



Columbia Eagles' Watch

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Jog-A-Thon Success: Students Keep Fit While Raising Money



Money Run — Students round the corner of the new 7/8 building. Mr. Munoz is in the lower-left corner of the picture. Students in the lower grades ran earlier that same morning.

The jog-a-thon was a great success thanks to Mrs. Zamora Day; she organized the jog-a-thon which took place on Thursday morning, February 25.

The students that ran 25 laps won a free dress pass, but some did not reach that goal. Still, those that didn't accomplish that goal earned money for the school.

All over the campus there were posters giving thanks to all the sponsors. Names of sponsors were also placed on Columbia's new electronic billboard.

Many people were excited to run while others were not that enthusiastic. But even Mr. Munoz participated, running along

with all the students. Some teachers wanted to participate also but couldn't because they had to mark the student's paper for each lap ran.

After the run, everybody was tired, but luckily everybody was given a little snack: a water bottle and a banana.

The day went pretty fast for many students and teachers because all the periods were shorter in order to allow time for students to run. Some students said, "That was the best part of the day."

Why is the jog-a-thon important?

According to Mrs. Rendon, "It's important because it is a fundraiser that will not only help Columbia school raise money but it will bring the community together." Mr. Moreno, an eighth-grader teacher said, "Without the money that was be raised we would not be able to have field trips, like the annual eighth-grade trip at the end of the year."

Not only does the jog-a-thon benefit Columbia school with money, it also helps students be active and stay fit, which complements Colombia's other fitness programs, like the Mile Club.

It is known that if the students raise 5,000 dollars there will be a dance and the winning grade would choose the theme. All the students are excited about the dance. Delene Mejia, an eighth-grade student, said, "Almost everybody likes to dance, and they enjoy listening to music." In order to win the dance every student has to bring fifteen dollars.

The eight graders are looking forward to going to the eighth grade annual field trip at the end of the year. But regardless of field trips or dances, the jog-a-thon has benefited Columbia school in many ways. ■



School budget cuts hurt Students, make it more difficult for teachers

United States has been in debt for many years now — but now it has become even worse. About 7 million people have been laid off from their jobs in the last year alone, and that's only within the United States. And the states are also feeling the crunch, including California.

Even public education has been affected. Right here in El Monte more teachers will be laid off at the end of this school year — just like last year — because of the school district budget cuts.

Within the El Monte City School District, three schools have been shut down: Lomas, Mulhall, and Norwood. And even at Columbia teachers have been laid off.

Before this budget crisis, 82 percent of money from the school went to salaries and benefits paychecks and their benefits. That has risen to 90 percent, leaving 10 percent for equipment and other things that the school needs. In order to save money, some classes will become larger while more teachers are laid off.

The disadvantage of this solution is that classes will be packed and some teachers will have a difficult time teaching a larger class. After all, more students in a class means less one-on-one time with individual students. In other words, this crisis affects teachers and students.

Since there have been major cuts in higher education as well, students that are about to graduate from high school are going to have a harder time getting into college. And that's before you even consider the very large increases in tuition and fees for colleges.

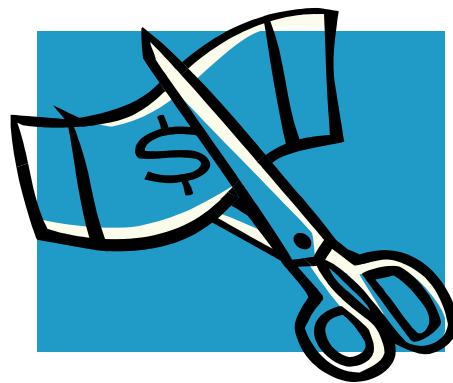
Some will have to go out of state to apply to college because it may actually be cheaper to go to another state!

Many students have also complained how school budget cuts have affected their privileges of going on field trips and joining after-school activities.

Ngoc Nguyen, and eighth-grade student argued, "It is ridiculous that school field trips and activities in general are reduced just because the government is spending that money for other meaningless things."

Seventh-grade student Araceli Avila agreed: "I think the money situation in our school is sad because, as a seventh-grader, it's terrible for us because we have no field trips and fun activities."

The reason why students don't have many after-school sports and activities is because it's not the school, teachers, or the district that is funding for the activities. Actually, it's the city of El Monte that funds the activities and citizens of El



Monte who donate money to after-school activities — and money is also very tight for them.

Many teachers and principals are just as unhappy about what is happening. Teachers don't always get what they need for students because of the budget crisis.

But the damage doesn't stop there.

Many good programs have been cut from schools because of budget problems, including wood shop and metal shop. Some districts are even looking to cutting music, drama, and art.

About 1,000 schools in the U.S are experiencing the same thing as Columbia school is, but some are experiencing something far more serious.

Will this recession ever end? ■

Spring elections bring new leadership to Columbia's student body

Spring elections are officially over! Our new student body officers are Melissa Mendoza, president; Kevin Luong, vice president; Lizbeth De Leon, secretary; Thy Pham, treasurer; and Amanda Melendez, sergeant-at-arms.

The candidates that ran for office did their best. Mendoza and Vanessa Valdez did especially well at the candidates' forum. During the forum Mendoza and Valdez both spoke about getting students more involved, increasing the number of free dress days, and trying to get a school dance approved.

Mendoza is committed to representing the student body and Columbia properly. "I will try my best to make this a fun year for the eighth-graders," she said. One fun thing Mendoza, as the president, has to do is talk on the loud speaker. It may be nerve-racking, but she enjoys it. As president she also has to be an example for the rest of the students by being here on time.

But now that the election is over, what are the newly-elected officers saying about what they want to accomplish? Mendoza said, "I want peace and harmony and to make the rest of the school year amazing." As part of making the school year amazing, she will try hard to keep her promises. Valdez, who is also a member of the Student Congress, plans to work hard as well. "Melissa and I are really close," she said, "and I will do my part." Both of them agreed that being president is hard "because you have to make everything stable, organized, and fun."

Cynthia Millan and Mireya Rivera also ran for vice

president, but both support Luong and will do their best to help the new Student Congress have a successful four months, including offering some great ideas and the time needed to help carry them out.

De Leon stated, "I want to do my best to help organize Student Congress by taking notes of each meeting and coming up with some ideas that will help make Columbia School better." Alyssa Ledesma, her opponent, ran a good race and will be a part of Student Congress as a member of the publicity team. De Leon's responsibilities will include keeping minutes of all the student council meetings — but we heard she enjoys writing so that won't be a problem.

Although Pham was elected treasurer, she stated before the voting that Nathalie Nguyen "would be a really good treasurer." Pham's new responsibilities include taking good care of the student's money and sticking to a certain amount of money that can be used. She said, "In my opinion, being a treasure means handling the money and taking care of anything involving money and working within the budget.

Melendez will try her best "to keep the student council stable" by making sure the rules are correctly enforced and followed.

Even if you're not in student congress you can help by participating in the fund raisers and giving good ideas to the student council. ■