



# The Pink Panther

## Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

### Greetings from Principal Mel Stenger

Dear Friends,

Summer officially has ended. Fall has begun. It's the season of gathering in, of harvest, of reflection and reconsideration. Friday was the beginning of the Jewish High Holy days and Yom Kippur; we are with our Jewish families in this time of reflection. Saturday marked the Autumn Equinox, and we join with those among us who celebrate the changing seasons. As we get to know each other, we get to know our celebrations and how we mark the progression of time. Let's acknowledge our connectedness!

And, let's be teacher-supportive! The first 6–8 weeks of the school year are a very stressful time for teachers as they establish routines with their students, set up curricular program, and gather baseline data on their students. Giving teachers feedback on their practice is a very delicate process and should not be done for frivolous or impulsive reasons. And there is an important difference between sharing an observation with a teacher and telling him/her how to do his/her job. I have been in every classroom every day to let the teachers know that I am present in the school as an observer and guide. Official teacher observations begin shortly. I am also calling for this same patience on *your* part. Several parents have started conversations with me with words like, "I've heard that Ms. So-and-So is..." Let's be careful about bringing preconceptions about veteran teachers to forming our opinions. And sometimes it can get a bit awkward when you see a classroom situation or teacher practice that may seem to you could be done better. In general let's remember that helpful criticism is still criticism. Finally, when talking to our children about classroom and teacher practices, remember that children cannot bring the complete picture of the situation, nor are child unbiased in their assessments, so they really shouldn't be included in such conversations as peers.

It's a no-brainer to figure out that time in the classroom spent on meaningful activities directly improves student performance. Last week I shared that our teachers have been very good at getting everyone immediately on task in the morning and after each transition during the day. This week I want to give our parents some gentle reminders about how we are preserving and respecting time in class:

- The teachers appreciate the way parents are not hovering outside the classroom doors at the end of the day, drawing attention away from the teacher, or interrupting closing procedures. Parents are now waiting for their kids near the picnic tables. Dismissal is more orderly. The halls are quieter in the afternoon. Thank you!
- If you need to bring something to your child, please bring it to the office and we will call the student at the next recess to come and get the item. Please don't go directly to the classrooms and interrupt class time.
- Make sure your child comes to school every day, on time, and stays for the entire day.

Let's make class time a priority to reflect its value. Our children will learn from our example!

In the following pages, I'd also like to share with you some key information about how we can follow up on some great advice we're getting and taking to help make our school the safest it can be for our children. Let's make this one of the strongest connections — the way we help take care of each other.

**Mel Stenger, Principal**

# Getting In The Know

## Auction Donors NEEDED

Donate items for the upcoming auction November 4.

Contact **Liz Hall** at 531-2422 or probossliz@pacbell.net

## School Site Council Membership Opening

After several years of service on the School Site Council, **Yvonne White** (Jordan in 2nd and Rachel in K) has stepped down to have time to pursue her master's degree.

**We wish to thank Yvonne for her service on the council** and support and advice she has given.

**The SSC serves as a local school board**, overlooking all the major functions of the school and advising the staff on needed direction and program changes.

**Yvonne's replacement, Mar Smith** (Sarah in 5th and Emily in 3rd) has stepped into the council as a regular member.

**Now we need an alternate member** who may serve as a substitute and ideally will eventually join the SSC.

**The Council meets monthly on the third Wednesday, from 4:00–5:30 p.m.**

**CONSIDER IT. IT COULD BE YOU!**

## KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Sept 11–29	Sally Foster Sale (Ending this week!!)
Sept 28 Thurs	PTA Board Meeting 7pm
Sept 30	Beautification Day
Oct 6	Gardening Day
Oct 13	In Service Day for Teachers – NO SCHOOL!
Nov 4	Kaiser AUCTION

**KEEP UP TO DATE ALL WEEK THRU**

**The Kaiser School Web Site**  
<http://www.kaiserelementary.org>

- *Pink Panther* copies
- Info about fundraising events
- After school programs
- Teacher classrooms online
- Parent participation

## How to be in the *Pink Panther*

To include your story or information in your school newsletter:

forward your news, questions or article to the editors by 5:00 p.m. on Sundays via:

[mryder@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mryder@ix.netcom.com) and  
[kbradley@ix.netcom.com](mailto:kbradley@ix.netcom.com)

## How to Reach Kaiser School

Our phone number is **(510) 879-1710**  
(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/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/)

## Child Safety First

### Let's Work Together to Keep the Kaiser Grounds Safe!

At our principal's meeting on Thursday my supervisor, Denise Saddler, spent some time emphasizing school safety. In the next couple of weeks I will be reviewing the fire drills, earthquake practice, disaster plans, and evacuation procedures. I want to assure you that there *are* procedures in place for the safety of our children, so our review will be for updating and including new personnel into the plans.

Speaking of safety, **I need to remind you all to be extra cautious on the traffic circle.** Robin Sasada and Sonya Brooks are excellent at directing traffic and looking after the kids as they dart in and out. They reported to me several incidents where parents have ignored their directions, refusing to open the window to communicate, continuing to move the car or blocking the parking lot. Here are some reminders:

- **Park on Hiller Drive whenever possible.** Our campus is *very* crowded so walking up the hill reduces traffic and provides a moment to connect with your child as you walk back. Or feel free to wait on Hiller Drive and direct your child to walk down to you; but please don't ask them to wait there until you come. We've had a couple of incidents of student conflicts as they were waiting for their parents. So please be there ahead of time.
- **Do not park on the uphill side of South Hill Court.** It blocks and slows the traffic.
- **Do not park in the teachers' lot until after 3:30.** All the spaces are assigned and some of our staff even need to park on the streets. Staff members come and go during the day and it's very frustrating for them to return to find their assigned space taken.
- **Pay attention to the traffic monitors and be respectful of each other.** Traffic drives us all crazy. Let's all take a deep breath and remember who we are to each other.

— Mel Stenger

### Top Tips from Parents Family Guide to Healthy Eating

#### Look for 100% —

When buying juices look for 100 percent on the label. They provide nutrients not found in fruit drinks. Even if it is 100 percent juice, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting children's juice intake to no more than 4 to 6 ounces for 1 to 6 year-olds and 8 to 12 ounces for 7 to 18 year-olds. Beyond that, give kids great-tasting summer fruits from the produce aisle that provide fiber and other nutrients juices don't.

#### Go for Whole Grains —

Whole grains provide more fiber, vitamins and minerals and other protective substances than their refined cousins. The choices are endless. Look for grains such as whole-wheat flour, graham flour, oatmeal, brown rice, whole oats, or barley as the first ingredient on the label.

### Childhood obesity and diabetes are at epidemic proportions. Let's do our part to promote healthy diets!

I spent about a half hour with a couple of Kindergarten parents talking about lunch and lunchtime procedures. We spoke of getting the Kindergartners some extra time in the lunchroom for the next several weeks because they eat slowly and don't understand the whole lunchtime routine yet. And we talked about encouraging parents to choose healthy foods for kids. I've been in the lunchroom and I've been pleasantly surprised by how healthy most lunches look. But there is some need for improvement. I see some chips, some highly processed foods, some "Lunchable" type lunches that include high-fat and high-sugar foods. I've asked the fourth and fifth grade teachers to teach a lesson about healthy eating and I'm asking you all to take a look at what type of foods you're including in the lunches.

— Mel Stenger

*P.S. - You might want to visit [www.parentsagainstjunkfood.org](http://www.parentsagainstjunkfood.org) to see how to support healthy school food legislation.*

# Jewish New Year — A Fresh Start

In Judaism, the High Holy Days are a period for settling up the old year and gaining a fresh start with the new. The “book-ends” of these holy days are Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana.

**Yom Kippur** is the most holy day for people who practice Judaism. The goal of Yom Kippur is to ask for forgiveness for all of their sins that they have committed during the past year. **Rosh Hashanah** is the beginning of the Jewish New Year. In a sense if you have asked for forgiveness your New Year will be prosperous.

The first observance of Yom Kippur happened after Moses came down Mount Sinai the second time after breaking the original tablet of The Ten Commandments. The Israelites were engaged in idol worship of a golden calf which caused a separation between them and God. In order to bridge the gap, they needed to fast [give up eating], pray, and repent [vow to give up bad ways] for God to forgive their transgressions. On the eve of Yom Kippur people begin the fast, which is continued for a full day. During the fast the worshipers will confess their sins and pray for forgiveness.

Rosh Hashana usually falls either in the latter part of September or the early part of October. While most of the holidays originating in the Bible have their logical place on the agricultural calendar, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur do not necessarily fit that mold. The rabbis tell us that the 10th of Tishrei [a month in the Jewish calendar] was the day on which Moses completed and brought down the second set of commandments from Sinai, signifying that God had granted atonement for the sin of the Golden calf. This rabbinic interpretation lends historical significance to the otherwise unexplained placement of the holiday 10 days after Rosh Hashanah.

In *The Jewish Way*, Rabbi Irving Greenberg explains that today the High Holy Days is a time to take stock and do Heshbon HaNefesh (an accounting of one's life) and to take action by doing teshuvah (repenting from one's sins). The idea of asking for forgiveness is present in many religions around the world. Often it is accompanied by a *sacrifice*... In the book of Leviticus we're told that the High Priest would perform sacred rites in order to achieve expiation (forgiveness) of the people's sins. These rites included a lottery to choose two goats--one to be consecrated to God and one to “Azazel.” While the exact meaning of the word Azazel is uncertain, the ritual required the High Priest to confess the sins of Israel on this Azazel-goat, and to set it free in the wilderness so that it “shall carry on it all their iniquities to an inaccessible region.” (Lev. 16:22) The goat consecrated to God was offered on the altar as a purification offering.

#### Sources:

<http://www.information-entertainment.com/Holidays/yomkippur.html>

<http://www.on-this-day.com/publications/days/yom-kippur.html>

[MyJewishLearning.com](http://www.MyJewishLearning.com)

[http://www.ujc.org/content\\_display.html?ArticleID=84008](http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=84008)

## Kaiser Grade Sizes and Demographics 2006

**245** students are now registered at Kaiser Elementary in the 2006–2007 school year.

There are **11** classroom teachers and **1** resource teacher, giving Kaiser a student-teacher ratio of **20.4**.

Kindergarten — 45 Students  
1st Grade — 42 Students  
2nd Grade — 43 Students  
3rd Grade — 34 Students  
4th Grade — 39 Students  
5th Grade — 40 Students  
Latino — 5.8%  
White — 31.7%  
Black — 51%  
Asian — 9.1%

## **Auction Donors and Volunteers Shifted Gears Upward Last Week**

First, welcome **Alison May** on board as **Head of Solicitation for the auction**. Along with **Liz Hall**, the planning leadership is good to go for the sprint to November 4. You can reach Alison and Liz through messages at the Kaiser Office, or at these email addresses:

[alisonemay@comcast.net](mailto:alisonemay@comcast.net)  
[probossliz@pacbell.net](mailto:probossliz@pacbell.net)

Just in the last week, Alison reports news of donor support from an art gallery and five arts organizations, with retail organizations, on the horizon.

And Liz has some excitement for the “hot ticket” auctioneers out there; your stop at the auction site November 4 is just the beginning of your trip, Up for grabs are some cool vacation houses. How about these destinations from generous Kaiser family donors:

a house in Tahoe **Truckee**  
a time share in **New Orleans**  
a time share in **Cabo Mexico**

Or, get that project at home-sweet-home finished off; Elliott Construction is donating **8 hrs of work!**

### **Key Donor News to Come:**

We're working hard on **Kids Entertainment** and **Child Care** for the evening. We've secured the Cafetorium at West Lake Jr. High which conveniently shares a parking lot with the auction site. After check out, just a hop, skip, and jump will get you to your kids. Stay tuned...

Meanwhile, if you're thinking of being a wine donor, look for a case in the small room to the left in the office where people can place the bottles. You'll also see a clipboard provided so that you can write down what you donate, if you want.

Leave your auction news, entries and other info at the Kaiser Office or email [probossliz@pacbell.net](mailto:probossliz@pacbell.net)



## Free Concerts at Woodminster

### Sundays in the Redwoods

Music and Drama at **Woodminster Amphitheater** from **3:00–7:00 p.m.** launched Sunday, September 17, with the gifted Michael Morgan conducting Oakland's wonderful Symphony.

### The Next Two Sundays

#### Four Flavors of Jazz

Sunday, October 1, 11:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.  
Beginning at 11am: Khalil Shaheed, Oaktown Jazz Workshops, Oakland Music Conservatory and the Youth Jazz Band.  
Beginning at 3:00 p.m. the Count Basie Tribute Band, Mo'Rockin Project, and Babatunde

#### Gospel at the Woodminster

Sunday, October 8, 3:00–7:00 p.m.  
Featuring the Men's Missionary Choir, Peace, and KC Gospel Group

**Gates open at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Performances begin at 4:00 p.m.**  
**VIP Seating & food available.**  
**Call 238-3092 for reservations.**



**Oakland Parks & Recreation, the Montclair Village Association, Friends of Oakland Parks & Recreation, and Jean Quan's office are sponsoring two more FREE events at Woodminster.**

This series is about our hope of bringing the community together across generations and cultures. We hope to build this into an annual event.

— J. Quan

## Events at the Dimond Library

The following programs will take place at the Dimond Branch Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave.

#### Friday, Oct. 6

Dimond Book Club for ages 9–12.  
Be prepared to discuss a book you read over the summer.  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

#### Tuesday, Oct. 24

*Two Witches and a Warlock*  
Scary Stories for ages 6 and older  
7:00 p.m.

#### Friday, Oct. 27

Witches and Warlocks Crafts with Robin Goodfellow for ages 6 and older.  
Make a witch or warlock and see it glow!  
3:30–5:00 PM

#### Every Tuesday

Family Storytime for preschoolers and their families  
7:00 PM

#### Every Wednesday

Toddler Time for ages 0–2.  
Stories, songs, tickles, and bounces  
10:15 a.m.

#### Every Wednesday

Preschool Storytime for ages 3–5.  
Stories, songs, and fingerplays  
11:00 a.m.

Thanks,  
Mary Schrader,  
Dimond Branch Library

# Kaiser PTA Updates

## Last Week to Sell Sally Foster!

The Sally Foster gift wrap sale ends this Friday, September 29. If you haven't already done so, check out the catalog filled with wonderful wrapping papers, chocolates, and other gift items. Online orders can be placed beyond the 29<sup>th</sup>, however your child will only receive prize credit for orders placed up until the sale end date. For catalog orders, please return the envelope with the order form and checks made out to Kaiser PTA to your child's teacher by Friday.

Thank you in advance for your support!

## PTA Members Needed to Approve Audit Thursday, September 28, 7:00 p.m.

If you are a PTA member, please come to the library this Thursday at 7:00 p.m. to approve the audit that was performed on the PTA finances. It should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

## PTA Membership Drive

**Have you joined the PTA yet?** It looks like Mr. Neat's class is taking the lead with Ms. Bailey and Ms. Reese following close behind. To find out how your child's class is doing check out the mountain in the main hall. The first class who reaches 100% wins a class trip to the Ironworks climbing gym!

## PTA Reminders

If you can help with any of these items please contact Lisa Downes 532-5913,  
[lisadownes@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisadownes@sbcglobal.net)

### Volunteers Needed Immediately in the Following Positions!

**Tax Preparer:**

to prepare a tax return (due November 15)

**Auction Donors:**

to donate items for upcoming auction November 4.  
Contact Liz Hall 531-2422,  
[probossliz@pacbell.net](mailto:probossliz@pacbell.net)

**Grant Writers:**

to seek out and write grants

**Computer Support:**

to help maintain computers and fix problems that may arise.

**Walk-a-thon Chair:**

to organize and oversee a committee for the Walk-a-thon which takes place on May 5

## School Beautification Day

**This Saturday, September 30,  
9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**

On the agenda: Gardening, Window Washing, and installation of the "Katie McLane" tile wall.

If you want to help, just show up or contact our garden volunteer coordinator Jeff White at 540-6906.

## Be Kind to the Environment!

And make some \$ for our school

We are all signed up for the **printer recycling program** via Office Depot. A box to place the cartridges is being mailed to the school and will be available shortly.

## The Kaiser Butterfly Garden and Related Projects

The butterfly garden at Kaiser has been a long-term project that I think characterizes some part of the Kaiser school vision. We began by thinking about wanting a beautiful environment for kids to be in. That beautiful environment reflects our feelings that all students deserve a safe and secure environment—both physically and emotionally—and beyond that, a physical space that is beautiful and pleasant. I think the desire for a beautiful space also demonstrates our feeling that children need and deserve to be surrounded by beauty, and that the space we inhabit has inherent value. How we care for and nurture that space reflects our feelings about the inherent value of all our students. Our sense of place, of pride in community, of stewardship in some way demonstrates that kids are worth it, and we model these same values for our kids as we participate.

Beyond that, we began to think about the garden as an outdoor learning space. What do we want children to learn in and from such an outdoor classroom? We want them to learn respect and caring for the environment, and to learn about living things in a real context. We want them to learn about working together to care for our community. We want them to learn about scientific observation and the processes and elements that are required to sustain life. We want them to gain an appreciation for the natural world and the beauty and complexity therein. It seemed to make sense to try to develop the landscape toward being restored to native plant communities that provide habitat for native animals and insects. Since we border on wild lands and have animals and insects that have learned to co-exist with humans, we could provide habitat that fosters their ability to survive and thrive, and we could observe them close up as a benefit. Sometimes we get to observe deer, families of quail and many other bird species, and several butterfly and insect species that have made homes in or near our gardens, or are traveling through. Also, returning to native plant communities means using less water and other resources, so we are also demonstrating a conservation ethic through our choices.

Two related projects are *the garden murals* and an event we called *the butterfly extravaganza*.

Mr. Rust had the idea that we create “cameo” murals of the different species of butterflies that are native to our area. These murals show the life cycle of each species, as well as the important related host species of plants—usually native plants that the each specific butterfly uses for a larval food plant—as well as nectar plants for adult butterflies. Each teacher wanted to participate, and adopted a species. Teachers created images for the murals, with help from students in many cases. Students, parents, and community volunteers helped to paint the murals. Now these beautiful murals grace our buildings, and also help us in learning about and identifying butterflies and plants. I think these murals are a beautiful and lasting demonstration of the Kaiser commitment to integrate arts into learning in meaningful ways.

The butterfly extravaganza was a one or two day event that I thought of as a way to increase awareness, participation, and use of the gardens. It started as a project for my cooperating teachers group, a group of teachers that all had student teachers from Mills College, and were reflecting together on the role of the cooperating teacher and how best to support our new teachers. We were asked to create an *event of meaning* that would demonstrate our passion for teaching, some integration of curriculum, and show our student teachers how such a learning event could be planned and done successfully. Since I am passionate about the environment, ecology, and gardening, I focused on that. Also, I thought it would be a way to get more help finishing up the murals and get help with ongoing maintenance for the garden. I also thought that if everyone realized what we had, they would be more interested and find ways to integrate the garden into the teaching and learning going on in and around classrooms.

This really embodied the Kaiser value of the learning community. Parents, teachers & students were all involved in teaching lessons about the garden or butterflies, weeding and caring for sections of the garden, and painting the murals. I am hoping that this could be something we could do on a regular basis so that new members of the Kaiser community get familiar with the garden as a resource, and so that everyone is reminded and energized to get out and use the garden and help care for it.

*Janan Apaydin*

