

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Rancho Santa Gertrudes Elementary Celebrates Family Ties During Annual Grandparent's Day Lunch

Whittier, CA – Dozens of Los Nietos School District grandparents visited Rancho Santa Gertrudes Elementary School on Sept. 9 to share lunch with their grandchildren, pose for photos and tour the campus as part of the school's third annual Grandparent's Day.

"In our close-knit community, grandparents play a crucial role in preparing our students for class every single day. Quite often, they are the ones dropping them off in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon," Rancho Santa Gertrudes Principal Octavio Perez said. "Grandparent's Day is our way of thanking them for all they do for their grandchildren and their families."

Volunteers from the Rancho Santa Gertrudes Parent-Teacher Committee (PTC), which helped coordinate the lunch, blew up colorful balloons and welcomed the guests, pinning red and white carnations on women as they arrived. A picture frame decorated with the words "Grandparent's Day 2016" was available for those who wanted a souvenir picture with their grandchild.

The day's menu featured a salad bar and whole grain pizza along with fresh fruits and vegetables. The lunch options are part of a District program aimed at curbing childhood obesity and promoting nutrition.

"Nutrition is of great importance to our community and special events like Grandparent's Day allow us to spotlight the steps we're taking to create a healthy culture," Los Nietos Superintendent Jonathan Vasquez said. "Thank you to Principal Perez and the Rancho Santa Gertrudes PTC for all their hard work in putting together a special event that recognizes our District's rich history."

Rancho Santa Gertrudes school nurse Teresa De La Mora hosted four generations of her family at the event, including three generations of students. She was joined by her daughter, Teresa; granddaughter, second-grader Irene De La Mora; and great-grandmother Irene Sandoval.

"There are many of us who have lived our entire lives in this area and that speaks to the community spirit of Los Nietos," De La Mora said. "We all know each other and share the same values and goals for our children and theirs. We are one big family."

Former Rancho custodian Joe Pantoja and wife, April, who is a health clerk at Los Nietos Middle School, lunched with granddaughter, Aliyah Pantoja, their third grandchild to attend Rancho Santa Gertrudes.

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Pantoja, a 19-year employee, noted how the school has added 65-inch TV monitors complete with Apple TV to classrooms and upgraded wireless infrastructure, funded through a \$13 million bond measure approved by voters in 2014.

“The campus really looks great. Rancho has always been a good environment, but the school has taken a step forward with the new technology,” Pantoja said. “I enjoy coming back. It feels like home.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

091516_LOSNIETOS_GRANDPARENTS1: Rancho Santa Gertrudes Elementary School celebrated its family ties on Grandparent’s Day, an event that brought together generations of Los Nietos families.

091516_LOSNIETOS_GRANDPARENTS2: The day’s lunch options were a part of a District program aimed at curbing childhood obesity and promoting nutrition.

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