



**Panda Cares.**

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**PANDA CARES TO HONOR LOCAL STUDENTS AT 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOLIDAY CARNIVAL CELEBRATION  
*Encinita Elementary School to be Recognized for Outstanding Academic Achievement***

**ROSEMEAD, Calif.** –Panda Cares, the philanthropic arm of Panda Express and its parent company, Panda Restaurant Group, will host its 8th annual Leader In Me Holiday Carnival on Friday, Dec. 11. Four hundred students from Encinita Elementary School in Rosemead, CA, will be recognized at the event for their academic and leadership achievements in The Leader in Me program, a whole school transformation process created by Franklin Covey, which teaches leadership skills at the elementary school level.

The students will be welcomed by the Panda Express Panda Bear mascot and will enjoy carnival-themed booths created and staffed by Panda Restaurant Group associates. All attendees will be treated to a delicious Panda Express lunch and receive Panda swag. Toy manufacturer, Mattel Inc., will also join the celebration by donating gifts for the students.

Through Panda Cares, Panda has supported The Leader in Me program in over 550 schools throughout the country. Encinitas Elementary School, who has been sponsored by Panda since 2009, is one of 27 schools sponsored by the company that has earned the prestigious Lighthouse School designation from the program. Earning Lighthouse School status is the highest level of achievement within the program. There are currently 161 schools in The Leader in Me program that have been designated as Lighthouse Schools.

“We are proud to bring leadership development to schools nationwide,” said Peggy Cherng, co-chairman of Panda Restaurant Group. “Through this program, students have the opportunity to become insightful and confident leaders who will contribute to their communities.”

The Leader in Me program is inspired by Stephen R. Covey’s book, “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” that integrates timeless leadership principles with practical character and life skills relevant to today’s challenges. By building self-confidence, interpersonal skills, elevating student achievement, and reducing school-wide discipline problems, this program helps children become leaders in their field of interest.

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**About Panda Restaurant Group**

Founded in Southern California in 1973, Panda Restaurant Group Inc. is the world leader in Asian dining experiences with more than 1,800 locations in 46 states along with stores in Puerto Rico, Guam, Canada, Mexico, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Korea. The family-owned and operated chain of fast casual, full service and quick service restaurant concepts includes Panda Express, Panda Inn, and Hibachi-San. For more information visit [www.pandarg.com](http://www.pandarg.com), or become a fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pandarg).

**About Panda Cares**

Established in 1999, Panda Cares' mission is to bring hope to children in need purpose is to foster the spirit of Giving within Panda by directly serving the health and educational needs of underserved children. Learn more at [www.pandacares.org](http://www.pandacares.org).