

Pursuing Educational Excellence in a Caring, Positive Environment.

Helix Charter High School PTSA

Helix Hi-Lites

Volume LIII, Issue 5
Principal: Douglas D. Smith

Foothills Secondary Council, Ninth District, Inc., CCPTS
PTSA President: Robin Peterson

February, 2004
Editor: Pam Davis

PTA President's Message

Dear Families and Community Members,

With continuing opportunities on our campus for volunteers, we welcome your support as we prepare for Spring Fling, Senior Boards, and Grad Night. Participating on Senior Boards is an excellent way to get a sneak preview of what your student will be expected to do for their Senior Project and helping out with Grad Night helps PTSA ensure that our students have a safe, fun place to celebrate. As we near the start of Quarter 4, we are also beginning to plan for the coming year by seeking interested people to serve on the 2004-05 PTSA Board. New faces and new ideas allow great things to happen. If you are looking for just the right opportunity to be more involved at Helix, please feel free to contact me at

petersontalk@juno.com

Sincerely, **Robin S. Peterson**

**Don't forget that
March 2nd is Election Day.
Exercise your Right to Vote!**

As an attempt
to better inform

parents and the community about the "Benefits" of being a charter school, the Helix Charter High School Budget Committee will be using the PTSA Bulletin as an avenue to demonstrate some of the positive fiscal benefits of a charter. For this issue we would like to highlight the Home Economics and Social Studies Departments.

The Helix Charter High School Home Economics department is a small but popular department on campus. Students enrolled in Home Economics take courses such as Single Survival, Child Development and Housing/Interior Design. Charter funding has supported this department. For example, charter funding provided:

- Seven new ranges
- New tables and chairs
- New demonstration table
- New textbooks for Housing/Interior Design

Despite the many improvements charter funding has provided, the Home Eco-

Budget Committee High-

nomics department
is unable to expand

to meet the demand of students due to the limited classroom space. These classes are very popular so many students must wait until their upper grades to enroll. Although there is interest to expand the Home Economics program, there are not enough classrooms available to facilitate an expansion. Charter funding will be able to address the minor needs of this program, however, modernization is key to future expansion of this important program.

The Helix Charter High School Social Studies department services is one of the largest on campus. Every student at Helix Charter High School is enrolled in Social Studies courses every year. Charter funding has allowed the social studies programs on campus to expand in a variety of manners. For example, charter funding has provided:

- Eight classrooms to receive new desks
- Laser Printers for six classrooms
- Digital projectors for 90% of classrooms
- Continued textbook funding
- Release time for teachers to work together to score student work and align curriculum

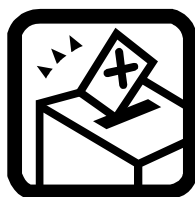
- Funding to expand popular courses (AP Psychology, AP Economics, AP Government, Psychology)
- Mobile computer cart for Honors Geography

Despite the many improvements charter funding has provided, the Social Studies department is still functioning with a variety of teachers without classrooms and/or

continued on page 2

What is Proposition H? (Bond Measure)

Proposition H is a local school bond measure on the March 2nd ballot to authorize \$274,000,000 for critically needed repairs and upgrades to our local high schools. If approved by voters, Proposition H will allow the High School District to repair aging roofs, upgrade deteriorated plumbing, restrooms, electrical, technology, heating and cooling systems; improve fire safety and security systems; renovate outdated classrooms, science labs and school facilities; improve buildings and grounds for safety; and construct a new high school.



Why is Proposition H needed?

Local high school facilities are aging. After 30-50 years of constant use, most high schools in our community are old and deteriorated, some are overcrowded, and virtually all need repair and renovation. After the unsuccessful attempt to pass Proposition T in 2002, the High School District reexamined the facility needs of each school. Based on need and the input of parents, teachers, staff and community, a specific plan to rehabilitate aging schools and relieve overcrowding was developed. Proposition H was placed on the ballot to authorize implementation of the plans to renovate and upgrade all of our local high schools.

If you wish more information you can pick up (yellow) packets in the reception area of the high school or through Helix Adult School in the evening hours.

CALENDAR UPDATES

Feb. 21 Parent Teacher Conferences
Mar. 16,17 Final Exam Schedule
Mar. 18-19 INTERSESSION
Mar. 22-26 Quarter Break
Mar. 29 First day of Quarter 4
Apr. 9 School Holiday
Apr. 8-13 Spring Break

California State
PTA
every child, one voice.

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

National
PTA
every child, one voice.

Resolution Establishing Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Exercise Policy for Helix Charter High School

On Monday, January 26, 2004, the Helix Governing Board approved the "Resolution Establishing Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Exercise Policy for Helix Charter High School". This resolution was written by the Helix administration with input from parents, community members, and students; and, is considered a commitment for future decisions made for the students and community of Helix Charter High School. The resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS: The Charter Board of Helix High School is committed to the health and well-being of all students.

Being overweight and physically unfit has become a major health problem for children throughout the country, a problem that is of grave concern to the Surgeon General, health professionals, parents, policymakers, and children themselves.

Many concerned parents, community, students and staff have investigated the problem conditions at Helix and have made recommendations concerning the situation.

The Charter Board is interested in providing our students with the most healthy and appealing food choices possible, and in diminishing the dependence of schools and school-related organizations on selling products of questionable nutritional value.

The problem of obesity is further exacerbated by students today having far fewer opportunities for physical exercise than students in decades past due to cutbacks in funding for physical education and intramural sports, and time spent being physically active.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That a School Nutrition and Physical Fitness Advisory Committee will be formed by the Principal to gather information on this issue and bring recommendations to the administration and the Charter Board on possible actions to begin to address the issues of childhood obesity, physical fitness and related health concerns.

That the administration and the committee will develop a plan to improve the nutritional quality of breakfast, lunches, snacks and beverages served on campus, as well as plan to phase out the sale of sodas and unhealthy snacks by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, including suggestions for replacing revenues currently secured through the sale of these items.

That the administration and the committee will also develop a plan to expand and improve opportunities for physical

activity in our schools.

That the committee will work with county services, city departments, youth groups, students, parents and others to develop recommended strategies, and coordinate its recommendations with related strategies being developed throughout the county on such things as access to appropriate health care, potential funding sources, community education and outreach.

That representatives from the Associated Student Body and other student groups be involved in the committee.

That periodic reports will be made to the Charter Board during the spring of 2005 and beyond, as needed. **PASSED AND ADOPTED, ON THIS 26th day of January 2004, by the Governing Board of the Helix Charter High School Governing Board.**

Pat Feldman

Budget Highlights *(continued from page 1)*

office space (19 teachers share 13.5 classrooms). There are still many classrooms in need of new desks and technology.

Helix Charter High School has a growing Social Studies program. However, due to facilities constraints, many students are unable to take additional Social Studies classes because more sections cannot be offered. One reason why sections are limited is due to the constraints of the classrooms. This department has a limited amount of space and the classrooms are used every period of the day. In addition, all of these rooms (except one) lack air conditioning and heat. Although there is interest to expand the Social Studies program, there are not enough classrooms available to facilitate an expansion. Charter funding will be able to address the minor needs of this program, however, modernization is key to future expansion of this important program. **Paula Ann Trevino**

The Highland Players

present the Stephen Sondheim musical

"Into the Woods"

Show dates are March 4-6 and 11-13. Show time is 7 pm and tickets are \$8, or \$6 for each student with an ASB card. For tickets, please send a check made payable to Helix Drama along with a note indicating the number of tickets, which night, any seating preferences, and a phone number. Someone will call you to let you know your order was received and your tickets will be left at will-call.

There will be a special dinner, available only on opening night (March 4). The dinner is presented by friends of the Highland Players. Your price includes a carne asada dinner with rice, beans, tortillas and guacamole; a beverage; dessert and admission to that evening's performance. The cost for the evening is \$20 per person and all proceeds benefit the drama department. Please have your reservations and payments made by Monday, March 1.

The Helix Speech Team needs you! The final league tournament of the year will be on March 19 and 20 at El Camino High School. This is the State Qualifier Tournament, which means successful speakers at this tournament will go on to the California State Speech Tournament in Concord, CA. The team is responsible for one judge for every six entries; if we can't meet our judging commitment, our entries will have to be cut and students will miss the opportunity to go to the state tournament. No prior experience is necessary and there are no special skills required. If you are interested in helping our very successful team (we have finished in the top three at every league tournament this year - the league includes all of San Diego County and the Imperial Valley), please contact Gregg Osborn at ext 366 or Jennifer Osborn at ext 450.

Jennifer Osborn

Summer School Dates

Students and faculty have 1 week off before summer school starts (June 14 through June 18).

Summer School starts Monday, June 21 and runs through Friday, July 16. (20 school days)

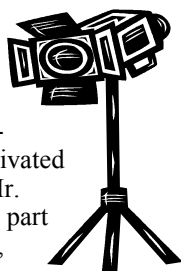
Grade Level Teams will be accepting summer school requests in late February and March when collecting students' course requests for next year. Summer school requests can be submitted to each Grade Level Team through out Term II as remediation needs of students are identified. **Kevin Osborn**

Ice Cream Social

Please join the Instrumental Music Department for a tradition just started last year: our "Ice Cream Social." It's a chance to hear the students in our bands and orchestra perform while eating various ice cream treats (other food available too). The event will be in the gym on Sunday, March 14 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Admission is free, but the ice cream is not. Have you even eaten ice cream while listening to a bagpipe? If not, you

Grade Level Teams are currently developing dates and possible new ways to register for the 2004-05 school year. More info. will follow.

Social Studies Spotlight



Welcome Back Mr. Geary! Helix Charter High School welcomes Mr. Geary back to work after two years due to being activated for military service in January of 2002. While in active duty, Mr. Geary (LtCol. USMC) served the United States as an officer as part of the 1st Marine Division Staff. He spent time in Kuwait, Iraq, the Pentagon, Camp Pendleton, Quantico, VA, and Hawaii. Mr. Geary has returned with energy and keen desire to work with students. Welcome Back!

Also in Social Studies –

- Congratulations to the Honors Geography program for writing and receiving the “Best Buy Teach Grant”. This grant further supports the expanded use of technology into the core curriculum.

- Helix is a College Prep school and the Social Studies department believes that many of our students are capable of completing college level work while in high school. Our Honors/Advanced Placement program has continued to grow over recent years. This month we spotlight A.P. European History.

AP Microeconomics/AP Macroeconomics are challenging courses taken by many 12th graders at Helix. Students who are successful on these exams in May can earn college credit. Below is a comparison of Helix with other top schools in the county as well as other Grossmont Union High School District schools. Congratulations to all students who earned college credit last year! For more information about this course contact gasimos@helixcharter.net (Mr. Asimos).

A more comprehensive list is available by contacting patrevi@helixcharter.net (Mrs. Trevino). We are very proud that the number of students passing this exam has increased over the past three years. In addition, this year, due to the popularity of the course, over eighty students will take each exam. Over the past three years, the Helix A.P. Microeconomics/Macroeconomics results have placed Helix in the top 10 for San Diego County (based on number of exams passed). Mr. Asimos is a popular teacher who consistently prepares students to score well on these college credit exams. Great job!

Paula Ann Trevino

AP Microeconomics

School Name	# of Exams Passed	# of Exams Given	Pass Percentage
1. San Dieguito	70	80	88
2. La Costa Canyon	62	115	54
3. Bonita Vista	45	70	64
4. Point Loma	29	38	76
5. Vista	26	30	87
6. Helix	18	23	78
7. El Camino	11	15	73
8. Ramona	11	13	85
9. Hilltop	10	25	40
10. El Capitan	7	17	41
Other Schools			
15. Granite Hills	1	6	17
19. Valhalla	1	22	5
21. Grossmont	0	4	0
No other schools offer course	20	85	24
San Diego County Avg			58

Announcements from Class of 2007

The class of 2007 is looking to build a core group of parent volunteers who are interesting in helping with various activities throughout the school year such as recognition events, fundraising events, registration or other special events. Please contact Renée Milburn at 644-1940 x259 or email at rmilbur@helixcharter.net We would appreciate your help!

Class of 2007 Sweatshirts - \$35.00

See your nearest class officer or, Ms. Trevino, Ms. Beltran or Ms. Milburn
Renée Milburn

Class of 2004

As we welcome in the new 9th grade, the team is finding we cannot do it alone. We are looking for anyone who might have some available time to help us with phone calling or speaking to parents about Helix from a parents perspective.

If you are available to volunteer at any of the following events, please email me to sign up. If you know other parents that may want to help PLEASE forward on the request. We are also looking for students to help out at the Orientation days (2/28, 3/13, 3/18, and 3/19). We think it would be helpful to new high school parents to gain wisdom from those who have been there before.

Wednesday, 2/11 from 3 - 5 pm - Phone calls to incoming 9th grade parents to schedule orientation appointments.

Wednesday, 2/18, 2/25, 3/3 and 3/10 - Collating Packets for Orientation

Saturday, 2/28 from 7 - 12 am or 11 - 4 pm
Answer questions from parents and scheduling summer appointments

Saturday, 3/13 - Answer questions from parents and scheduling summer appointments

Thursday, 3/18 from 7 - 12 am or 11 - 4 pm
Answer questions from parents and scheduling summer appointments

Friday, 3/19 from 7 - 12 am or 11 - 4 pm
Answer questions from parents and scheduling summer appointments

Wednesdays, 4/14, 4/21 and 4/28 from 3 - 5 pm
Phone calls to incoming 9th grade parents to schedule registration appointments

Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated. If you can help please email me at csinger@helixcharter.net

Cathy Singer, School Counselor Class of 2004

Curious about the ASB?

Whether you want to know about how ASB spends money, what the ASB does during the year, or how to get involved with the ASB, we have a website to cater to your needs! Log on to the internet and visit our new site at <http://www.helixcharter.net/helixasb/>

Michelle Kitson

Did You Know?

"If you don't ask, you don't get." This saying holds true under many circumstances, including scholarships. Most scholarship applications require some effort to find, fill out and file, but the time and effort spent can result in thousands of dollars for tuition. Here are some tips to make your search easier and more fruitful.

Opportunity knocks. Have your student check in once a week with the school's College/Career Center for available scholarships. The scholarship coordinator can help students find the appropriate information. You can also check the Helix bulletin online at www.helixcharter.net

Read the fine print. Make sure that your student meets the scholarship qualifications before taking time to complete the application. Scholarships may require academic, athletic or artistic talent, extra-curricular activities, community service, proof of financial need or a combination of the above criteria.

Delve into the details. Completeness and neatness count to the scholarship review committee. Check all the elements of the application package for accuracy and spelling. Make a copy for your records; in some cases, you'll be able to repeat the information on another application. Be sure to get the packet in by the deadline.

Coast into cash. In honor of its 75th anniversary, California Coast Credit Union is offering a special scholarship program for graduating high school seniors. A total of five scholarships will be awarded: one for \$7,500, and four additional scholarships for \$1,000 each. In addition to other criteria, applicants must be a member of the credit union, or the son or daughter of a member, in good standing and have a cumulative high school grade point average, or equivalent, of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0. Applications must be postmarked by April 2, 2004.

For more information and/or an application, please call California Coast Credit Union toll free at (877) 495-1600, visit the La Mesa branch at 8131 Allison Avenue or visit www.calcoastcu.org. California Coast Credit is a partner in education with Helix Charter High School.

Terri Miracle,
Community Relations Manager for California Coast Credit Union

Public Health Week

My Mom called me the other day. She said, "We had another 18 inches of snowfall yesterday! The snow banks are so tall you cannot safely see out of the end of your driveway. I wish I were back with you. I miss walking." Too few of us walk for enjoyment. Sure, we walk for our health, grudgingly. "Only if I have to.... When I have time...." Nevertheless, we often don't enjoy it. We are lucky to live in a climate where we can walk 365 days a year, and enjoy it! I don't know about you but I could stand to loose a few pounds, and walking is one of the best exercises. It's also a great workout for your heart.

April 5-11, 2004 is National Public Health Week. Sponsored by the American Public Health Association, the theme for this year's national public health week is "Eliminating Health Disparities". One of the goals is trying to eliminate health disparities between different ethnic and racial peoples in our communities. For those seven days, I dare you to take a walk! Walk around your cul-de-sac, your block, walk your dog, walk your mom, your husband or wife. I dare you! Anyone can do it, Hispanic, African-American, Caucasian, Asian, and others. Walking is something that we all can do. So, let's get up, walk outside and put your face in the sunshine, and enjoy! At least you don't have to shovel the snow from your door to do it!

Shelly Burns

Sports Schedule

Basketball CIF Playoffs

2/24-3/5 Sites and dates TBA

Soccer CIF Playoffs

2/24-3/6 Sites and dates TBA

Wrestling CIF Tournament

Sites and dates TBA

Spring Sports start Saturday Feb. 21

- Baseball
- Softball
- Track & Field
- Boy's Tennis
- Boy's Volleyball
- Boy's/Girl's Lacrosse
- Boy's/Girl's Swim
- Boy's Golf

All athletes must be cleared through the Finance Office before participation. This includes: pre-participation physical, proof of insurance and emergency information. If you have questions please call Damon Chase at ext. 524.

Stadium Field Turf Installation Complete

The Stadium Field Turf is installed and looks great. Thank you to all who purchased Buick Golf tickets or donated to help fund this project. We truly have a beautiful, safe, state of the art surface. County Supervisor Diane Jacob, a Helix alum, was instrumental in helping us acquire funding. We are still accepting donations to pay off a substantial loan. Please call Damon Chase at ext. 524 if you would like to contribute.

Damon Chase

The Best Time of 2004 is already scheduled

Get the babysitter booked for April 17th. Grab your Poodle Skirts, your Nehru Jackets, your tie-dye T-Shirts, whatever era is in your attic and rock on over to "**HELIX ROCKS**", HIMA's annual dinner and Auction. Don't wait to reserve your seat(s). We are going all out this year to make it a sellout! There are only 200 seats available! Call now! Operators are standing by. We have individual and full table ticket prices. Here are all the details.

Event: Helix Rock's Sponsored by: Helix Instrumental and Music Association

Date: April 17th, 2004

Time: 6:00 P.M. til Midnight

Place: The Crystal Ballroom, 414 N. Magnolia Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020

Attire: Come in your favorite rock 'n roll era clothing from the 50's to today.

Price: \$30.00 per person / \$200.00 for a table of 8. Adults only for this event

Price Includes: Admission, dinner, coffee and/or tea, and dancing.

Alcoholic drinks and soda are available for purchase

Reservation #: 619.433.3664



AP Fee Reduction Form

A student may qualify for fee reduction by meeting federally calculated income levels. Complete this form and return to your teacher **NO LATER THAN MONDAY, APRIL 5TH**. If you qualify, your total cost will be the \$15 reservation fee paid PLUS \$10.

Student Name _____ (PRINT)

- ____ 1) Qualifies for free or reduced lunch program (no other proof needed)
 ____ 2) Eligible based upon family income (chart appears on Fee Waiver Information sheet)

Size of family unit _____ Annual family income _____

Attach proof of family income / financial need (tax return, SS form, Medicaid form, etc.)

Student plans to take the following AP tests in 2004

Please list all tests being taken

If more than one student in family, submit only one form BUT include all student name and tests on this sheet.

Senior High/Senior Life Con-

Do you want to learn to sew - or cook - or play chess? The **Senior High/Senior Life Connection** is a program on campus designed to provide students with activities that are fun and useful.

Sewing Club with Miss Georgiana is held in Room 500 on Mondays at 3:00 p.m. Learn basic sewing and quilting techniques. The first project will be Qwillows! That's a blanket that folds into a pillow - it's great for stadium events, tucking in the car or taking to the beach. The next class is on Monday, February 9.

Cooking Club with Miss Vickie is held in Room 500 on Fridays at 3:00 p.m. Learn to cook your favorite foods from scratch - like chocolate chip cookies, lasagna, fried chicken and lots more. The next class is going to be on Friday, February 6.

Chess Club with Mr. Bill is held on Thursday and Friday mornings from 7:00 to 11:15 a.m. Learn to play or hone your skills with Mr. Bill or another student. They meet between the EXL building and Ms. Kirk's office.

Future activities in the making:

Buddy Walkers - meet a partner on prescheduled days and walk around the track. By earning mileage (1 mile equals 4 laps) you can make up PE classes.

This Old School - volunteers are needed to oversee repair and construction projects by students on campus. We are looking for retired folks who would be interested in volunteering a couple of days each week, from 1:23 to 2:55 p.m.

It's easy to participate. Interested students should call Su Hamano, the Intergenerational Coordinator on campus at 619-971-1560, email her at shamano@helixcharter.net, visit her on Tuesdays or Fridays from 9:00 - 2:00 in the office next to Officer Stoney, or put a note in her mailbox. Tell her what your interests are and how to get in touch with you.

Su Hamano, Intergenerational Consultant

A very special **Thank You** to those of you who made a donation to the Sophomore Class. Remember it is not too late to make those tax-deductible donations to Class of 06' in your students name. Please send them c/o Judy Kirk at Helix Charter High School. Watch for up-coming Fundraisers for our class! Thank you for your continued support of your student and our school.
Judy Kirk, Sophomore Class Advisor

AP Fee Reduction Information

AP Test cost: \$82 per test With Fee Waiver: \$25 per test

Criteria for Fee Waiver:

- 1) Student is eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches at Helix.
- 2) Student is a member of a family whose taxable income for the preceding year does not exceed the amount listed for the size of the family unit listed below.

Size of Family Unit	Annual Family Income
1	\$ 13,470
2	\$ 18,181
3	\$ 22,890
4	\$ 27,600
5	\$ 32,310
6	\$ 37,020
7	\$ 41,730
8	\$ 46,440

For families with more than eight members, add \$3,140 for each additional member.

Verification: (must be provided before the April 5th date)

1. If Criteria # 1 above, no further proof needed
2. If Criteria # 2 above used, provide tax information from 2003 and verification of family unit size (immediate family living under same roof supported by this income figure)

One of your AP teachers will collect this proof and forward it to the AP Coordinator prior to test ordering date.

Test Ordering with Fee Waiver:

- Each test must be reserved with a \$15 fee on or before April 5th, 2004
- Students with fee waivers must pay an additional \$10 per test (total = \$25 per test) on or before April 30th, 2004.
- Helix Charter High School will assume the cost difference for those who qualify.

The AP Test coordinator must have accurate fee waiver and test order information when placing the Helix Charter High School AP test order. No adjustments can be made to that order.

If undo financial hardship exists, please contact Howard Estes at 644-1940 ext. 353 or hestes@helixcharter.net

NO STUDENT WILL BE DENIED ACCESS TO ANY AP TEST DUE TO FINANCIAL HARDSHIP!

Howard Estes

AP Test Reservation Information

AP test reservation will take place from **Monday, March 8**, until Monday, April 5. Students will be given a reservation form to complete and turn in with their reservation fee (**\$15 per test**). Late reservations (after April 5th but before April 15th) will have a **\$10 per test late fee** applied to the total fee. Each exam costs \$82 this year. Students should turn in only one form, no matter how many tests they will take.



ANGEL WILL NOT PROCESS ANY RESERVATIONS WITHOUT A COMPLETED RESERVATION FORM!

Remind your students early and often about reserving the appropriate tests. Students who feel they qualify for a fee reduction must submit a fee waiver form (1 per family with all applicable students' names on the form) to you so you can get them to me by April 5th. Helix will cover the State portion of the fee reduction.

ANGEL WILL NOT PROCESS ANY RESERVATIONS WITHOUT A COMPLETED RESERVATION FORM!

Howard Estes