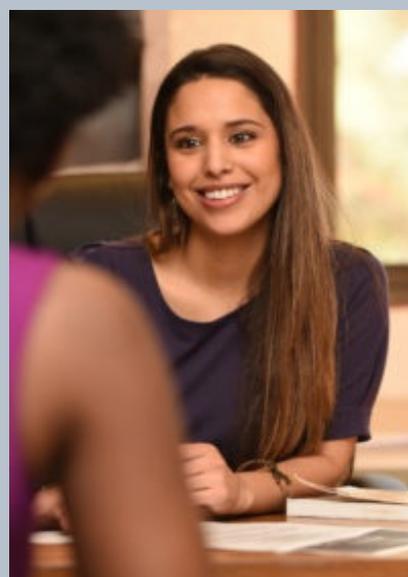
What is a Community School?

A Community School is a public school that works with parents, educators and the community to increase student opportunities. By making the school the hub of the neighborhood and combining top-quality academics with on-site health and social services, parents work with staff to strengthen the entire community and ensure that children are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn. Community schools equip parents with skills, knowledge and confidence to lead not only our families, but also our community and city.

For more information about community schools, visit www.successdac.org

Lynn Community School Coordinator, Vanessa Mendez

Vanessa Mendez is the Community School Coordinator serving Lynn Middle School. She aspires to inspire the community, to come together and looks forward to being a part of the positive changes our community seeks. She graduated in 2016 from New Mexico State attaining a Master of Arts in Communication Studies with minors in Educational Leadership Administration and Communication and National Security. Upon graduating she became an adjunct instructor New Mexico State University. In 2013, she graduated from New Mexico State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and Foreign Languages. All her academic accomplishments began at Dona Ana Community College. During her undergraduate studies, she had the opportunity to study abroad for a year exploring Europe and South America. During her time, abroad she did internships and volunteer work serving to provide a resource for children of lower-economic households. Vanessa has been very involved both in DACC, NMSU, and the Las Cruces community. She has a heart to serve her community and make a difference.



Community School Against Budget Cuts, Action Needed

Severe proposed budget cuts to the quality after-school funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, is at high risk. The program currently funds \$1.1 billion dollars to a variety of after-school programs. Community schools is in dire need to call constituents to action. The appropriated funds support after-school enrichment programs for youth including STEM, Readers Theatre, archery classes, school gardening programs, and more. The budget cuts will deeply impact the high-poverty youth. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), "A long-term study of 120 community youth programs shows school-related benefits".



Photo Courtesy of After-School Alliance

Funding for Community Schools is crucial to providing quality services to student's education outside of the classroom common core academics.

Please click on the link below to send messages to our local Senators and Congressmen to fight for youth after-school opportunities in our schools.

<https://afterschoolalliance.rallycongress.net/ctas/stand-up-against-devastating-cuts-in-programs-youth-families>

Lynn Volunteers Needed for Family Engagement Event

On Thursday, May 11, Lynn will be hosting our annual student showcase night for families and community members. Community school volunteers will be out in force speaking one-on-one to parents and families about community schools and asking them to complete a short survey about their vision for Lynn. If you are available from 5:00 PM to 7:30 on Thursday, May 11, please email Vanessa@NgageNM.org and let us know!



Great Public Schools for Every Student