



**SANTA CLARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

## Director's Message

*By Jennifer Ann, Ed. D*



Navigating the many changes that we've been through these last two years has been challenging, but has also provided us with new opportunities to find solutions to support the academic, social and emotional success of our students. I am deeply grateful to all of our parents, caregivers, and staff who have worked together to meet these varying needs and who have done so with a smile on their faces.

I am so excited that this Spring we get to bring back the Special Games, open house events, and graduation ceremonies. I know we have all missed celebrating the special events and moments that our children typically experience at school and I hope we will continue to see these expand to even more opportunities like field trips and in-person parent meetings next school year. Thank you again for partnering with our team to ensure your child's growth and success. I look forward to seeing parents I've had the pleasure to meet again and to meeting new families.

## SCCOE Introduces the Zarcone School in Honor of Michael "Mike" Zarcone

*SCCOE News Release*

On Friday, May 6, 2022, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) hosted a formal naming ceremony for the Zarcone Classroom located at Saratoga Pediatric Subacute. The classroom is named after pharmacist, Michael "Mike" Zarcone, the founder of the Subacute Saratoga Hospital. Zarcone had served numerous patients, specifically children with acute medical needs since 1989.

In efforts to secure more resources to meet the medical and rehabilitation needs of the hospitals' young patients, Zarcone championed state legislation to pass Assembly Bill 36, which created a category of pediatric subacute, allowing funding that supported the rehabilitation of children. In the years following, he opened two additional facilities, Scribbles and Giggle and the Children's Recovery Center, to provide high-quality care to medically fragile children.



In his advocacy, Zarcone was adamant that the hospital's young patients needed schooling as well. He approached the SCCOE and local school districts, resulting in the opening of a classroom on the Saratoga Pediatric Subacute campus in 2004



“Mike Zarcone was an advocate, health care provider, and entrepreneur. He was also the life and soul of this class,” said Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, County Superintendent of Schools. “This ceremony is dedicated to his work and devotion to children’s health and education.”

Dr. Dewan and Santa Clara County Board of Education President Peter Ortize, joined the SCCOE Special Education Department, members of the Zarcone Family, and staff of the subacute hospital to celebrate and recognize the legacy of Mike Zarcone, Former Senator Jim Beall, a fellow children’s advocate and long-time supporter of Zarcone’s work, was also in attendance.

“He was dedicated to providing high-quality care to medically fragile children,” said Zack Zarcone, Mike Zarcone’s son. “We are grateful to see his legacy live on in the students served in this classroom now named in his honor.”



The ceremony included the presentation of a commemorative plaque to the Zarcone family, and a certificate of appreciation to Mary Scates, SCCOE Teacher of Orthopedic Impairments. The event concluded with a tour of the Zarcone Classroom with demonstrations of the adaptive learning tools used to teach students.

## SCCOE Children’s Discovery Museum Day

*By Jennifer Casel*

This year, cluster staff honored students each month who embody the SCCOE Special Education Department’s core values – Safe, Empowered, Engaged and Equitable (SEE). Staff nominated students who displayed one or more of these values at its monthly Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) meeting with more than 200 team members in attendance.



Each cluster put forth a student’s name and then had an opportunity to provide specific examples of how they embody one or more of these values. It was so fun to learn about the great and amazing work our students were involved in and to celebrate the staff who were supporting them in the classroom each month.



The team decided to invite students who were celebrated throughout the year to a special day at the Children’s Discovery Museum on Saturday, May



6th. The SCCOE Special Education Department reserved the entire museum for students, caregivers, parents and their families to enjoy hands-on learning, arts and crafts and outdoor activities. Students who were honored throughout the year had their photos and a special message displayed on a large poster in the museum’s entryway. It was so fun to see the huge smiles on their faces as students recognized and shared their special poster with those in

attendance. The SCCOE Special Education staff cannot wait to see who gets nominated by cluster teams next year for being Safe, Empowered, Engaged and Equitable.

## Saturday Academy

*By Aileen Castro, Jamel Thomspson and Zeny San Augustin*

This year, the SCCOE Special Education Department launched its Saturday Academy. The Saturday Academy is a program open to kindergarten through Post-Secondary students who are enrolled in a Specialized Academic Instruction class at SCCOE.

The program was held the second Saturday of the month from February through May at Hester, Anne Darling, and Gateway schools.

The Academy enrolls an average of 90-100 students across the three sites each month. All classrooms are staffed with highly qualified and trained teachers, para educators and nurses.



It is a wonderful sight to watch students arrive with smiles on their faces, ready for the adventures of the day. Students can be heard laughing, and are seen thumping their feet and waving their arms as they participate in a variety of music activities. Art is another favorite activity and students had fun producing seasonal projects such as heart-shaped cards, leprechaun hats and bunny sketches. It has been fun to see new friendships develop as students from different classes across the County get a chance to meet each other and play or work on projects together.

Animal Assisted Happiness, a group that works with animals as part of a local therapy program, joined in the fun at Anne Darling and Hester. Students seem to really enjoy petting the bunny's soft fur and enjoyed the "clucking" of the chickens.

One of the parents commented that this was the first time she was able to go grocery shopping without pushing a grocery cart and a wheelchair at the same time. She was grateful for the opportunity to have a Saturday to run errands while knowing her child was having fun and being cared for by a team of experts. This same sentiment seemed to be shared by all parents who came to pick up their child with a relaxed and happy attitude.

## Kiwanis Special Games 2022

*by Robert Escarcega*



Amazing weather and smiles abound! This is quite possibly the best way to describe the 2022 Kiwanis Special Games held at West Valley College on Friday, May 13th. After a two year hiatus due to the COVID-19 shutdown; this year's Special Games resumed without a hitch! There were over 550 students, ranging from kindergarten to post-secondary, who attended this year's wonderful event! Input

from Boosters, Volunteers and families was positive as students with special needs were able to engage in numerous fun-filled games that promote physical activity; student engagement; and empowerment to our special needs community!

Starting early Friday Morning, SCCOE Staff and Kiwanis Volunteers began setting up their camping areas and the various games on the West Valley College campus. By 8:15am, students began arriving by bus, were greeted by a variety of smiling faces, and escorted to their pre-established class campsites before the games began.



Athletes lined up on the track group by their school's and carried their banners around in an opening ceremony parade.

Community agencies such as the California Highway Patrol and San Jose Sharks mascot Sharkie cheered on the athletes for their participation and accomplishments. Volunteers were amazing at engaging our athletes to participate in the variety of activities and have fun with their friends and families.

### Care Solace Connects SCCOE Students and Families with Mental Health Support

As part of its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of students, families and staff, SCCOE's partnership with Care Solace provides counseling support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By accessing the Care Solace service, students, families and staff are connected to verified mental health, behavioral health and substance use treatment providers who are matched specifically to their needs and their requested language. Care Solace can be accessed by visiting: [caresolace.com/sccoe](https://caresolace.com/sccoe)

### Parent Engagement Opportunities

Each month, the Special Education Department hosts a parent/student engagement evening where families are guided through activities including playing a game, building a volcano, flying a kite and starting a garden. The activities have allowed families to come together virtually during a year where in-person gatherings weren't possible. The Department hopes to continue these events in the 2022-2023 school year and wants to provide opportunities for families to engage with one another in-person, if possible.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the **School Site Council** is scheduled to meet on the following dates, from 6-7:30pm: September 20th, November 15th, and March 21<sup>st</sup>



### SCCOE Will be Using ParentSquare



We are excited to let you know that SCCOE will begin using ParentSquare to communicate with you at the school, and in your classrooms and groups. ParentSquare provides a simple and safe way for everyone at school to connect. With ParentSquare you'll be able to: receive all district, cluster and classroom communication via email, text, or app; view the district and classroom calendar and RSVP for events; securely receive important student documents

Activate your Account:

You will receive an invitation email or text to join ParentSquare. Please click the link to activate your account. It takes less than a minute. You can use ParentSquare on any device. You can download the free mobile app for iOS or Android or use the desktop version at [www.parentsquare.com](http://www.parentsquare.com). Our goal is for every family to join ParentSquare and engage with our school community.



#### Are You Getting Up-to-Date Information from SCCOE?

The SCCOE has implemented a new email address and phone number for questions and concerns related to attendance and to update contact information. The SCCOE's parent liaison can be reached at: [parentsupport@sccoe.org](mailto:parentsupport@sccoe.org) or (408) 453-6654.



Website:  
[www.sccoe.org](http://www.sccoe.org)



Contact:  
408-453-6542