

CARMELETTER



El Carmelo PTA Newsletter: Spring 2018 Edition

Welcome to our first 2018 edition of the *Carmeletter*. Inside, you'll find updates from our Principal, the PTA, announcements about upcoming activities and recent highlights from the school. If you are interested in adding anything to upcoming issues – or if you would like to become involved in editing the *Carmeletter*, please email elcarmelopta@gmail.com.

Principal's Letter

Dear El Carmelo Families,

The 2017-18 school year has been filled with tremendous teaching and learning! Here is a glimpse into some of our recent work in math and reading. During the recent Staff Development Day, El Carmelo teachers participated in a powerful professional learning session with K-5 colleagues from Walter Hays, Ohlone, and Hoover Elementary Schools. Some of the activities and discussion focused on the following:

- How to embed the Mathematical Practice standards into their math lessons through inquiry-based learning and questions that spark critical thinking in students
- Videos of other teachers in first year of the Mathematics Bridges implementation
- Collaboration on planning the March Number corner and upcoming units, including ways to differentiate lessons to meet range of learners
- Analyzing the winter Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) results, which is the new reading decoding, fluency and comprehension assessment in our district. This included looking for trends across the grade level regarding reading or comprehension skills
- Collaboration on lessons to teach their students reading or comprehension in small groups

We've also continued our work as the second year as a Teachers College Lab School. As a Lab School, El Carmelo receives 10 full days of professional development with a Teachers College staff developer. The staff developer works with each grade level for about two hours each day. I participate alongside the teachers and spend the entire day with the Staff Developer. This is INCREDIBLE training for me, as I am better able to coach, evaluate, and support

Upcoming Events

March

2 Coffee with Principal, 8:30am

5-8 Teacher & Staff Appreciation

12 Monday NO SCHOOL

15 Lego Night, 6-7:30pm

16 Coffee with Principal, 8:30am

24 FAMILY FUN DAY, 2-4pm

30 Early Dismissal, 1:30pm

April

2-6 Spring Break, NO SCHOOL

11 PTA General Meeting, 8:30am

19-20 Spring BOOK FAIR

26 Stories Under Stars, 7pm

Check Calendar on

elcarmelowp.paloaltopta.org

teachers in their reading instruction, which impacts our entire school. This time with the Staff Developer allows me to ask questions and receive coaching on ways that I can facilitate ongoing professional development during staff meetings throughout the school year.

As each grade level meets with the staff developer, teachers can ask questions about specific reading challenges or stretch areas they are noticing in their students. The staff developer, having worked with students from across the country and a variety of grade levels K through five, has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in which to share ideas and strategies. This work supports teachers in growing their practice through explicit instructional steps to address the Reading area of focus. Teachers are able to implement their new learning immediately following their session.

I am honored that El Carmelo's teachers are dedicated to honing their craft as educators. They are willing to be vulnerable with each other, collaborate, and learn together to develop their teaching so that they can best meet the needs of each and every student.

As you work in partnership with your child's teacher, please ask about our new math curriculum, Bridges, and ways that you can support mathematical thinking at home. Here is the link to the Bridges family webpage:

<https://www.mathlearningcenter.org/families/bridges2>.

To ensure that your child is increasing his or her reading proficiency, please connect with your child's teacher regarding the books that he or she is reading at home. To create life-long readers, our children need to be reading books that are just right each day!

Warmly,

Danaé L. Reynolds, M.Ed.

Principal, El Carmelo Elementary School

THE PTA IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR 2018-2019

The nominating committee is seeking candidates for the PTA for the 2018-2019 school year. Being involved in the PTA is a great way to support our students, teachers, and staff, while actively engaging in and contributing to the El Carmelo community.

There are a **wide variety** of volunteer opportunities available, from year-long PTA Executive Board positions to single event chair positions, so there are multiple ways to get involved!

If you are willing and even mildly curious, please contact any of the nominating committee members:

Amy Fong (calvinandamy@gmail.com)

Chris Flynn (p.clynn@mac.com)

Kristy Saket (khsaket@gmail.com)

Inbal Segev (inbal.segev22@gmail.com)

Idit Zakai-Or (idit.zakai.or@gmail.com)

Angie Chin (angiewuchin@gmail.com)

Message from the PTA President

Dear El Carmelo Families,

One of my favorite parts of the PTA president's role is being able to witness all of the volunteer efforts throughout the school. Whether you are helping in the classroom, at an event, or in an official PTA role, your efforts are noticed and appreciated. **You** are what helps make our El Carmelo community great. I'm so grateful for the parents who have led our activities this year and for everyone who pitches in to make fun events happen. I am frequently reminded of the saying, "The days are long but the years are short." These elementary school years go by so quickly, and we have a limited time to be part of their school experience (believe me, high schoolers can be a little less enthusiastic when you show up at their school to help with an event). *I can assure you that you will not regret time spent being involved in your child's classroom and with the school community.*

We have some very fun activities coming up this spring, and we hope you'll participate in Lego Night, Family Fun Day, and Stories Under the Stars. We're also excited to announce that we will be able to offer a Spring Book Fair on April 19-20.

It's hard to believe that we are already planning for next year -- but the spring is here and we are starting to plan our PTA Board for 2018-19, along with the calendar and budget allocations. **What events have you enjoyed this year? Would you consider chairing that event or co-chairing next year? What events or programs would you like to see at our school? Would you be willing to commit to helping make it happen next year? Do you have questions about how the PTA raises and allocates funds? Would you be willing to join the PTA Board to help us plan for next year?** If that sounds daunting, keep in mind that we only meet 1 time per month. Add that to your particular role (Membership, Volunteers, Historian, etc), and you'll find that you can be involved with a very reasonable time commitment. I'd love to hear from you and would be happy to help you find a role that fits your passions and availability.

Sincerely,
Jen Wiener (jenwiener@gmail.com),
PTA President 2017-18

Family Fun Day & El Carmelo Parties

FAMILY FUN DAY – MARCH 24th, 2-4 PM

Mark your calendars! Our annual Fun Day will take place on Saturday, March 24th from 2-4 pm. Expect Fun, Fun, and More Fun! This FREE event will take place at El Carmelo. Families will enjoy games, face painting, a petting zoo, a bake sale, and more!

You'll also be able to sign up for El Carmelo *Parties!* – a great fundraiser for the school and a terrific way for you or your child to do fun activities outside of school.

El Carmelo Parties!

We will be having *Parties!* to build community at El Carmelo and raise money for our PTA, and we'd love for you to host a party! If you'd like to help or have questions before deciding, please email Idit (idit.zakai.or@gmail.com) by March 14.

Typically you (the host) donate the cost of a *Party!*, and parents/child who attend the *Party!* pay \$25-40/ticket (depending) as a donation to the PTA. What party could you host? Use your imagination! It could be a pool party where you provide some snacks and swimming, a dinner party, a parents' night out, a movie under the stars, etc. They're always fun, and they build community. We will have signups at the March 24 Family Fun Day and afterward in the office. Please let us know if you'd like to get involved!

If you would like to host a *Party!* event and/or volunteer to help during Family Fun Day, please contact Idit (idit.zakai.or@gmail.com).

Library News

Hi Parents,

Did you know that El Carmelo has a fantastic library on campus? We house thousands of books in a gorgeous light-filled building. Students visit our library once a week for their library classes. Classes cover a wide variety of subjects including digital citizenship, research, how to use the library and exposure to great books! The children are invited to check-out books and to visit during recess and lunch.

Our community is welcome to access our online catalog and find what books we have available. Our website is found at: elc.opals.pausd.org Older students have learned how to search for titles, make reservations for books and access their accounts to see what they have checked out.

Thanks to our wonderful P.T.A., El Carmelo is able to provide high quality books for our students. We recently added many new titles, plus we added a bit of softness to the library by purchasing cushions and a little couch. Parent volunteers help us out each week by escorting classes, helping students find “just right” books, and checking books in and out. We have a dedicated group of 5th grade students who help at recess and lunch. These junior librarians are learning to shelve books, process new and old titles, and help younger students.

Here are some of the activities we have on our up-coming calendar:

- Singing extraordinaire, Nancy Cassidy and Klutz books founder, John Cassidy will visit on March 6th to sing and read with our kindergarten classes.
- Stanford Football players will read to our classes K-5 on February 28th to help us celebrate Read Across America.
- Award-winning author, Greg Pizzoli will visit our K-2 students on April 11th to share his newest book, *This Story is for You*.

I would like to thank all the parents for supporting our library! I truly feel that we are blessed to have such a great resource here on campus. Please feel free to come in and visit!

Marilyn Nishio

El Carmelo Teacher Librarian

Site Council Encourages El Carmelo to UNPLUG

Our El Carmelo Site Council is supporting a campus wide observance of the “National Day of Unplugging” on March 9-10. There will be a special art project at lunch on March 9 where students can make posters and the first 100 students will receive a Cell Phone Sleeping Bag. The Site Council will be sending out a summary of their presentation on March 2 which will include strategies to unplug from our electronics and how to use mindful balance and connect with what’s most important: Our families, our children, & each other.

THANK YOU

SO many of you have worked to make great things happen this year –thank you to all of the Chairs of the Events & Tasks so far this year and to all who helped them:

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| Fall Book Fair | Kate Karagueuzian & Tanya Terry |
| See's Candies Fundraiser | Tzielan Lee |
| Fall/Winter Boutique Events | Idit Zakai-Or |
| Spirit Shop | Chantal Lacau |
| Sponsor a Book | Kate Karagueuzian |
| Room Parent Coordinator | Janet Owen |
| Webmaster | Rosanna Jackson |
| Holiday Giving Chair | Melanie Gurunathan |
| Parent Ed Coordinator | Angie Chin |
| Back to School Supplies | Shih-Hsin Peng |
| 3 rd Grade Bike Rodeo | Edith Zakai-Or, Shawn Owen |
| Bingo Night | Lynn Fisher |
| Book Exchange | Maria Derrick & Kate Karagueuzian |
| Children's Theater Coordinator | Abby Domine & Diana Hendry |
| Coffee with Principal | Shilpa Ranganath |
| Family Engineering STEM Day | Tara & Duncan MacCannell |
| First Day Coffee | Stephanie Verbeek |
| Game Closet | Simen Huuse |
| Ice Cream Social for New Families | Abby Domine & Kristy Saket |
| Ice Skating Party | Alli Wong, Kaisa Innanmaa |
| Kinder Coffee | Shruthi Murthy & Venkat Karnam |
| Kinder Playdates (summer 2017) | Orit Avital |
| Lunar New Year Celebration | Claire Chenyang Zhang & Sinae Chun |
| Pumpkin Carving Contest | Tina Wang |
| Staff Appreciation Lunch | Melanie Miao |
| Ten Mile Club | Zoe Mount & Liz Ellis |
| Visiting Author | Eimear McKeith |
| Site Council Reps | Liz Gardner, Angela Rivera, Kavitha Ramchandran, Jing Liu, Aarthi Anand |
| PIE Board Reps | Chris Flynn, Divyata Griggs & Zeena Benjamin |
| Project Cornerstone | Ann Holum & Alison Chao |

We know there are so many people who continually give their time and efforts – thank you so much. We are sorry if we've missed your name – please know that we appreciate you and sincerely thank you!