

# MUSD Radiant



## Measure G—Thanks, Madera!

**JONNIE MONTANO**

BIG THINGS ARE on the way for Madera Unified School District (MUSD) after Measure G was approved by Madera voters on November 4th of 2014. The process of getting this bond passed included the great need to inform citizens on what Measure G was and why MUSD needed it. The \$70 million bond passed and it is now in the process of being paid for by the taxpayers of Madera to help build a much needed new high school. The bond, costing roughly \$49 per \$100,000 of assessed value, averages out to be about \$5 a month for the average household.

Madera’s new high school focuses on the need to compensate for the overcrowding in Madera High and Madera South High. Madera South is a prime example of the overcrowding problem, currently holding its maximum capacity of 2,900 students just 10 years after opening, and Madera High is not far behind with a population of 2,200 students. Adding a new

high school to the district will give teachers and students the opportunity to learn in a more stimulating environment with smaller teacher-student ratios.

In addition to building a new high school, people in the community will be given a chance to better the district by giving their opinions and suggestions on what they would like to see in the newly added school. Meetings will take place to give people in the community an opportunity to input their suggestions on what the school should be named, and what mascot and school colors should be chosen. Also, new technology is expected to be seen in the new high school, not only in the classroom but also investments in the security of the school. Programmatic door locks and silent alarms will help the school be more protected than ever.

Not only students and teachers will benefit from the newly added school; traffic

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## From The Superintendent

ED GONZÁLEZ

WELCOME TO THE first edition of the MUSD Radiant. This new media format allows us to showcase the talent and innovation of young journalists from students at our high schools. The Radiant will highlight the many positive stories, events, and accomplishments that are occurring regularly in Madera Unified. The District is enjoying a Renaissance, and the benefits to the community will be incalculable. I would like to thank the community for supporting Measure G, providing much-needed funding for a new high school.

District staff is working on restructuring the career pathways at the high schools and enhancing Career Technical Education options for all interested students, a two-pronged approach that we feel will help improve the graduation rate and address the

problem of unskilled and unemployable youth in our community. In September, at the invitation of the German Embassy, I joined an elite group of Americans and toured the German Vocational Education model, in hopes that this model can potentially be used here within our city.

We will host the annual FIRST Robotics Competition Regional Event on March 6-8 at Madera South High School, an event that will bring more than 4,000 technology-driven students and their families to our community for a special weekend. Our Arts and Music programs are humming, our academic progress is rising, our athletic teams are winning, and we have improved our relationship with our labor partners!

Madera Unified is a district on the move, and the MUSD Radiant is an example of all that is right with our district. Enjoy!



Superintendent  
Ed González

## Schools: The Foundation Of A Community

MAYOR ROB POYTHRESS

THE IMPORTANCE OF our school system to the City of Madera cannot be overstated. Significant decisions are made based on how our school system is perceived and how it performs. For instance:

- **Great schools increase home values:** Families who have to be able to do so will usually locate to a school district or near a school that is considered high-performing. Higher demand for these homes leads to higher prices resulting in better investments for homeowners.
- **Great schools attract jobs:** Companies that require a skilled workforce generally locate to communities where the school system prepares students with the skills necessary to work at those companies.
- **Great schools attract middle income retail stores:** Schools that provide a quality education attract higher in-

come families, who in turn attract retail shopping that we are seeking, thereby increasing city sales tax revenue that can be used to increase services for residents.

- **Great schools provide a better foundation for a future that our families deserve:** Public schools work for us, the community, and the taxpayer. School districts are obligated to provide the finest educational experience in order to prepare students, who in turn desire and commit to be successful, with the foundation for great careers in whatever legitimate endeavor they pursue.

I encourage you, whether you are a parent or not, to take an active interest in ensuring that educational excellence is what Madera is known for, and that we participate in the process to create a culture of great schools.



Mayor Rob Poythress

## The “Four Pillars” of the MUSD Strategic Plan

OUR FOUR PILLARS are the building blocks of our professional practices; they frame what we must do well in every classroom, in every school, and system-wide to ensure success for all students, without exception.



**I Equitable Access To Rigorous High-Level Programs** ensures that curriculum, standards-based instruction, and programs provide all students with equitable access and opportunity for achievement.

**II Data-Driven Professional Learning & Collaboration** promotes meaningful collaboration and professional learning to improve and shift practices in every classroom, every school, and every district-level department.

**III Safe & Healthy Environments For Learning & Work** focuses on school-level and district-wide culture and structures that support the personal safety of the students, staff, and community with fair and consistent expectations.

**IV Strong Relationships With Families & Community** recognizes that schools can't do it alone. Therefore, we will initiate and sustain relationships among home-school community through shared responsibility for student success, proactive communication, and meaningful stakeholder “voice.”

The Four Pillars and corresponding Commitments provide a consistent framework for day-to-day action, allocating resources, assessing the impact of taxpayers' investments in our public schools, and accelerating student achievement in Madera schools.



## Future Farmers Of America

JONNIE MONTANO

THE MADERA FFA blog at [maderaffa2014.blogspot.com](http://maderaffa2014.blogspot.com) will feature recent events taking place in Madera South's FFA program. It is intended to keep anyone who is interested updated with what's going on in Madera's agriculture department. Posts may vary from prestigious competitions to individual achievements and even to procedures taking place in the agriculture classrooms. This blog will be a great way to keep you and anyone else up to date with important details about our amazing agricultural department on Madera South's campus.

## Last Stop On The Road

ANGELICA COSTILLA

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST, 2014 marked a very special day for Jeanie Arter. After 43 years at MUSD, the time to settle in the shoes of retirement finally came. Jeanie Arter was born in Merced, California and moved to Madera when she was just eleven years old. Growing up and attending Millview Elementary, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, and Madera High School, Jeanie would soon fill in the same roles as those who helped her find her own along the way. Arter was part of the graduating class of 1970 and has had only one other job that was not under the Madera Unified School District (MUSD): working at Thrifty's for her first four months out of high school.

Arter has had a remarkable history with MUSD. Following her attendance at Central California Commercial college, she took up the job of being the secretary of Madera High School. From there on, she would engage the majority of her life into jobs for the district, such as being secretary for the "Learning Deans," working for the payroll department, being part of the Work Experience Driver's Training Office, being Millview's administrative assistant (for 21 years!), working for student services, and being the Facilities Planning administrative assistant, which all led to her final stop on the road, Human Resources.

Jeanie knew in her heart when she first started working for MUSD that the job would stay with her for as long as it did. "There's no better place to work," says Jeanie with a spark in her smile. At Human Resources, Jeanie was responsible for processing new teachers, new support staff, and any other new employees. "I will miss most being able to help people and serve them," explains Arter. Jeanie has enjoyed working under many different supervisors,



*Jeanie Arter smiling as she enjoys her last week inside her office at Human Resources for the MUSD.*

## Robotics Blog

GEORGE MARTIN

BE SURE TO FOLLOW the Madera High Robotics team at [mادتown1323.blogspot.com](http://mادتown1323.blogspot.com) as they prepare and begin competing. The season starts in January. Please follow along as we build the robot and troubleshoot different components. The blog will feature pictures, videos, and different members of our team as well as business partners who support us.

including Viera Goodrich, her very first supervisor, and old bosses such as Jerry English, Galen Wright, and Rosalind Cox. Yet to these people, the guidance Arter has received over the years is not limited, for she has met a plethora of people whom have given her some of the best advice. "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you," provides Jeanie in describing her favorite quote, which she has carried with her throughout her career.

After devoting so much of her life to the Madera Unified School District, Jeanie describes her experience as "satisfying, exciting, and challenging." Working here has taught her to take things as they come, enjoying each day one at a time, something she would not take back for the world. When asked if there were any other jobs she ever thought of pursuing, she detailed that being a nurse once crossed her mind; however, "God puts you where he wants you to be." In regards to starting a career, Arter, mother of two grown children and wife to a former military policeman, advises that if anyone should ever find a good company, stick with it. The good will always outweigh the bad. The past several years that Jeanie has been working for the district has left her with an endless amount of memories, making it hard to give up. Although she has mixed emotions about leaving, one thing's for sure: she looks forward to having some "me time," time we can all say is very well deserved. Scrap booking, sewing, and spending time with her eleven dogs, eight of whom she has proudly rescued, is how she plans to spend her days. Jeanie Arter would like to give a big thank you to the Madera Unified School District for the privilege of working for them; and in return, the people of Madera would like to say thank you, Mrs. Arter, for your much appreciated service!



The four pillars of  
the MUSD Strategic Plan





## MUSD Board of Education

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MEASURE G continued from front page

on the south side of town is expected to decrease around the two existing high schools on Stadium Road. Building the 57-acre school on the corner of Martin Avenue and Road 26 is expected to make transportation run more smoothly. The amount of time in bus rides for students traveling from the east side of town to school will be cut down dramatically. This bond is also expected to provide much needed stimulus to businesses and property owners in the north side of Madera.

Once the total cost to build the high school is concluded, designs are finalized, and needed road constructions are finished, “you can expect to see walls going up and shovels in the ground as early as 2017,” says Superintendent Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez would also like to thank the community of Madera for their support, and states that the Madera Unified Board is “committed to building a school the entire community is proud of.”

Andy Medellin, Chairman of the Yes on Measure G campaign, would like to thank the taxpayers and voters of Madera for their support on Measure G and ensures that their support is definitely going to be “beneficial for everyone in the community of Madera, especially Madera Unified.” We are expecting to see great things from the students and community who benefit from this new high school.

## MHS Varsity Football Team Makes History

**HALEY WILCOX**

THE 2014 VARSITY Madera High Football Team is making history. For the first time in twenty eight years, the Coyotes football team competed against Hanford in the Valley Championships. Coaches are proud of their team but not surprised. Coach William Sally states that this team is not like any other team. “They are all one machine, different and unique but working together for one common goal: to win,” said Sally.



All players work their hardest to support each other player. Watching all athletes playing their roles and working together is inspiring. Varsity quarterback and team captain Nathaniel Nelson states that it’s really exciting that they are one of the first teams to be competing at Valley. As a team captain, he leads by example and by always staying positive. Nelson describes the team environment as “close friends” and says that “their motivation is their love for the sport.”

Defensive lineman Christian Corona has been on the team all four years of his high school career. He states that all the time spent together as a family to reach Valley has motivated them to compete. “It is good to be a part of history, but it is like any other game,” he shared.

Nick Martinez, a sophomore who has recently been moved up to varsity, describes the team as extremely supportive of each other. It is really like one big family. The encouraging atmosphere, unity, and dedication has led the team to numerous victories. Madera High will be celebrating their hard work and hosted a rally to honor them. A rooter bus left that afternoon, transporting over 90 students to Hanford to cheer them on.

Justin Thomas, 4-year athlete and wide receiver, could not wait to get on the field; he states, “for the seniors on the team, it is a bittersweet feeling, because Valley will be their last game as a Madera High team.”



The game was an intense competition. Hanford won 35 to 14. Despite the score, the Coyotes worked hard to make it to Valley. The season was an amazing one that made Madera Coyote history. Our coaches, staff, students, and community are proud of the MHS Varsity Football Team for their dedication and hard work.

The MHS team encourages the upcoming 2015 varsity team to go all the way and make it to Valley!

## Hustle And Heart Set Madera South Apart

ANGELICA COSTILLA

FOR THE PAST seven years, the one thing that's remained stable throughout the Madera Unified School District is the success of the Madera South boy's cross country team. With complete humility, the seven varsity boys—Eduardo Herrera, Miguel Villar, Juan Macias, Michael Ochoa, Christian Nevarez, Luis Becerra, and Jesus Cacique—entered the Central Section Valley Championship on Thursday November 20th, 2014, only to win it, granting Madera South its seventh straight valley title. Guided by an outstanding coaching staff including new head coach Eloy Quintana, the boys managed to earn four places in the top ten, an accomplishment easier said than done. "The boys took off and never looked back,"



Eduardo "Lalo" Herrera

says Coach Quintana.

The gang was led by junior Eduardo Herrera and sophomore Miguel Villar, who knocked out remarkable 5k times of 15:07 and 15:15. The two ran the race, taking first and second place, paving the way for the team's journey to the CIF State Championships. When asked what thoughts went through his mind knowing he was the leader of his team, Herrera simply noted, "Success."

Captain Juan Macias explains that none of them would be where they are now if not for the strong bond the team holds. "It's a bond like no other," Macias sincerely states. This same bond, along with the team's hard work and dedication, carried them to the line for the last time this season at Fresno's Woodward Park for the California State Championships on Saturday,



November 29th.

The boys took 3rd overall with a tight finish pulled through by Madera South's sixth runner that day, Luis Becerra.

With just an eight-point difference between 1st and 3rd place, Macias notes that after all was said and done, "It was just another blessed year to be able to run with the guys we call brothers and receive a place on the podium." The boys look forward to a successful track season this spring and continuing to overcome each and every obstacle as a team.



## Angel Cruz, Today's Student Of Influence

HALEY WILCOX

SOARING ABOVE ALL obstacles, Angel Cruz demonstrates joy, strength, perseverance, hope, and determination. In other words, traveling throughout the day in a wheelchair or leg brace does not limit him from living his life to the fullest. Angel has been a Nishimoto Hawk for three years, and in those three years he has inspired and encouraged others to view life in a positive perspective.

This was not always the case for Angel, but staff has witnessed the change. Earlier in his kindergarten year he was shy and kept to himself; he was afraid to make friends and preferred staying alone. But with effort from his teacher Mrs. Rocha, staff, and parents, he has opened up to be



Aide Cynthia Rodriguez and Angel Cruz

the student he is today. Nishimoto Elementary provides the support and atmosphere that lets students thrive and help find themselves.

Once he began developing friendships and participating in lessons, he realized that he was able to learn. Learning translated to confidence that carried over into all aspects of development.

For such a young boy, he has aspirations of becoming a heart surgeon. Angel commented, "I want to check people's hearts so I can help them."

He now supports Nishimoto Elementary by being a source of encouragement for so many. He is a unique student who raises the spirits of others through his actions. His can-do attitude causes others to want to try and work harder. His smile and energy encourage others that, no matter the problems they face, they can overcome any obstacles. Angel has the potential to grow and continue igniting hope and joy in others.

The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan



## Bear + Achee = Better Schools

ANGELICA COSTILLA

ROBERT ACHEE HAS been Black Bear Diner's general manager since November of 2010 in Madera, California. Conductor of an orchestra, "Robby" is one who makes it happen—managing scheduling, hiring, and training. When asked how he does it, how he manages to lead the restaurant alongside amazing employees, his words are simple: "Hire smart, train hard, manage easy."

But Mr. Achee's success as a general manager is not the only thing to bring to light. Father of four grown children and husband to a beautiful wife, Robby has made an impact on the community that will forever touch the hearts of Madera's youth. Sponsoring the Mighty Monroe Bear Students of the Month, Mr. Achee hosts three lucky students who are picked from a group of respectful, responsible, and ready-to-learn pupils from Monroe Elementary School. He has done this for the past four years, treating the kids to a breakfast of their choice and even lunch if they want it. "Mr. Achee is a wonderful host," says Kimberly Bitter, principal of Monroe Elementary. "He always comes to the table and makes each child feel very special."

Robby Achee works hard to give back the one thing that led him to where he is today: his love for food. Growing up, the influence of food took over his heart with help from his mother and sisters, who were forever cooking up magic in the kitchen. His main reasoning for wanting to get involved with the students at Monroe Elementary was to connect with the youth in a way that he loves most—food! In the kids, he sees himself and yearns to give each child what they deserve most for doing great things. "If you do right, you come out right," says Mr. Achee, words that can easily be ones to live by. This simple yet heavy act of kindness shows a group of students every month a whole new world of possibilities. From the delicious food to the warmth of the Black Bear Diner environment, memories are stored, which will bind to the children for years to come. Achee is the perfect example of taking advantage of the simple



*Bobby Achee from the Black Bear Diner with the Mighty Monroe Bears September Students of the Month.*

things in life. "I love just talking with the kids, asking them how they like the food," he explains. When asked if there were any words he holds close to heart, Mr. Achee provided, "If you always do what you always did, you always get what you always got," reminding us to strive always for the better, even if it means taking on the new, which is exactly what he did four years ago when agreeing to get involved with the students from Monroe Elementary. Black Bear also supports many community projects, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation is the project for December.

The love Mr. Achee has for the people and community will not go unnoticed, as it shines through his humble personality and is greatly appreciated. He is one of the many business owners in Madera who understand the blessing of giving back.

The four pillars of  
the MUSD Strategic Plan





## Investing Time In Our Students

**HALEY WILCOX**

MANY MUSD STAFF are proud to see Brandon St. Lucia back from Fresno State as a Madera High alumnus investing in and teaching the future generation. Mr. St. Lucia graduated Madera High in 2007 and is now working as a fourth grade teacher at Sierra Vista Elementary. During high school, he was a member of the athletic committee in one of the largest ASB classes in the history of MHS. However, he stood out because of his outstanding character. Sarah Murrieta, the activities director of Madera High, states, “He was always willing to participate, lend a helping hand, and take on responsibilities.”

Today Mr. St. Lucia is investing his time to build up and motivate students at Sierra Vista Elementary. He works hard to ensure that each one of his students is

recognized and involved so that they may reach their best potential. Mr. St. Lucia explains, “The best part about teaching is that every day is different. I could never sit at a desk and do the same thing over and over every day. I literally do something new every day and have a blast doing it! I also love being goofy and silly, and with 4th graders who are goofy and silly, it works! I also love when the students don’t understand something, then I show them and it’s like I can see the light bulb turn on in their heads and their faces light up with joy because they now get it.”

Mr. St. Lucia’s ability to problem solve, relate to others and explain has equipped him to reach the minds of young students who have the ability to make a difference in the world. When Mr. St. Lucia knew that becoming a teacher was the career he

would pursue, he recognized that he could pursue the career because of the numerous years he had been working in summer camps as well as after school programs. Principal Kathleen Nekumanesh states, “He definitely is a natural in the classroom, and we were delighted to add another great teacher to our staff.”

One of the things Mr. St. Lucia knew was that working with young children was a passion and a rewarding career to pursue. His biggest dream is to work in education and eventually become an athletic director due to his love of sports and kids. He advises all those who have the desire to teach to go for it because “teachers and educators have the potential to change, shape, and mold young people into amazing human beings.” Mr. St. Lucia does that every day with the students of Sierra Vista Elementary.



The four pillars of the MUSD Strategic Plan





## High School Bands—“One Big Family”

**GEORGE MARTIN**

ON THE 22ND of November, both Madera High and Madera South High participated in the Western Band Association Championships at Fresno State University. Both high schools’ marching bands participated in the 3A Class Championships, in which bands with up to 100 members competed for the championship title. Madera South’s team placed twelfth overall with a score of 72.35, while Madera High’s team earned eighth place with a score of 76.25.

Both teams performed very well the night of Championships, and excellently showed off the result of months of training and preparation. Madera High performed a piece called “Rise,” and Madera South performed “The Uncommon Man.” Both pieces were perfected as a result of hours of work on the part of the students.

However, each band’s success would not be possible without the help of the school staff. Director Bret Cappelluti and MHS Alumni Anneke Magos, Courtney Hall, Christian Olvera, and Raymond Herrera all make sure that the show runs smoothly and that all band members perform their parts as well as possible. In addition to band teachers and instructors, school staff also voluntarily show their support for the band. Band member Elizabeth Romero remarked that

Humanities V.P. Mr. Gonzales “always comes out and supports us,” as well as the staff of the Humanities Department and teachers such as Mr. Armes and Ms. Kaur.

Several band members expressed how they were glad to be a part of the band program, which provided such excellent instruction and support for its members. Elizabeth, clarinet section leader, says that through the band program she “made a family of about 100 or more individuals,” and that “the band room is like [her] second home.” Elizabeth gives the band program credit for helping her develop as a musician, and as a person. She says that the band technicians give band members “lots of feedback on how to improve and progress,” and that participating in the program taught her how to express herself through music.

Manjot Aulakh, section leader of the mellophones, had a lot to say about the technical and personal support that the band program provides. Beyond the excellent musical training offered through the school, Manjot says that the program “teaches valuable real world skills, such as time management, organization, and sportmanship.” Like Elizabeth, Manjot views the band as one big family that works together in near perfect coordination to make each year’s show come to life.

