

Dear Las Lomas Families,

It felt good to be back on campus with the children after our winter break. We hit the ground running with our **Read-a-thon!** I encourage you to support your child in this endeavor. The Read-a-thon was created to provide a way to generate funds for the school, yet support our mission and vision. Instead of selling pizza coupons, students are reading books and listening to books being read to them. As a primary school, literacy is the foundation for all learning. Over the past several years, we've seen students gain significantly in their reading skills during the Read-a-thon. As you know, the more you read, the better you get! Be sure to enter the minutes your child reads each week. It's exciting to see the graph grow on the banner by Cano Hall!

The Read-a-thon not only supports literacy, but it is an opportunity for the whole school to participate in a common goal. This builds community. Community is a term that is hard to define. Wikipedia states, "The word community is derived from the Old French *communité* which is derived from the Latin *communitas* (*cum*, "with/together" + *munus*, "gift"), a broad term for fellowship or organized society." The Read-a-thon provides us with the opportunity to be "together", which is definitely a "gift." Thank you to all the dedicated parents who support our effort to create a community that is focused on the children. Together we can help them grow and learn to be contributing members of the Las Lomas community.

Communities function effectively when there is clear **communication**. As in any community, there will be misunderstandings or disagreements. Open communication between the parties involved will quickly solve most problems. This week I'd like to share our school's practices regarding communication. In the School Handbook (on our website) our process is described. As a general rule, always start with the classroom teacher when you have questions about your child, curriculum, assignments, homework or classroom programs. The teacher may recommend that you talk with Kathy Ruwe, counselor, if you have concerns about your child's relationship with peers or a family crisis.

If you still have questions, please contact me. Together, you, the teacher and I can work to come to an appropriate resolution. The Harvard Family Research Project website, [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org), states that "parents and teachers consider communication the number one factor to increase trust. When teachers and parents are on the "same page" they can engage in more individual and concrete discussion around student progress and develop realistic goals and plans of action that are linked to student achievement (Drake 2000; James, Jurich & Estes, 2001)."

Another opportunity to communicate with one another is at the "***Mornings/Evenings with the Principal***" sessions. The next session is scheduled for February 26<sup>th</sup> in Cano Hall following the PTA's General Meeting. There is always a selected topic for discussion, but these gatherings are also an opportunity for you to get your questions answered. I look forward to seeing you.

Until next time,

Sue Sartor, Principal