

...advocates for children

Sign language specialist saves life

Around Eissler School they call Sign Language Specialist **Phaivanh Xayavong**, “PX.” If you check through the Kern County Public Schools Directory, he is the only name listed under, “X.” Oh, one other detail, Xayavong was born deaf — only able to hear 30 percent in one ear and nothing in the other.

Yet, all his senses were hyper-sensitive when they needed to be in the Eissler cafeteria at lunchtime on Dec. 12. Xayavong was just being a nice guy and loyal employee, when he told a sub, who had cafeteria duty with him, to leave five minutes early for her lunch. Moments later, something caught his eye that Xayavong thinks he “will remember forever.”

Through a sign language interpreter, Xayavong said, “I just happened to be watching a student who looked like he might be having some problems eating. But, I heard another student coughing, like a choking sound, and out of the corner of my eye, I saw that he was making panicky gestures. It happened quickly. I just went for it. I checked his mouth, where a

grape he was eating had become lodged in his throat. And then, I began the Heimlich Maneuver. It took two thrusts and the grape popped out. I just stayed positive through the whole situation.”

Xayavong credits the CPR training and refresher courses he has taken in his six years with KCSOS for giving him the skill to save young **Jorge Garza**’s life. Both know each other well. Xayavong works with the seven kindergarten and first grade students in teacher **Robin Lindsey**’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Class. Garza is one of his students.

Garza almost never missed a beat, finishing the rest of the day’s activities without any setbacks. And Xayavong reacted to his heroic deed with a simple statement, “Jorge was safe. He trusted me. It was my responsibility.”



Everyone was smiling on Dec. 13—Sign Language Specialist Phaivanh Xayavong, the boy he saved, Jorge Garza, and KCSOS Sign Language Interpreter Kasie Saldana, who translated the story of the heroic deed that happened one day earlier on Dec. 12.

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Personality profile.....*Michael Hulsizer*

Although he's worked for the office for 26 years, you don't see **Michael Hulsizer** every day in Kern County. But his influence, as Legislative Advocate for our office and Kern school districts, is felt daily.

As Chief Deputy, Governmental Affairs, Hulsizer works with state lawmakers, key staff members, policy experts, groups and organizations within and outside education. His mission: To increase legislative awareness about public education and work to secure funding necessary to educate our students.

"Much of what I do is learning and understanding in depth the state and national fiscal trends, then providing this information in a way easily understood by school leaders. Knowing these facts helps Kern educators stay proactive because they know what's coming," he said.

Staying ahead requires substantial time spent reviewing and analyzing budget data.

"Roughly 65 percent of school dollars come from the state. Given that the state has been in a fiscal crisis for four years, it's critical school administrators know which issues are emerging. In this economic environment no one wants a surprise," said Hulsizer.

He's at the Capitol Monday through Thursday, and in Bakersfield on Fridays serving as business liaison for the office. He communicates regularly with business groups and individuals on the Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce Governmental Review Council.

"Our superintendent recognizes relationships outside of education are critical. And this helps garner support from non-education sectors for school bond issues along with state legisla-



Michael Hulsizer started working for the office 26 years ago as a history/social science consultant.

tive issues that impact Kern schools," said Hulsizer.

During monthly meetings with Kern County superintendents and chief business officials, he keeps them abreast of new and developing issues in Sacramento. Their valuable feedback is shared in Sacramento with lawmakers and their staff.

Twice monthly, he chairs a meeting with the Legislative Policy Committee—consisting of all office division heads. The committee analyzes and takes positions on numerous education bills that can positively, and sometimes negatively, impact how we serve children.

Recently, **Superintendent Frazier** asked him to serve as spokesperson and consultant on budget issues for the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, an organization consisting of California's 58 county superintendents.

His analysis of budget issues is communicated to all of California's county superintendents of schools.

Challenging times are at the end of the budget year and the final days of a legislative session. Sessions run late into the night or early morning. Deals are made which often lack public transparency. In the final days of this year's budget session, a change was made that shifted the responsibility for providing children's mental health services from mental health agencies to schools.

Hulsizer has represented Kern County schools in Sacramento since 1995. His educational career includes Administrator, Division of Curriculum and Instruction; Director, Special Instructional Projects and History/Social Science consultant. Prior to joining the office in 1984, he worked as a counselor and teacher.

He played a key role in founding the Kern County Network for Children—working with public and not-for-profit groups that provide services to low income children and their families.

His expertise in budget and legislative work is recognized throughout the state.



Michael Hulsizer

Beautiful holiday scenes and thoughts

The holidays are gone but that time of beautiful scenery and generous hearts deserves another look.



Thanks to the annual volunteer efforts of Transportation Services and donations from office staff, 43 low income families of special needs students, driven to school in KCSOS buses, received Holiday Food Baskets to make the season a little brighter.



Nine years after the first light bulb was put in a display, HolidayLights at CALM continued to amaze and delight children and adults with its imaginative displays featuring more than two million lights.



Some would call HolidayLights a Winter Wonderland.



Creatively decorated trees provided an aesthetically visual holiday transformation for the City Centre.



Various office non-profits sold the tree ornaments and other gifts at the Charity Tree Boutique on Dec. 6 to raise approximately \$1,200 for their worthwhile efforts.



Those involved included CALM, the Dream Center, Downtown Child Development Center Parent Club, Special Education Services and the Youth Connection.

STAFF news

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Don't worry, it's all about marketing

Green men, a life sized walking backpack, a group of organic bees and glow in the dark high heels? When you compete in the California Virtual Enterprise Network Trade Show, those kinds of sights are expected. High school students from as far away as New York came to Bakersfield's Rabobank Convention Center on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 to compete and show what they have learned about running a business. If that meant dressing up like a faceless, green-bodied, action hero to make a sale, so be it. After all, they were being judged. Awards and a possible trip to compete in New York made winning strategies imperative.

Sometimes it was not the look but the incentive that
(please see VIRTUAL ENTERPRISE - back)



Canyon Springs High student Kevin Colón awed teammates Steve Garcia and Jacob Matthews with his method for attracting buyers to their "Lazer Kraze" booth.

VIRTUAL ENTERPRISE (continued from page 3)

brought prospective buyers to one of the more than 100 student vendor booths. California City High School's business was "Everything Kool-Aid." They offered everything — sweatshirts, calendars, pitchers, anything with the Kool-Aid logo on it. But they also had a bowl filled with free packets of Kool-Aid for those curious buyers walking by.

"We knew we needed a hook," said California City High student **Alexis Barnes**, "And what kid doesn't like Kool-Aid? Handing out samples is bringing in a lot of business."

So, what is this virtual enterprise? Turns out, it has been around for 13 years in California and is offered at many Kern County high schools as a Regional Occupational Program (ROP) course. All curriculum is approved by the California Department of Education and meets core curriculum standards.

"We are teaching students to survive in the real world," said **Carrie Johnson**, who teaches the course at California City and Mojave high schools for the Kern County Superintendent of Schools' Kern County Regional Occupational Program (KCROP). Another KCROP Virtual Enterprise course is taught at Tehachapi High. "We teach budgeting so they can learn how to pay their bills, how to act in a workplace, what job skills they need, and we give them hands-on experience. They create sales catalogs, run meetings, create fly-



California City High students (left) Peter Martinez, Alexis Barnes and Natasha Bullock had "Everything Kool-Aid" to sell.

ers, interview for jobs. With what you learn in ROP, you can get a job after high school."

Orders were written, sales made, and money exchanged hands during the trade show. But not really. Everything was, as the name says, "virtual." Still, the product and marketing ideas these inventive students create are real and could spawn products for pioneering businesses. Every product in Mojave High's "Glo Swag" sales catalog glowed. Team member **Cheyenne Ramirez** saw real value in that concept.

"Imagine having a pair of shoes that glow? It would help you walk in the dark," Ramirez said. "And how about electronics? If they are glowing, you will always be able to find them and use them — in the dark." The team took 10th place in the Impact Marketing category.

Just as practical for Tehachapi High student **Delaney Dragomanovich** was her company's concept of offering four businesses catering to her age group — a teen club, "swag" supermarket, boutique cupcakes and a shop selling healthy "smoothies."

"In our town, we don't have a lot of things for the kids who live there," Dragomanovich said. "If I decide to stay in Tehachapi, I now have ideas for what will interest the kids. Who knows, maybe one day I will start up one of those kinds of businesses."



Mojave High's "Glo Swag" team of (left) Liana Pierre, Cheyenne Ramirez and Sydney Achziger were ready with answers for this prospective buyer.

Et cetera

Facilities and Property Management Services Chief Facilities Officer **Jenny Hannah** has been asked to represent the state county offices of education on the California Department of Education, School Facilities Planning Division's Advisory Committee.

School and Community Partnerships received a Carol M. White Physical Education Grant for 3 years and \$1.7 million to fund a project called "Kern Kids Get Moving." The grant will support physical education goals in KCSOS Court and Community Schools, at Valley Oaks Charter School and in various Migrant Extended Day Programs.

Students in Kern County may in the future be tuning into "Do The Science." Pilot segments are going to be added to the long-running "Do The Math" TV program created and produced by the Kern Educational Television Network (KETN), operated by KCSOS. Chevron is making the production possible by providing \$55,000 for the segments that will promote sciences focusing on the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum.

Community Connection for Child Care (CCCC) clients and providers are very satisfied, according to a recent in-house survey. Ninety-nine percent rated the services provided by CCCC as "Very Good" and "Excellent."

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MISSION STATEMENT

As advocates for children we provide leadership, education and support for students, school districts and the community through programs, services and fiscal accountability.