

December 4, 2009

Thanks Giving Holiday Post Script

In many of my updates, I have taken enormous liberties by interjecting a mix of the experiences of my own family with those of my Mesa family. I have tried for years to separate the two, but find that the only way I can enjoy both is to combine at random. This year my family's gathering was a little different, and I have a feeling that this was the case for most families in this state and the nation in general. The term "Thanks Giving" took a more literal meaning than in years past because we have all experienced a change in our circumstances that, oddly enough, made us very much aware about the things we had taken for granted. This year, we gave thanks for what surrounded us with a new appreciation for their importance, their value, and their meaning. My granddaughter, Isabella, helped to say grace this year and she did it in Spanish – a great achievement in Grandma's eyes (given the fact that she is only three years old and enrolled in bilingual pre-school just six months ago!)

In discussions about culture, I have always found that in this great multilingual, multicultural experiment that is America, Thanks Giving transcends language, background, religious belief, or ethnicity. For most of us, it is not about Plymouth or Pilgrims, it is about giving thanks in the company of family and friends and making time to take stock of whatever it is that we treasure at that moment. This is indeed universal in nature and needs no translation.

This year, I had one more thing to be thankful for the day after the holiday meal – I did not gain any weight despite the availability of both turkey and ham (in our family there are two camps – well, maybe three – the turkey eater/pumpkin pie traditionalists, turkey haters/ham eaters/pecan pie contrarians, and "stuffing only please" finicky-types.) Also, a new tradition began – I made muffins in the shape of small turkeys with my granddaughter Isabella.

The problem with this undertaking, however, was that Isabella wanted a plate full of turkey-shaped muffins and no real turkey or any sort of protein at all. This was a dilemma that took some crafty negotiation. The solution was to fill one cupcake container with diced turkey and stuffing topping and place both muffins (the real and unreal one) side-by-side – case solved!

H1N1 – The Case of the Well-Mannered Pandemic

Vaccination Day: a Thing of Beauty - no, I am not suffering from a lingering case of tryptophan poisoning – there is nothing more beautiful than to watch planning in the abstract play out in real life the way that it was anticipated. During the past ten weeks, the SDCCD Emergency Team has met each Tuesday morning at 8:00 a.m. to plan, anticipate, and solve every possible contingency in preparation for the arrival of the H1N1 Pandemic and the means to contain its spread among our students, faculty, and staff. We monitored the spread of the virus weekly, developed "Just in Time" communications, implemented several preventative measures, placed our order for the vaccines, conducted preparatory POD (Point of Dispensing) training, established a schedule for vaccinations (including a priority of service process,) and then the much awaited day arrived: November 30, 2009. We held our breath and waited with much anticipation to see if our work had paid off – and this is where I get to the "thing of beauty" – it

all worked well. Surveys that were collected after vaccines were dispensed revealed a 99% satisfaction rating.

The H1N1 District-wide team worked hard to prepare for the H1N1 Pandemic. I am grateful for the opportunity to interact in an extended capacity with a cross section of colleagues from City, Miramar, Continuing Education, and the District Office that may not have come together otherwise. I have found that they are all passionate about their values, beliefs, and expertise and we all managed to have our say and contribute in an unprecedented manner. The “patience medal” goes to David Umstot who had to control, corral, cajole, and even threaten at times while making it all work in the end.

At Mesa, I would like to extend special thanks to Ashanti Hands, Suzanne Khambata, and the entire staff of our Health Services Center for coordinating our campus’ vaccination schedule and distribution.

Police Substation Open House

On Wednesday, December 2, we gathered to celebrate the opening of Mesa’s Police Substation. The construction and location of the substation represents our ability to listen to the input of our surrounding community, integrate their concerns, and follow through on our commitments. I say this because the idea to construct the substation as part of the parking structure to make it visible to entering traffic and visitors came from a community input meeting more than two years ago. Our neighbors expressed concerns with safety and traffic control resulting from a large parking structure and they suggested that having a police presence collocated with the structure would act as a deterrent. We listened and we complied.

If you have visited the substation, you will note that the design provides the visitor with a welcoming sense of support in an open setting with a great deal of natural light. This construction project has earned a Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Silver Level Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. In addition, all new construction projects will be designed to meet the highest LEED certification possible.

Finally, it is befitting that the substation should open at the same time that we have filed our Clery Act Report. This document is in compliance with the “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” that requires that all institutions of higher education maintain statistics and file an annual report on several key crime categories, including aggravated assaults, rape, and hate crimes. The great news is that crime statistics at Mesa decreased an overall 19% - making our college one of the safest in the region. The report is available in hard copy and may be accessed online at <http://police.sdccd.edu>.

Kudos to our safety officers for their excellent professionalism, sensitivity, and ability to join as part of Mesa’s team which places education and prevention first over enforcement. Officers assigned to Mesa include:

Supervisors:

- Sgt. Diana Medero
- Acting Sergeant Nancy Shumaker

Police Officers:

- College Service Officers:
- Officer Cindy Cavada
- Officer Sean McPherson
- CSO Noel Tabor
- CSO Gaspar Cariaga
- Officer Marco Garza
- Officer James Everette
- CSO Jasmine Holcombe
- CSO James Bennett
- Officer Brian Szymanski
- Officer Mark Green
- CSO Vicki Lindsey
- CSO Christian Picou
- Officer Jeff Claiborne
- Officer Jarad Preston
- CSO Matt Flores

Thank you all.