



Carmeletter

November 10, 2006

Issue 6

Principal's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Parents and Community,

We are about a quarter of the way through the year. Parent/Teacher conferences are in full swing and will continue through the rest of November. Teachers spend countless hours reviewing your child's work in order to complete the progress report card and to prepare for the conference with you. Do drop by your child's classroom to get informed about what your child is doing in his/her class.



NOV 16 - RAINBOW PICTURE DAY

NOV. 30 - CARMELETTER DEADLINE, 3PM

Here are some of the things to expect at your parent-teacher conference:

- The teacher will review your child's strengths and areas for continuing development.
- Samples of your child's work and the results of various assessments will be shared. The teacher will refer to the report card and will indicate your child's progress toward meeting the standards that we expect students to know and be able to achieve by the end of the school year. Is s/he making expected progress? Is s/he making limited progress? If so, is there a need to put increased attention on a particular skill or concept? Has s/he already met or exceeded the standard?
- Conference topics will include academic growth and performance, as well as study skills and social development.
- The teacher may suggest ways in which you can assist and support your child's progress at home.
- The teacher will give you an opportunity to ask questions and share reflections about your child's growth and achievement.

It is our common goal, as parents and teachers, to work together in the best interest of all our children. I want to thank you for taking the opportunity to meet with us, so we can move ahead together in supporting your child.

Updates and other general information:

- **Think safety!** The weather is definitely changing and the rain is on its way! Please emphasize to your child/ren the need for caution when on the way to and from school, whether on bicycle or on foot. Please ask that they take particular care when crossing the street at intersections and when going behind parked cars. Better to think defensively and be safe, than to be concerned about who was right—after the fact. Also keep these tips in mind if you drop-off or pick-up your child before and after school.
- **We need your help after school!** Your child's safety during the transition time right after school is of concern. We want every child to be responsible and self-reliant in getting to his/her next destination safely. It is our shared responsibility to monitor the children and account for their whereabouts and safety, whether it's going home, getting to after-school childcare, or any other destination. Students must go home when dismissed from school at the end of the day. If you are picking up your child and know that you are going to be late, have him/her wait in the office, **NOT ON THE PLAYGROUND**. Some of you pick up your children and stay around and chat with neighbors while children play. It's one of the benefits of a close knit community. Please do keep **CLOSE** tabs on your child's activities during that time to ensure appropriate play and safety.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

November

- 10 Veteran's Day - No School
- 14 Board of Education 25 Churchill 7:00pm
- 16 Rainbow Picture Day
- 22-24 Thanksgiving Holiday, No School
- 28 Board of Education 25 Churchill 7:00pm
- 30 Carmeletter Deadline 3:00 p.m.



Principal's Letter *(Continued from Page 1)*

- **A Special Thanks** to the many of you who take the lead (as well as the many “quiet doers”) in sponsoring and bringing school related activities to fruition. Your special touch and care make El Carmelo wonderful for our children. While many of the activities are a one-time event, many others are ongoing, and it takes time and energy to make them happen. I want to “Thank You” on behalf of the children, the staff and the entire community for your direct involvement and support!

Again, thank you for your active and supportive role in helping El Carmelo School provide a strong educational foundation for our children and a clear sense of community for all.

Warmest regards,

Lupe García

President's Letter

Last year we published several stories by El Carmelo students in the Carmeletter. We heard from the students on topics ranging from the third grade Ano Nuevo field trip to a visit by Stanford football team members to the recovery of a toy boat in the Palo Alto Baylands. The community enjoyed reading these pieces and the students were thrilled to see their work in print.

In this issue we are again featuring the writing of our students. Read these stories to hear about the California Walk Through Assembly, which the fourth grade participated in recently. We will continue to feature the work of our students in future issues of the Carmeletter. We hope you enjoy them.

It's hard to believe, but the holidays are arriving soon. This is the last issue of the Carmeletter before the Thanksgiving break. We have a lot to be thankful for. The school year has gone smoothly so far and the students are doing well. Both of us are very thankful for the many parents who invest their time to help make this happen. Your contributions are critical to the great community we have at El Carmelo.

The holidays can also bring stress for families. Although it's a busy time with lots to balance, let's remember to take a deep breath, remember how well things are going, and enjoy this holiday season.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Eric Schuur
President

Ana-Maria Dias
Executive Vice President

Thank You

Thank you once again to Jeff Bondor and Susan Rider for helping out with the Hearing tests at El Carmelo!



El Carmelo Book Fair

The Book Fair was a great success! Thank you to all who came out to enjoy the books! A special thank you to our volunteers: Julia Jacobsen, Susan Rider, Mirna Aguilera, Ann Holum, Alfredo Gonzales, Kesha Brown, Asmita Runge, Cong Li, Eunsook Kim Cho and family, Lynn Brown, Suzanne Ogawa, Maria Farhani, Barb Rains, LeeAnn McDermott, Elizabeth Doi-Ludwig, Dahna Pasternak, Mary Rose, Elisa Schmit, Barbara Sonner, Tania Goldszmidt, Deepali Joshi, Fabienne Bismuth, Mariel Spengler, Jennifer, Ginny, and those who came at the last minute to lend a helping hand!! We so appreciated all your help! See you in the spring.....

Michele Kasper and Jennifer Chu



Ice Skating Party

The El Carmelo Ice Skating Party on November 1 at Winter Lodge was a big success. We had over 200 skaters. And that was quite a turn out the night after Halloween! I hope everyone had a good time in spite of the rain.

I would like to thank all the people who helped with the party: Jane Garvey, Sharon Johnson, Gary Anwyl, Sandra McIntosh, Grace Lee, Ana-Maria Dias, Pamela Parke Haussler, Vered Shomron, Mirna Aguilera, Kim Nguyen and Eric Schuur.

I would like to especially thank Linda Jensen for assisting in the organization and being the liaison with Winter Lodge. I would also like to thank Jennifer and Ginny in the office for helping to collect all the registration forms. Finally, I want to thank everyone that participated!!

Yi-Mei Chang



The 30th Annual El Carmelo Auction:

Time to Send in Your Donations of Items to Auction Off

The El Carmelo Auction is celebrating its 30th anniversary with this spring's auction on April 14, 2007. The auction raises money for a lot of the important items the PTA funds for our students. The funding is for field trips, classroom computers, math lab supplies, YMCA Noon activities, Noon Art, Assemblies, and much more.

Donations from El Carmelo families are the backbone of our auction. Think of some items that you'd like to purchase and donate those . . . maybe a dinner at your favorite restaurant, an arts and crafts basket, a dessert delivered once a month for 3 months, babysitting, a group hike, a home cooked meal, a birthday party at your favorite bouncy place . . . Is your idea too big to do on your own? Then join together with other El Carmelo families to share the cost and time, and enjoy sharing that community spirit. Donations are welcome now and through early February. In the office, there are forms and a box where you can return them.

We are looking forward to receiving your creative and fun donations, which will help our auction be as successful this year as in the past.

Any questions, contact lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu.

**El Carmelo
Auction!**

Conflict Resolution- Friendship Skills

Conflict Resolution training has begun in most classrooms. We started off focusing on listening skills – how they help us make friends, solve problems and keep problems from growing out of control. We also did different activities that involved listening. During each session we work on different ways to calm down and cool off so we have a better chance of solving a problem before it spirals out of control. You can ask your child which way they tried in their class.

There are a total of 5 sessions scattered throughout the year. I will return to the classrooms in mid-November for session #2. If you would like to stop in and observe, please check with your child's teacher for the specific time and date.

Talley Kenyon

**Rainbow
Picture Day
Thurs. 11/16**



School Boundary Update; Middle and High School

At the school boundary committee meeting on October 30, middle and high school boundaries were discussed. The district presented no new boundary scenarios. Some members of the committee had asked for scenarios that might assist in peer-streaming, such as moving choice programs, but the demographer preferred not to do that until the committee answered certain questions.

The questions were whether the middle and high schools' capacities should be increased, whether the two high schools should be required to stay within 100 students of each other, and how peer-streaming might be taken into account. The committee broke into small discussion groups.

The groups presented no consensus regarding whether or not to increase the current capacities of the secondary schools. Currently, the Board of Education has capped the attendance at JLS and Jordan middle schools at 950 students each, and Terman middle school at 675. Paly and Gunn high schools are capped at 1950 each. However, each of those sites could actually accommodate more students than is currently allowed. JLS could take 1106, Jordan could take 1101, Terman could take 752, Paly could take 2128, and Gunn could take 2022. At the projected growth rate, middle schools will need expanded capacity by 2009, high schools by 2012.

Some members pointed out that the schools might feel too crowded if capacity were increased. Others felt that keeping middle schools from getting too large is more important than keeping high schools from expanding. There was cautious support for not strongly adhering to the tradition that Paly and Gunn must be no more than 100 students apart.

Peer-streaming was voiced by at least half of the small groups as an important consideration. However, there was very little time available to discuss this. Despite the strong support among the committee members for peer-streaming, the district's demographer felt that it would be very difficult to peer-stream El Carmelo and Palo Verde into middle school, e.g., giving the students who will go to Paly the choice of where to attend middle and/or high school. The demographer calculated that 142 middle schoolers live in the non-peer-streamed part of El Carmelo's residential area. Likewise, she calculated that 191 middle schoolers live in the non-peer-streamed part of Palo Verde's residential area. These numbers are significantly higher than what we expected based on the fact that only about 70 kids from JLS go to Paly in a given year. We are seeking an explanation of the district's numbers and anticipate working with the demographer to try to generate scenarios that give the non-peer-streamed part of El Carmelo a choice of secondary school track.

Questions: (lizcowie@alumni.duke.edu; linda@winterlodge.com) AAAG meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is Monday, November 13, from 7:00 – 9:00 pm, at 25 Churchill Ave.

Liz Cowie and Linda Jensen
El Carmelo's representatives to the Attendance Area Advisory Group

P.A.U.S.D. Music Department

Phyllis Smith

If you can tune a violin, viola, or cello we desperately need your help in the beginning strings or orchestra class. Thank you for sharing your time with the children.

Music lessons at El Carmelo are held on: **Monday** from 9:20 -10:00 and **Thursday** from 1:50-2:30. Please call Phyllis at 329-3944.

Update: Mandarin Immersion Proposal

The Feasibility Study that is currently being conducted to inform the Board of Education whether to implement another Choice program into Palo Alto which would be Mandarin Immersion into our Public School District will be presented on Tues. December 12. At the very next meeting which will be on Tues. January 9, 2007 the Board will come to a final decision. There are pros and cons about this proposal. It is advisable to educate yourselves on the advantages and disadvantages.

You can visit these websites for more information:
www.paee.us www.pausd.org <http://www.geocities.com/paceforkids/>

The next Board of Education meetings are Tues. November 14, and Tues. November 28. They are all open to the public. Your opinions are welcome.

For more information about this proposal call Faith W. Brigel at 330-0606.

California Walk-Through Assembly

All of our fourth graders went to an assembly, the theme of which was a Walk Through California. They then wrote out their experiences in a three paragraph narrative. The writings were excellent!

Editor

Walk Through California Assembly Paloma Tracy, Room 18

Yesterday, October 12, 2006, my class and I went to a California Walk-Through Assembly. Before we left for the M.P. room, we each got different assorted colored name tags. When my class got to the M.P. room, we also had assorted benches. There were four benches each with different teams on them including the Gold Rushers, the Blue Oceans, the Green Valleys, and the Red Volcanoes (which was my team.) A lady named Erin ran the assembly. Everyone had a different expert card and word with a question on it that you had to make a poster. A poster stated the definition, question and the answer. During the assembly when Erin said your word in a sentence you had to run up to the expert chair and say the definition of your word and the answer of the question. If you did that correctly then you got 25 points for your team. It was really exciting.



I liked a lot of things about the assembly. I liked the lady Erin who ran the assembly, she was very nice and enthusiastic. If you were sitting up straight, clapping for people and being kind than Erin might tell you to "Go for the GOLD". Then you would run up and grab off of a California map. If your lollipop had a gold streak on it then you would yell "Eureka" and get 50 extra points for your team. If your lollipop didn't have a gold streak on it you would say "Oh bummer" but you still got a lollipop. The "time machine" was really cool. You put one hand over your eyes and one hand on top of your head and crouch over. When you got up from "time machine" position we were in a different time period or century. It was very fun.

I learned a lot from the assembly. I learned that Spain was the first country to take over our land which is now called the United States of America. I didn't know that at the bottom of California there are some mountains that are called the Chocolate Mountains. It was fun to find out that Abraham Lincoln's nephew came up with the American Republic. I also found out that assemblies are fun. I think this assembly was a great experience.

Walk Through California Assembly Clara Harrington, Room 22

The Walk Through California assembly was a blast. We learned about California and how the state was ruled, how it changed, and the differences between now and long ago. We went into a time machine to see the different years (mostly the seventeenth and eighteenth century). All of the students were broken up into four groups: the Red Volcanoes, the Blue Oceans, the Green Valleys and the Gold Rushers. If we had good posture and were caught with a positive attitude, Erin (the girl who was teaching us) would ring a buzzer, call you up, and you would be able to pick a lollypop. If it were dipped in gold glitter, your team would earn 50 points. At the end, the team with the most points got a certificate. There was a lot involved in the Walk Through California assembly, but I thought it was great.

I liked a lot about the assembly. Although memorizing the expert cards wasn't much fun at all, I loved announcing it aloud to the other students and walking back to my bench with pride. I also enjoyed earning 25 points whenever a team member said their definition of their word correctly and answered the question in a full and complete sentence!. One of the other great achievements was being the team with the highest score. And, of course, it was wonderful to have all of my friends there as we leaned more about our state. There was definitely a lot to like about the assembly.

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**Walk Through California Assembly
Clara Harrington, Room 22**

(Continued from Page 5)

The assembly taught me a lot about California. I learned that California was officially a state on September 9th, 1850. It was owned by 'New Spain' at one time, which is what they called Mexico long ago. Tons of Hispanic people moved to California after the Russians began to populate the area because they wanted the state to be their own. Since 'ranch' was my Expert Words, I discovered that the closest rancho to our school is Ranch La Purisima and that: a rancho was a large farm area in California that was often given to others as a reward for service, and it was where cattle were raised. I am very glad to have been able to walk through the history of California, especially since it was interesting and enjoyable!

**Walk Through California Assembly
Molly Fogarty, Room 17**

The California walk through assembly was really fun. A woman named Erin told us lots of facts about California. If you were sitting up straight she would say "Go for the gold" and you would run up to a map that had lollipops around it and pick a lollipop, and if you had one with a gold tip you would earn 50 points for your team! When Erin was talking, if she said your expert word then you would go to the expert chair and say your fact. After you said your fact she would ask you a question and if you didn't answer in complete sentences everyone would yell "Juice juice" and Erin would squirt you with water. Those parts were fun.

I like the whole assembly, but especially how we got to participate in learning. I liked how the different teams showed sportsmanship to each other. The expert chair was cool too. I liked how everyone had an expert card and everyone shared a fact. Sometimes Erin would pick some kids to put into costumes when we were going back in time. I liked everything at the assembly.

I learned a lot of things at the assembly. Did you know that Spain took over California then Mexico took over, and then (finally) it became the California republic. I learned what a bay really was from the expert card. I also learned that the first California flag was different than it is today. I learned a lot of new things at the California walk through assembly.

EL CARMELO



DRAGONS

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Next Issue

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