



Perris News

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Local High School Receives Grant from Lowe's

Christmas came early for Rancho Verde High School.

Thanks to some behind-the-scenes work by Perris Mayor Pro-tem Rita Rogers, the school this week received a \$50,000 grant from the Lowe's Charitable Educational Foundation that will be used to enhance its fine-arts programs. Rogers put representatives of the high school together with those from the Lowe's Distribution Center in Perris and help shepherd the grant-application process from start to finish.

This week, she was on hand when Lowe's officials presented the \$50,000 check to Rancho Verde High School Principal Olivier Wong during a ceremony in the campus theatre, which will receive a major upgrade from the funds.

"This is going to be a blessing for the students of Rancho Verde High School," Rogers said. "Anytime we can give students the chance to succeed, it is our job to do so. I am delighted to have had this opportunity to help the school. I am excited. I am ecstatic."

Rogers called Lowe's a "big supporter of Perris community activities," including the annual March for Babies and March for Babies Relay, both which aid the March of Dimes in its battle against premature births and related defects. She pointed out that Lowe's also donated \$50,000 to make the Patriot Parks sports complex a reality in 2006.

Wong said the Lowe's grant will be used to purchase a new piano for the school choir, upgrade the sound system for the theatre and to buy new chairs and tables at the campus.

"We are incredibly appreciative of this grant," Wong said. "Students need a sense of purpose if they are going to excel in school. They have to feel an attachment to their school. A school gets the best out of its students if they feel they get the best out of their school. We are thankful to Lowe's and for Rita Rogers in their efforts to make this happen. We are beyond grateful. We are unbelievable grateful."

Founded in 1957, the Lowe's Charitable Educational Foundation grants millions of dollars annually to schools, religious organizations, non profits and other worthwhile programs. The largest grant given to an individual school is \$50,000.

Chris Dahl, who works at the Lowe's Distribution Center on Ramona Expressway in Perris, said the company was eager to help out Rancho Verde High School. Like many other schools, the campus has faced challenges funding its fine-arts program in light of California's perennial state funding woes.

"Band and choir are among the first things to be cut in this day and age," he said. "We are really excited to have this opportunity to expand into the Perris community."

Dahl also thanked Rogers' efforts in "helping us build relationships and opening doors for us" in the Perris Valley. As a member of the City Council's Schools Committee, Rogers helps identify challenges facing schools and works to identify solutions for those challenges.

Alan Jensen, superintendent of the Val Verde Unified School District, called Perris a "tight-knit community" that looks after its students and schools.

"We are treated as family in partnership with Perris," Jensen said. "We could not ask for a better relationship with the City of Perris."



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers, Harry Jimenez and Chris Dahl of Lowe's, Rancho Verde High School Principal Olivier Wong and Maria Becerra of Lowe's with the check for \$50,000 presented to the high school. Rogers said: "I am excited. I am ecstatic."



The Lakeside Middle School Marching Band entertained the audience prior to the presentation by Lowe's.



Rancho Verde High School Principal Olivier Wong says the grant money will be used to improve the campus' fine-arts programs.