



# Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

## School and Community Newsletter November 15th

### Note from Principal Katie McLane

Dear Families,

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, we are taking time this week to celebrate our family's traditions and cultural values.

My sisters and I are with our 91 yr-old mother as she is transitioning from this life to another. So often it takes impending death to reflect on the contributions of one's life to the many persons who have been touched and positively influenced. Rather than waiting until the end of a life to tell our loved ones how much they mean to us, it is important to affirm each person's value on a daily basis.

Your children help us feel challenged and fulfilled in our roles as educators, and bring great joy to our lives. We also honor our amazing families-all of you-for your support and commitment to your children. We want all of our children to be proud of their families and to recognize that no matter what configuration their family takes, that "family" is the group of caring adults in their lives. The vital thing is that we impart to our children the values of love, compassion and acceptance of difference.

I am continually grateful for our Kaiser community and how it embraces all of our family structures. All children deserve to know that the loving adults in their lives are valued by all of us.

There is probably no other school with as strong a commitment to diversity as Kaiser, and each of you-students and adults alike-are part of this accepting community. We truly have a great deal to be thankful for.

**Katie**

# Getting In The Know

## **Many hands working together can accomplish great things!!**

Our records indicate that last week's Auction/Dance **"An Evening in Tuscany"** exceeded our goal and raised over \$25,000 - Wow!



Thanks goes out to a magnificent auction committee for tremendous dedication, commitment, and time. Not only working together within the school, but connecting with volunteers, alumni and other organizations in the community made the evening possible.



### **Your Sally Foster Orders – On the Way!**

The Sally Foster fundraiser has ended; the last order forms were taken October 19. Thank you for all your support in making this a successful fundraiser. The orders will be ready to **pick up the week of Nov. 29th.**

### **How to Reach Kaiser**

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

Principal Katie McLane's email address is [Catherine.McLane@ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:Catherine.McLane@ousd.k12.ca.us)

### **How to use the Pink Panther**

**To include your story or information in your school newsletter:** check with Katie McLane, then forward to both editors by 5:00 p.m. on Sundays, at [cara\\_eva@hotmail.com](mailto:cara_eva@hotmail.com) and [kbradley@ix.netcom.com](mailto:kbradley@ix.netcom.com)

## **KAISER CALENDAR**

DATE / DAY	EVENT
November 16 Wednesday	Harvest Festival
November 21-25 Monday – Friday	Thanksgiving Holidays – No School
December 2 Friday	Minimum Day

### **The Girl Scouts and One Warm Coat**

Junior Girl Scout Troop #1877 is collecting coats again in our annual coat drive, One Warm Coat. Please donate your gently worn and clean coats and sweaters (that you no longer want) by placing them in the wardrobe box in the front hallway at school.

**In early December**, the Junior Girl Scouts in Troop #1877 will take your donated coats and give them to the East Oakland Recovery Center for individuals and families in need. The Center has benefited from these donations for the past three years and are very appreciative of the efforts of the Kaiser Community and their Girl Scouts.

If you have any questions about this coat drive, please contact Lesley Clark at [lesleyrc@aol.com](mailto:lesleyrc@aol.com)

Thanks for your generosity.

### **How to use the Kaiser School Website**

For our public information, be sure to visit and browse [www.kaiserelementaryschool.com](http://www.kaiserelementaryschool.com) and to participate in the school community group go to, [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool\\_group/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/) and join!!

# Kaiser School Leadership



## School Site Council Will Elect Alternate Position

The next meeting of the SSC will be on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, when we will hold the election for the alternate position and review the preliminary documents for the California Distinguished Elementary School nomination.

*Linda Pulido Esquivel* has offered to be the alternate member of the School Site Council for the 2005-2006 school year.

Renato Almanzor and Karl Debro's terms finish up at the end of the year.

Other parents serving on the SSC are Yvonne White and Valorie Hutson

## PTA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

aims to Climb to the top of the Mountain!

The class that signs up the highest percentage of PTA members gets a climbing trip to Ironworks climbing gym! So, strap on that harness and get climbing. Along with becoming a member you will also receive a membership card and a school directory.

Only parents and faculty can help the kids do this.

Single parent family \$ 7.00 Two parent family \$ 14.00

**Forms are available in the office.**

Have your check ready made out to Kaiser PTA. Include your child's name and teacher's name.

- Kelly & Cindy

## STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS-

Our third, fourth and fifth graders who participated in the voting had a difficult time choosing from among a terrific group of candidates. Elected:

**President:** Kindness Nwakudu

**Vice President.** Alexis Carney and Alyssa Kunesh

**Secretary Student Council:** Marina Donaldson.

**Treasurer** is Nikki Tauch

Candidate speeches previewed more of our budding future leadership as well amongst (alphabetically):

Christina Bates, Alistair Eeckman, Aaron Elliot, Slater Hitz, Maiyah Phelps, Naomi Kushins, Sophia Lee, Maya Lopez, Maureen Murphy, Ella Pearson, Olivia Ports, David Suruki and Trevor Wilson.

## - Who are the PTA officers? -

Board Presidents: Lisa Downes, Lesley Clark  
Board Vice-President: Liz Hall

Membership: Kelly Bartlett and Cyndy Hobbs  
Programs: Andrea Nobles and Katy DeVecchi

Room Parent: Katherine Fratti  
Site Safety/Environment: Janice Murphy  
After-School Activity: Katy DeVecchi

Communications: Kiki Bradley, Kim Carl  
Secretary: Renette Warner

Fall Auction: Andrea Nobles  
Walk-A-Thon: Rosalind Nalls  
Potlucks: Andrea Nobles

Fundraising: Cynthia Thompson  
Treasurer: Gail Elliot  
Auditor: Tracy Lovely  
Financial Secretary: Shawn Walker-Smith

# Keeping it Real...

## The History of Celebrating the Harvest

Let's eat! If ever there was a non-war idea good for unifying different people, that's GOTTA be the one. Is there anybody from anywhere who doesn't easily feel the image of "coming to the table" in a really deep vibe?

Just look at who's been "down with dat" – the **Greeks**, looking to feel the love from their corn goddess Demeter, had her over every year to some pretty cushy digs for a three-day festival called Thesmophoria. (This really sets the theme of *showing generosity to cultivate prosperity*.)

The **Romans**, like the Greeks, had a big time feel good thing about corn. But check this out – guys, get used to saying "goddess" and "we are not worthy". Gals, tell the guys to get used to saying "goddess" and "we are not worthy". Doing as the Romans do meant showtime for Ceres the goddess of corn -- including music, parades, games, sports, eating, parades, music, eating, sports, eating, music, eating, and eating – in a festival called Cerelia. Let the kids know that the menu prominently featured CERE-AL.

The **Egyptians** were a lot like the Romans, but even more theatrical, plus they kinda split from the program. They had a god (not a goddess?) of vegetation and fertility named Min, although he was married to Quetesh the goddess of *love* and fertility. What's up with that? The story: Min was originally all about animal fertility. But he somehow became a "vegetarian" associated with lettuce. Despite that, the Egyptian kings always encouraged Min at the festival of the staircase by handing over – uhhh – corn. But they had a reason. They thought that a spirit (not Min) lived within their corn crops and would get angry if the corn was harvested. So, at harvest, the Egyptians would pretend, *hugely*, to be saddened by it all. Another twist: this was happening not in the fall but in the springtime, which is when Egyptian harvest takes place. Hmm...it looks like the massive party they threw to ensure Min's blessing might have been the first "mardi gras"...

The **Chinese**, like since forever, tuned in officially on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month in the Chung Ch'ui festival, which is a big birthday party for the moon. This one is a bit more complicated. You can bet that in just about everyone's motherland the moon is (say it with me now) a goddess– and China is no exception, where she is Chang-O. But when the Chinese saved themselves from being conquered and starved by invaders, they did it by making and sharing amongst themselves Moon Cakes that contained the secret message of the time for attacking and repelling the invaders – and the plan became a great success. The moon cakes all had a rabbit on them, because that's what the Chinese saw on the face of the moon. So, aside from making rabbits into very lucky charms, Chung Ch'ui kind of celebrates the ultimate fortune cookie...

*Meanwhile, way low in the sky just last night, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month, maybe you caught it too: the moon was phat spooky big. Even so, I didn't see any rabbits; and too late for broomsticks; but I didn't see any reindeer either – and more on that in a second.*

The **Hebrews** for over 3000 years have celebrated not just gathering at the table of giving but whole Gathering Huts called Succots – portable shelter that protected and bonded the Israelites as Moses led them across the desert for 40 years. The 8-day celebration, called Sukkoth, begins with evening meals the first two days in huts under the sky, usually intended to include corn. Interestingly, maybe coincidentally, the word "succor" means *to give assistance to someone in time of want, difficulty, or distress*. Any etymologists out there?

Did we mention that corn has something to do with all this? Having a lot of corn was a big sign for the Pilgrims that they were going to make it after their brutal first year in **America** in 1621. The Pilgrims' governor William Bradford was hip enough to realize that survival through the harvest was something everybody could understand. It never would have happened without the help of the neighboring native American Wampanoags, and by inviting them to share in the fortunate harvest Bradford became the father of American Thanksgiving. Still, it was almost 200 years before it became an official holiday – in New York State in 1817, but then not nationally until 1863 through none other than Abraham Lincoln! *Who better to represent giving thanks for the contribution of different peoples to the common cause...* From the family level to the community level to the society level, this power of togetherness has really become the key theme of Thanksgiving. What's also cool: it's always been about *sharing things you actually made*.

And now, back to those reindeer: have you noticed that, for many "reasons", the "Christmas season" now seems to start the day after Halloween? Sorry, but what's up with that! Pass me the corn, please. The reindeer can wait their turn.

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# For your input...

## ***Draft Copy for your input !***

### SYNOPSIS OF HENRY J. KAISER, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. School strives to provide a complete academic program in a stimulating and creative learning environment where all can feel respected, valued and safe. We seek to impart the necessary skills for student excellence and to produce well-rounded, reflective, socially-aware individuals. We value those qualities that cultures and races share, as well as those that make them unique.

Our school is an open enrollment school enriched with visual and performing arts. We attract students from all over Oakland. We are unique in the district in the way we bring together children and families from so many diverse backgrounds. We celebrate children from a broad range of economic classes, cultural and family backgrounds. What some see as special challenges we view as opportunities to build community. Our children learn by seeing our efforts to do this.

Our parents understand that their efforts to be inclusive and connected with each other provide youngsters with a valuable example. Parents volunteer regularly in the classrooms, chaperone on field trips, support classroom cultural events and “healthy snack” sales, help in the office and maintain a high visibility throughout the school. Their presence allows them to provide emotional and academic support for students and staff alike.

Our school size allows all staff to know all students. The responsibility for our 241 students is truly shared by all the faculty, staff and parent community. Our facilities are very crowded, but well maintained. There is rarely a moment when our eight classrooms, three portables, converted storage room, and a half-sized computer lab are unoccupied. The multi-purpose room is used continuously throughout the day for enrichment classes and Adventure Time (a private childcare company). Our lower yard has classroom garden beds and the upper yard is a play field. Our physical structure ensures that there is no anonymity at our school. We believe that being a known member of a community of learners is vital for emotional security and academic success.

At Kaiser, we believe that learning is developmental and children need a sustained, support system of parents, teachers and administration at critical junctures in their emotional, intellectual and physical development. We pride ourselves in keeping open lines of communication among these partners.

Our Arts and Humanities focus emphasizes branches of learning that include literature, history, mathematics, dance, music and fine arts as well as integration of these disciplines. In addition to Open Court (literacy) and Harcourt Brace (math), the children engage in thematic projects in the humanities that are open-ended and provide opportunities for “values” education. The key dynamics in a Kaiser education include hands-on involvement in academic and social problem-solving, critical and creative thinking. The diverse makeup of Kaiser promotes cross-cultural familiarity and friendships, as well as positive social attitudes. In the end, the environment at Kaiser helps solidify these attitudes and contributes to a community of well-adjusted citizens who are able to interact positively and productively with people of all backgrounds.

# For your input...

## *Draft copy- for your input!*

### HENRY J. KAISER, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Vision and Values

#### Vision

Kaiser School provides an arts-enriched academic program where all students, families and staff feel respected, valued and safe. Our students achieve academic excellence and become well-rounded, reflective, socially-aware individuals.

#### Values

- **The best environment** for children is one which is emotionally warm, physically accessible, and respectful of the broader natural world.
- We celebrate children from all of Oakland's neighborhoods, socio-economic levels, diverse family structures and cultural backgrounds.
- Affirming diversity leads to academic excellence for all.
  
- As a **public school of choice** we thrive on a high level of parent commitment.
- Our family spirit encourages all adults to actively care for all children.
- Staff and families work closely to provide an exciting learning environment.
  
- **A complete education** goes beyond minimum core curriculum to include developing the whole child with experiences in social growth, the arts and self awareness.
- An infusion of the visual and performing arts in the core curriculum helps students to reach academic success and to become caring and productive human beings.
  
- **Good teaching** builds on children's life experiences, and then extends them into realms of new wonder.
- Our staff of life-long learners engages in inquiry and dialogue to continually improve instruction.