

Palisades-Founded Level UP LA Celebrates One-Year Anniversary

The Organization Will Host a Fundraiser at The Draycott

By LILY TINOCO
Reporter

Level UP LA, a volunteer organization run by a group of teenagers out of Pacific Palisades, is celebrating its one-year anniversary and has no plans of stopping anytime soon—including hosting a fundraising evening at The Draycott in Palisades Village.

Students from Palisades Charter High School, Brentwood School, Harvard-Westlake, Loyola and Marymount High School have collaborated to fulfill the team's core mission: to raise money and help strengthen under-resourced Los Angeles communities by providing support that will "level up" the primary educational experience for children, one school at a time.

The group of Palisadian teens launched their first campaign last year at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and met their goal of fundraising \$50,000 to support Coliseum Street Elementary. They were able to create bins with necessary supplies for each student to pick up at the start of the academic school year, and provide new computers and software for all of the teachers.

The first campaign was a blueprint for more work and future campaigns to follow, parent Claire Haas said to the *Palisadian-Post* last year. Claire, together with her son, Zach, came up with the idea to create Level UP LA. When students and staff re-



Level UP LA members

Photo courtesy of Level UP LA

turned to campus this past April, Coliseum Street Elementary reached out to Level UP LA to ask for help preparing their classrooms with materials for in-person learning.

"We wanted to make returning to campus that much more special for the students," Zach, president of Level UP LA, said in a statement.

Level UP LA organizers closed the year with gifts for students, including books, workbooks, journals and STEM activities. And on the last day of school, the team was able to finally meet the students of Coliseum Street Elementary.

"It warms my heart tremendously that these phenomenal, thoughtful and caring high

school students took the time to organize, fundraise, package and deliver much needed supplies to our school," Coliseum Street Elementary School Principal Jean Pennicooke said.

The team was looking at an all-new fundraising goal, and invited the community to celebrate and support at The Draycott, located at 15255 Palisades Village Lane, on Tuesday, July 13.

"The Draycott has generously offered to have a cocktail hour in which a portion of the proceeds of every drink purchased will go toward the Level UP LA nonprofit organization and to helping 'level up' the primary school educational experience across all Los Angeles schools," according to a press release.

"As a neighborhood restaurant, we feel a responsibility to support our neighbors in their causes—just as our neighbors have supported us over the last year," Draycott Owner and Palisadian Marissa Hermer shared ahead of event, which will run from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

"Local high school students appreciating their young educational experience and wanting to make sure all Los Angeles communities have an equal and fair start, I believe, will begin to change the future of education for many," Claire said.

For more information, visit leveluplosangeles.org or reach the team at levelupedla@gmail.com.