



# NIXON NEWS

Nixon PTA Newsletter—Vol. 2004-2005 Issue No. 12—March 4, 2005  
The L.M. Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 (650)856-1622 <http://www.nixon.palo-alto.ca.us>

## CALENDAR

Sat. March 5, 5:00 p.m.  
Mardi Gras Moonlight  
Auction

Tu. March 8, 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
PTA Mtg.

Tu. March 8, 6:30-8 p.m.  
Curriculum Night

Fri. March 25  
Minimum Day  
Dismissal at 1:30 p.m.

March 28-April 1  
Spring Break  
School Resumes April 4

**NEXT PUBLICATION**  
**DATE:** March 18

**DEADLINE:**  
Friday, March 11 at 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 Parents,

This next Tuesday night is one of the most important annual events at Nixon. **Curriculum Night** is an opportunity for adults and children alike to socialize and enjoy, by grade level, how a specific curriculum develops. The theme this year is literacy. The uniqueness of this evening is that both families and teachers visit classrooms together. The adults are able to see how students approach curriculum at different developmental stages. Also, teachers get to

see what other grades are doing and catch up with former students and their families. Although this is not an evening where teachers stay in their classrooms for the entire duration, they will all be on site if you have a specific question about something you saw in their class. As you travel from class to class, ask the students about their work. It gives them a chance to shine and take pride in sharing their knowledge.

*Continued on Page 2*

## PTA Presidents' Message by Cyndy Sandor and Tracy Stevens

### Don't Miss the Mardi Gras Moonlight Auction Tomorrow!

Ready to get into the carnival spirit of Mardi Gras? Well, we may not have carnivals and street dancing (although if you're having a really good time grooving to our live band, street dancing shouldn't be ruled out), but there will be lots of merrymaking and the chance to bid on some really fabulous items this year. A vacation in New Orleans' historic French Quarter, a week in Paris, a romantic getaway in Napa, a fabulous weekend retreat in Santa Fe, a safari adventure in Santa Rosa, a professionally painted portrait of your children—and more—are some of the amazing live auction items you can have a chance to bid on. But, come early for drinks and appetizers and browse through and bid on the hundreds of silent auction items spanning the

categories of home improvement, family fun, summer camps and classes, fine wine and dining, health and beauty, fun Nixon parties, and last but not least, teacher and class parties.

Remember, all of the items up for auction tomorrow night have been donated by many merchants and Nixon families to help raise funds for our school. All of the donations from this fundraiser will go directly back to Nixon to fund various needed projects—including instructional materials and site improvement necessities. So what better way to support the excellent educational environment of Nixon, while being able to have a blast yourself?

*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*

To facilitate your travels around our campus, at the front door there will be a general map and brief description of what to look for in each grade. There will also be a map of each pod on the outside door of the pod and the door of the pod into the library area. To experience the full impact of the evening with your children, you will want to start at the kindergarten and culminate at the fifth grade. This will allow you to look at how children build their knowledge and skills in one curricular area.

Curriculum Night is very well attended, so parking may be challenging. If you are within walking distance, this would be a great family jaunt. We also encourage you to park on Tolman and Raimundo. The lower drop-off parking lot and bus circle will be open.

A brief but important PTA meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m., and the classroom doors will be opened at 6:30. We will

close at 8:00 p.m. so children can get home at a reasonable time. Curriculum Night operates like an open house, so you may come and go on your own schedule. If you plan to attend after 7:00 p.m., parking will be at a premium. Unlike some previous years, dinner will not be served at Curriculum Night. We save that treat for the International Evening on April 21<sup>st</sup>. I am looking forward to seeing all the Nixon families.

I have been meeting with many of the classrooms this last week to discuss our theme of caring and how they are working with their families to fundraise to support the rebuilding of schools in tsunami ravaged areas. I really appreciate how many families have focused on caring for others, and as a result they are helping their children make a small sacrifice for others.

*Barbara*



### A Big Thank You

With the recent phonathon efforts (thanks again to Michelle Wu who donated Voicent software to help us organize the broadcast messaging to our families), we are in the final stages of this year's Partners in Education fundraising efforts. We do not have final donation amounts available yet, but it looks as if we will come very close to meeting—and hopefully exceeding—our goal of returning \$1.2 million dollars back to our 12 PAUSD elementary schools. In our next newsletter, I will have more specific information on total donations and the amount coming back to Nixon.

Thank you all for your generous financial support. I'd also like to specifically thank Anne Barry (Walter Hays parent), who heads up the elementary campaign for PiE. Her tireless efforts in managing this campaign and keeping all of the site chairs focused and motivated were behind the success of our fundraising efforts this year. Those of us involved with PiE have all learned a tremendous amount this year, and we have many ideas on how to improve the process for next year. Please feel free to contact me if you have any recommendations or suggestions regarding Partners in Education fundraising efforts. I'd love to hear from you.

Finally, even though I am stepping down as the Nixon PTA Co-President at the end of this year, I will be continuing on with my role as the Partners in Education site chair, as well as the Co-VP of Fundraising for the Nixon PTA Board (which I'm delighted to share with Tracy Stevens) next year. We both look forward to another great year at Nixon (and please don't feel you need to hide your checkbooks and wallets and run in the other direction every time you see us!).

*Cyndy Sandor*  
Nixon PTA Co-President  
Partners in Education Site Chair  
cyndy@email.com

## Presidents' Message *continued from page 1*

The auction will be held at Rickey's Hyatt in Palo Alto. The Silent Auction with drinks and appetizers begins at 5:00 p.m. The Live Auction, dinner, and live band begin at 7:00 p.m. Last minute tickets are available by contacting Lou Ann Winchell at [louannwin@aol.com](mailto:louannwin@aol.com).

### New Nixon Display Sign

Winter is almost behind us, and with our abundance of recent rain, the early spring flowers and trees are blooming everywhere. Spring cleaning moves up on the "to do" list and we're eagerly looking forward to a few small Nixon face lift projects that are underway. Along with our ongoing landscaping projects, within the next few months a new additional Nixon School Sign will be erected at our entrance that will display upcoming Nixon and PAUSD events. This is a PTA funded project built with the help of a local Eagle Scout. We have a very busy school event calendar, and we will now be able to better share that information with all of our Nixon families and the surrounding community. Watch for the new sign to spring up soon!

### Stay Connected – Sign up for Nixon eNews

Speaking of keeping our school community informed, make sure you've signed up for Nixon eNews. This is the easiest and fastest way to keep in touch with all the Nixon happenings. In fact our goal is to eventually use Nixon eNews as our regular form of communication and reduce the number of *Nixon News* issues. There are many advantages to electronic communication:

- Nixon eNews comes to you directly (rather than in a Friday folder that sometimes doesn't make it home).

- It arrives automatically, and you don't have to remember to look for it.
- It's very timely, arriving at a minimum of 1 time per week and more often if there are important news items we need to circulate quickly.
- It often provides direct links to online resources and appropriate contact people.
- eNews is environmentally responsible and requires less labor (less people power and we save some trees).

To subscribe to Nixon eNews, send email to [majordomo@lists.pausd.palo-alto.ca.us](mailto:majordomo@lists.pausd.palo-alto.ca.us) with the words "subscribe nixon" in the body of the message. And, if you have a brief announcement that you would like to have added to the Nixon eNews, e-mail Linda Baker at [lindasbaker@hotmail.com](mailto:lindasbaker@hotmail.com). Thank you for staying connected!

### Gosh and Begorra!

St. Patrick's Day is March 17<sup>th</sup>, and our school will be celebrating this "lucky" holiday all during the week. Watch out for wee folk, shamrocks, pots o' gold, pesky leprechauns, and probably lots of green cookies. And, oh yes, don't forget to have you (and your children) wear a touch of green for luck! And even though you may not be Irish, may good luck be yours for the taking!

*Cyndy and Tracy*

## Classroom Happenings

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

All three first grade classes shared conversation and a potluck meal on Thursday, February 24. Parents enjoyed seeing and meeting the families from the other first grade classes. Children enjoyed some playtime together outside of the school day. Everyone enjoyed the food! It was definitely a great time of community building.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Students in Sue Chakos and Lisa Lichtenstern's class recently dissected lima beans to discover the three main seed parts. They predicted what would happen if dry beans were soaked overnight, and then compared the dry to wet seed, recording their observations.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Beryl Deremigio's class participated in a "Meet the Masters" art project, thanks to parent Carla Gratta. Students explored the artistic elements found in the murals of Diego Rivera. "The dancers make a diagonal leaning away from each other." "There were a lot of triangles in this picture. Did the painter mean to do that?" In the second part of the project, each student focused on a small part of a Rivera mural. They expanded that part, using the same proportions. The amazing results are on display in room A-3.

# Specialists Speak: Reading Specialist

*Third in our series of articles on the significant roles the specialists play in your child's educational growth.*

It has been a joy to be Nixon's reading specialist for the past 5 years. This position is two-fold, giving me the opportunity to work with Nixon's talented teachers and students.

**One goal of the reading specialist is to collaborate and support K-5 teachers to strengthen their development and instruction in the "best practices" of literacy.**

Collaborating and supporting teachers in their classrooms is an effective model that improves teaching and learning. I work with teachers in developing lessons, implementing new practices, modeling lessons while they observe, and reflecting together on these lessons to inform future instruction. This practice benefits all students in the classroom and students down the road as the teacher implements this new knowledge year to year. It also reduces the teacher-student ratio from 1:20 to 1:10.

This collaborative process is also helpful to new and beginning teachers. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of working with many new teachers. For example, Joe Young and I developed activities that supported his Reading and Writers' Workshops with first and second graders. When the district and school site focused on the Six Traits of Writing, I supported Sandra Fujii and Katie Woessner in the implementation of lessons using these 6 trait books. Deborah Schweninger asked for support to develop Interactive Writing and Shared Reading activities that support kindergarteners in their early literacy development.

I am also available to K-5 teachers to consult on any literacy topic of interest. I train new and interested teachers in the district's literacy assessment requirements. I help them implement the assessments and analyze the data to inform their instruction. Many teachers have requested my assistance in organizing their classroom libraries to help students in the book selection process. It is extremely important for students to read books at their reading level to ensure success at practicing and learning the reading strategies being taught in class.

I facilitate Parent Education Nights in literacy and organize the READ room, the room off the library full of teaching resources and student books used for instruction.

**The second goal of the reading specialist is to implement instruction and strategies particularly for students who are reading below grade level.**

Working directly with classroom teachers in the collaborative model mentioned above is a powerful way to improve students' learning and skills. I also work with small groups of students. Working with small groups enables me to meet their specific needs. The students remaining in the classroom also benefit, as it reduces the number of students in the room, allowing the teacher to address their specific needs successfully. This is a win-win situation.

I teach small groups of students from all of the first, second, and third grade classrooms. My sessions teach students strategies that good readers use to decode text and develop meaning and understanding from their reading. Many students receive books at their instructional level to help them practice and learn the strategies being taught. These books are used during independent reading time at school and at home.

I enjoy training instructional aides and parent volunteers in classroom literacy activities. This also improves student learning. So far, seventeen parents have been trained in "Making Words". This is an activity that builds spelling skills and word development. Once parents are trained, they can offer this service to their child's teacher each year.

Avenidas, a senior citizen center in Palo Alto, developed a program to support student literacy. I enjoy coordinating this program and watching the successes and relationships that develop between the seniors and our students. Students gain confidence and skills while the senior tutors receive the joy of helping a child succeed. Nixon currently has 6 senior tutors serving 11 students.

I am always searching for parents that would enjoy tutoring a Nixon child in a one-on-one setting. If you are interested, please contact me at [schakos@pausd.org](mailto:schakos@pausd.org). You can open up the world to a child by helping them unlock the mystery and joy of reading. This is one of my greatest joys, and I am lucky to experience this daily.

I would like to thank the Nixon community and teachers for supporting a reading specialist. I have learned a tremendous amount from this experience, especially from the work with my colleagues and Nixon's students. They have made me a better teacher.

*Sue Chakos*  
Reading Specialist

# PAUSD Parcel Tax Information

Since January 2003, the district has cut \$6.5 million from its budget and used approximately \$3.4 million dollars from its reserves.

The major factors contributing to the budget cuts were:

- loss of funding from the State including \$1.2 million in basic aid funding
- enrollment growth (the district receives no money for additional students)
- increased costs such as health care costs, required employer contributions to the state retirement system, workers comp., utilities, etc.
- relatively flat property tax growth due primarily to the decline in commercial property taxes (the district receives approximately 70% of its revenue from property taxes and about 35% of that is from commercial property)

As a result, during the past two years the district reduced its administrative staff by 13%, teaching staff by 2% and classified staff by 7%. Leaders examined all facets of operations to look for efficiencies, including eliminating or reducing outside contracts, combining or eliminating positions and departments, reducing expenditures for overtime or substitutes, and eliminating the district warehouse.

The budget for 2004/05 includes reductions to:

- elementary librarian time
- the spectra art budget

- elementary reading specialist time
- teaching positions at the secondary schools leading to reductions in course offerings
- school site funds for instructional materials and support
- funding for sports
- funding for Camp Anytown
- maintenance/landscape staff
- technology support and more.

The current parcel tax of \$293 is set to expire in 2006. It provides \$5.5 million annually for PAUSD programs including class size reduction. In order to ensure the ongoing quality of the PAUSD education program, the funds from the existing parcel tax plus additional funds are needed.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Education voted to place a parcel tax measure of \$493 on the June 7, 2005 ballot. If passed, the new parcel tax will replace the current parcel tax and will provide \$9.3 million annually for six years. Funding from the parcel tax will be used to retain teachers and avoid teacher layoffs, preserve small class sizes in K-10, and restore some of the more critical cuts to secondary class offerings, counselors, and elementary literacy, math, and art.

The budget is updated throughout the year as new information is received, such as new property tax information from the County Assessor, enrollment numbers, and budget information from the State. For additional information, visit

## Summer Camp Info

Summer will be here before we know it, and many of us are making plans for our children's summer activities. *Nixon News* receives many requests from various summer camp providers to publicize their camps—many more than we have space to print. If you are looking for summer camp information, check the Parents Corner bulletin board (located to the left as you enter the main doors to the school) or look for flyers and brochures in the main office. The *Community Kiosk*, published by the Palo Alto PTA Council and attached to the back of *Nixon News* also occasionally publishes listings for summer camps.

## Forgotten Lunch Policy

PAUSD Food Services is no longer providing IOU's. If a child forgets his/her lunch, they may call home or get an apple and milk from Food Services and we will provide crackers. This has actually been a policy for awhile and Nixon has been out of compliance. Starting this week we will follow the policy. Thank you for understanding.

# Beyond Nixon

## CPR Saturday

Saturday, March 12, 2005, 8 a.m. to noon **or** 1-5 p.m.  
Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto

The Palo Alto Chapter of the American Red Cross, with support from Palo Alto Medical Foundation and Foothill College, is offering FREE CPR classes. Participants will learn and practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for adults, rescue breathing, choking rescue, and use of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system. You may attend either the morning or afternoon session. Morning session attendees may also receive First Aid training in the afternoon for a fee of \$20. The First Aid class will cover bleeding and treatment of burns, fractures, seizures, shock, and heat- and cold-related emergencies. Classes will be offered in English and Spanish. To register, please e-mail CPRSaturday@paarc.org. Pre-registration is recommended. Walk-on registrations will be accepted on a space-available basis.

## What Regional Center Services are Available for your Child?

Monday, March 14, 2005, 7:00 p.m.  
Board Room at 25 Churchill Ave.

Do you know that families with a developmentally disabled child might be eligible for a paid respite worker for up to 24 hours/month? Did you know your child might qualify for financial assistance in paying for additional therapy? Are you interested in what the regional center can do for your graduating senior? Come find out what recent changes have taken place to regional center services and how they impact children with developmental disabilities. Mimi Kinderlehrer, the Director of Community Services for the Northern Region of the San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) will give an overview of available services for school age students. Sponsored by the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education. Questions? Call Karen Lawson, 473-1525.

## ADHD Support Group Meeting

March 17, 2005, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.  
25 Churchill Ave., 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.

## Pre-School/Young Child Groups at Children's Health Council

The Groups Program at the Children's Health Council provides support groups for children dealing with various developmental or behavioral challenges. Many of the groups serve children with ODD, PDD (Asperger's/Autism), ADHD, NVLD, anxiety, depression, or communication/speech and language issues. Groups are formed based on age, gender, and problem area. CHC currently offers the following five groups for young children (ages 3-8): Speech and Occupational Therapy, Kindergarten Readiness, Speech and Language/Slingerland Group, Social Communication Group, Social Skills Group. For more information, visit [www.chconline.org](http://www.chconline.org) or contact CHC at [intake@chconline.org](mailto:intake@chconline.org).

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**Stock Up on  
Girl Scout Cookies!**  
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Have you been waiting all year for Thin Mints or Caramel Delights? Nixon's Girl Scouts are ready to satisfy your craving for cookies, with eight of your favorite varieties available. The cost is \$3.50 per box, and the proceeds support our very active Nixon Girl Scouts. Contact Sharon Dally at [sharond@cva.stanford.edu](mailto:sharond@cva.stanford.edu) or Leslie Fiedler at [ljfgmm@earthlink.net](mailto:ljfgmm@earthlink.net) to order some.

The cookie sale lasts only a short time, so plan to stock up now!

### 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](mailto: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.

Information in this newsletter is provided as a community service. The mention of any business, service, or organization in this newsletter does not imply endorsement by the Nixon PTA or the PAUSD.