Pursuing Educational Excellence in a Caring, Positive Environment.

Helix Charter High School PTSA

HELIX HI-LITES

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Principal: Douglas D. Smith | PTSA President: Lori Free-Trout | Editor: Pam Davis

President's Message

Dear Friends,

In this ever-changing world we find ourselves in, one thing remains a constant; Home and hearth. It is something readily available that you can provide for your children and it's not something that you have to go out and search for or purchase. The security that you provide for your family is immeasurable. Do NOT take it for granted and don't let your family take it for granted either.

When our children were smaller we read to them on a regular basis. If you have discontinued that, consider doing it again, or have your students read to you, even if it is from a textbook.

During these challenging times, limit time spent in front of the TV. It is inevitable that we become overwhelmed with bad news if there is too much exposure to it. Instead, break out your board games and puzzles. It is around the kitchen table that dialogue begins and family discussions are set in motion.

In nearly every family, neighborhood, church group or organization that we are a part of, there is a person involved in the military. Use this time to reach out to them with whatever support you have access to. Invite them to dinner or out to the movies, a concert or a walk around the block. Enlist your children's support in this effort. Is there a family who needs help with yard work or errands while a spouse is trying to do the work of both parents? Is there a family that is fragmented because one of their children has been sent overseas? The opportunity for support to them is nearly endless.

Again, home is where the heart is. Make yours available to those closest to you.

National Public Health Week

I'll bet you didn't know that the week of April 7-13, 2003 was National Public Health (NPHW) week. Neither did I until I went web surfing one morning. I was looking for information relating to school health and "bing!" there it was. Sponsored by the American Public Health Association the article gave me a lot of information. Did you know that one cup of whole milk has as much saturated fat as one hot dog, a Snickers bar, or 5 strips of bacon? Don't feel alone, I didn't know either. I guess we all should look again at what type of milk we buy and serve at our family's dinner table. Needless to say, I'll bet the cafeteria at Helix serves only 1% milk. Good for them, and good for our children who choose this at lunchtime.

Other ways we can provide better nutrition for our children is to find out what is stocked in the vending machines at school. At the next activity you attend on campus, look for the vending machines and see what choices we give to our children to eat. You may be surprised. You may be horrified! I hope that next year, Helix can celebrate National Public Health Week with great new offerings in the vending machines as well as other activities.

The website also mentions Vista High School in north county as a leader in establishing a healthy choice of foods in the vending that the school itself purchased and stocked. Beside the fact that students there are given healthier items to purchase, the sodas are priced higher that the nutritious foods. The great caveat is that the school now earns $6,000.00 a month in profits. Wow! What could we do with a few thousand dollars at Helix? I wonder…….

Shelley Burns, R.N.
Health chairperson for Helix PTSA

The School Health Index Begins At Helix Charter High School

A group of concerned students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members held the first School Health Index meeting on April 12th, 2003. Through the School Health Index the group will assess the health/nutrition and physical educational programs at Helix in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school's health promotion policies and programs. We will then develop an action plan for improving student health.

Please stay informed by reading the newsletter in the months ahead for information that will result from the completion of the School Health Index assessment. If you have any questions concerning this assessment, please contact Pat Feldman at (619) 466-8579 or pat.feldman@cox.net

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Kim Lauzier on being awarded a $500.00 Scholarship from the California State PTA. Kim is more than deserving of this scholarship (and so are her parents)! Kim is the only student in the Grossmont Union High School District who has received this honor. Kim has been accepted at Cal State San Marcos and plans to study film and art history. Good luck Kim!!!

2003/2004 Dates

School begins	August 13
Winter Break	Dec 22-Jan.2
Quarter Break	March 22-26
Spring Break	April 8-13
End of School	June 10

AP Testing

--takes place from May 5 through May 15. All fees ($80 total per test) must be paid. If a fee waiver was granted, the student has been notified of the amount of fee reduction granted. If you have any questions, call Howard Estes (GATE Coordinator) at EXT.353.

CALENDAR UPDATES

April 30	Spring Fling
May 26	Memorial Day—No School
June 3, 4	Senior Boards
June 11, 12	Final Exam Schedule
June 12	Graduation 6 p.m.

Please visit these parent-friendly and informative web sites.
http://www.foothillscouncil.org • Helix High School: helixcharter.net

Helix Library Web Page Great for Research

Please visit the **Helix Library Web pages** (via Helix home page at **helixcharter.net**, click on the word "Library" on the lower left side). Students and their families may want/need to use the **subscription services**, such as BigChalk, SIRS, or CQ Researcher, which are newspaper, magazine articles and much more. These are great for research as students will not have to worry if this is an "authority" the teacher will accept in their papers. Home access codes for the subscription services are:

Home BigChalk Access

URL Address: http://library.bigchalk.com/remote
(or via Helix Library page)
Username: 79-11534 Password: bigchalk

Home SIRS Access

URL Address: **www.sirs.com** (or via Helix Library page)
Customer number: CA2706H Password: 91941

HELP WANTED

We have a few positions still open on the Helix PTSA Board. We'd love to have you join us. It's a great way to make a difference in a kid's life!

1st VP/Programs - Researches and implements Parent Ed Programs - Time commitment approx 15 hours per year *.

Recording Secretary - Takes and transcribes the minutes of the PTSA meetings. Keeps a log of volunteer hours. - Time commitment approx 2 hours per month*.

CHAIRMANSHIP POSITIONS

Founders Day - Works with a committee to distribute HSA and Benton Hart applications to PTSA and staff. Selects (with committee) the winners and presents the awards at the Association meeting. Coordinates hospitality for this event. Updates list of recipients and creates program (printed) for Founders Day. Time commitment approx. 15 hours*.

Safety - Coordinates the reporting to the PTSA via newsletter articles, etc. the safety issues regarding Helix. Time commitment approx. 10 hours*.

Reflections (National PTA Arts) Program- Coordinates the application process with staff members, notices in bulletin, Newsletter, PTSA, etc. Collects entries and submits them to Council. Works with Council if there are winners. Arranges for a celebration for all Helix applicants. Time commitment approx. 20 hours*.

Concessions - Set up concession stands prior to home football games. Coordinates volunteers (from a list) to staff the stands. Time commitment approx 60 hours in the fall *.

Hospitality - Coordinates & serves Back to School staff lunch (August), Founders Day (cake & coffee/February), 24 Hour Relay Breakfast (March or April), Spring Fling Bar B Q (May) & Senior Awards Night (cake & punch/June) - Time commitment approx 50 hours per year *.

Campus Pride - Coordinates beautifying efforts for our Campus. Time commitment approx 20 hours per year *.

Outreach - Coordinates programs in this area. Works with the Effective Parent Partnership Coordinator in school outreach programs. Time commitment approx 12 hours per year*.

*Approx time commitment does not include 10 PTSA meetings a year.

GIRLS GOLF

Did you know that Helix has a Girls Golf Team? The season runs from Mid-August through early November. Contact Coach Frank Theroux at ext.136 or ftherou@helixcharter.net if interested.

Scottie Tots

Our Child Development classes will be running their Scottie Tots pre-school beginning May 5 for 3 weeks. This is a great opportunity for the little ones to socialize, for our students to get "hands on" experience and for Mom and Dad to have a 3 hour break in the morning to run errands, go shopping or just sit! The hours are from 9:30 to 12:15 everyday except Wednesdays (because of our weird schedule) for children ages 1-5. If interested, contact Beth Leighton, room 500, ext 390 or e-mail: bleight@helixcharter.net

Scrip Help Wanted

The Helix Foundation, a non-profit organization created to help Helix, has operated a very successful scrip program with precious donated time from many important folks for several years. We would like to take this opportunity to extend a very special THANK YOU to Gaydeen Dollar, who has been the captain of our scrip ship since 1998. Gaydeen has also welcomed parents and staff to her home, so everyone who needed access to scrip on weeknights and also weekend mornings could be accommodated. Thanks to Colleen Jackson, too, who has brought her smiling face each Thursday morning to the front office, in order to make scrip available to the staff and parents. Sadly for us, the time has come for Gaydeen to "graduate." Helix parents, students, and staff have greatly benefited from your efforts over the past 6 years, Gaydeen. Thanks for everything, you made an extremely busy job look easy. You're the best!

Parent Handbook Awarded

Congratulations to Helix PTSA from Ninth District PTA! The Helix Parent Handbook was awarded the BEST ALL AROUND Parent Handbook for a high school. Considering that Ninth District PTA serves ALL of San Diego and Imperial Counties, this is quite an honor! Parents!, take advantage of this "handy dandy parent resource". If you have misplaced yours, there are extras in the Helix front office and the counseling office.

The HELIX HI-LITES newsletter was presented with the award of Honor Roll by Ninth District PTA. Again, an honor!

Thanks to our editor (Pam Davis) for both of these endeavors. Pam, you are performing a much needed service to the students, parents, staff and community with your efforts. Thanks from the bottom of our hearts!

Cheer Tryouts

Tryouts/practice for next year's varsity and junior varsity cheer squads will begin on Tuesday May 6th at 3:00 in the Dance Room. Sports Packets need to be completed before that date (available in Library and Finance Office), including a physical. There will be a **mandatory** parent meeting on Wed. May 14 at 7:00 in room 500(student may not tryout if a parent/guardian doesn't attend) and the judging will be on Sat. the 17 at 9:00 am.

No experience is necessary! A great way to be involved at Helix! For more info see Mrs. Leighton in room 500, call ext. 390 or e-mail: bleight@helixcharter.net.

9th Grade Information

It's hard to believe that the year is almost over. We are reviewing the 3rd quarter report cards and will be contacting students about summer school if necessary.

Summer School dates are June 20 to July 18, from 8am to Noon.

We have gotten course selections for next school year from all 9th grade students. Your opportunity to meet with us about your student's progress towards graduation and to select classes for next year is Summer Registration. **Summer Registration for current 9th grade students will be June 24 – 28, July 1 – 3, and July 8 – 12 from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm.** You should have received this information in early April. Registration is by appointment and a parent or guardian MUST be present. **Appointments can be made on Wednesday, May 7 or May 14 from 7:30 am to 9:00 am**. Failure to make or keep your registration appointment will jeopardize enrollment at Helix for next year. Some elective classes may fill before the end of registration, so plan on making the earliest possible appointment. You should plan to spend at least one hour to complete this process and students should plan to have their ID pictures taken.

For your planning purposes, **school will start on August 13th** for the 2003/2004 school year!

Sophomore Corner

The Sophomore Class will be selling Snocones at the Spring Fling on April 30th. Come by and see us.

We are currently in the process of finalizing a location for next year's Winter Formal. The Junior class is responsible for putting on the Winter Formal and next year that will be US!

The class officers meet every Wednesday at lunch in Room 260. We welcome everyone's input. Stop by anytime.

Andrea Newell
Sophomore Class VP

Attention Seniors

Are you a member of the Helix PTSA? If so, the Helix PTSA scholarship applications are now available from your Senior advisors or in the Career center. We offer several scholarships, so get your application today and return it to Ms. Cech by May 9, 2003.

Performing Arts Information

The Helix Instrumental Music Department presents, "Lights, Camera, Action: A Theatrical Pops, " May 15, 16 and 17 in the Helix Gym at 7 p.m. On May 15, all tickets are $5. On May 16 and 17, General Admission tickets (bleachers) are $5 and reserved table tickets are $8 and $10. For more ticket information, contact Mr. Sperling at ext. 351. Ticket orders can be sent to Helix, attn: Russ Sperling.

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Members of the Helix Speech Team recently participated in competitions sponsored by local service groups. Tyler Brown, Beca Venter and Jenny Anderson competed at the La Mesa Lions Club competition. Tyler took 1st place and will compete at the next level against winners from other area Lions Clubs' competitions. Caitie Ulle, Beca Venter and Bernadette Siscon competed at the La Mesa Sunshine Rotary competition. Caitie took 1st, then took 3rd at the next level of competition against winners from other area Rotary Clubs' competitions. Each of the competitors won cash prizes at the competitions for placing 3rd or higher.

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The Helix Music Department has been recognized as one of 50 "Grammy Signature School" awards by the National Academy or Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) Foundation. These awards were given to select music departments across the country that exhibited comprehensive music offerings, including all areas of instrumental and choral music, as well as music theory and introductory music courses. Each school that was considered for the award submitted portfolios of ensemble recordings and videos, and detailed explanations of course offerings. The award gives Helix Charter High School national recognition and a grant to the music department of at least $1,000. The award will be presented at an upcoming concert (T.B.A.) by a representative of the Grammy Foundation.

The music department faculty are very pleased that our efforts to teach music to all interested students and produce performing ensembles of high caliber has been recognized at this level.

Russ Sperling, John Lindhorst, Matt Quiroz

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The Helix Speech Team is proud to announce that nine speakers have qualified to represent the team at the California State Speech Tournament in May. This is the most qualifiers the team has had in the last four years. It is also the biggest group of qualifiers in the Grossmont District and in the top echelon in the San Diego/Imperial Valley Speech League. Qualifiers are: Darius Shipp in Thematic Interpretation; Tricia Lesinski in Dramatic Interpretation; Rachel Derwin and Caitie Ulle in Oratorial Interpretation; Tim Roberts, Tyler Brown, Demetrius Henderson, and Shannon Rall, in Duo Interpretation; and Gabe Thibodeau in Original Prose and Poetry.

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The Highland Players announce the final production of the 2002/2003 season: A Night of One Acts. The performers will present several one act plays directed by students Darius Shipp and Sierra Francisco, in fulfillment of their Senior Project requirement; alumnus Danny Grodecki and faculty member Gregg Osborn. A Night of One Acts opens Wednesday, May 7 and runs through Saturday, May 10. Show time is 7 p.m. Tickets are $8 each, or $6 for each student with an ASB card. To pre-order tickets, send a check made payable to Helix Drama to Helix High School, Attn: Gregg Osborn, 7323 University Ave., La Mesa, CA 91941. Include a note indicating the evening you would like to attend, the number of tickets you are requesting, any special seating requests and a phone number where you can be reached. Someone will call you to confirm your order was received and your tickets will be left at will call. For further information, contact Mr. Osborn at ext. 366 or Mrs. Osborn at ext. 450.

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The Helix Choral Music Department proudly presents Pops 2003 - Stars on Broadway, featuring the Treble Choir, Bass Choir, Intermediate Choir, Advanced Choir, Guys and Dolls (Show Choir), and numerous solos and small groups. The concert will include Broadway tunes from shows such as Annie Get your Gun, The Sound of Music, South Pacific, Cinderella, West Side Story, Bye Bye Birdie and many others. Performance dates are May 22, 23, and 24 at 7 p.m. in the Helix Gym. Ticket prices range from $8 to $15 and will go on sale in early May.

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The Helix Show Choir "Guys and Dolls" recently performed at a competition at Fullerton College. The group's performance was well-received by the audience and they received a lengthy standing ovation at the conclusion of their set. Mr. Lindhorst stated that it was a successful trip and he looks forward to future competitions with the choir.

Class of 2003 Activities Calendar

April 21 – 31	CAT-6 Testing – Senior Activities TBA
April 29th	Blood Drive
May 2nd	Multicultural Day
May 5th	Senior **Project & Portfolio Due** (Econ/PoliSci Term 2)
May 14th	Senior **Research Paper Due** (Senior English Term 2)
May 28th	Practice Senior Boards (in Advisory)
June 3-4	**Senior Boards** (Minimum Days)
June 6th	Student Appreciation Day
June 7th	**Prom** – San Diego Design Center
June 9th	Senior Awards Nights
June 11-12	Finals Schedule
June 12th	**GRADUATION DAY** ☺ • A.M.- GRAD REHEARSAL • 6pm – 2003 GRADUATION CEREMONY • P.M. – GRAD NIGHT

Information for Parents of 11th graders

Please talk with your student about the following issues that are important to juniors at this time of his/her high school education.
The last day to register for the June 7th test date is May 2nd. Registration packets and practice questions are available in the Career Center Room 201 during break, lunch or after school. Students can also register on-line at www.collegeboards.com with a credit card. There is also some prep information available on that website. Students who are planning on applying to any UC school must take both SAT I and SAT II on separate testing dates. The last date to take any SAT exam will be October 11th next fall so students should reserve that test date as a back-up and try to get all testing done this year.
All juniors should try to have their Senior Project Proposal approved by the end of this school year. For general information click the "Senior Project" link on the Helix website at www.helixcharter.net

Do you have a more than one student attending Helix next year?

There will be a special summer registration appointment date ONLY for students that have siblings on April 16th from 7:30am – 9:00am in front of the counseling office.

Do you only have one student attending Helix next year?

All other students should plan to make their summer registration appointments on May 7th or May 14th from 7:30am – 9:00am in front of the counseling office. Your students may know this time as "lottery." It took place after school in the past years but will be taking place on Wednesday mornings this year.

Summer registration for seniors will be taking place from June 25th – 28th, July 1st – 3rd and July 8th – 12th, 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Please make sure that you and your student will be able to have an appointment to schedule next year's classes during one of these dates.

If you have any questions please e-mail one of us:
Kathy Gunion - kgunion@helixcharter.net
Amy Levy - alevy@helixcharter.net
Cathy Singer - csinger@helixcharter.net

Please Join Us at **Chevys Fresh Mex** in La Mesa
for our LAST Grad Nite 2003 Fundraiser
On **Wednesday, May 21st** from **5pm – 9pm**
Chevys will donate **20%** of the proceeds to Helix PTSA!
Please call ahead for reservations at **619-698-9757**
Please remember to mention Helix High School when ordering!

PROMise to Keep It Safe

As parents and teens plan for prom, graduation and other spring activities, Helix PTSA suggests that parents:

- Say NO to unchaperoned parties, after prom parties in hotel rooms, coed sleepovers or any other event where alcohol could be served.
- Know the address and telephone number of a party your teens wants to attend. Then contact the parents of the party giver to verify that they plan to be at home and visible, (offering to send some food or soda is a good icebreaker.) Be sure alcohol/drugs will not be permitted.
- Be certain your teen knows when he/she is supposed to be home, and that he/she must stay in one place, or call before changing party locations. Set up a code word your teen can use when calling you to signal that he/she needs to be picked up now.
- Don't bargain with youth by allowing them to drink as long as they promise not to drive. There are other problems with underage alcohol consumption besides drunk driving!

If your house is the site of the party….

- Don't allow teens to leave and return.
- Walk through your home often with more food and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Ask other parents to help chaperone or provide food for the party.
- Call parents of anyone under the influence immediately, and take away the keys.

Alcohol is a depressant, slows reactions, dulls the brain, effects coordination, changes behavior and impairs judgment. Teens report that alcohol consumption is a major factor in date rape, suicide, fighting and vandalism. Too much….too fast….can kill you. Alcohol poisoning kills 4,000 teens a year. Signs of alcohol poisoning can include vomiting, sweating, pole and clammy skin, slowed breathing, disorientation, and losing consciousness. The teen should NOT be given coffee, water or food, or be put to bed to sleep it off, or be left alone. The teens should receive medical care **immediately**. There is no antidote, but doctors can pump the stomach, restart a failed heartbeat and monitor breathing.

**San Dieguito Alliance for Drug Free youth is the alcohol tobacco and other drug prevention collaboration for the north coastal region. If you would like to participate in our prevention networking meetings, please contact us at (858) 755-6598 or strang@cts.com or PO Box 2448, Del Mar, CA 92014.*

Scholarships

Each year the Helix PTSA offers a few $100-$200 scholarships to graduating seniors who are active PSTA members. Pick up your very simple application from your senior advisor or see Mrs. Cech in the career center for more details.

Parent Input for Performance Goals

Dear Parents,

In order to gather information for our Helix Local Educational Agency (LEA) Plan to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, we are asking for parent input for our performance goals. If you could respond to the following questions via mail or email to Martha Foncerrada (mfoncer@helixcharter.net) or Cheryl Tyler (ctyler@helixcharter.net) by Thursday, May 8, 2003, it would be greatly appreciated. The NCLB goals and our questions are as follows:

Goal #1: All students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics, by 2013-2014.

1. How are you notified about your student's assessment scores and their interpretation?
2. What are some programs that you are aware of that improve literacy?
3. What about other parent outreach programs?

Goal #2: All limited-English-proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

4. What programs are you involved with regarding outreach and family literacy?

Goal #3: By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

Goal #4: All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.

5. What are we doing from a parent/community perspective to ensure a healthy learning environment?

Goal #5: All students will graduate from high school.

6. What are some activities that Helix provides for students that would keep them actively engaged in high school in order to obtain a diploma?

Be Safe

The Helix PTSA would like to honor our staff members for their service to our country. A HUGE THANKS to Lieutenant Colonel John Geary (Social Science Department), Commander Stephen Masi (Math Department) and Corporal Robert Saenz (Campus Supervisor). We miss them and hope for a swift and safe return to Helix.

Math Homework Survey

The math department has recently done a department wide survey on homework with most of our classes. We asked the following questions (or similar ones) below:

1) What do you believe are the benefits/frustrations of homework?

2) If you do not complete your homework, what is generally the reason?

3) How could we get you to do a better job on homework?

4) Do you go to math tutoring? In your opinion, why don't more students attend tutoring?

Surprisingly, the results varied little despite the level of the course (Basic Algebra - Calculus).

The main responses were:

1) The students want to practice, but they do not want to do busy work. They do not want to spend too much time doing homework, they have busy lives (for a variety of reasons). When students do not know how to do it, they have no one to help them. Generally, their parents cannot help them.

2) The main responses as to why they did not complete homework regardless of course level were: **I do not know how to do it**, I had something else to do, I did not have enough time.

3) Give students less homework to do, clear examples from the lecture, make sure students practice some problems before they leave.

4) Tutoring needs to be more one on one. The times that tutoring is available is not convenient (after school/ before school). Many students will not come because they are embarrassed about their knowledge level. Many are afraid to ask for help. Many students do not care.

The statements above represent a summary of what the students believe about homework and tutoring. To some, they may sound like excuses, but again these statements relate what the students actually believe. Some of my own opinions are:

***I believe each department should conduct a similar survey.**

***I also believe we should assign less, more focused work and try to get students to do it at a higher level of sophistication.**

***Jeff Babbitt pointed out that we must not forget the "guided practice" aspect of lessons, where we check for understanding.**

***I believe that each department should have an "open office" throughout the school day to tutor students, staffed by rotating teachers on their prep period. Maybe students could sign in for a allotted amount of time (5 - 15 minutes) and have one-on-one attention.**