



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 4, 2010

Dear Kaiser Families,

Welcome to the New Year! Happy 2010! "Twenty-ten, twenty-ten, twenty-ten!" Another decade has started and with it, hopes for a better world. Looking at the bright, happy faces of your children this morning, it's easy to believe in the future. Here's to the future they'll make! We were back at work before 9:00! As I made my way to the classrooms to welcome the kids back I was greeted by students engaged in their work and happy to be back in their groups. There was a familiar buzz of activity and learning. The teachers were prepared, the students were rested and ready, and the whole "machine" ran smoothly!

Evidence of your generosity! During December one of our parents, Roxie Samuels, led a campaign for Operation Smile. Operation Smile is an organization that provides surgery to children in other countries to repair cleft palates; in addition to beautifying the children the surgery helps them to eat and speak better. Roxie called me today and told me that our kids collected \$1,925! Wow! A big thank you goes to Roxie and to the wonderful kids here at Kaiser School!

More evidence of your generosity! At the Holiday Performances I passed around a basket and asked for donations to upgrade our educational technology. We need digital projectors for several classrooms, wireless internet connection (which the district may fund), and a better sound system in the multipurpose room. During the two shows we collected just over \$900 dollars! Thank you very much!

During those performances I explained where much of the PTA's budget goes and I told you about the personnel and enrichment programs provided through your efforts. Over the next couple of months I will be working with the faculty and our School Site Council to write a School Site Plan for next year. Because the state's budget for the coming years is so unpredictable, we need to prepare for possible changes in state support. We'll be looking for ways to provide the same level of service (or better!) than we do now. I've attached a summary of personnel and programs for your review. If you have any input regarding them, or ideas for next year, please email me at Hmel.stenger@ousd.k12.ca.us

On another topic: 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, 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

Kindergarten Info Meeting Scheduled for January 6

There will be an information meeting for prospective kindergarten parents on Wednesday, January 6, at 6:30 p.m. Please tell any friends, relatives, or neighbors with incoming kindergartners about this meeting. We are also hosting two tours that week. Word of mouth is our best advertisement!

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

Another great online resource is Net Trek. Go to [Hhttp://school.nettrekker.com/frontdoor/](http://school.nettrekker.com/frontdoor/)H user name: ousdtrek; Password: ousdtrek. This is a site that our school district has subscribed to in order to provide resources for teachers to plan their classes, and for parents to get information for their children.

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

**The online Pink Panther includes
information from our Wellness
Committee**

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. 6	Kindergarten Info. Night 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 18	MLK Day, No School
Jan. 20	SSC Meeting 4-5:30
Jan. 20	PTA Reading Night 6:30-8:30
Jan. 27	PTA Board Meeting 6:30
Jan. 29	Asian Potluck
	<i>Kaiser Staff positions 2009-</i>

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/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kaiserelementaryschool_group/)**

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

PTA President: Kimberlee White

Pink Panther Staff

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd

Copy editor: Wendy Harcarik

Kaiser Elementary School Wellness Council Helping to Raise Healthy Children



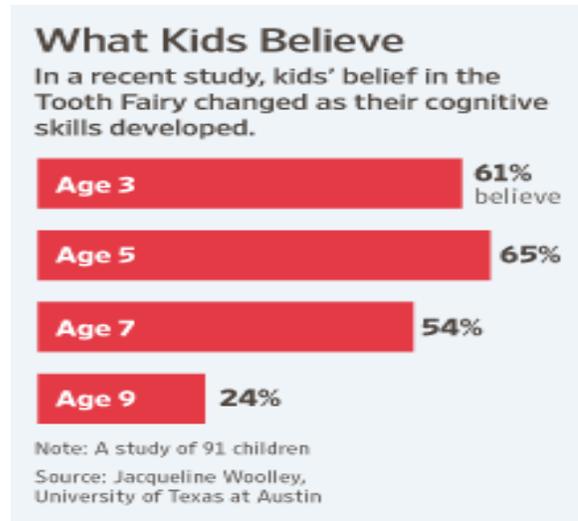
My husband and I spent part of the December holidays with his family that had gathered in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was a short airplane ride from the Bay area but I am not fond of those tiny spaces one has to sit in-I am over 6 feet tall and seem to always be behind someone who wants to put their seat back as far as possible taking up what little space I had. It was a short trip so the suffering time was minimal. What I was able to notice as she crashed back into me once was she was reading part of the Wall Street Journal with a headline-“The Power of Magical Thinking.” I asked if I could have it when she was done and she graciously agreed.

When my son was growing up, he had a whole family, the Witicures, who lived in his pockets. They were with him for over a year. They were a family of four that he could depend on for comfort and acceptance during a rather difficult time in our lives when maybe he felt he couldn’t count on all of us. He made sure to carefully empty his pockets before laundry day and move them somewhere safe. I never saw them but I believed in them too. We moved to another city they chose to stay behind. My son no longer needed them and they apparently no longer needed him.

Magical thinking is something I have a strong interest in- according to the Wall Street Journal, “Research Shows the Importance of Imagination in Children’s Cognitive Development”. Apparently for some time, imagination was thought of as a way for children to escape from reality, and once they reached a certain age, the theory was they would push fantasy aside and deal with the real world. Now child-development experts are recognizing the importance of imagination and the role it plays in understanding reality. Imagination is necessary for learning about people and events we don’t directly experience, such as history or events on the other side of the world. For younger children, it even allows them to explore the unknown future, including what they want to do when they grow up. (Doctor, lawyer, Indian chief)



Since the article was written for the December 22nd issue, Santa was part of the focus but it also looked at a belief in the Muppets and other well know characters. Look at this chart:



So, you are not alone if your child uses magical thinking. But you might wonder, what should you do, if anything? Well, according to Dr. Woolley, if the child already has an imaginary friend, for instance, parents should follow their children's lead and offer encouragement if they are comfortable doing so, she says. Similarly, with Santa, if a child seems excited by the idea, parents can encourage it. But if parents choose not to introduce or encourage the belief in fictitious characters, they should look for other ways to encourage their children's imaginations, such as by playing dress-up or reading fiction.

If a child asks if the Tooth Fairy is real you might want to assess their child's level of doubt. If the doubts appear strong then the child might be ready and it is time for the truth. Ideally, the child will find out for him or herself, usually from their friends at school. You can ask them, "What do you think?"

"Fantasy play is correlated with other positive attributes. In preschool children, for example, those who have imaginary friends are more creative, have greater social understanding and are better at taking the perspective of others" This according to Marjorie Taylor, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon and author of the book "Imaginary Companions and the Children Who Create Them." She also writes that imaginary friends can also be used to help children cope with stress, "This is strength of children, their ability to pretend," she says. "They can fix the problem with their imagination."

It's not easy being a child today. How do you separate real from fantasy? When I took my granddaughter to see the Princess and the Frog, I found myself startled and frightened by the previews of coming attractions. The marvels of movies make it all seem real. WE can look at that next week. By the way, I still miss the Witicures.

Barbara Blaser, RN

Kaiser Staff positions 2009-10

Positions decided and funded by Oakland Unified School District

These are positions which follow contract rules and over which we have little discretion. They include: 11 full-time classroom teachers, 1 PE teacher-3 days weekly, 1 Instrumental music teacher-2 days weekly, half-time Resource teacher and aide, speech pathologist-2 mornings weekly, school psychologist-1 morning weekly (for testing for learning needs), 1 Custodian, 1 Cafeteria/Food Service worker, 1 Administrative Assistant, and 1 Principal

Positions funded by Oakland Unified School District at our request:

These positions are funded out of our site budget according to our school site plan, and can be changed when the plan changes. They provide enrichment, intervention and support for our regular program.

- Instrumental music teacher assistant -2 days weekly
- Family Support Provider-4 days weekly
- Half time library clerk
- Counselor Trainee from JFK University-1 day per week
- Kindergarten aide
- Intervention tutor-grades1-5
- Fast ForWord coordinator (reading intervention)
- 3 lunch time yard supervisors

Positions funded by Kaiser PTA:

These positions are funded by our PTA according to our school site plan, and can be changed when the plan changes and at the discretion of the PTA board. They provide enrichment and support for the regular school program.

- Librarian and math intervention provider-4 days weekly
- Art instructor-2 days weekly (partially grant funded)
- Orff music instructor-1½ days weekly (partially grant funded)
- Computer instructor and maintenance-2 days weekly
- School clerical aide
- Lunch time yard supervisor