



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

25 South Hill Court, Oakland, California 94618 (510) 549-4900

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 6, 2008

Dear Kaiser Families,

Every other Thursday I am not at school and some may wonder where I go. I attend a Network Principals' meeting with my supervisor, Denise Saddler, and the other principals in her network. While much of the time is devoted to the business of running the schools, we also have some really good training. Recently we had a session about giving effective feedback to staff to help them improve performance, and then last week we had a session about coaching teachers how to give effective feedback to students. There were some commonalities in both of the sessions, and I began to think that parents might be interested in the same kind of ideas.

The newest research on helping children to improve performance shows that we should *praise effort rather than ability*. When we make comments to our kids, positive or negative, about their *identity*, they tend to try less. We are learning that it is almost as bad to refer to kids as "so smart" or "very bright" as it is to give them messages that they are stupid or unable to do what's expected. For example, if kids are constantly told that they are smart and the task before them seems difficult, they will not engage because it makes them feel stupid, and that doesn't fit with their picture of themselves. Gifted kids, those labeled as in the top 2%, often will not struggle in any area in which they are not immediately successful. And if kids are constantly told they are stupid, they will not engage in difficult tasks because it will make them feel more stupid.

We educators have known for years about the importance of developing learning tasks that are "just right" for the students. If the task is too easy kids won't engage, won't learn and they'll be bored; too hard and they won't engage, won't learn and will become frustrated. We're now just learning about the effect of our language on how children engage and struggle.

What we want is for our kids to engage in the struggle of learning, to take risks in their learning. Therefore we need to encourage them by praising their efforts, to make it safe to take risks and to learn from failure. Our messages to our children should be more along the lines of "Keep trying. I think you'll get it," or "What a wonderful job you did!" or "I can see you worked really hard." Comments like "You didn't finish. You're so lazy!" or "Another F? You're no good in math. It's a good thing you can write well," or even "Look at this terrific report card. You're so smart!" *all discount the importance of effort and reduce the results to who the child is, rather than what the child did*. Thus, effort becomes irrelevant to the child who come to believe that they either "got it or they don't."

This came home to me the other night at my own house. My younger son is not doing well in two subjects, and when I asked him to explain why, he said, "I'm not good at taking tests. I've never been good at it."

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Getting In The Know

He had made a decision that poor testing is part of *who he is*, so there is nothing he can do about it, because it's part of his unchangeable identity. Our conversation about what he did or didn't do leading to his poor grades *and his good grades* was difficult. He did not want to see how his efforts led to the results, something most of us take for granted. (Just because I'm a principal doesn't mean I have children who are perfect students!) I had to admit to myself that I need to review the language I use in talking to him about his schoolwork in order to get him to look at his efforts and what he needs to do to succeed.

Parent-teacher conferences are coming up the week of October 13. Some teachers may have started already because it's difficult to get through the whole class in one week. This conference is a time to check to see how your child has done so far and to set some long-range goals. Teachers have reviewed last year's assessment data and the results from work and quizzes your child has done this year. Working together you should be able to set some realistic goals and some methods for achieving those goals. Remember: Smart is not something you are, it's something you get!

Mel Stenger, Principal

Sign-up for the OUSD E-Newsletter.

Learn important district-wide information. To sign-up, visit the OUSD website:

www.ousd.k12.ca.us

and select the "Join Now" box on the lower left side of the page.

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
Oct. 10	Staff Development Day No School
Oct. 13-17	Conference Week Minimum Days All Week
Oct. 15	School Site Council
Oct. 17	Latino Heritage Potluck
Oct. 21	Picture Day
Oct. 29	PTA Board Meeting
Nov. 8	Kaiser School Auction

How to Reach Kaiser School

Our phone number is **(510) 549-4900**
(includes a 24-hour message service).

To participate in the school community group,
go to (and join) this website:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementarvschool>

**The Pink Panther is also available at
www.KaiserElementary.org.**

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

PTA President: Janice Murphy

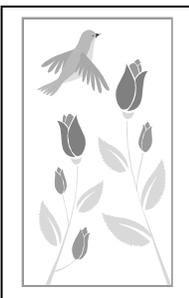
Pink Panther Staff

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd

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Kaiser Kiosk

Thanks to Maureen Caldwell for organizing our Kaiser Beautification Day this past Sunday. It was a joy to see so many people who came to help the school look more beautiful



Pledge Drive

We thank those of you who have already contributed to the pledge drive. The PTA is asking each family to contribute **\$75 per child** that attends Kaiser. This sounds like a hefty sum, but divided by the amount of school days, this works out to 42 cents a day. We have many programs that are funded by the PTA that add value to the education and teaching of our children. Some examples include:

- Library Instruction
- Music Instruction and Equipment
- P.E. Instruction
- Staff Aide
- School Assemblies
- Class funds (for field trips/extra supplies, etc.)
- Computer Lab equipment/software

Please help us reach our goal of \$15,000 by making a pledge contribution today. Checks can be made payable to Kaiser PTA and left in the office. Also, we look forward to offering a PayPal payment option on our website very soon.

All donations are tax deductible and you are welcome to pay in installments.

Thank you so much for your support,
Kristin Carpenter
VP Fundraising

HELP THE KAISER AUCTION! DONATE TO THE INSTANT WINE CELLAR

BevMo's Annual 5-Cent Sale is over, but we still need your donations for the auction. Please donate one or more bottles of wine for Kaiser's Annual Fall Fundraiser "Instant Wine Cellar" auction item. The more wine you donate, the bigger the cellar! Please donate wines priced above \$10 and place the donations in the wine case in the nurse's station in the school office.

Any questions? Please email Liz Hall at probossliz@pacbell.net or call 510-325-7803

Come on people! Give till it hurts!
Thanks.

HOW ABOUT DONATING A HOUSE!?!?

Do you have a vacation home or time share? How about airline miles? If not you, does someone in your family or a good friend? If so, please consider donating them to this year's auction. Last year we were lucky enough to get a two-night stay in an apartment in New York City as well as a weekend at a house in Tahoe—both from within the Kaiser community.

Contact Alison May ASAP, at 530-6264 or alisonemay@gmail.com with your generous offer. Thank you!

Kaiser Kiosk

Don't Delay! Join Today!

Please join the PTA. The membership fee is only \$10 per person. The PTA supports many wonderful programs. Our goal is to get 100% membership and, as an added incentive, the class that gets to 100% first (or the class with the highest percentage) will win a pizza party. Here's how the classes are doing as of October 1.

% of families who have joined the PTA

Apaydin - 41%	Araki - 65%
Bailey - 61%	Banks - 60%
Gorham - 59%	Haruyama - 60%
Hunter - 59%	McGhee - 68%
Neat - 43%	Ross - 56%
Yang - 59%	

As you can see, it's a close race. Every class still has a chance to win, so turn your membership in today!! A big thanks to those who have already joined.

Thank you.

--Joyce Wessling, VP Membership

Thank you all for blending in smoothly with our new morning routine. Our teachers' contract provides them with preparation time at the beginning of the day. In the past, this time has often been lost due to lots of interruptions. At most schools in Oakland the kids are on the playground until they line up at their places at the bell. The kids have some time to socialize a bit and the teachers have time to get final details in place before starting the school day. It's working here, too, thanks to you!

It's Not Too Late to Order Kaiser School T-shirts!

The new deadline to order Kaiser shirts is October 10. Why not get one for each member of the family? They make great holiday gifts!

Sizing samples are in the office; please order correctly because there are no refunds or exchanges! Remember to turn in the order form to your child's teacher, not the PTA mail slot.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS:

Friday is an in-service day. No school for students. Teachers will be reviewing student progress and determining if we need to adjust our programs.

During conference week, October 13-17, there will be minimum days all week with dismissal at 1:25 p.m. each day. Please make appropriate arrangements. Thanks.