



NEW DESIGNS
CHARTER SCHOOL

Newsletter

FALL 2025

Building Community at New Designs Charter School



**CELEBRATING OUR
COMMUNITY AND GROWTH**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	A School Community That Wraps Around Families	Page 3
	Supporting the Whole Child Means Serving the Whole Family	Page 4
	Walking Together as a Community	Page 5
	Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Pride	Page 9
	Friendsgiving and Community Gathering	Page 10
	Daily Practices That Build Trust	Page 12
	Looking Ahead with Purpose	Page 17



A SEASON WORTH CELEBRATING

Fall 2025 at New Designs Charter School

Some school communities are defined by what happens inside classrooms. Others are defined by how they respond to the lives of the students and families they serve.

At New Designs Charter School, fall 2025 was shaped by both.

Across campuses, families came onto school grounds not only to attend events but to feel supported and welcomed. Students experienced learning that connected academic expectations to real futures and real possibilities. Staff made sure care, opportunity, and high expectations were all part of the same work, every day.

This achievement was not the result of one program or one **successful** moment. It was the result of so many intentional choices made across classrooms, **hallways**, offices, and community spaces.



Together, those choices shaped a semester where learning felt purposeful, relationships felt strong, and the work of education felt visible.

What follows is a closer look at that Season

Editorial by: Marcus Herring

Photography Credit: Michael Holmes & Nick Anderson



A SCHOOL COMMUNITY THAT WRAPS AROUND FAMILIES

At New Designs Charter School, the belief is simple and unwavering. Students cannot thrive academically if their basic needs are unmet. Learning improves when families feel supported, respected, and welcomed.

Throughout the fall semester, all New Designs campuses addressed food insecurity as a core responsibility of the school community. This work was not done as an emergency response or a temporary solution. It was simply built into how schools show up for families with consistency, dignity, and care.

At New Designs Watts, families responded quickly anytime food distributions were announced. This happens because trust is already in place. Parents arrived knowing they would be welcomed without judgement. The school community witnessed students smiling, helping carry groceries for their parents and others, turning moments of support into shared experiences that reflected empathy and responsibility.

For New Designs University Park and Adams, offering food support was often connected to campus gatherings and family events with intention. This approach reinforced the idea that meeting basic needs and building relationships go hand in hand. The school's support was offered in safe spaces that felt familiar and community-centered, not transactional.



These efforts reflect New Designs Charter School's role in the California Community Schools Partnership Program. Through this model, academics, health services, family engagement, and community partnerships are purposefully aligned to support the whole family, not just the student sitting in a classroom.

Serving the whole child means serving the whole family.



SUPPORTING THE WHOLE CHILD MEANS SERVING THE WHOLE FAMILY

Supporting student wellness is essential to academic success.

Across all New Designs campuses, a partnership with Shields for Families plays a critical role in providing services for students experiencing challenges with their behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs. This partnership is embedded into daily school life, allowing meaningful support to be responsive, coordinated, and easily accessible.



This approach reflects a shared belief across New Designs schools. Learning is strongest when schools respond to the full reality of students' lives, not just what appears on a report card.

New Designs provides students with direct services when needs arise, and allows families to receive guidance, referrals, and assistance to help them navigate challenges that may affect attendance, focus, or overall well-being. Shields staff work closely with school teams so that proper care is aligned with academic expectations and classroom support.

Because these relationships are already in place, families do not have to navigate systems alone or wait for challenges to escalate. Support is available through trusted adults on campus who understand both the student and the family context.



WALKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY

The Breast Cancer Walk at New Designs Watts



One of the most meaningful moments of the fall semester took place beyond the classroom.

At New Designs Watts, the annual **Breast Cancer Walk** became a visible expression of unity, care, and community pride. Attendance grew significantly from the previous year as teachers, staff, students, and families walked together through the surrounding neighborhood and nearby park.

Students played a central role in the event's success. They eagerly invited their families, taking flyers home and encouraging parents to attend. On the day of the walk, families arrived with younger children, siblings, and strollers, transforming the event into a true community gathering rather than a school-sponsored activity.

After completing the one-mile walk, families stayed to talk, connect, and spend time together. Staff pooled personal resources to provide food and drinks, extending the experience into a shared celebration. Conversations continued. Children played. Relationships deepened.

The impact of the walk extended beyond the day itself. Families who first experienced the campus through this gathering later returned to enroll their children, strengthening the school community in lasting ways.



The walk reflected something essential about the Watts campus. When care is visible and shared, community grows.



WALKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY

The Breast Cancer Walk at New Designs Watts





WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL

THE FIRST NIGHT FAMILIES STEP INSIDE

Back-to-School Night marked the beginning of partnership and trust for the academic year.

At New Designs Watts on September 17, families arrived curious and left reassured. Parents noticed the care taken in the campus environment and the warmth of staff interactions. Teachers became familiar faces rather than names on a schedule, and expectations were clarified early. Families left knowing who to contact, how to communicate, and how to stay connected throughout the year.

Just days earlier, on September 14, families gathered at New Designs University Park and Adams for their own Back-to-School Night experience. The evening was designed to mirror the student day, with parents rotating through classrooms period by period. This approach helped families understand not only what students are learning, but how learning unfolds across a full school day.



Across both campuses, these early experiences set the tone for the year. Families gained clarity. Teachers gained connection. Students benefited from adults beginning the year aligned and informed.



SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPING STUDENT VOICE



Mr. Said Dibinga, Law & Finance Teacher and Debate Coach

At New Designs University Park, student voice is not treated as an add-on. It is intentionally cultivated, and the debate program stands as one of the clearest examples of that commitment.

Under the guidance of Teacher and Debate Coach Mr. Said Dibinga, students engage in debate as both an academic discipline and a leadership practice. They learn how to research complex topics, analyze multiple perspectives, and construct arguments grounded in evidence. Just as importantly, they learn how to listen, respond thoughtfully, and engage in respectful discourse even when ideas differ.



Debate creates space for students to find and trust their own voices. Many who enter the program hesitant or unsure grow more confident as they learn to speak with clarity and purpose. These skills carry into classrooms, presentations, and leadership roles across campus. Students begin to see themselves not only as learners, but as thinkers whose ideas matter.

Mr. Dibinga's approach emphasizes discipline, preparation, and respect. Students are challenged to rise to high expectations while being supported in the process. The result is a program that strengthens academic skills while also shaping character and confidence.

For many students at University Park, debate becomes a defining part of their school experience. It reinforces the belief that education is not only about mastering content, but about learning how to engage with the world thoughtfully, responsibly, and with conviction.



CELEBRATING IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND PRIDE

Hispanic Heritage Month at New Designs University Park High School Campus

Hispanic Heritage Month at New Designs University Park was one of the most joyful and affirming moments of the fall semester.

Throughout the celebration, the campus came alive with color, music, and movement as students, families, and staff gathered to honor culture, identity, and shared history. Families played an active role in shaping the event. Parents helped decorate campus spaces and created photo backdrops where students proudly took pictures with relatives and loved ones.



There were games, food, laughter, and conversation all over campus. Students moved easily from one activity to the next, sharing traditions and spending time with both peers and adults in ways that felt natural and fun. Teachers and staff took part alongside the students, which made everyone feel they belonged together rather than apart.

For **students**, the celebration sent a clear message; their **culture** is valued and respected at school. For families, it affirmed that their presence and traditions **belong** on campus. When students see themselves reflected in and honored by their learning environment, **confidence** grows, and connection deepens long after the event ends.





FRIENDSGIVING AND COMMUNITY GATHERING



Creating Traditions That Bring Families Together

The fall semester also included moments designed to bring people together.

At New Designs University Park and Adams, the first annual Friendsgiving on November 21 marked the beginning of a meaningful campus tradition. Families gathered on campus to share food, conversation, and time together in a setting that felt welcoming and relaxed.



Students could easily move between tables to say hello to staff, classmates, and family members. Parents stayed, talked, and got to know each other, often for the first time. The organized flow of the gathering made it easy for people to get to know each other without feeling rushed or formal.

The event blended celebration with generosity. Alongside sharing a meal, families participated in a food drive that supported others in the community. This combination reflected a shared value across New Designs campuses. Community is strengthened not only by gathering together, but by caring for one another.



Friendsgiving helped families experience the school as more than a place their students attend each day. It felt like a shared space where people belong.



A SPACE FOR GRATITUDE

During the Thanksgiving season, a Gratitude & Empathy Wall captured the heart of the school community.

Students, parents, and staff were invited to write messages of thanks and reflection. Throughout the day, the wall filled with handwritten notes reflecting a wide range of voices and experiences. Some messages were short and simple. Others were thoughtful and personal.

The Empathy Wall was a response to anti-bullying, in an effort to build awareness and support for students experiencing emotional distress.

Parents said they were grateful for teachers who believe in and support their kids. Students wrote about their friends, feeling welcome, and having adults who care about what they have to say. Staff thanked families and coworkers who come to work every day with care and dedication.



The **Gratitude Wall** was in a central location, prompting people to stop, read, and think. It became more than just a show. It was a moment of **recognition** and connection that showed how much trust and respect had grown among the **community**.



DAILY PRACTICES THAT BUILD TRUST

Some of the most meaningful work at New Designs happens quietly, every day.

At New Designs Watts, the first thing you do in the morning is show up and connect with others. Every morning, staff members who are always there when students arrive greet them by name. When you greet parents with warmth and familiarity, they enjoy it. This routine makes the start of the day calm and welcoming, and it makes kids feel safe and like they belong before the first bell rings.



A clear cell phone policy has made it even easier for people to focus and connect on campus. Students pay more attention to their peers and lessons when their phones are locked up during school hours. Instead of screens, lunch periods are full of talking and doing things together. Teachers spend less time getting kids to pay attention and more time teaching. Staff have observed a noticeable decrease in conflict and a calmer overall campus environment.

At New Designs University Park and Adams, daily practices similarly reflect a commitment to whole-child support. Attentive staff presence and wellness partnerships reinforce that students are seen and supported academically, socially, and emotionally throughout the day.

Over time, these consistent practices build trust. Families may not always see the systems behind them, but they feel the difference in how their students experience school.



LEARNING THAT IS MEASURED AND SUPPORTED

Internal Benchmark Assessments

Throughout the fall semester, students across New Designs campuses participated in internal benchmark assessments designed to support learning and inform instruction.

These assessments are part of an ongoing instructional cycle. Teachers review results collaboratively to better understand student progress, identify areas of strength, and respond to learning needs in real time. Instruction is adjusted thoughtfully, and additional support is provided where needed. Students are guided to reflect on their performance and set goals for continued growth.



Benchmark testing periods are supported intentionally. Schools communicate clearly with families, ensure students have access to breakfast, and provide structured breaks so students can remain focused and supported throughout the process. Attendance during testing windows remained strong, reflecting shared trust and partnership between families and schools.



At New Designs, Assessment is used as a tool to strengthen instruction and support students, not to define them.



LEARNING THAT CONNECTS TO REAL FUTURES

Academic learning at New Designs is intentionally connected to life beyond high school.



Through Career and Technical Education pathways, students explore fields such as Law, Medical, Information Technology, Finance, and Engineering. These pathways give learning purpose by helping students understand how academic skills translate into real careers and opportunities. Students develop practical skills, explore interests, and begin to imagine themselves in professional spaces.

Dual enrollment partnerships with Los Angeles Trade Technical College and Los Angeles Southwest College further strengthen this connection. Students are able to earn college credit while still in high school, gaining exposure to college-level coursework in a supportive environment. These experiences reduce barriers to higher education and help students build confidence as learners.

For many **families**, these opportunities are transformational. Students **graduate** with college units already earned and a clearer vision of what comes next, supported by schools that believe in their potential and plan intentionally for their **future**.





BELONGING THROUGH ATHLETICS AND LEADERSHIP

Athletics and student leadership play an important role in building confidence and belonging across New Designs campuses.

At New Designs Watts, after-school athletics such as flag football and basketball keep students engaged well beyond the final bell. Participation is closely connected to classroom expectations, and students understand that effort during the school day directly impacts their ability to be part of a team. This connection motivates students to stay focused, take responsibility for their work, and support one another.

Athletics at Watts also strengthens relationships across grade levels. Older students support younger teammates, and peers encourage one another to stay on track academically and behaviorally. Over time, the sense of team becomes part of daily campus life, shaping how students show up in and out of the classroom.

At New Designs University Park high school campus, athletics created moments of shared pride throughout the last school year and fall semester. Students participated in volleyball, football, flag football, track & field, soccer, basketball, baseball, and cheer, offering many ways to feel connected and involved. One standout moment energized the campus when the boys' junior varsity soccer team defeated Palisades for the first time since 2017. Families, students, and staff celebrated together, marking the victory as a symbol of growth and determination.



Leadership opportunities and spirit activities further strengthen school culture at both campuses. Through student-led initiatives, spirit weeks, and visible leadership roles, students take ownership of their school community. They support one another, celebrate collective successes, and build pride in where they learn and grow.



RECOGNITION THAT MAKES GROWTH VISIBLE



Growth at New Designs is meant to be seen!



At New Designs Watts, weekly Friday recognition assemblies are a highly anticipated part of the school experience. Students gather to celebrate peers who demonstrate positive behavior, academic effort, and commitment to learning. Teachers build anticipation throughout the week by noticing positive choices and encouraging students to stay engaged.

Students who are not recognized one week remain motivated. Many ask questions, reflect on **expectations**, and set goals for the next assembly. Over time, this routine has strengthened relationships between **students** and **teachers** and reinforced a clear understanding of what **success** looks like.



At New Designs University Park and Adams, academic achievement was cheerfully celebrated during the California State Testing Achievement Ceremony on October 23. Students who met or exceeded academic standards the previous year were honored publicly in front of their families. Parents joined their students on campus for lunch, turning the ceremony into a shared celebration rather than a brief acknowledgment.

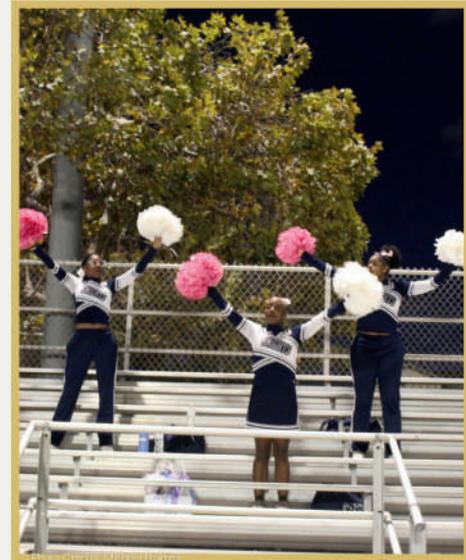
Across both campuses, recognition sends a consistent message. Effort matters. Growth is noticed. Students are valued for who they are and how they progress.



LOOKING AHEAD WITH PURPOSE

As fall transitions into spring, the work across New Designs campuses continues with momentum and intention.

Honor roll celebrations are planned for February, providing another opportunity to recognize student effort and growth. A Career Day in March will highlight pathways, aspirations, and future possibilities for students as they continue to explore their goals.



Graduations and culminating events on June 10 and 11 will mark important milestones, celebrating the dedication, support, and perseverance that carry students forward.



These moments reflect a continued commitment to learning, belonging, and opportunity across New Designs Charter School.



A COMMUNITY WORTH SUPPORTING

Fall 2025 reflected what New Designs Charter School stands for.

Across campuses, students were supported academically, socially, and emotionally. Families felt welcome and valued. Community partnerships strengthened stability and opportunity. Learning was connected to real futures, and growth was celebrated openly.

These outcomes are not accidental. They are the result of intentional design, shared values, and daily commitment from staff, students, and families working together.

New Designs Charter School continues to be a place where students can thrive, families can trust, and community can grow. It is a season worth celebrating and a mission worth supporting.



SAFE. SUPPORTED. KNOWN.

A School Community Where Students Thrive



Why Families Choose New Designs Charter School



Safe & Supportive Environment

Structured,
Calm Campuses



Mental Health & Family Support

Wellness &
Counseling Services



Dual Enrollment College Credit

Earn College Units
In High School



After School Programs

Athletics &
Enrichment Activities



Community Schools Model

Whole Child,
Whole Family Support

Explore Our Campuses

Watts School Grades 6-12

A middle and high school rooted in community, academic growth, and college and career readiness.

📍 Address: 12714 Avalon Blvd. LA, CA 90061

📞 Phone: (323) 418 - 0600

🌐 Website: wattsschool.newdesignscharter.com

Call to schedule a campus tour.
New Designs Charter School - Watts

University Park HS Campus Grades 9-12

A high school campus focused on student voice, leadership, dual enrollment, and preparing students for life beyond graduation.

📍 Address: 2303 Figueroa Way LA, CA 90007

📞 Phone: (213) 765 - 9084

🌐 Website: universitypark.newdesignscharter.com

Call to schedule a campus tour.
New Designs Charter School University Park Campus

Adams MS Campus Grades 6-8

A middle school campus where strong relationships, structure, and academic preparation build confidence for high school and beyond.

📍 Address: 1342 Adams Blvd. LA, CA 90007

📞 Phone: (323) 730 - 0330

🌐 Website: adamscampus.newdesignscharter.com

Call to schedule a campus tour.
New Designs Charter School Adams Campus

ENROLL NOW

Ready to take the next step?



Scan the QR Code to Begin Your Application

Serving Students. Supporting Families. Building Futures.

New Designs Charter School