



Carmeletter

Issue 01

El Carmelo PTA Newsletter

Sep 11, 2009

Welcome back to school!

El Carmelo Calendar

El Carmelo Calendar:

- Sept. 08: PTA General Meeting, Special Guest Speaker Principal Chuck Merritt, 8:30 am, MP Room
- Sept. 08: Kinder Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
- Sept. 10: 1st Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
- Sept. 15: 2nd Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
- Sept. 17: 3rd Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
Picture Day
Welcome Luncheon for Teachers
- Sept. 21: Original Works Fundraiser Begins
- Sept. 22: 4th Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
- Sept. 24: 5th Grade Class Picnic 5-7 pm
- Sept. 25: No School, Local Holiday
- Sept. 28: No School, Local Holiday
- Sept. 30: Vision Screening K-2-5

Principal's Letter

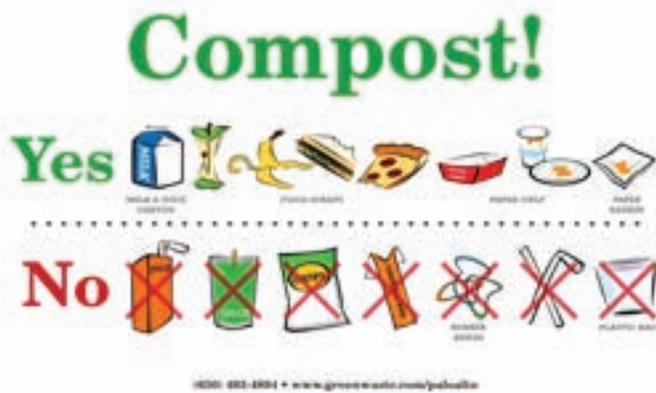


Dear El Carmelo parents,
Let me take this opportunity to once again welcome everyone back to El Carmelo Elementary! We've had our New Family Ice Cream Social and both Back to School Nights already, and we are now in the thick of the school year. There are many new things at the school to be excited about this year, and I'd like to share a few of them with you:

Landscaping – The PAUSD Landscaping Dept. has been showering us with attention over the summer, not only taking good care of our fields, but also completely renewing the landscaping in the front of the school. Thank you PAUSD Landscaping!

Everyday Math – The excitement is multiplying! After extensive training during the summer for teachers (and principals), the staff is geared up to make the most of this great math curriculum. Look for more information in your students' classrooms.

Trash Talk – Everyone's talking about composting at El Carmelo. We were chosen to be part of a "waste diversion" pilot by the City of Palo Alto, along with Terman Middle School. Just a few schools are trying out this new way to redirect waste to recycling and now composting. Here are a couple of visuals to help you understand our new process:



Thank you for talking about this with your kids. We want our students to feel proud of being at the forefront of an effort that can eventually dramatically reduce the total waste output of our community.

Wishing you a wonderful school year,

Sincerely,
Chuck Merritt
Principal

PTA President's Letter



Hello El Carmelo Parents and Staff,

Welcome new families and returning families! May you all have a safe, healthy and happy year full of learning.

I have the honor of serving as the El Carmelo PTA (Parent Teacher Association) President this year. I work hand in hand with Principal Chuck Merritt, our fabulous teachers, a team of dedicated PTA Board members, and a host of amazing PTA volunteers.

Have you ever wondered ... what is the origin of the PTA? Why does it exist? In the spirit of learning, I did some research. The answer is more than bake sales.

The PTA is the oldest child advocacy organization in the United States. It was founded in the year 1897! And it's still going strong today with over 5 million members in all 50 states nationwide. As the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation, the PTA provides parents and teachers with a voice to speak on behalf of every child.

What does this mean? It means the PTA has served a pivotal role for the past one hundred years in **laying the foundation for the educational environment we all enjoy today.**

It all started in 1897 with two visionary women Phoebe Apperson Hearst (the mother of famous publisher William Randolph Hearst) and Alice McLellan Birney who were greatly concerned about the nation's children. The United States was at a critical juncture with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. These women saw a wave of immigrant children moving from farms to the city who were being exploited in factories, mines and on city streets. These kids couldn't go to school and often didn't have enough to eat. In grass roots fashion, Phoebe and Alice called a meeting (expecting only 200). Over 2,000 men and women surprised them by filling a hall in Washington DC. And so the PTA (originally called the National Congress of Mothers) was born. Their goal was simple: advocate for children's safety, health and productive futures.

Here's just a fraction of what the PTA has done for us in the past hundred years:

- creation of a juvenile justice system
- creation of kindergarten classes
- establishment child labor laws
- founding of the hot lunch program
- mandatory immunizations for all school children
- legislation on education of migrant children
- teacher education scholarships
- physical education classes in public schools
- increased wages for teachers
- comprehensive health education
- cooperation with colleges committee
- comprehensive Parenting Project
- Kids At Risk legislation agenda
- statewide Math and Science Initiatives
- Bring Back the Arts campaign, etc.
- working with local, city, state and national legislators to ensure that public school finance is a top priority.

For a fascinating history and complete list of PTA accomplishments you can visit:

<http://www.capta.org/sections/basics/brief-history.cfm>.

What's the relevance of the PTA Today? The PTA continues its fight for children's health, safety, and education in our local schools and communities. PTA members help parents learn the skills they need to raise happy confident children.

Where does El Carmelo fit in? The teachers and parents at El Carmelo play an important role in this ongoing effort! Please know that your PTA membership goes to an invaluable cause. The time you donate on behalf of the PTA (over 250,000 hours of time to our Palo Alto school district just last year!) is critical to the success of our schools.

At the end of the day, every child benefits from these hard working teachers and parents who give and give of themselves to the PTA and in our classrooms. So we'd like to see every parent contribute. Please step up to pass along the legacy that we've all inherited thanks to the PTA founders Phoebe and Alice.

Most gratefully,

Jennifer Mutz

PTA President and Mom

(husband *Andy*, daughter in grade 4, son in grade 1)

Editors' Corner

We are the co-editors of the Carmeletter for the 2009-2010 school year. The Carmeletter is published monthly and provides details of upcoming school events, calendars, and information about teachers, staff members, and other members of the El Carmelo community. It also regularly includes communications from the Principal, PTA President, and PTA Event Chairs.

If you are a teacher, student, or parent and would like to share information about something new or exciting happening here at El Carmelo, we would love to hear from you! Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind while submitting articles for publication in the Carmeletter:

- Please submit articles on time. The next submission deadline for the October Carmeletter issue will be posted on the El Carmelo eNews.
- A list of submission due dates for 2009-2010 will also be posted on the PTA Bulletin Board/glass case outside the school office, as well as on the school website.
- The best way to submit articles is by email, with an attached Word file, to the following email address – carmeletter@paloaltopta.org. If necessary, hard copies of articles can be left in the Carmeletter editor folder located in the office beneath the teachers' mailboxes.
- When submitting anything which requires a special layout design (e.g. flyer, logo, other), please send it in .pdf format. All photographs should be in .jpg format.
- Please try to keep the length of the articles to no longer than one (1) page. We realize there may be exceptions to the general rule, but, whenever possible, please keep the submissions as short and as concise as possible.
- Articles may be edited for length, grammar, punctuation, accuracy, and spelling.
- Please make sure you have reviewed the times, dates, locations, and name spellings in the articles before submitting them.
- We may limit the number of articles published each month for specific groups or events. In doing so, we will be mindful of our target audience and will attempt to be as fair as possible.
- If multiple articles are submitted from a specific group or committee in the same month, we may postpone the publication of one or more articles to the extent the information is not timely.
- No advertisements or individual/commercial promotions are permitted. Articles not specifically related to the El Carmelo community may be referred to the PAUSD Community Kiosk.
- Please consider viewing the monthly Carmeletter online (www.el-carmelo.pausd.org) as an alternative to receiving the hard copy each month (see Maria Derrick's note below). This results in a savings of time and printing costs for the PTA.

In the future, you can find a copy of these guidelines on the school website. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you throughout the school year!

Maria Whealan
Carmeletter Co-Editor
mbwhealan@gmail.com

Geeta Iyer
Carmeletter Co-Editor
geetai@yahoo.com

Carmeletter On-Line

By *Maria Derrick*, Carmeletter Distribution Volunteer

Want to save paper and remain up-to-date with El Carmelo news? Get the Carmeletter on-line only. If you're interested, send an email to Maria Derrick at wesderrick@mindspring.com.

Spotlight

By Jennifer Wiener

We're fortunate at El Carmelo to have such incredible teachers and staff. Here are a few more details about two of our teachers who are new – or are doing something new – at El Carmelo this year.



Michelle Haughney – Third Grade, Room 19

Michelle Haughney is a familiar face at El Carmelo. For the past 3 years, she's taught 1st grade here, but this year she is teaching 3rd grade. *Michelle's* enthusiasm and love for teaching is contagious. "I always wanted to be a teacher," she says. She grew up in Washington, where her parents and sister still live. Her mother was a teacher and gave *Michelle* lots of opportunities to help in the classroom. "I've been decorating bulletin boards since I could talk, practically." *Michelle* graduated from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and spent 5 years teaching elementary school in Los Angeles before relocating to the Bay Area and joining El Carmelo.

She loves working with children and being there when a child "gets" something for the first time. She also enjoys the creativity involved in teaching – everyday involves new challenges, activities, and experiences.

When she's not working, you might find *Michelle* at a baseball game. She is a **huge** baseball fan. She's a true Mariners fan, but she loves going to all baseball games – especially when she travels. This summer she visited St. Louis and had a great time at a Cardinals game. This summer was also busy because she and her husband Bill became homeowners and are keeping busy settling in. She enjoys cooking and doing anything crafty.



Lori Beasley – First Grade, Room 7

Lori Beasley teaches 1st grade (shared with *Gina Fortt*, who teaches the class on Fridays). She's been teaching in the Palo Alto school district for 12 years, with the last 10 years at Barron Park. *Lori* is returning from a 2-year leave of absence, following the birth of her daughter *Fiona*, who is now 2 years old. She also has a 3.5 year old son, *Thomas*.

She grew up in San Jose, the 5th child of seven children (she has 3 brothers and 3 sisters). She went to UC Berkeley and graduated in Environmental Science. Her decision to go into teaching was based, in part, on a sense of responsibility to the community. "I had a sense of wanting to give back, to pass on the great educational experience that I had growing up," *Lori* explains. She also wanted to make science really fun and interesting for children. She loves seeing the dramatic change in 1st graders over the course of a year. "Kids love to learn," she explains, "and it's fun to be a part of that."

When she's not working or caring for her children, she's a Masters Swimmer. She is actually swimming from Alcatraz to the shore on September 12! In preparation for this event, she's been doing bay swims for 8 weeks. Good luck, *Lori*! We can't wait to hear about it!

Everyday Mathematics

El Carmelo, along with all of PAUSD, implemented a great new math curriculum, Everyday Mathematics (EDM) this year. This program gives the students an intuitive understanding of math while at the same time focuses on computational proficiency. This program engages the kids by using games as a large part of the program. Many of these games needed to be created. To help the teachers and students be successful in this new program, I've had a crew of volunteers helping make these games who need a big THANK YOU: *Maria Derrick, Ana-Maria Dias, Karole Goldie, Michele Kasper, Shirley Siu, Jennifer Mutz, Sherwin Wong, Nina Hansen, Celina Tracy, Erina DuBois, and Anna Chan.*

This is a thank you from Ms. *Katie Kinnaman*, a second grade teacher at El Carmelo:

You are amazing! Having the games ready has been such an incredible help -- it is really an amazing service you are providing. Please tell all your volunteers that it is MUCH appreciated. It makes such a difference and really allows me to focus on what and how I am teaching, rather than spending a lot of time prepping games.

Katie Kinnaman

This work is on-going. If you are interested in helping, please contact me.

Stephanie Youngquist
Math Lab Coordinator
Yoyo2000@pacbell.net

Palo Alto Partners in Education



Welcome back!!!

I hope everyone had a relaxing summer, recharging themselves for another school year. I know everyone is busy with the start of school, but the PiE (Partners in Education) campaign has already begun.

First, I want to thank all the families who contributed to PiE last year. During these uncertain economic times, it was wonderful to see 66% El Carmelo families giving to PiE. PiE granted \$2.57 million to PAUSD this year. El Carmelo received \$105,000 which is used towards paying for the costs of teacher aides you see in your children's classes, Science enrichment from the Palo Alto Junior Museum, and Art enrichment through Spectra Arts. Thank you all for investing in our children.

I would also like to thank the many people who helped with the PiE campaign last year: *Mr. Merritt, Michele Kasper, Jennifer Mutz, Leslyn Leong, Megan Fogarty, Laura Schneider & Jody Lieb.*

Thank you for your continued support for PiE. California faces an uncertain budgetary future making your PiE donation even more critical this year. Please look for the donation forms in your children's Friday folders. Or you can go directly to www.papie.org to make a donation. And finally, please remember to see if you qualify for an "employee matching program."

Thank you,
Elizabeth Doi Ludwig, El Carmelo PiE Representative
If you have any questions, please contact:
Elizabeth Doi Ludwig elizdoiludwig@hotmail.com or
Alli Wong allison_wong17@yahoo.com

Go Back to School with a Waste-Free Reusable Lunch Kit

Go Back to School with a Waste-Free Reusable Lunch Kit from www.citizenpip.com and Earn Money for El Carmelo!

El Carmelo School has partnered with www.citizenpip.com, a company that sells reusable lunch kits designed to be fun and stylish for kids, and practical and convenient for parents. Everything in the kits is made from **eco-friendly** and lab-tested materials that are **lead-free, PVC-free, phthalate-free, and BPA-free**. Kits include an insulated lunch bag, stainless steel water bottle, BPA-free airtight food containers, stainless steel insulated food jar, stainless steel fork and spoon, and 100% cotton napkins. Items may be ordered separately.

Packing your kids a waste-free lunch is not only better for the environment, but it will reduce our waste collection costs and result in substantial savings for our school. Help us spend less money on trash and more money on school programs! During checkout, enter school code **iloveELCARMELO** and 15% of your purchase will be donated to El Carmelo School.

ORIGINAL WORKS IS COMING!

El Carmelo has teamed up with Original Works – the #1 art-based program in the country – which allows you to have your child's very own artwork reproduced onto a selection of over 20 quality products. These products range from magnets, mugs, and mouse pads to t-shirts, tote bags, and tiles. The wide selection of professionally produced, full color products offers something for everyone. And, your participation will earn money for El Carmelo with every product purchased!

Your child can create the artwork at home on 8½ x 11" cardstock and also through some art opportunities at lunch time at school. You will then have the opportunity to order whatever products you wish with your child's own artwork featured on each and every product.

Complete program, product, and pricing information will be in your child's October 2nd Friday folder. Orders will be due October 16th, and items will be done the first week in December.

Additional product and program information, as well as customer testimonials, can be found at www.originalworks.com.

Stephanie Youngquist
VP of Fundraising

Sign Up for eScrip Today

Raise Money for El Carmelo at No Cost to You - Sign Up for eScrip Today

eScrip is a fundraising program that allows you to make donations to El Carmelo simply by shopping with merchants you already patronize. Whenever you use a registered Safeway or Macy's card, or your credit/debit card at participating merchants, those businesses will contribute between 1% and 4% of your purchase directly to El Carmelo.

Last year, the PTA received about \$8000 from eScrip, thanks to the participation of many El Carmelo families and friends. As the economy continues to suffer, your participation is increasingly important, since it helps to pay for many important PTA-funded programs and items like classroom computers, field trips, Homework Club, Visiting Authors, Teacher Appreciation, Parent Education, PE/Recess Equipment, and Math/Science enrichment.

Signing up is easy and costs you nothing. Just go to www.escrip.com, designate El Carmelo PTA as the recipient, and register your Safeway, Macy's, credit and debit cards. Then, whenever you shop at participating merchants using these cards, a donation is made to our school at no cost to you.

If you have questions or need help signing up, please contact one of the El Carmelo eScrip coordinators:

Maria Derrick
wesderrick@mindspring.com
330-0598

Julia Jacobsen
juliajac@aol.com
856-7935

Special Program: 10% Goes Back to Schools at Safeway

If you used your Safeway Club card when shopping at Safeway and purchased specially marked products between August 12 and September 15, you can earn 10% of the purchase price for El Carmelo. For three weeks beginning September 18, your cash register receipt will have a redemption code printed at the bottom. Simply turn in your receipt (or just the bottom of the receipt containing the redemption code) to the envelope in the main office, and we'll process it for you. If you are an eScrip member, your donation will automatically be credited to El Carmelo.

Questions? Contact one of the El Carmelo eScrip coordinators:

Maria Derrick
wesderrick@mindspring.com
330-0598

Julia Jacobsen
juliajac@aol.com
856-7935

El Carmelo Auction



This year's theme is Alice in Wonderland.

Join our school community for a magical adventure on Friday, March 26, 2010, for the 33rd annual El Carmelo Auction! It is a chance to dress up or dress silly and have fun with friends. You can buy enchanting adventures, parties, or other goodies and know that all the proceeds benefit our children directly.

Thank you to those who filled out the auction survey at the end of last year. Due to popular demand, the auction will be held at the University Club from 6 to 11 pm. The evening will also feature a full sit-down dinner followed by dancing.

Please donate your help, even if only for an hour, to planning the auction. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me. It is a great way to meet other parents. I have found that friendships are created and cemented when you work side by side on a common cause.

So remember to save the date and start lining up a babysitter for a fun evening in Wonderland!

Ana-Maria Dias
Auction Chair
650-326-5854
anamaria_am99@yahoo.com

A Special Mention

Our very own El Carmelo parent, *Carrie Manley*, was one of only five people presented with a prestigious Honorary Service Award in June 2009 at the Palo Alto PTA Council's Annual Honorary Service Awards. *Carrie* received the award for her passion in educating the parent body of our community. For two years, *Carrie* served as co-VP of Parent Education for the PTA Council, providing schools across the entire district with leading experts, DVDs of programs, teacher trainings, and well structured school board candidate forums. We thank you, *Carrie*, for your tireless volunteer efforts reaching the lives of thousands, beginning with the parents at El Carmelo.

10MileClub

by *Jennifer Mutz*, parent volunteer

Run by PTA volunteers: *Dana Roman, Susan Gordon, Jennifer Mutz and Marie Decreau*

It's happening again this year, folks! Run, walk, skip – it's up to the kids, and all grades are welcome! Starting mid-September, Tuesdays at lunch. Please stop by Room 22.

Did you know that last year over 130 El Carmelo students participated in the 10 Mile Club?

- It's wonderful for the kids because
- it helps them stay fit
- helps get their "wiggles" out, so they can focus more easily in the classroom
- they get to socialize and make new friends
- they learn persistence
- they may want to bike/walk to school (good for the earth)
- they are setting exercise goals and challenging themselves to reach them

Here's how it works:

During recess, the kids run a large lap in the field, blacktop, and tether ball area.

Any distance is super and the child receives recognition after reaching 5 or more laps. After reaching 50 laps (10 miles), they get a prize!

Sneakers are best. Have your child bring their own water bottle if they plan to run so they stay hydrated.

We're looking forward to seeing our veteran runners/walkers/skippers (anything that keeps the kids groovin'), and we always welcome new 10Milers. You may even see a teacher or two joining in!

Carmeletter Publication Members

<i>Jennifer Mutz</i>	PTA President
<i>Susy Kim</i>	PTA Vice-President of Communications
<i>Chuck Merritt</i>	Principal
<i>Maria Whealan</i>	Co-Editor
<i>Greeta Iyer</i>	Co-Editor
<i>Jennifer Wiener</i>	Back-up Editor / Spotlight Articles
<i>Wen Li</i>	Layout
<i>Maria Derrick</i>	Distribution
<i>Marcus Aiu</i>	Web Master
<i>Susy Kim</i>	eNews

A HUGE 'Thank you' to all these volunteers ...

- ... preparing the Everyday math program and Math Lab materials and resources for the teachers and children throughout the entire summer: *Stephanie Youngquist*, supported by parents *Michele Kasper, Erina Dubois, Ana-Maria Dias, Shirley Siu, Karole Goldie, Nina Hansen, and Sherwin Wong.*
- ... coordinating all the new Kinder parents for playdates over the summer, setting up a Yahoo group, and attending the playdates: *Nina Hansen*, our Chair, supported by *Kate Karagueuzian Gibbons, Kristine Mostofizadeh, and Tais Schmitt .*
- ... organizing our annual Ice Cream Social for new families with invitations, coordination, heading up the event for 200 people: *Nina Hansen*, our Chair, supported by her husband *Jorgen, Doreen Rehbock, and Stephanie Youngquist.*
- ... matching current families with new families and greeting all the new families at the Ice Cream Social: *Erin Duran*, our Chair, supported by her husband *David Duran, Laura Tannenwald* and a team of approximately 20 welcome families.
- ... hosting a lovely First Day Coffee: *Jen Donat*, Chair, supported by *Kristine Mostofizadeh, Karen Geiselhart, Debra Wittenbrink, Leslyn Leong, Erina DuBois, April Heron, Christine Hodson, Erika Krugler, Kathleen Ford, Yvette Bovee.*
- ... hosting the Kinder Coffee and contributing food to welcome our kinders: *Angela Dunnigan*, Chair, supported by parents
- ... promoting and staffing Back-to-School nights (both Kinder and upper grades) and guiding parents through our new format: Chairs *Simone Klass and Andrea Christensen*
- ... running the Spirit Shop on Back-to-School nights and fulfilling orders for our great new gear: *Sherwin Wong* supported by *Cecile Limborg*
- ... kicking off our eScrip program for the year by signing up parents at BTS Nights: *Maria Derrick and Julia Jacobson*
- ... pulling parent volunteers together to begin planning for our biggest fundraiser of the year, the Auction: *Ana-Maria Dias*
- ... bringing in the PAUSD nurse to train our newest lice checkers: Coordinator *Michele Kasper*
- ... being our school supplies shopping wizard and ensuring all our kids had them all on the very first day of school: *Kelly Zenger*
- ... working behind the scenes as the PTA One Check Form processing team of twelve people responsible for data entry, summer mailings, tracking orders and donations, check cashing, and the school directory -- and all this to keep it simple for the families on the front end: *Christine Hodson, Maya Venkatraman, Erica Brand, Yi-Mei Chang, Sherwin Wong, Ana-Maria Dias, Shirley Siu, Kelly Zenger*
- ... kicking off our citizenpip lunch kit fundraiser for the PTA and supporting our school green efforts: *Stephanie Youngquist*
- ... meeting with Principal *Merritt* about Emergency Preparedness: PTA liaison *Maria Derrick*
- ... being the Room Parent Coordinator and reaching out to and training all our new Room Parents in each grade: *Sherwin Wong*
- ... working so parents could receive eNews before school even started: *Susy Kim*, Communications VP
- ... co-editing our first newsletter of the year and working together as a team moving forward: *Maria Whealan, Geeta Iyer, and Wen Li*
- ... taking on the PTA web site project as Webmaster for a second year and updating our information to be readily available to parents online: *Marcus Aiu*
- ... spearheading our Recycling Pilot Program effort with Palo Alto City Recycling to help our school go green and save money: Teacher *Diane McCoy* and Principal *Chuck Merritt*
- ... preparing our six-month PTA audit in such a thorough manner and ensuring our books are in order: *Calvin Woon*, PTA Auditor
- ... investing their summer vacation time in training and preparing for the new Every Day Math curriculum so they could hit the ground running in the fall for all our children: all our wonderful teachers