



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 10, 2007

Dear Kaiser Families,

We have all-day principals' meeting every other Thursday. Like all meetings, the value varies. This past Thursday we met again with Mutiu Fagbyo, a consultant working with Oakland principals to help us focus on school improvement. He made a comment along the lines of, "Every principal should be able to say 3 or 4 things which make their school special, and 3 or 4 things which, if improved, would dramatically increase the learning of the students in the school."

The first part was easy for me. Our school is so successful because of the students who work so hard and care about their education, our teachers and staff who are very qualified, dedicated, put in many hours above their contract, and genuinely care about the kids, and of course the parent community who support the kids and the teachers in so many ways.

The improvements were harder to nail down because I think we are developing them. Last year about 20% of our upper grade students dropped down a category in their CST score; our teachers did a very good job of intervening for low performing students, so I have challenged our teachers to be watchful of the successful students in their classes to make sure they maintain their success. Our 4th grade writing scores were very low with only 29% of our students tested as proficient or advanced; again, I have worked with our teachers to review our methods for teaching writing and implement a structured program. And our 5th grade science scores were very low with only 37% testing as proficient or advanced. Our district has adopted a new science curriculum and I review lesson plans to make sure the science program is implemented.

What can you do to help our school (and your child) improve? Glad you asked! Please stay in contact with your child's teacher to see **how your child is performing** on quizzes, projects and tests. If you don't get papers coming home, ask for them. Watch for **benchmark assessment scores** which should come home every 6 weeks. These are official district tests meant to monitor student progress through the year. If your child is not doing well in a subject, ask the teacher what the **improvement plan** is. **Support your child's academic growth by providing a homework routine which includes nightly reading.** Each child in grades 3-5 is to have a weekly composition. Please look for it as you review your child's homework.

We have a faculty who works with you to teach much more than reading and math. We teach children how to be human beings, which includes teaching them our core values. Our teachers explicitly teach values. For example teachers invite kids to talk about what courage means to clarify the concept and deepen the students' understanding. They rehearse the required behavior; during Second Step lessons teachers discuss situations that are opportunities for kids to exhibit courage. Next, the teachers guide the kids to practice the values behavior; again in Second Step lessons the kids sometimes perform very short skits to rehearse behavior that reflects courage. Finally, they reinforce the values behavior; the teacher reminds students by pointing out courage when they see kids showing it and making sure the kids see it again. As an extension, some teachers will have students write about the value, either in an essay, narrative, or story.

Teaching values doesn't just happen. **Kids don't become nice and respectful by us merely hoping they will.** Like everything we want our kids to learn, we need to teach it explicitly if we want them to internalize it and have it be part of their very being. In December we face a difficult time for parents in terms of values. Some parents bemoan that this is the season kids sometimes turn into gift-grubbing fiends, telling everyone what they want for Christmas and making those demands known, sometimes to the point of acting con't on page 2

Getting In The Know

really obnoxious. Sometimes they nag or negotiate or even threaten in order to get what they want. I'm sure you've all seen and heard it if you haven't experienced it in your own family. The ideas that "gifts are for giving" or "it's better to give than receive" are totally lost on them when our kids get like this.

Let's take this opportunity to teach our children our value of generosity and giving. Model the behavior and tell your kids why you are giving gifts, so your child sees you practicing this value. Teach your child how to give a gift by together choosing a recipient and discussing what *they* would want (not what the child wants). Help your child choose, buy (they should pay for all or part of the gift), wrap the gift and write a card. While you do these steps, make sure you talk about the recipient, why the child wants to give the gift, imagine together how the person will enjoy the gift, and rehearse how to deliver the gift. After your child gives the gift, discuss how the act made them feel, how they were received, and who else they might want to give a gift. This is the season of giving, and we have the opportunity to give our children the gift of giving.

Happy Giving!
Mel Stenger

Our primary grade Orff Music concert and African Dance performance will be on Tuesday evening, December 18, at 6:30. Children should arrive in their classrooms by 6:15.

Instrumental music performance and Mr. Neat's class play will be on Thursday, December 20, with the same schedule.

PARKING ON THE UPPER FIELD!

How to be in the *Pink Panther*

To include your story or information in your school newsletter: forward your news, questions, or article to **both** of the editors by **5 p.m. on Sundays** via e-mail:

carriemail2001@yahoo.com – Carrie Shepherd
jolie@earthlink.net – Jolie McRae

Please put "Pink Panther" in the subject of your email to ensure that it is not deleted accidentally!

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Dec. 18	ORFF Music Concert & African Dance Performance 6:30 pm
Dec. 20	Instrumental Music Concert, 7 pm
Dec. 24- Jan. 4	Winter Recess

There will be an information night for Kindergarten on Wednesday, January 9, at 6:30 p.m. If you know of parents of prospective Kindergarten students, please let them know.

One Warm Coat Sponsored by Girl Scout Troop #1877

Girl Scout Troop #1877 will again be collecting gently-used outerwear through the *One Warm Coat* program. The outerwear will be donated to the East Oakland Recovery Center for them to distribute to families in need this holiday season. This is an annual event that Girl Scout Troop #1877 has coordinated, very successfully with donations from many Kaiser families. Each year we have collected 75-125 pieces of outerwear in both adult and child's sizes each year.

The donation box is set-up in the school hallway outside of the main offices. Donations of clean, gently-used outerwear will be collected through Friday, December 21st and donated to the East Oakland Recovery Center for them to share with their clients during their annual holiday party.

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors:

PTA President: Janice Murphy
VPs Communication: Kim Carl
Kiki Bradley

Pink Panther Staff:

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd
Copyeditor: Wendy Harcarik

KAISER KIOSK

ORFF Music Winter Concert Music and Dance From Around the World

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.

Students in grades K-3 should report to their classroom by 6:15 p.m. Parents gather in the auditorium to enjoy their children's singing.

African Dance Performance

African dance students will also be performing this evening. Notices will be going home with dancers this week.

Parking available on the upper field.



Instrumental Music Winter Concert Thursday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.

Students report for tuning:

6:30 p.m. - string instruments

6:45 p.m. - wind instruments

Students should wear dark bottoms and white tops.



The 5th grade class will also perform their class play.

There have been a number of incidences of head lice this year. Please take some time to thoroughly check your child's head for lice. Lice are highly contagious and can spread quickly from person to person, especially in group settings.

To help to prevent your child from getting lice - or from becoming reinfested with lice – remind him or her to take the following precautions:

- Tell your child to try to avoid head-to-head contact at school and while playing at home with other children.
- Tell your child not to share combs, brushes, hats, scarves, bandanas, ribbons, barrettes, hair ties or bands, towels, helmets, or other personal care items with anyone else, whether they may have lice or not.
- Tell your child not to lie on bedding, pillows, and carpets that have recently been used by someone with lice.
- Examine members of your household who have had close contact with a person who has lice every 3 or 4 days. Then, treat those who are found to have lice or nits close to the scalp.

If you do find lice (or nits) on your child, please take steps to treat your child. There are a number of treatments with either over-the-counter medicine, prescription medicine, household, or by hand. More information is available from Robin in the Kaiser office, or online at:

<http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/lice.html>