



CLASP CONNECTIONS

CLAREMONT AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, INC. • WINTER 2016

CHAPARRAL • CONDIT • MOUNTAIN VIEW • OAKMONT • SUMNER • SYCAMORE • VISTA DEL VALLE

CLASP UNITES TWINS

CLASP's mother—Claremont's 1994 Youth Master Plan—brought together representatives from the City, the school district, the Claremont Colleges, churches, nonprofits, and the community at large to identify the greatest needs of the city's children. At the top of the list was the need for after-school academic-support programs for children at risk. So the Youth Master Plan gave birth to twin programs within a year—the Youth Wellness Center at St. Ambrose Episcopal Church and Claremont Tutorial Centers at Vista Valle Townhomes, an affordable-housing community on San Jose Avenue.

By 2005, when these twins were competing for funding from the City of Claremont, Human Services Director Dick Guthrie urged them to merge. With that nudge, their two program directors, Carole Harter and Shirley Butler-Hughes, got together.

According to Shirley, the unification of the twins was a challenge. "We talked and agreed no way we could do it," she said. "But we kept talking. Okay, let's try. And then it just started happening."



CLASP marched in the 2011 Fourth-of-July parade as the City's Honored Group

A core group developed the framework and bylaws for CLASP. Among many critical contributors, Adar Belinkoff deserves special recognition for acquiring its nonprofit status and developing the financial procedures that led to the organization's stability. Teddie Warner spearheaded development efforts. Lissa Petersen and Charlene Martin recruited volunteer tutors and developed training programs for them. Sue Smith stepped into the first presidency. In 2011 the restless twins sharing the CLASP name became one fully integrated organism through the creation of the first strategic plan, facilitated by volunteer consultant Jack Mills.



In 2012 California School Boards Association awarded CLASP the Golden Bell, accepted by Carole Harter, Teddie Warner and Mary Caenepeel.



Shirley Butler-Hughes at a CLASP party

Over the past decade, all but one of CLASP's five centers, like pinballs, have bounced from spot to spot until settling into their current, comfortable pockets. The center at Claremont Village Apartments has stayed put since its founding in 1999 by Claremont Tutorial Centers. As for its sister centers, whenever they have needed a home, someone has opened the door to them, especially the City and Claremont's churches.

The center at St. Ambrose moved to Claremont Presbyterian Church even before CLASP began. When the center at Vista Valle Townhomes outgrew its rec room, it moved to the Wheeler Park community building. CLASP's two youngest centers have been the most itinerant. One, created by the school district for homeless families at American Suites motel, joined CLASP, then bounced to Foothill Mobile Park to Goodwill to Sumner School, and finally landed at Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church. And the center CLASP launched at Oakmont School bounced to Wheeler Park to The Claremont Club to its current happy home in the senior center at Blaisdell Park.

In this issue we celebrate each of our five centers and those who are making them successful today.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This year CLASP is back at work with homework help for our students. Thanks to our marvelous staff, energetic tutors, dedicated board and committee members, and generous donors and supporters, we are making a true difference in the lives of our children.



On September 25, we held our **Celebrate CLASP** event at the Studio Art building of Pomona College. We recognized the contributions of Claire and David Oxtoby with the presentation of an inscribed glass apple. Claire served on the CLASP Board for nine years, and the two of them have supported CLASP in many ways.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holidays,

I am thankful to know that we have many, many individuals like the Oxtobys supporting CLASP. We provide critical help to Claremont elementary-school students who need a tutor's guidance to step forward on the path of learning, to experience new books and ideas, and to discover multiple ways of seeing and exploring the world around them. This is no ordinary accomplishment.

It is a pleasure and honor to serve as Board President of CLASP and to be part of an organization that does so much good in this community. Just walk into any of our five centers to see tutors working with children in caring relationships that make learning possible.

Thanks to every single one of you who gives your time, your money, and your caring to CLASP. CLASP would not exist without you!

Greg Shapton

CLASP CENTERS

GOOD SHEPHERD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH CENTER

Supervisor **Cristina Moreno** at this site on Towne Avenue works with two recreation leaders, **Gabby Turrubiarres** and **Naiomi Gonzalez**.

Cristina became a site supervisor when CLASP opened its doors at Foothill Mobile Park in 2005. This long involvement makes her the most experienced member of CLASP's staff, and she has also volunteered in CUSD classrooms for fourteen years.

"This has been a great program," she says. "I love coming here and enjoy watching the kids' progress from the beginning to the end of the year. I hope the program continues for a long time."



Valerie with Gabby and Naiomi



Playtime

This center hosts kindergartners through third-graders from Sumner, Chaparral, and Condit. A core group of ten volunteer tutors helps the little ones achieve their school-year goals.

Valerie, one of the older students in the program, is a second-grader whom we met in the play yard during recreation time, playing ball with her friends. She is here for her second year because she likes the program: "I come here because my tutor helps me with homework, and then I can go outside to do fun activities." Valerie, who speaks Spanish and English equally well, plans to be a math teacher when she grows up.

CLAREMONT VILLAGE APARTMENTS CENTER (CVA)

When new children or tutors join the CVA center, site supervisor **Jim Keith** asks them to introduce themselves and stick a pin in a large



Chuong and Khang

wall map for the place they or their families have come from. Blue pins for tutors and white ones for students dot the world.

Current students or their parents hail from Tanzania, Vietnam, Mexico, China, Haiti and Afghanistan. Tutors, including international students from the Claremont Colleges, come from Bolivia, China, Thailand, Indonesia and Azerbaijan. And some in both groups come from scattered pinpoints across the USA.

On the day of their interview, brothers **Chuong and Khang** took a break from a lively

game of Four Square on the lawn under the watchful eye of recreation leader **Kassie Jones**. As we talked, third grader **Khang** was trying, in vain, to trap a cricket with a paper cup. In between cricket hops, he proudly announced, "I got 90 on my math test. I only missed one!" While **Khang** is in his fourth year at CLASP, **Chuong** is in his sixth. He says, "CLASP helps me, especially with math, like simplifying fractions before dividing them."

The brothers, who speak Vietnamese at home, used to live in CVA, where their grandmother still lives.



Searching for Idaho

This CLASP center is distinct in two ways. Surrounded by 150 residential units, it is located in an affordable housing community. And since it is the only center that serves kindergartners through sixth-graders, it draws families with children of varied ages.

CLASP CENTERS

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CENTER (CPC)

Cheryl Nespor is serving as supervisor at this site for the third year. Assisting her are recreation leaders **Jezenia Martinez** and **Veronica Diaz**. As many as twelve tutors a day help 25-30 fourth-through sixth-graders from Sumner, Mountain View, and Condit schools with their homework. Cheryl also works for the school system during the mornings. She enjoys getting to know the kids because "it's fun watching them progress from semester to semester."



Briseida with tutor Tiffany Madruga from Harvey Mudd

One of her eager pupils is **Briseida**, a sprightly, eleven-year-old sixth-grader whom CLASP volunteers tutored for three years at Wheeler Park and who has graduated to her fourth year at CPC. Her favorite school subject has been language arts, but this year she is also enjoying math "because I now understand it better." Briseida speaks Spanish, which is her first language, as well as clear and fluent English.

"I like to come here because when I don't understand

homework, someone's here to help me," Briseida says. She is enthusiastic about CLASP and already has plans for a future career: "I want to be a teacher because I want to inspire kids."



Working together

BLAISDELL PARK CENTER

This community center is one of the City of Claremont's lunch and activity centers for older adults in the mornings and a bustling homework hub for CLASP students in the afternoons.



Blaisdell crew with name tags

In 2013 former president **Teddie Warner** was eager to add this "bright and airy space that feels homey" to serve fourth-through-sixth graders from

Vista and Oakmont schools. Today it also welcomes students from Condit, Chaparral, Sycamore and Sumner.

Mackenzie Jessip has served as recreation leader for one year. She says that the students thrive on the exercise and activities they can enjoy in the center's spacious, green park. She will begin graduate school next year with plans to become a high-school math teacher.

Nathan, a fourth-grader from Vista, says, "When I walk in [to CLASP], I feel like I'm ready to learn."

Site supervisor **Cheryl Palmer-Bird** agrees: "Nathan arrives ready to work and eagerly engages with his tutors. I adore that at the end of most tutoring sessions, he makes sure to let me know that he has completed all of his homework. He is so proud of himself!"



Nathan with tutor Steve Hamilton

WHEELER PARK CENTER



Nuritza with tutor Angela Huang

After sprinting her way through rousing exercise games of "Grab the Bacon," "Shark and Minnow," and "Seaweed" during recreation time, third-grader **Nuritza** heads inside to start her homework with tutor **Angela**

Huang. This week, they are working on multiplication. "At first," says Angela, "she had a hard time concentrating, but she is getting better and better at that, and her reading skills have improved." Nuritza's assessment of her tutor is equally positive: "She helps me, and she makes me laugh!"

Indeed, there is a lot of laughter at this center, where the walls are cheerfully decked out with seasonal student art and educational posters, and the children



Recreation time

enjoy support from longtime tutors and caring staff, including recreation leaders **Aubri Huang** and **Monica Anguina**.

Former CLASP president **Teddie Warner** chalks up much of the center's success

to **Maria Martinez**, who "has been a caring site supervisor for so long that she knows the students, their families and her tutors. And she is a liaison with Vista del Valle school, [where she works as a teacher's aide]—a real plus."

Maria passes on the credit to her devoted tutors, who take their roles as mentors seriously. Tutor **Jane Prendergast** says, "Each time I sit down to work with my students, I think about how they are going to do on their next test."



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Tutoring Centers

Volunteer tutors are welcome to join CLASP throughout the school year. Students may enroll at any time if space is available.

Blaisdell Park Community Center

440 S. College Avenue
Mon., Thurs. 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Wed. 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Grades 4 – 6

Claremont Presbyterian Church

1111 N. Mountain Avenue
Mon., Tues., Thurs. 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Grades 4 – 6

Claremont Village Apartments

965 W. Arrow Highway
Tues., Wed., Thurs. 3:15 – 5:15 p.m.
Grades K – 6

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

1700 N. Towne Avenue
Mon., Tues. 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Wed. 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Grades K – 3

Wheeler Park Recreation Center

626 Vista Drive
Mon., Tues., Thurs. 2:35 – 4:35 p.m.
Grades K – 3

Mission Statement

To help elementary-school children enhance their academic, organizational and social skills by providing high-quality after-school programs in Claremont Unified School District neighborhoods.



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Ways to support CLASP

- Volunteer to tutor.
- Provide financial assistance.
- Donate supplies.
- Serve on a committee.

www.clasp4kids.org (909) 204-0127

Please join us to help CLASP kids!

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