



NIXON NEWS

Nixon PTA Newsletter—Vol. 2004-2005 Issue No. 9—January 14, 2005
The L.M. Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 (650)856-1622 <http://www.nixon.palo-alto.ca.us>

CALENDAR

Mon. Jan. 17 and Fri. Jan. 21
No School

Mon. Jan. 24, 5:30-8 p.m.
TB Testing, District Office

Tue Jan. 25, 5-9 p.m.
Nixon Night Out at
Armadillo Willy's

Thu. Jan. 27, 5:30-8 p.m.
TB Test Read

Fri. Jan. 28,
Pajama Day

Fri. Jan. 28, 6:00 p.m.
Family Bingo Night
(Auction item)

**NEXT PUBLICATION
DATE:** Jan. 28, 2005

DEADLINE:
Thursday, Jan. 20, 5 p.m.



Principal: Barbara Welch

PTA Co-Presidents:
Cyndy Sandor and Tracy Stevens

Editor: Sharon Dally
Production: Yasuko Weyhrauch

Principal's Corner by Barbara Welch

Dear Nixon Families,

I hope you all had an enjoyable and restful winter break. I thought the fall was busy until I returned and looked at my calendar for January. I am sure many of you are experiencing the same thing.

In January the staff will be focusing on School Improvement Plan goal 1C: to foster social-emotional health and resilience in every student as measured by improved student attitudes and behaviors. We will be working as a staff to examine and develop a pilot program for a school-wide life skills program. Our plan is to select a life skill such as *caring* and then build a variety of learning activities around it. It can be tied to student service projects, conversations at home, writing prompts, literature, and our spirit days. We will select one life

skill for this spring with pilot activities for March. Then at our April staff meetings we will evaluate and reflect on the pilot successes and necessary changes, as well as select four concepts and activities for next year. Our intent is not to design another layer of curriculum, but to address the needs of the "whole child." As we move through this process, we will keep the parent community informed. You are also encouraged to share any ideas you have with your teacher or me.

The recent tragedy in Southeast Asia has profoundly affected us all, some more personally than others. The staff, Site Council, and PTA are looking at ways that Nixon, as a very international community, can make a meaningful contribution. We have two objectives that our effort must meet.

Continued on Page 2

PTA Presidents' Message by Cyndy Sandor and Tracy Stevens

By now the saying of "Happy New Year" may have worn off some of its effectiveness, so we would like to say, "Welcome to 2005."

We could not write this message without acknowledging the devastating tragedy of the Tsunami and its overwhelming effects. People from all over the world have felt the impact of the event, and many are finding their own way to try to ease the pain and burden of what is sure to be a very long recovery. In a few weeks, Barbara Welch

will share with the Nixon community some thoughts on how we might become involved and contribute.

As often happens when the holiday season ends, our thoughts turn to the remainder of the school year. And although there are 5½ months left, there are some very important events that will take place and some goals that must be accomplished:

Continued on Page 3

Se puede encontrar una edición de *Nixon News* en español en la oficina general de la escuela. Favor de avisar a Maria Cacho (cacho@stanford.edu) si usted desea añadir su nombre a la lista de distribución.

Principal's Corner *continued from page 1*

First, to raise funds and donate them to an organization that directly serves the people. Second, to take this tragedy and make it a "teachable" experience for the students. We want to focus on compassion and responsibility as a member of a global society. We are thinking of ways for students to donate their own money, which they have earned or saved.

We want this to be an intimate experience, not one where they transport a check. Our plan is to kick off our fundraising at the Spirit Day assembly on January 28th and conclude it at the February 25th Spirit Day assembly. I will provide you with more detailed plans in the January 28th issue of *Nixon News*. We will be looking for parents to help us with collecting funds or working with a child who does not have adult support to do this. Let me know if you would be willing.

The Palo Alto Unified School District has long held the belief that in order to ensure continuous improvement, it is useful for all staff to collect input on professional performance. The District and the Palo Alto Teachers Association agree that the purpose of student/parent input is to provide meaningful feedback to teachers and supervisors for the improvement of teaching performance. Consequently, even though teachers' assigned supervisors are the sole evaluators of teacher performance, all staff members collect input from students and/or parents with a view to improving instruction.

This year's parent survey has been slightly revised and will appear as the cover page for the January 28th *Nixon News*. Input to teachers is valuable and required as part of their contract. Another contractual requirement is that the survey must be signed. The Principal reads each survey. Some parents have shared with me that they are reticent to voice any constructive criticism and then sign their name. I simply remind them that it is their job to be their child's advocate, and questioning a policy does not need to be an attack of the teacher. Focusing on the concern and how to make it work for each of you is valuable. If no name is attached to the survey, it is impossible for us to have a meaningful conversation about concerns or change. Please, diligently fill out the survey and return it to your child's teacher.

In February the students will be filling out their own surveys at school, so they can see responsible participation modeled by their parents and then participate themselves. It is important for them to understand that their input is val-

ued, too. We are presently using student surveys from other sites and past ones from Nixon to revise ours this year. We will attach a copy of the student survey to our February issue of *Nixon News*.

I hope that you shared your thoughts at the Principal's Coffee this morning and enjoyed the return of our assembly that celebrates the contributions of all people regardless their race, color, sex, culture, or personal beliefs.

Barbara

To My Little Darlings

Love, Mom and Dad

Place an ad to your child(ren) this year in the Nixon Auction Catalog. They will love to see their name in print! Congratulate them on a special accomplishment or just say "I Love You."

Cost for a ¼ page ad is \$50.00. See the flyer in this *Nixon News* for the Catalog Insertion Order Form, also available in the Auction drawer at the front desk, or call or email Vicki Dempsey to receive one, vldempsey@yahoo.com.

PS. Don't forget to advertise your personal business too. Space reservation deadline is Feb. 5th.

Presidents' Message *continued from page 1*

- Coming up in March is the annual Nixon Auction. Please keep your eye out for flyers (one in this newsletter!) and eNews articles. Your participation is requested and needed: to help with the Auction, to make donations, and to attend what is a very fun and worthwhile event. If you have any questions please contact Carol Carbone or Sheryl Humble at humblefamily@earthlink.net.
- Your participation in the ongoing challenge of funding our schools, our teachers, and your child's classroom. Please donate to PiE (see article on page 6). Should you want to know more, you may contact Cyndy Sandor at cyndy@email.com.
- Nixon Parent Volunteers: This is a very broad topic but one that is essential to the daily activities and larger events that take place at Nixon. Now is the time when the search committee for volunteer recruitment convenes to put things in place for the end of this school year and all of next year. The search committee is the critical first step to finding those folks who will fill our committee and volunteer positions. If you would like to be on that committee, please contact David Kahn at wilddave50@yahoo.com.

During the months of February, March, and April, we will need to find volunteers who have many different interests and talents and who would like to be more involved in the Nixon community, and more importantly in their children's everyday experience at Nixon. We are fortunate that many of our current volunteers will be here next year and will continue to volunteer, but there are also many whose children will move on to middle school and leave some very big vacancies in our network of volunteers.

Some of these are committee chairs who will organize and communicate; other positions require time, or assistance, or creativity, or group participation. Some positions are on going, while others are one-time, taking only a few hours. Every volunteer position is essential and greatly appreciated, and if you are interested there is a place and a need for your participation. A complete list of available positions will be posted on the Parent's Corner bulletin board, just inside the office by the computer lab, and on the Nixon web site. Here are just a few of the available positions:

PTA President/Co-Presidents
Vice President of Communications
Website Coordinator
Nixon News Layout/Production
Ice Skating Party
May Fete Parade
Back to School Coffee
Auction Chair
Traffic Safety

If you have any questions regarding volunteer positions, contact Tracy Stevens at trastevens@earthlink.net

Nixon has such a wonderful blend of cultures and backgrounds; we would love to see the influence and participation of as many people as possible, as it would only continue to enrich all our experiences. So please, if you never considered participating in an event or volunteering in one of the many programs, consider it now. Thank you!

Cyndy and Tracy

Nixon Night Out—Tuck Your Napkin Under Your Chin!

Save the date—Tuesday, January 25, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Armadillo Willy's Restaurant, 1031 N. San Antonio Road, Los Altos, is the location for our next Nixon Night Out event.

Take a break from cooking and join your friends at Armadillo Willy's for a night of great bar-b-que and fun for the whole family. Nixon School benefits too! Armadillo Willy's will donate 20% of our purchases to the school, take out included. You'll be dancing the Texas two-step when you see how easy and fun it is to support Nixon School.

After School Enrichment Classes

We are lucky to have most of our enrichment providers returning for the second semester. One significant change is that Know Chess will not be providing classes. However, we are fortunate to have a new provider, Success Chess. They come highly recommended.

You should have received registration flyers with this issue of *Nixon News*. If you did not receive a flyer, contact information for the providers is included below. Flyers are also available in the office.

The Schedule: The table on page 5 summarizes all enrichment classes. Even though every effort was made to ensure that this table is accurate, please rely on the provider's flyer for the actual times, days, and grade levels for each class.

How to register: Registration information is included in each provider's flyer.

Fees: Please pay the class provider directly. The Nixon PTA has scholarship money available to students needing financial aid. Contact Barbara Welch, Deb Lipari, or Lisa Schmidt for additional information.

And finally: Parents are responsible for picking up children promptly at the end of the enrichment class. Children may not wait in the office, and enrichment teachers may ask a child to stop attending class if the child is not picked up promptly.

Contact information:

Art, Carla Gratta, carla@hep.Stanford.edu; and Alejandra Hermandinger, Jajuina@yahoo.com

Basketball, Mike Livingston, mike@1on1basketball.com

Chess, Alan Kirshner, info@successchess.org

Creative Writing, Sylvia Sanders, agsandbox@hotmail.com

Math, Homa Yazdani, homa_yazdani@yahoo.com

Music, Nancy Kaye, nkaye@pausd.org

Science, Karen Miel, karen.miel@cityofpaloalto.org; and Ines Thiessen, ines.thiessen@cityofpaloalto.org

Spanish, Natalia De la Chica, nataliadela-chica@hotmail.com

Enrichment coordinator, Lisa Schmidt, lisa@schmidt.net

Continued on page 5

Kindergarten Registration

Don't miss the February 3 deadline for registering your child to enter kindergarten in Fall 2005. Registration information is available at the PAUSD website (www.pausd.org) or by calling the Central Attendance. An informational meeting for incoming kindergarten parents will be held on Thursday, January 20, 7:00 p.m. in the Palo Verde Elementary School Multipurpose Room, located at 3450 Louis Road in Palo Alto. Registering before the February 3 deadline is critical, so please pass the word along to any friends or neighbors with incoming kindergartners.

Nixon Art Show

The After School Art Enrichment program is proud to announce the First Art Show of Nixon artists as closure of the first semester session:

Wednesday, January 19, 2005
1:30-2:30 p.m.
Nixon Theater

There will be an opportunity to sign up for next semester's program then.

Thank you,
Carla and Alejandra

After School Enrichment Classes *continued from page 4*

Day	Class	Start Time	End Time	Grades
Monday	Spanish K	11:35	12:05	K
	Spanish Adv	2:20	3:05	4, 5
Tuesday	Creative Writing	2:20	3:30	4,5
	Spanish Beginning	2:20	3:05	1,2,3
Wednesday	Chess	1:40	2:55	all
	Chess	1:40	2:55	all
	Spanish Adv	1:30	2:15	1,2,3
	Art	1:30	2:20	all
	Art	2:30	3:10	all
Thursday	Creative Writing	2:20	3:30	4, 5
	Spanish Beginning	2:20	3:05	1,2,3
	Music	2:30	3:20	4,5
Friday	After School Hoops	1:30	2:20	1,2,3
	After School Hoops	1:30	2:20	1,2,3
	Spanish K	11:35	12:05	K
	Spanish Adv	1:30	2:15	1,2,3
	Spanish Adv	2:20	3:05	4,5
	Math	1:30	2:15	2,3
	Math	2:20	3:15	4,5
	Science K	11:30	12:15	K
	Science 1	1:30	2:20	1,2,3
	Science 2	1:30	2:20	1,2,3
	Science 3	2:25	3:05	4,5
	Science 4	2:25	3:05	4,5
	Art	11:30	12:00	K
	Art	1:30	2:20	1,2,3
	Art	2:20	3:10	4,5

Partners in Education Update

We are delighted to report that PiE finished 2004 with \$1,025,000 in donations, so we are officially over the million-dollar mark! We still have approximately \$270,000 to raise to meet our goal of returning \$1.2 million back to the 12 elementary schools in our district.

We don't have Nixon specific results at this point, but will have that information for the next newsletter.

PiE's strategy to help close that \$270,000 gap will be through organizing volunteer teams to solicit Major Gift donations (private and corporate) and to arrange a mini-phonathon to help encourage those who may not have donated yet.

I do have a few volunteer requests. PiE will be holding their first Online Auction (to be held in April for the purpose of funding Teacher Grants), and we are looking for a Nixon parent to be a contact for this project. It is mainly a communications job - passing information on for our newsletter and eNews. But, we'll also be looking for a unique parent or teacher offering from each school (a teacher who bakes cookies, a parent who wants to cook a gourmet dinner, etc.) as a donation, and we'll need this person to help coordinate that effort. Also, I will be looking for a Partners in Education Site Chair for 2005 to share the job with me next year. If you're interested in either of these opportunities, please let me know.

As always, thank you for your generosity in donating to PiE to help us keep our supplemental teaching staff for next

year. For more information on Partners in Education, please visit www.papie.org or contact Cyndy Sandor at cyndy@email.com.

Cyndy Sandor
PTA Co-President and
Nixon PiE Site Chair

Spare Pants Needed

If you have an old pair of children's pants that you can spare, please donate them to the school. From time to time, a child comes to the main office needing a change of clothes, but the supply that Becky and Ginny keep there is running low, especially pants. All sizes are needed, boys or girls. Thanks for your help.

Rainy Day School Commute Blues

Getting to school on rainy days doesn't have to force you into your single-family automobile. At Nixon, we need to find ways to get cars off the road because we don't have the street capacity around our school to handle everyone driving in single-family autos. More importantly, heavy car traffic on slippery streets creates a very unsafe environment for children on and around our campus.

To get your child to school safe and dry in the worst weather without driving every time, you can set up a rainy day carpool. Talk with the families you see on your walk-

ing or bicycling school route. Set up an arrangement in advance and have the phone numbers of the drivers handy when the clouds burst.

Let's all do our part to keep our school routes as safe as possible for our children. Sharing a ride is lots of fun and good for our environment, too!

TB Testing Reminder

The last opportunity this school year for parent volunteers to receive free tuberculosis (TB) testing will be January 24 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the district office. Everyone that receives the TB test on Monday, January 24 **MUST** be able to return on Thursday, January 27 between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. to have the test read. You must be free of acute illness and fever to receive this test.

All volunteers who come into contact with students are required to have a current tuberculosis test on file. This includes field trip drivers, chaperones, and classroom volunteers. The test result is **valid for four years**. If you prefer, you may have the test done at your doctor's office

at your own expense. Then, bring a copy of the test result to the Nixon office.

If you have had a documented positive test in the past and had a chest x-ray, then all that is required is a letter from your physician stating that you have been examined and are free of infectious TB. Take that letter to the Nixon office.

If you have questions, please contact Roseann Burhenne at roburhenne@yahoo.com

Please Do Not Park in the Reserved Parking Space!

Have you noticed the "Reserved Parking" sign posted next to the first parallel parking space along the median strip between the parking lot and the bus circle? That prime parking space is a highly sought-after item at our annual Nixon auction. Please support our school's fundraising efforts by respecting the sign and keeping that space available for the generous auction patrons who purchased the right to park there.

If you find yourself eyeing that space longingly, then be sure to bid for it at this year's auction on March 5!

Sign up for eNews!

Nixon has an e-mail list for parents and staff interested in receiving weekly updates on school events. To subscribe (or unsubscribe) from the list, send e-mail to majordomo@lists.pausd.palo-alto.ca.us with the words "subscribe nixon" (or "unsubscribe nixon") in the body (not the subject) of the message.

If you have items that should be publicized in eNews, e-mail Linda Baker at lindasbaker@hotmail.com.

Beyond Nixon

1st Annual CAC Sweethearts Award

Help us nominate those individuals that have made a difference in the life of your child with special needs. You can nominate anyone—a bus driver, a student, a neighbor, an aide, a teacher, a therapist, ANYONE! You can also nominate as many people as you would like.

The only requirement is that you must write a paragraph (it can be short) explaining what the nominee did to help out your child and why he or she deserves a CAC Sweetheart Award. Please include whatever information you have about the person (address, e-mail, etc.) so that we can contact the nominees and invite them to attend the 1st Annual CAC Sweethearts Awards on February 17.

Nominations must be received by January 15, 2005. Please e-mail your nomination(s) to: wunder@best.com. Sponsored by the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education/ PAUSD.

ADHD Support Group Meeting

January 20, 2005

7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

25 Churchill, Room A

Support group will focus on how to manage issues related to school, social life, and home. Discussions led by Janet Dafoe, Ph.D., licensed psychologist on the staff of the Children's Health Council and in private practice in Palo Alto. Sponsored by the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education and PAUSD.

Bringing Up Bicyclists

Learn how to teach your children to become safe and responsible bicyclists. The Palo Alto Recreation Department, with co-sponsorship by the PTA Council, is offering classes that will help parents teach their children (up to age 10) how to be responsible, legal, and predictable bicyclists. The courses cover the differences between children and adults when cycling and the basic

skills that need to be taught, as well as bicycle and helmet selection and fit. (A more complete description of the course contents is posted on the Nixon Parents' Corner Bulletin Board.) The two-hour courses will be given in Room A-6 of the Cubberley Community Center on the following dates: January 11, January 19, February 3, March 2, March 10 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

To enroll, see classes 42279 – 42283 in the *Adults and Seniors* section of the ENJOY catalog (<http://www.paenjoy.org>), or enroll online at <http://enjoyonline.cityofpaloalto.org/Activities/Activities.asp>. Enter the class number or search on the word *bicycle*. For more information, contact Richard Swent (RSwent@pacbell.net).

Juana Run!

Interested in running a 5K through quiet neighborhood streets? Or maybe pushing the baby stroller during the 1-mile while chatting with a friend? You should sign-up for the Juana Run!

Got a kid with lots of energy, or maybe just a sense of adventure? Sign 'em up for one of the Juana Run Kids' Races. From Pre-K through 5th grade, there's a range of short courses just for them.

How about a free pancake breakfast and t-shirt? Just sign-up for the Juana Run! The Kids Races also include ribbons for all finishers.

The Juana Run is about families running (or walking) and having fun while doing it. Join us on Saturday, February 26th at Juana Briones Elementary School. This community event raises heartbeats and money for both the Barron Park and Juana Briones PTA's.

For more information, go to www.juanarun.org or go straight to the registration form at <http://www.barron.palo-alto.ca.us/juanarun/Juanaregistration2004.pdf>. Forms are also available in the Nixon office.

About Nixon News

Nixon News is a PTA funded newsletter, designed to serve as a parent educational and information resource. It is published every other Friday (except when holidays interfere). Submissions should be sent via e-mail to the editor, Sharon Dally, at sharond@cva.stanford.edu. Either type the text directly in the body of the e-mail or attach a Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format file. If your article is on paper and cannot be submitted electronically or if you have a photo or graphic, please contact the editor for instructions. Deadlines are announced on the front page of every issue. They are normally (but not always) the Friday before publication. Articles will be edited for spelling and grammar and for length, if space constraints require it. All submissions must include your name and contact information.

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