



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 29, 2007

Dear Kaiser Families,

We've all heard about the power of reading and the power of writing so often that the message has become cliché. Sometimes non-educators question me about the amount of time dedicated to developing our students as readers and writers. And we educators often forget that we have been given the opportunity, through reflection and our own specialized education, to come to see and believe in the deep importance of reading and writing for human fulfillment.

The teachers here recently completed a round of testing to assess whether children are in their reading and writing skills for this year. This information was too late to be included in the conferences that we had last week so I will be asking my teachers to send home a short report with their next newsletter. We do these kinds of assessments about every six weeks to monitor the progress of every student to help them to become fluent writers and competent, confident readers. That's how important it is!

On Tuesday of this past week I received my first piece of hate mail. It was delivered to the school with a Flint, Michigan postmark. It was directed at gay people, and since I'm the only gay man on staff now I assumed it was directed at me. Later in the day a principal from another Oakland school, a straight woman, called me to tell me that she also received the same piece of mail. Not only was it disgusting and inaccurate, but it was deeply troublesome for both of us--to me for who I am, and to her for her public stance on equal rights for all people. Even though it was a negative example, this was an exemplary reminder of the power of writing.

I have included in this week's newsletter an article from writing coaches, giving tips for how to help your child become a better writer. Even though the subjects of this article were older students, the ideas are easily transferable to the elementary arena. When we reflect on our experience of living in America, it is easy to see that in order to get something done it often takes well-written communication. And when we think about the images we have people who read, scanning the newspaper or textbooks for information, or relaxing with the book, we see people who are reading to expand their knowledge base or to escape and relax. These are obviously things we want our children to be able to do. As a former kindergarten teacher, I remember the thrills children had as they learned to write letters, words, and sentences. Each year I would get teary-eyed when students would learn to read letters, then words, and then sentences and with each step would grow more confident and proud of their efforts. I had the luxury of being there at the beginning.

I would encourage you to indulge in that luxury also. It may not seem easy at first, but take the time to do some writing and some reading with your child each week beyond what the teacher requests. Help your child write a thank you note, or an invitation to a party. Help your child read street signs, or an Internet page about their favorite animal. Help your child to move beyond seeing reading and writing as mere skill development, to using these skills as windows to the world. Our PTA is sponsoring an upcoming Family Reading Night on November 7, at 7 p.m. Look for the announcement elsewhere in this newsletter. Come join us!

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Getting In The Know

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It's not only the skills of reading and writing that we need to pass on to our children, but they need the joy and passion also. Our children need to experience the empowerment that comes from writing a note and getting a response, the thrill from filling out a postcard and getting something in the mail a few weeks later, the deep satisfaction of researching a topic of their choice and writing a paper that reflects their new-found knowledge. Our children deserve to be aware of their learning as they spend time reading signs, newspapers, and texts. They should be given the opportunity to delight in magazines and novels of their choice. And they should become such confident readers that they never hesitate to fill their own hearts and minds with information and entertainment from the printed page.

By the way, if you can read this newsletter thank a teacher!

Mel Stenger, Principal

*AFRICAN DANCE RESUMES
this coming Friday, November 2.*

Distaff Singer's Benefit Concert

Our own Valerie Rogers (PTA treasurer) will be singing with the Distaff Singers at their 70th Annual Benefit Concert. The concert will be Saturday, November 3, at 4 p.m. at Skyline High School. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for students and seniors. Good luck, Valerie!

How to be in the *Pink Panther*

To include your story or information in your school newsletter: forward your news, questions, or article to both of the editors by **5 p.m. on Sundays** via email:

carriemail2001@yahoo.com – Carrie Shepherd
jolie@earthlink.net – Jolie McRae

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Oct. 31	Halloween Parade, 1pm
Nov. 2	Gardening Group, 3pm
Nov. 5	Sally Foster delivery
Nov. 7	PTA general meeting: Family Reading Night
Nov. 10	Kaiser Auction: "A Night in New Orleans"
Nov. 12	Veteran's Day—No School
Nov. 15	SSC Meeting
Nov. 19-23	Thanksgiving Recess— No School
Nov. 28	PTA Board Meeting
Nov. 30	Report card period ends

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/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/)**

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors:

PTA President:	Janice Murphy
VPs Communication:	Kim Carl Kiki Bradley

A Night in New Orleans

Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School PTA's 33rd Annual Auction Fundraiser



Saturday, November 10, 2007 - 5:30 to 9:30 P.M.

Auction Fundraiser Update:

~ This week you will be able to SEE the auction catalog and take a peek at the hundreds of items we'll have for you to bid on this year. We have items starting at only \$10 in value so, never fear, we've got something for EVERYONE to bid on! And, just think, this is a perfect opportunity to get a jump-start on your holiday shopping. Be sure to stop by near the office to peruse the catalog - it should be out there by Tuesday!

~ Thanks to all who donated wine for the Instant Wine Cellar! Please keep those bottles coming to make this a truly spectacular live auction item!

~ Thank you, also, to everyone for getting your donations in as asked! The generosity of this community is astonishing! There's only a little time left - **so please, if you're going to donate something, get it to Alison May or Robin Sasada no later than November 6th.** We will not accept items donated after November 6th. (Please complete a donation form, available from Robin, upon dropping off donation.) Contact Alison: alisonemay@comcast.net or 530-6264.

~ Ticket orders POURED in last week! Keep those coming as well. Tickets will be \$30 at the door, so take advantage of the early bird discount. Order forms can be found outside of the office & can be dropped off, once completed, to a drop-box on Robin's desk.

~ Come to the auction just to eat great food & mingle with Kaiser friends. There is no pressure to buy but you may just get caught up in the excitement & go home with a couple of fabulous things!

**Attention:
Auction Committee Seeking Three Quilt
Racks!**

They will be used to display our fabulous handmade quilts at the auction this year. One day only & we promise to return them exactly as we got them. Do you have a quilt rack we can borrow? Call or email Alison 530-6264 or alisonemay@comcast.net.

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TRICK OR TREAT FOR UNICEF!

Halloween is coming up, as if you didn't know! This year two of our teachers, Trish Gorham and Janan Apaydin, will be encouraging children to trick or treat for UNICEF. We will give them information and trick-or-treat boxes at school, and we need your help and support in encouraging them to do this fine charitable work.



Mark your calendars!

3Monday, November 12 we will celebrate Veterans' Day and school will be closed.

3Thanksgiving vacation is the entire week of November 19.

Are you on the Kaiser Elementary PTA members list?

We've attached the list to recognize everyone who has become a member, and to give members the chance to check the accuracy of our records. Please look for your name, and if you don't find it consider joining our PTA.

Family Reading Night!

Join us Wednesday, November 7, as we come together for PTA sponsored Family Reading Night. We will wear our pajamas, share hot chocolate, and enjoy stories and books from surprise visitors. The fun starts at 7 p.m. in the multipurpose room and the evening will end at about 8:30.

If you plan to come please RSVP to the office, if you so that we know how much hot chocolate to make!



Last week to join the PTA to be included in contest for class bowling party

Have you had a chance to turn in your PTA membership yet? Thank you to the many families that joined already. Also, thank you to the many people who joined and who also donated money to the pledge drive. We have 203 members. Our goal is to get 100% percent membership. As you can see from the percentages below, some classes are ahead of others. However, any class still has the potential to win the bowling party as whichever class gets to 100% first will win. While you can join the PTA at any time during the year, **the deadline for the class contest for the bowling party is Nov. 2.** So get your membership in as soon as possible. Remember, it's only \$10 per adult to join. The PTA supports many programs at Kaiser that help to make it such a great school. To join, fill out a membership form (included in your back to school packet or available on the table outside the office) and turn it in with the membership fee to your child's teacher or put it in the locked box on the table outside the office. Please join today! If you have any questions about membership, contact Julie Mills at 531-8699 or julieandlarry@sbcglobal.net. Here's how the classes are doing as of 10/26/07:

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>% of families who have joined PTA</u>		
Apaydin	40%	McGhee	64%
Bailey	65%	Neat	46%
Estrada	58%	Pessin	90%
Gorham	45%	Ross	32%
Haruyama	75%	Yang	27%
Hunter	57%		

Flash! Volunteers Surround Kaiser Elementary Gardens & Grounds!

It was a sad Saturday around Kaiser School if you happen to be an invasive species, such as non-native grasses or scotch broom. A good 300 volunteers from UC Berkeley, Kaiser Elementary, Caltrans, Oakland Fire Department, EBMUD, School Department.... Who did I miss?... Lots of people, all of whom worked around and about our school yard.



Notice the freshly weeded gardens and tended pathways, freshly benched, as you drive around the circle this week. And new plants are going in everywhere, thanks to Margie Potts! Glance up to the hills behind the school and you won't see half the brush fire fuel that was there last week (Gordon Piper's brainchild). Take a stroll past our verdant fields of raised planters and you'll see our developing amphitheater at the back of our school yard.

Special thanks to Janan Apaydin, our lead lioness when it comes to guiding the gardens, and Kiki Bradley, who, with Anya Axelrod and family, planted a lemon tree in our new green planters. Not to mention our energetic volunteers from the Berkeley Project who contributed brains and brawn to make it all happen.

Still, several plants are left to be planted, trees to be trimmed and benches to be topped. Hope you'll join us after school next Friday, our regular monthly Kaiser Gardening Day (first Friday of every month). And take a moment sometime to stroll the pathways and relax in the garden. See you there.

The Real Crisis of Katrina

During the upcoming Kaiser Elementary School Auction there will be a small tribute to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. One auction item, a large earthquake kit has been donated to send money to children who have survived the hurricane and are still very much in need of our support. This is done in the spirit of community reaching beyond the geographic boundaries of Oakland. The specific charity will be chosen by the donors of the earthquake kit who will be working other Kaiser families from the New Orleans area and Principal Stenger to find a suitable child centered cause.

Hurricane Katrina was the most expensive and one the deadliest hurricanes in the history of the United States. Devastation occurred along much of the north-central Gulf Coast. The most profound loss of life and property damage occurred in New Orleans, Louisiana, which flooded as 50 levees in the levee system catastrophically failed. The hurricane also caused severe devastation across the entire Mississippi coast and into Alabama. These areas are many years if not decades from recovery. At least **1,836** people lost their lives in Hurricane Katrina. This thought to be an underestimate because many people, including children and seniors went missing without anyone knowing they were lost. These people could not be included in the count. Due to many factors including racism and the low socio-economic status of the victims the support has remained optimal.

The following is an excerpt from an article by **Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D. Ph.D.** which underscores the need for support for children in the aftermath of Katrina.

The real crisis of Katrina is here in its aftermath. "It is more relentless and more powerful than the flood waters in New Orleans; more destructive than the 150 mile an hour winds of Katrina. It will destroy a part of our country that is far more valuable than all of the buildings, pipelines, casinos, bridges and roads in the entire Gulf coast. Over our lifetime, this crisis will cost our society billions upon billions of dollars. And the echoes of the crisis will haunt the next generation.

"The crisis is foreseeable." It is happening now. "And much of the destructive impact is preventable." Yet our society may not have the wisdom to see that the real crisis of Katrina is the hundreds of thousands of ravaged, displaced and traumatized children. And our society may not have the will to prevent this crisis. We understand broken buildings; we do not understand broken children....

We will spend billions of dollars rebuilding the roads, bridges, buildings, pipelines, levees, oil rigs and houses. Will we spend billions healing these children?...

The future of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast does not depend solely on structures. Our future depends on children, some of whom 2 years plus later are adolescents. If we do not provide the safe, nurturing, predictable and enriched experiences those children need and we do not arm our caregivers... and educators with the tools they need. Otherwise there will be new buildings filled with struggling children growing into adulthood expressing only a fraction of their true potential. .. We know that traumatic experiences can result in a host of chronic sometimes lifelong problems.

In short we need to give children the attention and resources that we give our roads, pipelined, bridges and infrastructure. The health and productivity are renewed each generation through its children. The society that understands and acts on this will succeed; the society that does not is doomed to fail. Let us not fail these children. Let us not fail ourselves."

Please consider purchasing the earthquake kit to help support our community in New Orleans. You can both give back and prepare to protect your own family

Deborah J. Williams, RN BSN PHN
Mother of 4th grader Taki H. Taki

For the complete text quoted above go to chss.com/guest_dispatches/katrina-tragedy.html - 16
And to find more information about Dr. Perry's work @ www.ChildTrauma.org