

## Camp Arroyo Expands Students' Horizons, Increases Environmental Awareness

At Bridges Academy, the traditional "Three Rs" – reading, writing, and 'rithmetic – are just the beginning. Through field trips like the three-day, two-night adventure at Camp Arroyo in Livermore, they are becoming experts in "The Four Rs" as well. Fourth-grader Leslie explains:

"I had a good time at Camp Arroyo because we learned about nature and 'The Four Rs': *reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink*," she reflects.

Learning about the camp's green architecture, use of solar power, and organic garden, students got a hands-on look at conservation, composting, and other forward-thinking environmental practices. Using field guides, binoculars, and magnifying glasses, the students got up close with the 138-acre camp's flora, fauna, and animal life. "My favorite part was when we hiked to Cresta Blanca [a demanding three-mile hike overlooking Lake Del Valle]" says Leslie.

"It was a great opportunity for students... to thrive and learn in the manner that they best learn, which is through



experiences, dialogue, observation, and fun," says 4th-grade teacher Candice Camp.

"Camp Arroyo is a good experience because you can learn more about the wild," says 4th-grader Erika. "[It was] also good because you go on a bunch of trips. I felt amazed to know there are a bunch of things we can do to help the environment like recycling all the plastic bottles and glass. I especially liked the solo hike because we got to walk in the woods alone."

"It is always an enriching life experience to be away from home for the first time in a setting where you need to depend on yourself and

your friends to take care of the everyday tasks of living," Camp adds. "I always see a great development of independence and trust [on these trips]."

And the learning doesn't end in the woods. Back on campus, 4th-grade classes connect the experiential lessons to grade-level science standards.

"We did a lot of fun activities like go hiking, gardening, and go see animals from the forest," says 4th-grader Jorge. "We saw wild turkeys in a big group of about 13 of them. The people there were really nice and you get to make a nametag out of wood and take it home."

"[If you go], one thing you will absolutely enjoy is the breakfast, lunch, and dinner because they make good stuff like fruit," says Leslie. "One thing I liked was when we went to the garden and tried new fruits and vegetables."

Fourth-grader Joshua also has a message for next year's Camp Arroyo attendees: "You should go to Camp Arroyo because you will go on adventures to the mountains, learn about 'The Four Rs,' plants, trees, how to save our world, and try new vegetables. You can eat, drink, and sleep for two days in cabins that have names like Walnut, Pine, Willow, and Madrone."

# Cesar Chavez Day Celebrates Legacy, Inspires Community Spirit

If you set foot on Melrose Leadership Academy's campus on March 29, you would not have known that all California schools were closed in observance of Cesar Chavez Day. That Monday, dozens of students, staff, families, and community partners from both Melrose and Bridges Academies gathered for an inspiring celebration of Cesar Chavez's legacy.

AmeriCorps volunteers kicked off the day by working with students and school staff to weed and plant the campus garden, while also building more planter boxes and constructing trellises. Meanwhile, community partners such as the Oakland Farm to Schools program set up information tables for families. There was also support for parents of 5th-graders heading on to middle school (some of whom will attend Melrose, a K-8).

"One of the reasons this event is exciting: We do it collaboratively with Melrose Leadership Academy [an East Oakland K-8 school]," says Bridges Academy Garden Coordinator Anne Louise Burdett. "It's a great way to bring both school communities together and share resources and know that this is bigger than just one school site."



Students also collaborated on a new mural celebrating Chavez, drum troupes from both schools performed in the courtyard, and kids read aloud from Chavez's writings and speeches.

Laying a foundation for the event, Bridges classrooms spent the previous month studying Cesar Chavez and

integrating that learning into the after-school program, art lessons, garden class, and more. By the day of the event, says Burdett, "Students had a great idea of what he represented and why the event features him as a symbol of why we're all there together as a community. The event is a really nice culmination of what he stood for: social justice."

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## SUPPORT BRIDGES ACADEMY

Bridges – like all California schools – faces unprecedented state cuts entering 2010-11. To continue offering formative field trips like our adventure at Camp Arroyo – which next year's 4th-graders are already eagerly anticipating – we must fundraise aggressively, since off-campus trips fall outside our ever-narrowing public school budget. **You can help!**

To make a tax-deductible donation online, visit [www.oaklandschoolsfoundation.org](http://www.oaklandschoolsfoundation.org) (designating "Bridges").

You can also send a check to "OSF/Bridges," P.O. Box 20238, Oakland, CA 94620.  
**Thank you for your support!**



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