we have two gifts to give our children...

one is roots, the other, wings.

mission statement

The mission of Echo Horizon School is to educate hearing and deaf and hard of hearing children in an inclusive environment in which self-reliance and mutual respect are valued and encouraged. The curriculum is designed to be challenging and developmentally appropriate for each learner.

goals

Students will develop the academic tools, social skills and moral integrity needed to be successful in their next phase of education.

Students will integrate themselves successfully, making contributions to a diverse society, while maintaining individuality and respect for others.

Students will generate a variety of solutions and approaches to situations requiring thoughtful and creative problem solving.

Students will develop the skills and positive attitude for engaging in learning as a life-long process.
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Vicki C. Ishida, Director, Echo Center
John Crabtree-Ireland, Director of Operations
Each fall, when I take time to reflect on the previous school year, I marvel at the determination, creativity and dedication of Echo Horizon’s many stakeholders – our Board of Trustees, the school’s faculty and staff, the students and their parents. The energy and enthusiasm with which each individual approaches his/her piece of this montage that is Echo Horizon School are both extraordinary and heartwarming.

The 2008-2009 school year was defined by the economic uncertainties that affected all segments of our society. I am gratified by our constituents’ ongoing commitment to Echo Horizon school’s mission, goals and vision in the midst of this uncertainty. Our Board of Trustees made the unprecedented decision to hold tuition at its current level, while the annual giving campaign exceeded its goal by nearly $50,000.

Led by a joint team of trustees and faculty, Echo Horizon School completed a comprehensive self study in preparation for an accreditation review by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) that resulted in commendations for our commitment to our mission and the consistent implementation of our philosophy throughout our program and operations, as well as a full six year term of accreditation by both agencies.

The caliber of preparatory schools to which our students matriculate continue to reflect their excellent preparation, their willingness to take risks and to challenge themselves and “how nice” they are. Many former students, now high school graduates, are studying at some of the best colleges and universities in the nation including Ivy League schools, small liberal arts colleges and University of California campuses. It is with pride and interest that we follow their progress.

Echo Horizon School continued to garner national recognition for its programs. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) included a description of a 6th grade water quality unit in its booklet, Stories of Excellence: Case Studies of Exemplary Teaching and Learning with Technology. The school’s designation as a SMART Showcase School and its exemplary technology integration bring visitors from around the world.

Although change is healthy for an organization, it can also be poignant. Last spring we bid a grateful and fond farewell to our founder, Carol Proctor Landsberg, who stepped down from our Board of Trustees after 26 years. Carol’s vision has been the cornerstone of Echo Horizon School / Echo Center and will continue to guide us in our commitment to provide the best education possible for both hearing and deaf and hard of hearing children.

We also say good-bye to long time trustees and former EHS parents David Rosenblum and Linda Brown who are leaving active involvement in the school. Their gifts of time, service and resources to the school community have been instrumental in achieving the stability we enjoy today.

I extend my gratitude to our trustees for their leadership and commitment, to the faculty and staff for their expertise and willingness to give that ‘little bit extra’ to their students, and to our parent body for their commitment to the school and their children, as well as for their generous gifts of time and resources. The involvement, dedication and support of the entire EHS community are what make Echo Horizon school the special place it is. I feel privileged to work alongside all of you to ensure that EHS remains a first-class environment for learning and growing.

Sincerely,

Paula R. Dashiell
HEAD OF SCHOOL
In June 2009, Carol Proctor Landsberg resigned from the Echo Foundation Board, after thirty-seven years of dedication and commitment to an ideal. Carol is an educator in the truest sense of the word. Working together, she and her late husband, Kent H. Landsberg, created what is now Echo Horizon School / Echo Center, fulfilling their vision of a school where children with hearing loss could be mainstreamed with hearing children in a manner that benefited both.

How did this come about? In a 1972 meeting with the renowned Madeline Hunter at UCLA’s University Elementary School, Carol saw the embodiment of an ideal learning environment that could be adapted to educate deaf and hard of hearing children alongside their hearing peers. The Landsberg’s dream became a reality in 1983 when they leased the Washington School facility that would become today’s Echo Horizon School / Echo Center. In the fall of that year, “Horizon School” opened its doors to a total of twenty students.

Carol’s commitment was contagious. Soon after Echo Horizon opened its doors, grateful parents voluntarily provided the school with a fledgling arts program, a library program, hot lunches and a hospitality committee. And that legacy of family involvement and enthusiasm is as strong today as it was in 1983. With the hiring of Head of School Paula Dashiell and Echo Center Director Vicki Ishida in the late 1980’s, the foundation of Carol’s plan was complete. Her original vision has evolved through the years into what Echo Horizon School / Echo Center offers today – a fine academic curriculum, enhanced by award-winning technology and arts programs that creates 21st century learners who matriculate to the finest secondary schools and universities across the country.

An alumni student beautifully summarized the results of Carol’s efforts. “The school exists because one woman had a vision. She believed in oral communication for the deaf so they are able to interact with the hearing world. I believe without Carol’s dedication and determination that I would not be here speaking to you today.”

So how do we thank this inspiring woman? By remaining true to her vision, by building on its depth and scope, by continuing to evolve and adapt, by simply saying…

Thank You, Carol Proctor Landsberg
From the Echo Horizon School / Echo Center Community Past, Present and Future
The 2008-09 school year was a good one for Echo Horizon School, in spite of the challenges a changing economy brought to many individually. Our administration, faculty, staff and families ensured that, regardless of what was taking place outside of our school, the students continued to have a rich and fulfilling educational experience, the hallmark of our program.

The Board of Trustees focused on completing and publishing “Sustaining the Vision: The Strategic Plan.” This plan, which will guide the Board in the next several years ahead, incorporates six major areas of focus: Sustainability, Program and Services, Faculty and Staff, Finance, Diversity and Community, and Governance and Administration. The Plan includes strategic goals and steps to meet those goals, all of which are intended to secure the future of our fine and unique school, based on the vision of our founders, Carol and Kent Landsberg.

As if in response to our Diversity and Community goal to “integrate and expand current initiatives to become an institution more reflective of the community and society in which we live,” a major Southern California foundation stepped forward with a $400,000 grant that firmly established the EHS Financial Aid Fund. This was soon followed by gifts and pledges of another $100,000 from our families. We view the Financial Aid Fund as an important tool to ensure diversity in our school community, and we greatly appreciate the generous gifts we have received to date.

In addition, our current and alumni families, faculty and staff, grandparents and friends of the school showed their support of and commitment to Echo Horizon School by exceeding their Annual Giving goal with contributions of almost $400,000. This is especially meaningful given the challenging economic climate.

Following 25 years of service, Carol Proctor Landsberg retired from the Board of Trustees in June. Her guidance, insight and example have been instrumental in the development of the unique program she and her husband Kent founded. The foundation laid by the Landsbergs’ vision and commitment is firm, and that dedication has been passed to those of us who continue to serve. Linda Brown, parent of two EHS alumni, retired from the Board in June 2009, after seven years of service. We thank Linda, and her husband Steve, for their years of commitment and dedication to Echo Horizon School as well as for their continuing support. After serving five years as Board Chair, and eight years as an Echo Foundation Trustee, Dave Rosenblum also retired from the Board in June. Taking his place as Board Chair is Nora Wendel who has been a Trustee since 2000.

The appointment of Nora Wendel as Chair ensures continued leadership strength. Nora’s expertise in Strategic Planning as well as her tenure on the board will maintain continuity as well as a clear vision for the Board in the coming years.

The Echo Foundation Board of Trustees greatly appreciates the hundreds of hours the EHS community volunteered during the 2008-09 school year. This giving of time, energy, and funds is precisely what brings us together as a community and clearly defines the essence of Echo Horizon School.

David Rosenblum  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Parent of Eric (Class of 1999) and Lauren (Class of 2001)

Mary Brussell  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Parent of Robbie (Class of 2006), Matthew (Class of 2008), and Katie (Class of 2011)
With many more families seeking private options in education in 2008-09, Echo Center’s program continues to be regarded as the preeminent oral deaf education program in the country. Last year we successfully renewed our program certification, receiving positive feedback and fulfilling all certification categories. Our reputation is being communicated throughout the community and was clearly reflected in last year’s program enrollment reaching capacity. We were fortunate to hire two new Echo Center teachers with excellent backgrounds to match our enrollment and increase our total faculty. We are very proud of all of these accomplishments.

That the Echo Center continues to receive praise for providing one of the finest auditory oral options for deaf and hard of hearing children in a mainstream environment is due to the commitment of our professional faculty and support staff. They are a highly trained, supportive and motivated group, and our students blossom because of their teachers’ obvious dedication and energy.

What cannot be overlooked is the unique environment that our mainstream setting provides to all members of our school community. Every day our students, faculty, staff and families benefit from this unique and inclusive environment.

Although she is lauded elsewhere in this Annual Report, I also want to mention the obvious impact Carol Proctor Landsberg had in implementing her dream of Echo Center. She saw a need, researched the challenges and opportunities, and developed a one-of-a-kind program that has gone on to win awards and has positioned Echo Center/Echo Horizon School as a standard against which others are measured. It has been an amazing journey, and I am proud to be its current leader and to have been a part of creating its success.

Sincerely,

Vicki C. Ishida
DIRECTOR, ECHO CENTER
This past school year was a very challenging one as our nation faced the worst recession since the Depression, and Echo Horizon was not immune to the difficulties and uncertainties of the time. However, with sound financial management provided by our administration and the Board, and with continued support from the school community, EHS finished the 2008-09 fiscal year on a very strong note.

We were extraordinarily fortunate to receive a $400,000 financial aid grant. Combined with the generosity of our families from Annual Giving and other activities, we surpassed the $1 million plateau for fundraising for the first time in the school’s history*. This marks a big step toward one of our strategic objectives of actively seeking non-tuition income from outside of the community. Finally, thanks to the prudent stewardship of the Board, EHS sustained only a very limited loss of its invested funds during the sharp market declines in late 2008 through the first quarter of 2009.

Echo Horizon also raised approximately $130,000 for the Building Fund/ Capital Campaign. Through June 30, 2009, we achieved approximately $2,090,000 toward the $3.2 million construction costs of the last facility renovation, with our goal of retiring the internal debt within the next several years.

With this solid financial footing, the EHS Board determined to hold off any tuition increase for the 2009-10 year. We felt that this was the right thing to do when many families were dealing with uncertainties and strains of the economic climate. However, although we closely monitor expenses and keep our overhead low, operating costs increase annually. Given that, the ongoing support of the school community continues to play a major role in ensuring the quality education and nurturing environment for which Echo Horizon School is known.

On behalf of the Echo Foundation Board of Trustees, I thank each of our families and friends for their past and future support.

Masako Carpenter
BOARD TREASURER
Parent of Elina (Class of 2001)

*Excludes contributions for the capital campaign.
The Echo Horizon School Parent Association is comprised of an amazing group of parents! In 2008-09, more than 100 parents served as committee chairs or room parents. Many more volunteered their time working with committees, staffing the Library, serving Hot Lunch, or attending field trips. It was a joy to work with this group of passionate and giving parents who enthusiastically carry out our wonderful traditions and events that distinguish the unique community that is Echo Horizon School.

Fall is the busiest time for the Parent Association. We kicked off the year welcoming new and returning families in a variety of ways – the Pre-K/K picnic, Welcome Coffees, dinners at two Back-to-School nights, and grade-level parent potlucks. Reading was given the spotlight in the annual Book Fair and Celebration of Books. As part of the Celebration of Books, students in Pre-K - 2nd grade read 3,112 books, students in 3rd – 6th grades read 177,805 minutes, created more than 100 illustrations of their favorite stories and donated 1,400 books to a local literacy program! We also brought parents together in a book group discussion.

The Hot Lunch Committee expanded the Hot Lunch Program to three days a week with the help of countless volunteers. Big smiles were in attendance on Picture Day and the highly anticipated Halloween Carnival – hosted by zombies, witches, fairies, and even Sara Palins – was a treat for all. The Community Service Committee facilitated a monthly “Playdate with a Purpose,” linking the EHS and broader communities in a series of outreach projects. We came together for the Ballona Creek Clean-up, Thanksgiving Project, Project Celebration holiday drive, and Big Sunday. The Open House Committee proudly orchestrated and conducted school tours for hundreds of prospective families, and on Thanksgiving Eve our school came alive with excitement as Grandparents & Special Friends Day welcomed over 300 guests. Feelings of warmth, enthusiasm and pride filled the halls while our special guests enjoyed time with the students in their classrooms.

Throughout the year we hosted monthly “Coffee & Conversations,” giving parents an opportunity to connect with one another as well as hear speakers or learn more about specific parts of the curriculum. The Caring Community Committee thoughtfully reached out to our families in good and not-so-good times. On Alumni Day our halls were filled with graduates from many years, reminiscing about their time at EHS. We finished the year with a “bang” with Western gunslingers commandeering the Teacher and Staff Appreciation Luncheon.

The strength of the EHS community was most evident in our annual spring fundraiser, “A Night at the Copacabana.” Parents put in countless hours to organize live and silent auctions, opportunity and teacher adventure drawings, a program and dedication book, and an amazing party! The venue was full to capacity, with our guests socializing, bidding, dining and dancing through the night. Our inaugural book of “Great Gatherings” gave families another way to enjoy each other’s company and simultaneously raise money for EHS. Sales of spirit wear, which this year included eco-friendly water bottles and grocery totes, and eScrip collection rounded out PA fundraising. Through these many efforts, the Parent Association raised more than $165,000. This is a magnificent testimonial to the dedication and commitment of our families.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people who make up the EHS community. Please let me take this opportunity to formally say “thank you” to each and every one of you for making my job as President a fun and rewarding experience! The time, talent and energy you dedicate to the school enrich the experience of our children, and are integral to creating the warm spirit of Echo Horizon School.

Patti Vogt Rowey
EHS PARENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT
Parent of Nicole (Class of 2010) and Kate (Class of 2007)
We must confess that we started our second year as co-chairs of the Annual Giving campaign with some trepidation. Following an outstanding performance in 2007-08, we were faced with the task of asking the Echo Horizon community to meet the challenge of reaching our Annual Giving goal of $350,000 at a time when the financial climate was changing from moment to moment, affecting almost all of us in one way or another.

EHS families showed their commitment by exceeding the goal through their gifts of almost $400,000! We have spent many years here as parents of Echo Horizon students (Caroline and Matthew), and I don’t believe we have ever been more proud of or moved by the sense of community here as we came together to meet this challenge. In addition to our current families, our alumni and their families, our Board of Trustees, the wonderful EHS faculty and staff, grandparents and friends of the school showed their support for Echo Horizon School, its mission and goals through their generosity.

What does this say about us as a community? The message is clear that we are all well aware of and deeply appreciate what a unique school this is. It says that we clearly understand how an EHS education will benefit our children while they are here and after they matriculate. We feel confident that at Echo Horizon our children will become academically strong, that the fine technology program will provide skills and prowess to succeed, and that the arts program will open our children’s eyes to new forms of expression. With the diversity of our student body, we have seen through the years that both our hearing and our DHH children benefit immeasurably from their respect for and appreciation of one another.

Since the school’s inception in 1983, the dream of founders Carol and Kent Landsberg has grown and evolved while their vision has remained intact: to provide a nurturing environment where all of our children can visualize a world of opportunities and realize their dreams. And, each and every one of our Annual Giving donors can take pride in realizing that their financial support continues to make this dream a reality.

Nancy and Jonathan Lurie
Parents of Matthew (Class of 2011) and Caroline (Class of 2006)
annual giving 2008 - 2009

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Wells Fargo
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Yahoo! Inc.
The challenges facing all of us last year have been noted throughout this Annual Report. We are so grateful to the families and friends of Echo Horizon School who made sure through their generosity that EHS would continue providing our students with the same high level of education as in years past. Congratulations to all of you who made this possible!

We also want to express our gratitude to Nancy and Jonathan Lurie who served as Annual Giving Chairs for the last two years during which time the campaigns raised over $750,000. Thanks and kudos as well to Parent Association President Patti Rowey and Spring Event Chair Mary Presser. And, how do we thank the legion of hardworking volunteers who work with such enthusiasm and energy throughout the year? There is not room enough in this Annual Report to thank them individually but we realize how fortunate we are to have a body of such dedicated families here at EHS.

While Annual Giving and our Spring Event represent the mainstay of Echo Horizon’s fundraising efforts, we have a number of very special giving opportunities that are described on the following page. Often, a member of the EHS community wants to make a gift in honor of or in memory of someone special to them. These funds offer a range of options for our donors. Our sincere thanks to this year’s special funds donors.

The Echo Horizon School community, including current and alum families, grandparents, special friends, our Board of Trustees and our fine faculty and staff, has consistently shown support for our school and mission through their giving. EHS continues to evolve and thrive because of your belief in the school and our stated goals.

If you are interested in making a multi-year pledge or a gift of stock to any of these funds, please contact EHS Development Director Linda Delarosa.

Deborah Nordman
BOARD TRUSTEE
CHAIR, FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Parent of Jonas (Class of 2002) and Leah (Class of 2006)
FINANCIAL AID FUND
Bolstered by our recent grant of $400,000 from an anonymous Southern California foundation and subsequent gifts from Echo Horizon families totaling an additional $100,000, our goal to build a $1 million Financial Aid Fund is off to a strong start. This fund assists current and prospective families who are in need of tuition assistance.

Anonymous Foundation Grant
Anonymous (2)
Daniel Cohen
Lisa & Chris Downey
Jane Bassett & Mike Fair
Dorsay Alavi & Matthew Flint
Nancy & Jonathan Glaser
Dorothy Nichols & Martin Smith
Mindy Schultheis & Jeff Strauss

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND
Echo Horizon School has a very fine and loyal faculty, some of whom have been with EHS for over 20 years. The Faculty Development Fund provides continuing education opportunities and other benefits that allow us to retain our current teachers and seek out the best when additions or replacements must be made.

THE JUDITH KATES MEMORIAL FUND
Established by her family and the Board of Trustees in memory of Mrs. Kates. Mrs. Kates joined the Echo Center faculty in 2000, working with students for six years. She brought a wealth of experience stemming from her 25 years in the field of DHH education. The fund established by her family and the Board of Trustees in memory Mrs. Kates provides financial assistance to the children of Echo Center.

Anonymous
Enid Wizig

THE ENID WIZIG SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Established by Enid and Bernard Wizig, this fund provides financial assistance to our deaf and hard of hearing students. Mrs. Wizig is well known and loved within Echo Horizon School for her many years of working tirelessly as a volunteer.

Anonymous
Enid & Bernard Wizig

BUILDING FUND
In 2004, Echo Horizon significantly renovated its physical plant to meet the needs of our programs in the future. We expanded the school’s footprint to include the Science Room, the Performing Arts Room, an expanded Library, Art Studio, Math Room, Tech Center with audio/visual space, and an enlarged Pre-K space, as well as the well-loved and much-used Play Yard redesign. To date, approximately $2 million of the original $3 million construction loan debt has been retired.

Anonymous
Rachael & Navy Banvard
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Lori Shiotani & Ken Nakayama
Monica & Joseph Rice
Tania & Paul Saylor
Jolene & Andrew Snett
Rocio & Leonel Vazquez
Wells Fargo
Xandrya Woods

LIBRARY FUND
Echo Horizon’s renovated library houses over 15,000 fiction and non-fiction books and periodicals. Students use the space as a resource for both research projects and leisure reading. Gifts add new books to our library and can be made in honor or memory of a friend, relative, teacher or other special person.

Anonymous
Enid & Bernard Wizig

DORENE TAWA MEMORIAL FUND
This fund was established by the Board of Trustees in memory of Dorene Tawa. Starting as curriculum coordinator for EHS in 1990, Mrs. Tawa became a much-loved admissions director with strong ties to the entire community. The gated garden area at the front of the school is dedicated in her memory. Donations to this fund maintain a memorial tribute garden planted in her honor that is used by today’s EHS students as an outdoor classroom.

Anonymous

THE SAMANTHA NICOLE SACKS FUND
The earnings from this fund provide opportunities for students to participate in the school’s outdoor education programs. It was established by the Board of Trustees in memory of Samantha Sacks who was part of the Class of 2001.

Karen & Robert Sacks

many thanks to each special fund donor listed below

Lilia Aronoff-Aspaturian
Debbie Briggs
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Roberto Scaramuzzi & Liz Jereski
Noah Ulin
Sophie Ulin
Kaylie Yakura

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Bridge & Riff Hutton
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Xandrya Woods

Mia Kor LeBeau
Avon Leekley
Thom Macias
Raff-Rotchel family
Donna Raphael
Ela Richman
Patti Rowey
Roberto Scaramuzzi & Liz Jereski
Noah Ulin
Sophie Ulin
Kaylie Yakura

Anonymous

Karen & Robert Sacks
It is a tradition at Echo Horizon School for each graduating class to present the school with a gift. The Class of 2009 increased the reach of technology at EHS by its contribution of a new SMART Board for the Math Room.
We sincerely thank our Board of Trustees, our Parent Association, and our dedicated volunteers for their hard work and commitment in 2008-2009. We also want to introduce our Board of Trustees and Parent Association Officers for 2009-2010.

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All listings in this report reflect contributions received as of June 30, 2009. Thank you to the parents, alumni, grandparents, friends, faculty and staff who contributed money, time and effort to Echo Horizon School during the 2008-2009 school years. We have made every effort to list all contributions accurately. If we have made an error, please accept our apologies and notify us of the mistake.