



Carmeletter

January 18, 2007

Issue 8

Principal's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Parents, Students and Community,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful and joyous holiday break with family and friends. The children have returned to school with renewed energy and enthusiasm for tackling the rest of the year. Let's work together to ensure your child does his/her best as we move ahead.

Timeliness is an important habit children need to learn in life. Since we have just returned from vacation and students might have gotten used to getting up later in the day, this is a reminder to get your child/ren back into regular school routines so s/he can be rested when at school and do his/her best work. If your child has difficulty getting up early enough to get to school on time, here are some suggestions to consider and possibly put in place:

- Have him/her regularly go to bed earlier.
- Use an alarm clock to set his/her wake-up time.
- Set up a regular schedule for what needs to be done in getting ready for school: shower, getting dressed, breakfast, all work in backpack, etc.
- Prepare lunch and have him/her set out his/her clothes the night before.
- Have him/her take a shower before going to bed, so there's more time in the morning, etc.

Second semester is about to begin on January 22 and everyone will have a clean slate. Help your child establish a REGULAR routine for getting to school on time. Your help is essential in having all children learn this lesson as early as possible.

Do stay in touch with us. Everyone is working diligently on behalf of the children and the community, but sometimes during the course of the day we do things with which you might not agree or perhaps which might not be clear to you. If that is the case, please contact our office so we can speak directly. As adults, we need to model clear communication skills for our children when there are questions or concerns. At El Carmelo we STRONGLY value your input and support. Let's work together!

Warmest regards,
Lupe García



DONATE LEGOs TO EL CARMELO SCHOOL

Do you have Legos you and/or your children no longer use? Please consider donating them to El Carmelo School for student use during recess. Several students are specifically seeking Lego building pieces, as a way to be engaged with each other during recess. Your donation will be greatly appreciated!!!!!!! If questions, please contact Lupe at: lgarcia.pausd.org

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Jan 19 — School Holiday
- Jan 24 — Spirit Day—Pajama Day
- Jan 30 — PTA Meeting (8:30 am)
- Jan 30 — PAUSD School Board meeting, Mandarin Immersion Action, 25 Churchill (7:00 pm)
- Feb 6 — PAUSD School Board meeting, Attendance Area Action, 25 Churchill (7:00 pm)
- Feb 6 — Parent Ed: "Child time management and organizational skills" Fairmeadow Elementary Library (7:00 pm)
- Feb 8 — Visiting author, Annie Barrows
- Feb 8-10—Children's Theater "Rumplestiltskin" performances
- Feb 11 — Asian Dinner (4:00—6:00 pm)
- Feb 15 — Auction donation deadline
- Feb 16 — NO SCHOOL, Staff Development Day
- Feb 19-23 — Ski Week, NO SCHOOL



PTA President's Letter

Welcome back, El Carmelo. School is back in full swing after a much needed break over the holidays. There is a lot for our students to learn and a lot for our school community to do in the remainder of the academic year.

There is quite an assortment of events to look forward to in the next couple of months. We have just had auditions for the Children's Theater production of Rumpelstiltskin; the performances will be held February 8th through the 10th. Please be sure to watch for announcements of these dates and plan to attend. On Feb. 8, the PTA is proud to sponsor a favorite El Carmelo tradition: the Visiting Author! This year, writer Annie Barrows is coming to El Carmelo to meet all our children. She is the acclaimed author of the Ivy + Bean series. Also in February we will have our first ever Asian Dinner on February 11th. Planning is underway for this wonderful celebration of Asian culture, so if you are interested in participating please contact Eiko Baldwin at eikobaldwin@gmail.com or one of us for more information. If you've ever wrestled with your child over homework then the Parent Education event in February is a must for you. On February 6th El Carmelo and Fairmeadow will co-sponsor the Parent Education Event "Organization and Time Management for Students".

We have two of our long-time favorite gatherings to look forward to in March, the Stories Under the Stars and the Pancake Breakfast. A new addition in March will be the Math/Science Night. There will be games, puzzles, displays and food, so come have a little fun with numbers and technology. There will be another Parent Education event as well in March for those of us who have ever wondered how to help our kids deal with conflict. Join us on March 13 at El Carmelo for the Parent Education event "From Conflict to Cooperation".

More information will be forthcoming about all of these events in the weeks ahead. If you want to know more now, please ask either of us. We'll get you the information you need.

Happy New Year!

Eric Schuur
President

Ana-Maria Dias
Executive Vice-President

Ten Mile Club

Congratulations to Jeffrey, Andy, Avi, and Tony on completing 10 miles within El Carmelo and earning that T-shirt! We have such dedicated runners at El Carmelo. Several more students are about to reach ten miles and probably will do so before this Carmeletter is published, so you'll have to watch for their names in the next one. A big round of applause also goes to the enthusiastic helpers who organize and file the runners' cards and punch their cards for every lap run. Come join the runners, walkers and skip-pers during Tuesday lunch recess, in front of Mr. Danie's classroom. Reach 50 laps, which equals 10 miles, and earn that T-shirt.



Liz Cowie (lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu)



LIBRARY NEWS

Happy New Year! Many classes are currently listening to and will soon vote on the California Young Reader Medal books. This is a wonderful selection of books. Please remind students to return books on time so they can enjoy new books. We have had many overdue books!



Congratulations to the children who participated in the Summer Reading Program. They read a lot of books last summer! We have some wonderful new books in our library thanks to donations and adopted books. These contributions are much appreciated!

Parents may want to hear reading expert, Jim Trelease. He will be speaking on January 23, 7:00 at the JLS Cafetorium. Trelease is an authority on children's books and well worth seeing!



PALO ALTO PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Don't Forget Your PiE Contribution!

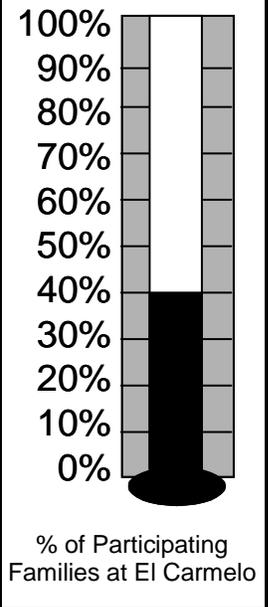
6 Weeks to Go!

If 30 more families give, we can stop the announcements!

Thanks to the 40% of El Carmelo parents who have generously given to the PiE Campaign! These funds impact the education of every child at El Carmelo!

New Participation Challenge

Starting January 15th, PiE launched a new Participation Challenge which can double or triple the value of your gift. For those who have never donated to PiE before, your contribution will be tripled. For past donors who have yet to give this year, your contribution will be doubled. This Participation Challenge expires February 28, 2007 and is made possible by the generous support of anonymous parent donors.



What is PiE?

Government funds are not enough to cover the costs of the kind of education we expect in Palo Alto Schools. We as parents need to contribute our time and money to make our schools the best they can be. Palo Alto Partners in Education (PiE) is our non-profit education foundation that raises funds for PAUSD schools. Funds raised are directly reallocated to schools on a per capita basis. Donations to PiE are tax deductible. For more information, go to www.papie.org.

How much comes to El Carmelo?

Of the \$1.35 million raised by PiE last year for elementary schools, El Carmelo received over \$100,000 for 2006-07.

How does El Carmelo use these funds?

These funds are being used right now for Classroom Aides, Spectra Art, Counseling, Math Support, Conflict Resolution, and Hands-On Junior Museum Science programs.

How much should I give?

It is crucial that 100% of families contribute some amount to PiE. Contributions of all sizes are welcome and important:

- Donate \$20 to pay for one hour of aide time
- Donate \$110 to pay for one Junior Museum Science Class

How do I contribute?

Envelopes are available in the PiE box in the office. Checks may also be mailed to PAPIE, Department 33329, P.O. Box 39000, San Francisco, CA 94149-3329. You may contribute online at www.papie.org.

"Thanks to PiE funds we have been able to provide academic support via instructional aides as well as hands-on enrichment experiences through Spectra Art and the P.A. Jr. Museum. As a result of last year's fundraising efforts, we will also be able to address an ever-increasing need in our schools: socio-emotional (psychological) support for students. There is simply no other funding for these essential staff services at El Carmelo. Thank You!"

Principal Lupe Garcia



BOUNDARY COMMITTEE UPDATE

MANY THANKS FROM YOUR ATTENDANCE AREA ADVISORY GROUP ("AAAG") REPS: We would like to extend a great big "thank you" to everyone in the El Carmelo community for your interest and participation in the work of PAUSD's AAAG boundary committee, and, in particular, in the issue of peer-streaming. So many of you filled out our survey in May, gave us feedback in and around school, communicated with us through email, wrote letters to the AAAG committee and to the Board of Education, came to all the PTA meetings at which we spoke, attended committee and board meetings and spoke at those meetings, as well as stayed informed about the progress of AAAG through our Carmeletter articles, enews notices and postings on the El Carmelo web site.

- Your engagement in this process over the past 8 months has let us communicate the views of families at El Carmelo to the committee and the Board. In participating in AAAG meetings and working groups almost weekly since September, we have relied on your valuable input to show the grass-roots support of peer-streaming. We have found the AAAG committee to be truly interested in seeing that the Board make decisions that are in the best interests of all PAUSD children, regardless of where in the district they reside.
- Our May 2006 survey showed that peer-streaming was our community's the top concern regarding boundaries, whether it was the great majority of those El Carmelo families currently assigned to JLS-Gunn who are satisfied, or whether it was the great majority of those El Carmelo families in the "gray area" who are seeking peer-streaming. At our urging, early on, the AAAG committee adopted peer-streaming as an important variable to consider in the boundary review process. In our presentation to the Board at its December 5th study session, we urged the Board to effect peer-streaming when it makes its boundary decisions.
- The major issue the Board is wrestling with is the increasing enrollment of the school district at all age groups. Numerous "overflows" of students to schools outside their neighborhood are already impacting the elementary level. The demographers also project that the middle schools will exceed Board-approved capacity by 2009 and the high schools by 2011.
- To address these challenges, Superintendent Callan listened to AAAG's comments and prepared a recommendation to the Board. As the AAAG is simply an advisory group, it lacks the power to make decisions itself. The Superintendent has not asked for any formal consensus from AAAG on any issues; we have been basically a brainstorming committee and sounding board. However, at our meeting on December 11, Superintendent Callan asked us to identify the major issues and peer-streaming was of course identified. And, in speaking with the administration, we know that the district hears us "loud and clear."
- The Superintendent posted her recommendation on-line January 12 at http://www.pausd.org/community/board/downloads/brd_packet/pkt_011607.pdf. It will be a subject for discussion at a second Board study session January 16. There are no further AAAG meetings scheduled.
- There will be a Board meeting on February 6, at which it is possible the Board could make a decision regarding boundaries and peer-streaming. The Board meetings are open to the public and take place at 25 Churchill Avenue at 7:00 p.m. Throughout this process, the Board welcomes public participation.

Again, we are grateful for your interest in and support of peer-streaming. It is our sincere hope that all of this time and work by the community and the whole AAAG committee of 50 will bring about positive change for both our school and the district as a whole during these times of unprecedented growth. The challenges are tremendous, and while it will not be possible to solve every issue, we are hopeful that the Board will ultimately propose scenarios that improve conditions overall for both the district and El Carmelo.

Liz Cowie and Linda Jensen
 (lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu; linda@winterlodge.com)

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
 On Tues. Jan 30- an important board meeting at 25 Churchill, when the Board will vote on the Mandarin immersion program and continue discussion on the topic of school boundaries..
 Public welcome.



El Carmelo Auction 2007 - Saturday, April 14th

Come Aboard...We're Expecting You!

Auction Donations Needed - Deadline: Thursday, February 15th

If you haven't already, please turn in your family's auction donation now - more forms are available in the office. Join another family and contribute to El Carmelo's biggest annual fundraiser! It is a great way to meet other families and support our school! Consider donating a gift certificate to your favorite restaurant, movie tickets, gift baskets for kids or adults with a favorite theme, tickets to sporting events, home cooked meals, kids excursions or whatever your family likes to do! Remember you have a year from April 14th to hold your event! Please call the volunteers listed below if you have questions! Please help make this year's auction the best ever!
Megan Swezey Fogarty (K/1 - 473-0428); Liz Cowie (2nd/3rd - 322-7776); Debra Wittenbrink (4th/5th 324-2835)

Auction Tickets Go on Sale on March 7th - Cost \$50/person

Watch for signs and be sure to buy your ticket to attend this great event -- great food, lively crowd, and great fun all to benefit El Carmelo! Make sure to line up a babysitter for April 14! Watch for catalogs in March!

Complimentary Tickets

The auction committee is looking for a small number of people who would be willing to sell beverage tickets at the event for two hour shifts. You will get a complimentary auction ticket in exchange for your services! Please call Jill Spain 494-1988 if you are interested.

Visiting Author Comes to El Carmelo

On Thursday, February 8th, acclaimed children's author Annie Barrows will visit El Carmelo. She is the author of the *Ivy + Bean* series, which so far includes *Ivy + Bean*, and *Ivy + Bean and the Ghost That Had to Go*. These chapter books, which appeal across the elementary age group, are about two girls who are very different from one another but become good friends when they experience adventures together.

Ms. Barrows, who resides in the Bay Area, will have the chance to talk to all of the classes at El Carmelo. Her books will be available for purchase and signing -- just stop by the office and place your order. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Cowie (lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu).

Sharing and Caring: The El Carmelo Way

It's clear when it comes to helping, the kids of El Carmelo lead the way! Here are just a few recent examples.

**3rd grader Larkin McDermott has just finished her book drive to help establish some new libraries in Africa. Larkin is grateful to the many El Carmelo kids who supported this important cause by donating hundreds of books. Larkin now has about two thousand books, or as she puts it, "enough to fill up my Grandma's garage!" The books will soon be shipped by boat to Africa. Thanks to Larkin and to all the children who donated so generously.

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**The entire 2nd grade has also been very busy lately, bringing scores of canned items to school for their big food drive. This annual event benefits the Community Services Agency. Thank you El Carmelo second graders!

**More than 80 El Carmelo students recently teamed up to make the holiday season brighter at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital. The students made garlands of colorful paper chains (spanning 600 feet!) for veterans who had to spend the holidays in the hospital.

Thanks to all the children and to our terrific teachers, who each day do so much to support these lessons in giving--lessons to last a lifetime.

Carrie Manley (carrie_manley@yahoo.com)

Parent Education Events Sponsored by El Carmelo

PARENTS--SAVE THESE DATES: Tuesday, Feb. 6 and Tues. March 13!

Your PTA is proud to bring you two exciting parent education programs!

"Getting It Together! How to teach your child time management and organizational skills"

Date: Tuesday, February 6 from 7-9 pm

Location: Fairmeadow Elementary School Library

The El Carmelo and Fairmeadow PTA parents are teaming up for an important topic: how to help your child find that book, get to that classroom on time and much more. Top organizational expert Ali Meyer has years of experience helping students and families with useful tools and strategies for success in the classroom and in life. You can check out more about the speaker at www.meyerslearningcenter.com

"From Conflict to Cooperation"

Date: Tuesday, March 13 from 7-9 pm

Location: El Carmelo School Library

Everyone knows parenting can be stressful at times. Whether it is getting kids to do homework or daily chores, it's sometimes difficult for parents to face conflict with their children. This PTA-sponsored event will give you some important advice and tools on how to cope and manage when the going gets rough in your household. This event is about more than organizational strategies; it is about building healthy, strong and positive connections to last a lifetime. Our special guest lecturer Cynthia Klein is a Certified Child Rearing Specialist and the founder of Bridges to Understanding. Ms. Klein has over 20 years of experience as a parent education facilitator at schools, businesses and with individual families. She is a respected instructor with the Children's Health Council Parent Education division. Please join Cynthia and other local parents for what promises to be a valuable discussion on moving from conflict to cooperation. This free event is co-sponsored by El Carmelo, Fairmeadow and Palo Verde PTAs. So mark your calendars: Feb. 5 and March 13th!

Both of these events are free, sponsored by your PTA.

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