

November 3, 2010

Dear Friends of Children First,

We have been on a long and challenging journey together. It has been worth every step along the way.

We recalled. We removed. Today we begin the journey to recovery.

Congratulations to John Alpay, Gary Pritchard, and Lynn Hatton on their election to the Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees. They look forward to collaborating with students, parents, educators and community members to restore confidence, trust and excellence in Capistrano Unified.

We are very disappointed that Saam Alikhani and Martha McNicholas will not have the opportunity to join John, Gary and Lynn on the dais in December. Saam and Martha gave their best in this campaign and deserve our deep appreciation for their efforts. They have raised the bar for what we as a community should expect and demand from our school board members. I know that they will continue to play an active role in our communities. They will continue to work in their own ways to promote quality education for all children in our school district.

In 2012 voters in CUSD will elect trustees by trustee area thanks to the success of Measure H. Voters embraced cost savings, local control and greater local accountability – all true reforms that will strengthen CUSD for years to come.

To those of you who are teachers or school employees - we appreciate your dedication to your profession and your enthusiastic support of our campaign. Times are still tough for education in California. Significant budget problems persist. However, you now have new team members who are interested and willing to talk to you. As John Kennedy said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to each of you for all that you have done throughout the past year. You have welcomed us into your homes and have reached deeper into your pockets every time we asked. Your generosity of time, spirit and money enabled us to do what we needed to do to reach voters throughout the district. We are truly grateful.

To my Children First colleagues, Trudy Podobas, Linda Verraster, Erin Kutnick, Kevin Kirwan, Marilyn Amato, Saam Alikhani, Kathy Westling, Mary Fortmeier, Linda Kirwan, Pete Espinosa, Ross Chun and the incomparable Chris Korpi - thank you.

These are the hardest working people you will ever meet. We have challenged each other every single day to keep on going to the next level. Our motivation was our drive to do what we believe will benefit every student in this district.

Last summer we focused our efforts on our Commitment to the Capistrano Unified School District Community. ([Click here to read Our Commitment.](#))

We found individuals who shared that commitment to restore integrity and excellence to CUSD. It is an honor and a privilege to have worked with John, Saam, Gary, Martha and Lynn. We wish Saam and Martha the best.

We hope that John Alpay, Gary Pritchard and Lynn Hatton will share the commitment they made to all of us with their colleagues on the board. Together we can all begin the journey to restore CUSD.

Sincerely,

Fran Sdao, Capistrano Unified Children First Inc