



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

School & Community Newsletter February 7, 2006

Message from Principal Katie McLane

Dear Families,

This week we lost an incredible human being- Coretta Scott King. She, along with her husband, stood for racial peace and nonviolence and she became an international symbol of the civil rights revolution, women's rights, anti-apartheid and later, gay and lesbian rights. I was in my fifth year of teaching when Dr. King was assassinated, and I clearly remember the strength of her character as she stood with her four young children and quoted her husband as saying, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." She gave many women the courage to fight for equality in whatever area- racial, religious, and gender. She and Rosa Parks were acknowledged, each in her own way, as the first ladies of the Civil Rights Movement.

I remember her speaking in the late 1960's about the need for women to unite and fight the three great evils of our time- racism, poverty and war. Sadly, those same evils still exist today. What I also remember about Mrs. King was her willingness to embrace all people, and on the 30th anniversary of her husband's assassination, she called on the civil rights community to join in the struggle against homophobia and anti-gay bias. "Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood. The civil rights movement thrives on unity and inclusion, not division and exclusion. My husband's struggle parallels that of the gay rights movement." That speech resonated with many of us in the schools who continue to have the responsibility for maintaining learning environments where every child, staff member and family member feels included and valued.

At the time that the civil rights movement was beginning in the South, the unfairness of unequal education was still prevalent. The basal readers were The Little White House and Fun with Dick and Jane and there were no persons of color characterized in the beginning reading textbooks. In my teacher education classes, a friend of mine burst into tears when she saw a story that included an African American family. "After all these years, finally the children will see someone who looks like them in a textbook!" It was a big breakthrough. In the fifties, the issues of bi-racial dating were rarely mentioned (and in fact were illegal in parts of our country) and we learned of hypocrisy from songs like "You've Got to Be Taught...to hate and fear" from "South Pacific" and Nat "King" Cole, sang to us about "Two Different Worlds We Live In." Almost forty five years later, Caroline Yee, the principal at Lincoln School, was absolutely thrilled to see and hear her own family's Chinese surname in the Disney film, "The Legend of Mulan."

Change is inevitable. Allowing our children to understand the forces that influence change and helping them to be flexible and tolerant human beings is a gift. Children learn from their peers in the real world arena of the public schools. We are fortunate that our school is a microcosm of our community. Our children are in an environment that reflects the amazing diversity that is in the Bay area. We look forward to having wonderful discussions in our classes about these issues and the importance of having children see themselves and their families portrayed in a supportive and positive way. After all, it's all about love!

Katie

Getting In The Know

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS UPDATE:

For some of our after-school classes the current session runs through the end of the school year. There are, however, a handful of classes that will require re-enrollment in March. They are:

MAD SCIENCE (current session ends March 20th)
KAISER MIRACLE CHORUS (OYC) (current session ends March 7th)
CHESS (current session ends March 15th)
LEGO ENGINEERING (current session ends March 10th)
AFRICAN DANCE (current session ends March 10th)

Some partial scholarships will be available for some of these programs. If you would like to request financial assistance for your child, please ask in the office for a scholarship application. Completed applications should be turned in to Robin in the office. **DEADLINE FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE MARCH 3rd.** Late application submissions will not be considered.

Keep checking your Pink Panther for more details. A packet with flyers and registration information will go out later this month. Questions? Call Katy DeVecchi at 336-9679, or even better, email me at katyhunterd@sbcglobal.net.

STRONG POSSIBILITY OF ADVENTURE-TIME PRESCHOOL FOR 4YR. OLDS AT KAISER NEXT YEAR!

We are interested in knowing how many of our families (or your friends) would be interested in a preschool program that serves ten four-year old children. Adventure Time will still be offering before and after school day care, but because all of Oakland will be having full day kindergarten, we will have room in the auditorium to provide a supportive, caring environment for siblings and their friends.

Please contact Susanne Plunkett at 845-3371 for further information.

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 and kbradley@ix.netcom.com

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
February 6 Monday	That's A Family showing 6:00 pm
February 9 Wednesday	PTA Board meeting 7:00 -9:00 pm Steve Neat
February 15 Wednesday	School Site Council
February 20 Monday	President's Day Holiday- School closed
February 24 Friday	Black History Celebration and Oratorical Fest

HAVE A HEART ASSEMBLY ON FEB. 14TH

To honor young Vanessa Wittmer who has completed her chemotherapy treatment for childhood lymphoma, we have invited representatives from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to visit Kaiser School and raise awareness of the need to bring "Pennies for Patients" to help the young children who have been diagnosed with leukemia or lymphoma. The assembly will be on **Tuesday, Feb. 14th from 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** Other children will also be acknowledged for their acts of kindness.

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

How to use the Kaiser School Website

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

Teacher Negotiations Update

Dear Students, Parents, Teachers, and Administrators:

We are now in the final stage of negotiations between State Administrator Randolph Ward and OUSD and Oakland teachers. Ward and his people are using the media and principals around Oakland to spread an untruthful account of all aspects of the situation, including bargaining (examples below). We need you, the parents and teachers, to let District officials and others in power know that YOU know what's really going on. **Please support us by being there for our students at 4:00 p.m. this Wednesday, February 8 at the District office at 1025 2nd Ave. This rally will coincide with a school board meeting.**

This is not just another contract fight. The future of public education is at stake. Will public schools in Oakland be a place where great teachers want to come and stay, or will they be a place where teachers stay for a couple years as paid interns, before leaving because they can't afford to buy a home, raise a family, or even pay their electric bill on an OUSD salary, because every year they take home hundreds of dollars less in pay each month. Fact: under the district's latest contract offer teachers WILL be taking home less per month in June, 2008 than they were in June, 2003. FACT: teacher turnover in Oakland is at 30% per year and rising. This cannot go on if we want what's best for our kids in Oakland. Our children are worth more. Please come out to the school board meeting on Wednesday, February 8 at 4:00 p.m. at 1025 2nd ave.

If we don't stand up and be counted now, things WILL get worse and there WILL be a strike and many teachers, including many at Kaiser, WILL leave Oakland in the next two years. I know this sounds like scare tactics, but it's just the truth. This is the kind of demonstration that, when well-attended, has averted strikes in Hayward, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Don't tell me you have other plans that afternoon. Don't tell me you can't send your regrets to your dentist, or your book club, or your hot date. If you have an engagement that afternoon, then arrive half an hour late. We need you parents and teachers. Even if you anticipate that you or your kids won't be in OUSD much longer, I want you to picture one of the many delightful children you've encountered at Kaiser School and think about the situation in which they may find themselves in three years. Wednesday, February 8 at 4:00 p.m. at 1025 2nd Ave. One hour of your time could make all the difference.

Some examples of the distortions of the facts that are going on:

Example One: The media, Ward, and the District refuse to mention the report of Claude D. Ames, Oakland resident and retired bankruptcy judge. Mr. Ames was the state-appointed neutral member of the fact-finding panel appointed to help the District and the teachers come to a contract agreement. The neutral's report came down firmly on the side of the teachers, and the teachers' bargaining team made an offer on Sat, January 28 along the lines of this report.

The District rejected this offer. A recent "Oakland Tribune" article gave an account of all Ward's excuses for low-balling teachers, and yet did not mention the state neutral's report once. Considering that the report was released only two weeks ago, and considering it's bearing on the dispute, this is a remarkable oversight. It is also noteworthy that the neutral's report found that although OUSD presented a \$2 million deficit for 2004-05 in their fiscal report, they actually finished 2004-05 with a \$22 million surplus. Add to that confirmed and projected state-funded cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) of 3.5% (2004/05), 5.5% (2005/06), and 6.4% (2006/07). AND ADD TO THAT Measure E money. These are significant amounts of money totaling over \$50 million. Yet the media does not EVER mention them, instead buying the District's line that a fair contract for teachers would be "fiscally irresponsible."

Example Two: the media, Ward, and the District are giving the impression that the District is offering a raise. They are not. The contract language of their offer specifically states (and I would be happy to share the hard copy of this offer with anyone who is interested) that Oakland teachers would get a 4% restoration by June, 2007, but that it would be contingent on a source of state funding related to staff development "buy-back" days. This is not a real raise. It is not on the official pay scale. It does not count towards teachers' retirement. It does not hold the District accountable for continuing to fund the 4% beyond June, 2008.

Example Three: the media, Ward, and the District are giving the impression that the District is offering free health care. The contract language of the District's offer specifically states that teachers will be responsible for ALL increases in monthly health care premiums not covered by a fund the District wants to set up using Measure E money. There is NO WAY this fund can keep up with rising health care costs beyond June, 2007. As with the pay restoration, the District will not be held accountable, beyond June, 2007, for making sure Oakland teachers can afford health care.

Example Four: The District's contract offer does not provide ANY staffed, covered elementary preparation time for Oakland students, the only way many Oakland students get any specialty music, art, or P.E. instruction. The District's contract offer does NOTHING to protect teachers from punitive involuntary transfers between sites. Yet these are subject only to the briefest of mentions by media reports and are totally passed over in District propaganda.

Please be there this Wednesday, February 8, at 4 p.m. at the school board meeting at 1025 2nd Ave. We need to let these people know that we are not being hoodwinked by their lies.

**Thank you for your time and concern,
Steve Neat**

Learning Families, Family Learning

February at the Lawrence Hall of Science

EXHIBITS

CSI: Crime Scene Insects

Opens February 11

They've wiggled their way into a hit television series—now they're crawling around your local science museum. The science that has thrilled—and chilled—television audiences is now a popular exhibit. Step into the world of forensics; and explore authentic field and lab equipment, model crime scenes, live insects, case studies, and interactive displays. This exhibit is recommended for ages eight and older. Visit lawrencehallofscience.org for up-to-date listings on events and special appearances.

Big Dinos Return

Extended through May 7, 2006

We've added another big dino—APATOSAURUS.

Explore the size and movement of these long-necked, super-size creatures with new dino activities: Weighing a Dinosaur, How Big Is That Bone?, and Apatosaurus—Head to Tail, now through May 7. These giant robotic dinosaurs will challenge your imagination with evidence that adaptations in theropods, the family that includes T. rex, led to birds. [More about Big Dinos Return](#)

Current exhibits include *Idea Lab*, *NanoZone*, and our outdoor science park *Forces That Shape the Bay*. [More Lawrence Hall of Science exhibits](#)

SPECIAL EVENT

CSI: Crime Scene Insects Exhibit Tour with Dr. Lee Goff

Saturday, February 11, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. *CSI: Crime Scene Insects* explores the "biological clock" set in motion when the first insects arrive on the scene of a homicide. Dr. Lee Goff, curator of the exhibit, and consultant to the television program *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, will be at the Lawrence Hall of Science to give public tours of the exhibit.

FLOOR PROGRAMS

Nanotechnology Live

Daily, 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m.

What can Nano do for you? Find out in these short interactive demonstrations that explore this emerging field of study. Facilitators will highlight specific aspects of this super-small realm, giving you a glimpse of exciting and promising future applications. Recommended for ages 10 and up.

February at the Dimond Branch Library

Friday, Feb. 10, 2006 at 3:30; Crafts with Robin Goodfellow - Castles. For ages 6 and older.

Every Tuesday at 7:00PM- Family Storytime
Every Wednesday at 10:30AM - Preschool Storytime

Mary Schrader, Librarian II
Dimond Branch Library
3565 Fruitvale Ave., 510-482-7844

February at the Rockridge Branch Library

Come join us in celebrating African-American History Month, with Kalimba music by Carl Winters, the Kalimba King. The kalimba is an African instrument, played with thumbs, on which Carl Winters performs both African and American music. Free, for all ages. 7:00pm Tuesday, February 28th.

FOR CHILDREN:

Pajama Story Times: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:00pm: 14 February. (No story time on Feb. 28)

The library will be CLOSED on the following holidays: Monday, 2/13/06; Monday, 2/20/06

Erica Siskind, Children's Librarian, Rockridge
5366 College Ave, 510-597-5017
esiskind@oaklandlibrary.org

Parents & Teachers -- We have some wonderful theater classes in acting or stage combat for youths 4-18 beginning next week and the week after. From Imagination Playground for the youngest to Stage Combat to Teen Scene with performance. For students 8-18 interested in Summer Theater Camp, we have Open Houses this coming Monday (in Lafayette) and Tuesday (in Berkeley), Feb. 6th and 7th, featuring actors from the Cal Shakes mainstage as well as teachers and directors from our camps. Scholarships available for all our classes and camps.

More info is at: www.calshakes.org/classes or www.calshakes.org/camps

Questions: Erin Carter, 510-548-3422 x127
Bronwyn Eisenberg, 510-548-3422 x115
Dir of Artistic Learning California Shakespeare Theater

More February Highlights

L'aissez Les Bon Temps Roulez!!

Black History Month (African-American)

February Holi (Hinduism) is a spring festival. It is a carnival-like celebration featuring bright colors, bonfires and pilgrimages. It is dedicated to Krishna or Kama, the God of Pleasure.

February 2 - Vasant Panchami (Hinduism) celebrates spring, or basant, and Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning and the arts. This is the time some children begin learning the 50 letters used in the Sanskrit alphabet

February 2 - Candlemas Day (Christian, Wiccan & Pagan) is a purifying ceremony to let go of the old and bring in the new (with the light.) In Christianity the day commemorates when Mary took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem 40 days after his birth. It has also long been a day for weather predictions: "If Candlemas be fair and clear, two winters you will have this year," leading to the celebration of Groundhog day which originated in Germany.

February 2 - Groundhog Day (USA and Canada) is based on an old belief that if the sun shines on Candlemas Day, or if the groundhog sees its shadow when it emerges from its den, we will experience six more weeks of winter.

February 2 - El Día De Candelaria (Mexico) marks the official end of the Christmas season.

February 2 - Imbolc (Wiccan)

February 5 - Anniversary of the Constitution (Mexico)

February 9 - Ashura (Islamic, Muslim)

February 8 - Nirvana Day commemorates the death of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha.

February 12 - Lantern Festival (Taiwan)

February 13 - Tu b'Shvat or Tu B'Shevat (Jewish, Israel - Sundown Feb. 12th)

February 13 - Tu B'Shevat (Judaism) is the New Year of Trees.

February 14 - Saint Valentine's Day (USA, Canada, Europe and Latin America) is based on the exchange of gifts that convey affection and love. The history of this holiday cannot be identified with any one origin with certainty. One version of the story tells of a priest named Valentine who would secretly marry people forbidden to wed by law. The Emperor believed that he could form a larger and stronger army if men remained single and had no family ties. Valentine was arrested and beheaded on February 14th . Because he was a champion of love, he became known as the patron saint of lovers.

February 20 President's Day (USA) was originally in honor of Presidents Washington and Lincoln and now serves as a reminder of the contributions of past and present presidents.

February 24 - Flag Day (Mexico)

February 26 - Mar.1 Ayyam I Ha (Intercalary Days.) The four days of the year (five days in leap year) which fall between the eighteenth and nineteenth month of the Bahai Calendar. These days are set aside for hospitality, gift giving, and service.

February 27 - Shrove Tuesday (Christian) the last day before Lent. Many people celebrate this day or days prior to it by having carnivals such as Mardi Gras held in France and Louisiana and by festivals in Germany and Latin America. In England it became known as "Shrove Tuesday" because people went to church to "shrove" or "confess" their sins.

February 28 - Mardi Gras (United States)

SOURCES:

http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic_relig

<http://fcgov.com/neighborhoodservices/pdf/holydays05-07.pdf>