



Carmeletter

Teacher Appreciation Week - May 18 - May 22



Kindergarten
Marilyn Nishio



Kindergarten
Susie Davidson



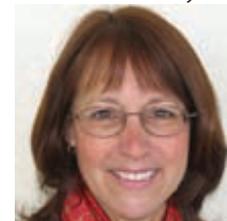
Kindergarten
Serena Chandley



Kindergarten
Denise Dauler



1st Grade
Michelle Haughney



1st Grade
Diane McCoy



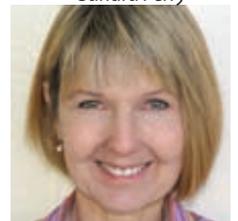
1st Grade
Sandra Pery



2nd Grade
Karen Lemoine



2nd Grade
Katie Kinnaman



2nd Grade
Robin Dosskey

Thank you to all of our wonderful teachers at El Carmelo!



3rd Grade
Sarah Newman



3rd Grade
Christina Nosek



3rd Grade
John Walton



3rd Grade
Sue Chakos



3rd Grade
Alice Anne Chandler



4th Grade
Carol Bae Wu



4th Grade
Kendall Smith



4th Grade
Robert Siu



ELL - Annette Isaacson



Resource - Debbie Hilleary



Speech/Language
Grace Lee



5th Grade
Kathy Chin



5th Grade
Gaelyn Mason



5th Grade
Nan Knoblauch

Principal's Letter



Dear El Carmelo parents,

Please take the time to read through the following description of the El Carmelo student classroom placement process. I believe that the following gives a very good idea of how placement is done and answers many questions that you might have.

Classroom Placement Process and Parent Input: Please note the information below regarding our classroom placement procedure. If, after you review the process, you would like to provide us with information about your child, please pick up an Input Form from the Main Office, address it to Chuck Merritt and return it by **Friday, May 22, 2009**.

Classroom Placement Procedure: There are a variety of factors that the El Carmelo staff considers when we begin the process of developing classroom groups for the following school year. These perspectives include:
 The needs of the individual child
 The need to create balance within each classroom
 The need to create balance among classrooms at grade level
 Using these guiding principles, considerable thought and attention go into formulating classes that will work best for all students, as well as for the individual child.

Individual Child: We seek to balance the compatibility between the child's working style and the classroom environment, between the child's learning style and the teacher's instructional style, as well as considering the compatibility of the child and other children in the class.

Balanced Classroom Composition: We seek to balance classroom with students according to **learning needs** (Does each class reflect the range of learners, from independent to needing special support? Does each class reflect the range of academic abilities?), **individual relationships** (Will the social dynamics of the class work to foster a positive learning environment?), **gender** (Is there a balance of boys and girls in the class?), **ethnicity** (Does each class reflect the diversity of all children in that grade?), **parental participation** (Does each class have parents who are interested in and able to help with in-class activities?)

Balance Among Classrooms: Finally, are all classrooms at the same grade level "balanced" and have similar compositions? This may include such variables as balancing children who tend to be more "time intensive" (both behaviorally and academically), students new to the school, students for whom English is a second language, etc.

We take the classroom placement process seriously. We always try to put the most important educational interests of the children in the forefront, and we expect parents will trust and respect the judgment of the staff in making placement decisions.

Parent input plays a part in this process too. Although your child's teachers are in the best position to see your child as a learner in the school setting, you bring the unique perspective of the parents, which can be useful to the grouping process. Any information that you think is relevant please put in writing by completing the Class Grouping Form, which will help you organize the information. You can pick up a copy of this form in the Main Office at the school.

Requests for specific teachers will not be considered. Please do not make such a request. Make sure to turn in the input form at the Main Office by Friday, May 22, 2009. If you feel that your child may have some special needs for next year that cannot be addressed on the parent input form, please make arrangements to see me personally before the deadline.

One final thought... although this activity begins at the end of May, a number of variables and unpredictable factors, such as late registrants, the need to realign classes, potential staff changes, and so on, delay the final class grouping assignments until shortly before school begins in the fall. For this reason, and to avoid having class lists announced, only to be changed, class lists will not be posted in the school office until August 21, 2009, the Friday before school begins.

Sincerely,
 Chuck Merritt
 Principal

PTA President's Letter



The school year is winding down..... kids are excited and energetic, parents are getting ready to put their volunteer "hats" away, and everyone is looking forward to the lazy unscheduled days of summer.

This year we have an opportunity to review our children's work during the student-led showcases in May and June. Mark your calendars and plan to attend these special nights.

May is the month for STAR testing. Please look to teachers' newsletters for grade-specific details. Please encourage your children to get a good night's sleep and eat a balanced breakfast for sustained energy during the days of testing. Also, please help your child arrive at school on time.

This month we have two opportunities to gather as a community: the Pancake Breakfast on May 9, and the International Dinner on May 31. I hope to see you there!
The 5th grade will be taking their ship trip...an El Carmelo tradition that teaches problem solving and cooperation while on the "high seas." Have a great time 5th graders!!!

On a more bittersweet note we will be bidding farewell to three teachers. *Mrs. Perry* (1st grade) and *Mrs. Chandler* (3rd grade) will be starting new lives as retired school teachers. Thank you both for your years of service. To *Sue Chakos* (3rd grade), we wish her all the joys of parenthood...we will miss you!!!! Please look for e-news information on retirement celebrations.

Finally, please join the PTA in honoring our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week-May 18-22.

Peace to you and your families,

Michele Kasper
PTA President
mekasper@comcast.net

El Carmelo Calendar

May 2009
Character trait-Perseverance
May 2 - May Fete Parade
May 9 - Pancake Breakfast
May 4-15 - STAR Testing Window
May 11 - Site Council Meeting
May 12 - PTA Board meeting
May 15-18 - 5th Grade Ship Trip Weekend
May 19 – June 8 – Student Showcases for each grade (replaces Open House)
May 20 - Spirit Day-Crazy Hair Day
May 28 - Carmeletter Deadline
May 31 - International Dinner – 5PM



Thanks for Guest Layout - *Conrad C.*

A Tribute and Farewell to *Sandra Perry*, First Grade Teacher

by *Liz Cowie*

Dedication. This word is so often the first that comes to mind when one thinks of *Mrs. Sandra Perry*. It has been the good fortune of students and parents alike to get to know *Mrs. Perry's* energy and enthusiasm as one of our first grade teachers. Her long tenure at El Carmelo caps a teaching career that spans more than thirty years and has included elementary special education, fifth and sixth grade, and seventh and eighth grade math and science.

Mrs. Perry has brought many wonderful attributes to her classroom. Among these is a sincere desire for each child to succeed, and she provides strong academic support to make this happen. Any parent who has witnessed the extra time she puts into helping a student after school, or whose child has received a packet of skill-building exercises right before summer vacation, can attest to this. Not content to rely solely on her wealth of experience, *Mrs. Perry* also meticulously prepares work that is carefully differentiated for each child. Further, *Mrs. Perry's* love of travel enriches her teaching, as does her enjoyment of music, which she shares enthusiastically with the students.

Perhaps one of *Mrs. Perry's* most valuable lessons has been her practice of shaking hands at the classroom door with each child every morning. The students learn to look her in the eye, shake hands firmly, and say "Good morning," skills that will serve them well throughout life. We wish *Mrs. Perry* all the best in her retirement and will fondly remember her dedication to the children of the El Carmelo community.

A Tribute and Farewell to *Alice Anne Chandler*, Third Grade Teacher

by *Carrie Manley*

Spring-time many moons ago, I was a nervous mom worrying about my son. After two years at Charles Armstrong School in Belmont (a school for children with dyslexia), my then 8-year old son was set to transition back to El Carmelo Elementary School. The principal of El Carmelo at that time was *Lupe Garcia*. Sensing my concern, he kindly invited me to stop by the school. "I want you to meet someone," he said, as we walked across the green lawn towards Room 19.

Moments later, I met *Alice Anne Chandler*. She slipped quietly out of her classroom to share some time with me. "As a teacher, I'm like a cobbler making shoes; it's my job to learn about each of my students and to make things a perfect fit for each student." That one insightful comment was all it took for me to know my son would be in the right place with the right teacher.

Now it is common at El Carmelo to see teachers using microphone sound systems in our classrooms. But back then this technology was something entirely new and something our son needed to make sure that he could hear the teacher no matter where he was seated. At first *Alice Anne* was understandably not so sure about having to wear a microphone; "I'm a soft-spoken teacher. That's my magic." But later she said, "My son tells me to 'Embrace change!' and I think he's right!" And, her "embrace" was so complete; she soon became one of our school's strongest advocates for making this technology available to all teachers, for the benefit of all students.

But far beyond any technology, *Alice Anne's* truest gift to me was her incredible, unwavering, positive belief in my son; his success was her happiness. Even now, years later, with my son in Middle School, she still always takes the time to ask, "How's my Will?" As a teacher, she not only helped my son; she also helped and supported me, with genuine warmth and wisdom. I know I have always felt better after any conversation with *Alice Anne*. She has the authentic ability to put the wind in your sail and make a good day even better.

Several years ago, *Alice Anne* once told me that even after she is retired, and he is all grown up, she would always remember my son. I know she is someone we will always remember, with the greatest of gratitude and love.

Alice Anne is not someone who seeks the spotlight, and quite characteristically, she is not seeking a lot of fanfare on the occasion of her retirement. But even in leaving, she is ever gracious and thoughtful, mindful of the need we might have to say a proper good-bye and thank-you. So *Alice Anne*, may I boldly speak for many here... in saying thank you for caring for all our children, and caring for us too. Here's to a joyful retirement with your husband, children and grandchildren, filled with good health, treasured books, tennis, travel and fun. No one deserves it all more than you.

Field trip: Peralta Adobe

by *Faith Brigel*, El Carmelo parent (of *Josh B.*)

Right after the fourth graders studied the California missions, their teachers took them on a wonderful field trip to an old structure called Peralta Adobe which is located in San Jose. I am including a few unedited quotes from the students in each of the fourth grade classes who reviewed the adobe.

Room 17- Mr. Robert Sui's class:

On Tuesday March 7th 2009 we went to the Peralta Adobe building. I really enjoyed this learning experience. *Louis Maria Peralta* served in the army for many years. He was given one of the biggest land grants, 44,000 acres.

His land included Rancho San Antonio.

I learned white wash is used to keep the adobe bricks from falling apart. Also that white wash is made from crushed seashells and dead cactus.

Room 18- Ms. Kendall Smith's class:

Peralta Adobe was very very very so much fun.

I learned that *Mr. Peralta's* house used about 2,500 adobe bricks.

I learned how to weave and what Californians wore for clothing. One thing that I enjoyed the most was the weaving because you use the fabrics and you can make beautiful clothes for you and your family.

Room 22- Mrs. Carol Bae Wu's class:

I learned many things. *Luis Peralta* lived for 92 years. I learned how to make adobe bricks, candles, herb tea and tortillas. I enjoyed dressing up in the old clothes, and trying to lasso the fake cow.

You actually got to feel as if you lived on a rancho. You did not just look at exhibits but you got to do all of the things that they used to do.

This was my first visit there as well and I was just as impressed as the students were and I could not describe it any better! I would just like to add that this adobe was built in 1797 and is the oldest address in San Jose.

If you are interested in more information about it, or touring it with the rest of your family the address is - 175 West Saint John Street, San Jose, 95110 - Telephone: 480-993-8300.

ELIMINATING PLASTIC BAGS AT EL CARMELO: A School Wide Project

by *Diane McCoy*, First Grade Teacher

El Carmelo would like to continue to 'go greener!'

In addition to our successful recycling program at lunch, we are trying to become 'plastic-sandwich-bag-free' in lunches and snacks. It would help if you would use reusable containers instead.

Plastic bags don't decompose. Instead, they remain in landfills and break down into poisonous materials.

Making plastic bags also uses a lot of energy and oil. And, using them in Palo Alto is especially dangerous to our Baylands wildlife. Our current dumpsite is still near the Baylands, and plastic sandwich bags carry on breezes and winds out to the shoreline areas where wildlife try to eat them.

Using reusable containers also helps reduces the amount of garbage in our school and helps our custodians, too. El Carmelo families, please continue to help the environment and wild animals by not using plastic bags and using only REUSABLE CONTAINERS.

Thank you. GO GREEN!



TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK May 18 – 22



It's true that we appreciate our teacher every day but once a year we show it in a big way during the Teacher Appreciation Week.

The high quality of our teachers is a key reason El Carmelo is a great school. This is an excellent time to show our teachers how much we value their professionalism and their loving care toward our children.

The PTA is organizing snacks and a luncheon catered by our parents during the week. We would like to encourage parents and children to write thank you notes, bring flowers, and other homemade tokens of appreciation (drawings, poems, etc). Parents are also encouraged to **help teachers with year end tasks** and/ or **lead a fun project with the kids to show appreciation** (e.g. making a poster with appreciation messages/art for the classroom).

- **Monday:** Please encourage your child to bring a note of appreciation (a drawing, poem, etc.) to their teacher. A note from a parent is also welcome.
- **Tuesday:** Teacher snacks – kindergarten and 1st grade parents will be asked to bring goodies to delight our teachers. Signup sheets will be posted next week.
- **Wednesday:** Bring flowers to your teacher from your garden.
- **Thursday:** Teacher luncheon – 2nd to 5th grade parents will be asked to bring a dish for this luncheon. Signup sheets will be posted next week. Let's treat the teachers to a culinary adventure!

“Teaching is the greatest act of optimism.”



Congrats On a Great Earth Day El Carmelo!



“Every day from now on needs to be Earth Day” – Steven Chu, Energy Secretary

On April 22, 2009, El Carmelo celebrated Earth Day with creativity and GREEN flair. The day started with our annual walk, bike, bus, carpool to school effort. Those who came to school on time and out of an individual car, got a stamp and a reusable lunch container. The number of bikes and scooters on campus increased from the previous high of 90 to 119! Counts since Earth Day show we continue to walk and roll to school at high levels. After the bell, staff and leadership students lead an Earth Day assembly focused on initiative including a great student skit on eliminating plastic bags from our lunches. The walls were decorated with student ideas on taking initiative in our homes, school, and communities. The day culminated with an Earth Day Showcase of local industries using adult initiative to change our world. A huge thanks to:

The El Carmelo Green Team for your leadership; and the entire El Carmelo staff that ramped up Earth Day with thoughtful classroom discussions and personal conviction (including *Christine Nosek* who was featured in the PA Weekly!)

Leslie Bell for library books and activities to help students think and design!

Brian Goncher for putting together an amazing array of exhibits! Wow!

Cynthia Tham for leading our transportation program and creative marketing!

Diane McCoy and leadership for your great skit and creativity!

Jennifer, Michele and the PTA for wisdom, prizes and supporting our container purchase!

Marjorie Sayer and *Vandana Singh* for container research, purchase, and helping with walk and roll. Thanks to *Jennifer Mutz*; and to *Marjorie* for the giant pledge as well!

Carrie Manley and *Megan Swezey Fogarty* for publicity and onsite help on Earth Day!

Calvin Woon for serving as official photographer!

Jennifer and *Chuck* for always believing in new ideas!

Finally, thanks to the amazing companies who spent most of their Earth Day at El Carmelo. If you were unable to make it, check them out on the web!

Mariah Power (wind energy technology),

Sopogy (solar heating and electrical power)

Vista Solar (solar electric power)

GroundSource Geo (earth-based heating and cooling alternatives)

3 Degrees (Palo Alto Green energy alternative program, the largest of its kind in the nation)

Sustainable Spaces (home energy audits and improvements)

A+ Japanese Auto Repair, (one of eight companies in the U-S that convert Prius cars to make them even more energy efficient, by installing a large high-tech battery in the truck.)

Want to join the Green Team to plan similar efforts next year? We are a staff and parent committee that meets quarterly and collaborates with Student Leadership and the PTA to change social norms to environmental instincts at El Carmelo. We would love new members. Email meganfogarty@sbcglobalnet.com to join our email list!

Scholastic Book Fair

The book fair is always one of my favorite events. I love to see children excited about reading and books. This year I had the privilege of working with several El Carmelo parents who donated their time and efforts to this wonderful celebration:

Erina DuBois, Robin Agarwal, Beata Madej, Asmita Runge, Susy Kim, Jennifer Chu, Maria Derrick, Wen Li, Suzanne Ogawa, Kathleen Ford, Angela Dunnigan, Julia Jacobson, Ann Holum, Elisa Schmidt, Alli Wong, Sherwin Wong and Laura Tannenwald.

Thank you!

From, *Michele Kasper*

A Special *'Thank you'* to all who helped with the Auction

Thank you to all for supporting the El Carmelo Auction whether it was by donating an item or attending the auction. We had an amazing turn out at the auction dinner! The over \$40k netted goes directly to supporting our children at El Carmelo.

Thank you to the following for the beautiful masks:

Adriana Reyna, Andrea Christensen, Erina DuBois, Wen Li, Asmita Runge, Michele Kasper and Doreen Rehbock.

Thank you to *Kathleen Ford, Erina DuBois and Chuck Merritt* for the photography used in the auction slides.

Thank you to *Jennifer Allen* and *Mike Maystead* for their continued support and for the fun bidding paddles.

Thank you to the following for showing up early Saturday and working hard to turn the University Club into a dinner and auction house: *Annette Isaacson, Michele Kasper, Asmita Runge, Adriana Reyna, Aruna Bhamidipati, Elisa Schmit, Abbie Schmit and Erina DuBois.* Thanks, *Erina*, for also driving all the way to San Jose to pick up the auction cakes!

Thank you to the following for helping with the silent auction and check in at the dinner: *Denise Dauler, Serena Chandley, Jennifer Donat, Jennifer Mutz, Ann Holum, Alex Kass, Asmita Runge, Aruna Bhamidipati, Ram Ramkumar, Maria Whealan and Diana Bang.*

Thank you to *Stephanie* and *Mike Youngquist* who once again took on the data processing and database management that runs the whole back end of the auction. And thanks to their crew who worked diligently throughout the whole dinner: *Maria Derrick, Nina Hansen, Yi-Mei Chang, Dahna Pasternak, and Maya Venkatraman.*

Thank you also, *Stephanie*, for all your help the week before the auction and for scoring that amazing cake from Prolific Oven.

Thank you to *Simone Klass* for heading the Check-out and her helpers: *Oi Ha Lam, Greg Chandley, Mona Napaa, Joan Gu and Mai Le.*

A continued thank you to *Marcus Aiu* for posting the items left over from the auction and helping with the paypal payment page on our website.

Thank you to *Jeannette Cheng* for her help with the auction survey.

Thank you as well to my husband, *Robert*, and *Seow Tan* for their hard work packing and transporting all the stuff at the end of the night.

Ana-Maria Dias
Auction Chair

'Thank you' to all these volunteers ...

...to *Ana-Maria Dias* for her steadfast leadership and incredible auction planning. She has helped make this years auction a success.

...to the Green Team for an amazing effort to bring the 3Rs to our children.

...to *Laura Tannenwald* and *Alli Wong* for bringing Stories Under the Stars to our community. We appreciate that both these talented women are new to our community and stepped up to help out...BRAVO LADIES.

A great big shout out to the Teachers on the Math adoption committee who spent hours and hours reviewing textbooks and looking for ways to improve math instruction across the district - *Katie Kinnaman, Michelle Haughney, Nan Knoblauch, Gaelyn Mason, Kathy Chin,* and our very own parent representative *Stephanie Youngquist.*

Many thanks to all from the El Carmelo PTA.