



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

School & Community Newsletter February 21, 2006

Message from Principal Katie McLane

Dear Families,

Many cultures contribute to the richness of our world community. Just as every culture has time-honored traditions that make its heritage unique, each of us has individual qualities and characteristics that make us special. Let us learn more of one another...in knowledge there is understanding; in understanding there is respect; and where there is respect, growth is possible. This month our children have been learning about the contributions of the African Americans to our world and we will be celebrating on Friday evening with our annual potluck and oratorical fest. Thanks to Tracy Levy for chairing this event. We hope that everyone will plan to come, enjoy the children's speeches and their African dance program. And did I mention the fabulous food?!

Please put March 8th on your calendar for the Family Music and Literacy Night. Our children are invited to wear their pajamas and to enjoy a special story teller, some pizza and each child will get a book. We will also have a classroom where we will be making bookmarks. The first graders will be demonstrating the integrated music, math and literature skills that they are learning from Claudia McCarthy and their teachers.

The week of March 13th to 17th will be for parent/teacher conferencing and we encourage the upper grade students to be a part of those conferences as we hope they will reflect on their progress and their goals for the rest of the year. Minimum day dismissal will be at 1:30 p.m. from Monday through Friday that week. Please note that on your calendars and make appropriate plans for your children.

Saturday, March 18th is a beautification day at Kaiser and we need help with our gardens and also with the sorting and storage of chairs, desks, etc. which are accumulating at the end of the main building.

Tuesday evening, March 28th will be another musical event featuring the Orff music instruction for the K-third graders, led by Laura Sherman. We encourage you to come that evening to see the development of the musical talents of our young people.

Skipping over April and May and looking ahead to June, I'd like everyone to set aside June 3rd to join with me in a joyful celebration of a lifetime of wonderful memories of working with and for the children of Oakland. I have definitely decided to retire this year knowing that Kaiser Elementary is in a very good place! We have a strong and supportive group of parents, a dedicated and talented team of teachers and staff members, and we have recently affirmed the values that our school will continue to hold. I feel completely comfortable knowing that Kaiser's community will carry on in the direction that we have forged and that everyone will contribute to upholding those goals. I am hoping to coach new principals and also to spend time with my grandchildren. These formative years are very special and I'm looking forward to being the kind of grandmother that my mom was to my children- an integral part of their lives.

My supervisor, Denise Saddler, is aware of my decision and she has a real sense of the type of leadership that Kaiser needs. The process for principal selection has been evolving, so I will keep you posted as to the current procedures which are being set in place soon.

Take care of yourselves and join us this Friday for a wonderful evening of camaraderie and cultural celebration.

- Katie

Getting In The Know

Dear Friends,

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society has chosen **Vanessa Wittmer** to be the 2006 honoree child for the KGO-Curathon fundraiser that benefits the Society. The Curathon will be on KGO radio March 24th-25th and Vanessa was just on "Beyond the Headlines" hosted by Cheryl Jennings. Vanessa was informed on 1/19/06 that she is now in REMISSION! Kaiser children are currently raising funds for research on this disease. See attached flyer.

Thank You for all your support,

Trish Dolan

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM



Hello everyone, it's that time again. We will be celebrating the history of African Americans on **Friday, February 24th, @6:30pm**. We will celebrate through dance, poetry, and more.

We are asking that all dishes for the potluck Fri. Feb.24th arrive by 6pm, so that we can prepare for our families to eat as soon as possible. Questions contact Tracy Levy @ 465-1385 or leejoelevy@aol.com

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

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 22nd Wednesday	Word for Word assembly at 10:45 a.m.
February 24 Friday	Black History Celebration and Oratorical Fest
March 8 6:00 to 8:00	Family Music and Literacy Night
	Science Fair at Kaiser
March 13-17	MINIMUM DAYS for parent/teacher conferencing
March 18 9:30pm-1:00 p.m.	Kaiser Beautification Day

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!

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!!

Word Up!

M.L. KING, JR. ORATORICAL COMPETITION

Last week over fifty individuals and groups of school 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**.

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! 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. The Potluck is this week! See you there!

Family Music and Literacy Night- at Kaiser

March 8- 6:00 to 8:00

We'll have a Story teller, pizza and crafts in addition to first graders performing demonstration of musical integration with their reading and math.

Kids are encouraged to wear their pajamas!

February at the Rockridge Branch Library

7:00pm Tuesday, February 28th -- 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. .

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

February at the Dimond Branch Library

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

WORD FOR WORD, the award winning theater company that brings books to life on stage, will be visiting Kaiser Elementary on Wednesday, **February 22** to perform *Lost & Found*, two tales of inclusion in one performance.

Two stories about children helping others will be performed "word for word."

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox follows a caring boy who helps his 96-year-old neighbor find her lost memory.

Looking After Louis by Lesley Ely tells the story of an autistic boy and his class as they discover the links between Louis' world and theirs.

This performance will take place on Wednesday at 10:45am in the multi-purpose room.

Making History

The History of Race

It's said that "history is written by the winners." We want our children to be winners; but what histories will they write?

The article below on the origins of the concept of race was not written anonymously, but the author's name did not accompany it on the web page where it was found. He shows us the link between ancient slavery and racism, which helps us to understand how racism continues to try to write our history today. The article reflects much of the 21st-century understanding achieved by historical research. His discussion is almost shocking in its completeness and clarity about why race was invented as a social tool, and what it means regarding our children. We excerpted it below, but the whole article is fast and solid, including additional historical and scientific perspectives.

(<http://www.geocities.com/onemansmind/op/Race.html>) Says the author:

The word "race" comes from the Italian "razza" which denotes a person to be part of a group. It was adopted by the French in the 1500's and changed to its current spelling.

Any empire that felt it was their right to subjugate lands and peoples other than themselves, would feel superior; the idea of race determining inferiority/superiority was easier because it inherently gave the aggressor an easily defined and politically passionate argument for conquest.

People are not taught to hate; they are either given reasons to continue to hate or to avoid their hatred.

We (correctly) look at children different than we look at ourselves. We rarely classify or categorize small children because we know it doesn't apply. Why doesn't apply? It's because children do not categorize themselves. A classroom of children is simply a classroom of children until we begin to label them based on generalities and shared attributes.

Kids do not say "the immigrant kid in my class" did this or that boy was "acting Jewish". They think of the other kids only as other kids. They define them as individuals and by their specific traits. Like; the kid that stutters; that girl who cries all the time; the boy with the glasses.

Those are labels you hear from a child. And it is not based upon any perceived connection to any group; it's based on the individual.

Many groups and people that have views close to my own maintain that children are taught to hate. I disagree whole-heartedly. In my opinion, children already have a natural tendency to hate (or unfounded dislike). Most children are selfish and anyone with a child has seen many examples.

As a child grows, they learn to either trust their guardians or turn from them. Those children that trust their role models will emulate the lessons they try to impart.

If a child trusts the judgment of parents that espouse bigoted beliefs, they will believe what they say, sometimes blindly. If a child trusts the judgment of parents that encourages respect and tolerance, they are very likely to continue like them.

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In books such as "**Race" Is a Four-Letter Word** - The Genesis of the Concept, by C. Loring Brace , the power of race as a social invention is traced right to the moment you are reading the book. Oxford University Press offers this book, described on the web at

<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Anthropology/BiologicalPhysicalAnthropology/?view=usa&ci=019517352X>.

The intro to the book almost says it all:

"Opening with an explanation of why the concept of race is biologically indefensible, *"Race" Is a Four-Letter Word* shows how the major elements of human biological variation have unrelated distributions and cannot be understood if the existence of "races" is assumed as a starting point.

The book then examines the course of events that created the concept of race, journeying through time from Herodotus through Marco Polo; to the Renaissance and the role of the New World; on up to the American Civil War, the curious results of the alliance switch in World War I, Arthur Jensen, *The Bell Curve*, J. Philippe Rushton, and the Pioneer Fund in the twenty-first century."

Parent-to-Parent

Occasionally we overhear a conversation that goes like this: "I see her everyday and I'm still not sure what she does..." or "I wonder if somebody at Kaiser does that kind of work?"

One thought that has been floated is to compile a list of Kaiser parents who would offer professional services to other parents, either on their own or through their company. Often this includes things like Legal, Building, Design, Travel, Production, Landscaping, Editing, Internet help, Commercial Art, Tutoring, or other things that an individual may need to undertake as a project, with extra help or expertise.

Additionally, our community is rich with artists and members of organizations where the community is the target audience.

Since these are things that happen year-round, knowing about each other is always newsworthy! If you have an idea or example of a Services and Professions listing, let us know your thoughts and interest in a Kaiser version..

Kaiser's community is full of parents doing great things to make our city the place we want it to be. Tell the Pink Panther about your discoveries, work and each other. Contact Eva Caraher or Kiki Bradley with your news. cara_eva@hotmail.com
kbradley@ix.netcom.com



On a recent Saturday evening, two Kaiser moms looking for a night on the town decided to check out the Uptown on Telegraph at 19th Street. For those of you not familiar with this four month old bar and music venue, the proprietors are Kaiser parents Bob and Katherine Fratti.

A big bright neon guitar neck on the building's facade announces this newcomer's presence in downtown Oakland. My "date" for the evening and I were pleasantly surprised by the spare elegance of the Uptown with it's soaring ceilings, ambient lighting and enormous mahogany bar and mirrors. It's spacious and comfortable, especially for those of us whose days of frequenting dark and smoky bars are past.

Bob led us into an adjacent room that was an even bigger surprise. With a stage and ample seating, the Uptown Club could prove to be a formidable player in Oakland's music scene. The performer we heard on this particular evening was Trace Ellington, a soul singer and reputed descendant of Duke Ellington. The house was packed and the show provided some lively original 60's style soul.

For a schedule of music events, visit www.uptownnightclub.com and find each month's calendar filled with jazz, blues and rock. The Uptown is also available for private functions, and with its cool and sophisticated interior, it would be my choice for a party or fundraiser!

DID YOU GET A COPY???

The Kaiser Directory
is now available ...

If you are a PTA member and haven't picked up your copy yet, get it from Robin !!
\$5.00/copy if not a PTA member
Kelly & Cindy

Teacher Contract Viewpoints

“School District Needs to Support Teachers” by June Ko-Dial, president of the Skyline High PTA (Letters to the Editor, Montclarion, Friday, February 17, 2006)

Our teachers have been working without a contract for more than two years. That is not a very secure situation.

Yes, the district has always provided one of the cushiest health care plans around, but the teachers' union came back to the table willing to help with the amount suggested by the fact finder's report. They gave up 4 percent of their salaries two years ago to try to help this situation out, with the understanding that they would get it back. Yrs, they will get it back with this new contract offer, which is restoring their 4 percent. It is definitely NOT a raise, but now State Administrator Randolph Ward is saying that he wants it to be a three-year contract.

The union wants some assurances that they will get at least a cost of living increase in that third year and a promise that the health care costs won't skyrocket. That is not a lot to ask for.

The fact-finding report supported most of the union's demands. The big sticking point here is the third year.

The district is saying they cannot promise anything in the future because they don't know what the future holds.

OK, make it a two-year contract. That is not rocket science. That is all the union wants now.

If Ward and the state force a strike on the city of Oakland schools, I would hope everyone would stand behind their teachers and keep their children at home, I think I can safely say that I have my finger on the pulse of many in the education community and while no one wants a strike, and our children's education will be drastically affected by it, most parents will stand behind our teachers.

Randolph Ward, get back to the table and be fair. You certainly are making a pretty penny off of Oakland's problems and spending our money foolishly on bodyguards. And now you are willing to turn you back on our teachers because you are crying poor, yet you are willing to pay \$900,000 a day to fill our schools with substitute teachers? Do the math. Does this feel good to you?

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS UPDATE

STARTING IN MARCH THERE WILL BE NEW SESSIONS OF:
MAD SCIENCE (spring session: 3/27 - 5/22)
KAISER MIRACLE CHORUS (OYC) (spring session: 3/21 - 5/30)
CHESS (spring session: 3/22 - 6/7)
LEGO ENGINEERING FOR GRADES 2-5 (spring session: 3/17 - 6/9)
NEW! LEGO PRE-ENGINEERING FOR K-1 (spring session: 3/21 - 5/30)
AFRICAN DANCE (spring session: 3/17 - 6/9)

If your child wishes to join or continue in one of the above after-school programs, please sign up NOW! A packet with flyers and registration information for all of our spring session offerings is going home with this issue of the Pink Panther and will also be available on our website, www.kaiserelementaryschool.com.

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.

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