

Another issue of the Las Cruces Academy's public newsletter!

January 23rd, 2021

It's been three months since our last issue. The students, teachers, and administration are doing well, and there's much to report.

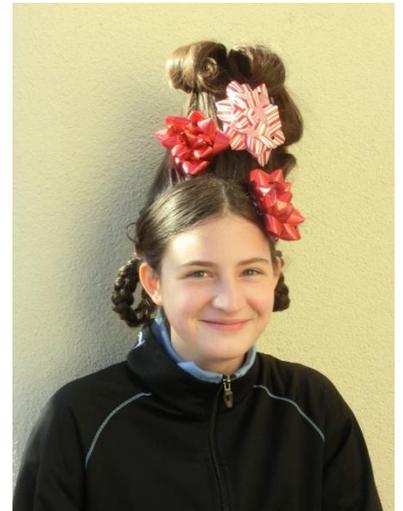
Almost all of our students are present in the school for very effective learning in person. They're remarkably happy. Here's the top of the note by a happy parent of two happy students. We're lucky that we have a building with space and an enrollment of 45 that readily meets the 25% occupancy constraint.

We are beyond grateful to you and all the staff at LCA for all that you do to create a magical, fun and safe learning environment for our kids.

Enrollment has increased to fill up many classes to totals that we can support with COVID-19 restrictions. Early kindergarten and kindergarten and grades 1-2, 3, and 5 are full. There's one opening in grade 4 and a number in grades 6-8. Students have been coming in from the public schools that have no classes in person and very limited teacher-student interaction. We regret the conditions in public schools but we're pleased to be able to serve some of their former students.

Students are making excellent academic progress – and, as importantly, they are happy and active. They do social distancing but they have their friends near and they play oh so actively. Our newsletter to parents reports what students are doing in each class, and each one sounds like a class that's several years ahead.

We had no end-of-term performance, alas, because of COVID-19. Still, students had a socially distanced outdoor performance for other students and parents. They enjoyed a wild hair day and a crazy socks day.



Katie Bushma is our new teacher for kindergarten and early kindergarten – welcome, Katie! Arielle Lane, our current teacher, got an offer she couldn't refuse, to be director of the Children's Playhouse pre-school. We congratulate Arielle and thank her for 5-1/2 years of great work. Katie and Arielle will both teach the week of 25-29 January, which will make an even smoother transition. Katie comes with a strong background in all the methods and subjects and stellar references. Her day of shadowing Arielle and then doing a teaching demonstration confirmed her as a great choice, especially for the kids; "When is Ms. Katie coming back?!"

Our COVID-19 precautions have been very effective in the face of increasing infection rates in the general public. Everyone in our LCA community is very responsible. We've had some parents and children and one teacher exposed or possibly exposed over the vacation time but they all quarantined themselves. No positive cases in the school!

The Las Cruces Bulletin held a *Best of the Mesilla Valley* contest with voting by the public. We won Best Private School (competing with 11 other schools, four of them bigger or much bigger than we are. Lou Ellen won Best Elementary School Principal and second place in Best Middle School Principal! Arielle Lane won second place in the category Best Elementary School Teacher, competing against all schools, public and private.

Vince, our Board Chair, bookkeeper, publicist, and outreach person, celebrated his second full year doing weekly 90-second podcasts on science on KRWG-FM, our local NPR station. You can replay them also at krwg.org/programs/science-digest. He also has a new website, lcaoutreach.org, with two big segments on travel and on the habitability of planets.



We have a newly designed website coming online very soon. David Gutschick, Lou Ellen and Vince's son and a Board Member, brought in (electronically) his friend Cindy Chen and other volunteers to completely revamp the school website, lascrucesacademy.org. The current version hit limits on presentation modes in Wordpress. They moved to Squarespace, with a lot of work. Watch for it soon.

Our finances are solid... and, so, we are pushing to use funds for two actions that will strengthen us even more. The first is going for accreditation with the top accrediting agency, the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest. There's a lot of work, including very extensive documentation of our entire curriculum and our policies (think thick binders). We're also looking at lease-purchase of the fine Preston building that we lease. This takes a lot of funding and enrollment income. Wish us luck, and help us if you can.



We have to thank effusively our so capable teachers, Elizabeth Brasher (English, social studies, PE, music), Kelly Lin (math, grades 1&2, art), Arielle Lane (early K/K, grades 1&2), Yulin Zhang (Chinese), and Yolanda Guevara (Spanish). Lou Ellen and Vince teach as volunteers, she for science 1&2, science 3-5, and cursive writing, Vince for science 6-8, computer programming, and some math. We have happy and productive teachers. Rebecca Dankert is our efficient part-time custodian.

We hope this finds you well. Thanks for being engaged with us.

Sincerely,

Lou Ellen, Vince, the Board, and our teachers.