

Riverview students rally 'round peace pole

Nonviolent message put on school's lawn

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LAKESIDE – A sea of students stared at a large pole shrouded in a white cloth and bright red bow yesterday. As the cloth was lifted, a collective “Oooh!” came from the young audience.

What they saw was a “peace pole,” a new fixture at Riverview Elementary School meant to remind students of the importance of peace-building.

The 8-foot cedar pole has six sides, and on each, “May Peace Prevail On Earth” is written in two of a number of different languages, including English, Spanish, Kumeyaay, Chinese, Hebrew and American Sign Language.

“This is a visible symbol of our commitment to building peace at home, at school and in the community,” Principal Larry Skeels said yesterday.

The pole will remain on the front lawn outside the main office.

There are more than 200,000 peace poles in 180 different countries, according to www.peacepoles.com, a Web site that sells the poles for \$300 to \$1,000. Poles like the one at Riverview retail for \$670.

The school's pole is dedicated to Sandy Orr, a former teacher at the school who now teaches at Lemon Crest Elementary School in Lakeside, and to members of the Barona Band of Mission Indians, who donated money to purchase the pole. The reservation also helped translate the pole's message into Kumeyaay.

The pole fits in with the school's PeaceBuilders, a violence prevention program that ties into the curriculum. Several schools in the Lakeside Union School District have implemented the program, Skeels said.

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