



NIXON NEWS

Nixon PTA Newsletter—Vol. 2004-2005 Issue No. 7— December 3, 2004
The L.M. Nixon Elementary School, 1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 (650)856-1622 <http://www.nixon.palo-alto.ca.us>

CALENDAR

Sat. Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-noon
Book Fair

Mon. Dec. 6-Thu. Dec. 16
Toy Drive

Thu. Dec. 9, 11:30 a.m.
PTA General Meeting/
Holiday Luncheon

Fri. Dec. 17
Minimum Day
Dismissal at 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 20-Jan. 3
No School
Winter Break
School resumes Jan. 4

**NEXT PUBLICATION
DATE:** December 17

DEADLINE:
Fri. Dec. 10, 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,

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Book Fair and Literacy Night. These are both examples of how we work together as a team to increase student literacy.

Toy Drive

Last year Nixon participated in the annual holiday toy drive sponsored by the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto, and we plan to do so again this year. In the month of December, on a volunteer basis, Nixon will be supporting the Urban Ministry. Urban Ministry is a non-religious, non-profit organization that works closely with other community groups to avoid duplication of services and to leverage additional materials and services. Each year Urban Ministry of

Palo Alto provides 26,000 free hot meals, 17,000 bags of groceries, and 4,800 nights of housing through a rotating emergency shelter program. Other supportive services include housing referrals, a clothing closet, a money management service, and transportation vouchers. Urban Ministry provides new or nearly new toys to qualified families that live within Palo Alto city-limits. Nixon became involved because it came to our attention that sharing with the less fortunate was not an opportunity that many of our children regularly have. We are very sensitive to the fact that many of our families do not participate in gift giving in December; therefore, our toy drive will be very low key and clearly voluntary.

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PTA Presidents' Message by Cyndy Sandor and Tracy Stevens

Many of us have turned our thoughts to holiday celebrations, special events, entertaining, family gatherings, and children home from school. It is an exciting time filled with anticipation. It can also be a time of increased stress and overextended schedules. Our children may become more sensitive, homework may become more of a challenge, and daily disruptions may happen more often. So try to pace yourself with all the many holiday activities, especially since we have so much happening at

Nixon during this special time.

Holiday Staff and PTA Volunteer Appreciation Lunch —December 9, 11:30am–12:30pm

Our annual Holiday Staff and PTA Volunteer Appreciation Lunch will be held on December 9th in the Nixon Theater.

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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*

The first day of the toy drive is Monday, December 6, and we will deliver the toys to Urban Ministry on December 17. If this is something your family is interested in supporting, please consider making it a meaningful experience for your child by involving him or her in the selection process and maybe even the purchase price. Donations need not be large or expensive but thoughtful. Please do not wrap the gifts.

The Power of the Positive

By now you have all met with your child's teacher and received his or her progress report. These conferences are an opportunity for parents and teachers to share, plan, and develop strategies for student success. Sometimes, parent memories of the meetings focus on the concerns and not the child's strengths. We are all so goal-oriented that we want to "fix" what we perceive to be "broken." The result is that we rush home with a list of strategies to do this. Research shows that if we would do just the opposite, positive change is more likely. Students with self-confidence, who assume they will be successful, stretch to try more; and interestingly enough, they are more readily able to work on an area of concern. They view themselves in a positive light, so one negative attribute does not overwhelm them.

What I am suggesting is each day think of three things your child does well and praise those things specifically.

"Carrie, you did a great job completing your homework last night without being reminded." "Sam, I really was impressed with how you put away your computer games before dinner." Children who hear this over and over again can hear and act on, "Carrie, I would like you to work on your math flash cards with me for fifteen minutes before bath time." Yes, I know some days are harder to find three specific positives. On these days just be generic. Who wouldn't want to hear, "Each day I love you for who you are." I have yet to meet a child that didn't want his or her parents to be proud. I am going to work on a 3-1 plan for myself. Three "you did so well" to one "could you improve?" Will you join me?

New Upgraded Computer Lab

Be sure to read the article on page 5 filling you in on all the exciting details.

Barbara



PTA Minutes in Brief

At the PTA meeting held on Tuesday, November 9 at 6:30 p.m., the members:

- Approved the October meeting minutes and the October transaction report, which showed a current balance of \$84,300.
- Heard a report from Cyndy Sandor that Partners in Education (PIE) has raised about \$900,000 so far. Participation rate of Nixon is 22%, slightly below the overall district participation rate of 27%.
- Accepted a donation of 25 iMac computers from a Nixon family and allocated \$4000 to purchase the necessary software and materials in order to bring up the new systems in the Nixon Computer Lab. Existing computers in good working condition will be dispersed into the classrooms.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. and was followed by a presentation by the PAUSD Director of Assessment, Bill Garrison, on "Making Sense of Assessments".

The next PTA meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9 at 11:00 a.m. in the Nixon Theater. The meeting is open to all interested parents and teachers.

PTA Presidents' Message *continued from page 1*

All PTA volunteers and Nixon staff are invited to attend as we spend a fun time together acknowledging our fantastic Nixon staff and our dedicated, hard working PTA volunteers. This is a wonderful potluck event, and we ask that our PTA volunteers attending bring an appetizer, salad, entrée, or side dish (enough to serve 8). Our Nixon Staff will be bringing desserts for us all to share. If you'd like to help with this fun and tasty event, please contact Karen Yang at karen@doughbox.com. We hope to see you there! All interested parents are also invited to attend the PTA meeting, which will immediately precede the Lunch at 11:00.

Annual Holiday Toy Drive

On Monday, December 6 we begin our annual Holiday Toy Drive. This is our second year working with the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto, a non-religious, non-profit organization that provides gifts for local needy children. Last year many of our Nixon students expressed the desire to donate toys to help make a child's holiday season brighter, and they demonstrated their generosity through donating many, many new unwrapped toys. It's a wonderful way for our

kids to really get into the spirit of giving. Please see Barbara Welch's message for more information.

Another Successful Nixon Book Fair

Our Nixon Scholastic Book Fair ends tomorrow! We would like to extend our gratitude to Sylvia Sanders, our dedicated Book Fair Committee Chair, and all of the parent volunteers who contributed their time and energy to make this a great event and successful fundraiser for Nixon. We also thank all of you who attended and purchased books for your children or yourself. Scholastic Books returns 25% of the proceeds to Nixon, so your money is well spent!

Cyndy and Tracy

Please Join Us At Tengu Sushi

For Nixon Fundraising

Invite all of your friends and family to dine in or take out a variety of healthy Japanese dishes. Bento Boxes and Party Trays are available. For your convenience this offer available Dec. 1st – Dec 12th. Simply bring in this ad or mention that you are a Nixon Family. 10% of the proceeds go to Nixon.

Located in the Stanford Barn at 700 Welch Rd. #110
(650) 321 2066
11:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., M – F
12:00 – 6:00 p.m., Sat.

Toy Drive Reminder

The Nixon Toy Drive for Urban Ministry runs from December 6 through December 16. If your family would like to participate, please help your child select an unwrapped new or nearly new toy to contribute.

During the week of December 16, we will need a few volunteers to help transport our contributions to Urban Ministry. Please contact Cheryl Fong if you can help.

Thank you, and thanks from the Palo Alto community!!

Haven't Donated to Partners in Education Yet?

There's still time to contribute to Partners in Education! If you haven't participated by giving to PiE yet, you will receive (or have already received) another request for donation in the mail. We are hoping that people now have a better understanding of PiE and how important it is to our schools. For Nixon, this means funding for our computer lab instructor, reading and math specialists, and necessary librarian time.

In total, Partners in Education has raised over \$900,000 with about \$400,000 to go to meet this year's goal. Last year, our Nixon families donated approximately \$75,000 with a participation rate of 51%. Currently this year, our Nixon families have donated approximately \$47,000 with a participation rate of 22%. In the season of giving, please consider this as one of the most important gifts you can

give to our schools. We greatly appreciate any amount you're able to give.

Questions? Please contact Cyndy Sandor at cyndy@email.com.

Be a Good Neighbor

The office has received several complaints from residents on Tolman Drive that Nixon parents are blocking their driveways. Please be considerate of the neighborhood residents when you park your car. And be aware that a parked car blocking a driveway may be ticketed or TOWED.

Nixon Library News

Biographer Whitney Stewart Addresses 4th and 5th Graders

The table was set with artifacts from Tibet, Burma, and China, and the children entered to the sound of monks chanting. Biographer Whitney Stewart spoke before an audience of 4th and 5th graders on Friday, November 5, describing her adventures in East Asia and interviews with Nobel Peace Prize recipients Aung San Suu Kyi and The Dalai Lama.

Ms. Stewart is the author of nine books targeted for upper elementary through high school students. Although she has written two novels, her specialty is writing biographies. Students submitted questions to librarian Janice Mulholland

prior to her visit; then after hearing her speak about her life and work, they were stimulated even more! Her passion for travel and writing are infectious.

Thank you, PTA, for an inspiring event.

New Computers for the Nixon Computer Lab

In the coming weeks the Nixon Computer Lab will be receiving 25 brand new G5 iMac computers donated by the Tevanian family. This incredibly generous donation will provide our children with a state-of-the-art computing environment and provide the opportunity for many new learning experiences. The donation has the support of the school staff, the district technology office, and the PTA. The PTA will contribute funds raised at the recent Family Fun Night event to purchase new software and accessories for these computers. Barbara Vana, our computer lab instructor, is already busily preparing for the arrival of these new computers.

A further benefit of this donation is that the existing computer lab machines can be re-deployed into classrooms, thus allowing the school to replace some very old and outdated equipment. The school expects to increase the number of in-class computers in the 4th and 5th grades, in compliance with district and state guidelines.

While this wonderful donation goes a long way to updating the school's computer inventory, there remain a number of older systems that need replacing. The PTA will continue its focus on fundraising and encouraging donations until all of the outdated computers are replaced. The PTA is excited that we are able to move forward with this and other initiatives more quickly than expected.



Book Fair Ends Tomorrow

Your last chance to shop at the Book Fair is tomorrow, Saturday, December 6, from 10 a.m. to noon. Thanks to everyone who has supported the fair so far by shopping or volunteering!

Sylvia Sanders

Classroom Happenings

Geo-Kids

“I liked the fossils.” “My favorite part was finding the bugs.” On Tuesday, November 16, Joe Young’s 1st grade class experienced exciting, interactive, and hands-on science on a field trip to the Geo-Kids program at the School of Earth Sciences at Stanford.

A team of graduate students led four stations exploring different aspects of geology. In the rocks station, students handled a variety of rocks and observed similarities and differences between them in terms of color, weight, feel, and patterns on the rocks. In the minerals station, students were all fascinated to learn how geologists identify minerals by many things including, color, density/weight, hardness, shape and luster. There was a scavenger hunt in the soil station, where students dug, explored, and looked for bugs and other components that make up soils. They all really enjoyed painting with the earth materials. At the fossils station, students learned about fossils and made their own fossil!

1st Grade Thanksgiving Feasts

First graders feasted in celebration of Thanksgiving. Students in Joe Young’s, Kim Peckenpaugh’s, and Laura Lajeunesse’s classes made stone soup and muffins as a culmination to their literature study of the classic story Stone Soup. It was a great time of sharing, enjoying each other’s company, and having some great tasting soup! Kathleen Bianchini’s class chopped and cooked and made their own pumpkin pie, cornbread, stew, and fruit salad, followed by a skit featuring Pilgrims and Native Americans. Sounds like all the 1st graders are learning about some wonderful Thanksgiving traditions first-hand.

Stanford Lively Arts

On Wednesday, November 10, Nancy Kaye’s 3rd graders and Beryl Deremigio’s 5th graders heard the Lincoln Center Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, presented by Stanford Lively Arts. Students learned through an Arts Ambassador who visited their classrooms prior to the concert that Afro-Latin jazz is a coming together of African, European, and North and South American influences. It draws on the rituals and religions of African slaves, but is informed by strong Latin influences. At the concert, its undeniable relationship to American jazz was evident.

Lost & Found Overflowing!

The deadline for claiming items from the lost and found (located at the base of the stairs leading to the main office) is December 17. Don't delay, because items remaining after that date will be donated to a charitable organization.

December 17—Minimum Day

Friday, December 17 is a minimum day. Dismissal for all students is at 1:30 p.m., and there will be no after school enrichment classes on that day.

Beyond Nixon

ADHD Support Group/CAC for Special Education

Thursday, December 9, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

25 Churchill Ave., Room A

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. This support group will focus on issues such as how to manage school accommodations and modifications, organization, time management and study skills, IEP's and 504's, as well as management at home. We will also spend time discussing social relationships and difficulties and how to manage these. Please come and share your ideas. Other topics of interest are welcome. Mark your calendar for future meetings (3rd Thursday of each month, 2nd Thursday in December): January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, and May 19. For questions, call 617-3822.

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.

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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