

# DaVTA Newsletter

## Today is Picture Day!

Picture Day for kids in Kindergarten through Third Grade is today! Picture day for Fourth through Eighth Grades is tomorrow. Makeups are Friday.

## Staff Hospitalizations

We regret to report that this past week we had two unrelated staff hospitalizations. The first one was our STEM Curriculum Coordinator Mr. Billy Russas on Wednesday. The second was our Mentor Teacher Ms. Martha Moore on Thursday. While we are keeping the details of their medical conditions private, we can report that both staff members were admitted for serious and separate reasons. Both are now no longer in life threatening danger. Depending upon how their recoveries progress, students will likely not see these individuals on campus for a month or more.

Please join us in sending thoughts and prayers to Mr. Billy Russas and Ms. Martha Moore for a quick and complete recovery.

## Mr. Roll is Back in Algebra!

Once upon a time, there was an algebra teacher who made sing-a-longs a mandatory part of math class. Students had to play Battleship with Lasers, drag their teacher (who is not light) across the floor, and occasionally even dance. His terrible puns and awful dad jokes were matched only by the weird rules he created and forced his students to repeat...  
**WELL HE'S BACK!**

Starting today Principal Roll is retaking the Algebra I and Algebra II High School math classes for the remainder of the year! Joined by Mr. Roll's unflappable sidekick, the Bearded Mr. Barbero, students will be forced to fight back mathematical ignorance with their unbelievably cringey Principal (he's the guy in the red tie in the photo above). Be ready!



Various pictures from last year's yearbook. The last one was just for fun.

# Zero Hour Grade Rebalance

Da Vinci Tree's Principal and Board of Directors have many international connections. Some of these connections are reflected in our Zero Hour courses which are taught remotely by instructors based in Australia and South Asia. Unfortunately, the geographic location of these instructors created complications with both the Arizona Department of Education and the school's Infinite Campus online systems. As a result, grades for these courses were not posted until last week.

Several parents have rightly pointed out that the very late posting of the Zero Hour grades has created an unfair situation for students who would otherwise be on Honor Roll. School administration agrees. To make up for the inability of parents to encourage students to get on top of their homework, the following grade changes are being made:

1. Homework for this trimester is now being counted as extra credit. Assignments not turned in will therefore not hurt the grades, and assignments turned in will now boost the grade.
2. The trimester grade will be based on the cumulative final project that students have been working on for the past two weeks. Students will have time in class this week to have questions answered and continue to work through their projects while receiving feedback.
3. Students can turn in any late homework (which is now extra credit) as well as their final projects up to Friday, March 15th. This shouldn't create an issue with the close of our legal grading session as the Zero Hour courses are electives and not core academic subjects.

Thank you to all our parents who reached out to us to discuss this issue. We hope that this is a fair and equitable way to judge our students efforts. These classes are fun and are designed to equip our students with new creative outlets. Despite this, without some form of accountability, we can't help our kids to realize their true potential!

Event	For	Date(s)	Notes
Picture Day Part 1	Kindergarten through 3rd Grade	3/11/24	We will be taking individual and group photos for the Kindergarten, first, second, and third grades on this day.
Picture Day Part 2	4th through 8th Grades	3/12/24	We will be taking individual and group photos for the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades on this day.
Picture Day Part 3 and <b><u>HALF DAY</u></b>	All Students	3/15/24	Friday of picture week is our retake day for any students who missed their picture day.
Zoo Field Trip	Kindergarten and 2nd	3/22/24	Students in Kindergarten and 2nd Grade will be going to the zoo and Reid Park.
Parent Conferences	All Students	3/28/24-3/29/24	Signups posted on school's <a href="https://www.picktime.com">picktime.com</a> .
State Testing	3rd through 8th Grades	Early April	In early April, grades 3-8 will have their annual tests. Exact dates TBD.
Spring Break	All Students	4/22/24-4/26/24	Off-Peak Spring Break! Have a great vacay!
Catalina Island Marine Institute	6th-8th Grades	4/28/24-5/02/24	Our capstone field trip for 6th-8th grades!

# University High School Entrance Exam Training

The high school that Da Vinci Tree Academy most highly recommends for our top academic students is University High School, also known as UHS. University High School is a free, public school and is objectively one of the best high schools in America. They regularly listed in the top ten schools on US NEWS AND WORLD REPORTS' ranking of public, private, and charter schools. This year, they rank #1 in Tucson, #4 in Arizona, and #25 in the entire US (<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/search?state-urlname=arizona&ranked=true>). Mr. Roll and Mr. Meehan have had many successful students go to UHS and achieve amazing things. A few of them are listed below.

- UHS Freshman Graduated Da Vinci Tree Academy in 2023 – Awarded 3rd prize in the countywide essay writing contest. 1st and 2nd prize both went to her classmates at UHS...
- UHS Senior Graduated Da Vinci Tree Academy in 2020 – Debating between multiple scholarship offers from different universities to study science.
- UHS Alumni, Graduate Mr. Roll & Mr. Meehan's classes in 2012 – Did her undergraduate at UA, her graduate degree at an Ivy League, and is now a Machine Learning expert who speaks at conferences around the world.
- One young woman got interested in natural science after going to Catalina Island with Mr. Roll in 2011. She went to UA to study conservation science and is now a National Park Ranger.
- One young man who graduated from Mr. Roll and Mr. Meehan's classes in 2011 served in the Navy 6 years and is now attending an Ivy League University business program.

Our first prep session for the upcoming UHS entrance exam will be led by UHS alum Mr. Leon. It is scheduled after school from 3:30-4:30 in Mrs. Kemme's room. **If your student is interested in taking this year's entrance exam, please make sure they attend!**

## Give a Free Donation to Da Vinci Tree Academy

Instead of paying part of your state taxes, Arizona allows you to donate to our school! An individual may claim a nonrefundable tax credit for making contributions or paying fees directly to a public school (like Da Vinci Tree). The public school tax credit is claimed by the individual taxpayer on Form 322.

The maximum credit allowed is \$400 for married filing joint filers and \$200 for single, heads of household and married filing separate filers.

There are two ways to donate:

1. To use cash or a check, make your donation in the front office. Our staff will write you a receipt on the spot. You will receive your tax credit letter in the mail within the week.
2. To use a credit or debit card, visit our SquareUp payment site at <https://davincitree.square.site/>. This site allows you to donate \$200, \$400, or a custom amount.

Thank you in advance to everyone who donates! We are trying to create a savings fund in order to afford more amazing field trips for our students.