



# Carmeletter

Issue 05

El Carmelo PTA Newsletter

Jan. 15, 2010

## *Happy New Year!*

### El Carmelo Calendar

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|---------|--|
| Jan. 05 | Kindergarten Registration begins                         |
| Jan. 13 | Auction Art Session 5th grade, 1:30-3pm                  |
| Jan. 14 | Lego Night, MP Room, 6-8pm                               |
| Jan. 18 | No School, Holiday                                       |
| Jan. 20 | Auction Art Session 4th grade, 1:30-3pm                  |
| Jan. 22 | No School, Local Holiday                                 |
| Jan. 25 | Book Exchange begins                                     |
| Jan. 27 | Auction Art Session 3rd grade, 1:30-3pm                  |
| Jan. 28 | Carmeletter Submission deadline for Feb. 5th publication |
| Jan. 29 | Kinder Open House, 9am                                   |
| Jan. 30 | Family Service: Give It All Away Day                     |
| Feb. 04 | Bingo Night, MP Room, 6-8pm                              |

## Principal's Letter



Happy New Year!

While we are all trying to figure out how to remember to write 2010, I'd thought I'd let you know about some character education initiatives we're implementing at El Carmelo in 2010.

Along with *Alicia Becerra's* wonderful character education series that is being delivered in classrooms and our Character Education assemblies (monthly by topic and the Free to Be series about bullying), we have invested in improving the experience of students on the playground through the Peaceful Playgrounds program.

Peaceful Playgrounds is a program that addresses the need for students to have a variety of sports, games and other activities with clear rules and procedures. It includes activities, equipment and instructions. The program also addresses best practices for playground procedures (such as the 'end of recess' procedure), many of which were already part of the El Carmelo recess practices. Both the new and old practices include procedures for students to use to resolve conflicts they may have during play.

Another great aspect of Peaceful Playgrounds is that it ties into our PE curriculum (we even received a grant from the PAUSD PE department to make Peaceful Playgrounds happen). Games available at recess will also be taught during PE, many of which may be creatively adapted by students to make new games. The Peaceful Playgrounds program includes many new games, some of which will require painting additional lines on the blacktop, in various colors for multiple-use spaces. If you would like to help with this, please let me know ([cmerritt@pausd.org](mailto:cmerritt@pausd.org)).

We've already seen an enthusiastic response to the new equipment and procedures that have been introduced. As this month proceeds, the El Carmelo Peaceful Playgrounds committee will continue to introduce new games, equipment and procedures to help students at El Carmelo enjoy an active and enjoyable recess. Please feel free to ask how this is going.

Sincerely,  
*Chuck Merritt*  
 Principal

## PTA President's Letter



Happy New Year! Welcome back.

Although the holidays are over, this month at El Carmelo we have opportunities to continue in the holiday spirit having fun together, giving, and helping others in the community.

First, El Carmelo Lego Night is coming up. It's a fun way for kids and parents to enjoy spending time together. Second, the El Carmelo Book Exchange is your chance to give the gift that keeps on giving: books. What a better way to maintain the holiday spirit than passing along your kids' favorite used books for another child to discover. Your child in return receives books to enjoy. Third, El Carmelo families can continue helping others in our community who need assistance. The Green Team and PTA are collaborating with local agencies to bring household clothes and other items to people in need. Please take time to read the articles about these wonderful opportunities to socialize with El Carmelo families while generously supporting each other with used books and those in our community with greatly needed household items.

Finally, thank you to all the El Carmelo parents and teachers who have joined the PTA to support our children. Your PTA membership is invaluable.

*Jennifer Mutz*  
 PTA President

## Important Registration Dates!

For Incoming Kinders!

Jan. 5 - Kindergarten Registration begins online.

Whether you are a parent new to the school district, or a parent of older siblings at El Carmelo with incoming kinders, you MUST register your child with PAUSD!

Kinder registration MUST be submitted online between January 5 and February 10, 2010 to receive Priority 1 status. Registrations completed after February 10, 2010 are date and time stamped and will receive Priority 2 status. El Carmelo will host a Kinder Open House on Friday, January 29, 9am for parents of incoming kinders (adults only).

Go to [www.pausd.org](http://www.pausd.org) and click on enrollment for details. If you have questions or need access to a computer, you may call the PAUSD central attendance office or the El Carmelo office for assistance.

For 5th Grade Parents!

Middle school general information meetings will be held:  
February 24 at 7pm at each middle school (JLS, Jordan and Terman)

More information will be available at that time regarding:

- fifth grade middle school visits on May 21 from 10:30am-12pm
- choice program information meetings in March
  - Jordan Spanish Immersion March 3 at 7pm
  - Terman Direct Instruction March 3 at 7pm
  - JLS Connections March 2 at 7pm

Middle school choice program applications are due on March 19, 2010.

## A very Happy New Year to all from PiE!

Thank you to the 42.8% of El Carmelo families who have already donated to PiE.  
That's 145 families!



Before the Donation Days campaign, we had only 22.9% of our El Carmelo families participating. Donation Days was a success thanks to the efforts of *Alli Wong* in organizing and getting volunteers. A big thank you to all of the El Carmelo parents who volunteered: *Carrie Manley, Leslyn Leong, Stephanie Youngquist, David Hodson, Maria Farhani, Maria Derrick, Erika Krugler, and Karole Goldie!*

Congratulations to the PiE raffle winners - *Bart* (student) and *Sherwin Wong* (El Carmelo parent).

Our goal is to reach the 66% participation rate that we met last year.

In order to achieve that, we need 54 more families to make a contribution to PiE. If you have donated in the past but haven't yet for this school year, please visit [www.papie.org](http://www.papie.org) and make a donation.

By supporting PiE, you support our children here at El Carmelo Elementary School. If you have never donated to PiE, now is your chance to make a difference in your child's education!

*Elizabeth Doi Ludwig*  
El Carmelo PiE Representative

## You are invited to a Free Art Session!

All students are invited to make art for El Carmelo's upcoming Auction! The kids will have fun with their friends while helping our school. The auction is El Carmelo's largest fundraiser and pays for many important programs.

Sessions will be held by grade and will be after school in the MP room. A light snack will be provided. Please see below for dates:

**5th Grade Art Session** - Wednesday, January 13 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**4th Grade Art Session** - Wednesday, January 20 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**3rd Grade Art Session** - Wednesday, January 27 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**2nd Grade Art Session** - Wednesday, February 3 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**1st Grade Art Session** - Wednesday, February 10 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**Kinder Art Session** - Wednesday, February 17 - 1:30-3:00 pm

**Parents:** If you would like your child to attend and/or would like to help please contact the auction chair or simply fill out the permission slip that will go home in the Friday folders and return it to the school office.

The auction is on **Friday, March 26, 2010**, at the University Club in Palo Alto. The theme is Alice in Wonderland.

Ana-Maria Dias  
Auction Chair  
650-326-5854  
[anamaria\\_am99@yahoo.com](mailto:anamaria_am99@yahoo.com)

## Book Exchange coming soon! Mark your Calendars!

The Annual Book Exchange will be held on **January 25th** through **January 28th** this year. Here is how it works:

- Students bring in previously read books of any level
- Teachers collect books from students on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings
- Parents help sort the books so that a fresh assortment of books can be distributed to teachers to give to students on Thursday
- Students can receive up to 5 "new" books for their donations
- Donate 1 book, receive 1 book; donate 5 books, receive 5 books; donate more than 5 books, receive 5 books
- Every child receives a book, even those who forget to donate

We need donations of more books (especially for higher grades) so every child can receive at least one book.

To volunteer or donate books, contact [asmita@runge.us](mailto:asmita@runge.us)

## Family Service Day

**Saturday, January 30, 9:30-11:30 am, El Carmelo MP Room**

Participate in El Carmelo's Second Family Service Day. Together we will sort, box, and deliver items collected during our Give It All Away Week. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please email [meganfogarty@gmail.com](mailto:meganfogarty@gmail.com) if your family would like to sign up.

## Give It All Away Week – January 25-30

All donated items must be clean and in good condition. Collect, bag, and drop any of the following items in the box at office:

- Backpacks and school supplies (pencils, pens, paper, staplers, glue, crayons)
- Books for all ages for the El Carmelo Book Exchange and Friends of the Library
- Hotel Toiletries and gift items for homeless individuals such as water bottles, mugs, umbrellas.
- Winter clothing, jeans, t-shirts, socks for all ages, including baby clothes
- Towels and Twin Bed Fitted Sheets, twin and queen blankets/comforters, gently used sleeping bags

Some of the agencies we will help:

Asian Americans for Community Involvement - <http://www.aaci.org/home.htm>

Friends of the Palo Alto Library - <http://www.friendspaloalto.org>

InnVision - <http://www.innvision.org>

St. Anthony Padua Dining Room - <http://www.paduadiningroom.com>

Sponsored by the El Carmelo Green Team and PTA, and Youth Community Services

## Auction News

By *Carrie Leontis*

### ***Tips for Donating to the Auction, Friday, March 26, 2010, at the University Club in Palo Alto***

It's easy to donate to the auction, and we need your help!

#### **Suggestions to help you figure out what you could donate...**

- 1) Take five minutes to brainstorm about a skill you have that you could share with others (e.g. knitting lesson, dance lesson, cooking class, etc.).
- 2) Take a moment to brainstorm about an experience that you could offer (e.g. home-cooked food or gourmet meal, vacation home for a weekend or week, sporting or cultural event tickets)
- 3) Plan a joint donation with a friend or friends. Offer a group dinner or party (e.g. international cuisine, wine tasting, game night).

#### **Ways to make donating easier for you...**

- 1) Don't worry about your item selling or not selling. A wide range of things are sold each year. Most importantly, any dollar amount made goes directly to our school. It ALL helps!
- 2) Tell your friends to bid on your item – spread the word to get people excited and informed about your plans.
- 3) Remember that it's all for a good cause. It's not a contest to see who comes up with the most extravagant or interesting item. It's a way to raise dollars for our school. Every dollar counts to make El Carmelo a great school.

#### **Ways to make a donation:**

- 1) Complete the form online at the El Carmelo website - [www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org/auction/familydonationform.html](http://www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org/auction/familydonationform.html)
- 2) Fill out a form (you can find them in the office) and return it to the box labeled "Auction Donations" in the main office.

**Donation sign-up is due by February 5th.** There are only a few weeks left, so please donate today!

Thanks for your help!!! See you at the auction.

For Questions please contact:

*Ana-Maria Dias*

Auction Chair

650-326-5854

[Anamaria\\_am99@yahoo.com](mailto:Anamaria_am99@yahoo.com)



## **Bingo Night**

### **Thursday, February 4, 6–8pm, MP Room**

Come and join the fun at El Carmelo's Annual Bingo Night!  
Kids (and parents!) love to play Bingo.

If you are interested in helping out with the event, please contact  
Christine Hodson at [chodson@sawyertrail.com](mailto:chodson@sawyertrail.com) or Celina Tracy at [cptracy@yahoo.com](mailto:cptracy@yahoo.com).

## **3rd, 4th and 5th Graders:**

### **Be part of El Carmelo's Upcoming Play!**

El Carmelo, in conjunction with Palo Alto Children's Theater, will present ***Once Upon a Shoe OR The Rhymes and Mimes of Mother Goose and Her Traveling Troubadors***. It is the story of how Mother Goose's children saved the family from having to move from its large, comfortable shoe to an old sneaker in the wrong part of town.

Students who participate will have a unique opportunity to experience all aspects of a theater production, both on and off-stage. They will take on vital crew responsibilities such as stage managing, handling props, or running the sound and lights under the guidance of a professional director and technical and costume assistants.

This experience is open to 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. The only requirement is attending all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Any exceptions must be cleared with the director in advance. **There can be no conflicts with the rehearsal schedule Tuesday, March 30, through Wednesday, April 7.** Students who are stage shy or cannot attend rehearsals can be part of the backstage crew, although they must be present during tech week (April 3 - 7). All rehearsals and performances will take place in the MP Room at El Carmelo.

There is no cost to participate and all sets and costumes are provided by the Children's Theater. Parents will help supervise the students during rehearsals and performances, and will also help with makeup, tickets and organizing the cast party.

Scripts are available in El Carmelo's library for students to check out.

#### **Important Dates to Remember:**

##### **Auditions:**

Tuesday, February 23, 3-5pm

Wednesday, February 24, 1:40- 4pm

##### **Rehearsals:**

Rehearsals - Tuesdays through Fridays after school until 6pm. First rehearsal is Tuesday, March 2, 2:50-5:30 pm followed by a Parent Meeting.

Tech rehearsals – Saturday, April 3, and Monday through Wednesday, April 5-7, ending no later than 6:30pm.

##### **Performance dates:**

Thursday, April 8, 4:30pm

Friday, April 9, 7:00pm

Saturday, April 10, 2:00pm & 7:00pm (Please note this is the first weekend of Spring Break.)

#### **For additional information please contact:**

Ana-Maria Dias, El Carmelo Theater Chair  
650-326-5854, [anamaria\\_am99@yahoo.com](mailto:anamaria_am99@yahoo.com)



## Upcoming Parent Education Events in 2010 – February 3, March 25 and March 27

By Carrie Manley

We have three important PTA parent education opportunities coming soon, focusing on ways to support the mental, emotional and physical well-being of our children.

### **1) Wed., Feb. 3, 2010, Fairmeadow Elementary School, MP Room, 9–11 am: Denise Clark Pope**

You are invited to join other parents for a very special conversation with Denise Clark Pope, the noted author, Stanford educator, and co-founder of the nationally-recognized youth advocacy group, Challenge Success.

[www.challengesuccess.org](http://www.challengesuccess.org)



Since the “seeds for student stress” often get planted early, Denise Clark Pope will focus this talk specifically on children in elementary school. Her thought-provoking presentation is a must for parents seeking a healthy balance between achievement and personal fulfillment, starting with the simple joys of childhood. Our children today live in a culture that is increasingly characterized by a “more is better” and “earlier is better” mindset, both in and out of school. This fast-paced existence for kids too often places them under undue pressure and stress, which, over time, can result in burnout, disengagement, unhealthy life patterns, or debilitating health problems. Further, over-scheduling infringes on relaxed family time, as well as one of the most productive activities for children: unstructured play. This thought-provoking program will give you the latest research findings, as well as the chance to:

- Explore the unique demands placed on this generation of children
- Examine how today’s high-pressure, fast-paced culture can have unintentional and potentially damaging effects on children
- Discover simple ways your family can make healthy changes that allow kids to be kids, without sacrificing learning and achievement

This free event is proudly sponsored by the Fairmeadow PTA, Palo Verde PTA, and our own El Carmelo PTA. All El Carmelo parents are warmly welcome! Thanks to our kind El Carmelo neighbors, Andrew and Carol Mellows, who will be videotaping this program for parents and teachers unable to attend this morning event with Denise Clark Pope. More event details at [www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org](http://www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org).

### **2.) Thurs., March 25, 2010, Gunn High School, 6:30-8:30pm: Dr. Ken Ginsburg, Free PTA Talk**

### **3.) Sat., March 27, 2010 (TBA exact location & time): Dr. Ken Ginsburg, Extended Workshop**

Also, save these two dates when Dr. Ken Ginsburg, pediatrician, author and resiliency expert, is coming to Palo Alto! Some of you may remember that Dr. Ginsburg was an outstanding featured speaker on the Palo Alto PTA Council’s DVD for Challenge Success, “Helping Our Children Thrive.”

Based in Philadelphia, Dr. Ginsburg runs the largest adolescent health clinic in the U.S. He will be speaking live at Gunn High School on March 25th from 6:30-8:30pm. This free event is for all PAUSD parents and educators. Dr. Ginsburg is the acclaimed author of A Parent’s Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens. He is also a key advisor to Challenge Success, the pioneering youth advocacy non-profit, based at Stanford University. Dr. Ginsburg will offer a practical step-by-step guide for developing your child’s sense of competence, confidence, character and much more. His do-not-miss special presentation promises to inform and inspire every parent and educator, and our entire community.

Dr. Ginsburg is also scheduled to host a morning workshop for more in-depth conversation and Q & A on Saturday, March 27. Seating for this event is limited; the cost is \$20 per person for advanced registration, \$25 at the door. Please read your eNews bulletin, and check your child’s Friday Folder for exact workshop location, time, and important registration information.

Special thanks to our many generous sponsors for Dr. Ginsburg’s visit, including the El Carmelo PTA, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, The City of Palo Alto Libraries, Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church, First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, All Saints’ Episcopal Church, the SHARE Committee, the Palo Alto PTA Council and individual PTAs throughout Palo Alto, Los Altos and Mountain View.

Dr. Ken Ginsburg and Denise Clark Pope are both acclaimed national speakers, and just two of the many life-enhancing, and potentially life-saving resources available to help all our families now and in the coming months. For an extended list of wide-ranging community events and resources, please go to [www.info.paloaltopta.org](http://www.info.paloaltopta.org).



## **Rainy Day School Commutes**

By Cynthia Tham

Even if it is predicted to be a rainy day, families can still choose safe, environmentally friendly transportation alternatives. Remember that forecasted rain in the Bay Area usually lasts only for a short while, leaving school commute times sunny and dry. If the weather is clear in the morning, students can set out on foot or on bikes. If the weather is particularly bad in the afternoon, parents still can opt to pick up then.

### **Gear Up for Rain!**

Rainy day walks to school are a fun adventure and a good learning experience for young children. On your way, point out how the world changes in the rain. Enjoy the sounds, smells and sights that come with these natural changes. Gear up to enjoy a little puddle jumping on the way. Dressing children in brightly colored umbrellas, boots, ponchos and/or raincoats insures they will be comfortable and safely visible in inclement weather.

### **Safety Tips for Slick Streets**

Teach your child to be more cautious and alert than usual. Drivers are often frustrated and in a hurry because of the extra congestion that comes with rain. Also, since wet streets are slick, young children should be taught that it takes vehicles longer to stop. Learning and practicing these fundamental rainy day street skills now prepares children to navigate streets safely when they become more independent.

When you drive on rainy days, please allow yourself extra time so you can reduce your speed to avoid slipping. All road users should be vigilant in these conditions.

### **Set Up a Rainy Day Carpool**

If you can't walk or bike, consider carpooling to help reduce overcrowding in the school parking lot and surrounding street systems. Talk with the families you see on your walking or bicycling school route. Make an arrangement in advance and have the phone numbers of rainy day carpool partners ready so it is easy to find someone to share a ride when the clouds burst.

Let's each do our part to reduce congestion and support safe, environmentally friendly school commutes.

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

...Thank you to all the parents who donated their time and resources to the PTA in 2009. Because of you, the PTA continued to build a safe and welcoming community, supporting the teachers and children. We're looking forward to another fun year with so many involved and committed El Carmelo families in 2010.