

Mariners Christian School Hosts Dedication Ceremony for New Athletic Facilities

When Mariners Christian School student's came back from Christmas break, they were welcomed by a New Year's surprise: a brand new, state-of-the-art 57,000-square-foot AstroTurf athletic field.

To help celebrate this new addition, on Wednesday, Jan. 25 over 150 students, parents and teachers gathered for a special after school event to dedicate the new athletic facilities. The ceremony included remarks by the Head of School, Troy Moore, a prayer dedication by an 8th grader, Levi Darrow, a ribbon cutting ceremony and finally, fun field games that included the participation of students, teachers, and parents.



In April 2016, MCS launched a fundraising campaign to replace the natural grass field, which was 30 years old and

significantly impacted by the extended drought conditions, with professional-grade AstroTurf. The total project cost was \$440,000.

By October 2016, the fundraising goal was reached, and construction commenced in November. The new field, now featuring AstroTurf with a 2-star FIFA rating, includes permanent zoning stripes for flag football, soccer (small and full sided), and PE/recess lines.

Mariners Christian School earns top accreditation

Mariners Christian School has earned the highest accreditation status, a six-year renewal from the dual accrediting organizations of Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

“Dual accreditation is often more difficult to achieve because there are broader and deeper evaluations of school performance, including a higher requirement for teacher and administrator training, and a detailed focus on biblical elements of instruction and organizational practice,” said Head of School Troy Moore. “When a school achieves dual accreditation, it has demonstrated its ability to meet rigorous standards, both secular and biblical in nature.”

The entire accreditation process required two years of preparation, with Vice Principal Megan Shahabi leading the effort.

The visiting committee from ACSI/WASC, which included

delegates from other private schools in the Southern California region, toured the school extensively in April, with a formal accreditation being granted on May 4.

City earns ‘Mega’ water saver title from Mesa Water District

At the Mesa Water District’s Board of Directors regular meeting on Thursday April 14, the City of Costa Mesa was recognized for its water conservation efforts and presented with the “Mega” Mesa Water Saver award.

Through the city’s efforts, along with other local agencies, businesses, schools and residents, the water district has reached and exceeded the state’s 20 percent conservation mandate with over 21 percent reduction in water use from June 2015 through February 2016.

“The 10 Mesa Water customers we’re recognizing today include property owners and managers with varying responsibilities, who are clearly dedicated to doing the right thing and engaging in activities that achieve higher-than-average water savings during this extended drought,” said Mesa Water Board President Shawn Dewane. “We’re proud to be part of a community so dedicated to water efficiency.”

The water district focused on outdoor watering, reducing water waste at residential, multi-family, business and government properties.

Customers who increased water efficiency beyond expectations were responsible for higher-than-average water savings ranging from 31 percent to 56 percent.

Businesses and Homeowners' Associations amended their outdoor watering for larger landscapes to comply with Mesa Water's watering schedules that changed with seasonal temperatures and weather.

Single-family homeowners and local government agencies implemented additional water-saving techniques, including installing a pool cover, replacing thirsty turf with water-wise landscaping, updating old irrigation with drip irrigation, reducing sprinkler times, installing smart-timers, and decreasing off-peak utility use.

The following were recognized at Thursday's event by Mesa Water's Board of Directors as "Mega" Mesa Water Savers:

- Janice and Steven Frates
 - Susan and Geoff West
 - Brookview Homeowners' Association
 - Harbor Village Apartments
 - C.J. Segerstrom & Sons
 - Mariners Christian School
 - Vanguard University
 - City of Costa Mesa
 - John Wayne Airport
 - Newport Mesa Unified School District
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Private Costa Mesa School Teacher named as one of the top 25 in county

Mariners Christian School of Costa Mesa announced that its beloved fourth grade teacher, Kristin Knecht of Mission Viejo, was chosen as one of the Top 25 Teachers in Orange County for 2016 by OC Parenting Magazine.

The surprise announcement came in Knecht's classroom, who received balloons, flowers, and cheers from fellow teachers, administrators, and her students.

Knecht has over 20 years of teaching experience in fourth grade, four of them at MCS.



"Mrs. Knecht is dedicated to the idea of fostering creativity, imagination, and finding ways to apply content to the real world to motivate her students. She desires to know the unique dreams and aspirations of each student in the classroom in order to make learning come alive," said Elementary Principal Reggie Biancalani.

One of Knecht's educational commitments is to model for her students what it means to be a "lifelong learner" by pursuing professional development opportunities as often as she can.

From attending the California Math Council Conference so that she can teach her students to think like mathematicians, to the latest training on Literacy from Columbia University Teacher College Reading and Writing Program, Knecht is ready to implement top teaching strategies to benefit her class.

She understands the importance of assessing growth as vital data to ensure students are increasing their level of achievement.

Recently she helped implement a new national standardized assessment program called MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) geared towards identifying students' strengths and weakness in the math, reading, and language.

This year, Knecht served on the school's accreditation steering committee, the admissions committee, and she is instrumental in co-leading a group of 130 parents and 4th grade students to Sacramento and San Francisco each spring to make social studies come alive.

In addition to being a wife of 17 years and mother to her daughter Riley (an MCS student), teaching is truly Knecht's passion, and it is not uncommon to find students from years past visiting her classroom for a hug and pep talk.