



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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San Gabriel Unified Elementary Promotes Kindness During ‘Friendship Week’

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Coolidge Elementary School students bonded over music and art as they decorated the school in colorful, positive messages during the school’s inaugural Friendship Week, a series of campus activities that promoted kindness and celebrated diversity.

Friendship Week – held Oct. 1-5 – kickstarted National Bullying Prevention Month, which aims to educate students about bullying and build positive school climates.

“The idea for Friendship Week generated from one of our parents,” Coolidge Principal William Wong said. “We saw it as an opportunity to celebrate differences while also making sure everyone on campus feels welcome and supported.”

Students, teachers and parent volunteers painted “friendship rocks” – which featured messages of kindness and acceptance – that will be installed in a display on campus. Many teachers also decorated their classrooms with positive messages like “Kind people are my kind of people.”

Coolidge also unveiled a friendship bench – built by Gabrielino High School wood shop students – near the playground. The bench, which includes a list of questions, jokes and stories for students to discuss, is intended to provide a space for students to reach out to one another and build friendships.

“This week, I learned how diverse our school is and that there are many new friends we can make here by just being kind to each other,” Coolidge fifth-grader Jacey Nguy said. “I like that we have a friendship bench now, because if someone is looking to make new friends, they can come here to do it.”

The week’s activities included an assembly on what to do if bullying occurs, a lunchtime drum circle and a schoolwide reading of “The Art of Making a Friend” by Julia Cook.

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Friendship Week was planned by the school's parent volunteers and supported by the District's facilities, maintenance and operations department, which volunteered time and resources to install the friendship bench and beautify the surrounding area.

"San Gabriel Unified is committed to ensuring the socioemotional well-being of all students," SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. "Thank you to Coolidge Elementary for finding creative and engaging ways to make students feel welcome and supported."

PHOTO CAPTION:

SANGAB_COOLIDGE_FRIENDSHIP: Coolidge Elementary students try out the school's new friendship bench, which provides students a quiet place to get to know one another and build friendships. The bench was unveiled Oct. 3 as part of the school's inaugural Friendship Week.

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