



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

School & Community Newsletter February 14, 2006

Message from Principal Katie McLane

Dear Families,

We had quite a week from films to fires and everything in between. Many of our families joined us on Monday evening to see the "That's a Family" video and I was extremely **touched by the eloquence of our families as they spoke on behalf of all of our children and their families.** It was really an affirming evening and our thanks to Denise Saddler, my network executive officer, who has supported us.

The ongoing negotiations between the teachers' union and the district have caused duress and I am still hopeful that there will be no need for an employee action. The district met with principals on Friday to reiterate that they want to continue to negotiate, and also reviewed what to do in case of a shortage of our regular employees. The back-up plan involves inviting newly hired substitutes to cover the classes if all the teachers are not on site, so that all children will be safe. **Our teachers very much appreciate the incredible support that the Kaiser parents are providing. Thank you!**

As we have talked about areas of sensitivity, I need to ask that parents remind their children of the need **not to tease other children who may not be moving through the grades at the same pace as their child.** At Kaiser, we often recommend that a child be given "the gift of time" in kindergarten or first grade, to allow him or her to spend an extra year gaining a stronger foundation and then be really ready to move through the rest of the grades, no longer struggling. As I look at our current fifth graders, those who spent an extra year in the primary grades, or who entered school as an older child, are definitely among the strongest students. Every child develops as his or her own pace and the amount of curriculum which has moved from upper grades to lower grades makes the challenge even greater for children who have difficulty holding a pencil and creating sentences in kindergarten, or conceptualizing beginning algebraic equations in first grade. So, please, support the children and their families who are making the difficult, yet brave decision to stay an extra year in a primary grade. Currently, a few of our children have creative schedules to accommodate their educational and developmental needs.

We had another fright last Thursday after school when a young boy lit a fire in a pile of leaves at the back fence. Luckily, the child panicked and let third grader Sam McGlynn-Mandel know that **a fire had started and was spreading on the hillside,** and Sam (our hero) ran to the office. Robin Sasada ran up the hillside, dragging the hose behind her (hurting her knee as she went) and then Tom Rust followed with a fire extinguisher. I called the fire department and they arrived shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, several other second graders had known that one of their classmates had matches and was playing with them, but no one told an adult. All of the boys' families understood the magnitude of the danger and why we must encourage our children to let an adult know when there is potential danger. In fact, one of the grandmothers recommended that we appoint a student safety team to look for other dangerous situations such as wet floors in the bathrooms, potholes on the upper field and broken furniture. If our children are encouraged to be vigilant, we can avoid tragedy at home and at school!

- Katie

Getting In The Know

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM



Hello everyone, it's that time again. We will be celebrating the history of African American's on **Friday, February 24th, @6:30pm**. We will celebrate through dance, poetry, and more. During this event, we feast on delicious dishes that leave a wonderful taste in your mouth. We are asking the Kaiser community to bring a dish for this event, which are as follows:

If your last name begins with any of these letters you are to bring a dish accordingly

A-K MAIN DISH (CHICKEN, FISH, JAMBALAYA, ETC.)

L-S SIDE DISH (BEANS, SWEET POTATOES, GREENS, RICE, ETC.)

T-Z DESSERT (PIE, COOKIES, CAKE, ETC)

If anyone is still interested in volunteering please feel free to contact me @leejoelevy@aol.com or (510)465-1385. We are still in need of people for our cleanup crew.
Kindly,
Tracy Levy

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
February 15 Wednesday	School Site Council
February 20 Monday	President's Day Holiday- School closed
February 24 Friday	Black History Celebration and Oratorical Fest

END OF YEAR TAX DEDUCTIONS??

Our families have been so incredibly generous already this year, but if you need to have a tax deduction which will go to support the programs at Kaiser, **please send a check to our Kaiser PTA. We are a 501 c.3 organization and any contribution is tax deductible.**

If you have friends or neighbors who believe in public schools but do not have children in the system, please let them know that they can support Kaiser or their neighborhood school. It is important that we begin letting people know that a lot of good things are happening in Oakland's schools!

DID YOU GET A COPY???

**The Kaiser Directory
was available at the
Asian Potluck January 27th**

If you missed out, contact the PTA!!
Kelly & Cindy

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 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

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!!

Learning Families, Family Learning

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS UPDATE:

The current session of some of our after-school classes 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.

A packet with flyers and registration information for all of our spring session offerings will go out with next week's Pink Panther.

Questions? Call Katy DeVecchi at 336-9679, or even better, email me at katyhunterd@sbcglobal.net.

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:

Toddler Story Times: 1st & 2nd Saturdays at 10:30am: 4 & 11 February.
Pre-School Story Times: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 10:30am: 1 & 15 February.
Pajama Story Times: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:00pm: 14 February. (No story time on 28 February)

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

February at the Dimond Branch Library

Thursday, Feb 2, 2006 at 10:30; Carl Winters Kalimba King playing the African thumb piano chanting, singing, and dancing. For all ages.

Friday, Feb. 3, 2006 at 4:00; Dimond Book Club reading "Crispin: the Cross of Lead" by Avi for ages 9 - 13.

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

Kids Take the Page!

Seven Minutes and Seven Questions with Ms. Janan Apaydin!

1. Ms. Apaydin, what other grades have you taught besides 1st grade?

I taught 2nd grade for a few years and a 2/3 combination, all at Kaiser. I was very lucky because I didn't even know that Kaiser was a school (!) when I got chosen to teach here. Kaiser is the first place I was hired as a fully credentialed teacher. I just get a tingle from being at Kaiser. It's such a very special community, great families, teachers and kids, and I am so happy to be here.

2. What is the best thing about each grade that you remember?

Wow. The kids! But 1st grade is so exciting because the kids are learning so much new. It's fascinating teaching kids how to read – giving them the core concepts. It's so rewarding because so much is going on. In 2nd grade most kids have those reading and math skills so you can have more fun. You can go a lot farther. But 3rd grade curriculum, especially the Social Studies curriculum and things about Oakland, is something I love. I'm from Oakland and it's so great to share something I love with the kids.

3. Do you think first grade is very different in other countries?

What a good question. I wasn't a student in other places and haven't talked to teachers elsewhere. But I think in some countries there is much more emphasis on developmental play, while others are much more focused on academics. In Italy there is a project-based school where kids all learn through themes and all the subjects are blended together. It's very difficult to bring that idea and get it going here, but there are a lot of good ideas and inspiration; things that make teaching more fun. I'd like to meet people from all around and talk to them about how they experience things...

4. How are science and art alike for teachers?

Well, they're both specialty subjects. They both help to express awe and wonder at everything in the world... It helps if you have a certain amount of experience and subject matter knowledge. Teachers feel more secure with those when they have more background in them. But both require a lot of creativity of thinking and a willingness to explore. They are both among my favorite subjects. The Beauty of Mathematics and the Mathematics of Beauty is something wonderful that the staff had a chance to talk about at our big conference recently.

5. If you were not a teacher, what do you think you would be?

I was before a landscape contractor and gardener for over 15 years! My business and projects got bigger and bigger, with people working for me and more ideas. I'd love to do that again. But being a Mom is plenty of work and that would be great. Or being an artist -- or an environmental scientist helping to preserve nature... I even was a plant operator at the EBMUD Waste Treatment Plant at one point. That's one way that people have really figured out how to take care of the Earth and keep our water and nature clean and healthy.

6. What are some of the healthiest snacks people have brought to your classes over the years?

Tangerines, oranges, apples... some people brought a lot of cheese sticks. Those Japanese rice snacks are pretty good, too. One of the healthiest snacks was when somebody's Mom who was Korean came to class and taught us how to make sushi. It has just the right blend of healthy ingredients. We all got to make it so everyone also tried it.

7. How was the February 8th rally good for you?

Well, it helps me personally because I feel connected to other teachers and families and kids and know that we're all working together for something good. And you look around and see the news media there and you know that you're getting the word out about what we need to do our jobs well.

(Interview by roving Pink Panther reporter Campbell! Let's get some more reporters! Any student volunteers let us know via Mrs. McLane – thanks!)



Kids Take Another Page!

M.L. KING, JR. ORATORICAL COMPETITION

Last week over fifty individuals and groups of children presented their speeches, original works and poems before a group of judges. Each school can only send four entries to the district-wide competition on February 23rd, but we try to encourage our students to perform for their peers at other times, such as the African-American History Potluck, the Literacy Night and for school assemblies.

We wish to congratulate the winners

in the K-2: Mrs. Gorham's 1st/2nd grade class and Emmett Blunt, first grader.
The grade 3-5 winners were: Christina Bates and Maiyah Phelps, fifth graders.

There were many exceptional presentations and we congratulate all of the children who participated!

Below are a few of the Original Poems for the M.L.King, Jr. Oratorical Fest that were written by our fifth graders.

"I Want to be Free" by Kindness Nwakudu, gr. 5

I'm tired and depressed
Of segregation

I want segregation
To end now!

I work all day
What else can I say?

I wish I could reach
As far as the sun.

I want to be free
And have my rights,

Then I will rejoice
And feel my might;

Now I know I'm free
As far as I can see,

Now I'm freer than
What I used to be.

Freedom's Path by Maiyah Phelps, gr. 5

Freedom is a path of Righteousness
Where I know where I want to be,
And nobody else can speak for me.

I walk that path, I walk it so proud.
What did you say? Can you speak a little loud?
Freedom is like a bird that's flying away.

Freedom is that leaf falling from the willow tree
Where it blows, and the ocean flows.

Freedom is when I can talk the way I want to talk,
I can say what I want to say,
And I can walk the way I want to walk,
And no one can affect me in any kind of way,

Freedom is you, freedom is me,
Freedom is accepting yourself
Not what others want you to be.

"The Freedom Tree" by Naomi Kushins, gr. 5

I have a place to be and that's
my freedom tree.

I sit there staring at the tree
and it's staring back at me.

As the branches brush the
ground, I feel a warmth all
around.

Listening to the soft stream
I fall asleep into a deep
dream.

The wind whispers through
the tree
I am relaxed

I love the tree and it loves
me.
That's my wonderful freedom
tree.