



CARMELETTER

Principal's Letter

May 1, 2015

Dear El Carmelo Parents,



As we get down to the last month of school, I'm thinking a lot about the changes coming next year. There are many changes to the El Carmelo line up that I will be sharing over the next month.

First, you'll have received a wonderful letter from your new principal, Danaé Reynolds, a few weeks ago. As much as I'll miss you all next year, I also

know that you will love Danaé and the expertise and energy that she brings with her. Her extensive literacy experience, for example, will be invaluable. She is not only a great colleague but also a good personal friend.

My own transition to Escondido is on my mind as I prepare not only to be principal of Escondido but also serve in an administrative role at the district level in World Languages. Danaé and I have been working together to transition both sites for next year, including time spent making sure that both sites have the best staffing in each area of need. We have both been arranging parent and staff events at both sites and we hope to see you at one of these, if possible.

We also have several retirees this year, Annette Isaacson, Alicia Becerra and Charese Fernandes, our ELD Specialist, bilingual counselor and Reading Specialist respectively. They are both very important members of our school community and we will miss them very much.

Annette came to El Carmelo 23 years ago after previously having taught high school for 17 years. She was an El Carmelo parent during the time that she served as our English Language Development teacher, and in addition to teaching served in many capacities in the PTA and Site Council. Annette feels that this has been the ideal place to work, with delightful, motivated students from all over the world!

Alicia Becerra Mendoza has been one of our school counselors for 9 years. She is a licensed bilingual psychotherapist with training in both the U.S. and México. She was also a parent in this community, at Nixon, Escondido, Jordan and Paly. Alicia works with both kids and parents and feels that the warm environment at El Carmelo makes this a very special school.

CALENDAR



May

- 1 Fri: Carmeletter Published
- 2 Sat: May Fete Parade
- 4 Mon-8 Fri.: Bananaseed Book Fair
- 5 Tues: Stories, Milk & Cookies (6:30-8 pm)
- 6 Wed: PTA Executive Board Meeting (8:30 am)
- 11 Mon: El Carmelo Site Council Meeting
- 18 Mon: Kinder Visits (12:45-2:30 pm)
- 20 Wed: Volunteer Coffee (7:45 am)
- 21 Thurs: Kinder Visits (12:45-2:30 pm)
- 25 Mon: No School, Memorial Day
- 29 Fri: Family Pizza and Movie Night (5:30-8 pm)
- TBA: Student Showcases for each grade K-5
- TBA: End-of-Year Class Parties, Class Music Performances

June

- 3 Wed: Field Day Grades K-5 (10:30-12 pm)
- 3 Wed: 5th grade pool party (2:00-5 pm)
- 4 Thurs: Kinder & 5th Gr. Promotion Ceremony
- 4 Thurs: Last Day of School; Minimum Day
- 11 Thurs: Office closes, re-opens August

Find the 2014-2015 El Carmelo School Events & PTA calendar here: elcarmelo.pausd.org.

Find the district calendar on this page: <http://events.pausd.org/>

Charese Fernandes came to El Carmelo six years ago from Woodside schools where she was Reading Specialist. Charese is trained in Reading Recovery, a valuable resource for our school. Charese says that she feels blessed to have finished her career at a school with wonderful families, great kids and a positive and professional staff.

Congratulations to our wonderful retiring staff!

Sincerely,

--Chuck Merritt
cmerritt@pausd.org



PTA President's Letter



Dear El Carmelo community,

Once again we are quickly approaching the end of the school year. It is always hard to believe that summer is just around the corner. The PTA is already knee deep in preparations for next year.

At our April General Meeting, we elected a new PTA board for the 2015-2016 year:

President	Janet Owen
Exec VP	Chris Flynn
Secretary	Devony Taylor
Treasurer	Jianglin (Jeff) Zhou
Auditor	Maria Derrick
Corresponding Secretary	Ronna Edwards
Historian	Ann Holum
VP Fundraising	Alli Wong
VP Communications	Jen Wiener
VP Membership & Outreach	Shirin Zebarjadi
VP Programs & Volunteer Services	Medha Nanal
Parliamentarian	Kathryn Lamis
Principal	Danae' Reynolds
Teacher	Leslie Bell

Our current board has been an excellent group of school volunteers and student advocates, and I suspect this new PTA Executive Board will be just as successful!

This seems a fitting opportunity to thank our PTA Executive Board and PTA volunteers, who have spent countless hours this year advertising and running events, managing the budget, fundraising, and being advocates for our kids. The entire El Carmelo community appreciates your hard work. The El Carmelo staff would like to extend their thanks as well, so please join us at the annual **Volunteer Breakfast on Wednesday, 5/20 at 7:45am** to celebrate all we have achieved this year.

I'd also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Auction committee, chaired by our fearless leaders Abby Domine and Mallory Graffeo. The Lights, Camera, Auction event on March 21st was held at the University Club and was such a fun, great evening. It was also a total fundraising success, raising approximately \$50,000 for the school, which was above budget! It also raised funds to put in a sand box in the Kindergarten playground.

Thank You Auction Committee! Without you, we'd be selling wrapping paper!

Chairs: Abby Domine and Mallory Graffeo

Donations: Lucinda Brommersma, Sarah Cornwell, Melanie Gurunathan, Kate Karagueuzian Gibbons, Susy Kim, Medha Nanal, Robyn Reiss, Cynthia Tham, Alli Wong.

Design: Erik Jacobsen

Information Technology: Maya & Manesh Venkatraman, Jennifer Chu, Maria Derrick, Kate Karagueuzian Gibbons, Sripriya Kannan, Cynthia Tham, Jen Weiner, Mei Yuan Crider

Catalogue: Maria Derrick, Melanie Gurunathan, Kate Karagueuzian Gibbons

Decorations: Carolina Dias, Julia Jacobsen, Susy Kim, Tammy Kwan, Cecily McReynolds, Janet Owen, Kim Stern, Greta Tan, Alli Wong

DJ: Mike Runge

University Club sponsor: Kristine and Javad Mostofizadeh





PTA President's Letter [continued]

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to show our appreciation to Principal Chuck Merritt. As you know, he will be taking his Spanish speaking skills to Escondido as principal next year, where he will also take on the role of World Languages Administrator for the district. I talked a bit to Mr. Merritt about his time here and would like to share that with you.

1. Since this was your first head principal position, what have you learned as the principal at EC?

Yes, this was my first 'principal' position; before 2008 I had been the assistant principal at Paly. I'd say that I've learned a lot about juggling many hats, since the elementary principals are usually the only administrator at the site. In the high school we could specialize (budget, special education, sports, testing) and in an elementary school you must know about everything. Just like the teachers.

2. What accomplishment at EC are you most proud of? There are so many wonderful things happening at El Carmelo that it's hard to pick one. I guess the biggest thing that has been taking place while I've been here is our work toward the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We began by understanding the new standards, learning how to align our curriculum and instruction, and most importantly, have shown our students how to think deeply about their world, which is at the core of the Common Core.

3. What will you miss most about El Carmelo? I love all of the traditions here, from the Ice Skating Party to the Ship Trip, Stories Under the Stars, etc. I love how parents show solidarity with each other and the way that school staff support give each other, and how those two groups support each other and their students.

4. What are you most looking forward to in your new position as Principal and World Languages Administrator. Both positions are really tied to each other; the former is supervising a school that represents our work at the elementary level to teach languages other than English and the later is a policy job that gives me the chance to influence the future of World Language instruction in the district.

5. Any other thing you'd like to add? I am so grateful to the El Carmelo community for being so welcoming from the start. You are that kind of a community and folks know this around the entire district.

We wish you the best of luck Mr. Merritt! You will be missed and Escondido is lucky to have you!

Well that's a wrap. It's been another whirlwind of a year, with so many memories made and things learned. I've personally enjoyed my time as PTA President. We have such a great, dedicated group of volunteers here, and it has been rewarding to work with you all. I have particularly enjoyed getting to hear from PAUSD staff and board members, and finding out about all the fantastic things that are going on in our district. I highly encourage each of you to take advantage of opportunities to learn more about what the district is doing for our students and families. Go to a board meeting. Attend a parent ed night. Go to a PTA event. Volunteer. Through these events you will be reminded of what a great place El Carmelo and PAUSD is to obtain an education in.

Have a wonderful end of school year and summer. See you on the playground!

Kathryn Lamis





Volunteers

With our sincere thanks....

Thanks to all of the people who volunteered to help with many PTA sponsored events during February, March and April, 2015!

Family Engineering Day

Thanks to Gloria Chung for organizing El Carmelo's Family Engineering Day! Parents who helped with this engaging afternoon of engineering include Duncan MacCannell, Jen Shen, Vicky Lu, Maria Derrick, Mel Gurunathan, Savith Gurunathan, Rosanna Jackson, Lynn Fisher, Aprajit Mahajan, Ross and Bruce Woodley.

Bingo Night

Shout out BINGO to Christine Hodson for organizing an action packed evening of Bingo and pizza! Thanks as well to the many El Carmelo parents who volunteered to make this night a huge success: Jim Leontis, Lisa Sato, Maria Derrick, Abby Domine,, Melanie Gurunathan, Dave Spencer, Gloria Chung, Bruce Woodley, Lorna Thorton, Mike Jelks and Xiaobo Fan.

Pancake Breakfast

Many happy sticky delicious words of thanks to Greta Tan, who organized our yummy Pancake Breakfast! Thanks go to others as well who helped to keep the pancakes flipping, including Gloria Chung, Mel Gurunathan, Savith Gurunathan, Heidi Shubert, Svetlana Soloveiva and Adriana Reyna.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

Thanks to Faiza Zarroug and Susy Kim for organizing our parents and classrooms to think of the many ways we could show our thanks to our teachers and staff at El Carmelo during Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week. The circle of appreciation was enormous!

Project Cornerstone

Many thanks go to Christine Hodson who organized parents' participation in Project Cornerstone this year. Each month, after her workshop for parents, participating parents would go to individual classrooms to read a story to the class and do a related project. The books each month underscored themes related to facilitating the development of students' social and emotional resilience. Parents readers included:

Paulette Kamenecka, Hannah Lee, Miranda Wann, Devony Taylor, Ann Holum, Christine Hodson, Kaumudi Bhawe, Rosanna Jackson, Lynn Fisher, Julie Jacobson, Medha Nanal, Alison Chao, Dave Sheaffer, Abby Domine, Tanya Dodge, Maria Derrick, Jayne Pearce.

Coffee with the Principal

Thanks Chris Flynn for organizing all the coffee events this year and keeping us well fed. Our thanks as well go to Stephanie Verbeek and Rashmi Hunt for their support of these events.

PTA Website

Many thanks to Scott Thomas for both building our new website this year as well as doing an excellent job of keeping it up to date!

Stories Under the Stars

A sparkling thanks goes to Lisa Sato for chairing our cozy evening, Stories Under the Stars. Children listened to stories read by teachers Ms. Rutledge, Mr. Colchen, and Ms. Dosskey, all tucked under twinkling lights. Thanks to those who helped put that event together, including Maria Derrick, Kate Karagueuzian-Gibbons, Devony Taylor, Gloria Chung, Wendy Ju, Radhika Dinesh, Ann Holum and Katie Cicero.

International Day

Tusen Tak - that's, a "thousand thanks", in Norske - for all of the many cultures and countries represented by many families at the recent International Day. A special thanks to Jenny Schmidt who chaired this amazing event! (Please read, in another article in this issue of the Carmeletter, for more details about this event and the many families who contributed so generously of their time).

Earth Week – Green Team

Many thanks to Alison Chao for spearheading the efforts of El Carmelo's Green Team during Earth Week. Alison's teacher team included Diane McCoy, Annette Issacson, and Leslie Bell. Parents who participated included Maria Derrick, Jamie Liang, and Sara Kaye. Many students at El Carmelo participated throughout the week, to complete posters, to play games (including garbage relays during lunch as well as scavenger hunts!) and the students who are part of El Carmelo's SSC helped to vote for and sponsor the prizes for the winners of the Energy conservation poster contest. Thanks Green Team!



Volunteers [CONTINUED]

Throughout the year, PTA members have given generously of their time for many activities that help our school function smoothly. Our thanks to parents who supported El Carmelo in these activities:

Reading Garden

Many thanks to Patricia Campbell for all of the tireless work she has done throughout the year, to make our Reading Garden and our new intermediate grade gardens so lovely!

School Newsletter – eNews and Carmeletter

A special thanks to Jen Wiener and to Mike Pagan for all of the work they have done on the eNews and Carmeletter, respectively. The eNews has kept us up to date with up-and-coming events and activities, and the Carmeletter has reported on our news as it has happened. We all appreciate these useful and interesting news links that help us build a strong community at El Carmelo.

Ten Mile Club

Many thanks to Zoe Mount and Elizabeth Ellis for showing up every week to encourage our kids to run those miles at lunchtime! Go Dragons!

Student Directory

Our sincere thanks to Tom Tan who compiled our El Carmelo student directory. How could we organize ourselves to get anything done, without our student directory of names and numbers that keep our cell phones and email outreach busy!

KidPower Workshop

On March 3, El Carmelo hosted a fantastic workshop open to all PAUSD parents. KidPower is a non-profit leader in teaching positive, practical personal safety skills to protect people of all ages and abilities from bullying, molestation, abduction, and other violence. Below are some key points from the workshop.

- ◆ Children who are "calm, aware+confident," tend to be bothered less, and listened to more.
- ◆ Use "walk away power" to move out of reach from someone being unsafe.
- ◆ Boundary+limit setting: Problems should never be kept secret. Keep telling an adult until you get help.
- ◆ Keep an imaginary trash can within arms reach. "Throw away" any and all negative words/interactions you may have with friends/family, etc. Use self-assuring words to boost self-confidence.

We hope to host another workshop next year. For more information please visit: www.kidpower.org



Coming Soon: Bananaseed Book Fair

Can you think of a better way to spend a lazy summer afternoon than curled up with a good book? Do you need some good beach or poolside reading? Or maybe you aren't quite ready for summer reading? Problem solved! El Carmelo will host a book fair with Bananaseed Books from May 4 - 8 in the MP Room. The fair will be open before, during, and after school, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., on Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and on Friday, before school only, from 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. There will be a special evening with stories in the library read by El Carmelo celebrities, milk and sweet treats on the patio outside the MP Room, and shopping at the Book Fair on Tuesday, May 5, 6:30-8:00 p.m. We are looking forward to discovering new books together with our El Carmelo community.

If you have questions or want to volunteer to help set up, or help during the fair, please contact Sharon Tobias sltobias2002@yahoo.com or Julia Jacobsen juliacjacobsen@gmail.com

Coming Soon: Maker Cart Noon Enrichment Program

We are excited to pilot a new PTA lunch enrichment program in May. Get ready to be creative! El Carmelo's Maker Cart will be available on May 20 (Wednesday) for mystery bag challenge! All students are welcomed. If you have questions, or want to help volunteer with this enrichment program in the coming school year, please contact Amy Fong (calvinandamy@gmail.com) or Medha Nanal, VP Volunteer Services 2015-2016, ([medha\)00@yahoo.com](mailto:medha)00@yahoo.com)). (Location: Open space in front of the MP room).

Creativity is innovation.

Creativity is thinking outside of the box.

Creativity is improvisation.

Creativity is growth.

Creativity is being a risk taker or mold breaker.

Creativity is passion.

International Day, Sunday April 19th

We enjoyed many great sights, sounds, and tastes at International Day. Kids visited Australia (Bobby and Shuchita Gupta), Belize and the Dominican Republic (Kori Shaw), Brazil (Marina Campos), China (Ailing Gao, Lily Zhao, and Iris Fung), France (Cecile Limborg), Great Britain (Jayne Pearce), Guatemala (Miranda Wann), India (Mridula Charlu, Kuldeep Parikh, Kavitha Ponnuswamy, and Aprajit Mahajan), Israel (Sara Kaye and Orit Avital), Korea (Shannen Jung), Luxembourg (Gilles Ruppert), Mexico (Lorena Ruelas and Rosa Ruiz), Norway (Signe Helene Forsdahl), the Ukraine (Elena Kostrygina), and Vietnam (Hanh Nguyen). We heard music from around the world played by DJ James Pearce. We listened to Chuck Merritt read in Spanish and English, Benigne Deprey French and English, Cynthia Tham Cantonese and English, Rekha Goel Hindi and English, and Sara Kaye Hebrew and English. And we enjoyed food and drink from around the world brought in by El Carmelo parents.

Susy Kim made the passports, Nico Kapoor and Bradley Phan were the immigration officials, Annie Chen was the food manager, and Rupesh Kapoor, Jeff Parker, Ann Holum, and some on the spot volunteers were the furniture movers. And Jerry Phok, El Carmelo custodian, did final clean up in the morning.

See you again on our next world travels.



Library News

Here we are again near end of the school year! In order to get all books returned, the last day of book checkout will be Friday, May 15 and all books will be due by **Friday, May 22**. Classes will not have library time during the last week of school. If you have a lost book, we will let you know the price. Please pay book fines ASAP. It is prudent that 5th graders clear their records before they leave. Contact the library if you have any questions.

The El Carmelo Library Catalog is at
<http://elc.opals.pausd.org/bin/home>

The El Carmelo Library Website is at
<https://sites.google.com/site/elcarmelolibrarypage/>

To use BrainPop, the username is pausd and the password is talltree9.

Also, to remind you, we have a good collection of parent resource books in the library. You are welcome anytime to check them out.

Students in K-4th will be receiving an *EC School Library Summer Reading* record and list of suggested authors

at the end of May. This is optional, but a great way to encourage reading. All who participate will be acknowledged. Students may use the same books for the *Palo Alto City Library Summer Reading Program*.

Many thanks to all parents who have offered continued support to the library. With the Sponsor-A-Book Program, Book Donations and PTA assistance we were able to add many special books to our collection. Thanks to the help of our parent liaison we had a very special visiting author this year. Lastly, thank you parent helpers in the younger grade levels. It has been a wonderful year. Make and share many great stories this summer!

Leslie Bell and Rose Desposito





Upcoming Events and Helpful Resources

Common Sense Media Presentation

Thursday May 7, 7 p.m. in the library; **CHILDCARE provided**

How do you deal with violence in your child's video games? Do you want to prescreen movies and other media for objectionable content? What is a family media agreement? How do you regulate screen time?

Join our discussion led by librarians Leslie Bell and Jenny Schmidt. We will explore the CommonSense Media Web site and discuss topics such as family media agreements, and screen time.

Child care and light refreshments provided. Sponsored by the El Carmelo Site Council. Questions?
Email jennykschmidt@gmail.com

Kick Off the Summer at Family Movie Night!

Friday, May 29th, 5:30-8 p.m. MP Room

Bring the whole family to watch Big Hero 6 and enjoy one last get together before school is out. Pizza (\$1/slice) and free popcorn.

Have an item to submit to the El Carmelo eNews?

Send an email to elcarmeloPTA_eneeds@paloaltopta.org

New Websites and Facebook Page

El Carmelo is improving and increasing its online presence. Here are a few new updates:

New El Carmelo Website:
<http://elcarmelo.pausd.org/>

New El Carmelo PTA Website:
<http://elcarmelo.paloaltopta.org/>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/ElCarmeloPTA>

Please LIKE our page on Facebook -- you'll keep up to date on the latest PTA activities and events.

Community Links

The Palo Alto Council of PTAs invites you to visit the info pages on the PTA Council website to find information on community sports, parent education and community service opportunities:

Community Sports:
<http://info.paloaltopta.org/sports/>

Parent Education:
<http://info.paloaltopta.org/parents/>

Community Service:
<http://info.paloaltopta.org/service/>

Palo Alto Partners in Education (PiE)

PiE FAQs available at papie.org.

We welcome all questions and comments... *and volunteers!* :)

El Carmelo PiE Team: Yan Sun, Sarah Cornwell, Mizuho Goto, Medha Nanal, and Susy Kim

PiE Donations

We welcome your donation or pledge in ANY AMOUNT that is comfortable for your family. Donations are 100% tax deductible. Donate or pledge now at papie.org OR email elcarmelo@papie.org

