



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 30, 2008

Dear Kaiser Families,

On Monday, the staff was at school reviewing our work so far this year, reviewing the role of the enrichment program instructors, and discussing the most recent performance data of the children. I also asked the teachers to evaluate my performance. Our regular school schedule doesn't afford us a lot of reflection time, and I know this type of day is inconvenient for parents, so I want to let you know we appreciate the time to improve our work.

Last week was emotionally difficult for many families as teachers met with them to talk about the possible need for their child to spend more time in a particular grade level. This is a touchy subject for many people as there are so many negative feelings around it. We use words like *fail*, *flunk*, *held back*, or *retained* to refer to the kids who need more time. Some children just need more time for their own development before they move on to the next phase of their education. It is not a fault of the child if he/she needs more time. In fact, it is an institutional problem that we have children move lockstep through the curriculum. We need to change our school culture to make it okay for some children to take seven years to go through the six years of elementary curriculum without the students and their families (and teachers) feeling shame and guilt. If your child's teacher has broached the topic with you, rest assured that it was not an easy decision, nor a flippant one. We are keenly aware of all the studies and possible outcomes. We have not brought it up because we don't like your child, or think they're stupid. We ask your help in planning the best course of action for your child's education.

We typically don't recommend more time in upper grades because kids are more socially aware and tend to see that as a punishment. So the problem becomes, how can we support students and parents to help children catch up? I have encouraged my upper grade teachers to meet with parents of low-performing students to develop intervention plans, and I will be writing you letters to describe some steps to take. Unlike many Oakland schools, we do not have an after-school academic program (lack of funding), so we will need your help!

The food was delicious, the company was delightful, and the entertainment was fantastic! What am I talking about? Why, the Asian New Year potluck and celebration! We had a large group here Friday evening and we ate and talked and laughed and enjoyed an evening with our kids. Thanks to Karen who organized the children into a dragon dance on bubble wrap! I want to thank all the parents who organized the party, put up the decorations, arranged the tables and food, and did the clean up. So many people pitched in to help! Happy New Year to everyone! Gung Hay Fat Choy!

Mel Stenger, Principal

Getting In The Know

PTA Association Meeting

Wednesday, February 6

7 p.m.

“How to Become Financially Fit”

It's hard to believe, but now is the time to start saving for college. Please join us on Wednesday, February 6th, to hear Jeremy Niederstadt discuss the best ways to save for your child's educational needs as well as how to obtain “financial fitness”—how to have a healthy financial life. Jeremy is a Senior Financial Advisor with Merrill Lynch in Oakland, where he specializes in wealth management, estate planning, and money management.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Fest Results!

The following students/class were chosen to represent Kaiser Elementary at the Oratorical Fest:

Ms. Gorham's 2nd grade class
Nyela Cade/Alexis Marshall – 4th grade

Thanks, also, to the teachers and parents who worked with the classes and/or individuals to help with the presentations! In truth, everyone who participated was a winner.

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 e-mail:

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

Please put “Pink Panther” in the subject of your email to ensure that it is not deleted accidentally!

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Jan. 30	PTA board meeting
Feb. 6	PTA assoc. meeting: “How to become financially fit”
Feb. 18	Presidents Day No school
Feb. 19	SSC meeting
Feb. 22	African-American Heritage Potluck
Feb. 27	PTA board meeting
March 5	General PTA 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/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/)**

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

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