



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2, 2009

Dear Kaiser Families,

The sound of laughter came pouring out of the multipurpose room. It was only 6:30 and the hall was quickly filling up with our school community, gathered to celebrate Asian New Year. Gung Hay Fat Choy! Gung Hay Fat Choy! That was the chanted greeting Friday evening. Many children dressed for the occasion, whether or not they were themselves Asian, to give respect and another layer of celebration. Old friends and new came together and filled their plates from the communal table. Many Asian cultures were represented this year. Like so many families, food is the center of our celebrations, and this was no exception. And it was delicious! Thanks to all who contributed.

Later, after we had feasted on long noodles for long life and other treats, there was some entertainment. Alumnus Neil Wessling and his younger sister Mei demonstrated some martial arts moves and we were all impressed. Many of the children gathered on stage to perform a dragon dance. They lined up under a dragon body and wound around the stage as other kids beat rhythm instruments, all in an effort to chase away the evil spirits from this year. Based on the noise they made, I think we're safe!

Coming together to celebrate is a mark of a successful school and I think we do that well. We're working on another trait of successful schools, which is rewarding effort and achievement. Last week I passed out attendance awards and this week I'll be passing out academic achievement awards. We don't do this very often at Kaiser, but it's time we did. Too often kids who work steadily receive no public recognition for their efforts and they deserve to be recognized.

Children in grades 2-5 who have achieved Benchmark or Above on the midyear tests for English/Language Arts or math, or who have grown at least one level in either of those two areas, will receive a certificate recognizing their effort and achievement. I gave the lists of students to classroom teachers last week to confirm, because I wanted to let teachers include others who, according to the teachers' assessments, have made significant progress and may not have been as successful on the one-time district tests.

Trying to be sensitive to the possibility of comparison, we will distribute the certificates in the classroom this time. I am aware that some children will be disappointed, but I'm also mindful of the motivating power of awards. It's not easy to do things perfectly the first time. As we move into developing this part of our school culture, please let me know what you think.

Last year we initiated Kaiser Alive!, and that program will return. This month, February, is Facts Month. At the end of the month we will reward kids who have memorized math facts appropriate to their grade level. Aimee Goodrich, our computer instructor, will support the effort during computer time and we ask that parents help out at home. Teachers will be sending home information as to the expectations for your child's grade. Good luck!

Mel Stenger, principal

Getting In The Know

Dear Kaiser Parents:

Once again, we are facing drastic cuts to our state education budget that will affect us all—and as many of you may be aware, Kaiser is already running very lean. There's no "fat" to trim, and so more financial cuts are going to mean a loss of some important resources at our school. Therefore, it is important that we get momentum going to make sure that the governor and others in Sacramento realize that there are A LOT OF US against the current proposed cuts. Right now there is talk of another PTA-backed rally in Sacramento—I will let you know when I find out more about that. In the meantime, schools around Oakland are organizing a letter-writing campaign using a letter very much like the one attached. According to Senator Loni Hancock and Assembly Member Sandre Swanson, we need to show our support in sheer numbers by sending letters. It doesn't matter so much that they're original, just that there are a lot of them. So, please take a moment to print out the attached letter, sign it, and mail it today to Loni Hancock at her office in Sacramento. Feel free to make any changes to it as you see fit. You also can send one to Sandre Swanson and Governor Arnold Schwarzeneger at the addresses listed below:

Assembly Member Sandre Swanson
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849, Room 6012
Sacramento, CA 94249-0016

Governor Arnold Scharzeneger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Thank you for supporting Kaiser school and education in Oakland.

Janice Murphy
Kaiser School PTA President

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Feb. 16	Presidents Day – No School
Feb. 18	Assembly: Storyteller Diane Ferlatte 10 a.m. K-2; 11 a.m. 3-5
Feb. 27	African American potluck
March 27	Assembly: East Bay Community Orchestra 1:30 p.m. all grades

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!

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/

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

Sienna Ruiz Headed to District Spelling Bee

Congratulations to the Kaiser Elementary School Spelling Bee winner, Sienna Ruiz of grade 5! Sienna will be going to the district competition on February 5.

TAKE THE KIDS CHALLENGE

Kaiser Permanente is sponsoring the Kids Challenge program at East Bay Regional Parks. The 2009 Kids Challenge guidebook is filled with 15 self-paced activities for kids age 17 and under. All participants will receive a prize, and those who complete the Kids Challenge of trying five activities will receive a colorful commemorative patch and Frisbee (one per child, while supplies last).

Some activities require parent participation and/or additional fees. Materials are free to Alameda and Contra Costa County residents and kids of Kaiser Permanente employees. Registration is required; to sign up, call 1-888-EBPARKS (327-2757), option 2, 3.

Beginning Ballroom/Hip Hop Dancing Classes



**When: Saturday, 10-10:45 am - K-2nd grade
11-11:45 am - 3rd-5th grade**

**Where: Resurrection Lutheran Church
Euclid/Van Buren Street/Oakland**

Cost: \$10 per class per student

The instructor for this class is Makmud. Makmud is a professional international ballroom dancer who trained in Moscow and all over the world. His years of experience include professional dancing, instructor for children and competitions. His passion is to teach children in all areas of ballroom dance. Classes will start Saturday, February 7th for 12 weeks. Space is limited to 12 students. Please call or email Lori Admokom with questions or to enroll in the class (510-763-7027 or lusocha@sbcglobal.net)

**FEBRUARY IS
FACTS MONTH!**