



Press Release

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CONTACT: Lindsay Ivins, William Diepenbrock PHONE: 909-445-1001

Lynwood Unified Fifth-Graders Break Out their Dancing Shoes for Conga Kids Semi-Final Competition

Lynwood – About 60 Lynwood Unified elementary students danced their hearts out in the Lynwood High School Performing Arts Center on Dec. 14 during the Conga Kids semi-final competition, shimmying their way toward a chance at claiming major bragging rights and a shiny trophy for their school.

Conga Kids is a nonprofit arts-in-education charitable foundation with the mission of providing a dynamic partner dance program that develops students' creative potential and sets a foundation of respect, teamwork, confidence, leadership and a sense of accomplishment. This is Conga Kids' first year working with about 600 Lynwood Unified fifth-graders, who practiced with instructors twice a week for 10 weeks to learn five different ballroom dances: merengue, swing, salsa, tango and foxtrot.

"We are so happy to be playing our part in such an amazing, progressive school district like Lynwood," Conga Kids Artistic Director Daniel Ponickly said. "Interpersonal communication skills like the ones kids learn through our program give them an advantage in this communicative world by practicing concepts like teamwork and problem solving."

The top 5 couples from Abbott, Lugo, Wilson, Helen Keller, Lindbergh and Mark Twain elementary schools worked their way into the semi-finals to see who among them will compete against next semester's semi-finalists from the District's other six elementary schools: Lincoln, Marshall, Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, Washington and Will Rogers.

"Visual and performing arts are vital outlets for our students to express themselves and be creative," Superintendent Paul Gothold said. "We are working to provide more opportunities each year for our students to pursue the arts, whether that be painting, singing, dancing or playing instruments."

Lugo Elementary students took home first place, while Helen Keller Elementary placed second and Abbott Elementary claimed third.

"I am so impressed by everything Lynwood Unified strives to do for its students," Board President Alma-Delia Renteria said. "Giving students access to these programs motivates them to excel in their regular coursework and for some students, sparks an intense passion within them to pursue an art form for the rest of their lives."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

121616_LUSD_CONGA1: Lynwood Unified's Lugo Elementary fifth-graders hoist their first-place trophy above the crowd after the Dec. 14 Conga Kids semi-final competition at Lynwood High School's Performing Arts Center.

121616_LUSD_CONGA2: Lynwood Unified's Helen Keller Elementary fifth-graders Luis Cardenas (left) and Sa'nayah Perkins tango during the Dec. 14 Conga Kids semi-final competition at Lynwood High School's Performing Arts Center.

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The **Lynwood Unified School District** is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support system for students and staff. For more information, visit www.lynwood.k12.ca.us.

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