



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

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

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 13, 2010

Dear Kaiser Families,

Have you ever had the experience of standing in front of the refrigerator with the door open and not knowing what you want? Maybe you couldn't sleep and you wandered into the kitchen. We pretty much know what's in the fridge. After all, we put whatever's in there, *in there*. We stand, staring, as if something else would inhabit that cool, dark space, something other than what we have so dutifully packed away from the evening's dinner. Then maybe we eat something, a spoon of leftover pudding or a torn scrap of the rosemary chicken, or maybe not...And we close the door and walk away not truly satisfied.

Why do we believe in the possibility of there being something in the refrigerator beyond what we ourselves have put there, or that something we've put there will have transformed into a different, surprising, tasty morsel? I can almost hear my mother scold, "Close the door! You already know what's in there!"

Maybe you've had similar experiences of not knowing exactly what it is you want. Sometimes the only clear thing is that *we want*. What is that un-named hunger? What is that emptiness that occasionally surfaces but lacks clear definition? Can it be satisfied by some attention from a companion, a gesture of kindness, some new clothes, a drink of cold milk in a dark kitchen? Hope and expectation are clearly part of the human condition. Even disappointment and grief are signs of hope because they would not happen if we weren't hopeful to begin with.

Children let themselves hope for everything. When we ask them about Christmas, their faces are filled with wonder and awe as they imagine the possibilities. They are consumed by hope. It does not enter their minds to temper their hopes with realism, or to restrict their dreams with the limits of time, money or physics. A child will tell you without pause that Santa will land on their roof in the middle of the night to bring them a pony for Christmas, without ever considering the slant of the roof or the lack of a chimney! They are transformed by the experience of hope into believing the impossible.

Before we label such experiences as silly games of early childhood, consider what the dreaming does for the child. It releases the child from the confinement of their current reality so that they can create another version of themselves. They dream of being happier, wiser, "bigger" and it pushes them to try to make their dream come true. If they were content with all the adult reminders about what they couldn't do, they would never have the courage to believe they could do something more.

Sometimes it's hard to continue to hope. Life can make us weary and we come to expect less and less. We look at the kids and envy the ease with which they hope for something better and we're saddened when we think how reality will destroy their innocent dreams.

We have a part to play: It is our job to create possibilities for transformation. We can choose to believe things can get better, even when the facts say otherwise. We can dream that relationships can improve. We can commit ourselves to the continued growth of our children, our family, our school in the face of limited time and resources. We can model for our kids how to be people of hope.

What do we dare hope for? What do we dare dream of?

Happy holidays!

Mel Stenger, Principal

Getting In The Know

TOYS for TOTS

We have extended the Toy Drive deadline until December 16th.

Fire Station #18 is very excited with all the great toys we will be delivering to them in time for Christmas.

THANK YOU so much Wonderful Kaiser Families for your generosity!!

There is still time to make a child's Christmas that much brighter with a toy from you. So please put donations in the bin by the office labeled "Toys for Tots."

Thank You,
The Daisys 30445 and Fire Station #18

KAISER CALENDAR

DATE / DAY	EVENT
Dec. 15	Winter Music Concert, grades K-3, 6:30 pm
Dec. 16	Winter Music Concert, grades 4-5, 6:30 pm
Dec. 17	After School Programs performance, 9 a.m.
Dec. 20	Winter Break Begins
Jan. 3	Classes Resume
Feb. 5	Kaiser Auction

There will be an information meeting for Kindergarten on Wednesday, January 5, at 6:30 p.m. Please tell interested friends and family. If you are interested in attending as a supportive parent please

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

Pink Panther's PTA Sponsors

PTA President: Kimberlee White

Pink Panther Staff

Co-editors: Jolie McRae & Carrie Shepherd

Copy editor: Wendy Harcarik

**Check out the complete 2010-2011 school year calendar at
www.kaiserelementary.org/calendar**

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/

Kaiser Kiosk

Claremont Information Night: Dec.14

Interested in learning more about Claremont? Please join us next Tuesday, December 14, at 6:30 PM in the school cafeteria. Snacks and refreshments will be served. Current students and parents also are encouraged to come and share your experience.

Claremont has an enrollment of 430, and has posted a 90-point API gain over the past two years. It also has an outstanding elective program featuring an award winning band and orchestra, transformational fine arts, and a cutting-edge computer animation program. Next year we hope to add Spanish. Information night provides an opportunity to learn more about Claremont and to meet our community. For more information, contact Assistant Principal John Stangl, john.stangl@ousd.k12.ca.us .

Thanks to Dora Pulido-Tobiasson and all who helped with the World Heritage potluck last Friday! We celebrated holiday traditions around the world. The food was delicious and there were happy faces all around! If you missed it, there'll be another in the spring.

School Site Council Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 15, at 4:00. We will be reviewing the site safety plan and a summary of student performance data. All are welcome!

Isn't it fun to take off the wrapping and see what's inside a gift? It may be a surprise and yet still make you happy. I hope you have time over the holidays to get into some conversations with your children and to see this child-gift. If we believe our children are gifts, that belief can transform our relationships with them.