



Carmeletter

June 9, 2006

Issue 17



Last Issue!



Have a wonderful summer!!

Principal's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Parents, Students and Community,

At the end of the year it is appropriate to reflect on the things that have made a positive difference in our school community and while we analyze test scores, plan and schedule activities and events to strengthen the academic and social rigor for all our students, we can't forget that this work is a human enterprise. It is about people who make a difference--- who touch our lives and inspire us to do our best. Many of you have made such a difference to the students, the staff, our community, and to me. To you, I offer our sincere gratitude for helping us do our best work possible, which at times has been under difficult circumstances. You have made a positive difference in our lives! On behalf of the entire community, I say "THANK YOU" for the generous and kind work that continues to make El Carmelo special.

Other items and updates:

A HUGE THANK YOU to Erina DuBois, our outgoing PTA President, for her THOUGHTFUL and ENERGETIC leadership throughout the year. Her positive can-do attitude, enthusiasm, and TIRELESS support of children, community and staff have been instrumental in making this year a success. She exudes energy and her efforts permeated every aspect the PTA sponsored at El Carmelo. Erina made a big difference to all of us. We wish her continued success, as she continues to stay connected with us at El Carmelo.

Other Thank Yous: I'd like to briefly acknowledge and say "thank you" to several other individuals who have quietly performed valuable work on behalf of our school community:

- Faith Brigel (editor), Alicia Olivier (layout), and Margarita Perreault (translation) for producing a terrific bi-monthly Carmeletter edition. Your expertise and care come through loud and clear! Your ongoing work keeps all in our community informed.
- Sue Hermsen and countless others for providing Noon Art every other Wednesday. The hands-on experiences you provided our students made noontime fun and enjoyable for many children on an ongoing basis.
- Margarita Perreault and others for organizing and bringing to fruition our inaugural International Potluck Dinner. It truly was a "community event" for children, parents, and community, all coming together to celebrate our heritage. Well done!
- Jill Spain and supporting cast for another successful Book Fair. All our students will certainly have a more fun-filled summer reading their new treasures! Your devoted care and efforts are greatly appreciated!

(continued)

DATES TO REMEMBER

June

15 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

- Kinder Promotion — 8:30 am
- 5th Grade Promotion — 10:00 am
- ECKC Last Day
- Early Dismissal — 1:30 pm

August

21 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



Principal's Letter (continued)

- Lisa Kucik and her supporting cast for putting on a scrumptious feast for the staff during Teacher Appreciation Week. It was GREATLY welcomed and appreciated!
- Graduating parents, you've left your imprint with us. Thank you for giving us "your best efforts" in providing a nurturing environment for our children at El Carmelo. You'll be missed. Best wishes with your middle school endeavors.
- Eric Schuur & Ana-Maria Dias, incoming PTA President and Vice-President, for working quietly behind the scenes throughout the year on behalf of our school community.
- Ana-Maria Dias for her tireless efforts with Escrip. She has made great progress in enrolling many of us to support our school without having to donate out of pocket. Continue to look for her, or her designate, at upcoming school events.

Staff Updates: I write this part of my letter with rather mixed emotions: sad for losing highly regarded colleagues, but happy for them, as they undertake their next challenge. As such, Triona Gogarty will be taking on the job of Speech Language Specialist within the PAUSD. She is apprehensive about leaving El Carmelo, but excited about the new challenge. I know she will do a fabulous job; Michelle Wilk will take over the vacant first grade position. She is a highly regarded experienced teacher at first grade from the Los Angeles area. She will do well at El Carmelo; Sue Chakos will return to El Carmelo as Alice Anne Chandler's fifth day partner at third grade. Sue worked with us for several years as reading specialist—and we are sure glad to have her back! Christine Pirzadeh will take leave this coming year to be with family. I know she will really enjoy being with her son and husband. Thank you for your efforts with our room 19 students; Robert Siu will return to full-time status at fourth grade this coming year; Leah Rich, a highly regarded experienced teacher in the PAUSD will be Janeen Swan's fifth day teacher. We are lucky to have her. Lynn Beck will move on to Addison, where she will be teaching two days a week at first grade. Michelle, Sue, and Leah welcome to El Carmelo!

Thank you Barbara and Judy for your singular care, love and support of our children, the staff and the El Carmelo community! Barbara, your tenure at El Carmelo is nothing less than "stellar". Your warm, calm, tactful and professional demeanor has been the welcoming beacon in the Main Office over the years. We wish you and your husband, Peter, the very best as you embark on a new journey up in Washington. Be sure to visit us when back in Palo Alto. Judy, the other half of the office team, quick-witted and always ready and willing to help, will be moving on to a full-time secretary position in the Special Education Department at the PAUSD Office. Barbara and Judy, we wish you all the best!

Jennifer Fernandez will be our new El Carmelo School Secretary. She is a product of the Palo Alto schools and Drexel University. She has worked in private industry and more recently at Jordan, as a classroom aide. She is quite familiar with El Carmelo, as her older daughter attended here through the third grade, prior to moving to Menlo Park. Ginny Nagao will be our new El Carmelo School Clerk. She is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and has been working at El Carmelo as a classroom aide for over ten years. She is quite familiar with El Carmelo: the kids, the staff, the community, as well as our routines and general expectations. Jennifer and Ginny—Welcome to the El Carmelo Family!

We are excited about the coming year, as we continue to focus on our mission of "teaching and learning". I will be soliciting your help and support in moving ahead. Have a restful and fun-filled summer. See you in August of 2006.

Warmest regards,
Lupe



**Last Day of School
Thursday, June 15th**

EARLY DISMISSAL – 1:30pm



PTA President's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Families,

Thank you to everyone for making this a tremendous year for our children and our community. I am truly awed and inspired by our parents' commitment to make this school year the best academic, social and emotional experience for all children. The amount of volunteer hours and contributions that they have given is overwhelming. The positive energy and support was in full gear the entire school year. Thank you to all participants and volunteers who were involved in any PTA activity.



I would also like to thank Eric Schuur and Ana-Maria Dias for graciously taking over the leadership of the PTA next year – they have already started planning and working!

I would like to extend a special thank you to the staff at El Carmelo: Lupe Garcia, Barbara Ogle-Reid and Judy Hanley, as well as to all the teachers. Our PTA was tremendously successful, with the critical support and guidance that we received from them on a daily basis. This is a true team effort.

Wishing you a safe and wonderful summer,
Erina DuBois



SUMMER CAMPS

Last minute help with summer camps? Don't forget the PTA Summer Camp Binder in the Office. The binder is available until the office closes on June 22nd.



Review of Hall Meeting on the Mandarin Immersion Proposal

Faith W. Brigel

Recently the Board of Education approved a feasibility study on implementing a Mandarin Immersion program in the PAUSD. On Tuesday May 30th the Board of Education held a Hall Meeting to discuss this issue. The entire Board was present as were a large number of parents from several elementary schools. The Board shared their views regarding the Chinese-Mandarin Immersion proposal, followed by a question and answer period.

The proposal was presented to the Board approximately four years ago by Grace Mah (Hoover school parent). Three of the five of the current Board members see more merit in the proposal than past Boards have, and has been comparing it to the Spanish Immersion program at Escondido that it describes as a successful Immersion program that was started about ten years ago. There are two other Mandarin Immersion programs one in Cupertino, and one in San Francisco. Although the implementation of such a program is complicated, these same Board members seemed quite optimistic that these hurdles can be surmounted. There is a growing number of parents who disagreed with this optimism.

The Board explained that they are not yet certain where it would be located, but probably at a school that is deemed under populated. The Board stressed that this Immersion Program will be cost neutral. If it turns out that the Task Force ascertains that it is not cost neutral that factor would deter the Board from going forward.

The immersion program is planning to apply for a grant for the Department of Education for the sum of \$150,000. The deadline for this grant is June 30th. Some of the parents expressed positive feelings about this program, and some were not in favor of it for various reasons.

Implementation of this type of program may have a significant impact on the elementary school community. Those interested in this issue and language instruction in the PAUSD in general should familiarize themselves with the issue with available resources on the PAUSD website. The Board invited the audience to contact the Board via email, telephone or letters so that they are informed as to the sentiment of the Palo Alto community. Your opinions are important, and you can make a difference.



OPEN HOUSE DINNER

Thank you to the following hard working group of parents that helped make the lines go so quickly during the Open House Dinner. Thank you for volunteering your dinner time to help others get their food faster!

Ana-Maria Dias and Robert Howard	Hilda Espinoza	Miki Coupal
Melinda Schuur (and Michael)	Jody Lieb	Greta Tan
Barbara Rains and Kirk Beesley,	Tania Macuil	Jenny Kuan

and thank you to Judy Haney for joining the fray and helping us just for fun!

LICE CONTROL

Thanks to these parents, the school is able to keep the pesky little Lice critters at bay and under control. These parents (led by Elizabeth Maulick) check all our kids at school every month!

Thank you:	Jennifer Chu	Valeriya Promokhov	Dawn Saunders	Paul Morales,
	Gary Anwyl	Keiran Sherlock	Susan Rider,	Yvette Mitchell
	Jane Littau	Yoko Imanaka	Abbie Sanger	Lisa Mash
	Mary Baker	Monohar Prabhu	Linda Jensen	Maggi Smeal
	Carolyn Santo	Patricia Afshar	Mirna Aquilera	Alfredo Gonzales
	Yadira Zuniga	Patricia Cameron-Loyd	Barbara Yates Sonner	

CLASSIFIED LUNCH

Interested in wearing lovely brightly colored vests and carrying a walkie-talkie? If you are, you can do it next year during the Classified Luncheon. Thanks to these parents who were kind enough to volunteer to help during this year's luncheon so the teachers could thoroughly enjoy their time with the hardworking classified staff.

Thank you:	Mona Nappa	Debra Wittenbrink	Elizabeth Maulick
	Lesley Kalmin	Ana-Maria Dias	Elisa Schmit

BOOK FAIR

The book fair is not only a fundraiser for our school, it is a great way to foster the love of reading in your child and to help teachers' classroom libraries blossom. Thank you to Jill Spain for pulling together another fun and very profitable book fair. She was there throughout the whole book fair! We hope that you found some great books for yourself and your children.

[From Jill Spain] - THANK YOU for another successful book fair! Whether you made purchases, worked a shift during or after school, helped set up or take down the book fair, your contribution helped make the spring book fair a great success. For those who came to Open House and stopped by the book fair, it was a great night, one of the most successful family nights at the book fair that we've had. THANKS again for your supporting the book fair and have a great summer!

Happy Reading.

MORE THANK YOUS

Throughout the year, we have acknowledged and thanked the many volunteers who have put so much effort into making our PTA services and events so successful. Here are a few more of those fantastic and dedicated parents.

Elisa Schmit — As a result of her hard work in running the Adopt-A-Book program (and to the wonderful parents that participated in the program), almost \$800 was donated to the library!

Barbara Yates Sonner — Barbara has been compiling and sending out our school's enews to El Carmelo families throughout the year. Thanks to her, our principal, the District and the PTA are able to get information to parents in a very timely and directed manner.

Yi-Mei Chang and Megan Fisher — Math Lab is held in every classroom at school. Thanks to the yearlong efforts of Yi-Mei and Megan, every child and teacher had all the materials they needed to conduct this fun and educational program.





Reflections - Judy Haney

Andrea Christenson, dreakiya@hotmail.com



As Judy Haney prepares for her new endeavors, her first impression of El Carmelo is still true today – a warm community. Over the last 25 years, Judy's El Carmelo experience includes being a volunteer, a parent, and an employee. "I have been here at least 25 years straight," said Judy. Moving from one facet to another was not a problem for Judy. "It was easy to integrate here," she said. "Everybody is so helpful and it was great to work where I knew everyone. It was an easy and natural way to go."

Judy has many fond memories of El Carmelo and picking just one was not easy. "It is hard to pick. There have been many really lovely moments," she said. However, there is one that stands out. "I was really sick when my youngest was in kindergarten. The community rallied together and brought me meals. The teacher even walked my child home," Judy said. "That is an indication of the type of community we have here."

On the lighter side, Judy thought Halloween was one of the most fun and funny times. "I loved the competition between the 4th and 5th grade girls versus boys. Also, the kids thought it was so funny and got so excited when we dressed up," said Judy. "They loved it when they saw you doing something different."

There will be a lot Judy will miss; however, the community is at the top of the list. "I will also miss the kids. It is fun to watch the kids come here as kinders and leave as pulled-together 5th graders," she said. Judy really did get to watch the kids grow. They would come into the office barely seeing over the desk when they arrived, and left as 5th graders with a full view. "They are taller than me when they leave," she said.

Looking forward, Judy is excited to be working with the district nurse and helping to get things organized. "It will be a different environment and pace."



New Beginnings - Triona Gogarty

Andrea Christenson, dreakiya@hotmail.com



As Triona Gogarty reflects back on the beginning of her nine years at El Carmelo, she remembers the sense of community. "It was a friendly place. The parents were always around after school and it gave you an opportunity to get to know them," said Triona. "There was a real community feel here."

The memories can build up after nine years, but one memory stands out – the construction. "We were given one day to move back into our class," said Triona. "The parents came and moved all the boxes back in, put everything away and put up the blue construction paper. There were 250 boxes." If that wasn't enough, this all happened during the first day of school. "I had the boxes labeled and the shelves labeled. The parents brought in the boxes and matched up the labels and put everything in its place," she said. "They moved furniture and everything."

Not everything was hard labor. There have been lots of laughs as well. "There have been so many funny moments. It is really quite funny when the kids planned a joke, or inadvertently played a joke, and you've been had by a 6-year-old," she said. The fun doesn't stop in the classroom, however. Triona also likes attending the auction. "I've always had fun at the auction. I think I'll come back just for that," she said.

Triona knows exactly what she will miss. "I'm going to miss the people – totally the people," said Triona.

As Triona looks forward, she has some exciting new challenges. She will be the speech therapist at Fairmeadow School and Jackson Hearing Center. "I like changes," she said. "There will be a whole new set of problems and things to learn. There will be new faces, which can be intimidating, but invigorating. There will be new things to learn, and that is always good. I'll get to be a student for awhile."



BUDDY PROGRAM

Thank you to all those who turned in a buddy volunteer form! The many responses received so far, reflect the great community that we have at our school.

You will be contacted by Yvette Mitchell over the summer, and given your buddy's information.

If you would still like to sign up, please contact Yvette at yvetteemitchell@yahoo.com.

Thank you for helping to welcome a new family to our school.

Carmeletter
Publication
Members

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Erina DuBois

PTA Executive Vice-President
Eric Schuur

Principal
Lupe Garcia

Editor
Faith Brigel

Guest Layout Designer
Erina DuBois

Distribution
Mona Napaa

Spanish Translations
Margarita Perreault

No Need to Go Shopping!!

Don't forget, Megan Fisher has graciously agreed to do almost all of the classroom supply shopping for the whole school next year. This provides greater price break benefits and we parents get to spend more time having fun with our kids instead of



running around to office supply stores!

(Just please do not forget to reimburse the PTA next year!) 😊



Have a
Great
Summer!

(see you August 21)

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR FOR 2006-2007

JULY 2006						
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7/4 Fourth Of July
 8/17 Teacher Work Day
 8/18 Teacher Work Day
 8/21 First Day For Students
 9/4 Labor Day
 9/5 Staff Development Day
 10/2 Local Holiday
 10/3 Staff Development Day
 11/10 Veterans' Day
 11/22 Local Holiday Day
 11/23 Thanksgiving Day
 11/24 Local Holiday
 12/15 Districtwide Minimum Day
 12/18-1/2 Winter Break
 1/15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 1/19 Semester Break
 2/18 Staff Development Day
 2/19 Presidents' Day
 2/20-23 Local Holidays
 3/30 Districtwide Minimum Day
 4/2-4/6 Spring Break
 5/28 Memorial Day
 6/14 Last Day For Students
 6/15 Teacher Work Day

End of Quarter 10/27
 End of Semester 1/18 (88 days)
 End of Quarter 3/30
 End of Semester 6/12 (92 days Includes
 3 days for STAR Testing)

-  = Holiday
-  = First Day for Students
-  = Last Day for Students
-  = Teachers' Work Days
-  = Staff Development Days
-  = Districtwide Minimum Days
-  = STAR Window

JANUARY 2007						
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