

An Education Built on Love

How the King-Chávez
Neighborhood of Schools
are transforming lives by
investing in relationships



A Special Advertising Supplement



Tim Wolf is the CEO of King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools. He says love of students is at the heart of the King-Chavez mission.
PHOTO BY KELLY JETT

All You Need is Love

King-Chavez schools promote success by investing in relationships

BY KATE GONZALES

AWARDS & RECOGNITION FOR KING-CHÁVEZ

Cesar E. Chavez Social Justice Award

awarded to Dr. Tim Wolf, CEO of King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools

Public Charter Schools Grant Program Dissemination Sub-grant two-time recipient, allowing King-Chavez to share **innovative educational practices**

King-Chavez Primary Academy recognized with the

Title I Academic Achievement Award for five consecutive years,

making it the first school in the Historic Barrio District to earn the award

King-Chavez Academy Colorguard Team has

won Gold

in several divisions in the past five years, making them the top junior high team in Southern California

Recipient of The County of San Diego Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2011

Community Impact Award

The King-Chavez Community High School boys soccer team has earned the

league championship

three times and won the prestigious Parker Cup twice

At the King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools, educating a child goes beyond making sure the day's lessons are well-learned. A deep personal investment in each student drives the schools' simple but powerful mission: "We seek excellence in academics, arts and athletics from the foundation of love." This credo makes King-Chavez schools unique.

"I don't think you see love in the mission statement of any traditional school," says Tim Wolf, CEO of King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools.

The entire staff embraces a love-based approach to learning, empowering them to better serve their students, who are mostly from the Historic Barrio District and Downtown neighborhoods of San Diego.

"[If kids] feel like people love them and care for them, they can go on to do higher-order learning," Wolf explains.

The King-Chavez system of charter schools, appropriately named in honor of two civil rights leaders, was born out of community need. Before King-Chavez launched, there was no school in the neighborhood that served sixth graders. Some of the local schools were not meeting standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act. A change was needed. School Futures Research Foundation, a project that establishes exemplary charter schools, stepped up, and the first King-Chavez school opened in 2000 with 75 students enrolled.

Today, King-Chavez schools serve more than 2,000 students in six schools and two preschools. Each school builds a healthy and empathetic environment, where children can thrive.

Every year, new staff partake in Pre-Season, a two-day session that immerses them in the King-Chavez culture. One element of Pre-Season is a bike ride and scavenger hunt through the neighborhood, where staff count things like the number of banks as opposed to payday loan establishments.

"These kids come to school heavily burdened sometimes because of the environment they come from," says Wolf. "Teachers need to know that."

Once the school year begins, teachers visit the homes of each student, to meet the family and better know the whole child.

On the campuses, kids engage in mindfulness practices and many teachers start class with a meditation session. Schools also take a restorative justice approach to discipline, which values communication and restoration of relationships over punitive tactics like suspension. Students also benefit from small classes, furthering the intimate nature of the schools.

"Part of the ambiance of King-Chavez is just the smallness and closeness of relationships we can foster," Wolf says.

King-Chavez schools offer many unique learning opportunities, like enriching after-school programs, arts and athletics, and internships for seniors. Wolf says it didn't take major changes to make a big difference.

"It's remarkable how just changing a few things and taking care of kids makes learning better," Wolf says.

Continue reading to learn more about the impact King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools is having on students.

"[If kids] feel like people love them and care for them, they can go on to do higher-order learning."

TIM WOLF
CEO, King-Chavez Neighborhood of Schools

Top: Susy Cortés helps students in an after-school program. Cortés started out at King-Chávez as a parent and later became a full-time parent coordinator. Bottom: Linda and Oscar Pereyra say that the staff and faculty at the King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools has gone above and beyond in giving their son Ricky, 15, the love and support he needs to succeed in school.

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN WHALEN



"It's like they're teaching their own children, they put that much love, effort and attention into teaching those kids."

LINDA PEREYRA
King-Chávez parent

Where School is Like Family

BY ANNE STOKES

Parents share what makes King-Chávez different

Like any parent, Susy Cortés wanted the best for her children. The mother of five was not satisfied with the educational options in her neighborhood, nor was she thrilled about busing her children to different schools all over town. So when she heard about a new neighborhood school opening up, she was eager to enroll her youngest son into their sixth-grade class.

Once at King-Chávez Academy of Excellence, he flourished under the school's focus on personalized, small-group education.

"When he started at King-Chávez, he was low in reading and math," she says. "They put him in special classes to bring up his grades in math and reading. By the end of the year, he was a little bit above [grade level]."

With her son thriving, Cortés wanted to be a part of the school that supported her son's success and volunteered to teach students ballet folklórico, a traditional Mexican dance. The principal, however, declined her offer to volunteer – she would be paid to teach instead! Now, as a full-time parent coordinator, Cortés contributes to the loving and supportive environment that she so valued for her own son, working with students at King-Chávez Primary Academy's after-school programs.

"They know I love them," she says. "They always come and give me kisses and hug me because I show my love to them. The teachers do the same thing, they show the love, not just say it."

Linda and Oscar Pereyra were also looking for options for their two youngest sons. Not happy with their eldest son's educational experiences, they found the extra support and individualized learning environments to be just what their younger sons Oscar and Ricky needed.

"It's like they're teaching their own children, they put that much love, effort and attention into teaching those kids," says Linda Pereyra. "They offered them the academic support that they needed there. They have programs to help struggling students: fast-forward reading programs [and] after-school math help. Teachers are willing to put in the extra effort to help students."

When their son Oscar unexpectedly passed away at age 12 after a tragic accident, the Pereyra family found support in their King-Chávez community. Friends and staff not only took up a collection to help them through their difficult time, but were there to help them emotionally. The Pereyras take comfort in the fact that their son had so many happy times at King-Chávez.

"The school was wonderful and he had fantastic time there," says Oscar Pereyra Sr. "Because of that, I'm eternally grateful. He loved going to school there. He loved it."

A COMMUNITY OF NURTURING

From home visits to caring for whole families, King-Chávez students are supported by a foundation of love at home and at school.

Home visits

As a first-year teacher, Scott Worthing was amazed at the benefits of visiting the homes of his students. Now as a principal, he's made them mandatory.

"When you're in the home and working with the family ... something changes to the

relationship between teacher and student, teacher and parent," he says. "I was blown away over the impact that a small amount of my time could have with my classroom and relationships with parents."

Partnering with parents

Whether it's English language classes or tips for having a parent-teacher conference, King-Chávez supports the whole family.

"We hold very highly [the task of] supporting our families

and making sure they have the access necessary to not just be a solid parent, but to improve their quality of life," he says.

For more information on King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools, visit www.kingchavez.org.

Students Soar with Love and Support

Alumni reflect on the King-Chávez culture of caring

BY KATE GONZALES

Every student who graduates from King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools is a testament to the schools' strength in creating a loving environment.

At King-Chávez schools, teachers get to know the whole student — including family background and neighborhood influences. They strive to uplift all children, even those who need a second chance.

Abdiel De La O didn't take the linear path to success. He began attending King-Chávez Athletics Academy in third grade before moving on as a middle school student to King-Chávez Preparatory Academy, where a physical altercation could have resulted in expulsion. Instead, he got a second chance, and was transferred to a different King-Chávez campus.

He attended a public high school his freshman year, but missed the King-Chávez environment. He began at King-Chávez Community High School his sophomore year, where he found stability and guidance.



Abdiel De La O was given a second chance at King-Chávez schools after he got into trouble in middle school. He graduated with the class of 2015, and today tutors King-Chávez middle school students while taking college courses.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN WHALEN

"King-Chávez made me feel like family," he says.

"Everything I needed was just support and love and just that extra push for me to become something."

In 2015, he became the first in his family to graduate from high school and enroll in college. He is currently attending community college, with sights set on earning a doctorate in education to become a school counselor.

While he completes school, he is working as a tutor for the Advancement Via Individual Determination program (AVID) at King-Chávez Prep. AVID is an international nonprofit that equips educators with training and tools to help students excel in high school, college and their careers.

Leslie Cedillo, a member of King-Chávez Community High School's first graduating class in 2013, is another former student who has returned to tutor the next generation of learners. Cedillo believes in the King-Chávez mission and model. While she was in school, the small class sizes made it easy to forge relationships with teachers and fellow students.

"We felt like a big family," she says.

"The teachers were there for us, no matter what the situation."

That support continued when Cedillo enrolled in college. The high school's Alumni College Assistance Program, which helps support graduates who continue on to college, provided Cedillo with a free public transportation pass and helped her get a laptop.

In December 2015, she earned her associate degree in psychology. She plans to transfer to a four-year university next fall, and while she waits to hear back from schools, she continues to contribute to the King-Chávez culture.

"We want the school to be a place ... where they know they're loved and cared for," she says.



Leslie Cedillo was a member of the first graduating class of King-Chávez Community High School. She has earned her associate degree in psychology and plans to earn a four-year degree at a San Diego university.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN WHALEN

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The work of King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools does not end once a student crosses the graduation stage.

The King-Chávez Community High School Alumni College Assistance Program, the only program of its kind in California, supports high school graduates who continue their education at a university, community college or trade school. Most alumni are first-generation college students, so the program is particularly important in keeping students motivated.

The program arranges university tours so students can make informed decisions. Once a student is enrolled, funds help that student with individual needs, from offsetting the cost of travel and textbooks to helping students purchase laptops or printers. Most of the program's funds are raised through an annual gala, which drew in more than \$45,000 in 2015.

Principal Kevin Bradshaw and another staff member also make monthly phone calls to students, to ensure their needs are met.

"Small things can discourage a kid from pursuing their dreams," he says. "We think it's important that we show that support."

Learn how you can support the King-Chávez Community High School Alumni College Assistance Program at kingchavezalumni.org.

Left: First-grade teacher Allen Becker, seen working with student Isaac Mojica. Becker says that communicating and working with parents is one of the key elements to success for his students. Right: Third-grade teacher Lynn Woodhead says that the administration at King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools allows her the autonomy to cater her teaching methods to what best suits students.

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN WHALEN

BY ANNE STOKES



The Freedom to Teach

Giving students the tools they need to succeed

At King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools, success is built on a foundation of love. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in its teachers.

“When you walk around, you feel respected and loved, the kids are happy, you’re appreciated and the administration is willing to bend over backwards for you. We’re given the autonomy to teach the way we want and how we want as long as we’re teaching to the standards,” says third-grade teacher Lynn Woodhead. “I love what I do.”

Classroom engagement

At King-Chávez, teacher autonomy allows educators to create vibrant learning environments for their students. Through interactive methods such as project-based learning, ability-based small group learning (also known as “Power Hour”) and an emphasis on technology and the arts, teachers are allowed to tailor teaching to students’ individual learning styles.

“I’m able to differentiate my instruction based upon what their needs are,” Woodhead says. “I can use videos, I can use

pictures, I can use manipulatives, I can use anything I need to get to those kids. I teach to their level. They’re getting exactly what they need.”

Data-driven instruction

Data-driven instruction involves regular assessment of student learning. Analyzing the results allows teachers to pinpoint what’s working in the classroom and what isn’t.

“We’re able to say, ‘These students did well on this area, but they need additional support in that area,’” says first-grade teacher Allen Becker. “It’s the data-driven instruction that has helped us quite a bit to become very successful.”

Parent community engagement

Parent involvement figures heavily into students’ success in the classroom. For King-Chávez faculty, maintaining open lines of communication is a priority.

“When a parent comes into the school, there’s a very warm and welcoming atmosphere,” Becker says. “For me, I want to gain parents’ trust. We need to work as a team and we have to

“The kids know they’re loved. They know that they’re supported, not just at home, but here too.”

LYNN WOODHEAD

King-Chávez Athletics Academy third-grade teacher

have that constant communication. I do my best to communicate with my parents and let them know what’s going on so if there is a problem, we can catch it early.”

King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools’ mission – to seek excellence and equality in education from the foundation of love – is evident in the way that teachers, students and their families work together to create an engaging and supportive educational environment.

“The kids know they’re loved,” Woodhead says. “They know that they’re supported, not just at home, but here too.”

PROMOTING SUCCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Ten years ago, parents and educators of King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools took control of the local education landscape and created a wildly successful educational model.

“People often ask us, ‘What’s the secret? What’s the magic?’” says Scott Worthing, King-Chávez Preparatory Academy principal. “My answer is simply:

good people and a lot of hard work. There’s nothing magic about it.”

Small schools, small classes

Small, manageable school and class sizes allow for a more personalized education and extra help where it’s needed. While a typical middle school can house up to 1,800 students, at King-Chávez Prep there are less than 400.

Restorative justice

The restorative justice approach to managing student behavior replaces punitive measures with community interaction. Worthing credits the practice with a sharp drop in suspensions at both the elementary and junior high school levels.

Teaching the whole child

King-Chávez schools provide a well-rounded education by offering opportunities for sports, dance, art and music.

For more information, visit www.kingchavez.org.

Join the King-Chávez Family!



GET INVOLVED

At King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools, we believe in connection and collaboration.

We embrace community members — parents, potential partners and fellow educators — and invite you to experience the love at King-Chávez.



PARENTS WELCOME

Your child will enjoy many benefits at King-Chávez schools, like small class sizes and an

integrated program from preschool through graduation, with the opportunity to excel in arts, academics and athletics.

King-Chávez appreciates each student's talents and background. Visit one of our campuses today to find out if it's the right place for your child.



PARTNER UP

Are you a business or nonprofit with a heart for community? Join our family of partners to make

an impact in kids' lives and our community. Provide a space for an after-school program, host a high school intern or help us meet the needs of families.



LEARN WITH US

Are you an educator who wants to be inspired by an educational model that works? The King-

Chávez Neighborhood of Schools has a proven track record of success in empowering students and boosting achievement. We believe our rigorous, data-driven model is key to helping students thrive — and we'd love to share our methods with you.

CONNECT WITH US AT KINGCHAVEZ.ORG

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What makes the King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools unique?

Our deep community connection makes King-Chávez different. Founded on the belief that we could better serve the children of the Historic Barrio District and Downtown neighborhoods of San Diego, we have never strayed from our commitment. We are built on the foundation of love — which you can feel on a visit to any of our campuses.

What grades are served?

We serve children from preschool through high school — and offer support to our King-Chávez Community High School graduates who enter college.

What is a charter school?

A charter school is an independent public school that has more flexibility to innovate, with a greater amount of oversight.

Is there a cost to enroll my child at any King-Chávez school?

No! As a public school, enrollment is free.

What is the enrollment process?

Before you enroll, visit www.kingchavez.org and locate the page of your school of choice for information and a list of documents to bring. Then, visit the school campus to request and fill out enrollment paperwork. Generally, there is no waitlist for students.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Meet the King-Chávez Neighborhood of Schools

King-Chávez Academy of Excellence

Grades K-8
2850 Logan Ave.,
San Diego, CA 92113
619-232-2825

Features:

- Competitive Colorguard Program
- Restorative Justice disciplinary approach
- STEAM instruction (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)
- Student-led conferences

King-Chávez Primary Academy

Grades K-2
415 31st St., San Diego, CA 92102
619-525-7320

Features:

- Physical education
- Visual and performing arts
- Social-emotional learning curriculum
- Rigorous, individualized reading instruction

King-Chávez Arts Academy and King-Chávez Athletics Academy

Grades 3-5
415 31st St., San Diego, CA 92102
619-525-7320

Features:

- Mindfulness practice
- Weekly lessons in visual arts, ceramics and dance
- Physical education
- Yearly swim lessons

King-Chávez Preparatory Academy

Grades 6-8
500 30th St., San Diego, CA 92102
619-744-3828

Features:

- STEAM and humanities courses
- Healthy meal options
- Parent involvement opportunities

King-Chávez Community High School

Grades 10-12
201 A St., San Diego, CA 92101
619-704-1020
Freshman Academy
1010 Second Ave.,
San Diego, CA 92101
619-610-9060

Features:

- Internships
- Athletics
- Music, cooking and outdoor classes
- Free public transportation pass

King-Chávez Preschool

415 31st St., San Diego, CA 92102
619-525-7320

Features:

- Serves children ages 3 and 4
- Free part-day programs
- English immersion with Spanish support

Call for enrollment priorities/eligibility

King-Chávez Sherman Community Preschool

2258 Island Ave.,
San Diego, CA 92102
619-955-8555

Features:

- Serves children ages 3 and 4
- Free full-day and part-day programs
- Open year-round
- English immersion with Spanish support

Call for enrollment priorities/eligibility

