

For 3 Sept. 2021 public newsletter

Have a look at the beautiful skies that surround us at the school, lifting our spirits!



Forty-five full-time students in kindergarten through grade 8 joined us on our first day of classes, August 12th. Some students from last year moved on and 9 new students joined us, for our best enrollment ever. Students from a widening area came to us – from Silver City and New York this year, with inquiries from DC to California. We'll have a class picture soon! The students also enjoyed some new decorations that bring yet more world culture to them – donations from Chao Liu, a former teacher at the Confucius Institute, trained at the Peking Opera:



Our cherished teachers were there – **Elizabeth Brasher** for 6 levels English and writing, 3 levels of social studies, 3 levels of PE, and 3 levels of music; **Arielle Lane** for 6 levels of math, 2 levels of science, art, an ethics circle, and grades 1 & 2 group class, spelling, cursive, reading, and English learning as a resource; **Katie Bushma** for the rich program in kindergarten (science, handwriting, reading, phonics, music) and grades 1&2 reading and music; **Yulin Zhang** for Mandarin Chinese at 6 levels; **Yolanda Guevara** for Spanish at 4 levels; LCA founder, Head of School, and volunteer teacher **Lou Ellen Kay** for co-teaching math at 5 levels, science grades 3-4 and 5, art, cursive, and grades 1&2 reading; Board Chair, asst. treasurer, publicist, and volunteer teacher **Vince Gutschick** for science grade 6-8, math grade 8,

computer programming at 4 levels, tennis at 5 levels, and world culture for grades 3-4 and 5-8; LCA parent and volunteer **Paul Bowman** for automotive mechanics for grades 3-4 and 5. This is a rich curriculum.



Paul and the mechanics students of grades 3&4

World culture: 3 young women at Senso-ji temple

On top of the core academics students have the opportunity to participate in clubs – the engineering and Legos club is run on Zoom by Elizabeth Brasher, as is the theater club. LCA parent Wei Tang is starting a math club to get ready for an international competition. (We'll get a picture soon.)

Late news: On Thursday, September 16th, the Las Cruces Academy was graced by the visit of three Justices of the New Mexico Supreme Court: Shannon Bacon, Julie Vargas, and Briana Zamora. Over an hour, they fielded a great many questions from 24 students in grades 3 through 8 as the justices, students, and teachers assembled in open air in the school courtyard. The students asked a great variety of deep questions. The justices and students showed mutual admiration. The Academy has to thank parent Mollie McGraw for creating this occasion. The Las Cruces Bulletin ran the full story that Vince put together, along with one of his photos:



The summer was truly busy even without classes (which so many students anticipated eagerly). Teachers, LCA parents, a teacher's mother, Vince, Lou Ellen, and building manager Bryan Fallstead moved mountains to prepare rooms, create new lessons and even courses, update technologies, create publicity, enroll and orient new students, work out the budget, and push forward on the major work of accreditation. Some mountains were close to literal; cleaning out the storage room and arranging teaching facilities there involved moving probably half a ton of materials.

Our students learn in person, safely and happily. All of our staff are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. We all wear masks if we're not eating outside with distancing. We all take care to maintain social distancing. Fans circulate the air in each classroom to dilute any inadvertent viral load. We use hand sanitizer and wash hands frequently. Parents meet students, for the moment, only outside the school. All our families have been careful with all the precautions, extending to testing and quarantining whenever necessary. We've never had a COVID case from any school contact, and only two cases outside of school with self-quarantining ever. We've been able to go back to more and shorter scheduling blocks to fit in our even more diverse curriculum. Even tennis is back!

After our first mini-week (two days) of classes we all celebrated and renewed friendships in person at our picnic. At least twenty of our thirty-four LCA families met at Parque de Cura Ramon Ortiz in Mesilla after school at the end of the first week.

We owe a great deal to our donors. The great success of our 2020-21 Annual Fund we noted in the 1 June newsletter. We're already rolling on the 2021-22 Fund with parents who started donations on their own – cash, stock (via our simple new link to Cocatalyst.org), and school supplies. We also have links now that make matching donations from companies very simple, using Benevity.com; any corporation doing matching is up on this. We must not overlook donations of time – extra time put in by our teachers, two parents, and a grandparent in making special school preparations and in running clubs; Lou Ellen's full-time work as Head of School and teacher; Vince's half-time as financial officer, techie, publicist, and teacher. We look forward to another great Annual Fund and to real camaraderie in the whole LCA community.