



# The Pink Panther

## Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 14, 2008

*Dear Kaiser Families,*

So my partner, Vince, finally got a cell phone. We teased him that he was coming out of the middle ages! Of course he was using it all weekend, calling me from wherever he was just to tell me what he was doing. Not that I was all that interested in all the details of his errands and shopping, but he wanted to call, so I answered. After the fifth or sixth call, I finally told him that I wanted to take a nap. On Sunday at church two phones went off during the Scripture readings, even though the lector had reminded everyone to turn off their phones right before he began. And last week someone apologized to me about using a cell phone in the office, saying, "I know how much you hate cell phones." Well, I don't hate cell phones. What bothers me is how so many people let technological tools and toys take over their lives, simply because they exist, as if the people have no choice but to bow to this newest invasion. Our new phones, computers, and other technological advances are wonderful, amazing tools—but that's where it ends. They are tools for us to decide how and when to use!

We, the people, get to decide how to construct our environments. That means we get to decide which furniture and colors to use in our houses, which electronics go in which room. We don't have to have a TV, stereo, and phone in every room just because they are available and relatively cheap now. Kaiser Hospital now bans phones from its waiting rooms, as do many doctors, to preserve the soothing quiet there. Some restaurants ban them or have designated calling spots.

For so long in our history we have been trying to get better and better tools and toys, and for so long they were beyond our reach, that we often feel that we must have and use them because they're here. The same is true with our food choices. Until the 1950's or so, simply having a reliable food source was a problem for many people, so we became ingrained with the idea that if food is available we should eat it; now we have epidemics of diabetes and obesity because our thinking hasn't changed.

Over the past 2 months we have had a nearly constant stream of visitors here, considering our school as the choice for their Kindergarten child next year. They come with questions and hope to find an environment to support the growth of their child as they begin their educational journey. Our history of success here at Kaiser shows that parental choice greatly influences the success of the students and the school. You all have made conscious decisions to have your child here and then you follow through to make it work!

The point I'm getting at is that we have a lot more choices than any generation before, and we need to be aware of the consequences and responsibilities for those choices. And we can't get away from the fact that we are making choices. The French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre said, "Not to decide is to decide." With our phones, our food, and the way we support our kids in school, let's make appropriate decisions to build the world we want!

Finally I'd like to offer you a little story reflecting the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. I was a seventh grade teacher here some years ago, and one day one of my students challenged my understanding of the race

## Getting In The Know

relations between my students. She said to me, "Mr. Stenger, I don't think you understand. I think that you think everybody at Kaiser School gets along like they're best friends or something. It's just at school we play together on the playground, and we work together in classrooms. It's only here where we sit together in the cafeteria and eat our lunch with our friends. We don't hang out together all the time, especially in our own neighborhoods." I looked at the young lady, dumbfounded for a moment, stunned by witnessing one of my students profoundly yet matter-of-factly describing her school life in terms that many other people dream of. I could only respond, "Karol, if all the world lived that way, what a wonderful world it would be!"

Our daily choices add up to how we live our lives. Let's continue to choose to build the dream!

*Mr. Mel Stenger, Principal*

### Asian Heritage Potluck

**Anyone interested in helping with the Asian Heritage Potluck on January 25, please contact me at 729-6141. I have arts and crafts activities and decorations that mainly focus on the Chinese and Vietnamese Lunar New Year and culture. It would be nice to broaden the event to be more inclusive in celebrating aspects of other Asian countries/cultures (e.g., Japan, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, etc.) If anyone has anything they would like to share or include in the way of activities, entertainment, or decorations to honor Asian heritage, we'll be planning the evening over the next two weeks. Thanks!**

*—Karen Orsulak*

### 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
Jan. 15	SSC meeting
Jan. 21	MLK Jr. Day No school
Jan. 25	Asian Heritage Potluck
Jan. 28	Teacher Planning Day No school
Jan. 30	PTA board meeting
Feb. 18	Presidents Day No school
Feb. 19	SSC meeting

### 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/)**

### Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

PTA President: Janice Murphy  
VP Communication: Lisa Downes

### Pink Panther Staff

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd  
Copy editor: Wendy Harcarik

## *Martin Luther King Jr. Activities in Oakland*

Oakland has a lot going on to help honor Dr. King! Head to [www.oaklandnet.com](http://www.oaklandnet.com) for even more listings.

Saturday, January 19, 2008

### **Martin Luther King Day Potluck Dinner**

6:00 p.m.

Mormon Temple, 4770 Lincoln

Free Admission

Potluck dinner, displays of various African-American leaders, speaker Burgess Owens (former Oakland Raider player) and Arif Katib, president of the African-American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame. Presented by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints – Genesis Group. (925) 458-1298

Sunday, January 20, 2008

### **MLK, Jr. Celebration: Faith in California**

Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street  
Free Admission

Honoring the legacy of Dr. King, representatives of religious movements not traditionally followed by African Americans (Black Buddhists, Hare Krishnas and Muslims) discuss the mix of cultural and spiritual practices. Enjoy the stirring melodies of South African freedom songs by Vukani Mawethu, a local choir. Visit the new photography exhibition, Trading Traditions: California's New Cultures, which captures how new Californians work, play and celebrate together. Hands-on activities for the whole family.

(510) 238-2200 or [www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org)

Sunday, January 20, 2008

### **“In the Name of Love,” 6th Annual Musical Tribute Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

7:30 p.m.

Oakland Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr.  
\$6-\$20 advance; \$6-\$22 at door

Cultural and civic event including Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir, Rhiannon and Terrance Kelly (in an unprecedented vocal duo), Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Oakland

Children’s Community Choir with Khalil Shaheed’s Oaktown Jazz Workshop and Clifford Brown, Jr. (KDYA/ KCSM personality) as emcee. The 4th annual Oakland Citizen Humanitarian Award will be presented and archival footage of Dr. King will be shown on a larger-than-life screen. Presented by Rhythmic Concepts, Inc.

(510) 287-8880, (800) 838-3006 or

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

Monday, January 21, 2008

### **Oakland's Martin Luther King National Day of Service**

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Two volunteer locations:

Arroyo Viejo Park, 7701 Krause Avenue or

Knowland Park/Oakland Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Road  
Free Admission

Join the Arroyo Viejo Creek Community for a morning of volunteer service and celebration. Remove litter and non-native, invasive plants or plant California native plants. Presented by the Arroyo Viejo Creek Watershed Awareness Program and Service for Peace.

(510) 665-3508 or [www.thewatershedproject.org](http://www.thewatershedproject.org)

Monday, January 21, 2008

### **A Day On, Not a Day Off, Volunteer Restoration Project and shoreline clean-up, and guided walk**

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline, Garretson Point at the end of Edgewater Drive, Oakland

Volunteer project led by park staff including clean-up and environmental restoration along the shoreline, and a naturalist led walk to hear the history of the marsh and how it came to be known as Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline. All are welcome. Presented by East Bay Regional Park District. (510) 562-1373 or [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)