



The Jefferson Independent

Translations of Principal Maggie's letter available at www.jefferson.berkeleypta.org.

Letter from Principal Maggie



Dear Jefferson Families,

Our school ROCKS in so many important ways! Twice a week, during the months of December and January, I give tours of our school for families who have children entering

kindergarten in the fall. I regularly visit classrooms and spend time both on the schoolyard and in the cafeteria as well. From this excellent bird's eye view, I can see that Jefferson School is a wonderful place for our students to be educated. This is a view also shared by our many visitors who love what they see! Here are just a few ways that OUR SCHOOL ROCKS!

R- Respect for All. Take a look in to any classroom during a Second Step lesson. The *Second Step* program teaches children how to deal with emotions, resist impulsive behavior, resolve conflict, solve problems and understand the consequences of their actions. By understanding their emotions and how to respond to them, students are able to remain focused on learning. Children begin to understand issues that lead to conflict and then use specific problem solving strategies to resolve and avoid them. Walk by Lisa Rossi, Anne Scheele and Susanne Reed's classes where you can see posters of the important issues and questions that our children are exploring with Second Step. In addition all of our classrooms teach the Welcoming Schools curriculum. Welcoming Schools offers tools, lessons and resources on embracing family diversity, avoiding gender stereotyping and ending bullying and

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December 2013, Issue 3

Calendar of Events

December	17 Math Festival
	19 Assembly at 8:15AM
	20 Last day of school before Winter Break
January	6 School resumes
	9 Assembly at 8:15AM PTA meeting at 6:30PM
	20 Martin Luther King, jr Holiday – No School
	23 Assembly at 8:15AM
	27 Staff Development Day – No School

Clipboards Needed

Jefferson's Reading Specialist Glory Styles needs clipboards with wood backs to use with her students. If you have any to spare, please bring them to the office! Thank you.

Letter from PTA Co-President Valerie Kratzer

Happy fall Jefferson families! We were very fortunate to have enjoyed a very successful book fair with a great assortment of literature this November! The book fair raised over \$6,000, which paid for books for kids, teachers and staff this year and will be put towards more books next year.

The Giving Campaign is in full swing and all families should have received a letter and donation form in their communication folders regarding this critical fundraising effort. The Giving Campaign aims to raise over \$30,000 this year and provides funding for books, school supplies, field trips, P.E., tutoring and other important (and fun!)

services for our kids. This campaign costs the PTA very little and contributes a significant portion of our budget. Please take time to make a tax deductible donation as soon as you can!

On December 17th we will have a special math festival during the school day to support the new common core math curriculum. If you are able to help out, email, maggieriddle@berkeley.net.

There will be NO PTA MEETING in December, we will resume our usual second Thursday of the month

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From Librarian Adoria Williams: Our Girls ROCK

As young girls grow and develop, their overall sense of self-esteem and personal worth grows and develops too. Self-esteem is about how confident we feel about our abilities and talents, not just how others may perceive us. Girls who express their feelings, make positive choices, and care about others usually have high self-esteem. I want all girls to be empowered, to believe in themselves, and to understand that they each have wonderful and unique qualities that make them special.

This year, I want to fill the library's void of relevant and current books related to girls' social, behavioral, and emotional development. I have filet mignon ideas, but a McDonald's budget, so I turned to the Berkeley Public Schools Fund (BPSF) and DonorsChoose.org for help.

For the past 30 years, the Berkeley Public Schools Fund's mission has been to inspire and empower an extraordinary public education for every child. This month, BPSF funded my proposal, *Girl Power in the Library*. These funds will be used to purchase both fiction and nonfiction books to encourage girls to embrace STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects. As the demand for scientists and mathematicians is projected to grow dramatically in the future, the number of students going into these fields is not growing at a comparable rate. It is my hope that some of our girls will be inspired to investigate careers in these fields.

Some of the BPSF funds will also go towards the purchase of GoldieBlox storybooks and construction sets. GoldieBlox uses an interactive story to engage girls in helping Goldie, a kid inventor who solves problems by building simple machines. Goldie's stories encourage girls to build, developing fundamental spatial skills.

I also received funding for two DonorsChoose projects this month. The first project, *Creating a Nonfiction Book Buzz in the Library*, will provide much needed books about animals, important women in history, math, and science. Funding of the second project, *Promoting Girls' Health, Well-Being, and Positive Development*, will be used for books to inspire positive motivation in girls and help them with body image, friendship dynamics, bullying, goal setting, stress, respect for self and others, conflict management, organization, and life skills.

Parents, please feel free to contact me if you would like to borrow any books or if you are interested in checking out a GoldieBlox set to try at home with your children. I am looking for a few testers who will provide feedback! In closing, here are a few book recommendations. Cheers!

Cupcake (2010)

by Charise Mericle Harper

For ages 4 - 7

This is an adorable book about a plain vanilla cupcake that isn't picked to eat. Cupcake decides that he must find a way to make himself more exciting, but ends up making a friend in the process. Readers can learn about self-esteem through Cupcake and list things that they like about themselves.

Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon (2001)

By Patty Lovell

For ages 4 - 8

Molly Lou is different. She's tiny with big buck teeth and a voice that sounds like "a bullfrog being squeezed by a boa constrictor." But thanks to her grandmother, she also has an indomitable self-esteem...strong enough to survive a new school and a mean bully. Molly loves herself so much, she soon wins everyone over!

Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies and Bossiness and Finding a Better Way (An American Girl Library Book)

By Patti Kelley Criswell (Author), Angela Martini (Illustrator)

For ages 8 and up

This is a fantastic little nugget of a book for parents and daughters to read together. The message in this book is that there is no one right way to deal with bullying. Instead, there are lots of options for girls to try, from ignoring a bully and trying a few clever comebacks to reporting bullying to a trusted adult. Also, there are tips on how to not be mean to others and say kind, but truthful, things.

PTA Afterschool Class Reminder

The PTA hopes everyone has enjoyed the Fall Session of PTA Enrichment Classes! The last day of classes is December 20, with the exception of Skilly Circus, which ends a week early on December 13. Parents will be notified directly by their class instructor if any make-up classes are scheduled. Look for the registration brochure for the Spring Session of classes in the Wednesday Communication Folder the first week back from Winter Break.

'Tis The Season to Give...to Jefferson

Annual Giving Campaign

This holiday season would you consider adding Jefferson to your holiday gift list?

Your year-end gift to the Jefferson Giving Campaign plays a key role in Jefferson's ability to deliver the outstanding programs, and support that underlie our school's success – and the success of our children. All of it goes towards critical programs. For example, here is what these gifts enable our school to purchase:

- \$25 5 library books
- \$50 art supplies for 12 kids
- \$100 field trip for 25 kids
- \$250 1 week of playground supervision
- \$500 1 semester PTA afterschool class OR Literacy Program for 30 kids
- \$1000 1 month of PE class

Here's how to give: in the box in the office, securely online at www.jefferson.berkeleypta.org via Paypal OR you can mail a check to Jefferson PTA, P.O. Box 9584, Berkeley, CA 94709. Donations are 100% tax-deductible. Every penny goes to our children.

Thank you for making a gift this December so we can all wish Jefferson a very 'Merry Christmas', 'Happy Hanukkah' and 'Happy Kwanzaa'.

Phil Polishuk and Magali Barbieri
Co-Chairs, Jefferson Giving Campaign

Got Extra Clothes?

A number of children have borrowed clothes from the office after an accident or after having too much fun in the mud a few weeks ago. If your child borrowed clothes, please wash and return the clothes to the office. We'll need them soon enough for the next round!

Also, if you need a place to donate pants, underwear, socks and shoes that your child has outgrown, please know that these items are always welcomed in the office.

JefferSONS and Daughters Holiday Gift Drive

JefferSons and Daughters is sponsoring its annual gift drive to provide new toys to families needing help with holiday gifts for their children. Many families are struggling during this difficult economic time. The mission of JefferSons and Daughters is to support those families in a manner that is confidential and respectful.

For those who would like to donate, go to www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C094FAEA72DA1F94-holiday or sign up in the Gift Drive Book located at the front desk of the office.

If you have any questions about the gift drive, please contact Christina Hernandez at christinacastrohernandez@yahoo.com or Valerie Kratzer at vkratzer@yahoo.com

We would also like to thank all the families that contributed to the Food Drive for Thanksgiving. The families that received the boxes were very grateful and gave us many thanks.

Math + Festival = FUN

We're excited to announce that Jefferson is partnering with the California Math Council (CMC) to host a hands-on Math Festival at school on Tuesday, December 17. The CMC is a nonprofit organization that is committed to improving mathematics education for K-8 grade levels throughout the state of California as well as across North America and beyond. The Math Festival will promote the learning of critical math topics and increase awareness of the importance of mathematics in a positive, self-exploratory, festival-like atmosphere. The topic for the Jefferson Math Festival will be "numbers." There will be 12 problem solving stations set up in the cafetorium with each station focusing on one or more key math concepts. Parent volunteers will be helping at each station so if you're interested in helping too, please contact Mas Handa (m-handa@comcast.net). The more the merrier!

Principal's Letter, Continued

name-calling. Welcoming Schools helps us set the tone for caring and welcoming classrooms.

O- Open Hearts, Open Minds. Watching our K and 1st grade classes with their upper grade “buddies” is truly inspirational. The older children lovingly mentor their young buddies. They read, play cooperative games and more as they form meaningful, cross age relationships that further strengthen our school community. Watching them walk hand in hand is all that it takes to see the heart, depth and strength of the “buddies” program. Buddy Classrooms: 107 & 200, 101 & 103, 105 & 205 and 104 & 202. Next time you are at school look for these wonderful partnerships!

C- Courage. All over our school students are challenging themselves in reading. With the help of their teachers, and our engaging literacy program, students set goals for themselves and then work diligently to reach them. The love of reading is exploding at Jefferson! Kids can be “caught in the act” of reading in class, in the halls, in the library, during JAZ, on the yard and at home. Ms. Trevor’s students even read in line! Literacy teacher and coach Glory Styles is our site expert and leads this work with students and staff to help every child become an avid and proficient reader.

This same zeal for learning is evident as our children and staff work with the new math curriculum- A Story of Units. It’s called A Story of Units because through the standards it tells the unfolding story of mathematics. The engaging story is about the creation, manipulation, and relationship between units, the basic building blocks of arithmetic. Even though the standards are more rigorous, and students struggle with some of the practices, they are engaged in the high-level math problem solving and math discussions that are a signature part of this curriculum. Later this year we’ll have an evening event to talk about A Story of Units with you, our parents and guardians.

PTA Letter, Continued

meetings after the winter break.

We are moving forward the Silent Auction and Adult Party to March 1 instead of holding it in June. This will help us better able to plan our budget in May and spread out our fundraisers. This year's theme is Mardi Gras.

Last but not least, thank you to all our volunteers who keep the school events, field trips, recesses and projects running smoothly. Thank you to Jess Reich and her

K-Kindness. From the office to the cafeteria our staff is committed to treating every person in our school community with kindness. School secretary Tiana Alnas-Benson exemplifies kindness as she assists students with a wide variety of needs from small scratches to frantic children who have missed the school bus. The front office can be a very lively place because it is the first stop for students, parents/guardians and visitors. Tiana makes sure that everyone who comes in to the office feels welcomed and that they are helped with whatever they need. Students definitely don’t worry about being sent to the office! Seeing Tiana at the front desk is a great way to start the school day!

S- Success for All. Our wide range of school programs are serving our students well this year due to excellent coordination from our Universal Learning Support Services (ULSS) team led by coordinator Mary Cazden . We have strong “wrap around” programs that address the unique needs of every student. These include: reading labs, ELD classes, extensive after school programming, tutoring, mentoring, community building, service learning, and our Peacemaker program for conflict management. Each classroom has a wide range of academic and artistic learning for your children as well that is designed to differentiate instruction so every child is truly engaged and successful.

Our staff is a highly committed group of professional educators who are engaged in ongoing collaboration about teaching. Our goal is to keep our focus firmly on students and learning and to work together to make sure that your children are well educated, inspired and happy at Jefferson School!

These are only a few of the ways that Our School ROCKS. From the playground to the office, in every classroom and throughout our after school programs Jefferson School is a wonderful place to go to school!

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Sincerely,

Principal Maggie

crew of volunteers who turned the book fair and ice cream social into great successes! Thank you Alexander Winslow, David Hess, Colin MacPhail and Lenard Curtis for updating the school emergency supplies, a critical and tremendous effort. Thank you to Phil Polishuk and Magali Barbieri for getting the Giving Campaign off the ground. A huge thank you to everyone who turned out for the Crepevine and Ashby Lumber fundraisers, they raised \$650 and upwards of \$2,000 respectively!

Thanks for all that you give and do!