



# The Pink Panther

## Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

25 South Hill Court, Oakland, California 94618 (510) 879-1710

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

### Greetings from Principal Mel Stenger

Dear Friends,

Wow! Back-to-School Night was a tremendous "Wow!" experience for me. We had a *huge* turnout, about 80%. I am so grateful and pleasantly surprised. You obviously care very much about your children's educational program, and I hope we can rise to the challenge and opportunity to provide the best school program for them.

We are also looking forward to having you participate in the classroom community of learners. You can connect through the teacher's newsletters, as a volunteer, helping at Thursday snack sales, or networking through room parents. Also remember if you have very little time you can "Give Us a Day." If you haven't already provided your email address to your child's teacher, please do so. I am encouraging teachers to use email for newsletters to save on paper.

Wednesday evening I also talked about shaking up our academic status quo, to stretch a little more and to achieve even more than we have. And one of our district goals is to help each child grow to be "college ready." Toward that end I will be working with the teachers to help all of you develop an Individual Learning Plan for your child. You'll be looking closer at their test scores, academic strengths and challenges, and developing a plan for guiding your child to college.

Also on Wednesday evening I shared with you our vision of making Kaiser School a place that's "all about the kids." Working with the teachers is again a key point: I hope you can support us in that endeavor as we ask you to use cell phones outside only, to keep adult issues restricted to adult conversations, and to refrain from interrupting the teachers especially at the beginning and the end of the day.

Finally, I've added to the newsletter a list of helpful phone numbers for services around the city. Some are numbers that may be immediately useful and some are those that I hope you never need.

Once again, thanks for the tremendous support on Wednesday evening. The beginning of the year went very well and we're off to a fabulous start!

**Mel Stenger, Principal**

## Getting In The Know

### Important Notes:

#### EARTHQUAKE/EMERGENCY PACKETS DUE BACK ASAP

The emergency packets were sent home the first day of school. Please fill the packets with the listed items and return them to your child's teacher. Now, we need to have the packets returned **within one week**.

**It's important** they are returned with the listed items so your child will have supplies in the event of an emergency.

*Thanks, Margie Potts*

### KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Sept 11-29	Sally Foster Sale
Sept 28	PTA Board Meeting
Sept 30	Beautification Day
Oct 6	Gardening Day
Nov 5	Kaiser AUCTION!

Where can you go for a current calendar of events at Kaiser?

**The Kaiser school web site**

Where can you get copies of the *Pink Panther*?

**The Kaiser school web site**

Where can you get information about fundraising events, after school programs, parent participation, classrooms, and more?

**The Kaiser  
school web site**

Check it out at: <http://kaiserelementary.org>  
Contact Kim Carl at [kcarl@berkeley.edu](mailto:kcarl@berkeley.edu)  
for more information.

### How to Reach Kaiser School

Our phone number is **(510) 879-1710**  
(includes a 24 hour message service).

Robin Sasada will be picking up your calls and messages.

To participate in the school community group go to (and join) this website:

**[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool\\_group/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/)**

### How to be in the *Pink Panther*

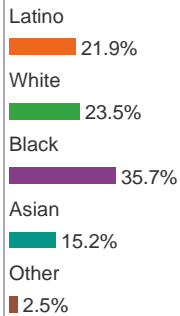
To include your story or information in your school newsletter:

forward your news, questions or article to the editors by 5:00 p.m. on Sundays via:

**[mryder@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mryder@ix.netcom.com) and  
[kbradley@ix.netcom.com](mailto:kbradley@ix.netcom.com)**

# Dollars and Census

## Appreciating Oakland's Melting Pot



2000 U.S. Census data

Graph Data SOURCE: <http://muninetguide.com/states/california/municipality/Oakland.php>

The median age for residents in Oakland, CA is **33.3** (this is younger than average age in the U.S.).

Families (non-single residences) represent **57.3%** of the population.

## Kaiser Elementary Grade Sizes & Demographics

247 students attended Kaiser Elementary in the 2003-2004 school year. There were 12 teachers on staff, giving Kaiser Elementary a student-teacher ratio of 20.6.

Kindergarten - 40 Students

1st Grade - 49 Students

2nd Grade - 36 Students

3rd Grade - 42 Students

4th Grade - 48 Students

5th Grade - 32 Students

Latino - 9.3%

White - 25.1%

Black - 55.1%

Asian - 10.5%

2006 Data is coming in a future issue of the *Pink Panther*.

## You may remember hearing at Back To School Night...

that our school rather distinctively reflects the full diversity of Oakland. Of course this is a hugely important reason for us to be part of the Kaiser community.

But how is this dealt with by the public school system? Is there any connection, coincidental or otherwise, between our diversity, our funding, and the way that we reflect Oakland's diversity?

In fact, *it does*. It's a coincidence that ethnic/racial diversity also correlates highly with *economic* diversity.

We use economic diversity for some funding purposes. Additional funding comes from several sources and some is based on diversity but not by race. It's based on diversity of income.

That is, when parents fill out the Free or Reduced Lunch form, the data is entered and we get some additional funding based on the number of kids eligible for free/reduced lunches. That's why it's so important for everyone to fill out the form.

## How September 11 Continues to Change Us

Many of us in the Kaiser school and community were traveling far and wide during this past summer. At the airports and on the planes, it took more and more forethought to keep security interruptions down to a minimum. But for a good cause, we did whatever it took to get where we intended to be, especially if it meant being with far-flung family. It's strange to realize that this is all pretty new to us but not to most of the places abroad.

After "9/11" one thing we might not have expected as travelers was the degree to which people outside of the U.S. watched and judged our response to the tragedy here. So much of what had been completely unimaginable here beforehand suddenly became a shockingly real rite of passage for us. Ironically, the customary world role of the U.S. as the country "farthest into the future" showed up resting on a lack of the experience typical of many other countries' past. Namely, disaster-level violence on the home turf checks the history of so many countries since 1960, except notably that of the U.S. Some of us received poignant messages from abroad, saying "we know what that's like, all too well."

Now, years have already whipped by, and the recovery from 9/11 is still monumentally incomplete. In reality, "recovery" is not the right word, because what is possible is not a naïve return to the past but a turn to a permanently changed future. Meanwhile, now that we really feel how small and densely complex the world is, the ability to respond to the present has overtaken the emphasis on the ability to invent the future. The response to Katrina is a second globally explicit demonstration of what Americans can do or not, and how Americans prioritize (or not).

But does this matter at the level of our neighborhood and our school?

Well, the big stories are always really stories about how people think about other people, and what they decided to do about that. But the decision that we make in the present *follows* from the way we've learned to think about each other. The punchline: even history itself begins locally. That's why we need our school to focus on helping our children become good people, who do what they've learned to do *for* each other, not to each other.

## Are You Concerned About "No Child Left Behind" ?

Principal Mel Stenger scanned a packed audience at Back To School Night and laid out the challenge of No Child Left Behind very plainly for all to see: facing ever-rising government standards of achievement, how do we take a flawed system of requirements and turn it into an instrument for giving our children an advantage?

To consider the solution, we first have to understand where No Child Left Behind (NCLB) came from. While people may feel strongly about its goals, it's complicated and controversial background of ideas is in many ways just plain contradictory to the professional experience of our teachers. In-depth discussion about this is readily available at any number of websites such as NoChildLeft.com (<http://nochildleft.com/2003/apr03fuzzy.html>). But NCLB is already a requirement, not a choice. The question this background poses is: how can our school and its teachers use their resources most effectively — the ones they know from experience (not from politics) will work?

It all has to fit into the boundaries of the government framework, and yet also work around that. This brings us to the need for an important daily strategy.

The second key consideration, then, is what we can do to support our teachers' strategy — their program for addressing the variety of learning styles that our children have and need.

At Kaiser, we have **The Wheel** (ask your teachers about it!)

And, there's the regular emphasis on parental preparations. But this teacher-parent partnering doesn't just mean attention to homework. One of the most important ways that teachers get to enrich the classroom time, and to reach students in the way the students need to be reached, is to have the help of **Classroom Parents**. This is a role that each teacher can look to for making the difference between quantity time and "quality" time during the day. It is really a key element of leaving no child behind... Add in our **field trips** and the support of your PTA funds for **adding subjects to the class** offerings, and the system that we need to deal with NCLB is in place.

To find out how you can make your "class team" a strong and reliable success, check in with your teacher and also with your team's other resources: Katy DeVecchi (After School Coordinator) and Liz Hall (Room Parent Coordinator)

# PTA News Update

## Volunteers Needed Immediately in the Following Positions!

**Auditor:** to perform an audit on the PTA books twice yearly (due September and February)

**Tax Preparer:** to prepare a tax return (due November 15)

**Auction Donors:** to donate items for upcoming auction November 4. Contact Liz Hall 531-2422, [probossliz@pacbell.net](mailto:probossliz@pacbell.net)

**Grant Writers:** to seek out and write grants

**Computer Support:** to help maintain computers and fix problems that may arise.

**Walk-a-thon Chair:** to organize and oversee a committee for the Walk-a-thon which takes place on May 5

**Kiln operator:** to operate kiln and help with class ceramic projects.

If you can help with any of these positions please contact  
Lisa Downes 532-5913, [lisadownes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisadownes@sbcglobal.net)

### Unanswered Questions?

I hope everyone has had a successful transition into the new school year. It was great to see so many families at back to school night.

If you still feel like you have unanswered questions, or would like more information, please either set up an appointment with Mr. Stenger (available between 2:00 and 4:00 daily), or contact PTA President Lisa Downes (532-5913, [lisadownes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisadownes@sbcglobal.net)), and they will be happy to help you.

### PTA Reminders

- Please be sure to hand in your **child's emergency supply bag** to your child's teacher. It is important that each child has these supplies in the event of an emergency.
- Complete and return the **green directory form** sent home with the back to school envelopes. PTA members will receive a directory after they are printed. Non-members may purchase them for \$5.00.
- Sign up to be a volunteer. A description of the various volunteer positions can be found on the sign up sheets outside the auditorium.
- Become a PTA member! We're looking for 100% membership. The class who gets there first wins a class trip to the climbing gym Ironworks!
- Please keep track of your volunteer hours and record them in the **volunteer sign-in** binder in the office.

**Sally Foster is here!** Sally Foster envelopes went home with your child on Monday. Orders can be made both through the catalog and online. 50% of all purchases benefit the school. Orders are due **September 29**, with delivery scheduled for November 13.