



Carmeletter

Issue 1

El Carmelo PTA Newsletter

September 12, 2008

Welcome Back to El Carmelo!
We hope your school year is off to a great start!

El Carmelo Calendar

- Sept. 9 – Kinder Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 11 – 1st Grade Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 16 – 2nd Grade Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 17 – Play Auditions
- Sept. 18 – Picture Day, 3rd Grade Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 22 – ERB – Grades 4,5
- Sept. 23 – 4th Grade Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 24 – Vision Screening K,2,5
- Sept. 25 – Teacher Welcome Lunch, 5th Grade Picnic, 5PM – 7PM at El Carmelo
- Sept. 26 – Sally Foster Fundraiser begins

- Oct. 9 – 10 – NO SCHOOL
- Oct. 15 – Sally Foster sales end

PAUSD/Community Calendar

- Oct. 4 – Black and White Ball

Principal's Letter Spanish Translation by *Moisés Goldszmidt*



Queridos padres y representantes, y demás miembros de la comunidad de El Carmelo:

¡Muchas gracias por la calurosa bienvenida que me han brindado! Sus amistosas sonrisas y demás atenciones, han permitido que me sienta como en casa. Ya llevo más de quince años trabajando para el distrito de educación de Palo Alto. Antes de este, mi nuevo puesto como director de la escuela de El Carmelo, yo trabajé primero como maestro, luego como maestro de tareas especiales (TOSA – “teacher on special assignment”), y más recientemente como administrador en el instituto de secundaria de Palo Alto (Palo Alto High School). Mi hija Emily, quien se graduó de Paly este pasado Junio, acaba de empezar su primer año en Mt. Holyoke College. Mi esposa, Sharon, es profesora en la Universidad de Santa Clara. ¡Cómo pueden ver, mi familia está muy vinculada a todo nivel con el proceso educativo!

A medida que me fui familiarizando más a fondo con la escuela durante el verano, me quedó bien claro que la incansable dedicación tanto del personal administrativo y educativo, como la de la comunidad de padres y representantes son las virtudes principales de El Carmelo. Tanto los maestros como los padres voluntarios han estado trabajando mucho antes del primer día de escuela, asegurándose que todo esté listo para este nuevo año escolar.

Además de las muchas horas necesarias para preparar todos los materiales para el nuevo período, nuestros maestros han empezado el año asistiendo a un día de entrenamiento especial para familiarizarse con el nuevo currículum de ciencia adoptado por el distrito. Los conceptos esenciales siguen siendo los mismos. Sin embargo el enfoque del material a enseñar en cada grado (kínder a quinto grado) cambiado. Algunas de las áreas nuevas de enfoque incluyen: Animales y vegetación en Kinder; clima en primer grado; equilibrio y movimiento en segundo grado; materia y energía (física) en tercero; medio ambiente en cuarto; y nuestro planeta y agua en quinto. Estamos muy entusiasmados con este nuevo programa de ciencia que en nuestra opinión está muy bien organizado y tiene muchas consideraciones prácticas y adaptadas a nuestros tiempos.

Así mismo quisiera también reconocer el trabajo de los miembros de la asociación de padres y maestros (PTA). Los directivos del PTA y varios voluntarios se reunieron varias veces conmigo para discusiones pertinentes

a El Carmelo y a mi nuevo trabajo, y dedicaron muchas horas para preparar los paquetes informativos para el nuevo año escolar, a organizar el evento de "Café del Primer Día". Además está claro que todas las horas invertidas por nuestros padres y representantes durante el pasado año escolar están dando fruto ahora ya que contamos con los fondos necesarios para todos los elementos principales del programa escolar. Por favor, si no lo han hecho todavía, quisiera animarlos a que apoyen a PTA y PIE. Tanto PTA como PIE son esenciales para la educación de nuestros niños.

A estas alturas del año los eventos de "back to school night" ya han tenido lugar. Los eventos a seguir son los Picnics de primero y segundo grado, las fotos escolares, y el "Soule Shop Assembly". Este último evento es importante para el clima de bienestar general de la escuela. Durante el transcurso de este año escolar vamos a crear actividades y eventos con el fin de apoyar el aprendizaje de las siguientes habilidades básicas de la convivencia en comunidad: cooperación, esfuerzo, amistad, cuidado y asistencia, resolución de problemas, responsabilidad, flexibilidad, iniciativa, y perseverancia. Iremos de tres en tres de manera que podamos enfocarnos en unas cuantas cada tres meses.

La otra prioridad del distrito (y de nuestra escuela) se centra en el programa de "evaluación de desarrollo de habilidades de lectura y comprensión" ("Developmental Reading Assessment" -- DRA). Este programa le permite a nuestros maestros obtener información precisa acerca del nivel de lectura y comprensión de nuestros estudiantes. Dicha información incluye fluidez en la lectura (expresión, velocidad, y precisión) estrategias de comprensión (desde el entendimiento literal hasta el análisis más profundo de intención y significado) etc. Todos los géneros, ficción, biografía, y literatura factual ("non-fiction") están incluidos en los criterios de evaluación lo cual permitirá a nuestros maestros obtener información precisa acerca de cuáles son los puntos fuertes y débiles de los hábitos de lectura de los estudiantes y les ayudara a enfocar la enseñanza apropiadamente.

Gracias de nuevo por su calurosa bienvenida. Estoy convencido de que este será un gran año escolar para todos.

Atentamente,

Chuck Merritt

Principal's Letter



Dear El Carmelo parents and community,

Thank you for your warm welcome to me as a new principal! The friendly smiles and thoughtful introductions have very quickly made me feel at home here. Before coming to El Carmelo as principal, I served in the Palo Alto Unified School district for fifteen years, first as a teacher, then as a TOSA (teacher on special assignment) and most recently as an administrator at Palo Alto High School. My daughter, Emily, who graduated from Paly in June, is now a freshman at Mt. Holyoke College. My wife, Sharon, teaches at Santa Clara University. You can see that we are all pretty invested in education!

As I worked this summer to get to know the workings of El Carmelo, it became even more clear to me that the key strengths of this school are the dedicated staff and the committed parent community. Both teachers and parent volunteers have been busy long before school opening in order to prepare for this year.

In addition to the many hours spent preparing this summer for this school year, the teaching staff began the year with a day-long Science education training to present the new K-5 Science curriculum adopted by the school district. While the concepts are generally the same, the sequencing and focus of units have changed. Some of the new/modified areas included: Kindergarten - Animals and Trees; First grade - Air and Weather; Second grade - Balance and Motion; Third grade - Matter and Energy; Fourth grade - Environments; Fifth grade - Water Planet. The training was necessary as there are many materials that go with this new curriculum. We are looking forward to the hands-on, well-organized science education that has been added to the curriculum.

I also want to recognize the hard work of the Parent Teacher Association. Officers of the PTA met with me during the summer and they and many other parents were involved in activities such as the preparation of the First Day Packet and the First Day coffees for Grades 1-5 and Kindergarten. And, of course, many hours that parents invested during the last school year are bearing fruit now during the current school year in the form of planning and funding for many important elements of the school program. I'd like to encourage you all, if you have not done so already, to support the PTA and PiE at El Carmelo.

By the time you read this, we will have had both Back to School nights. We will be looking forward to the First and Second Grade picnics as well as Photo Day and the Soul Shoppe Assembly, which is an important piece of our "School Climate" program. During the coming school year, we will be creating activities to support learning around nine life skills: Cooperation, Effort, Friendship, Caring, Problem Solving, Responsibility, Flexibility, Initiative and Perseverance. We'll take them three-at-a-time in the order above so that we can focus on a few life skills every few months.

Another ongoing focus at El Carmelo and around the district is the Developmental Reading Assessment, or DRA. The DRA provides teachers with a great deal of information about the way a student approaches a text, including oral reading fluency (expression, rate, and accuracy) and comprehension strategies (extending from literal comprehension to deep analysis of the text). The kits include fiction, biography, and nonfiction books, so students are assessed on a variety of reading genres. These assessments provide teachers an in-depth understanding of each student's reading strengths and needs, leading to effective, efficient instruction.

So, thank you, again, for your warm welcome. I think we are off to a very good start after this first week of school.

Sincerely,

Chuck Merritt
Principal

Carmeletter Publication Members

<i>Michele Kasper</i>	PTA President
<i>Jennifer Mutz</i>	PTA Exec. Vice-President
<i>Stephanie Youngquist</i>	PTA Vice-President of Communications
<i>Chuck Merritt</i>	Principal
<i>Maria Whealan</i>	Editor
<i>Jeanette Cheng</i>	Back-up Editor
<i>Wen Li</i>	Layout
<i>Christine Hodson</i>	Distribution
<i>Moises Goldszmidt</i>	Spanish Translation
<i>Christine Hodson</i>	eNews

PTA President's Letter



When did you first decide to volunteer for something? What did you commit to? Where did you share your talents, your time and your passion?

I recently was challenged to examine these questions, and how volunteering has changed my life. My first recollection is volunteering to do small things for neighbors when I was a child. As I got older, I felt the "pressure" of doing the "right thing", and offered to volunteer with the secret hope I would never be called upon to do anything.

Then at the ripe old age of 33, a neighbor took me up on one of my insincere offers to coach her daughter's volleyball team. I could never have imagined that the path I was taking would lead me to such a wealth of personal growth and fulfillment. Volunteering offered opportunities to grow in ways I would never have done in my professional life. I have learned to collaborate, to share, to listen, and to value myself and others. I have learned to acknowledge the individual, and to advocate for the whole.

Why do I volunteer? I love the sense of community I feel in working with others. I feel truly energized by the ideas and perspectives others bring to problem-solving. To brainstorm with others, plan an activity, and see how those ideas are put into action to support our community and our children is exhilarating.

People volunteer for a lot of reasons: altruism, duty, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, to support their children, to model "good" citizenship, to be acknowledged. Whatever drives you to volunteer, your participation at our school can have a profound and lasting effect on our children – whether it is heading up the PTA, or offering a hello and a smile to a child. I know I make a difference in our community – and you can, too. It doesn't necessarily take hours of time – when we ALL pitch in, the work is easier, and more FUN!

Both the school and the PTA have plenty of opportunities for you to lend your talent and energy. Volunteering is important to the school, and a great way to challenge yourself, too! Keep an eye on the calls in this newsletter (and future ones) either for something that seems "right down your alley" – or maybe instead, for something in an area you'd like to grow in. Thank you!

Michele Kasper
PTA President
mekasper@comcast.net

PTA Exec. Vice-President's Letter



Hello El Carmelo Parents and Staff,

I have the honor of serving as the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) Executive Vice -President this year. I work hand in hand with Michele Kasper, our fearless PTA President, as well as with a team of dedicated PTA Board members and a host of amazing PTA volunteers.

First, I'd like to thank each and every one of our teachers who are the core of this exceptional elementary school. We are very lucky to have the experienced, enthusiastic and supportive staff we have who invest so much in our children. It is truly my pleasure to help them in any way I can. Second, I'd like to thank Mr. Chuck Merritt, our fabulous new principal, for jumping in at El Carmelo and handling our school so gracefully. We all really appreciate how present and available he's been in getting to know the parents and students. Chuck exemplifies how we pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive community. Third, I'd like to thank the parents who give so much of themselves to the classrooms, PTA, and PiE (Partners in Education Foundation). As a group, not only in our own school but throughout the PAUSD (Palo Alto Unified District), parents donate literally hundreds of thousands of hours toward maintaining our exceptional schools. Did you know that the PTA officially volunteered over 250,000 hours of time to the school district just last year? Using a minimum wage base, this equals approximately \$2.5 million dollars in donated time! In reality, the figure is probably double this amount based on the number of hours that parents give out of the kindness of their hearts behind the scenes. And, of course, there are the additional hours parents donate to working in our fabulous teachers' classrooms.

At the end of the day, every child benefits from these hard working parents who give and give and give of themselves. So we'd like to see every parent contribute. If you see an opportunity to get involved in your teacher's classroom, the PTA, or PiE, please consider jumping in. You'll find in the end, the rewards are even greater than the time you give.

Most gratefully,

Jennifer Mutz

PTA Executive Vice-President

and Mom (Hannah in 3rd grade, Sam in Kindergarten)

Spotlight on El Carmelo's New Reading Specialist



Dear El Carmelo Families,

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year! I am thrilled to start my sixth year at El Carmelo as not only one of our third grade teachers, but also as our school's new reading specialist. Jan Barrett has retired, and is now enjoying this new chapter in her life with family in Connecticut.

My goal as reading specialist is to play a key role in helping all of our children at El Carmelo become willing and able readers and writers. It is my firm belief that the four components of literacy; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are the foundation from which all aspects of education are built. Without being fluently literate in all of these areas, school will be a struggle for our children. With this in mind, start the school year off on the right foot by making the following suggestions for habits in your home:

- Institute a daily family reading time where everyone reads for as little as 15 minutes or as long as an hour. Remember, you are your child's biggest influence. If they see you reading, they will want to read.
- Is your house stocked with reading material? Magazines, newspapers, on-line articles, books, manuals, letters, and even recipes all count. Basically, anything printed that needs to be understood is good reading material.
- Parents always ask me for a reading list, and I don't have one! It is my firm belief that children must read what they enjoy at home. Find books or magazines that your child will be interested in. Think about this - I'm an avid runner, so I subscribe to Runner's World Magazine. That doesn't mean everyone should read it! While it intrigues me, it may bore you. We read what interests us, and so should children. Trust me, they get enough varied literature at school. Home reading must have the ability to sustain interest.

Look for more in-depth tips on reading with your child in upcoming Carmeletters. I'm also planning to conduct parent literacy sessions in the coming months. At these sessions, I will give more tips on working with your children at home, and inform you of the most up to date practices in literacy education. The first session will be sometime in October. I'll let you know as soon as we set the date.

Have a great start to the school year, and feel free to email me with any questions regarding literacy.

Christina Nosek

Reading Specialist and 3rd grade teacher

Getting Plugged In at El Carmelo

by *Christine Hodson*

Carmeletter and eNews Guidelines

The purpose of the Carmeletter and eNews is to communicate a wide range of school-related information to the El Carmelo community. All members of the El Carmelo community can take advantage of the Carmeletter and eNews to publish their information relating to school activities. No advertisements or commercial promotions are permitted. The only fundraisers permitted to advertise are those run by El Carmelo PTA or PiE. The exception to this occurs when El Carmelo PTA has voted to sponsor an activity or program.

Carmeletter

The Carmeletter is a monthly newsletter. It contains the principal's letter, president's letter, and calendar, as well as information from Event Chairs and the El Carmelo community. Information can be in article format or quick announcements. The Carmeletter is published monthly and is available both in hard copy and as an electronic document.

Carmeletter Submissions

Submissions may be sent to:

Carmeletter@paloaltopta.org

or a printed copy may be left in the Carmeletter editor folder in the Carmeletter drawer of the main office (below the teacher cubbies). Submissions will usually be reformatted, so plain text is preferred.

eNews Guidelines

The El Carmelo eNews is for quick dissemination of information related directly to the school or community. It is sent out frequently, often twice a week. Items submitted to eNews should be very brief (3-5 lines) and time sensitive (happening within a week of the eNews in which the item appears). A link to additional information about the event can be included.

eNews has four sections:

A calendar section

A school and district news section

A volunteers wanted section

A community links section

eNews Submissions

Submissions must be related to the immediate community, and must be child or family - related content. Our El Carmelo principal reviews all submissions before they are distributed in eNews. To submit an item to eNews, email it in plain text format to elcarmeloPTA_enews@paloaltopta.org.

Subscribing to eNews

To subscribe to eNews send an email to elcarmeloPTA_enews@paloaltopta.org

Getting Plugged In at El Carmelo

by *Michele Kasper*

It's official – El Carmelo is the first PAUSD school to have amplification systems in every classroom. You may have noticed some teachers wearing “space age” looking necklaces. These microphones are part of the new audio systems that were installed over the summer. These systems amplify and clarify the teachers' voices so that each child can hear as if he /she were right next to them. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Carrie Manley, Mr. Garcia, the teaching staff, the PTA, generous family donors and PiE for accomplishing this at El Carmelo. I am proud to say that this community effort will enhance the educational experience of every student in our school for years to come. A BIG “thank you” to all those parents that went to bat for our children – it's amazing what we can do when we work together!

Get Ready for our Fall Fundraiser



50% of every purchase goes directly to El Carmelo PTA!

Our fundraiser featuring Sally Foster® gift wrap and gift products is just around the corner!

Premium gift wrap, value-priced, many recycled wraps

Gifts for everyone

Chocolates so good they've been served at the White House

And, everything is \$20 or less!

The Catalog sale runs from September 26th to October 15th with delivery in mid-November. On-line purchases at www.SallyFoster.com are also a great, easy way for family and friends to participate. Shipping is free on orders over \$70. El Carmelo continues to earn 50% on purchases made through January 15th.

Watch for the Sally Foster catalog coming home in Friday folders on September 26th.

El Carmelo takes a bite out of PiE



Twice yearly, Partners in Education (PiE), our district-wide non-profit fundraising organization, awards Teacher Grants to teachers seeking funds to support innovative educational programs. Last year El Carmelo was awarded four grants:

Graphic Novel grant awarded to our librarian, *Leslie Bell*. Graphic novels are books in comic strip form. These books appeal to reluctant readers, as well to enthusiastic ones.

Reader's Theater grant awarded to *Diane McCoy*, first grade teacher, to be utilized by the whole first grade. These scripted plays improve literacy, public speaking and confidence in our children.

Garden Learning Center grant awarded to *Robin Dosskey*, second grade teacher, to be utilized for second grade curriculum, and enjoyed by the whole school. The garden center is designed to bring science to life.

Audio System grant, written and spearheaded by *Carrie Manley* on behalf of the whole El Carmelo community. The audio systems help students better understand their teachers, by amplifying and clarifying the spoken word.

BRAVO, teachers!!!! Your enthusiasm and dedication is appreciated by the El Carmelo community.

Thank you to Grant writers and PTA members, *Carrie Manley* and *Michele Kasper*, for collaborating with the teachers to bring these programs to El Carmelo.

Welcome to our 2008-09 grant writer *Liz Cowie*.

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 (\$650/student) will be matched, dollar-for-dollar up to \$125,000.

Make your gift today - The Challenge ends on October 15, 2008.

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!

El Carmelo received over \$100,000 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". If you have not received a letter or have any questions regarding Partners in Education, please contact *Elizabeth Doi-Ludwig* at 329-1265 or elizdoiludwig@hotmail.com.

Free Money for El Carmelo!

With the current state of the economy we all may be tightening our belts. The great thing about eScrip is that it costs parents NOTHING and provides needed funding for our school. It's easy and free. To participate simply register your credit, debit, Safeway and Macy's cards with eScrip and designate El Carmelo PTA as the recipient; then between 2% and 4% of what you spend at participating merchants will automatically be donated to El Carmelo. To find a list of participating merchants and to register if you haven't done so already, go to www.escrip.com or call/email *Ana-Maria Dias*. Last year, El Carmelo received over \$12,000 from eScrip.

Ana-Maria Dias
eScrip Chair
326-5854
Anamaria_am99@yahoo.com

El Carmelo presents "Blather, Blarney and Balderdash"

This Fall, El Carmelo 4th and 5th graders will have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming school play, "Blather, Blarney and Balderdash" written by Patrick Rainville Dorn. The title characters are a trio of wild and crazy leprechauns who try to help tongue-tied shepherd Fin O'Grady learn to tell a story and win the hand of his one true love. As they work their magic, three hilarious and action-packed Irish folk and fairy tales are brought to life. It's a charming play with a bit of humor and excitement, and should be fun for audiences of all ages.

Rehearsals will take place Mondays and Wednesdays after school and culminate with two evening performances November 20 and 21, and one matinee performance Saturday, November 22.

4th and 5th graders who are interested in participating and have not yet picked up a registration packet may contact *Rebecca Davis* or *Ana-Maria Dias*.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Friday, Sept. 12th – deadline for completed registration packets to be returned to El Carmelo office

Wednesday, Sept. 17th – Auditions, 1:30-3:45 p.m. in the MP room

Wednesday, Sept. 22nd – First rehearsal, 3:00-5:15 p.m. in the MP room

Wednesday, Sept. 22nd – Mandatory Parent Meeting 5:15-6:00 in the MP room

We hope everyone in the El Carmelo community will support our aspiring actors by attending the performances!

What is Adopt-a-Book?

by *Shirley Siu*

Adopt-a-Book is a program that gives your family an opportunity to donate books to the El Carmelo Library while honoring your child, family, teacher or others. By donating \$15 per book (as noted on the One Check PTA form) this allows the Library to purchase more books. The Library can never have too many books!

Once you have paid, you and your child can stop by the Library during regular library hours, during lunch or at designated times before or after school, to choose from a pre-selection of books. The designated times will be posted within the next few weeks. In addition to choosing from pre-selected books, you can also choose to adopt a book that is currently on the shelves that has not yet been adopted.

An inscription is placed in the book with a dedication bookplate. Your child will have the first opportunity to check out the book from the Library.

El Carmelo's Library is an important resource in our children's education.

By donating, your child will be very proud to know that your family has personally supported the Library!

Any questions about this program contact

Elisa Schmit at elisaschmit@hotmail.com or *Shirley Siu* at siusiu@pacbell.net.

Going Green at El Carmelo



PLEASE DO WHAT YOU CAN TO ENCOURAGE THESE EFFORTS AND JOIN OUR GREEN TEAM TODAY!

Our school community works hard to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Please join our new school green team or email your ideas by contacting *Megan Swezey Fogarty* at meganfogarty@sbcglobal.net. Join our efforts:

Reduce trash at lunch by working toward waste free lunch boxes – See below. We also encourage families to bring reusable plates, cups and utensils to all school events.

Reuse books through our annual book exchange. This year we will sponsor a larger service effort January 19-24 to collect such items as books, professional clothing and coats, hotel toiletries, kids' party favors, and canned foods, and GIVE IT ALL AWAY.

Reduce energy use by encouraging all students to walk, bus or bike to school and by turning off classroom lights at lunch.

Reduce paper use by putting the Carmeletter online (this reduced Carmeletter paper use by 45% last year), using enews for communication, encouraging staff to use both sides of paper and send only one item per family, and getting off junk mail lists.

Recycle paper, cans, and bottles with bins in classrooms and throughout the school.

Tips Toward a Waste Free Lunch

Let's keep El Carmelo trash cans empty! Disposable items in the lunch box create up to 8 oz. of garbage each day. This adds up to 100 pounds per year of trash just from your child's lunch box. HERE ARE 5 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE WASTE :

1. Use all reusable containers in your child's lunch box. NO BAGGIES.
2. Only pack what your child will eat.
3. Pack a cloth napkin and reusable utensils.
4. Purchase snacks in bulk and repack in individual reusable containers to reduce packaging waste.
5. Pack fresh fruit. It's healthy and does not require packaging.

Safety Tip for Bicyclists

by *Liz Cowie*

Bike riders, please watch out when crossing an intersection where there is a crossing guard holding up a stop sign. Do not ride across with the pedestrians! Instead, get off and walk your bike across the street. That is the word from the crossing guard supervisor. It was not intuitive to me, and I am guessing a lot of kids don't know this rule.

The reason to walk your bike is that it is a vehicle. When cars stop for the crossing guard who is holding up a stop sign, people on bikes must stop, too. Although a bicyclist could wait and cross with the cars, that would be less safe than walking the bike with the pedestrians.

Please spread the word to the bicyclists in your family.

Thank you for keeping El Carmelo's streets safe!

10 Mile Club

by *Jennifer Mutz*

It's happening again this year folks! Run, walk, skip, dance – it's up to the kids! Just keep moving.

For several years (thanks to Liz Cowie who initiated this great program at El Carmelo) we've offered kids the opportunity at recess to set an exercise goal and successfully reach it. Why? We want to engage kids in physical activity, help kids get those wiggles out so they can focus more easily in the classroom, offer kids an opportunity to set a goal and challenge themselves to reach it, and encourage kids to socialize – a host of valuable reasons. In a perfect world, kids walking/running will translate into a lifestyle change not only for themselves but for their entire families. Healthy living through walking/biking (instead of driving to school)! These kinds of activities that help kids develop values around healthy living are critical for our green efforts. Better for our kids' bodies, better for our earth.

Here's how it works. The kids run a large lap (includes the field, blacktop and tether ball area). Any distance during recess is super. The kids get a punch for each lap. If a child reaches 5 laps (or more) during recess they receive recognition. After a child reaches 50 laps (10 miles) they receive a prize. Please make sure students wear sneakers. We want all students to stay hydrated so please remind your students to drink a lot (bringing their own water bottle is best – the Spirit Shop carries these)!

We're looking forward to seeing our veteran runners/walkers/skippers (anything that keeps the kids grooving) and welcoming new 10Milers. All grades are welcome. Stop by Room 22 on Tuesdays at lunch (starting mid-September) and take a look!

Vounteer Call

Picture Day - September 18.

The PTA is looking for 3 volunteers to help escort and supervise children during photo session. Parents needed for 8:15 AM-12:00 Noon time slots. No experience necessary. Call *Michele Kasper* at 858-1807 if you can help.

Vision Screening - September 24. Grades K,2,5.

Three volunteers needed to escort and supervise children to and from classrooms. Call *Michele Kasper* at 858-1807.

Sally Foster Fundraising Event – prior to and after September 26 start date.

Looking for parents to help with all aspects of the event...sign making, distribution and data collecting. Call *Stephanie Youngquist* at 327-4284.

PTA Chair positions available.

These positions, if not filled, will result in activities being removed from our events calendar:
School Traffic and Safety,
Spring Book Fair,
Health and Nutrition,
International Day, and
Stories Under the Stars

Taking a Moment to Say 'Thank you'

Kinder Summer Playdates

Thanks to our playdate hosts – Erika Krugler, Leslyn Leong and Jennifer Mutz - for getting our kinders off to a great start! The kinder summer playdates were a lot of fun and well attended. It was so nice for our kinders and parents to start school with some familiar faces.

Shirley Siu, Sherwin Wong, and Stephanie Youngquist

Ice Cream Social

We hope that new and incoming families enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other and get to know El Carmelo a little bit at our Ice Cream Social. We enjoyed meeting you. Thanks to Erika Krugler, Robert Siu, and our tireless PTA President, Michele Kasper for making the event happen.

Stephanie Youngquist, Shirley Siu and Sherwin Wong

Math Lab

Math Lab is a hands-on, self-paced, concrete approach to understanding math. All students at El Carmelo regularly participate in Math Lab with the help of many parent volunteers. Over the summer 100 games and 40 Rubik's Cubes were donated to our program!

A big THANK YOU to: Gamewright Games, JAX LTD, Inc, Days of Wonder, Out of the Box Publishing, Inc, Mayfair Games, Seven Towns LTD – USA, Palo Alto Sport and Toy, and The Play Store.

Back to School Supplies

Thank you *Megan Fisher and Kelly Zenger!* Many of you will remember in years past rushing to Target with your school supplies list in hand to face decimated shelves. Three stores later and you still haven't found the tropical-colored markers your child's teacher has requested. Megan and Kelly took the entire teacher wish lists, perused all of the ads for the best prices, bought, stored, sorted, and delivered all of the supplies to the teachers.

Let's give a big thank you to Megan and Kelly for such a big service, saving us all time and money. If you haven't yet said "Thanks" by reimbursing the PTA \$25 per student for the supplies, please do.

Back to School Coffee

We had a wonderful Back to School Coffee on the first day of school. Over 60 parents came and enjoyed coffee and some wonderful homemade treats. Thanks to all of the parents that helped to start off the school year so nicely:

*Erina DuBois, Maggie Smeal, Debra Wittenbrink
Karen Geiselhart, Leslyn Leong, Chris Barry
Deanne Welch, Eiko Baldwin, Jody Lie, Kathleen Ford
Julia Jacobson, Michele Kasper and Jen Donat*

Online One Check Form

Did you notice the PTA's on-line data collection and payment form that went out over email? This year's form was created thanks to the efforts of one of our parents, G.D. Ramkumar. Ram spent many volunteer hours this summer working on it and he continues to put in time collecting information for our student directory.

Thank you, *RAM!*

'Thank you' to all these volunteers for...

...putting together the Hospitality folders for new families to help them get acquainted with Palo Alto:
Michele Kasper

...putting together the First Day Packets with key information for parents:
Michele Kasper, Stephanie Youngquist, Asmita Runge, Jennifer Mutz, Diane McCoy, Christine Hodson

...for the wonderful First Day Coffee:
Jennifer Donat

...working over the summer to get our PTA books audited:
Eiko Baldwin

...to all the classroom reps that helped communicate the importance of PiE and PTA at Back-to-School Night:
Michele Kasper Erika Krugler, Jennifer Mutz, Elizabeth Doi, Shirley Siu, Kelly Zenger, David Duran, Calvin Woon, Liz Cowie and Ana-Maria Dias, Maria Whealan and Julie Bitler

...organizing and managing the information tables for Back-to-School Night:
Megan Fogarty - Green team
Michele Kasper - PTA and PiE
Stephanie Youngquist - Sally Foster Fundraiser
Ana-Maria Dias - Auction
Elisa Schmit and Shirley Siu - Adopt-a-Book
Jennifer Mutz and Rhiannon Wallace - After School Programs
Colleen Hall and Susan Rider - Spirit Shop
Ana-Maria Dias - eScrip
Chris Sanchez and Susan Fung - Tables and food
Elizabeth Doi and Calvin Woon - Scouts

...to all *buddy families* that came to our ice cream social to welcome new El Carmelo families.

... to kinder coffee hosts, *Michele Kasper* and *Jennifer Mutz*.

...to our new webmaster *Marcus Aiu* for putting a new shine on the PTA website. Fabulous job.

...to Mathlab queen *Stephanie Youngquist*. Your passion for math and science is contagious!!!
Thanks for bringing your talents to El Carmelo.

A HUGE "Thank you" to *Ana-Maria Dias* (PTA President 2007-08) for her years of service to the PTA. Your "can do" attitude and commitment to children is inspiring. Your guidance and friendship have helped me grow in spirit and mind.

Many Thanks, PTA President *Michele Kasper*