

# TIDINGS

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### Lights...Camera...Action!

#### Buy Your Tickets to March 20th Gala Today

Get ready to roll out the red carpet Saturday March 20th, LJES style with our annual gala, "A Night at the Oscars." We have a lot in store for you that evening! Guests are encouraged to come decked out in their best star-studded ensemble for the paparazzi lined red carpet where you might bump into Joan Rivers or other LJES celebrities, then on to dinner, drinks, dancing, shopping the auction, and entertainment by the band Goldfish.

Get there early for opportunities to bid on some of the fabulous donated items. The fun starts at 6 p.m. where you can bid on opportunities to win a Louis Vuitton Eva bag, a date with your child's favorite teacher, Wine Cellar, Maui Condo, Big Bear condo, boat cruises, Padres tickets, club memberships, and much, much more. For a preview of some of the items you can bid on, visit our website at <http://ljes.maestroweb.com>.

*See Gala, Page 5*



*Fun With Computers*

This year's Technology Night had a great turnout of families. Above, Maya-Lucia Gessner showed her father, Gerhard, the popular math program, ST Math.



Jennifer Snyder is the parent volunteer behind the weekly sales phenomenon known as Pizza Wednesday.

## Homework Leads Students to Higher Achievement

By **Donna Tripi**, *Principal*

Since teachers began giving homework, there has been controversy concerning it. Should we give homework at all? What is the right amount of homework? Should students do homework on their own or should parents help? I often say that the homework debate can never be won; we will never please all of our students and families with the decisions we make about homework.

As a teaching staff, we have studied the research on effective homework and do believe that there is a correlation between children who complete homework tasks regularly and their achievement in school. Homework extends the work of the classroom by giving students addi-

tional time on task and opportunities to check their understanding of important concepts. Many areas in math and reading require practice for students to perfect their skills

*Homework extends the work of the classroom by giving students additional time on task and opportunities to check their understanding of important concepts.*

and to feel confident in their abilities. Homework also helps students to develop their skills as independent learners; strategies that they need to be confident in their ability to complete independent learning

tasks in the classroom. We want students to learn how to organize their time and resources and how to work to the best of their ability. Students who complete homework each day are prepared for their day and the tremendous amount of learning that goes on in their classrooms.

In order for students to gain the optimal amount of learning from homework, several components need to be in place at home and at school. At school, the teachers have worked to provide meaningful homework assignments that they feel extend the work of the classroom and/or reinforce important concepts or skills. The work is tied directly to the work of the classroom, so is authen-

*See Homework, Page 3*



## District Seeks Parental Support On Class Size

San Diego Unified School District is seeking parental support of legislation that would help the school district keep class sizes down despite the fiscal crisis. The bill, introduced by Assemblymen Marty Block and Nathan Fletcher, would allow school districts to raise class sizes slightly (from 20 students to 24 students) without having to incur a huge financial penalty that results in even larger class sizes.

Administrators say the penalty is actually forcing districts to increase the student-teacher levels even more to make up for the money lost.

The proposed legislation would allow San Diego Unified to keep more than \$20 million in funding in the 2010-11 year. San Diego Unified is hoping to hold class sizes in primary grades to 22 students. "The state currently has school districts in a Catch-22 situation," a district news release explains. "On one hand, state budget cuts put overwhelming pressure on districts to increase class sizes

in order to save money. On the other hand, the state hits districts with steep penalties when they do increase class sizes. "Across the state, the result is terrible: many school districts are leaving scarce state resources on the table, and as state funding cuts continue, only the very wealthiest school districts will be able to keep their classes from severe overcrowding. This can be prevented. School districts would not have to increase their class sizes by as much if they were able to keep and spend their penalty money in the classroom."

Assemblywomen Lori Saldana and Mary Salas are co-authors of this bill. To show your support for this legislation, email Block, Fletcher, Saldana and Salas ([http://www.assembly.ca.gov/clerk/MEMBERINFORMATION/memberdir\\_1.asp](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/clerk/MEMBERINFORMATION/memberdir_1.asp)). For more information, contact Bernie Rhinerson, Chief District Relations Officer, (619) 725-5567 (desk), (619) 300-7015 (cell) or [brhinerson@sandi.net](mailto:brhinerson@sandi.net).

### School Budget Crisis

## School Year and Class Size Cut

Students will attend school five fewer days next year and class size for primary grades will be capped at 22 students, under a new bargaining agreement with the San Diego teachers union which is expected to be ratified by mid-March. The five-day furloughs and the 22-to-1 student-teacher ratio for kindergarten through third grade were part of the district's negotiated pact with the San Diego Teachers Association.

San Diego Unified School District must cut \$100 million from its 2010-11 budget. These cuts come in the wake of three years of record reductions.

The district is in the early stages of figuring out its budget for next year based on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's spending plan for 2010-11, which was released in January. A final budget will be adopted in June.

The board resumes budget discussions Tuesday, March 9th. It has already approved cuts of 135 classified (non teaching such as clerical, maintenance or janitorial) positions and 68 certificated (teacher or administrator) positions. More job cuts are expected.

The district, by law, must send pink slips to employees who may lose their jobs by March 15th.

To prevent layoffs, a majority of the district's governing board had supported a temporary 6 percent salary cut for employees, but union members preferred the furloughs. The furloughs are expected to save \$13 million.

For more information on the budget crisis, visit the district website at [sandi.net](http://sandi.net) or a parent organization called Voice for Our Kids at [www.voiceforourkids.com/](http://www.voiceforourkids.com/).

## Attendance Matters

By Donna Tripi, *Principal*

As ski season is upon us, there are many families that have been extending the weekends by one or two days. We believe that parents underestimate the disruption caused in a child's learning when they miss the start or end of their weeks. Students do feel behind when they return because they know that important work was missed. Teachers often need to take time out of lessons to catch up children who have missed school, which often doesn't give that child enough time to learn the concept and is unfair to the rest of the students in the class who are ready to move on. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in only scheduling vacations and outings on school vacation days. We only have your children for 180 days and we want to use them all to the fullest!

## Advertise in Tidings

To place an ad in Tidings, please contact Sharon Jones at 858-456-2039 or [sharonlj@san.rr.com](mailto:sharonlj@san.rr.com). Rates: \$50 for a business card size ad, \$75 for a quarter page, \$150 for half page, and \$300 for a full-page ad. A 25% discount is offered to advertisers who pay upfront to advertise in 6 or more issues in this academic year. Checks should be made out to LJES PTO, Inc., and mailed or dropped off at the school office: 1111 Marine St., La Jolla, CA 92037, attention Sharon Jones. Or you can pay via the online store on the school's website (go to [ljes.org](http://ljes.org) and find the online vstore and Tidings Advertising). Payment must be received PRIOR to publication. Ads must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Submit ad graphics in digital format, either as a postscript file or a 300 dpi (minimum) raster image. Email [lisastarr@cox.net](mailto:lisastarr@cox.net) if you have questions about formatting.

**YOU and Your Treasured Children DESERVE A PLAN**

As a fellow parent of students at La Jolla Elementary, I know the concerns of caring for minor children. Planning for them and yourself in the event of a major life change can be daunting. *I can help.*

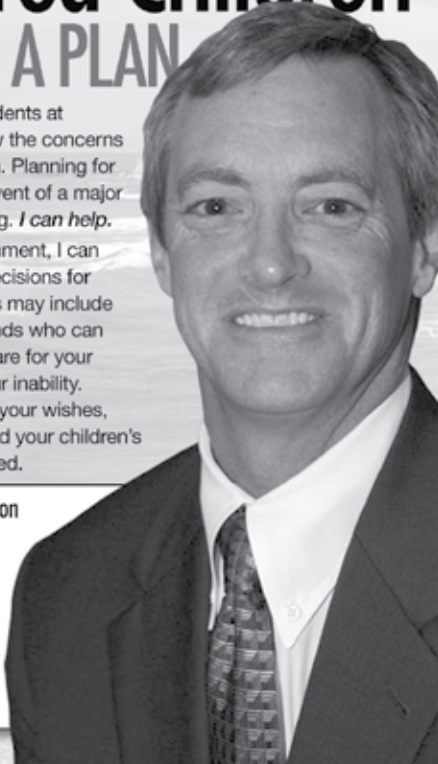
In a low-pressure environment, I can guide you to make wise decisions for you and your children. This may include nominating family and friends who can manage your affairs and care for your children in the event of your inability. By properly memorializing your wishes, you will ensure that you and your children's financial affairs are protected.

For a confidential, no-obligation consultation, contact me at (858) 558-9300 or at [smorrison@mgdtaxlaw.com](mailto:smorrison@mgdtaxlaw.com)

**Scott Morrison**  
Estate Planning Attorney

**MGD TAX LAW**

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# ► Homework

*continued from page 1*

tic and not “busy work.” Teachers check homework and give students feedback on their work. Homework is often differentiated for students, so that they are successful and feel challenged at their ability levels. The complexity, type and amount of time spent on homework begin with a developmentally appropriate amount at first grade and increases incremen-

*Homework also helps students to develop their skills as independent learners -- strategies that they need to be confident in their ability to complete independent learning tasks in the classroom.*

tally through the elementary grades. This is done purposefully to prepare students for the academic classroom and homework demands of middle school and beyond.

At home, the following guidelines should assist you in setting up a successful homework experience for your child:

• **Allow your child to complete the assignments independently.** If your child needs help getting started, allow him/her to read the directions to you and to tell you how he/she will go about completing the task. He/she should then complete the assignment and show you the finished product.

• **Look over completed assignments and promote your child doing his/her best work on all assignments.** Make sure that he/she edits written work before handing it in. If your child does not understand a concept, write a note on the assignment and send your child to school

to share his/her confusion with the teacher. The teachers need to know that your child needs to have the concept re-taught.

• Many of our students are involved in after school sports, music lessons, etc. **Work with your child to schedule enough time to complete quality assignments each day.**

• **Set up a good environment for homework** – a study area that is free from distractions, has a hard surface for writing and is well lit is ideal.

• **Ensure that supplies and resources are in the study area,** include: the reference book for Everyday Mathematics (grades 3-5), a dictionary, paper supplies, erasers, etc. For research and projects requiring outside sources, help your child access appropriate Internet resources and/or plan to visit the local library.

• **Praise your child for working independently,** completing assignments and doing quality work.

We established a support program for homework at school several years ago and it is very successful. Our Knowledge College program

*The work is tied directly to the work of the classroom, so is authentic and not ‘busy work.’*

enables students to work with their teachers in an 8:1 ratio on homework tasks. Teachers re-teach concepts if needed, help students organize their work and supervise homework completion. If you would like more information on the program, please call our office or check in with your child’s teacher.



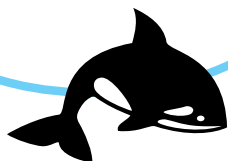
Julia Munson, a 4th grader, is a big supporter of recycling.

## Recycling Stacks Up To be Good Biz for LJES

By Julia Munson, Student Reporter

Many of you have heard about our recycling program at LJES. It is off to a great start, but we need your help. We already have made \$50 recycling bottles and cans, but we hope to make \$5,000! If you are a family that believes in recycling you can bring your bottles and cans to school on Wednesdays. Also if you use the curb-side recycling system you can ask your parents if it’s ok to fish bottles and cans out of the bin. These are a few of my favorite ways to find recyclables.

- If your parents works in an office you can ask them for bottles and cans on Tuesday and bring them to school Wednesday.
- If people live on your street but they don’t have children at LJES you can offer to pick up their bottles (with your parents’ and your neighbors’ permission).
- If you are at a birthday party or celebration, offer to bring home the recyclable cans and bottles and bring them to school.
- Ask visiting family members to bring all of their cans and bottles when they come to visit you (if they drive to town). Make sure everybody recycles their bottles and cans at classroom events or parties.



**Advertisements  
in The Tidings  
now being accepted**

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*P.E. Corner: "Let's Move"*

First of all I would like to share some exciting news from the White House! On February 9, 2010, President Barack Obama signed a bill called the "Let's Move Initiative" that will provide funding to fight childhood obesity. The Task Force will be led by First Lady Michelle Obama and will focus on four goals: making healthy choices, creating healthy schools, increasing physical activity, and increasing accessibility and affordability of healthy food. For more information, go to [letsmove.gov](http://letsmove.gov). In PE the students have been working on increasing their fitness levels through a variety of activities and stations including the Healthy Heart Obstacle Course. The 5th graders are busy preparing for the annual Fitnessgram Test, which will be administered throughout the month of March. Good luck and remember that practice makes perfect! It has also been fun talking about the amazing Olympic Athletes and sharing in the excitement of this year's Winter Games! – Kelly Wiskus, P.E. Coach

# Cluster Board To Hold First Meeting

The La Jolla Cluster Association is moving forward, with nearly all five schools finished electing their board representatives. The newly seated board will hold its first meeting in mid-March.

One of the board's first tasks will be to draft the bylaws that are required to create a legal nonprofit organization. It also will need to elect members to leadership positions and form committees.

Representatives of the cluster already have been at work. They have attended San Diego Unified School District board meetings, and have met with state

Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher to discuss legislation that would help school districts keep class sizes low.

LJES representatives are PTO President Fran Shimp, Tidings Editor Sharon Jones, 4th grade Teacher Debbie Balmat, 1st Grade Teacher Stephanie Cole, and Principal Donna Tripi. Parent Natascha Vossen, who tied with Jones in the official voting, will serve as the parent alternate.

The cluster email list has 171 members. To join, sign on to [www.lajolla-cluster.com](http://www.lajolla-cluster.com).



**LJES PTO WOULD LIKE TO  
THANK PIZZA ON PEARL FOR  
DONATING PIZZA THAT WE SOLD  
DURING FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT.**



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Melissa Roy-Wood

# Musings of a Fifth Grade Teacher

By Melissa Roy-Wood, *Teacher*

La Jolla Elementary was the first school I attended where I truly have some wonderful memories of being in school. When I was in fourth grade, I distinctly remember my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Estabrook walking the class to The White Rabbit (Children's Book Store) and sitting at the carpet listening to Barbara Park read from one of her Skinnybones books. We all purchased books and got them signed by her. I also remember when former astronaut, Jim Newman, came into our school and told us about training for space travel; he made a special visit to our class because Mrs. Estabrook had been his teacher, too.

I remember when the students at LJES read so many books one year, our principal, Mr. Jones, shaved off his entire beard in front of the school in the auditorium and another time, when he sat on the roof for the entire day and classes came to watch him work from the roof. And the PTA organized Charger great, Junior Seau, to visit our school to talk to the students about the importance of not bullying. I remember acting in Vaudeville and The Music Man and overcoming my shyness.

I also remember how welcoming the principal and teachers were of me and my family. I had a lot of positive moments with Mrs. Estabrook, Mrs. Roberts, and, though I never had her, Mrs. Gray, who was my little brother's favorite teacher. I remember when my brother would struggle to read how Mrs. Gray would always tell him, "don't worry, you'll get it" and sat and read with him. She even told him and my family how he reminded her of her own son when he was a kid. It may not sound like much, but to a kid who had a lot of trouble reading up until the fourth grade, that made a difference.

The teachers I had at LJES did these extra things. I had "moments" with them, where they took me to the side and encouraged me and helped me. From teaching me study skills, to expecting high quality work, to keeping my desk tidy to developing interpersonal skills. That's why I will always remember even the little events, too, like what it feels like to take a science test knowing no questions on it because I didn't study. Or the time that I had written an entire skit about The Underground Railroad and I played the part of Harriet Tubman, dressed from head to toe. The kids

though it was so funny that I stuffed my grandmother's bra underneath my shirt to make myself look more anatomically correct which I didn't think anything of because they held their laughter until after the end of the play. My victory was that I wrote an entire script with stage directions, incorporating historical facts and successfully led a group in fourth grade. And I'm still wondering if Mrs. Roberts ever saw a moldy sandwich from my lunch in my desk when she cleaned it out one day when I was absent from school. I knew the lunch had been shoved in the back of the desk for weeks, that by the then, the bread must have been moldy. And the thought of my dear teacher, having to see moldy bread in my desk when she was cleaning it out, made me never have a messy desk again. And made me take ownership for keeping myself organized and not having anyone else do it for me.

There are countless other memories, big and small that I will keep with me for a lifetime from

LJES which I strive to create for all of the students I reach.

*This article is part of an email letter that Ms. Wood sent to parents at the beginning of the school year.*



## ► Gala

*continued from page 1*

We still have sponsorship opportunities available, either through underwriting or donating items for the auction. Underwriting sponsors of the event will be given themed party favors the night of the gala that indicate which level they have given at. For executive producers we have a fedora and cigar, Star couples receive a feather boa bling ring and manly sword, fan club will have a giant hand, and other favors for different levels -- all in fun to support our kids. For more info log onto the website <http://ljes.maestroweb.com> and click on sponsor, or contact Katie Riveroll at [katieahumada85@hotmail.com](mailto:katieahumada85@hotmail.com).

Do you or your business offer a service or goods? Have extra sports tickets, artwork, vacation homes, timeshares, airline miles....? For last minute donations to our silent auction, please contact Christina Andrews at [chrisandrews@san.rr.com](mailto:chrisandrews@san.rr.com). This is a fairly painless way to support your school financially. Donate it today and get a tax receipt for the full retail value of the item. Donor forms are available in the front office.

A Night at the Oscars will take place from 6-12 p.m. at the La Jolla Marriott. Tickets can still be purchased for \$95. We can't wait to see you all there for a great cause -- our kids!

### JOIN OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL SHOPS PROGRAM

...and your store or business will be listed and described on the new LJES website and will be featured in monthly eBlasts to the entire school (more than 550 students and their families) in exchange for a portion of the sales to LJES families being donated back to the school.

Please visit the **Partnerships with Local Shops** link on the LJES website or email Julie MacDonald at [JMacDonald@san.rr.com](mailto:JMacDonald@san.rr.com) for more information.

LA JOLLA  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Open Air  
Market



# Shop the Market, Help our Kids!

All proceeds fund programs for LJES

The Open Air Market occurs every Sunday from 9am-1pm on the upper playground. Featuring Certified Organic fruit & veggies, farm-fresh eggs, a variety of breads, pasta, olive oil, hummus, jams, baked goods, a delicious food court, unique artisans, live music, and room for the kids to play.

Your support directly benefits programs funded by Friends of LJES.



The pizza flies off the table at the weekly Pizza Wednesday. Suzanne Brown, Jennifer Snyder and Angie Goodwin are among the volunteers who make it happen.

## Volunteer Jen Snyder Heads Up the Pizza Crew

By Sharon Jones, Tidings Editor

Every Wednesday, rain or shine, Jennifer Snyder is out in the lunch area, directing her sunshine personality to the business of selling pizza.

Snyder is the volunteer in charge of Pizza Wednesday, a PTO fund-raising enterprise that has raised over \$10,000 this year so far. About half of that pays for the pizza expenses, leaving about \$5,000 in profit, which will help PTO fund programs.

Snyder has done this by finding a vendor, Trio Catering, which would deliver quality pizza at a good price, and building a team of volunteers whose commitment and consistency has made the pizza literally fly off the tables.

Her crew includes Amy Aiello, Angie Goodwin, Deborah Myers, Jessi Wright, Katherine Schultz,

Katherine Munoz, Kirstin Kirn, Nora Feune de Colombi and Suzanne Brown. They dish up about 44 pizzas a week.

"They enjoy helping, most of them commit to every week," Snyder said. "They all have fun attitudes and handle the long lines with ease. I can honestly say I couldn't pick a better group to work with."

Asked why she volunteered for this position, she said, "As much as I would like to say it is because I love the food industry, I have to confess Sandra Munson asked if I was interested and my daughter Kennedy said, 'Do it!'"

Her biggest challenge, she said, was finding a supplier to work with who "could provide a quality product at a price that would allow us to make

a profit." And then, she said, there's the weekly challenge of supplying enough quarters for change.

Snyder, 39, grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana. She's been in San Diego for 16 years (La Jolla for the past 10). She worked in residential real estate at Willis Allen Co. before she became a mom. She has two children at LJES: Kennedy, who is in 2nd grade, and Ben, who is in kindergarten.

"In keeping with the food industry theme, my husband, Dan, is one of the partners of the La Jolla Butcher Shop (Homegrown Meats) on Fay Avenue," she pointed out.

What is your favorite part of being pizza mom?

"I enjoy interacting with the kids and working with great moms," she said.

### Service Learning

## Walk in Their Shoes

By Cynthia Kronemyer  
Service Learning Chair

"Act as though what you do makes a difference. It does." William James

For our March Service Learning activity, we will be collecting shoes. Try to imagine yourself or your child going through a normal day barefoot. Now - try picturing a child who walks three miles to a well or picks through a city dump for recyclables doing all that THEY do barefoot. Wow. What a difference a pair of shoes can make!

The shoes we collect will be delivered to Shoe

Metro who participate in the Soles for Souls program (soles4souls.org). We can accept men's, women's and children's shoes - gym shoes or dress shoes. Our shoe drive will end when school is dismissed for spring break.

### Valentines for Haiti

Our Valentine's sale was very successful... especially when you consider we sold our packs of cards for less than 2 weeks. The \$550 that was raised is being donated to Scripps Health which has been engaged in ongoing deployments of physicians, nurses, and support personnel to Haiti since the time of the earthquake. More news and updates on this to follow: stay tuned!

## 3 Students in Sound of Music

Two third-graders and a first-grader are performing in a production of Sound of Music this month at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center of San Diego.

Mac Simpson, 9, and his brother, Tyler, are in the play, along with Maxwell Starko-Jones. Opening night was Thursday, March 4. Several classes are attending a performance as a field trip.

The play runs through Sunday, March 21st. To purchase tickets, visit [tickets.lfjcc.org/contactus.asp](http://tickets.lfjcc.org/contactus.asp)



# A Night at the OSCARS

Don't miss a great event - and a chance to purchase these auction items!



## POWER CRUISE

Chris Foster has donated a cruise in a Tiara 35 powerboat. The boat is perfect for an evening cruise or concert (once season begins) on the harbor / bay, a day cruise to Coronado Islands (ocean, wildlife, dolphins and whales (in season), or a day of fishing (up to 7 hrs off or inshore). The boat holds up to 6 people, plus skipper and first mate.

Value: \$1,000. Minimum Bid: \$400

## Maui Getaway

Tony and Kristee Pauker have donated a one week stay in a Maui condo. The one-bedroom, one-bath condo is located in Honokawai, which is between Kaanapali and Kapalua in West Maui. The condo was fully remodeled in 2009. The complex features a pool, laundry facilities, parking and barbeques. Value: \$2,800. Minimum bid: \$1,120.

## Lipstick and Limo

Dolores Hickman has donated a high-class outing. You and five BFF's will enjoy champagne, a limo ride, and makeovers by Chanel and Dior makeup artists at Macy's. Plus, each guest will receive a \$20 Macy's gift card and goodie bag!

Value: \$400. Minimum Bid: \$160



Michael and Jennifer Spengler have donated photography sessions with studio m. The first 20 people to sign up get a studio session.

Value: \$350  
Minimum bid: \$140

## Fine Wine and Cigar Party

The Hickman, Riveroll and Andrews Families have donated a sophisticated evening of fine wines, gourmet tapas, and premium cigars at the home of Mike and Cindy Hickman.

Value: \$300. Minimum bid: \$120.



## Big Bear

Paul and Donna Scurio have donated a one-week stay at this beautiful cabin in Big Bear. The cabin sleeps 10.

Value: \$2,800  
Minimum Bid: \$1,120



# Jiji Charms All at Technology Night

A standing-room only crowd filled the auditorium as parents were formally introduced to Jiji, the star of a new math software program that has students clamoring for more math time.

More than 100 parents listened to Arthur Lin, senior account executive at Mind Research Institute, explain how ST Math employs the learners' spatial temporal reasoning abilities to explain, understand, and solve multi-step math problems.

He explained how ST Math allows students to learn mathematical concepts through visual stories. Because it is not language based, ST Math has even kindergartners solving simple algebraic equations, he said.

Many parents seemed intrigued by the visual mathematical puzzles presented by Lin during his presentation.

"Have you thought of applying this approach to other types of learning?" one parent asked. Mind Research Institute does have a program available for music.

Some parents seemed relieved to hear that ST Math will likely be available to LJES students from their home computer over the long summer break.

Research has shown that students who complete ST Math outperform their peers.

Teacher Joan Boyle serves on the technology committee that decided to purchase ST Math for the school. She has enjoyed seeing the excitement the program generates.

"It's so contagious," she said during Technology Night as she watched 3rd grade students showing their parents and siblings the program. "They absolutely adore it."

Parent Philip Larson believes that ST Math's visual approach to math will help his child.

"She's very visual anyhow," he said as he watched his fourth-grader, Siena, at work on Jiji. He believes that Jiji and ST Math already is helping her acquire math skills. "It's making a small dent. It'll make a bigger dent."

Mind Research Institute is a neuroscience and education research-based non-profit corporation.

The ST in "ST Math" stands for Spatial Temporal reasoning, which is a "higher order thinking skill that is highly transferable to general problem solving in all curricular areas."



Moms, dads, and even siblings got to watch Jiji the penguin in action during Technology Night. The evening started with a presentation from Arthur Lin (below center) about the software produced by Mind Research Institute.

