

Leveling Up ... Again

Palisades-Founded Level UP LA Reports Another Successful Year

By LILY TINOCO
Reporter

Level UP LA, a volunteer organization run by a group of teenagers out of Pacific Palisades, recently celebrated another successful year—and shared that the organization has no plans of slowing down anytime soon.

Students from Palisades Charter High, Brentwood, Harvard-Westlake, Loyola and Marymount High schools have collaborated to build the team and fulfill its 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.

Two years in and the team announced a new Level UP Team Two, which has brought newfound collaborations and growth.

Level UP LA recently partnered with Maple Primary Center and Los Angeles Unified School District’s Black Student Achievement Plan to offer its support.

BSAP is a new department within LAUSD that works to reduce the learning gap between Black students and their non-Black peers, according to a press release. Former Principal of Coliseum Street Elementary Jean Penicooke approached Level UP LA to ask for its support of BSAP.

“The work that BSAP is doing perfectly aligns with the work that LULA has been doing as well as in the areas that LULA hopes to have an impact in,” according to Level UP LA.

Penicooke said the partner-



An end-of-the-year celebration at Coliseum Street Elementary

ship was “truly personalized and exceptionally professional, and the young members of Level UP became awesome role models for [the school’s] students and staff.”

Since the induction of Team Two, Level UP LA has also raised over \$60,000. The funds raised are strictly used to accommodate the needs of teachers and staff.

Level UP LA said \$10,000 was spent on resources for Maple Primary Center, as well as Coliseum Street Elementary, which funded teachers’ supplies, back-to-school supplies for its students and more. The organization also donated backpacks, water bottles and additional supplies to help students

start the school year on the right foot.

Level UP LA has also expanded: The 10 original team members has grown to over 50 volunteers, and local students are consistently contacting them to join their efforts and support the team.

“With more student volunteers, LULA has been able to host many more fundraisers and projects at schools,” according to Level UP LA.

Level UP LA hosted an end-of-the-year celebration at Coliseum Street Elementary and launched a Beautification Project this summer on campus.

“The project had been requested by the teachers for over a year but has finally been



Photos courtesy of Claire Haas

brought to fruition due to the increase in financial and volunteer support,” the team said. “Today the children of Coliseum are enjoying a new, beautiful garden with a pumpkin patch that Ms. Brown’s second-grade students water each morning.”

Level UP LA said it will continue to host events to raise funds in support of LA-based schools. Last fall, the organization hosted Sunday Funday events—in partnership with YMCA—in the Palisades from August through October. Level UP LA is currently gearing up for its next event, which representatives said will be coming around “very soon.”

“[We] hope to strengthen the relationship between parents, staff and the community,” Level UP LA said in a statement. “Significant improvement has already been seen at both schools, due in part to the strengthened relationships between families, staff and students. And LULA will continue its efforts.”

For more information, visit leveluplosangeles.org or reach the team at lukasshaas05@gmail.com.