



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

25 South Hill Court, Oakland, California 94618 (510) 549-4900

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 31, 2009

Dear Kaiser Families,

Monday we celebrated Cesar Chavez Day. I wanted to know a little more about the man, specifically what went on in his childhood that led him to become such a powerful figure in the American Labor movement, focusing on farm workers.

From Wikipedia we learn that **César Estrada Chávez (1927-1993)** was a [Mexican American](#) farm worker, [labor leader](#), and [civil rights activist](#) who, with [Dolores Huerta](#), co-founded the [National Farm Workers Association](#), which later became the [United Farm Workers](#). Supporters say his work led to numerous improvements for union laborers. His birthday has become [a holiday in eight U.S. states](#). Many parks, cultural centers, libraries, schools, and streets have been named in his honor in cities across the United States. Later in life, education became César's focus. The walls of his UFW office in [Keene, California](#) were lined with hundreds of books ranging in subject from philosophy, economics, cooperatives, and unions, to biographies of [Gandhi](#) and the [Kennedys](#). He was a [vegan](#). There is a portrait of him in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Okay, but what led him to take on such big issues? What went on in his life to speak so strongly to his soul?

A little more research led me to this information from LasCuluras.com. "He learned about justice or rather injustice early in his life. Cesar grew up in Arizona; the small adobe home, where Cesar was born was swindled from them by dishonest Anglos. Cesar's father agreed to clear eighty acres of land and in exchange he would receive the deed to forty acres of land that adjoined the home. The agreement was broken and the land sold to a man named Justus Jackson. Cesar's dad went to a lawyer who advised him to borrow money and buy the land. Later when Cesar's father could not pay the interest on the loan the lawyer bought back the land and sold it to the original owner. Cesar learned a lesson about injustice that he would never forget.

He did not like school as a child, probably because he spoke only Spanish at home. The teachers were mostly Anglo and only spoke English. Spanish was forbidden in school. He remembers being punished with a ruler to his knuckles for violating the rule. He also remembers that some schools were segregated and he felt that in the integrated schools he was like a monkey in a cage. He remembers having to listen to a lot of racist remarks. He remembers seeing signs that read whites only. He and his brother, Richard, attended thirty-seven schools. He felt that education had nothing to do with his farm worker/migrant way of life. In 1942, he graduated from the eighth grade. Because his father, Librado, had been in an accident and because he did not want his mother, Juana, to work in the fields, he could not go to high school, and instead became a migrant farm worker. *(Another source said simply that he quit school to go work in the fields. It's important to remember that during the Depression many kids left school to go to work, and it wasn't really a choice.)*

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Getting In The Know

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While his childhood school education was not the best, later in life education was his passion. The walls of his office in La Paz (United Farm Worker Headquarters) are lined with hundreds of books ranging from philosophy, economics, cooperatives, and unions, to biographies on Gandhi and the Kennedys. He believed that, "The end of all education should surely be service to others," a belief that he practiced until his untimely death.

Chavez survived hardships and had to go to work as a farm worker. We're left wondering if the behaviour and attitudes he encountered in school had anything to do with his leaving school. How amazing that these negative experiences did not leave him bitter, but transformed him into a champion of justice and a lover of deep education! As a parent I want to protect my sons from ugly experiences, but learning about Cesar Chavez's early life make me wonder if instead I should be helping them reflect on and learn from these unavoidable events, so they come out wiser and stronger.

Mel Stenger, Principal

We try to be good neighbors! We need a parent to help us with traffic cones. The sign on South Hill Court restricts parking only between the hours of 8-9:00 a.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m. The neighborhood association has asked that we remove the cones between 9:00 and 2:30. Can you help? Please see Mira in the office.

**The Pink Panther is also available at
www.KaiserElementary.org.**

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
April 1	PTA Association Meeting
April 1	Kaiser ALIVE kickoff and Math & Science Night
April 3	Walk-A-Thon Drawings due
April 6-10	Spring Break – no classes
April 15	The Astro Wizard (assembly): 10 a.m. for grades K-2; 11 a.m. for grades 3-5

How to Reach Kaiser School

Our phone number is (510) 549-4900 (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/

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:

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

PTA President: Janice Murphy

Pink Panther Staff

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd

Copy editor: Wendy Harcarik

Help Spread Teacher Happiness with Bagel Wednesdays

Maureen Caldwell-Meurer, a parent of a third-grader in Mr. Ross' class, has generously begun bringing bagels on Wednesday mornings for the teachers to enjoy. The bagels are donated, but she'd like to get cream cheese and some fruit or juice to accompany them. This is where you come in...

Maureen is asking for a \$1 donation from each family to help her pay for the cream cheese, fruit, juice and whatnot for the rest of the school year (Wednesdays only.) She'd also love some volunteers to offer to pick up the bagels & extras each week.

You can drop the \$1 in an envelope marked BAGELS in the PTA drawer in the office. If you'd like to do a bagel run one week, please let Maureen know by emailing her: mcmeurer@pacbell.net.

Thanks for your time & for considering these requests.

There will be a District 1 Town Hall Meeting to explain the budget process for schools. Come and get the basics on how California funds schools and how and why schools get different amounts of funding. See the attached flyer for details.

Our Garden Coordinator, Marjie Potts, has been working with students to enhance their learning through gardening. It has helped to have one coordinator to put together information and efforts from many sources. If you would like to help, please contact her at jmp3951@comcast.net

CSUEB (California State University East Bay) will be hosting a science fair on Saturday, April 25, from 11:00-4:00. For more information please visit www.sci.csueastbay.edu/festival (Our school science fair will be in mid-May.)

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Walk-A-Thon T-Shirt Design Guidelines

Theme for This Year: Yes We Can!

- Incorporate theme for the Walk-A-Thon in your drawing
- Use only a single color for drawing (black or blue pen or pencil)
- Use an 8 ½ x 11-inch piece of paper (printer paper)
- Submit drawings to office by April 3
- Winning drawing will be posted for everyone to see and will be used on the Walk-A-Thon shirts!!
- Student with the picture used for the Walk-A-Thon will receive a prize!

