



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 26, 2007

Dear Kaiser Families,

This week those who were selected in the Options lottery began to call about enrolling in our school for the fall. (We also had many calls from those not selected, but that's another topic!) The calls ranged from those who were relieved to have gotten their choice to those who were upset that they were assigned here to those who asked, "Where is Kaiser? I don't know anything about that school." Those responses made me think about the range of people we have in our community, and their children. While it's easy to sit in judgment about *those* kids, we need to remember who belongs at Kaiser School. Our school is for everyone who needs an education, except the most disabled whose needs we cannot meet. It's not that we just don't discriminate on this or that basis, but we actively *welcome* all children into our learning community.

I took a reflective walk down the hall the other day with a parent. My purpose was to open her eyes to what our community can do for some of *those* children. In one class was a girl whose mother decided she didn't want her, so another Kaiser family took her in. I pointed out a boy whose parents brought him here because he had been teased so badly at his other school he had quit talking and stopped working; after six months here he is opening up and improving in his school work. In another class there is a boy who didn't know the difference between numbers and letters in my Kindergarten class, even at the end of the year; now in second grade he is exiting special ed support and is just being monitored. I pointed out girl whose mother died in the girl's Kindergarten year and whose father was completely overwhelmed with the prospect of raising a girl, and said that the women teachers here have helped the family with her upbringing, clothing and hair. In that walk I realized (with joy and humility) what we can do for some of *those* children.

My own experience reflects that welcome. In the early 1980's I left Cincinnati where gay people were regularly beaten and jailed by the police and moved to California. When I became a teacher I was welcomed into the Kaiser Community and my partner and I were amazed at the tolerance, no, the *affirmation* we received. When we adopted our first son, the faculty and parents had a shower for us. Eventually we adopted a second, whose mother also had a history of drug and alcohol abuse. Our sons came to Kaiser Elementary and soon showed behavioral and learning problems; again, the community here never treated them with less respect than any other child. Over the years I continued to teach and to grow as an educator myself, in an environment where I've been accepted and respected.. Instead of being treated as social trash, we were treated as human beings, and the way we were treated helped us to grow into being better human beings ourselves, and helped us to become a family. Oh yes, my family has its problems, as do all families, but we have been able to grow largely because of the support we've received at Kaiser School. So I know first hand the nurturing and transforming affects of living, working and growing in a supportive community. Yes, *those* kids belong here. We all do.

Mel Stenger, Principal

Getting In The Know

Correction: Giving Credit Where Credit is Due!

A couple of weeks ago we had a Teacher Appreciation Day that I said was organized by Julie Mills. Julie came to me and graciously pointed out that it was not she, but rather Anicia Peppas who actually got things moving for the special luncheon. My apologies, Anicia. And so, belatedly but with appreciation from our hearts we say thanks to Anicia!

Tardies affect everyone!

When children come in late it can be disruptive for the class, and disorienting for the late student. We understand the occasional late arrival and we encourage you to examine your own morning routine, and if you are habitually late, please redouble your efforts to be here on time.

Workshop about Adoption

Interested in adoption? You might consider attending a workshop, The Emotional Development of Adoptive Parenting, on March 31. The workshop is intended to help adoptive families work through feelings and create strategies. For more information, call 243-9460, or www.pactadopt.org

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:

lisadownes@sbcglobal.net
and
kcarl@berkeley.edu

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
March 27	Kaiser Permanente presents "The Best Me" to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade families. Dinner will be served with a presentation following.
March 29	PTA Board Meeting
March 30	No School Cesar Chavez Day
April 4	General PTA meeting: Kaiser Permanente's "Thriving Families" Science Fair awards, PTA board elections. Dinner will be provided by Kaiser Permanente
April 5	District Music Festival at Kaiser
April 9 through 13	No School Spring Break
April 18	SSC Meeting 4 p.m. in Library
April 26	PTA Board Meeting

How to Reach Kaiser School

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

To participate in the school community group, go to (and join) this website:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/

KAISER HAPPENINGS

Kaiser to Host District Music Festival

All Kaiser instrumental students will be performing at the annual district Music Festival on Thursday, April 5 from 1-2:30 p.m. Kaiser Elementary School will host this year's music festival. Parents are invited to attend, but will also have a chance to hear the same program at our school in May (TBA).

All students should be well prepared (practice, music, instrument) and dressed in dark bottoms and white tops for this event.

Thank you,
Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Briggs
(Music Instructors)



New T-shirts!

We appreciate the new t-shirt design and the work done by our committee, Tammie Madison and Pete Normandin. The colors are our school colors, green and gold (yellow) and the shirts are available in children's and adult sizes. An order sheet is attached to this newsletter, in case you didn't get last week's.

SAVE THE DATE!! THE WALK-A-THON IS COMING

The Annual Walk-A-Thon is scheduled for Saturday, May 5, 2007 at 9 AM. This year's Walk-A-Thon theme is "Going the Distance." This event is an exciting fundraiser for the PTA, which supports and enhances our school in many, many ways.

How it Works: Our Kaiser students ask sponsors to pledge money for the Walk-A-Thon. The kids walk laps around the school to earn money from their sponsors. There are fun prizes for the children, and the class that brings in the most pledge money will receive a pizza party to celebrate.

The Walk-A-Thon is a great way to earn up to one-third of the PTA's operating budget. There is a wonderful sense of school pride and community as kids walk, parents volunteer, and everyone eats! Also, the Annual Book Fair will take place during the Walk-A-Thon, so there will be plenty for everyone to do.

So, students: start filling out your pledge sheets as soon as you receive them this week after the assembly on Wednesday! Ask your friends, family, and neighbors to sponsor you and think about how many laps you think you can do this year. Remember to ask out-of-town family and friends you visit with over spring break to sponsor your walk.

Also, we will be having a contest for the best T-shirt design for the Walk-A-Thon. Submit your design to Robin Sasada no later than Friday, April 10. The winner of the T-shirt design contest will receive a super cool prize and see classmates and Kaiser friends wearing their design at the event.

So save the date, start getting pledges, and create your best T-shirt design! Please contact Lisa Cartolano at lisa.cartolano@prurealty.com if you have any questions or suggestions.

Kaiser Kiosk

EXTRA EXTRA!

BE THE PINK PANTHER'S NEXT CO-EDITOR

If you're ready to drive Kaiser's primary weekly newsletter from the front seat, **we need you now!**

Contact Malcolm Ryder (outgoing editor), Kim Karl (VP Communications) or Lisa Downes (PTA President).

mryder@ix.netcom.com

kcarl@berkeley.edu

lisadownes@yahoo.com

Please Support the PTA Pledge Drive!!

Help us reach our pledge goal of \$15,000. If every family pledged \$61.22 per student, our goal will be achieved. That's only \$6.12 a month for the school year. All contributions are tax deductible.

What does \$15,000 provide? The PTA pays \$16,400 for library instruction and supplies, \$11,000 for P.E. instruction, and \$15,000 for music instruction. Imagine Kaiser without those programs!

LAST CALL!! Easter Baskets for Sale!!

If you'd like to purchase an Easter basket for a little one this year, come to the office and see what we have. A Kaiser parent is selling Easter baskets for \$13 each and will be donating a part of the proceeds to the school. Orders will be accepted up to April 4, 2007. Please see Robin in the office.

To Support Children Who are Grieving...

Circle of Care assists children and families coping with grief and illness through support groups, counseling, and school-based programs. Call 531-7551 or www.ebac.org

2006-2007 Pink Panther Staff:

Copy Editor: Wendy Harcarik

Pink Panther Co-Editor: Carrie Shepherd

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors:

PTA President: Lisa Downes

VPs Communication: Kim Carl
Kiki Bradley

Healthy Snacks

The week before last, the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran an article titled “Americans Shun Fruit and Veggies.” It says that according to health officials “fewer than a third of American adults eat the amount of fruits and vegetables the government recommends, a trend that’s remained steady for more than a decade.”

We can help our children *not* become part of this trend by teaching them now that fruits and vegetables are a great snack and lunch choice. A recent random survey of some of Kaiser students’ lunches showed that, while some of the lunches contained no fruits or vegetables, most of them, such as these listed here, did:

- Cream cheese tortilla, milk and an **APPLE**
- Pizza, Lays potato chips, and **APPLE**, Raspberry water, 3 Jolly Rancher candies
- Meat, cheese, mayo sandwich, lemon Yoplait yogurt, **TOMATOES, APPLESAUCE, NORI SEAWEED**, fruit gushers
- Burrito, **TANGERINE, PEAR, ORANGES**, water
- Noodles, **APPLESAUCE, ORANGE**, crackers
- Turkey sandwich, crackers, **GRAPES**, water

We obviously favor giving fruit to our children because it’s sweet and it’s easier to get them to eat it, but here’s a Healthy Lifestyles tip: Put both fruit *and* veggies in your child’s lunch and have him eat one as his snack and one for lunch. Here are some possibilities that are good raw with dip or salad dressing:

- ❖ Carrot sticks or baby carrots
- ❖ Cucumber
- ❖ Peppers (red, green or yellow)
- ❖ Tomato slices or grape or cherry tomatoes
- ❖ Broccoli
- ❖ Celery sticks
- ❖ Snap or Snow peas
- ❖ String beans
- ❖ Yellow summer squash or zucchini slices

Dips – Try low-fat salad dressing, like fat-free Ranch or Thousand Island, store-bought light dips, bean dips, guacamole, hummus (which comes in dozens of flavors), salsa, or peanut butter.

At the end of the day, talk to your child about what he/she thought about the veggie snack and ask for suggestions on what kind of veggies he/she might be willing to try. Helping your child make good food choices now means he/she will be more likely to make good food choices later.