



CARMELETTER

Principal's Letter

Dear parents and students of El Carmelo,



As we enter the last month of school, I'd like to let you know about some changes in our school staffing.

Nan Knoblauch, 5th grade teacher in Rm. 16 is retiring. We will



miss her expertise in education, her collaboration with our 5th grade team in so many special activities for students, her service as science lead teacher for many years, her care for students, her generosity, and her wonderful laugh. Nan has made a strong impact on the culture of students at El Carmelo, and we will miss her very much!

We welcome **Joe Young** to the 5th grade staff. Joe is an experienced teacher who has decided to join us at El Carmelo (who wouldn't want to work here?). Joe comes to us from Duveneck, where he taught for five years (and Nixon before that). Joe is a district leader in technology and STEM and has provided district staff development on many occasions. We are delighted to have Joe join us here!

We are also preparing to renew **Site Council**, and before we consider the candidates for next year, let us thank the members who are cycling off. Staff representatives *Leanne Fonteyn* and *Annette Isaacson* complete their terms this year, as does parent representative *Katie Cicero*. Thank you for your generous commitment of time.

Our new candidates, who have personal statements for you to read on our website: <http://elcarmelo.pausd.org/wordpress/site-council>, are *Hanh Nguyen*, *Lorena Ruelas* and

Calendar



Monday, May 19

12:45-2:30pm, Kinder Visits

Wednesday, May 21

8-9am, Volunteer Coffee

Thursday, May 22

12:45-2:30pm, Kinder Visits

Monday, May 26

No School, Memorial Day

Tuesday, May 27

Field Day

Wednesday, May 28

1:30-4:30pm, 5th Grade Pool Party

Thursday, May 29

Last Day of School, Minimum Day

8:30am, Kinder Promotion

10am, 5th Grade Graduation

Jenny Schmidt. Thank you for running for Site Council representatives 2014-16 and for serving your school community.

Finally, please take note of the following **end-of-year Student Showcase** dates (your students' teachers will send you more details):

Kinder: Tuesday, 5/6 and Thursday, 5/8; Student-Led Conferences

1st Grade: Tuesday, 5/20 and Wednesday, 5/21; Student-Led Conferences

2nd Grade: Wednesday, 5/14; Music and Guided Tours

3rd Grade: Tuesday, 5/13; Student-Led Conferences

4th Grade: Wednesday, 5/21; California Icon & Walk-Through

5th Grade: Tuesday, 5/27; State Fair Poster Sessions

I look forward to seeing you at these wonderful celebrations of student work.

Sincerely,

--Chuck Merritt

cmerritt@pausd.org



PTA President's Letter

Dear El Carmelo community,



It is hard to believe how quickly the end of the school year has come! I hope you have been enjoying the warm weather and time with your family. The end of the year is a chance for me to reflect on the past year at El Carmelo.

We have seen the fruits of the first expenditures from the **Strategic Initiative Fund**. We have classroom sets of Chromebooks in many of our upper grades, giving kids more time to write papers and produce work while having seamless collaboration with their teachers. The lower grades have new sets of nonfiction literature to use in their classrooms. They also have iPad stations to use for interactive learning. As we look to the future, we will have the arrival of new picnic benches for the upper grades and enrichment activities for all of our children at lunchtime in the fall. Some of our teachers will have the chance to attend a weeklong writers' workshop and training at Columbia University this summer which will enhance our writing curriculum at El Carmelo. All of these additions to El Carmelo come through the use of funds from the Strategic Initiative Fund and generous donations from many parents in our community over the last few years!

Right now a committee of parents are working on **updating and improving our El Carmelo website**. With the coming of the new school year, this will be an enhanced resource for all of us. The PTA website will be modified to work closely with the school website. We hope this will make our online communication more powerful and easy to navigate for all of the families at El Carmelo. Look for the new website this fall!

We elected a **new PTA board** for the 2014-2015 year, effective July 1st.

2014-15 El Carmelo PTA Board

President	Kathryn Lamis
Exec. VP	Janet Owen
Secretary	Krissy Green
Treasurer	Maria Derrick
Auditor	Lifang Zhao
Corresponding Secretary	Ronna Edwards
Historian	Rosanna Jackson
VP Fundraising	Lucinda Brommersma
VP Communications	Jen Wiener
VP Membership	Sharon Tobias
VP Volunteer Services	Ann Holum
Parliamentarian	Julia Jacobsen
Principal	Chuck Merritt
Teacher	Leslie Bell

We are grateful for each of these people who have stepped up to give their time to help the El Carmelo PTA thrive. We truly have a wonderful community of parents.

I have enjoyed every minute of this year as PTA President. It was a joy to work with the staff and parents at El Carmelo. The high level of collaboration and hard work combined with humor and creativity inspired me every day. I will cherish this time to work alongside so many of you. It was a blessing to have been more present at school while my two youngest daughters are still here. The future is bright, and El Carmelo is a great place to grow and learn.

I hope you all enjoy the last few weeks of the school year and have a wonderful summer!

--Julia Jacobsen
juliacjacobson@gmail.com



People[®] of El Carmelo

Meet 1st Grade Teacher Diane McCoy

This article was written by 5th grader Jonathan Y., whose older sister had MS. McCoy for 1st grade.



Above: Ms. McCoy eating meringue in Switzerland

Childhood

Ms. McCoy was born in San Francisco and was raised right here in the Bay Area. As a child, Ms. McCoy's hobbies were sports and reading. She played tennis, baseball and softball, basketball, and volleyball, and also swam.

Her dad was an architect, and her mother was a stay-at-home mom who volunteered a lot in her school's PTA. Before she had kids, her mother worked at Disney Studios as an artist in the late 1940s. She had a large family, with four siblings: three brothers and one sister.

Career Path

Ms. McCoy went to Santa Clara University after high school. She decided to become a teacher because she had three younger siblings and loved playing school with them and being the teacher. Also, in high school, she tutored through a program called VISTA.

She found El Carmelo because she was lucky enough to be hired to teach special education classes there in 1987. She taught special education for 3 years. Then there was an opening in 1st grade, and she took the position. There are two things that she really likes about El Carmelo. First, she likes all of the families she has had over the years. Second, she feels she is so fortunate to have wonderful principals, teachers, other staff, and the aides. She really appreciates all of the staff. The only thing she doesn't like about El Carmelo is that lunch is only forty-five minutes, not an hour.

Family

Ms. McCoy has a husband and two grown sons. Her husband, Bob, works for Lockheed. Her son, Bryan, is also a teacher. Her other son, Kevin, is working to become a

paramedic. They all love sports, which is something that they all have in common.

Ms. McCoy loves animals. At home, she has two dogs, who are her two best friends. Their names are Lola and Scotty. In the classroom, she keeps three pets. They are Caramel the Guinea Pig, Jake the Snake, and Lucy the Lizard.

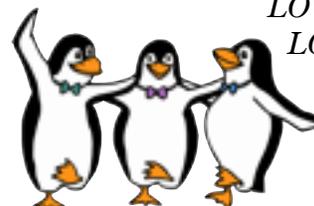
Hobbies

Ms. McCoy is very active. Her hobbies include reading, walking her two dogs, photography, hiking with her husband, and watching and going to Stanford Sports.

Fun Facts

Ms. McCoy is related to a Portuguese pirate, on her dad's side. His name was Edward Neil. He was a smuggler pirate who used rose petals to disguise his smuggled goods. That is because roses were a legal good to import. This gave him the nickname Edward Neil De Rosa, or Edward Neil of the rose.

And... as all of her students know, Ms. McCoy LOVES, LOVES, LOVES penguins!





BRINGING UP BICYCLISTS

On April 16th, Sylvia Star-Lack, from **Palo Alto's Safe Routes to School Program**, gave a lecture about biking and how to teach our kids to be better bicyclists.

The lecture talked about the benefits of biking, how to choose the right bike and helmet, how to fit them correctly, basic bike skills, and how we as parents can be better at teaching our kids bike safely.

Sylvia stressed that the most important things we need to teach our kids:

- ☑ **Wear a properly fitted helmet - all the time!**
- ☑ **Stop means STOP.**
- ☑ **Sidewalks are dangerous and are not a bike lane**
- ☑ **Claim the lane, judiciously.**
- ☑ **Be predictable & visible at all time.**

For more information:

www.cityofpaloalto.org/saferoutes for walk & roll maps and traffic related forms.

www.saferoutes.paloaltopta.org for more safety tips.

--Traffic Safety Representative (TSR) Isaac Katzenelson (isaackatz1@gmail.com)



COFFEE WITH THE PRINCIPAL

This year we've had some interesting and enjoyable Coffees with the Principal. These monthly conversations are great opportunities to informally discuss relevant topics with Mr. Merritt and meet other parents. Some of the topics this year included the following:



•**Guest speaker Janada Clark** (clearpathcoaching@msn.com), parenting coach and Love and Logic facilitator, discussed parenting strategies and how to avoid power struggles. Stop the tantrums and increase peace and harmony in the home? Yes, please!

•**Project Cornerstone:** Chuck gave a great overview of this program that develops and improves children's social connections through monthly books and activities. We heard from parent volunteers about how the classroom interactions were going and discussed the topics covered in the upcoming books. *See article on Project Cornerstone on page 6.*

•**Common Core:** Mr. Merritt discussed these new standards adopted by the state of

California and what changes to expect at El Carmelo, including using computers to take the standardized tests.

•**New Progress Report Draft:** Mr. Merritt fielded questions and comments about the progress reports, and we provided input to the draft in progress, which Mr. Merritt brought back to the district committee.

•**Summer Learning Opportunities:** We discussed opportunities and resources for summer activities, including websites and places around the Bay Area that offer good a variety of experiences and options.

Is there a topic you'd like to see discussed at a Coffee with the Principal in 2014-15?

Contact Chris Flynn (p.cflynn@mac.com).

We warmly invite you to take advantage of this opportunity. Our principal is available to discuss important topics on your mind. We hope to see there!

--coffee with the Principal co-chairs Jen Wiener (jenwiener@gmail.com) & Ann Holum (holum@sbcglobal.net)

EARTH WEEK

On April 21 to 25, El Carmelo had a wonderful weeklong celebration of Earth Day. Our focus was on **Water Conservation and "Being Water Wise."**

This year, we had a water conservation poster contest illustrating ways children and their families can save water during California's drought.

We also enjoyed a musical assembly from a group called Zun-Zun. The students learned how important water is in every part of our life. Ask your child if they remember the song and dance about four ways to conserve water. Go to <http://www.h2ogowiththeflow.info/watchvideos/> to see a video about the song and other water conservation videos performed by Zun-Zun.

On Wednesday, we Walked and Rolled to school, and enjoyed our Earth Day Faire with interactive booths about the importance of water and water conservation. There were over 150 students that entered the Earth Week poster contest. We can continue to read and discuss all the helpful tips printed on the posters. They are posted on bulletin boards around the campus.

With the ongoing drought in California, let's remind our families about the importance of water conservation. Below are some ideas to share with your children. Also, go to www.cityofpaloalto.org/water to learn other water related tips and to discover current water efficiency program rebates you might qualify for.



Water your yard and outdoor plants early or late in the day to reduce evaporation.



Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose.

Use plants that require less water.



Put off washing your car.

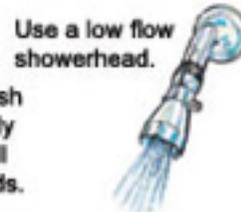


Mulch around plants to hold water in the soil.



Get an Energy Star labeled washing machine.

Wash only full loads.



Use a low flow showerhead.

Check for leaks and drips.



Take shorter showers — five minutes or less is best.

Turn off the water while soaping hands and brushing teeth.



Turn off sink faucet while scrubbing dishes and pots.



Wear shirts and pants 2 days before washing.



Install new toilets that use less than 1.6 gallons per flush.



Put faucet aerators on sink faucets.

Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and walkways.



--Green Team Liaison, Alison chao (antchao@gmail.com)

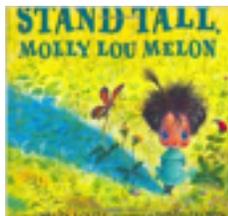
PROJECT CORNERSTONE

Project Cornerstone and the ABC (Asset Building Champions) Reader Program is in its second year at El Carmelo. Under the leadership of *Katie Cicero* and *Christine Hodson*, each child in the school had a parent reader come into the classroom each month to share a book that teaches about creating a more caring, positive school climate.

Project Cornerstone is working to build a community of adults who support children and teenagers so they can thrive. The books chosen teach principles centered around the **41 developmental assets** that have been shown to indicate children's ability to thrive and be resilient. As the parent readers come in month after month, each child in our school have more caring adults who they can look to for support and encouragement. The children are learning about ways to become upstanders and prevent bullying. They are also learning about ways to have more peaceful conflict resolutions, build friendships, take care of themselves emotionally and physically, and identify their feelings whether positive or negative.

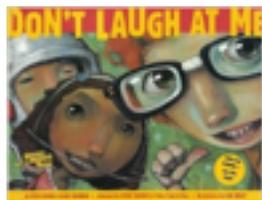
The books that the children listened to and learned from are:

Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon
by Patty Lovell

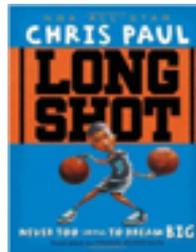
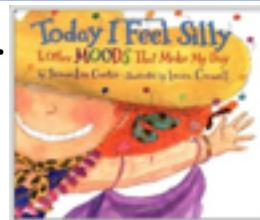


One by Kathryn Otoshi

Don't Laugh at Me
by Steve Seskin

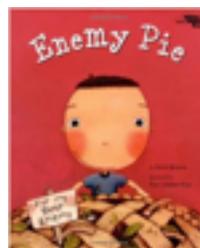
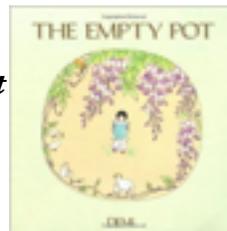


Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day
by Jamie Lee Curtis



Long Shot - Never Too Small To Dream Big
by Chris Paul

Empty Pot
by Demi



Enemy Pie
by Derek Munson

The OK Book
by Amy Krouse Rosenthal



We will continue with the ABC Reader Program next year and would love to have more adults come and join us in reading and teaching the children. If you want to get involved in the 2014-15 school year with this worthwhile program that strengthens our children and school environment, you can contact the parent volunteers below.

Anyone interested in learning more about this program can visit (www.projectcornerstone.org) or talk to parent volunteers *Christine Hodson* (chodson@sawyertrail.com) or *Katie Cicero* (kcicero76@gmail.com).



In Appreciation

THANK YOU to these volunteers who made the 2013-14 school year fantastic!

PTA President Julia Jacobsen:

The El Carmelo community blossomed with Julia's compassionate and wise leadership this school year.

Thank you SO much, Julia!!!



Earth Day Faire: We had a fabulous Earth Day Faire, headed up by teachers *Diane McCoy* and *Annette Isaacson*, and parents, *Alison Chao* and *Erich Heilman*. Our librarian, *Leslie Bell*, helped promote Earth Week by reading stories and explaining our water conservation poster contest. We had visits from our PAUSD specialist for Energy Conservation, *Rebecca Navarro* and a representative from the Palo Alto Utilities, *Debra Katz* to lead us in learning more about conservation and Earth Day. Thanks to the Green Team students for helping the El Carmelo community learn more about how to conserve our resources!

Traffic Safety Representative: Thanks to *Isaac Katzenelson* for heading up our traffic safety activities this year and bringing us a wonderful Parent Education Night, *Bringing Up Bicyclists*, that was informative about how to teach our children to be safe on their bikes.

Walk & Roll to School: Thanks to our Green team, *Diane McCoy*, *Annette Issacson*, *Elisa Schmitt*, *Alison Chao*, and student helpers, for heading up our weekly Walk & Roll to School Wednesdays all year!

Parent Classroom Volunteers: Countless hours are spent supporting the activities in each classroom, from math to science and reading and writing and the list goes on! Thanks to all the parents who gave time in their children's classrooms!

Bananaseed Book Fair Co-chairs: *Sharon Tobias*, *Maria Derrick* and *Julia Jacobsen* ran the fabulous Spring book fair, a highly valued literary and fundraising event for our library. Thank you to the special readers at the Stories, Milk & Cookies night: *Ms. Rutledge*, *Ms. Knoblauch*, *Christine Hodson*, and *Kathryn Lamis*. Thanks to the wonderful team of volunteers: *Kate Gibbons*, *Sripriya Kanna*, *Stephanie Youngquist*, *Erika Krugler*, *Devony Taylor*, *Abby Domine*, *Lucy Tompkin*, *Maya Venkatraman*, *Tammy Chen*, *Janey Wan*, *Kathryn Lamis*, *Sherwin Wong*, *Amanda Szecsei*, *Cecily McReynolds*, *Ronna Edwards*, *Tais Schmitt*, and *Jen Wiener*.

Visiting Author: Thanks to *Jayne Pearce* and *Leslie Bell* for coordinating our Visiting Authors this year! The 3rd, 4th and 5th graders were able to hear from three authors from the Spirit Animals series. Thanks for an inspiring and informative event!

Coffee with the Principal: Thanks to *Jen Wiener* and *Ann Holum* for helping bring coffee and treats for our monthly meetings with Mr. Merritt this year!

Kinder Visit Support: Thanks to *Kathryn Lamis* and *Julia Jacobsen*, along with *Janet Owen* and PiE representatives for guiding our

incoming kindergarteners in meeting the teachers for next year!

May Fete Parade: Thanks to teacher *Diane McCoy* for heading up the group from El Carmelo that marched in the May Fete Parade, this annual downtown Palo Alto tradition!

Site Council: Thanks to our Site Council for the invaluable service this year! The site council is a group of parents and staff who oversee the El Carmelo site plan. Thanks to *Janet Owen*, *Katie Cicero*, *Rosanna Jackson*, *Cynthia Tham*, *Annette Isaacson*, *Leslie Bell*, *Heather Stone*, *Leanne Fonteyn*, and *Mr. Merritt* for their work!

5th Grade End of Year Activities: Thanks to all the parents who chaperoned for the 5th Grade Ship Trip field trip. We have a team coordinating the upcoming 5th Grade End of Year Party – *Susy Kim*, *Alli Wong*, and *Blandine Chaperot-Merino*. The 5th Grade Yearbook is being compiled by *Hagit Katzenelson* and *Kori Shaw*. Thanks to *Kate Gibbons* and *Sripriya Kannan* for organizing the refreshments for the 5th graders celebrating their graduation!

Family Restaurant Nights: Thanks to *Rose Callaghan* and *Peggy Hu* for organizing our restaurant nights at *Pizza My Heart*, *Chevy's*, *California Pizza Kitchen* and *Tacolicious* this year. We enjoyed delicious meals, time with other El Carmelo families and raised money for the PTA!

Room Parents: Thanks to *Cynthia Tham* for organizing our Room Parents this year! These parents helped organize class parties, teacher gifts, staff appreciation week, communication with parents, and so much more!

(continued on next page)



In Appreciation... *(continued)*

Thank you to *Jen Wiener, Hue Tran, Rose Callaghan, Janet Owen, Kate Healy, Alison Chao, Medha Nanal, Susy Kim, Grit Denker, Yan Sun, Kori Shaw, Andrea Christensen, Faiza Zarroug, Ronna Edwards, Tanya Dodge, Janey Wan, Maya Venkatraman, Tais Schmitt, Irmelin Bergh, Krissy Green, Sarena Kim, Aruna Bhamidipati, Sonja Froeblich, Reina Hutchison, Simone Klass, Kyrrie Robinson, Alli Wong, Erin Reiland, Abby Domine, Tammy Kwan, and Jasmine Arieguín* for all your hard work this year!

Ten Mile Club: Thanks to our enthusiastic team of volunteers who encouraged our kids to run, run, run every week at noon! Thanks to *Janet Owen* for her enthusiastic leadership and the help of *Kate Gibbons, Peggy Hu, and Barbara Hirsch* each week.

Noon Art: Thanks to *Devony Taylor* and her team, *Victoriya Rufanova* and *Chris Taylor*, for a year of wonderful art projects during noontime for the El Carmelo kids!

Math Lab Support: Thanks to *Maria Derrick* for helping set up the Math Lab for the Kinder and 1st grade classes.

Auction Donations: Many of you have been enjoying Auction parties, meals, and so much more from the generous donations of many El Carmelo families and teachers! These bring us together in community and have helped raised valuable funds to fund this year's PTA budget. Thank you all for your generosity!

Carmeletter: Thanks to *Susy Kim* for three years of Carmeletters. Each issue was beautiful and informative.

Thanks for your creativity and attention to detail. What a valuable service to El Carmelo!

eNews: Thanks to *Abby Domine* for bringing our community the eNews for the last couple of years! This weekly service helps

us keep our calendars up to date and stay informed about what is happening in our school community and beyond.

Webmaster: Thanks to *Erik Jacobsen* for keeping our PTA website updated for the last few years!

WEB room: *Maria Derrick* helps coordinate the large collection of leveled book that teachers check out to use with small groups in their classrooms. Thanks for coordinating this useful resource largely purchased with PTA funds over the past several years.

Box Tops for Education: Thanks for bringing in Box Tops for Education all year and thanks to *Maria Derrick* for her work to help El Carmelo earn money for our school!

Project Cornerstone Readers: Thanks to *Christine Hodson* and *Katie Cicero* for coordinating the team of parents who read books monthly in each classroom teaching the value of being an upstander and kind, respecting differences, and developing good character. Thanks to these parents for reading each month: *Paulette Kamenecka, Miranda Wann, Devony Taylor, Rosanna Jackson, Ann Holum, Julia Jacobsen, Tanya Dodge, Dave Sheaffer, Jeannette Cheng, Maria Derrick, Jayne Pearce, and Andrea Christensen.*

El Carmelo website: Thank you to *Abby Domine, Scott Thomas, Erik Jacobsen, Kathrynn Lamis, Chuck Merritt* and *Julia Jacobsen* for working many hours on revamping our El Carmelo and PTA websites!

Amazon/eScrip: Thanks to *Grit Denker* for organizing our fundraising through eScrip and the Amazon rewards program. These ongoing fundraisers raise valuable funds for the PTA!

PTAC representative and

Site Council Liaison: Thanks to *Abby Domine* (PTAC Rep.) and *Katie Cicero* (Site Council member) for attending PTAC and Site Council meetings throughout the year and reporting to the PTA Board regarding the activities at our sister organizations.

PTA Executive Board Special thanks from *Julia Jacobsen* to the Board for the hard work and dedication in each of their positions this year. Each board member gave impeccable service and worked hard to fulfill their responsibilities all year long!

Thanks to *Kathryn Lamis, Sharon Tobias, Maria Derrick, Vivian Tsoi, Janet Owen, Melanie Gurunathan, Kate Healy, Abby Domine, Jenny Schmidt, Amy Fong, Tais Schmitt, Leslie Bell* (our teacher representative) and *Chuck Merritt*. What a dream team!

El Carmelo staff and teachers: Thanks to *Jennifer Fernandez* and *Ginny Nagao*, for their tireless assistance to families and PTA all year long! Thanks to our custodians, *Jerry Phok* and *Rickey Moore*, for supporting us all year long with a smile and help in whatever we needed! Special thanks to *Chuck Merritt*, our biggest supporter and advisor, who spent countless hours planning, collaborating, innovating, and supporting our PTA activities. And to all our teachers who inspire and care for our kids each day of the school year! We have so many specialists and aides who enrich our children's school experience. Thank you so much for all your hard work this year, El Carmelo staff! Enjoy your summer break!

Have a submission for the September 2014 issue of the Carmeletter?
carmeletter@paloaltopta.org