



# PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ENSURE LEARNING AND SUCCESS FOR EACH STUDENT BY PROVIDING A QUALITY EDUCATION

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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## Mokler Elementary School Honors Black History Month with Community Celebration

**Paramount, CA** – Major Lynn Mokler Elementary students placed their hands over their hearts and raised their voices for a rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” as they opened the school’s celebration of Black History Month on Feb. 16.

With songs, great food and presentations, Mokler parents, students and teachers gathered in the school’s auditorium to honor African American contributions to society. Close to 100 students worked with their families to create biographical sketches on pivotal figures of African American origin that were proudly displayed.

“Black history is American history,” Mokler Principal Linh Roberts said. “This event is a special opportunity for our children and their families to observe the journey others have taken that have impacted us all.”

Dr. Greg Francois, director of technology and secondary education for Paramount Unified School District, was the event’s guest speaker. He shared his story of growing up in a single-parent Lynwood home with four siblings. By daring to dream and set goals, he said, he was able to achieve the life he wanted.

Mokler fourth-grade teacher Stephanie Nutall led a stirring family quartet of “Mary, Don’t You Weep,” a Negro spiritual that carries a message of hope.

Out of the nearly 100 biographical projects, four were selected to be presented by students. Third-grader Ashley Lares shared her study of Benjamin Banneker, an astronomer and scientist.

“I was surprised to learn that he helped create the first clock in America,” Ashley said.

Ashley’s mother, Elitania Cabrera, proudly watched from the audience as her daughter highlighted the impact of Banneker.

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"She was very excited to learn how the clock was made," Cabrera said. "I'm happy that Mokler is teaching the significant history of all people."

The bios from students revealed a varied cross-section of African American heritage, including inventor Alexander Miles, President Barack Obama and civil rights figure Rosa Parks.

The Black History celebration is the second of three student/parent collaborations planned at Mokler to highlight multi-cultural awareness. In October, the school celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with an event that featured Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez and a student ballet folklórico presentation. The series will conclude in May with a day devoted to Asian/Pacific American heritage.

"By observing the achievements of diverse cultures we're also celebrating the differences in our students and community," PUSD Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez said. "The more we learn about others, the more we learn and appreciate the value in ourselves."

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**022717\_PARAMOUNT\_BLACKHISTORY1:** Major Lynn Mokler Principal Linh Roberts stands with students to display biographical sketches made for the school's celebration of Black History Month on Feb. 16.

**022717\_PARAMOUNT\_BLACKHISTORY2:** Close to 100 Major Lynn Mokler students worked with their families to create biographical projects on pivotal figures of African American origin. They were on full display during the school's celebration of Black History Month on Feb. 16.

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