



Carmeletter

September 1, 2006

Issue 1

Principal's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Parents, Students and Community,

Welcome to the 2006-07 school year! Thank you for helping us get off to a good start. I want to continue to recruit your help to ensure that the focus at school and at home is on teaching, learning and growing up to be wholesome and productive citizens. Please join us in our collective efforts to support our children.

Updates and other information:

Think Safety: Please help us keep everyone safe, especially our children, as they travel to/from school. All of us have busy lives, but I am sure that we do not want to be the cause of injury to any child because we did not take the time to observe and practice common sense safety procedures while in transit. It is critical that all adults take care and caution especially during drop-off and pick up times around the school. The El Carmelo School Traffic Safety Committee has made some visible changes around the campus to help us be more aware of each other, but especially the children, during rush hour. We installed:

- New banners on the school fence at the corners of Loma Verde and Bryant and at the corner of Ramona and Loma Verde asking motorists to be careful around El Carmelo School.
- New fluorescent yellow plastic crossing dummies at the pedestrian crosswalks to remind all motorists and pedestrians to be cautious at Loma Verde and Bryant and at the El Carmelo and Bryant.
- Two street signs on Bryant Street: one before Matadero Creek approaching the bridge and the other on Bryant at the intersection of El Carmelo Avenue.

Please also read other Transportation and Traffic Safety suggestions on page 18 of the El Carmelo Parent & Student Handbook. We need your help keeping all our children SAFE.

These efforts will be for naught if in the end someone gets injured due to something that could have been easily avoided. So, **PLEASE TAKE EXTRA CARE & CAUTION AROUND THE SCHOOL DURING DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP TIMES!**

Thank you parents, staff, students and community for a smooth beginning to the school year. Please remember that ongoing communication between you and the school is critical to your child's success. We are very fortunate for your active role in this process and your continued support.

Warmest regards,
Lupe García

DATES TO REMEMBER

September

4 Labor Day-No School
 5 Staff Development Day - No Classes
 7 Carmeletter Deadline 3:00 p.m.
 12 Board of Education meeting:
 25 Churchill Ave. 7 p.m.

September (Continued)

21 Photo Day
 Carmeletter Deadline 3:00 p.m.
 26 Board of Education 25 Churchill 7 p.m.
 26-27 4th & 5th Grade ERB Writing Test



President's Letter

Welcome back, El Carmelo!

We're always sorry to see summer end (parents? You are sorry, aren't you?), but happy to see our friends whom we haven't seen much of since June. For us, one of the most exciting things about the new school year is the anticipation of the new friendships that we will get to make in the coming months.

There are lots of new people at El Carmelo to meet, to work with, and to learn with. We extend our warmest welcome to the new students and families at El Carmelo. We hope you all will find the same growth, fulfillment, and enjoyment that we who have been here a while have found in this community. If you are feeling like you need to connect please don't hesitate to contact either of us!

We also extend a special welcome to our new teachers and staff this year: Michelle Wilk, in First Grade, Sue Chakos in Third Grade, Leah Rich in Fourth Grade and Jennifer Fernandez and Ginny Nagao in the office.

Already we've had the Ice Cream Social, First Day Coffee, and Back-to-School Night. And much lies ahead to look forward to. In October, we'll have the Spaghetti Dinner, Fall Book Fair, and El Carmelo Pumpkin Project. And in November, we have the Ice Skating Party.

All of these events, as well as the ongoing activities such as Noon Art, Math Lab, and the Carmeletter production, depend on the efforts of parent volunteers. We are very thankful for the capable and dedicated volunteers who help make El Carmelo great. If you would like to help, even if only for an hour once in a while, please let us know. There are many ways to participate. You can help make the difference between a very good school and a great school.

Lastly, a couple of reminders. We are in the process of producing the School Directory. Please be sure to fill out and return the Directory Information Form that you received at Back-to-School Night so the Directory is complete and accurate. Please also spend a few minutes learning how the PTA and Partners in Education (PiE) support our school. Both organizations provide important funds and resources to support our students.

We hope you will join in investing some of yourself at El Carmelo to make 2006-2007 a great school year!

With warmest regards,

Eric Schuur
PTA President

Ana-Maria Dias
PTA Executive Vice President

Start Of The Year Thank You's

It's two weeks into the school year and a lot has already happened. Kinder Playdates gave our youngest students a chance to meet some classmates over the summer, thanks to the efforts of Erika Krugler, Debbie Brown, and Mary Baker. The Ice Cream Social gave us a chance to meet our new families. Thanks to Erika Kruger, and Mary Baker for doing such a wonderful job with this annual event. We kicked off to the school year with the First Day Coffee; thanks to Margie Cain, Jennifer Donat, and Lisa Kucik for hosting this important gathering.

Others who have invested time and effort even before school started include Mirna Aguilera (Back-to-School Packets), Penny Kerhin (New Family Hospitality), and Yvette Mitchell (New Family Buddy Program).



The New El Carmelo PTA Website

Have you seen the new PTA website?
The URL is
<http://www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org>

This website was made possible by the creativity, vision, and hard work of Christine Potochny and Erina Dubois. Christine, thank you for all your work in creating a wonderful new communication vehicle for the PTA. And, thank you for sacrificing so much of your time over the summer to pull this off! Erina, thank you for standing by this project for months to make sure it got done. We love our new web site!

EL CARMELO



DRAGONS

eScrip

It's time once again to talk about eScrip. You have probably heard a lot about eScrip and you may be sick of it, but it's such good news that you need to know. It's free! Yeap, it costs you nothing. It's a wonderful and painless way to get money for our school. The more money we earn with eScrip the fewer fundraisers we have to do. Once you join eScrip the money just keeps coming in to El Carmelo year after year with no effort on your part.

El Carmelo received \$10K from eScrip last year!

Come by the eScrip table during Back to School Night to sign up or find out more. Call or email me if you have questions or need help signing up.

Ana-Maria Dias
650-326-5854
Anamaria_am99@yahoo.com
escrip: www.escrip.com.



Every Dollar You Donate to PiE Makes A Difference

TAKE THE CHALLENGE.... and double your PiE dollars! Make your gift to *Palo Alto Partners in Education (PiE)* NOW and every dollar "above and beyond" the suggested donation (\$500/student) will be matched, dollar-for-dollar up to \$125,000. **Make your gift today - The Challenge ends on November 1st.** Use the letter/envelope from your Back to School packet and mail your gift to:

*Palo Alto Partners in Education,
Dept 33329, PO Box 39000,
San Francisco, CA 94319-3329*

or make a gift on-line: <http://www.papie.org>. Thank you!



PALO ALTO
PARTNERS
IN EDUCATION

El Carmelo received over \$97, 000 from last year's campaign. These funds are being used **right now** for Classroom Aides, Spectra Art, Counseling, Math Aides, Conflict Resolution, and Hands-On Junior Museum Science. There is simply no other way to raise funds for these essential staff services at El Carmelo!

P.S. Don't forget to see if you qualify for an "employee matching program".

Lice Check Information

-New El Carmelo families: let your kids know that lice check occurs once a month. Most Kids love it!

-Sharing is great, but when it comes to brushes and hats, please have them use their own.

-Although Classroom Reps check for lice – please be diligent and learn how to check your own child on a regular basis.

-The district policy states that children cannot return to school until they are lice and nit-free.

- For basic knowledge about lice prevention, please pick up a pamphlet in the main office.

Noon Art Volunteers Needed

Looking for a creative way to volunteer at El Carmelo this year? Join us for the Noon Art Program. We provide open-ended art/craft activities for kids in 1st-5th grade as an option during lunch recess. Noon Art takes place approximately every other Wednesday and draws as many as 100 children each session.

This is a fun way to contribute to our school. Volunteers are needed from 12:00 – 1:00pm to help with set-up, supervision and clean-up. Younger siblings are welcome. Sign up for all sessions, or help just once a month.

To volunteer or get more information, please call me at 853-1861 or e-mail: suehermsen@msn.com.

Thanks,
Sue Hermsen

Fundraising at El Carmelo

Stephanie Youngquist, yoyo2000@pacbell.net
<http://www.elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org/programs.html>

El Carmelo PTA funds support Math Lab, field trips, the Jr. Museum presentations, the Carmeletter and many other programs. There are several fundraisers held throughout the year. This summary of El Carmelo's 2006-07 fundraising activities is to help you plan your participation.

Innisbrook Gift Wrap sale runs from September 15 to October 8 with delivery in November. This low-key promotion offers high quality merchandise and nets 50% of each sale for El Carmelo. Purchases may also be made at www.Innisbrook.com throughout the year and earn money for El Carmelo. Last year this program made \$6,000!



Book Fairs are a good way to promote reading, and El Carmelo earns 30% of sales. They take place the weeks of October 16 and May 21.

The Auction is on April 14. The El Carmelo auction is a fun, festive adult-only evening event and our biggest moneymaker. You can participate in the auction by attending and bidding (high and often!), donating an item, or making a monetary donation to underwrite auction expenses. This year some items will be available for bidding at the Pancake Breakfast March 24.

EScrip – all year long. Register and earn money for El Carmelo by shopping at participating merchants. Last year we earned \$10,000!

Box Tops for Education – all year long. Bring your Box Tops into the office or classroom, and El Carmelo turns them in for cash.



Adopt-a-Book – all year long. Choose a book for the El Carmelo Library. There is a bookplate in the inside cover for the donor name.

5th Grade Fundraiser – spring. This fundraiser is to raise money for their annual Ship Trip.

Partners in Education (PIE) Fundraiser – fall campaign. PIE is a non-profit foundation that provides money for staff like classroom aides, reading specialists, and Spectra Art

CALLING ALL QUILTERS

Working on a block? Thinking about working on a block?

There is still time to unleash your inner fabric artist and contribute a block to this year's quilt.

We will meet to layout and start assembling the quilt on Tuesday, September 12th, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at 2574 Cowper Street.

If you would like more information please contact Pam Sherwood (sherwood5858@yahoo.com) or Tanya Wing (tanyawing@yahoo.com)



Photo Day
 Thursday
 Sept 21



Library News

Welcome back to the El Carmelo Library. The library has already been busy at recess and lunch time with students reading, doing small art projects and playing quiet games. Classes will begin coming in next week. The schedule is listed below. We hope to be able to check out books, providing our system is up and ready to go.

Please encourage your children to share the books that they check out with you. One of life's greatest joys is reading with your child. Encourage them to take care of library books and keep them in a safe place. Also, remind them to bring books back on their scheduled library day to either return or renew. Some students get very disappointed if they are unable to check out a new book, because of an overdue. Students who have continual overdues will be limited and may have to keep their books at school.



The Paperback Chapter Book Swap Box will again be available in the library where students can exchange used paperback chapter books for new books. The books must be in good condition, school appropriate and have parent consent to trade. Also, students may check out library videos as long as a parent accompanies them.

Parents wishing to make donations to our library can participate in the Adopt-a-Book program. Books will be on display on Back to School Night. Our wonderful parent volunteer, Elisa Schmit, will be there to assist with Adopt-a-Book.

We look forward to a great school year! Leslie and Rose

The library schedule for classes is as follows:

Tuesday- Rooms 3, 5, 6, 9, and 21

Wednesday- Rooms 1, 4, and 7

Thursday- Rooms 8, 10, and 19

School Attendance Area Boundary Review and El Carmelo Survey Results

As we discussed in May, the Palo Alto Unified School District is planning to review the geographical boundaries defining which schools residents may attend. PAUSD has revised attendance area boundaries from time to time, most recently in 1998 (before Barron Park Elementary opened) and in 2001 (before Terman Middle School opened).

Background

PAUSD has asked a committee of representatives from each school in the district, the Attendance Area Advisory Group (AAAG), to advise how the boundaries might best be redrawn. We, Linda Jensen and Liz Cowie, are El Carmelo's representatives on this committee. The AAAG will begin to meet in September and new boundaries could possibly go into effect the following school year, 2007-2008.

Several factors are prompting the District to consider new boundaries. First, an increasing number of children are not able to attend their neighborhood school. This is due to population shifts, growing enrollment (a 21% increase over the past 10 years), and the community's desire to maintain small class sizes. In the 2005-2006 school year, 109 elementary students were "overflowed" to schools beyond their attendance boundary. The District places a premium on neighborhood schools and hopes to reduce the number of overflowed students through the boundary review process. Second, there is a variation in enrollments among schools due to population and capacity. Third, projected new housing developments may affect enrollment. (For more information on the boundary review, see http://pausd.org/community/downloads/brd_ed/brd_packet/pkt_101105.pdf, pp. 25-29).

Changing attendance boundaries is likely to be challenging. A change in one area is likely to require a change in a neighboring area, and so on. We are very fortunate that all of the schools in the District are terrific schools.

New boundaries could affect not only where your child may attend elementary school, but also middle school and high school.

School Attendance Area Boundary Review and El Carmelo Survey Results *(Continued)*

Currently, there are two different attendance paths for families within El Carmelo's boundaries. El Carmelo students residing south of Matadero Creek attend JLS Middle School, followed by Gunn High School (the number of El Carmelo students in this segment is approximately 20-22 kids per year). Thus, these students are "streamed" with their middle school peers when they enter high school.

In contrast, El Carmelo students residing between Oregon Expressway and Matadero Creek also attend JLS, but go on to Palo Alto Senior High School (Paly) (the number of El Carmelo students in this segment is approximately 20-22 per year).¹ (Until about five years ago, this segment attended Jordan Middle School, followed by Paly.) Only about 23% of JLS students (about 70 out of a class of 308) are currently slated to go to Paly each year.² These students were not streamed with most of their peers when entering high school.

Note: If you do not know which middle and high school your child is assigned to, go to www.pausd.org, click on Registration, and scroll down to the link in the text called "School Finder." You enter your street name and it gives you the assigned schools.

The Survey

In May we surveyed El Carmelo families about boundary issues and were very pleased that 49% (144 families) responded.

As discussed at the PTA meeting on August 29, virtually all respondents living within the El Carmelo residential area feel that El Carmelo is their most appropriate neighborhood elementary school based on where they reside.

Further, the great majority of responding El Carmelo families prefer their children to be "peer-streamed" in middle and high school. For example, 87% of families living south of Matadero Creek prefer peer-streaming, and prefer their status quo path of JLS-Gunn. 78% of families living north of Matadero Creek prefer peer-streaming, either Jordan-Paly or JLS-Gunn. Neither of these options is available to those families under the current boundaries. Only 17% of families living north of Matadero Creek prefer their status quo path of JLS-Paly. This path is not considered "peer-streaming" because the great majority of JLS students go on to Gunn High. Finally, if a split of El Carmelo students were necessary in secondary school, 70% of all responding El Carmelo families prefer that the split occur at 6th grade, rather than at 9th grade as it occurs today.

If you have any questions, a detailed summary of the boundary survey results is available in the office, or you may contact Liz Cowie (lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu) or Linda Jensen (linda@winterlodge.com).

We welcome your opinions as the boundary review process unfolds. The committee's public meetings are scheduled from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the PAUSD office at 25 Churchill Avenue on the following dates: Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9, Oct. 16, Oct. 30, Nov. 6, Nov. 13, and Dec. 5. We will continue to keep you apprised of developments through e-news, the Carmeletter, and PTA meetings.

Liz Cowie and Linda Jensen

¹Of the 2005-06 fifth grade class at El Carmelo, 29 were slated to go to Paly and 35 to Gunn. The remainder of each El Carmelo class is made up of students overflowed from other elementary schools and students in the voluntary transfer program. Where these students attend high school is determined by their neighborhood school boundaries, or, in the case of the voluntary transfer program, by a separate district policy. These are the most recent numbers we have and we await further updates from the District.

²The number of JLS students going to Paly is about 70 because both the voluntary transfer program and Palo Verde Elementary also send a number of students, who will attend Paly to JLS each year. As with El Carmelo, Palo Verde's students are split between Paly and Gunn, after they all attend JLS Middle School.

Editor's Corner

Faith W. Brigel, Faithwb3@yahoo.com

Welcome to the new school year of 2006-2007 at El Carmelo.

The Carmeletter is a school newsletter to inform the El Carmelo parents of various events and activities that take place at El Carmelo Elementary School. There are several important things to know about the Carmeletter. Please read on:

- ✓ It comes out every two weeks.
- ✓ The deadline for submission this year is Thursdays at 3:00 p.m.
- ✓ When you are organizing an event, **first** think of advertising! Figure out in advance if you want to advertise it in the Carmeletter, and decide which issue you want to have it in. Give yourself sufficient time to write the article.
- ✓ Submit your article only once it is complete. Before you submit your article, check the times, dates, locations, names of all the people involved, etc.
- ✓ If you want the article to be included in more than one issue – resend it again just prior to that next deadline.
- ✓ When submitting your article via email (to carmeletter@yahoogroups.com), please use plain text (bold, italics, etc are okay). Often times the article may be reformatted to fit within the layout. If you do not have access to email, you can also submit a hard copy of the article to the "Editor" folder in the office.
- ✓ Although we try to include all submissions, we need to keep the length reasonable so they may be edited for brevity, also grammar, and punctuation.
- ✓ The Carmeletter can not accept any advertising of any other organizations, or personal events.
- ✓ You may use the Community Board which is located outside Denise Dauler's kindergarten classroom for matters of a more personal nature. It is monitored by the main office.
- ✓ You may use the Enews and the Community Kiosk for articles more appropriate to those avenues.
- ✓ All of the Carmeletter deadlines are included in this article. Keep the list as a reference for the rest of the school year.

Please follow these requests to help the Carmeletter run smoothly. Remember that all of us involved in the editing, layout, and translating are volunteers who work on it every two weeks for the whole school year.

Looking forward to working with you on the Carmeletter throughout the year!

Carmeletter
Next Deadline
Thurs., 9/7 @ 3:00 p.m.

Carmeletter Deadlines and Publication Dates 2006-2007

Deadline Date	Publication Date
8/24/06	9/1/06
9/7/06	9/15/06
9/21/06	9/29/06
10/5/06	10/13/06
10/19/06	10/27/06
11/2/06	11/9/06 (Thursday)
11/30/06	12/8/06
1/11/07	1/18/07
1/25/07	2/2/07
2/8/07	2/15/07
3/8/07	3/16/07
3/22/06	3/30/07
4/12/07	4/20/07
4/26/07	5/4/07
5/10/07	5/18/07
5/24/07	6/1/07

EL CARMELO



DRAGONS

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or a printed copy may be left in the Carmeletter editor folder in the Carmeletter drawer in the main office (below the mailboxes). Submissions will usually be reformatted, so plain text is preferred. Although we try to include everything submitted, please be aware that we need to keep the length of the newsletter reasonable, so we may shorten articles.

Next Issue

<u>Submission Date</u>	<u>Pub Date</u>
Sept 7	Sept 15