



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 6, 2009

Dear Kaiser Families,

Welcome to the New Year! Happy 2009! There was excitement here yesterday! When the teachers came in they smelled smoke coming from Ms. Hunter's room. The fire department came and told us it was a faulty ballast in one of the lights. The school district immediately sent an electrician and replaced it. There is still a smell, but it is not toxic. We appreciate your cooperation during the traffic re-routing. Even with all the disruption, we were "back at it" by 9:00! The teachers were prepared, the students were rested and ready, and the whole "machine" ran smoothly!

Did you make any New Year's Resolutions? For years, psychologists, teachers, family counselors and dieticians have touted the benefits of families having regular meals together. I came across an article that tells another reason family dinners are important: they build language skills! Numerous studies show that children who regularly eat meals with their families have a larger vocabulary. When families take the time to eat together, they generally eat foods that are better for them and engage in conversations that build strong family relationships. Kids learn about the rules of conversation; parents and kids learn from each other about what's going on in their lives.

Family dinners provide that rare opportunity to have longer conversations that provide children with a chance to think, to hear words they may not be familiar with and enhance language development. Children are more likely to learn new vocabulary by figuring out how someone is using words in context rather than learning by direct instruction or giving its dictionary definition. For example, when a mother tells her young child not to sing at the table because it's rude—from the context, the child begins to understand what "rude" means. With older children, discussing world affairs, current events or homework research topics can help provide context and related vocabulary.

If the question, "What did you learn in school today?" gets the answer "not much" at your house, you may be wondering how to get the conversation going at the dinner table. Here are a few suggestions:

- Ask each other open-ended imaginative prompts like, "If you could have a wild animal as a pet, would you choose and why?" or "What special talent do you wish you possessed?" or "Tell me about someone who is really wonderful."
- Use family dinner conversation to plan an activity. Ask family members about a family vacation or outing. You can use the dinner hour to discuss the details.
- Play "20 Questions" with topics such as ancient cities, state capitals or mammals.
- Spotlight one family member with a special plate. On that night, other family members have to tell the person with the special plate what they like best about that person.

With just a little effort to take time to eat dinner as a family, you'll be helping your child build language skills, learn table manners and create strong family ties. It's worth a try!

Mel Stenger, Principal

Getting In The Know

Check Out These Resources!

Now you can see what books are in Kaiser School's library online! Go to <http://library.ousd.k12.ca.us> then go to "Kaiser", then go to the catalog tab to search for books in our library. Wow!

Another great online resource available to you is Net Trek.

Go to <http://school.nettrekker.com/frontdoor/>

User name: ousdtrek

Password: ousdtrek

Our school district has subscribed to this site to provide resources for teachers to plan their classes, and for parents to get information for their children. I showed this to Ms. Bailey and she was amazed!

Teacher In-Service on Jan. 26

January 26 will be an in-service day when the faculty will review how the students are doing, how we are doing, and how we can improve. We welcome your input. If you want to leave a note for us in the office, I will convey your ideas to the staff. We're always looking for ways to improve.

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Jan. 7	Information meeting for prospective kindergarten parents, 6 p.m.
Jan. 19	MLK Jr. Day – No School
Jan. 21	Family Reading Night & PTA general meeting, 7 p.m.
Jan. 26	In-Service day – No School
Jan. 28	PTA board meeting
Jan. 30	Asian potluck
Feb. 16	Presidents Day – No School
Feb. 27	African American potluck

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/kaiserelementaryschool_group/

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!

**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
Copy editor: Wendy Harcarik

Kaiser Kiosk

Kindergarten Info Meeting

There will be an information meeting for prospective kindergarten parents on Wednesday, January 7, at 6 p.m. Please tell any friends, relatives or neighbors with incoming kindergartners about this meeting. Word of mouth is our best advertisement!

Check out the online link to school lunch menus on the OUSD website under "Parents, Health & Wellness" at: <http://webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/WebItem.aspx?WebItemID=138&TabID=145>. A great site to bookmark!

Auction Update

Now that all auction payments have been received and expenses paid, the final auction numbers are now in, and it is fantastic news. We made a net profit of \$40,968.89. That's almost \$6,000 more than our goal of \$35,000! Thank you again to our auction chairs Dora Tobiassen and Linda Esquivel and everyone who helped make it not only a great fundraiser but a fun time for all. And thank you to all parents, friends and family who came and gave so generously.

Mark Your Calendar for Family Reading Night!

The PTA will host its annual Family Reading Night on Wednesday, January 21 at 7 p.m. Please join us for an hour of storytelling, hot chocolate and fun! Everyone is encouraged to come in their PJs and bring pillows and blankets. We hope to have some special storytelling guests.

This night also will serve as a General PTA Meeting night. The PTA president, Janice Murphy, will be in the library to give all members an update on our current budget and answer any questions you may have about any PTA-related issue.

If you plan to attend, please detach the portion below by Monday, Jan. 19, and give it to Robin Sasada in the office so that we can make sure we have enough hot chocolate for everyone. Hope to see you there!

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 Yes, we will be there!

Number attending _____

Name: _____