

# Peaceful Eagles & Youth Leaders

San Rafael City Schools  
**Coleman Elementary & Glenwood Elementary**

Michele Woodbury

Glenwood School's Peaceful Eagles and Coleman School's Youth Leaders are fourth and fifth grade students who, with adult supervision, involve themselves on the playground wearing identifiable shirts. They play along with other students while reminding them of the rules of the game, if needed, and they may also at times help mediate *small* conflicts between their peers. All this occurs during the lunch recess and requires parent/guardian permission. Students sign up for either one day or three days each week.



Mediation is a conflict resolution process that provides students the opportunity to talk and effectively resolve their conflicts. Peaceful Eagles and Youth Leaders help conduct the mediation process when and if necessary. They do not take sides or make decisions for their peers in conflict; instead, they help the students in conflict listen to each other's point of view, focus on the problem, and create their own solutions. They remind the students about the Problem Solving Wheel, which is displayed on the walls near the playground at each site.

At Coleman, the Youth Leaders also utilize a "Peace Path," supporting students to talk it out and use "I-messages" with one another.

The Peaceful Eagle and Youth Leader programs are voluntary. In order to be a Peaceful Eagle or a Youth Leader, students are either nominated by staff members or apply for the position. Students are required to write a paragraph, stating why they would like to participate. Lunch-time trainings are provided which include learning the rules of the games on the playground, how to listen effectively, how to not judge others or get overly-involved with the conflict at hand, understanding non-verbal communication of feelings, understanding different perspectives, how to make "I-statements," and how to identify the problem and how to problem-solve (using the Problem Solving Wheel). With all of this, students role play in order to fully appreciate and understand what they are learning.



This program has truly helped reduce the number of violations on the playing field and on the playground at both schools. Younger students enjoy playing with the older Peaceful Eagles and Youth Leaders and always look forward to seeing them at the lunch hour. Peaceful Eagles and Youth Leaders comment on how much they enjoy being a leader at their respective schools and take pride in the work they do. This program has also provided structure, routine, responsibility and heightened self-esteem to those students who were in need of this during their lunch hours.