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Read Across America

by LASPD Social Media Team

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go” – Dr. Seuss.

During “Read Across America” week, Los Angeles School Police Department officers participated in reading activities with students across the Los Angeles Unified School District.

“We’re always telling children that books and reading are good for them, but have we ever really thought about why that’s true? There has been a great deal of research that suggests that children who read or are read to form stronger relationships, have better communication skills, and have enhanced concentration,” said Officer W. Etue.

“Something truly amazing occurs when you place current police officers in a classroom with the future leaders of tomorrow and I don’t know if words can express what that is. It’s not about the sensational tongue twisting tricks that Dr. Seuss plays on us all, but knowing that these very children will be providing the same skills to others in a few short years. What an awesome responsibility we have as leaders, mentors, coaches, and protectors of the children that we safeguard,” he said.



Students from 68th Street Elementary pose for a selfie after reading on Dr. Seuss Birthday celebration. Photo credit: Officer



School Safety Officer Zamora reads to elementary students during “Read Across America” Week. Photo credit: LASPD Social Media

The Los Angeles School Police 2017 Baker 2 Vegas Report

by **Sergeant Oscar Soto.**

One hundred twenty miles of pavement, 20 stages, over 5,000 runners, guests, family members, and support staff. Hot days and cold nights. Blood. Sweat. Pride. Honor.....

That's what the world's most prestigious and unique law enforcement foot race is all about. Starting in Baker, California and ending in Las Vegas, Nevada, law enforcement officers from around the globe battle it out every spring for the chance of winning the coveted trophy.

The Los Angeles School Police Department is excited to report that the 2017 Baker 2 Vegas relay race is in the books! This year, your team placed 22nd overall, out of 274 teams and 12th place in the elite Open Division. This year's team trained as hard as ever, leading up to the relay. The final 20 runners averaged a 10K race time of 45 minutes and 31 seconds. These results couldn't have been achieved without the dedication of the runners and the support of our command staff.

For those who know about the race, but aren't exactly sure of its origins, here's a brief history. The Challenge Cup / Baker 2 Vegas Relay was the vision of Los Angeles Police Officers Chuck Foote and Larry Moore. It spawned following the format laid out by the LAPD Metro Division's "Death Valley Relay," which ended abruptly in 1985 after a seven year stint of running through the devil's graveyard. Chuck Foote, general manager of the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club, Inc. and Larry Moore, then LAPD athletic director, drove the course, and over those long stretches of highway, came up with the name for the race and its basic format.

The course begins 25 miles north of Baker CA, on Highway 127 to Shoshone CA; then northeast on Highway 178, across the stateline into Nevada on Highway 372 to Pahrump, then southeast on Highway 160 to the finish inside the Westgate Hotel Convention Room in Las Vegas. Teams are scheduled to run in 11 flights, depending on their ability, with flights starting hourly from 9 a.m. to 4



LASPD 2017 Baker 2 Vegas Team - photo credit: LASPD Social Media Team

p.m. On Sunday, eight hours after the last team finishes, an awards ceremony is held in the Westgate Hotel Convention room for over 5,000 runners and support personnel; several thousand family members and friends, and almost a thousand race volunteers.

The Baker 2 Vegas Relay is the most "positive" event open to law enforcement officers today. It gives them a reason to maintain a physical fitness program, and to help them better perform their duties. For over 20 years, the Challenge Cup/ Baker 2 Vegas Relay has been run by hundreds of thousands law enforcement personnel who have treaded across the desert. The original ideals of the race endure: teamwork, camaraderie, physical fitness and competition. The event has expanded in many ways — most notably in entries and categories. The number of teams has grown 14 fold from the first 19 teams in 1985. The number of teams has now been limited to 275. Categories have grown to include probation officers, district attorneys, U.S. attorneys and full-time civilian police personnel.

As a result of this growth, the race has flourished. Today, it is the largest law enforcement event of its kind in the world, with teams participating from Calgary Canada, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) both men and women; Berlin and Hamburg Germany and law

enforcement teams throughout the United States.

During the ceremony and throughout the hotel conversation, the most common phrase heard is, "Wait till next year!"

There you have it. The story of the largest police foot pursuit in the world.

This year's historic team would like to thank Lieutenant Lyndon Cullen, Sergeant Julie Spry, and Officer Jasmin White, for their work behind the scenes planning logistics, keeping our team free from penalties. The team would also like to send a huge "thank you" to every sponsors: Stone Busailah, LLP, Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge 1, Los Angeles Police Federal Credit Union, Schools Federal Credit Union, Los Angeles School Police Management Association - Unit H, Los Angeles School Police Association - Unit A. Our runners appreciate the financial support couldn't have enjoyed this success without the support team and our sponsors.

Watch out 2018, we're coming strong!

Administrator Spotlight: Principal Bennett



Principal Bennett with students and staff from Poly High School. Photo credit: Poly High School Staff

By Officer J.B. Williams

John H. Francis - Polytechnic Senior High School Principal Ari Bennett is a self-proclaimed introvert. Spend a few minutes around him during his interaction with students and staff on Poly High campus and that proclamation is hard to imagine.

Raised in nearby Encino, Bennett attended Los Angeles Unified School District's Wilbur Avenue Elementary School, Portola Junior High and Birmingham High School. He becomes animated when describing his early years of countless play participating in informal and organized sports at Balboa Park with his siblings and neighborhood friends. He ran track, as a sprinter, from fourth through 12th grades and credits his sprinting between the lockers and bungalows of the expansive Birmingham campus, as what kept him in shape.

Despite having a relatively comfortable lifestyle, Bennett had the misfortune of dropping out of the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) in his second year, due his parents' inability to help him pay for college. Returning home, he enrolled at Pierce College. After a year of what he described as *negligent guidance* from a college counselor, he dropped out of Pierce and travelled to Asia, settling in Japan to teach English. During this time, Bennett's teaching English, he realized the benefits of an education and how his opportunities

Los Angeles School Police Department

would be forever limited without a college degree.

Three years later, Bennett returned to the states, re-enrolling at UC-Santa Barbara, ditching economics in favor of an English degree. While in college, Bennett worked as a stockroom

clerk, window washer, camp counselor, camp lifeguard, cafeteria busboy, youth track coach and retail clerk. Bennett's untraditional path to earning a college degree taught him the value of real-world experience. Moreover, it taught him not to judge others who take non-traditional routes to reach academic and career goals.

When describing what leads to student achievement, Bennett believes it is the commitment of those tasked with teaching and the investment their respective organizations make for the students, to ensure they are qualified. "We work in the people business. There is no doubt in my mind the quality of education and percentage of talented educators working in LAUSD schools is far more superior than when I went to high school. It's not comparable. I'm often amazed at the multitude of passionate, committed and well-trained District employees supporting students and their families."

When reflecting on the Los Angeles School Police Department personnel who have been assigned during his, now, 17 years at the school affectionately referred to as "Poly," Bennett believes that the school police personnel who maintain a consistent presence on campus, are passionate about supporting students. He also concludes they are aligned with

Poly's culture and mission, contributing to school's success. Bennett said, "The more an LASPD officer nurtures relationships with school staff and students to be an integral part of the school team, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on the students, families and communities they serve. The role to positively engage with students is likely to have a bigger impact on a larger group than the impact made on a relatively small group of students committing minor crimes."

Bennett believes the current national issues and climate between communities and law enforcement are an opportunity for police to be proactive in developing positive relationships with those they serve. He wholeheartedly believes that the relationships L.A. School Police officers develop and maintain with students, staff and parents have a profound impact on how people within the Poly school community view and collaborate with the department to keep the campus safe.

Bennett credits his two daughters, now 15 and 12 years of age with helping to personalize the various ways how students learn. More importantly, their influence underscores his need to be flexible when providing instruction. Several years ago, when teaching them how to ride bicycles, the eldest proved to be a quick study; requiring minimal assistance, while the youngest communicated it was he (Bennett) who limited her success, due to his impatience and subsequent display of frustration with her. Bennett says he is always reminded of that experience when conveying his expectations to students and staff alike.

When asked to share something about his experience at LAUSD that others might not have known, Bennett stated, "In 2000 when I applied for a contract teaching position here at Poly, I was rejected. The reason given was the consensus that I wouldn't be committed to a long-term career in education." 17 years later, after serving as a substitute and full-time teacher, ESL Department Chair, Grant and School Site Coordinator, and Assistant Principal, Bennett was promoted to Principal in 2012.

What is PAL all about!



PAL participants tour UC Berkeley before the basketball tournament. Photo credit: Officer T. Fenderson



PAL participant in basketball tournament at UC Berkeley. Photo credit: Officer T. Fenderson



Champions of the Richmond/Oakland PAL Holiday Basketball Tournament. Photo credit: Officer T. Fenderson

by Officer T. Fenderson

Last December, the Los Angeles School Police Department's Police Activities League (PAL) sent a group of young men to represent our agency in the inaugural Richmond/Oakland PAL Holiday Basketball tournament. Teams throughout the state were invited to participate in this event. Its purpose is to encourage safe and supervised youth activities during non-instructional classroom time.

The youthful excitement and jubilation was exhilarating, and a great reminder of why the program is such an important way to connect our department to today's youth. Upon arrival in Oakland, our team enjoyed a team meal and shared stories. We discussed the purpose of the trip, individual personal goals, and the reasons it was important to each of them. The setting encouraged the group to have open discussions with members of the law enforcement community regarding current events impacting relationships between law enforcement and today's youth, perceptions of police, and other unprompted topics of conversation.

The first basketball game was scheduled at 2 p.m., allowing the group to participate in a sightseeing tour around the city in the morning. After breakfast, the group toured the campus of the University of California at Berkeley campus, one of the state's most prestigious universities. The group visited student-housing, classrooms, the campus bookstore, and most importantly, viewed college life from their own perspectives. The highlight of the tour included the opportunity to go onto the

floor during a basketball practice in Haas Pavilion, where the Cal Golden Bears play their home games in front of more than 11,000 people. Before leaving the facility, our boys were given tickets to attend a nationally-televised game scheduled for the following day.

The first tournament game pitted our PAL team against a tough Oakland team, but we were more than up for the challenge. The game stayed close for the first few minutes, but the final score had our team ahead by more than 30 points.

In the second game, the competition was expected to be far tougher against the host team. Over 200 people turned out to watch, but the crowd was soon disappointed. Again, our team won by more than 30 points. This second convincing victory secured a spot in the tournament championship.

With two victories under our belts, our team had December 21st off, which gave us more time for sightseeing in the beautiful Bay Area. Full of excitement, the group headed to San Francisco and the Embarcadero, where they toured Fisherman's Wharf and sampled local seafood, experienced classic cable cars, and looked across the bay at Alcatraz. The next stop was Lombard Street, visited by tourists for its continuous curves and steep incline. Next, crossing the Golden Gate Bridge excited the team members because of what the bridge represented to each of them individually. The day ended back at Haas Pavilion, where the boys enjoyed the college sports atmosphere, watching Cal take on the University of Virginia. In the

championship game, our team could finish their mission, mark a place in PAL history as the champions of this inaugural tournament. Their trophy could be displayed in the lobby of the Los Angeles School Police Headquarters for all to see.

Our team jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead, and never looked back. While displaying good sportsmanship, they scored more than twice as many points as their opponents and sealed their place as the first champions of the Richmond/Oakland PAL Holiday Basketball Tournament.

This event made dreams more achievable for a group of young people. Facilitated through the hard work and dedication of the law enforcement community, this trip also showed a different side of being an officer to the team and their parents. These kids will forever have these positive memories of law enforcement. The Los Angeles School Police Department's Youth Programs Unit raised all funding for this event. In order to provide opportunities for more young people, we need your support through donations of any denomination. If you would like to assist with this great cause, please donate to our Police Activities League (an IRS Certified 501(c) (3) organization).

In Case You Missed It

The Pearl Post

The Los Angeles School Police Department has teamed up with Los Angeles Police Department to create a public service announcement (PSA) focused on changing the student lives. "Start With Hello" changes the conversation on how one single act can make a difference. Our friends from Daniel Pearl Magnet High School featured the day of filming on The Pearl Post. Visit their website for behind the scene photos, www.thepearlpost.com.



Sgt. Spry greets Jason Echeveria, main actor from DPMHS. Photo credit: The Pearl Post

Pink Patch Project

The Pink Patch Project Team is setting the groundwork for 2017. [Pink Patch Project](#) participated and displayed at the When Women Lead Conference at USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. Thank you to the USC Department of Public Safety and Chief John Thomas for being great hosts!

Captain Darren Arakawa from the South Gate Police Department, Sergeant Julie Spry from the Los Angeles School Police Department and Communications Technician Officer Marissa Gutierrez from the USC Department of Public Safety represented the Pink Patch Project with pride.



Sgt. Spry (LASPD), Captain Arakawa (SGPD), & CTO Gutierrez (USCDPS) represent Pink Patch Protect Team. Photo credit: Pink Patch Project.

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Add us to get fun facts from the men and women of

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