

The Jefferson Independent

April 2005
Issue 8

Newsletter of the Jefferson PTA
For the 2004-05 school year



Jefferson Calendar

April

Fri. April 29 Walkathon
April 29-May 1 Baja Fresh
Fundraiser

May

Sat. May 7 Mayfair
11 am – 3 pm
Tues. May 10 PTA Meeting
7 pm, Library
Fri. May 13 NO SCHOOL
Malcolm X Day
Mon. May 30 NO SCHOOL
Memorial Day

The Jefferson Independent is edited by Lucinda Sikes. You can drop off your submissions to her box in the Jefferson school office, or contact her by e-mail at lucikas@sbcglobal.net. Please give her your submissions by the second Friday of every month. **The Jefferson Independent** is distributed during the third week of every month.

Around and Around They Go: Students March, Saunter, and Stroll for Field Trip Dollars

The walk-a-thon, scheduled for Friday, April 29, gives kids the chance to help raise money for field trips, while having fun and getting exercise. The students walk around the block to earn pledges (per lap or flat donations). Extra pledge sheets can be found in the school office.

Several walk-a-thon partners – BajaFresh, Jamba Juice, TranSports, and Sports4Kids – have joined forces with the Jefferson PTA to assist with fundraising and support the emphasis on exercise and good health.

Eat at BajaFresh on the weekend of the walk-a-thon, and 15% of the cost of your order will be donated to Jefferson.

The student from each grade level who signs up the most sponsors will receive a Jamba Juice gift bag. All students get a Jamba Juice coupon.

Adults who walk with their children, or who volunteer to help with the walk-a-thon, will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to TranSports, a running and swimming specialty store in Rockridge.

Sports4Kids will bring barrels to Jefferson to collect outgrown or rarely used sporting equipment. Swap your used sports stuff with other families in the morning and the remaining items will be donated to Sports4Kids.

Fun and Games, Food, Music & More Jefferson's Mayfair Entertains All

The Mayfair is always one of the year's highlights at Jefferson. Whether you're playing carnival games, decorating a cake for the cake walk, browsing through the books and beautiful flower arrangements, or simply eating and running around the playground with your friends, there is fun for all ages.

This year the Mayfair will be held on **Saturday, May 7, from 11 to 3**. In addition to the usual fun and games, the Mayfair will feature wacky relay races, bubble gum blowing and water balloon contests, a face painting and tattoo parlor, a yard sale where everything sells for \$1, and performances by Jefferson dancers, a youth circus troupe, and middle school jazz players.

This week's assembly said it all. When asked "Who has had fun at the

Mayfair?" nearly every student, teacher and parent present raised their hand. Raffle tickets are already on sale, and every student has taken home a packet with the tickets and a list of prizes. Tickets are only \$2 and there are many neat prizes this year, including the grand prize – the Jefferson quilt! The gorgeous quilt is on display at the North Berkeley Library until May 6.

Of course, the Mayfair is a success because of all the families who volunteer to make it happen. We need your help! **Please sign up for a shift at the Mayfair, and sign up early!** We also need help selling raffle tickets on any of the next three Saturdays – there are three shifts between 11 – 3. To volunteer, please contact Suzanne Teran at 527-9805 or steran@berkeley.edu.

The Importance of Testing to a Quality Education

In the most successful classrooms, students are “tested” every day. Teachers use in-class discussions, informal questioning, formal assignments, and other strategies to gain feedback about whether a lesson has been absorbed by all the students. The teacher uses that information to improve on the lesson and guide the next day’s activities.

Early in May, teachers will administer formal tests in grades 2-5 that are linked to California’s highly regarded academic standards. These assessments, combined with other information about student achievement, provide teachers and school leaders with guidance for refining the curriculum and targeting extra help for struggling students.

These standardized tests also provide us as parents with confirmation that when a teacher says a student is reading at grade level, she is holding that student to the same level of expectation as students from other backgrounds.

The College Corner Tip

Last month’s College Corner tip focused on high-school level academic preparation for college: the courses high school students need to take to be prepared for a college-level curriculum when they graduate. Our children’s preparation to take that series of high school courses should begin today. The more students learn in elementary school, the more able they will be to take the more challenging middle school courses that will enable them to take and succeed in the college-prep high school courses.

If you’re looking for ways to help your children learn now, the U.S. government provides free of charge, the Helping Your Child series of publications with such titles as *Helping your Child Learn History*, *Helping your Child Learn Science*, *Helping your Child Become a Reader*, *Helping Your Child with Homework*, and *Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence*. These publications provide both general principles about ways to help children of all ages as well as specific activities,



using household materials and library books, that can enrich children’s education experiences in various subject areas.

You can obtain copies of these publications by downloading electronic files from the web (<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html>) or by ordering copies by phone (toll-free 1-877-433-7827) or online, <http://www.edpubs.org/webstore/Content/search.asp>. The U.S. Department of Education’s website also includes a section dedicated to the information parents need to help their children succeed in school. Go to <http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml?src=pn>.

Parent Survey Shows Overall Satisfaction

“Overall, we are very satisfied with the teachers and the learning environment at Jefferson,” wrote one parent. “Thanks to all Jefferson teachers, staff and principal for doing your best for all the students under limited funds and staffing,” wrote another.

The parents of 177 Jefferson students responded to the parent survey. The majority of written comments commended teachers and staff. Some raised a concern that “academically advanced students have too few opportunities for challenge.” But overall, parents recorded a high level

of satisfaction with their students’ academic development. Parents were most satisfied with reading instruction, and least satisfied with music and art particularly in the higher grades.

Both White and non-White parents chose Physical Education and Science as the two programs most deserving of BSEP funding. Non-White parents ranked after school homework support and tutoring for children at risk much higher than did White parents.

These results will be used to help make decisions about the use of school resources.

Focus on Reading

Glory Styles and the Reading Recovery Program

Glory Styles is in her third year as Jefferson's Reading Recovery teacher. Jefferson has a literacy goal of increasing reading skills and strategies (fluency, comprehension, and decoding) of our lowest performing students through daily reading instruction. The Reading Recovery program is central to this goal.

As Jefferson's Reading Recovery teacher, Ms. Styles has three roles. The first is the direct instruction of first-graders in one-on-one sessions. The second is working with small literacy groups of children in other grades. The third is coaching teachers to meet their literacy goals.

Sara Nickerson and the Library

All the students at Jefferson go to the Library once a week with their class, and can also go on their own during recess.

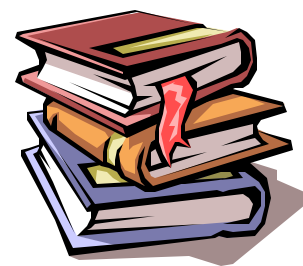
Sara Nickerson has been Jefferson's library technician for three years. She has a long history with the Berkeley schools and with Jefferson in particular. She has been working in the district for the past 25 years and her two children attended Jefferson. As a Jefferson parent, she helped form and was president of the PTA. She was also instrumental in starting the annual Mayfair Carnival.

Ms. Styles loves her work helping lead children into a literate community of readers and writers. She began her teaching career in Oakland where she taught 1st and 2nd grades for 10 years before moving on to Reading Recovery. She also taught English in Taiwan for one year, and speaks some Mandarin.

She shares her North Oakland home with her partner and her daughter who attends Longfellow. She also has a stepdaughter who will be graduating from Mills College this year. She has 2 cats, 1 dog and 3 chickens. Outside of work, she loves to play guitar and also sings in a Choir.

Ms. Nickerson feels as if she is a Berkeley native, but is originally from Southern California. She moved to Berkeley in 1964. Her two children are now grown, and are both firefighters. One lives in Albany and works at Mt. Tamalpais. The other lives in Ukiah and works in Clear Lake.

In her spare time she enjoys craft making. She loves doing seasonal crafts with the children at school, especially mosaics. She also likes to travel and expects to do much more of it upon retirement.



This month we focus on Reading & ask students for their impressions of the Library.

Student Voices - What do you like about the Jefferson School Library?

I like the library because it has a lot of books compared to other libraries. And it has some games you can play at recess. And it's a good place to have Girl Scouts, and to do Karaoke.

--Katrin, Room 204

I really like the library because they have a very wide selection of good books. But the one thing I think they could improve on is space and science books. **They don't have enough!**

--Nissa, Room 202

We get to play on the computers. You get to check out books. I really like the drawing books. There are games at recess when you don't have anything else to do.

--Joe F., Room 206

You can get books. The books are good and I like to read them. My favorite book is *Harry Potter*.

--Jeremy, Room 207

I like everything!

--Antonia, Room 105

I love Ms. Nickerson reading books.

--Emily F, Room 101

We get our library books. I like *Henry and Mudge*.

--Kelin, Room 101

Fun! --Edmond, Room 101

Picking books.

--Destinee, Room 101

PTA Officers

Please contact one of the officers if you have any ideas, questions or concerns.

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Announcements

Volunteers Needed for Walk-a-Thon

Volunteers needed to help with making posters, supervising the children during the walk, and keeping them safe at the corners and at driveways, providing water at the water station, marking laps on the children's stickers, handing out OtterPops and coupons, and signing up the parents who walk to enter their names in the drawing.

All volunteers will have their names added to the drawing for the \$50 TranSports gift certificate. To volunteer, call or email Cindy Chang at 527-5663 or cjchang@uhs.berkeley.edu.

Mayfair Plant Sale

Our Mayfair Plant Sale is especially exciting this year! Back by popular demand, we're offering gorgeous, ceramic pots of all sizes, planted with colorful grasses, succulents and other perennials. Even if your mother can't come to the Mayfair, you can give her a little piece of Jefferson School for Mother's Day with one of these beautiful plant creations!

